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German Source Materials in American Libraries

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*German
Source Materials*

IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES

by FRITZ T. EPSTEIN

An address by Dr. Fritz J. Epstein, Central European Specialist, Slavic and Central European Division, The Library of Congress, delivered before the Institute of German Affairs in the University Memorial Library, Marquette University, November 14, 1957.

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by FRITZ T. EPSTEIN

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German Source Materials

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IT IS AN HONOR and a great pleasure to be of service to Marquette University and to survey its German library resources and thus to assist in the future development of a German program which so auspiciously has been started by the establishment of the Institute of German Affairs. All those who have contributed to the founding of the Institute and in working out the German Area Studies program, in the first place Father Drummond, Dean Riedl and Professor Waldman, must be congratulated for their courage and foresight. The teaching program, unique in many respects, which breaks away from the traditional emphasis on German language and literature, can attain its goal of training future teachers, government workers, businessmen and journalists only if the pertinent library resources are adequate to the task.

It has been my good fortune to have been connected and to become well acquainted with three American libraries which are in the possession of outstanding German collections — with Harvard University Library between 1941 and 1944, with the Hoover Institute and Library (now the Hoover Institution) of Stanford University between 1948 and 1951, and with the Library of Congress since 1952.

By the setting up of several divisions with regional

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responsibilities — the Orientalia Division, the Hispanic Foundation and the Slavic and Central European Division, to which I belong — the Library of Congress has created a firm basis for area studies. The Slavic and Central European Division, formerly the Slavic and East European Division, still one of the smallest Divisions in the Library, has no custodial functions; it advises the Library about procurement not only of Slavic and German materials in the humanities and political and social sciences, retrospective as well as current, monographs and periodicals, but deals also with Albania, Hungary, Rumania and Finland; it surveys and evaluates the Library's holdings on Eastern, Southeastern and Central Europe, promotes bibliographical projects of national significance within its field of responsibility and answers reference questions which cannot be dealt with in a routine manner.

This will be not a formal address; it is intended to be rather an informal, but, nevertheless, I hope to a certain extent, an informative talk on resources for German research; it means research on German topics in American libraries and archives. Within the limited time at my disposal it cannot be by any means exhaustive and all-inclusive. Furthermore I intend to limit my discussion to some of the outstanding collections of materials for the study of recent history and contemporary affairs. But I would like to mention at least at random America's outstanding general collection on German history, the so-called Hohenzollern Collection of the library of Harvard University, and its Stolberg Library's unusual special collection on the Holy Roman Empire. The Yale University Library has attained a unique position in the field of history of German literature by its collection of German baroque literature and the William A. Speck Collection of Goetheana.

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In view of the fact that in the Library of Congress Slavic and German responsibilities are the assignment of the same division, a few words may be said, for the sake of comparison, about Slavic resources in our leading libraries.

Eighteen years ago I wrote a paper for limited private circulation entitled "Comparative Facilities for Slavic Studies in the Libraries of Germany and the United States." To my surprise, one copy reached the New York Public Library and even received a printed catalog card. My memorandum thus belongs now to the domain of public knowledge. It was a plea to stimulate strengthening of our library resources in the Slavic field where I could show that Germany at this time was absolutely leading. My paper was written in the spring of 1939, a few months before the outbreak of the Second World War which by Germany's taking possession of a large number of libraries in the occupied countries of the East, in addition to Czechoslovakia, increased immensely German holdings of research materials on Eastern Europe thus underscoring my warning that American research potentialities were inadequate. However, war time conditions and National Socialist anti-Slavic preoccupations and prejudices prevented scholarly exploitation of this wealth of sources for the study of Eastern problems.

The end of the war seemed to spell the termination of German research on Eastern Europe, of the so-called *Osteuropaforschung*, with the loss of practically all German research institutions and libraries in the German East, at the universities of Breslau, Koenigsberg and Posen, and heavy, if not total losses of special libraries on the European East at the universities of Berlin and Hamburg. Although teaching and research on Eastern and Southeastern Europe in Germany, especially in Western Germany, has made a

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truly amazing and impressive come-back during the last eight or ten years, the lead in resources for Slavic research outside the Slavic orbit since the last war has undoubtedly shifted to the United States. The launching of the Sputnik and the ensuing debate on Soviet and American training of scientists has greatly stimulated and augmented interest in the Soviet scientific, technological and educational literature available at the Library of Congress. While thus an important sector of our Russian collection has suddenly come into the limelight, no earthshaking event since the last war has focused attention on the German holdings of American libraries and especially the Library of Congress. But it is no exaggeration to say that German materials are abundant in American institutions, plentiful to such an extent that we have, for instance, an edge over German libraries when it comes to research on the Hitler period. The efforts of the Library of Congress Mission after the last war were under the very able leadership of Reuben Peis, whose work as procurement officer of enemy publications at Lisbon and Berne during the war has contributed more to Allied intelligence and final victory than it is generally realized and recognized, and whose untimely death has deprived American librarianship of one of its most promising men. These efforts have brought to the Library of Congress a unique wealth of publications of the Nazi period which may serve as research material. In addition hundreds of thousands of pieces of German and Japanese origin have been transferred, after the war, to the Library of Congress. As the principal Government library at the seat of the Federal Government, the Library received the lion's share of the materials brought to Washington during the war, from enemy, neutral and allied countries, by the Interdepartmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Publications,

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primarily for war information purposes of Government agencies.

In the German field the Library of Congress has in every respect, perhaps with the sole exception of belles-lettres, not only a representative collection, but has materials to offer which go far beyond what a scholar reasonably expects even of the leading library in the country. This does not, of course, mean that the Library of Congress competes or wishes to compete with libraries of special research institutes where, ideally, the expert should be able to find even the remotest pamphlet in his special field. It should also be remembered that the Library of Congress does not collect, except for reference in a broad sense, materials in certain fields, for instance technical aspects of agriculture and medicine, which are the prerogatives of the Library of the Department of Agriculture and of the Armed Forces Medical Library.

To sum it up: The work of the Interdepartmental Committee during the war, the effort of the Library of Congress Mission to Germany after the war and the transfer of confiscated printed and documentary German materials account for the increase of the Library's German resources in recent years by leaps and bounds.

I would like to call your attention to a few outstanding groups of German materials which are under the authority of different divisions of the Library.

To start with the Library's general or main collection, it is not possible to give figures of how large the German materials in the Library of Congress are, since all our books are divided in the general collection according to subject classification and, except for *Orientalia*, are not kept together according to language. There are, of course, a few exceptions to the rule in the German field. One such exception is the so-called Hitler Library in two parts, one called

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the Library of the Reich's Chancellery, which is kept together in the Rare Books Division, although many of its books are not rare by themselves. It consists of several hundred books, folios, and photograph albums from the Hitler Library. Many books are on art and architecture, mostly complimentary copies, the rest are on a variety of issues of the Hitler period. Sections of certain captured libraries have been accessioned directly into the main library holdings. These include books selected from the libraries of Gerdy Troost, Hitler's main architect, of the *Reichsrechtsfuehrer* (the leader of members of the legal profession) Hans Frank who was Governor General in Poland during the last war, of Himmler and of Goebbels. Some parts of the library of the Nazi Institute for "Research" on the Jewish Problem came to the Library of Congress, while its military holdings have been augmented by books from certain German Military District (*Wehrkreis*) libraries.

An important group in the Library's German holdings are a large number of individual captured German printed, mimeographed or lithographed items written for official use only, which were classified by the Germans; no trace of them is to be found in any printed bibliography. As a rule the higher the classification was, the fewer copies existed of such materials. It is the type of material which is the counterpart to some of our classified Government research which no scholar, after de-classification, can by-pass in working on a multitude of topics concerning America's participation in the last war. These German items have been accessioned into the main collection.

Very few materials of this type have found their way into commercial channels since the end of the war and have been offered in second-hand book-dealers' catalogues. In many instances the Library

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of Congress item is probably the only copy extant, and even the existence of such an item is often unknown to German librarians.

There is no other library which matches the German holdings of the Library of Congress in the field of Aeronautics. This is due to the fact that the Library has incorporated sections of the libraries of the Junkers and Focke-Wulf factories, of the German Academy for Research in Aeronautics, of the German Institute for Gliding, and of the Reich's Ministry of Aviation, Hermann Goering's *Reichsluftfahrtministerium*.

A very unusual array of German documentation of high research relevance is to be found in the Manuscript Division of the Library. Of first importance among the German holdings are the so-called Himmler files. They consist of photostatic copies of the 1938-1944 files of one of the offices under Himmler's jurisdiction, and are labelled: *Reichsfuehrer SS. Persoenlicher Stab. Schriftgutverwaltung*. This group is supplemented by another set of photostats in the Hoover Institution. In the Himmler files much material is to be found on enforced migrations and population movements, one of the greatest disgraces of our times; such mass shiftings of population were one of Hitler's fallacious means of "correcting" history, and it was this policy which boomeranged against the Germans in the postwar wave of expulsions. The Himmler files are also an important source for the study of German anti-partisan warfare in the East and in the West, of efforts of German authorities to use anti-Soviet national movements in the German interest, of the resettlement of Germans brought to the Reich from the countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe, and of the recruiting of foreign legions of the *Waffen-SS*.

Next in importance to the Himmler files are the

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papers of Captain Fritz Wiedemann who was Hitler's superior officer in the First World War. Later he became Hitler's personal adjutant and between 1938 and 1941 he served as German Consul General in San Francisco. Among his papers, drafts and reports on his mission to London in July 1938 have been found. They were discovered after the documents of 1938 had been published in the series *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, and they were regarded important enough by the Division of Historical Policy Research of the Department of State to be printed as an appendix to Vol. 7 of Series D which contains the documentation for August, 1939. According to Wiedemann's narrative, so ardent was Lord Halifax's wish to reach an understanding with Germany that he envisaged the entry of the *Fuehrer* with the King into Buckingham Palace amid the "cheering" of the crowd (p. 629).

The largest German record groups in the Manuscript Division are the *Deutsches Auslandsinstitut* (The Institute on Germanism Abroad) papers and the Rehse Collection. The latter was a private collection of miscellaneous manuscripts and printed materials on modern German history including many rare items of the early period of National Socialism, interest in which resulted in the acquisition of this collection by the Main Archives of the Nazi Party. The Manuscript Division also has a copy of the world list of the members of the Nazi Party outside of Germany. This list was prepared by OMGUS, the Office of Military Government in Germany, on the basis of the captured Nazi Party files in Berlin. The names are in alphabetical order and there is a country key.

The Microfilm Section of the Library of Congress has a microfilm of the page proofs of Vol. 14 of the official German military history of the First World War dealing with the battles on the Western front

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in the summer and fall of 1918 and with the armistice negotiations. This volume is of great interest to American military historians, giving the German version of the fighting where the American Expeditionary Force was involved. It was prepared for official use during the last war, but never published. Only last year the volume has been issued in Germany by the new Federal Archives at Koblenz thus bringing to completion what is popularly called the *Weltkriegswerk*. The page proofs of Vol. 14 were secured in 1947 from a private German source. The price: two Care packages. In my opinion the page proofs are extremely valuable because changes made in the copy indicate that the authors tried to shift the responsibility for the armistice of 1918 — to implicate the civilian government and to acquit the German Supreme Command. Several years ago, in a letter to the editor of the *Deutsche Rundschau*, I called attention to certain rather strange page proof corrections; a reviewer of Vol. 14 in *Wehrkunde*, a leading West German military journal, has heavily attacked but not refuted my contention.

I cannot describe in detail German materials in the Microfilm Collection, the Rare Book and even the Music Division which has received a large number of captured German recordings and monitored broadcasts, both on disks and on tape. American economists should take note that the Serials Division has a special collection of economic reports on various countries between 1936 and 1943 originating from the Economic Research Section of the I. G. Farben, the famous German chemical trust.

Of great interest to historians of German culture and art, there are in the Prints and Photographs Division between 6,000 and 7,000 photographs of the so-called *Fuehrerprojekt* which was set up in 1943 for photographing all immovable works of art that might

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be endangered by anticipated Allied bombing. This project was not confined to the Reich proper; it also covered objects of art in Alsace-Lorraine, Austria, Estonia, Latvia, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

The Law Library in the Library of Congress contains records of the trials of war criminals in Germany and Japan. The so-called Nuremberg documentation in the Library of Congress and in the Departmental Records Branch in Alexandria, Va., which is administered by the Adjutant General's office,¹ includes tens of thousands of German documents collected by the prosecution and by the defense. Between 1945 and 1948, 61,000 documents were filed by Allied investigators for official registration in the Nuremberg central documents room. The total number of documents reproduced for all the trials amounted to more than 750,000 mimeographed pages. Innumerable Nuremberg documents have never been printed and are available only in mimeographed or typewritten form in Alexandria and at the Library of Congress. The rapid deterioration of unprinted Nuremberg trial materials deposited in archives and libraries in this country and abroad is a matter of grave concern to archivists and librarians. It seems that for the copying process of many of these documents the worst paper that possibly could be found in Germany, has been used. An expert on microfilming, Dr. Lester K. Born, has estimated that an absolute minimum of two and a half million pages would have to be microfilmed to preserve the essential documentation connected with the Nuremberg trials, and this figure does not include material that has been printed in its entirety or so fully as to render further reproduction unnecessary. Needless to say, the historian's approach today

¹ Since January, 1958, the Military Records Branch has been administered by the General Services Administration.

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to the Nuremberg store of German documentation differs in many respects from the use made of it in Nuremberg when the fervor of the defense to find facts that might lead to exoneration and to furnish such material evidence was as great as the passion of the prosecution to submit incriminating material.

The Nuremberg documentation leads us to mention other research opportunities on German documents in American depositories. In 1953 by administrative declassification actions, restrictions were lifted at the Departmental Records Branch in Alexandria on German materials, estimated as between 5,000 and 6,000 linear feet. The Captured Records Section of the Departmental Records Branch is a treasure house, second to none, of unrestricted German documentation. The declassified material comprises four different types: German military records; records of German civilian agencies, including the records of several Reich ministries; records of the National Socialist Party; and miscellaneous records of German cultural and political organizations, of industrial enterprises, and similar organizations.

Since most of the declassified German materials will be restituted to the German Federal Republic, an American Committee for the Study of War Documents was founded in 1955 which last year, as Committee on War Documents, became a Sub-Committee of the American Historical Association. A generous grant of the Ford Foundation has made it possible to microfilm in Alexandria between the summer of 1956 and October 1957, more than one million frames of German documents. The films deposited in the National Archives provide primary source material for innumerable topics in the field of modern German history. The credit for the amazing feat of selecting such an amount of historically important German documentation goes in the first place to Dr. Gerhard

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L. Weinberg, Assistant Professor in the Department of History of the University of Kentucky. He has returned to teaching and his work is being continued by his former assistant, Dr. Dagmar Horna Perman, after the Old Dominion Foundation has granted the necessary funds for the continuation of the project for another year. It gives only the remotest idea of the wealth of German material put on microfilm since the summer of 1956 by mentioning records of the *Deutsche Akademie* at Munich and of the Academy for German Law; folders of leading firms such as *J. G. Farben*, *Messerschmitt* and *Rheinmetall-Borsig*; of Karl Haushofer files; of the offices of the Japanese Military, Naval and Air Attachés at Berlin; of the *Statistische Reichsamt*, of the Reich's Economic Ministry (*Reichswirtschaftsministerium*); of the German-Japanese Society; of the Association for promoting German-Manchurian economic relations; and of the Society for Southeastern Europe (*Suedosteuropa-Gesellschaft*). I could go on indefinitely in giving the names of National Socialist Party offices, of Government agencies and of military outfits. It is to be hoped that the National Archives will be in a position within a few months to publish an index to the microfilms of Alexandria materials. To this enormous material of German documentation must be added the microfilming of the German Foreign Ministry archives of 1918 to 1945 by the inter-Allied (Anglo-American-French) German Foreign Ministry Documents Project. Private microfilming projects of the Universities of California, Florida and Michigan and of St. Anthony's College in Oxford have supplemented for the years 1867 to 1918 the documentation published by the Germans in the 1920's in 54 volumes under the title *Die Grosse Politik der europaeischen Kabinette, 1871-1914*.

The declassified films of the German Foreign Min-

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istry Documents Project are being transferred from the Department of State to the National Archives; thus the National Archives has received the German Foreign Ministry records of the First World War and of the period of the armistice and the Peace Conference up to the signing of the Versailles Treaty. Its microfilms of the Stresemann papers deserves to be consulted much more as it has been done so far as material for German internal history of the Weimar period and for a better understanding of Stresemann as leader of the *Deutsche Volkspartei*. Official and personal papers of some of the outstanding German military leaders in the 19th and 20th centuries were for several years open for inspection by scholars at the National Archives. Unfortunately, few American scholars were aware of this unique opportunity — Professor Gerhard Ritter of Freiburg University made use of it for his monograph on the *Schlieffen-Plan* — and these records, including Groener and von Seeckt papers, have already been returned to the Bonn Government.

Having mentioned the Library of Congress, the National Archives and the Federal Records Center in Alexandria, Virginia, the only other really outstanding depository in this country of German printed and manuscript materials relating to 20th Century German history is the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. To the Hoover Library's Himmler files which I have mentioned in connection with the set of the Library of Congress, must be added the diary and papers of Josef Goebbels, documents from the *Adjutantur des Fuehrers* in the 1930's, files of the *Gauleitung* Berlin of the NSDAP, materials from the *Anti-Komintern* files and correspondence of Ludendorff with adherents of his folkish movement, the *Tannenbergs-Bund*. These and other materials and likewise the relevant holdings of the Library of Con-

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gress, the National Archives and the New York Yiddish Scientific Institute and Library (YIVO), are listed in the *Guide to Captured German Documents* which was prepared in 1952 by the War Documentation Project, a government project for locating, surveying and cataloguing significant depositories of captured documents which came into the hands of the United States Government during and after World War II. It has been my privilege to be of service to the three successive American document projects since the end of the last war — the inter-Allied German Foreign Ministry Documents Project, the inter-departmental War Documentation Project, and the American Historical Association's Committee for the Study of War Documents.

There also exists a guide to the German materials in the Hoover Library prepared by Hildegard Boeninger (*The Hoover Library Collection on Germany*, Stanford, 1955) which shows the riches of printed and manuscript materials on the periods of the German Empire, the Weimar Republic and the National Socialist State in America's leading research institute for contemporary history. The distance between Washington and Stanford fully justifies the parallel efforts of the Library of Congress and the Hoover Institution to build up representative collections on both the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic as well as on Berlin.

This brings to an end my rapid survey which wants to encourage you to come to Washington or to go to the Hoover Library to see and dig for yourself. I know that nothing will give the staffs of the institutions mentioned in my talk greater pleasure and satisfaction than to welcome you and to assist qualified scholars who wish to make use of the wealth of valuable German materials administered by them.