

# Bulletin of Central and East-European Activities

International Institute of Social History

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## Aid Program For Russia Under Way

Among many victims of the economic collapse of the Soviet Union and its successor states were quite a few academic projects jointly undertaken by Dutch institutions and their colleagues over there. In order to rescue them from unearned oblivion the Dutch Ministry of Education and Sciences created a multimillion-dollar fund, which is administered by its organization for the advancement of research, known as NWO. From this fund a special committee chaired by Jan Borgman now granted IISH f700,000 (\$415,000) over two years, roughly matching the amount it had already earmarked in its annual budgets for the same purpose.

The main beneficiaries will be the various institutions that succeeded the former Communist Party's Institute of Marxism-Leninism (IML), the newly created State Archives of the Russian Federation, and the independent research and document centre Memorial, all in Moscow. In all cases, NWO adopted IISH's viewpoint that before any historical research can be done, care should be taken of the collections on which it will have to be based. The bulk of the money will be spent on improving infrastructural facilities in the archives and libraries mentioned, for the benefit of scholars from Russia and abroad.

### Resurrexit Rjazanov

Only a couple of years ago IML was a 1,000-strong bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU responsible, among other things, for inserting appropriate quotations from the Marxist classics into the speeches of top bureaucrats. Yet it still retained the fabulous collection of books and manuscripts on the European labour movement that had been gathered by David Rjazanov in the 1920s. It had been endowed with those pre-1954

Party records deemed sufficiently innocuous to be viewed by sub-Politbureau eyes. And it had been made the repository of the archives of the Communist International and the Communist Information Bureau.

Already mildly suffering from *perestrojka* before August 1991, after the aborted coup IML was readily dismembered. Its archives were taken over by the Russian Federation and conferred to a new entity scrupulously named Russian Centre for the Preservation and Research of Documents of Modern History (RCCHIDNI), under the Russian Committee on Archival Affairs (Roskomarchiv). Its library was stripped of everything useful in the way of xerox machines or typewriters, and then just simply forgotten.

Forgotten, too, was the fact that this may be the most splendid collection of books and serials in labour history anywhere. Although often considered a mere appendix of IML, it had really become a treasure in its own worth ever since Rjazanov started to build it as an inseparable part of his Marx-Engels Institute, which for many years had the market virtually to itself. Today, this natural starting point for every study of IML's archives is closed to researchers. For five months now it is only able to pay its staff from money furnished by IISH and RCCHIDNI.

For almost a year IISH is pleading on behalf of the library with every authority that might conceivably be competent in the matter. It is slowly making headway. The library has at least got a name (Social-Political State Library, or GOPB), and was temporarily placed under the Ministry of National Property Management, thus removing the danger of its losing its building. Recent talks with the Ministry of Culture and Roskomarchiv opened the perspective of the latter taking



charge. This would bring GOPB together again with RCChIDNI under the same umbrella. Aided by NWO, IISH will now sustain the library for a transitional period of up to two years. This should enable the Russians to save Rjazanov's creation.

It will also be most useful to the continuation of the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, a major publication project started by the IMLs of Moscow and East-Berlin at the end of the sixties. In the course of 1991 work on this edition came to an almost complete standstill. It was saved by the Amsterdam-based Internationale Marx-Engels

### What Is It To Us?

Ever since the Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe started to crumble, IISH has paid special attention to the new world of archives and libraries that is emerging in the countries concerned. True to tradition, it seeks to safeguard existing collections and to help building new ones. Yet contrary to what it was used to, when speedy removal of endangered documents to Amsterdam was the only way out, the Institute now faces the even more difficult problem of assisting on the spot institutions that are of immense importance to the future study of history, both nationally and internationally.

In Central and Eastern Europe, history, notably social history, is more often than not strongly compromised by the *ancien régime*. Archives, sometimes directly supervised by State Security, were likewise affected. This is not helpful when you are trying to survive unfavourable political trends and financial restraints. For years to come, archives and libraries will get low marks on anyone's priority list. At the precise moment when billions of documents have become available for serious research, their keepers risk having to close shop.

In these circumstances IISH concentrates on maintaining and improving the infrastructure for the study of history in the countries involved. It seeks to do this by alerting Western policy makers to the state of historical collections, and by defining concrete forms of co-operation with independent historians, archivists and librarians.

Stiftung, created by IISH (which holds the majority of the manuscripts of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels) together with colleagues from East and West. IMES started funding the Russian working parties from money raised in Holland, Germany, France, Japan and the People's Republic of China. Some twenty or so staff are presently working at RCChIDNI and the Russian Independent Institute for Social and National Problems (RNISNP), another remnant of IML. Yet valuable as IMES has proved to be for the moment, its

financial strength is limited. With NWO's help IISH can guarantee the Russian salaries for a two-year period.<sup>1</sup>

### Speak, Memory

Earlier this year IISH held talks with Memorial, the organization founded by Andrej Sacharov to document Soviet State terror, which was looking for ways to make a safety copy of some 30,000 files it collected on individual cases of repression. Under the terms of a recent agreement the Institute is going to undertake the job, thus making millions of pages representing the social history of Stalinism available to researchers in Amsterdam. The NWO grant will buy the necessary equipment to speed things up.<sup>2</sup>

Before WW II, many of those who had fled Bolshevism deposited their papers with the Russian Foreign Historical Archive (RZIA) in Prague, which quickly grew into perhaps the richest collection on Russian and Soviet history outside the Soviet Union. Just days after the Red Army entered Prague in May 1945 the archives were seized by Soviet State Security and dubbed a "gift" to the Academy of Sciences in Moscow. The latter never saw any of them, as they were stored away in Moscow's Central State Archive of the October Revolution, or CGAOR, whose RZIA guide was declassified only at the end of the 1980s. In the meantime, more than seventy percent of the collection was dispersed over at least 27 different repositories, some of them in newly independent countries.

Since 1991 CGAOR, now part of the State Archives of the Russian Federation, is working on a five-year project to prepare a guide to the entire Prague collection. Thanks to NWO, IISH will be able to help in opening the archives to international scholarship by providing facilities for indexing and filming the documents.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> IISH is already funding RNISNP's research team on Michail Bakunin (see p 4) as well as RCChIDNI's forthcoming *Bulletin*, the *Yearbook on Social Thought* and two scholarships in social history. Together with the Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (Milan) it is also paying for the indexing of the Cominform records held at RCChIDNI.

<sup>2</sup> Two members of Memorial are now heading the Oral History Laboratory of the Russian State University for the Humanities. IISH is financially supporting three of their projects.

<sup>3</sup> Together with Feltrinelli IISH is also funding the publication of the first volume (on 1895) of a *Chronika rabočego dviženija Rossii 1895-1917g* prepared at CGAOR.



## Arch-Libs

The liaison office for Russian libraries provisionally created at IISH last August (see our issue of that month) risks being too much of a success. In talks held recently in Moscow and St Petersburg the keepers of a grand total of 100m books all agreed on the usefulness of the facility, but hardly on anything else. According to some it should focus on the needs of the largest libraries. Others stressed the agonies lived by the smaller ones. Some thought the office should solely serve libraries, but several major archives informed of the idea expressed an eager interest, as did Roskomarchiv. Meantime, the Dutch-Russian Chamber of Commerce and a few Dutch publishers have offered financial assistance, while plans for twinning Dutch archives and libraries with Russian sisters through the office are under consideration. Stay tuned.

## Old Customs

On September 10 the exhibition "Antisemitism and Nationalism in Present-Day Russia" went on show in IISH. It represents generous samples of related pamphlets, leaflets and periodicals held by Memorial, the fortunate owner of an unfortunately rich collection. The selection was made by Boris Belenkin and Marina Razozenova, who both spoke at the opening. Michail Gnedovskij signed for the presentation. Inter Documentation Company, the Leiden-based microform publisher, will reproduce the exhibits on microfiche. Institutions interested in taking the exhibition may get in touch with Huub Sanders at IISH.

On September 5 the whole event was put at risk when Mr Belenkin and Ms Razozenova were detained at Šeremetovo, Moscow's international airport. Border guards on

the alert for smugglers of cultural gems informed them they would have to ask an export permit from Pamjat', the copyright holder of part of the documents. Why the authorities in the end changed their view remains as obscure as how they first came by it.

## Secrets of Failure

Acting on a suggestion made by Roskomarchiv's Deputy Chairman, Vladimir Kozlov, IISH has scheduled an exhibition of formerly secret Soviet documents for Spring 1993. These will be provided by the Russian State Archives, the Centre for the Preservation of Contemporary Documentation (CCHSD, holding the archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU) and RCCHIDNI. On the Dutch side IISH is cooperating with the Municipal Archives of Groningen as well as the East-European departments of the Universities of Groningen and Amsterdam.

Groningen, which will organize a second exhibition, will concentrate on Dutch-Russian relations over the centuries. Amsterdam will mainly show Soviet political and socio-historical materials. In addition, the Dutch are planning two colloquiums on the present and the future of the Russian archives.

## Tour Guides

Invited by IISH's representatives Rudolf Pichoja, the Chairman of Roskomarchiv, and his Deputy, Vladimir Kozlov, addressed an open meeting of the Section of Business and Labour Archives during the International Congress on Archives held in Montreal, September 6-11. Their straightforward accounts of the present situation of Russia's archival world were much acclaimed. The essence of Dr Kozlov's text is now

available as a preface to the first part of *Archives in Russia 1992: a Brief Directory*, a guide to all major institutions in Moscow and St Petersburg edited by Patricia Kennedy Grimsted and updated up to August 1992. The preliminary English version may be obtained from International Research & Exchanges Board, 126 Alexander St, Princeton, NJ 08540-7102, USA.

## Prague Puzzles

The XXIII Annual Conference of the International Association of Labour History Institutions, or IALHI, was held in Prague on August 27-29. Organization was in the able hands of the Prague office funded by a consortium of four of its members (see box on next page). After Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, Russia became the fourth ex-Communist country to join: RCCHIDNI, the Social-Political State Library (GOPB) and the Historical Public State Library (GPIB), all in Moscow, were accepted as members.

The main topic discussed was the present state of labour collections in Czechoslovakia. The conference visited the Slavonic Library, whose core consists of the priceless books and serials that once belonged to the Russian Foreign Historical Archive in Prague. When the Soviets confiscated the archives in 1945, for some reason they neglected all printed matter, which has since been stored in the cellars and lofts of the Klementinum. As the National Library is in a bad shape, making the collection accessible is one of the priorities of the Western consortium. Another one is improvement of the conditions of the library of the former Prague IML, whose legal and material status is shrouded in mystery.

In addition, the conference heard concise reports prepared by Czech and Slovak specialists. Both Sta-



nislas Šisler, who directs archival studies at Charles University, and Pavel Seifter, one of whose many jobs is to edit *Historické Listy*, presented excellent analyses of the situation. The Czechoslovak colleagues were asked to submit a series of projects that might be funded from the West.

## Going Public

At the Prague Conference of IALHI Oleg Naumov, Deputy Director of RCCHIDNI, spoke at some length on

In May the Prague office of the consortium made up of the Bibliothèque de Documentation internationale (Nanterre), the Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli (Milan), the Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung (Vienna) and IISH published a first report, *Gegenwärtiger Stand der Literatur und Quellen zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung und zur Sozialgeschichte in Bibliotheken, Museen und Archiven der Tschechoslowakei*. This 140-page paper, written by Ladislav Niklíček and Stanislas Šisler, and financed by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Bonn), is now available from IISH at reproduction costs.

the new conditions of openness that prevail at the former Central Party Archive. All means of access are now in the reading room for everyone to peruse. All files that would routinely be given out in the West will be given out at RCCHIDNI. The main problems the archives are facing, so Dr Naumov, are caused by a still inadequate or overcomplicated legislation and a lack of proper equipment. Asked about rumours of sale or theft of documents he replied they should be considered

just that. In this he was supported by IISH and Feltrinelli, which have tried to verify such claims and found them grossly exaggerated.

## Commies Galore

In 1989, when *glasnost* seemed on the road to making intrusions even into the nook where the records of the Comintern were stored, IISH decided the time had come to lay the groundwork for future studies of international Communism by taking stock of existing sources and research. An initial workshop held in Amsterdam in April 1990 outlined the project. That same year the Institute, together with Feltrinelli and BDIC, published the first volume of a *Bibliography of the Communist International* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 400 pp), by the late Vilém Kahan, an IISH staff member.

On October 1-3 the results of the project will be presented at a colloquium held in the Institute. More than fifty participants from over thirty countries have contributed papers on their respective regions and on the central bodies of the Comintern and its affiliates. Discussion will focus on "The Comintern as an International Organization: the Relationship Between the Centre and the National Sections" and "The National Communist Movements". Kyrill Anderson, Director of RCCHIDNI, will inform on the present state of the Comintern archives in Moscow. The project is coordinated by Jürgen Rojahn.

## Bits of Bakunin

At the end of the 1950s IISH began publishing the writings of Michail Bakunin, the Russian cosmopolitan revolutionary whose papers are to a large extent in the Institute's strongroom. Edited by Arthur Lehning, 8 volumes of the *Archives*

*Bakounine* appeared between 1961 and 1981. The project ran into difficulties and seemed to follow the way of all attempts to publish Bakunin's Complete Works, failing miserably. Yet spurred on by lack of money for printing the books IISH is now studying ways to produce an edition on CD-ROM using optical character recognition.

Cyrillic text is not just a technical problem. Now that the Russian archives have opened up, a serious effort will be made to have the Works as Complete as possible. So IISH engaged Nikita Kolpinskiy and Vladimir Mosolov as full-time researchers at Moscow's RNISNP. Together with B.S. Itenberg and V.A. Tvardovskaja they will hold consultations with IISH staff in Amsterdam next month. Jan Lucassen is in charge.

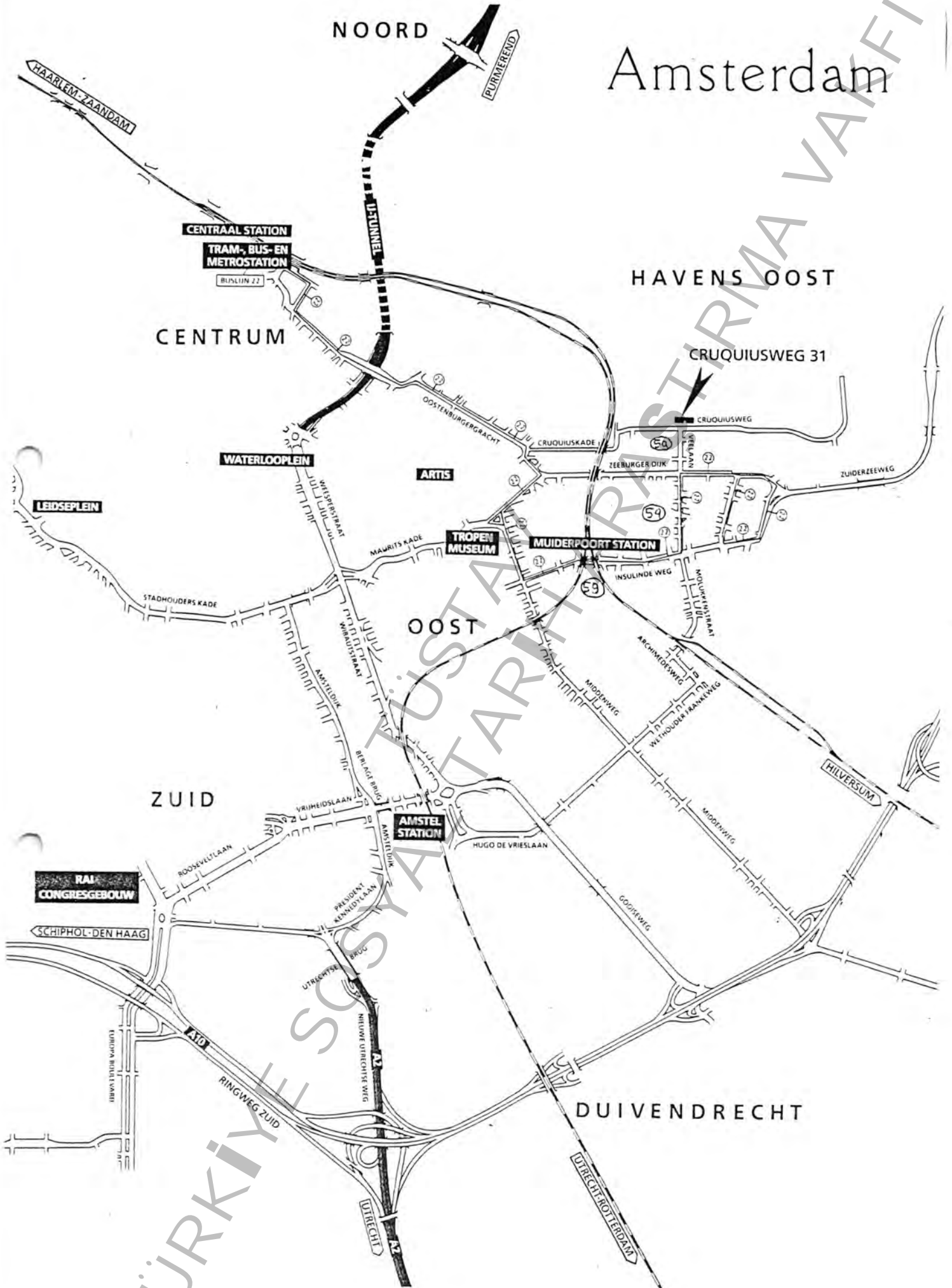
## Semper Manent

Recently rebaptized Centre for the Preservation of Historical-Political Documentation, or CCHIPD, the former Special Central State Archive is slowly yielding its secrets (see #1-2 of this *Bulletin*). The riches found by our Belgian colleagues are aptly described in the latest issue of *AMSAB Tijdingen*. Other colleagues listed the German collections in *Der Archivar* (1992, #3). And IISH now has definite proof that part of the holdings of its pre-war Paris subsidiary are in the Moscow stacks.

Among various initiatives to explore CCHIPD's holdings IISH is currently cooperating with the Hamburger Stiftung für Sozialgeschichte (HSG), renowned for its publication of American findings on the dealings of German companies with the Nazi regime. As HSG is financially in sad straits — all staff was formally discharged in August — IISH is funding the research team it will send to Moscow shortly.



# Amsterdam



TÜRKİYE