International Association of Labour History Institutions

(Online) Conference and General Assembly, 10–11 September 2020

PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

Thursday, 10 September

Sessions with member presentations.

Topic: The "corona crisis" and its impact on the activities of IALHI institutions

14:30–15:30   *First session*

Title: How Covid–19 Crisis has impacted activities of Ohara Institute for Social Research

Institution: Ohara Institute for Social Research, Hosei University, Japan

Author: Akira Suzuki

The spread of Covid-19 in Japan greatly affected activities of Ohara Institute for Social Research. Due to the campus lock-out of Hosei University (the university with which the Ohara Institute is affiliated) to prevent the spread of Covid-19, the Ohara Institute was closed from April 9 to June 12. Many of the Institute's activities, such as accepting researchers who use our collections, archiving historical materials, and cataloging books and periodicals, were suspended. Especially, closing the institute's reading room to researchers and other users was a hard decision to make, because many graduate students and researchers use our collections of historical materials to write their articles, books, and dissertations.

The Ohara Institute resumed its activities from June 16, after the lifting of the campus lock-out. The Institute re-opened its reading room to users from July 1, after getting an approval from the university's administration for "outside visitors" to enter the campus (although the lifting of lock-out, the university officially permitted the entry of its faculty members and students). To reduce the risk of possible spread of Covid-19, we limit a number of users of our archive per day and ask them to watch their health (we strongly discourage their visit to the institute if they are not feeling well) and to wear face masks in the reading room.

It seems that the pandemic of Covid-19 does not go away soon, and some fear that the second wave of infection will be worse than the first wave. Thus, the Ohara Institute may be forced to scale down its activities or even to be closed again. To maintain archival functions even under the restricting conditions, we are planning to make more of our historical materials and our publications available in the digitalized form in the website of the institute. We are also planning to enhance the content of the institute's English website by adding exhibitions of digitalized images of posters and other materials with English captions.

Title: TÜSTAV and Its Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Institution: Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı (Turkey)

The online General Assembly scheduled for September 10, 2020, will be the first IALHI event in which TÜSTAV (Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı – Social History Research Foundation of Turkey) will take part. Therefore we would like to contribute to the afternoon session with a short talk. Our presentation will have two objectives. First, we would like to provide some background about TÜSTAV's institutional history and its goals in general. In the second part, we will focus on our recent activities during the pandemic, such as the digitization of new archival materials and the opening of many historically important socialist and communist periodicals for online access. We will also refer to the publication of a number of new books by our institution to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Communist Party. Most of these books are based on the collections and archives we keep. We will emphasize how book publishing has become one of the useful ways in which we provide public access to our collections and historical materials during the Covid lockdowns.

Title: New Collection Strategies in Times of Crisis: Corona and Amsab-ISH

Institution: Amsab-ISH (Belgium)

Author: Geert Van Goethem and Donald Weber

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on the activities of Amsab-ISH in the course of 2020. Following the restrictions called upon by a national lockdown in Belgium from March onwards, the institution has struggled for months to combine the health and security of its staff and visitors, and its mission to make the content of its collection available to the public. Amsab-ISH was well aware of the historical nature of the situation and of the traces this would leave in the historical documents of our field of study. Or not, of course, unless we acted fast. Amsab-ISH has developed a strategy for raising awareness with its archival partners to keep track of the measures and communication in these extraordinary times, in collaboration with a number of Flemish cultural heritage partners. The presentation will bring a survey of this strategy and its effects upon our collections.

Title: The CEHTI and the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic

Institution: Centro de Estudios Históricos de los Trabajadores y las Izquierdas (Argentina)

Author: Hernán Camarero

Established in mid-2016 in Buenos Aires, the Centro de Estudios Históricos de los Trabajadores y las Izquierdas (CEHTI) aims to contribute to our knowledge of the rich history of the working classes, the labor movement, feminism and the left, in Argentina and worldwide, drawing upon social, political, cultural, intellectual and gender history, interdisciplinary approaches and comparative and transnational perspectives. It is a continuation of the experience of the journal Archivos de historia del movimiento obrero y la izquierda, started in 2012, and also of previous collective projects and groups.

The CEHTI is an independent and self-managed institution, established upon the initiative of a group of scholars, professors and researchers from the University of Buenos Aires and other academic centres — mostly (labour) historians, but also sociologists, political scientists and anthropologists. Together with the publication of the journal Archivos (16 issues so far, online and in print), it edits a book collection (with 11 volumes so far). Moreover, a wide array of activities take place in its premises in downtown Buenos Aires: meetings of research groups; conferences and lectures by invited scholars; workshops, seminars and teacher training courses, etc. In the course of the last four years, more than 1,500 people have attended and participated in these activities. The CEHTI is also building up its library (currently with about 3,000 volumes including books and academic, cultural, theoretical and political journals), specialized in the history and

theory of the left, the workers' movements, socialism and feminism, available for public consultation and free of charge.

The current Covid-19 pandemic posed very serious obstacles to our work, which we have been struggling to overcome. The existence of this kind of autonomous institution in Third World countries is undoubtedly strongly affected by the lack of resources and funds. Since its foundation, the CEHTI resorted to contribution of its own members, fund-raising campaigns and institutional collaboration in order to carry out its activities. While this ensures our independence and autonomy, it also creates permanent tensions as resources are scarce. The strict lockdown, which started on 20 March and continued for more than four months, made it impossible to continue with our activities in the office. All work related to catalogue and inventory also had to stop. Moreover, the economic crisis is severe and member contributions cannot be taken for granted.

However, we made important progress in other areas, as the project of digitalization and public access of one of the most relevant historical sources of the Argentine labour movement, the newspaper La Vanguardia, published by the Socialist Party between 1894 and 1958 (https://www.vanguardiadigital.org/). Also, conferences, study groups, workshops and courses have been converted into a virtual online format. The team dedicated to editing the journal Archivos took advantage of this time to redesign and completely improve the visibility of all its issues in open access, and to switch the entire journal to full open access (https://www.archivosrevista.com.ar/numeros). We also made significant progress indexing the journal in catalogues, directories and databases and obtained DOIs for all its published articles. During these months the CEHTI also saw a very substantial growth in the reach of our social media channels (+6400 followers on Facebook, +400 on Twitter, +500 on Instagram).

All in all, the pandemic slowed down our activities, and posed new challenges in terms of financing, but it did not prevent the CEHTI to move forward and achieve new objectives.

Title: Impact of COVID-19 in Nepal and Importance of Digitalization

Institution: CLASS (Nepal)

Background

Throughout history, pandemics/epidemics have had dire effects on societies and sent shockwaves through the world. They have undermined economies and battered the very foundations and values these societies were based on. Covid-19, the name for the new corona virus that emerged in Wu Han, China late in 2019 was declared a "public health emergency of international concern" on 30 January 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO). This

triggered governments to start taking health measures to deal with this viral pandemic spread by humans.

Since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the corona virus a global emergency countries around the world have increasingly adopting sweeping measures, including full lockdowns, shutting down airports, imposing travel restrictions and completely sealing their borders to curb the virus spread. WHO has stated Nepal as one of the high risk countries for Covid19 influence. On March 24, the Nepal government declared a state of emergency and imposed a nationwide lockdown and acted promptly to revoke all of its promotional Visit Nepal 2020 campaigns, and other international events until further notice. Further government has taken necessary actions to defend with possible threat. In the present situation, regarding the COVID-19 (Corona Virus) the whole world is affected by its impact. Currently Nepal government has opened lengthy lockdown after 120 days with few restrictions. Long route transportation, domestic and international flights are still unlocked so far.

General and Health issue:

Everything came to a halt in Nepal when the stay-at home and travel restrictions came into effect. All the school, college, industries, hotel, restaurants and offices remain completely closed. Means of transportation along with domestic and international remain completely halt. Also gathering of people has discouraged. Only essential service sectors like hospitals, grocery and medical shops were in progress for the services of citizens. All the planned and scheduled activities were affected. So far as the concern of health issue rate of psychological disorder and fear among people has increased due to this pandemic. It broke social harmony. People are not interested to visit hospitals for general check up due to fear as a result it can create unpleasant result in further. In Nepal till now above 19 thousand cases have been reported of infection and 49 death cases are found, whereas more than 14 thousand were recovered throughout the country according to Ministry of Health and Population on Nepal.

Labour issue:

Covid-19 has disrupted the world of work and presents the working conditions with immense challenges. Workers were the most vulnerable people in this situation. Temporary and low wage workers and workers in the informal economy have been one of the hardest-hit and faces increased risk especially if they have pre-existing health issues. Many workers with their family and children go back at their own native place by walking long distance at own foot due to lost the job and found no other option because of lockdown. Many did not get salary from their employers of lockdown period. Migrant workers also were mostly affected by this pandemic. Large numbers of workers were compelled to return Nepal after losing their job.

Since everyone was working from home through Internet, the demand for Internet was very high. It was a tough work for ISPs to maintain the bandwidth in the situation of Lockdown. There was no lockdown for those workers working to maintain the connectivity and the fiber breakage solution in the field. These were mostly the low-level IT workers of ISPs who didn't have facility of work from home and they need to go to solve the fiber breakage and connectivity up.

Another Sector was Telecom workers who were also working dedicatedly from home for the monitoring and other day to day operation. For the low-level staffs still go to office with the permission card to maintain the services up for the people who have taken the telecom service and working from their home. Likewise cleaning and health workers were also in vulnerable conditions due to continuous workload.

Economic issue:

The COVID has severe impacts on the economy. All the factories, industries, business and other means of income generation activities were completely freeze. People have lost the purchasing capacity as they did not pay salary. Government has lost unpredicted revenue because of the boarder seal and no any activity of import/export. Many business people have left their business after not being able to pay the house rent and other banking loan.

Importance of digitalization in crisis situation:

In such crisis situation role of digital platform become higher. Those who were not familiar with the digital platform must be realizing an importance of digitalization either to communicate or other professional uses. It became quite helpful us too to work from home to avoid visiting office or other working place for even a small document or other things during the scary time. During the locked period the offices remain closed and physical activities were not possible to run but many organizations and offices move ahead through the means of online tools for the video conferencing some of them are zoom, Microsoft Teams, Slack, Skype, viber etc. Still few offices are applying work from home. However work from home was new experience to general working people apart from IT professionals and freelancer.

Unfortunately in Nepal many have no access to internet and computer due to financial problem. And other reason is lack of awareness. But the growing young generation is very active and well aware in digital means. By using the different online tools for the video conferencing some of them are zoom, Microsoft Teams, Slack, Skype, viber etc. Still few offices are applying work from home.

Conclusion:

Even though the corona crisis badly affected us, possible activities were carried out from the side of social organizations and other line agencies by the means of digitalization. Virtual interactions in national and international forum were taken place during the time. Some of them were awareness creation through poster, psychosocial counseling, exchange of experiences,

motivation creation etc. Nepal government has also adopted digital policy and many government agencies already providing their service through digitally. Gradually reaming agencies are also entering into. Likewise the private sectors also e.g. bank, insurance companies, hotels etc.

Title: «Quarantinki» from the collection of the The State Public Historical Library of Russia.

Institution: State Public Historical Library (Russia)

Author: Elena Strukova

The State Public Historical Library of Russia presents a collection of social and political satire distributed in social networks. Materials collected during this period captured the immediate reaction to what is happening in the country from ordinary Internet users.

One of these sources, and perhaps the most numerous, was a social cartoon that was rapidly spreading in social networks. Unofficially, these drawings and small texts were called "quarantines", associated with the time of appearance.

The earliest material in our collection is dated March 5, 2020. In total, 207 materials were collected in March, 1049 in April, 1313 storage units were added to the collection in May, and 503 materials were received in June. In General, the resource dedicated to the pandemic includes 3072 storage units: images with captions, poems, comics, and replicas.

The vast majority of materials are received from social networks: Vkontakte-1624, Facebook-1380. The remaining 68 are on Instagram, Twitter and messengers. There are also some Amateur street photos in our collection.

A list of hashtags was developed. They can be divided into two groups: the subject to which the story is dedicated and, if necessary, the source from which the social caricature is based.

The group of thematic hashtags is divided into two parts: stories that are repeated throughout the period of self-isolation, and temporary stories. The first group includes topics related to distance work and learning, Economics, new life caused by self-isolation, as well as medicine and the General situation in the world caused by coronavirus.

The second group of hashtags are those that were triggered by certain events. For example, after the address of the President of the Russian Federation on April 8, 2020, in which he compared the epidemic with the invasion of the Pechenegs and Polovtsians, they became popular heroes of social caricature.

Thus, our collection of social cartoons that appeared during the period of self-isolation can not only remind Russian citizens of these events, but also become a good source base for historians, anthropologists, sociologists and representatives of other humanitarian professions.

16:00–17:00 *Second session*

Title: The IRELP and the "corona crisis"

Institution: Institut de Recherches et d'Etudes de la Libre Pensée (France)

Author: Jean-Marc Schiappa

The "corona crisis" did not substantially affect the IRELP. For two different reasons. The first is that we expected a global crisis. Obviously, we had no plans for a pandemic-type crisis and containment. We expected a financial crisis of the order of 2008 but much more severe (in our opinion, this crisis is coming).

So, we have moved forward for several years to be an Institute solid on its foundations, recognized by its own and with a large enough audience that trusts us. Did we get there? The future will tell.

The second reason is that we are a small Institute with a small budget. We don't have any employees. This budget is mainly based on our own products and support from friendly organizations; not at all on the support of patrons nor on that of public funds. This is a problem in normal times, it is luck in times of crisis: we could only rely on ourselves.

First of all, we have not recorded any deaths. In the global tragedy of the virus crisis, we know others have been sorely affected and they are the ones we think of first.

With the confinement, we had to close our premises and we were unable to receive researchers or students. The classification of our archives, that of the Library (both are still in constant development), the purchase of the necessary furniture have been stopped. In short, everything that was in the realm of physics has been cut short. Undoubtedly, this has been a lack. Our international relations have also been affected.

We did, however, make the electronic links work much more than usual. First, to break the isolation of the 2,500 correspondents. We pointed out to them the books or online reviews that were on our site, multiplying the information, sending sometimes old articles. We also conducted

a survey and a report with our correspondents on their appreciation of our site, which made it possible to continue the dialogue (the IRELP was not inactive). But we have not resolved the issue of (rare) people who do not have access to the internet.

The closure of our premises has affected our activities, and therefore our finances, but the owners of the premises that we rent (Mairie de Paris indirectly) have shown a great deal of understanding. We would like to thank them.

As soon as the postal deliveries were able to resume our shipments gradually resumed. As the importance of the relationships with our correspondents enabled mutual trust, orders for books and magazines continued, even in smaller quantities.

We have also urgently modified the content of our review, scheduled for October, which will be devoted to "Natural disasters, epidemics, clericalism, anticlericalism". Our contacts appreciated our responsiveness.

This situation has forced us to note the great delay in the digitization of our archives and the need to make up for this delay, at least partially.

Strength and efficiency (within our means) are elements that have allowed us to operate during this difficult period.

Title: Creation of the exhibition project 'Russia and the World' and its multimedia component

Institution: State Museum of Political History of Russia

We would like to tell you about our experience in creating the «Russia and the World» exhibition at the Museum of Political History of Russia and its multimedia component during the global pandemic. Even before the start of covid-19, the Museum was planning to open a new hall of the permanent exhibition, dedicated to the key processes of world political history of the 19th-20th centuries and their influence on the history of Russia. We took a systematic approach on a political history: how global processes influenced the historical choice of Russia, but also how events within the country influenced the world history and other nations. In other words, the history of Russia is presented in an international context – a highly relevant and effective approach to study national history. Our project consists of three interrelated parts, each of which can be perceived as a separate product: subject exposition, animation film and multimedia content. Multimedia content, in turn, consists of a scheme of world events of the XIX-XX centuries and a map on which several countries are displayed. Studying the history of these countries at key points, and

comparing events in different countries, one can see how global processes have differently influenced national history. Due to pandemic, we place or plan to place multimedia content not only in the exhibition, but also on video hosting sites, specialized educational resources and social networks. This should contribute to both maintaining interest in the Museum of the Political History of Russia and promoting our project "Russia and the World". In addition, it will help the Museum to continue its work in the case of a re-closing to visitors. As part of our address, we will demonstrate a multimedia scheme of world events of the 19th-20th centuries, a multimedia world map of the same period and a part of an animated film.

Title: Becoming a trusted digital repository

Institution: International Institute of Social History (The Netherlands)

Author: Robert Gillesse

In July 2020, the IISH acquired the Core Trust Seal (CTS). This internationally recognized certificate means that the IISH can now call itself a reliable and sustainable repository for digital materials. Given the considerable effort taken to obtain the CTS, this is reason for some pride and joy and an important milestone in achieving 'digital maturity' and a very important asset in times of online services. This presentation wants to elaborate on the motivations behind acquiring the CTS, the certification process, its value and relevancy and the next steps.

Title: From scan to online access

Institution: International Institute of Social History (The Netherlands)

Author: Eric de Ruijter

As the lockdown made physical access to collections impossible, IISH focused on its digital workflows. We improved the automatic workflow in which we could process all digitized material (images, text, audio, video) automatically and have it in a few days online available in the catalogue. This presentation shows how we controlled the workflow before the ingest of material, the ingest via Archivematica and the online presentation in a IIIF viewer.

Title: Collecting oral history during the corona pandemic

Institution: Työväen Arkisto

Author: Pete Pesonen

The Commission of Finnish Labour Tradition started its 60th anniversary collection project in the beginning of 2020. In this project we collect oral history of industrial workers' experiences and memories about changes in working life in the last 50 years.

The collection was planned to be conducted by personal and group interviews but corona pandemic made us adapt to the exceptional circumstances. The pandemic forced us to work more isolated. Instead of face-to-face interviews, we conducted the interviews by phone. The group interviews were abandoned altogether.

We've had to learn a lot about the methodology of phone interviews. For example, how to make the phone interview situation more intimate and similar to a personal face-to-face interview. It was also challenging to organize remote workspaces and guarantee the quality of the audio of the interview recordings. We also had to ensure that the personal data was processed in a way that the privacy rights of the interviewees were protected.

The corona crisis forced the Finnish Labour Archives to rapidly adopt remote working. The personnel that had worked almost entirely in-office before the crisis were forced to work from home or at least split the time between the office and working remotely from home. As not all the work tasks could be performed from home, the archive emphasized the transcription of the oral history materials.

Title: Conveying history in times of the pandemic

Institution: AdsD, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Author: Stefan Müller

The lockdown caused by the pandemic – the closure of the houses and the cancellation of all face-to-face events – also forces historical work to develop new ideas. In the Archive of Social Democracy (AdsD) of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, this particularly concerns the Public History section. Since March 2020, the digital communication of historical topics has been the focus of

our work and challenges us on the content-related and technical level. In a short input, we present our new (event) concepts and the associated challenges.

Friday, 11 September

13:00–14.00

WORKSHOP: The Door to Your Collection: The Social History Portal

Coordinator: Donald Weber (Amsab-ISH)

More than twenty IALHI member institutions have already joined the Social History Portal (SHP) since its launch in 2013. Users can now consult two million records of social history resources, each of which will conduct them to the institution that is holding the material.

The Social History Portal can open up your catalogue to the world wide community of researchers. This workshop will offer a short overview of the opportunities and requirements, and demonstrate the tools available to you for uploading your records.

The usual ingestion process involves the data provider to create an xml export of their catalogue records. The portal then provides a server where the xml data can be uploaded and converted to the SHP data format. However, in 2020 for the first time a data set was linked to the portal fully automatized with the use of API technology and Linked Open Data formats. The workshop will also demonstrate this new procedure.

14:00–15.00

WORKSHOP: The use of social media by the IALHI and its institutions

Coordinator: Lucas Poy

The goal of the workshop is to share knowledge and good practices among colleagues who are responsible for the social media accounts of IALHI institutions. After a brief presentation of the usage of the social media accounts of the IALHI and the Social History Portal, colleagues from different institutions are expected to make short presentations about the way they use their institutional accounts, the progress they have made, the challenges and difficulties they encounter, etc.

Some of the topics than can be addressed:

- Which social media outlets do you use? (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr, etc).
- What is your target audience?
- What kind of content do you usually post?
- How many people are in charge of posting content?
- Do you make use of paid advertising/campaigns?

15:00–16.00

WORKSHOP: Exploring new technology: Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR)

Coordinator: Sofie Veramme (Amsab-ISH)

Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) is a digital process that allows for the automatic conversion of handwritten text to digital text, similar to the OCR process for printed text. Amsab-ISH has conducted a project in 2018-2020 where the current state of affairs in HTR technology was tested. The starting point of this pilot test was very practical: We are a library or archives institution ; we have handwritten material (letters, diaries, minutes and so on) ; what HTR is out there and how can we use it ; what are the requirements, in terms of ict knowhow, workload, sample quality and budgets?

The workshop will offer a step by step overview of how an institution with little ICT resources can acquire HTR software, prepare their material and process it.

The workshop will also evaluate the present state of affairs with available HTR technology. The conclusion will be that for average size institutions with relatively smaller collections implementation of HTR today is probably too far reaching. However, this technology is evolving fast and it is definitely worthwhile to get to know the basics.

16:00–17.00

WORKSHOP: Everyday web archiving

Coordinator: Annabel Waltz (AdsD FES)

This hands-on workshop will focus on everyday tasks in web archiving.

We will share our workflow of web archiving at the Archive of social Democracy from the practitioner's point of view. The workshop will go step-by-step through the practical tasks when performing a crawl job with Heritrix.

Doing so the workshop will explore

- simple configuration options of the Heritrix 3.4 web crawler

- experiences with reading crawl logs, reports and common problems during a crawl job

- manual and partly automated quality assurance measures with OpenWayback 2.4 and script-generated statistics

- preparations for description and pre-ingest

Our own workflow is still a work in progress and we have more questions than answers ourselves (and as we are dealing with digital archiving we don't really expect that to change). But we look forward to share our lessons learned and are also very interested in your experiences.

We welcome anyone who is interested in sharing their own experiences with web archiving, but also everyone who would just simply like to have a look at one way everyday web archiving can look like. If you have any specific interests or questions feel free to let us know in advance – we'll see what we can do!