



Introduction

by Gerd Callesen

As a result of the political conditions at the time, the 1970ies saw the birth of a new academic interest being taken in the development of the labour movement. Increasingly, endeavours were made to make accessible the sources of this history on a broader scale. Relatively early in the German Democratic Republic reprints of central labour movement papers were produced, in Great Britain reprints of primarily early labour-movement papers were published, especially those linked to the Chartist movement. In the Federal Republic of Germany an antiquarian bookshop made an effort to realize a comprehensive reprint programme; however the initiative failed as a result of prohibitively high costs. The remainders were sold by the publishing house J.H.W. Dietz Nachf. in Bonn. This publishing house also published a number of reprints texts relating to the Social Democratic and trade union movements, but also material pertaining to the International, thus, for instance, the documents of the Bern Conference held by the Social Democratic parties in 1919 were published.

In Moscow the complete protocol and minutes of the International Working Men's Association were published in additional volumes while, again, in the GDR the documents of the Communist League (Bund der Kommunisten) were published in three volumes as well as one volume covering the I International in Germany thus establishing a close link between the national and the international labour movements. In this connection the series published by the Geneva publishing house Minkoff *Histoire de la Deuxième Internationale 1889-1914* saw the light of day. Till then, this publishing house had primarily made a name for itself by publishing reprints of musical material, but wanted to add another string to its bow. The series began with the publication of reprints of works which were deemed to be of fundamental importance. (1) , but whose value seems debatable. From volume 6 the material relating to the II International was published, including the significant 1888 London Congress mainly held by national trade union confederations, who did, in fact, decide to convene the Paris congress for 1889.

The ground for the bibliographical information in the edition had to a wide extent been provided by Georges Haupt (2) , however already in this first series reports, among other things, made by some organizations to the congress were integrated into the edition, material which had not originally been included by the two researchers Michel Winock and Georges Haupt.. (3) In addition to the congress material proper a number of reports in newspapers and periodicals evaluating the outcomes of the congress were included in the volumes. Exhaustiveness in this respect was not attempted as this would go beyond the scope of the publication. However, a fairly high proportion of articles - frequently highly interesting - in connection with some of the congresses were included; for the London congress in 1896 a separate volume containing press contributions was published. Regrettably, the criteria for inclusion were not indicated; thus, it remains a puzzle why, for instance, relatively important contributions made by Daniel De Leon on the Stuttgart Congress 1907 or the Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer on the Copenhagen congress of 1910 were not included. To be sure, the series does make available the most important organisational reports. The parties' own evaluations of themselves are made clear by means of these authentic reports. This material appeared in the volumes 6 to 22 and covers all the congresses before 1912. Furthermore, the official volume on the Stockholm congress of the Social Democratic parties in 1917 was also published, albeit without the materials of the congress itself.. (4)

The periodic bulletin of the International Socialist Bureau, published in 11 numbers and one annex during the period 1909 to 1914 was published as the 23rd and last volume. This three-

language bulletin contains many central documents of the ISB. It seems that so far its full importance has not been appreciated. Before the Bulletin began being published, communications of the ISB were brought in the periodical of the Belgian Labour Party, l'Avenir Social. Revue du Parti Ouvrier Belge prior to 1907 - these communications although not extensive are of considerable historical relevance, but as the periodical is not widely known, these communications have barely been subject to research at all.

Originally Minkoff intended to publish a second - and possibly later on also more - series. The basic publications for the planned X congress of the International in Vienna, the publications of the Women's International from 1907 to 1915 and the International Federation of Socialist Young People's Organizations 1907-1919 were collected around 1980 and partially prepared for publication. However, the first series did not enjoy any major success, and the publishing house had to abandon the project. The possibilities provided by the existence of the Internet have now opened up another path to publication. In the present version, only the documents of the organizations are published to the extent that they could be localized. Press reports and analyses in the periodicals published by the participating organizations are not included here.

Originally the material was found following intensive searches in many different, primarily but not exclusively European archives and institutions. A final report, the English-language report of the Socialist Labour Party of the USA has been found in connection with the most recent preparatory activities. The political transformations after 1989 have had as a result that some of these institutes no longer exist or have been given a new remit. This hampers any search for source material for which reason it has become all the more necessary to make the documents accessible. This will have been achieved by this publication that should be used in connection with other publications of source material, like for instance the abovementioned web-publication by Martin Grass and other initiatives such as the conference of the Stockholm archive and the Library of the Labour Movement, *The International Labour Movement on the Threshold of Two Centuries* - (http://www.arbarkiv.nu/sem_international.htm)

This edition is linked to the [Labour History Project](#) and this website contains a number of links to others dealing with the history of the international labour movement.

Notes

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- 1 - As, for example, the first volume in the series by Max Beer, *Fifty Years of International Socialism*, first published in London 1938
 - 2 - Georges Haupt, *La Deuxième Internationale 1889-1914. Etude Critique des Sources. Essai bibliographique*, Paris, 1964. A German version without the bibliographical part but with an expanded textual part was published with the title *Programm und Wirklichkeit. Die internationale Sozialdemokratie vor 1914*, Neuwied, 1970. Despite the fact that the 35 years that have elapsed since then have seen the publication of a number of important sources, in particular the edition of letters published by IISG Amsterdam and the Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe (MEGA), this text remains an analysis of central importance. Furthermore, Haupt published the first volume (1900-1907) of material of the International Socialist Bureau (ISB): *Bureau socialiste international. Comptes rendus des réunions, manifestes et circulaires*, Paris, Mouton, 1969, 438 p.
 - 3 - Unfortunately, this did not mean that the material was now complete. For instance, the comprehensive report by Max Schippel *Die fremden Arbeitskräfte und die Gesetzgebung der verschiedenen Länder. Materialien für den Stuttgarter Internationalen Kongress*, which had been an annex to the periodical *Die neue Zeit* (No 41, vol. 25/2, 1906/1907) was not included

in the relevant volume of the Stuttgart Congress.

- 4 - Parts of the material relating to the endeavours of the Social Democratic parties of the neutral states to bring the World War to an end have now become accessible. A project to publish this material in three volumes was never realized, however, Martin Grass of the Archive and Library of the Swedish Labour Movement in Stockholm has put the documents on the Stockholm congress 1917, collected and prepared by him, on the Internet at <http://labourhistory.net/stockholm1917/index.php#top>