

NEWS OF THE PROFESSION

I. Institutional News

The Hamburg Foundation for 20th Century Social History

At the end of the 1970s a period of fruitful research in social history in West Germany and West Berlin came to an end. As a result of the intellectual awakening of 1967/68, the hegemony of historiography centered on great men and important national political events had been broken. A new generation of historians, both male and female, arose to take up the methodological tools of the French *Annales* school, the economic-history school of East Germany, English social history, American labour history and a few West German non-conformists, making them their own for use as a basis in their own study and research.

Today we can see in retrospect that the political shift was gradual and not at first immediately apparent. Projects were trimmed, budgets were cut. Available learning grew more uniform. Critical dissertations on recent social and economic history had to be repeatedly rewritten. Even in the printing phase, works which had been declared finished were more and more subject to censure from the institutions sponsoring their publication. Imperceptibly, there was increasing pressure to conform.

Finally, in the early 1980s a divergence occurred among the younger generation of historians. The majority adapted to the new status quo and continued to perpetrate the error of academically alienating critical historical writing from its true function as a means of public enlightenment. Others left for abroad in order to pursue their academic careers without having to make concessions. However, a minority existed who went ahead with critical studies despite possible social and professional consequences. There thus came into being a new subculture taking as its task a critical historical examination of industry and local everyday events “from below”, an activity carried out principally in history workshops. A number of work groups concentrated their study and research on areas with a distinct general theme.

The Hamburg Foundation for 20th Century Social History had its origins in such a specialized project. From the beginning of the 1980s, the institute's founders had been working in association with critically-minded doctors, historians, psychologists and social scientists who combined their disciplines to address themselves to the problems of continuity in sociology, health care and social politics. The primary purpose of their study was to disentangle and cast light on a social-health model used by the forces behind mass annihilation for

the modification of social structures in order to facilitate domination and economic exploitation. From 1984 to 1986 the forerunner of the Hamburg Foundation, the Documentation Centre for the Social Politics of National-Socialism, was deeply involved with this sort of study.

In the summer of 1986, the Documentation Centre for the Social Politics of National-Socialism was restructured to become the Hamburg Foundation for 20th Century Social History. In the winter of 1986/87, a small building for the Foundation was found in Hamburg-Harvestehude. In addition to carrying on the emphasis of the Documentation Centre decisions were laid down for establishing a department of documentation, consisting of archives and a library, as well as a publication department.

Very important for us was the expansion of the Documentation Centre's information organ *Mitteilungen* to a quarterly magazine. Its title, the transitional year into the 21st century (1999), reflects its programme: the social, economic and cultural processes of the declining century must be viewed thematically, that is, openly and interconnectedly, in order to create conditions in the here and now which will produce a more humane 21st century, free from genocide and exploitation. The magazine's editors can fall back on the general research resources of the Foundation; in addition the magazine sees itself as a potential forum for all critical socio-historical tendencies and trends. "Misfits", basic historians and non-conformists are welcomed equally with representatives of the discipline itself. It will be up to a network of foreign correspondents to make certain that no provincialism creeps onto the scene and that also the important learning processes of the historiographic community of the more remote language areas are taken into account. Alongside the magazine, the publication department puts out a series of brochures (published by Greno) and has set up a small historical library. Together with the research groups and their outside associates, it recognizes a duty – in the words of the great Marc Bloch just before he was killed by the Gestapo – to make even the most complex and non-narrative historical writing understandable to the layman.

In this light, the Hamburg Foundation for 20th Century Social History should be regarded as a locus of critical and interdisciplinary historiography, a science which cannot do without the impulses of social movements and therefore strives for dialogue with them: with the workers' movement and its efforts towards an authentic counter-culture, with the women's movement and its feminist theories, with environmental groups and their conviction that means of production must undergo radical change, but also with the remainder of the political left, now attempting to find a new identity. The implication, then, is that clear-cut requirements must be set governing the quality of source-exposure and analytical insight, since this responsibility must by no means be left to the neo-positivist tendency manifested in the established order of social historical writing. On this basis, it is our desire to achieve a broad alliance for discussion in which it is important that many different voices be heard, a leftist pluralism oriented towards social and political emancipation. Critical historical science can never be anything but controversial; new themes must be addressed, old established ones questioned and examined in a different, confrontational light.

If we are successful in this, we will contribute to keeping the administrative aims of the affirmative mentality well within the realm of "wishful thinking" by promoting a stronger historical consciousness.

Like its predecessor, the Documentation Centre for the Social Politics of National-Socialism, the Hamburg Foundation receives the financial support of the Hamburg Foundation for the Promotion of Science and Culture. The Foundation is autonomous in all decisions regarding its personnel, organization and research policy. The governing board is composed of Angelika Ebbinghaus, Karl Heinz Roth and Kathrin Scheerer. The board is advised by a council of curators which includes Heidrun Kaupen-Haas, Heiner Lichtenstein, Jan Philipp Reemtsma and Heinrich Senfft. Operational affairs are seen to by an institute committee on which staff members, scientific associates and the board work together. The institute has a department of general management and departments of documentation, research and publication.

At the beginning, certain thematic focal points clearly made the transition from information centre to foundation for social history a logical one: studies on health policies and practical medicine under National Socialism, of the socio-political background of mass-annihilation planning, but also in the area of industrial history during the world economic crisis and the National Socialist period. In the last years, the focal points have been clearly differentiated and assigned the proper issues of inquiry and investigation, directing them more and more pointedly to the international socio-historical relations of this century. At the moment studies are being carried out in the following research fields:

Social strategies of the German Workers' Front

This concerns a scientific edition of memoirs, periodicals and key documents of the scientific labour institute of the "Deutsche Arbeitsfront". Disclosure of this extensive source-material is seen as a condition for a thorough critical analysis of the model which characterized labour and social policies during the Third Reich.

Genetics and neo-eugenics

Current genetical developments call for a critical reconstruction of their conceptual origins in the 1920s. Once source-material was brought to light, a theoretical analysis followed along with a scientifically prepared edition of the utopian models put forward at the time, some of which since have been realized in actual fact. At present a study has been begun of the historical relations between genetics and biological warfare.

Banks and finance 1930-48

The structure of large banks and financial institutions was decisive for the crisis, depression and neo-protectionist armament cycle of the 1930s and '40s. An extensive project aimed at unearthing sources has been going on for four years. Within this framework so far, two study reports by the American military have been edited of the Deutsche Bank and the Dresdener Bank.

History of business and economics 1928-48

Here, too, a long-term project for bringing to light source-material is under-

way. Associated research concentrates on companies in the chemical, non-ferro metal and metal processing industries. Publications have consisted of the OMGUS report on I.G. Farben, a two-part study of the Daimler Benz concern and an essay on Degussa A.G. The focus of attention has since shifted to the electro-industry.

Film propaganda for the institutional killings of the Third Reich

In the last number of years intensive research has been carried out into State-instigated killings of handicapped and psychiatric patients in institutions. But until now less emphasis has been placed on the fact that these activities were accompanied by an extensive programme of film propaganda (from documentaries to scientific films, even to entertainment films), in order to assure acceptance by the public. Not least because of the theme's timeliness, we are at the moment preparing, in co-operation with the Freiburg media studios, a critical documentary film in which efforts are being made to use historical film material.

Cold war

After the first preliminary studies of the separate aspects and background of the polarization of the anti-Hitler coalition (1943-46), a study was begun two years ago of the Cuban missile crisis, which brought the world closer than ever before to the brink of a Third World War. Analysis and documentation of this dramatic event have since become available. To mark the 40th anniversary of the German Federal Republic we are organizing a congress. At the same time, research has been begun on the background of the plans for and results of monetary restructuring in the western zone in 1948.

Migrant work and resistance: the labour market in Europe under the Nazis

Since 1937/38 there has been talk of an administratively engineered migration of workers to Germany, which took on a growingly coercive character as the war progressed. The model for this was the history of Italian worker migration from 1938-43, which is at present under study. An extension of this study to include Southeast Europe is in preparation.

The problem of continuity in the science of history in the Federal Republic of Germany

Critical history of the science of the FRG's history was for a long time taboo. Marked by a gradually stronger swing towards the tradition of great men and national political events as extolled by the Neo-Rankeans, the first attempts can be observed at embracing a very far-reaching "understanding" of their Nazism, thereby reinforcing the reactionary glorification of the individual. By contrast, our efforts are aimed at recording the history of the FRG by differentiating and critically examining social and economic relations and the lines of continuity of the various schools of historiography.

Occupational diseases and environment

As a result of dramatic increases in the disruption of the environment, in the last few years a number of aspects have been the subject of careful study. However,

research projects devoted to the environmental crisis in the context of the history of industrialization have been less frequent. And even here, the allied problem of workers' disorders and occupational diseases has fallen outside the area of research. In our current study an attempt is being made to eliminate the separation between the pathology of work and environmental history and to reflect in a number of selected case studies the relation between occupational diseases and environmental pollution. The research project arose from a colloquium on worker-safety and the environment held in January 1989.

The left in the Hamburg workers' movement 1914-48

In the projected research project, we will focus anew on the history of labour. The history of the left currents in the Hamburg labour movement covers the generation characterized by its resistance to the threat posed by the nationalistic policy of integration to the organizational structures so far developed. However, there is a consensus that not only should the history of organizations be analyzed, but that the proletarian struggle and living conditions should also be exhaustively reconstructed. Work has begun on an edition of collected documents with an extensive introduction and commentary.

Video archives

Historical source material and pictures which have come to light are increasingly given in visual form. At the moment, there exist areas of social historiography which no longer appear in print but only visually. The video image itself has grown into a historical source and form of presentation. In co-operation with the Freiburg media studios, television recordings of historic significance are stored, video-films collected and other audio-visual material not used in completed productions assembled.

It is our desire to participate in the development of socio-historical documentation and analysis in this new form of uncovering and preserving source material.

Women in history

In past years, studies have been carried out in themes proper to the history of women, especially in regard to women as victims and offenders of Nazi social politics and suppression policies. In 1989 a biographical study was begun on the female chemist Clara Immerwahr and an essay begun on chemical warfare.

A critical historical view of social statistics

During research into the social strategies of the German workers' front, extensive sources came to light on the development of wages, prices and living costs during the world economic crisis and the Nazi period. Preparing and evaluating these should provide a quantitative contribution to the social history of the Third Reich, but at the same time point beyond the confines of a pure description of social statistics.

As regards all requests for research support, we wish to call attention to the fact that the Hamburg Foundation for 20th Century Social History can not make available any promotional, teaching or other grants.

The address of the Foundation is: Hamburger Stiftung für Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, Mittelweg 36, D-2000 Hamburg 13. Tel. (40) 41 40 97 92.

II. Announcements

CCP Research Newsletter

CCP Research Newsletter is a new periodical, published by the Chinese Communism Research Group. The group exists to promote scholarly research on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and to provide, through the Newsletter, a guide to sources, scholars, and trends in research and teaching.

The group and Newsletter focus on the CCP from its origins to the present. Interests are, however, not limited to "Party history" alone. Three broad topics are covered: the pre-49 Chinese Communist Movement, the post-49 Party/State in the People's Republic of China, and the post-79 reform of the socialist system in China.

The Newsletter is not a forum for publishing research findings, but rather one for exchanging information about where to find sources, how to assess them, and how to interpret them. The intended audience is scholars in all fields whose active research includes the CCP.

Contributions are welcomed from scholars world-wide, regardless of institutional affiliation or country of residence. Editorial correspondence, submission of notes, reviews, news, and queries may be addressed to: Timothy Cheek, Department of History, The Colorado College, Colorado Springs, CO 80903, U.S.A., (719) 473-2233, ext. 2525. Subscriptions are \$ 12.00 per year (three issues) for individuals inside the United States, Canada and Mexico; \$ 20.00 per year for institutions. For other areas (Asia, Europe, and elsewhere): \$ 17.00 per year for individuals and \$ 25.00 for institutions. For airmail add an additional \$ 10.00 per year.

New York State Occasional Paper Series

The New York State Labor History Association is soliciting papers for its new Occasional Paper Series. It is seeking papers of varying length: suggested maximum of forty typewritten pages. Papers will contribute to the understanding of labour in New York State. The Association seeks papers that adopt a clear, straightforward, and jargon-free style and use that style to present and elaborate on issues and events of interest to a broad, informed and engaged readership. Call Dr Robert Wechsler (President), U.S.A., (212) 873-6000, ext. 359.

Consumer cooperatives

A conference is being prepared on "An alternative to capitalism? Consumer cooperatives in the Western world from 1840 to the present". Invited are inquiries from scholars of any geographical specialty who are working on

consumer cooperatives and on cooperatives' relationship to family life, consumerism, socialist, and other working-class movements, retail trade, or the state. For further information contact Ellen Furlough, Department of History, Kenyon College, Gambier, OH 43022, U.S.A., (614) 427-5327; or Carl Strikwerda, Department of History, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045, U.S.A., (913) 864-3569.