

'A vision of an alternative, better world'

International collections and archives

The labour movement sees itself as transnational. The creation of international political and trade union federations, unions of different groups and movements is a manifestation of this. It is also reflected in the diversity of labour movements in an international context. There are both global – at least titularly – and regional organisations, arranged in a hierarchical co-operative structure. In the trade union segment, for example, there are trade union confederation internationals, trade union internationals, supra-regional (e.g. European) federations and regional (e.g. Nordic) trade union secretariats.

The records of these international organisations are, however, not to be found in the Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek ARAB [Labour Movement Archives and Library], with the exception of the Socialist Temperance International and some Nordic organisations. The Internationale Sozialistischer Alkoholgegner ISA [International Socialist Temperance League], was founded in 1928 following an earlier attempt to create an international organisation in 1910. In 1934 the secretariat was reconstituted in Stockholm as a result of an offer from the Swedish temperance organisation, Verdandi,¹ and the German political refugee Henry Dittmer (1905-1985) was the organisation's driving force and secretary until 1952 when the secretariat was moved to Finland. Close co-operation was developed with Verdandi and the Scandinavian Temperance League. On specific issues there was co-operation with non-socialist temperance organisations, which was permitted under the regulations. Henry Dittmer transferred the records to ARAB. There are supplementary entries in his personal archives both at ARAB and at its sister institution the Archiv der sozialen Demokratie in Bonn-Bad Godesberg.²

ISA's fonds is still not completely organised. It contains documents from 1932-1952: minutes, bulletins and other journals, reports, regulations, correspondence, leaflets, posters, accounts, brochures and other printed matter together with temperance news from other countries. For example, ISA's press correspondence, ISA-Press nos. 3-4, 1935, relates what famous Labour leaders had to say about alcohol. One such is Hjalmar Branting, the leader of the Swedish Social Democratic Party who was scarcely an opponent of alcohol. He is quoted as saying: 'Just as it is certain that a wretched proletariat can never be the bearer of a higher social order, so undoubtedly must the struggle

Sheet of music with Joe Hill's song 'The Rebel Girl', '...to the working class she's a precious pearl...'. Published by Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) 1915.

against alcohol consumption as a popular custom form part of the preparations for a socialist revolution' (translated from German). An international bibliographic project on international socialism shows that ARAB's ISA material is in part unique.³

Mostly collections and printed works

ARAB also has internationally oriented collections that have been delivered as such or have been put together by the archives department. These collections are of two types: there is material from international organisations within the labour movement and there are some collect-

ions that contain material of interest and relevance to our field from individual countries. Among the latter one might, for example, mention collections of posters, leaflets and newspapers from the revolutions of 1848 in Austria and France. There is also a group on the 1918 - 1919 revolution in Germany contains leaflets and newspapers chiefly from the Soviet Republic in Munich and the revolution in Bavaria together with postcards from the so-called Spartacist uprising in Berlin from 5 - 12 January 1919.⁴ The Russian photographic collection contains interesting and in part unique photographs from 1917 to the mid 1920s.⁵ Collections from the 1933-1945 resistance movements, on the one hand German disguised writings (Tarnschriften)⁶ and, on the other, material from occupied Denmark and Norway. There is the 1933 - 1945 Exile collection,⁷ an extensive and interesting collection on the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939;⁸ a collection of cuttings on Franco's Spain 1962-1978 and some Scandinavian collections.⁹

Most of the collections contain only printed matter including organisations' printed matter (such as conference minutes, reports on activities and regulations). Some consist solely of clippings others contain a variety of material. Among the latter may be found a special type, 'archival collections' to use a German archival phrase, which means that they contain material that originally formed part of fonds but has been removed and combined with other material as collections. This was a common practice at ARAB up to the mid-1960s, in conflict with the archivist's 'fundamentals' - the principle of provenance and the premise of maintaining records intact. In general, it is difficult or impossible to trace the origin of particular documents. Therefore we have had to accept that they remain in their new context in different collections. Further collections of foreign organisations' printed material are managed and continually added to in the library department.

There are 27 collections from the trade union internationals, which constitute the largest block among the international collections. Fully ten of these internationals were already in existence as far back as the 1890s. During a joint stocktaking project with the other Nordic labour movement archives it was shown that ARAB, all in all, keeps an impressive stock. The pan-Nordic compilation is an outstanding aid at our information desk.¹⁰

The collections contain chiefly organisations' printed matter and periodicals, the latter usually stored in ARAB's library. Some collections are very extensive, for example the International Foodworkers' Union in 25 volumes.¹¹ In general, the material is fragmentary, and unevenly distributed in time (sometimes going up to the 1980s). There is a great deal of rare material from the early decades of the trade secretariats as much was lost during the war years in Europe. This material, for example various enquiries and reports, sometimes submitted to con-

gresses, are of great interest. It provides valuable comparative information about working conditions, working hours including night work, working environments, wage trends and so on, as well as the union struggles in various industries. Much more advantageous use could be made of this but it must naturally be supplemented by material in the archives of the trade unions involved in this cooperation and of Landsorganisationen LO [Swedish Trade Union Confederation].

Party and other internationals

The socialist international, the Second International, was founded in Paris in 1889, thus called from the International Workers' Association, the first international (1864-1872). The International was the federation of socialist parties throughout the entire world or, more correctly, chiefly

*In 1987 the Labour Movement Archives and Library (ARAB) held a conference on the so-called Stockholm Conference 1917. The contributions were published in the periodical *Arbetarhistoria* [Labour History] (edited by ARAB), in the no 47 issue, 3/1988. On the cover is the invitation sent out by the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee to social democrats of all nations to participate in the peace meeting in Stockholm 1917.*

Europe. It was the largest international alternative movement before 1914; through its organisation and power it represented 'a vision of an alternative, better world' (Feliks Tych); in the first place, a world of peace with no wars. During and as a result of the First World War this aspiration came to nought and the Second International ceased to function although, during the war, attempts were made to regroup as a peace movement.

The vision survived, and thus, in 1923, the Socialist Workers International (SWI) was founded. This was active until April 1940 when a new war brought it to an abrupt end. A new International, the Socialist International (SI), was established in 1951 following a number of attempts at reorganisation after the war. Material from all of these organisations has been assembled in a chronologically arranged collection. This contains principally printed conference proceedings including reports from associated organisations from 1889 to 1989 and provides a compendium of information, not least by means of reports on the situations in the various countries, the socialist parties and their struggle. A great deal of material, including circulars, originates in terms of provenance from the fonds of the Social Democratic Party of Sweden (SAP). Since it is difficult to establish precisely the correct provenance in every individual case, the collection has been maintained in its existing state. Only those documents marked with a 'Hjalmar Branting' ex libris stamp have been restored to their origin. Together with the publications of the internationals that are in ARAB's library, this is an extremely usable collection, providing a fine

overview of the activities of the internationals and containing besides a few things that are either rare or unique. There is supplementary material in SAP's fonds and in the personal archives of people who were engaged in the activities of the internationals, for example Hjalmar Branting,¹² Gustav Möller, Kaj Björk, Inga Thorsson and Alva Myrdal. Photographs are found in ARAB's photographic collection.

As well as these big collections, some smaller ones must be mentioned: the trade union internationals (International Trade Union Federation and International of Free Trade Unions); the Red Trade Union International and the communist Trade Union World Federation. Others are the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee which tried to reassemble the International in 1917¹³, the International Socialist Commission, the action centre of left-wing groups during the First World War, the Communist International, the Socialist and Communist Youth and Women's Internationals; the

The first Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), in Paris, 25 September-8 October 1945. The presiding committee on the stage of the huge congress hall in Palais de Chaillot in Paris. The first person from the left is August Lindberg, president of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation. Next to him the legendary French trade union leader Leon Jouhaux. The white-haired man (no four from the left) is the Secretary General of the British Trades Union Congress, Walter Citrine. He became the new International's first president. Sitting to the right of the chairman is the Internationals first Secretary General, the Frenchman Louis Saillant. Photo: AEP Paris/LO-tidningen.

International Falcons movement and the Socialist Workers Sports International.

In this connection I have to mention two other international archives of another type that are related to Swedish social democracy: the first is the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues, which was active during the 1980s under the chairmanship of Olof Palme and consequently known as the Palme Commission; the second is the Commission on Global Governance, active from 1990 to 2001, with Ingvar Carlsson as chairman, in which global co-operation and the role of the UN were discussed.¹⁴



Camouflage booklet [Tarnschrift] from ARAB's collections. This type of publication, small and innocent-looking, containing political texts on thin paper, were illegally disseminated throughout Germany and Austria during the time of National Socialism.

Finally I should like to draw attention to records that lie outside the scope of international archives and collections as set out here – the Polish Solidarnosc [Solidarity] information office in Stockholm. ARAB holds extensive and fascinating material on Solidarnosc as an opposition, the changes in Poland and the support offered by the Swedish labour movement.

All in all, the international collections afford an excellent possibility to obtain both an overview of the activities of international organisations and background information about the involvement of Swedish organisations in the international arena of the labour movement. Naturally it is fundamental to study the archives of the organisations that were and are engaged in this co-operation whose archives are also kept at ARAB.

NOTES

1. The Verdandi records are held at ARAB.
2. Henry Dittmer presented material from ISA 1982 (accession 1982/60) together with personal papers and exile material 1961, 1969, 1970 and 1982. Dittmer's personal archive is not described yet. There is a description of his personal papers in Bonn-Bad Godesberg at ARAB.
3. Gerd Callesen: *Socialist Internationals. A bibliography. Publications of Social-Democratic and Socialist Internationals 1914-2000*. A project by the International Association of Labour History Institutions. Bonn/Gent 2001.
4. There are additional posters and leaflets in Kurt Heinig's papers and in the poster collection (mainly from Heinig's papers) and postcards in Hjalmar Branting's papers, volume 5.3:1.
5. See the introduction by Maria Bosdotter in *Meddelande från Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek* nos. 26-27, 1983, pp. 26-33. Russian photographs are also included, for example, in Per Emil Brusewitz's papers (including interesting lantern slides) and in the fonds of the Sweden-Soviet Union Alliance.
6. ARAB's disguised writings appear in Heinz Gittig: *Bibliographie der Tarnschriften 1933 bis 1945*. Munich 1996.
7. See Martin Grass: The German Speaking émigrés' papers 1933-1945, in this book.
8. See Lucy Viedma: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939, in this book.
9. See Martin Grass: Scandinavian Archives and Collections, in this book
10. *Internasjonale fagsekretariater. Nordisk felleskatalog over historisk kildemateriale fra de internasjonale fagsekretariater*. 1994.
11. Sigvard Nyström: *IUL's historia. Del 1. Från början till 1920*. Genève 1983. Also available in a German translation.
12. See also Martin Grass: International material in Hjalmar Branting's papers, in this book
13. Ibid.
14. See Stellan Andersson: Peace and Disarmament, in this book. – An outcome of the Palme Commission: *Common security. A programme for disarmament*. London 1982

LIST OF ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS

Foreign organisation pieces arranged by country are not shown here.

Commission on Global Governance – c.150 volumes
Trade Union International (collection) – 10 volumes
World Federation of Trade Unions (collection)
France: The Revolution of 1848 (collection) – 7 volumes
Commercial Employees' International (collection) – 3 volumes

Dutch – Scandinavian Committee (collection) – 3 volumes, of which 1 is photographs
 Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues – c. 150 volumes
 Indian National Committee, Stockholm (collection) – < 1 volume
 International Falcons Movement (collection) – 1 volume
 Internationale Sozialistische Alkoholgegner – 16 volumes
 International Federation of Tailors and Garment Workers (collection) – 1 volume
 International Union of Builders and Carpenters (collection) – 4 volumes
 International Federation of Factory Workers (collection) – 8 volumes
 International Federation of Government and Local Authority Employees (collection) – 2 volumes
 International Federation of Public Service Personnel (collection) – 2 volumes
 International Union of Hairdressers (collection) – 1 volume
 International Glass Workers' Federation (collection) – 1 volume
 International Graphical Federation (collection) – 3 volumes
 International Federation of Mineworkers (collection) – 2 volumes
 International Federation of Railwaymen (collection) – 1 volume
 International Federation of Farmworkers (collection) – 2 volumes
 International Federation of Metalworkers (collection) – 9 volumes
 International Federation of Painters and Decorators (collection) – 1 volume
 International Union of Shoe and Leatherworkers (collection) – 1 volume
 International Socialist Commission (collection) – 1 volume
 International Masons' Secretariat (collection) – < 1 volume
 International Federation of Textile, Clothing and Leatherworkers (collection) – 1 volume
 International Union of Textile and Clothing Workers (collection) – 1 volume
 International Union of Textile Workers (collection) – 1 volume
 International Federation of Tobacco Workers (collection) – 1 volume
 International Federation of Transport Workers (collection) – 14 volumes
 International Woodworkers' Union (collection) – 1 volume
 International Typographers' Secretariat (collection)

– 1 volume
 International Union of Hotel, Restaurant and Café Employees (collection) – 1 volume
 International Union of Lithographers and Associated Workers (collection) – 1 volume
 International Union of Food and Leisure Workers (collection) – 25 volumes
 Communist International
 Communist Youth International
 The resistance movements in Denmark and Norway 1940-1945 (collection) – 3 volumes
 Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Personnel International (collection) – 5 volumes
 Russian pictures [photo collection] – 14 volumes
 The Red Trade Unions International (collection) – 5 volumes
 The Socialist Workers Sports International – 1 volume
 The Socialist International (collection) – 36 volumes
 The Socialist Youth International (collection)
 Solidarity Information Office, Sweden – c. 200 volumes
 Spain: Clipping collection – 28 volumes
 Spanish Civil War 1936-1939 (collection) – 2 volumes
 Study trips to the Soviet Union (collection) – 1 volume
 Germany: The Revolution of 1918/19 (collection) – 3 volumes
 Austria: The Revolution of 1848 (collection) – 1 volume

LITERATURE

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Socialdemokratin och svensk utrikespolitik från Branting till Palme. Ed. Hult, Bo/Misgeld, Klaus. Stockholm 1990

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