

INTERNATIONAL BONHOEFFER ARCHIVE AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

English Language Section

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Regional Archive Officially Planned at Union Theological Seminary

We are delighted to announce that the English-Language regional Bonhoeffer archive will be established at Union Theological Seminary, New York. The basic agreement was completed in discussions between the Executive Committee of the Section and the Seminary library staff and committee this spring.

The regional archive will operate in cooperation with the central archive to be housed in Munich. The Union Seminary collection will be comprehensive in its holdings of primary sources, including unpublished materials in photocopy and microfilm as these become available. In addition, it will include all major secondary literature in various languages, and aims to be comprehensive in every respect with regard to all materials published in English. Special effort will be made to have a complete collection of unpublished dissertations in English, and to be as comprehensive as possible for dissertations in other languages.

In format the archive will be a special collection. To be available to scholars at all times it will not circulate as do the regular library holdings. This involves duplicating in large part Union's present Bonhoeffer holdings so that the latter can be available for courses, students of the seminary, and so on. The special collection will be shelved together under a "maximum grouping" concept. This means, for example, that Bonhoeffer dissertations will be shelved with the main collection of primary and secondary literature; it also means that offprints and copies of articles will be shelved in cartons at this location so that the scholar does not have to trek through the stacks to the periodicals section. Microfilms will be the only exception to "maximum grouping" as they will be housed in the microfilm reading room. The card catalogue will contain a separate drawer containing only the Bonhoeffer holdings. Since there will be a separate card in this drawer for every item in the archive, it will virtually

function as a bibliography. The Bonhoeffer Committee Section has undertaken to provide the library with a bibliography and annual supplements to assist the acquisition of the special collection, to supply the library with duplicate copies of published works, and to seek gifts of books, dissertations, articles etc. from authors and publishers.

While a major milestone has been passed, a good deal of work remains to be done to build up as complete a collection as possible. Larry Rasmussen continues with his work of seeking out materials. We are grateful to all who have already made contributions of their writings for the archive, though the quantity of material received so far is modest.

Please write to any member of the Executive Committee if you have suggestions about archive organization, services it might provide, and sources of materials. In particular, please write if you know of sources of funds--foundations, churches, individual donors, libraries-- since expenses in obtaining and organizing materials will be significant; such information should also be sent to Larry Rasmussen.

Inquiries regularly reach members of the Executive Committee about bibliography and particular items. These have chiefly come from people working on dissertations, and to date we have been able to satisfy most needs. It is obvious that time will be needed to organize the archive as the comprehensive collection we have planned. In the meantime members of the Executive Committee will continue to assist people obtain the rarer items needed for research.

Appeal to Authors for Donations of Writings

Now that archive arrangements have been made, we urgently renew the appeal of March, 1974 (Newsletter #2) for authors to donate their writings on Bonhoeffer to the archive. For the time being these should not be sent to Union Seminary library, but to: Professor Larry Rasmussen, Wesley Theological Seminary, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20016. Ideally we would like two copies, one for the regional archive in New York and one for the central archive in Munich, but of course single copies will be received gladly. Materials sought include: complete books on Bonhoeffer; chapters on Bonhoeffer in books treating other theologians or subjects (either the whole book or a xerox copy of the chapter, with full details of original publication); offprints or xerox copies of articles and reviews (again with complete details of original publication); unpublished scholarly papers. A special note relates to dissertations and theses: if you can manage to supply a copy of the work in the

xerox form provided by University Microfilms, this will save both shelf space and binding costs, and your generosity will be much appreciated; but unbound copies in the original size--xerox or carbon-- will naturally be acceptable. Finally, if you have spare copies of Bonhoeffer's works in German, English or other languages, and in any edition, which you are willing to part with, this will greatly help the acquisition of primary sources; apart from the cost, there is also the problem that earlier editions of several works are now out of print and can only be obtained as gifts.

The success of this venture depends in considerable part on the generosity of authors in responding to this appeal. And the quicker materials arrive, the sooner a complete archive will be organized. The Executive Committee and the Seminary Library offer their thanks to all who have already supported the archive collection by their gifts, and to all who intend to do so in the near future!

Second Bonhoeffer Consultation: Chicago, Fall, 1975

As previously announced, a second Consultation on Bonhoeffer's theology and ethics will be held during the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. The meeting will be at the Palmer House in Chicago from October 30 to November 2, 1975. From the paper proposals submitted to the Executive Committee the following program has been arranged:

Friday, October 31, 10:30 - 12:00

Thomas Day, Paedagogische Hochschule, Berlin: "Conviviality and Common Sense: The Meaning of Christian Community for Dietrich Bonhoeffer."

David H. Hopper, Macalester College: "The Second Trip to America and the Limits of Theology as Autobiography."

Saturday, November 1, 10:30 - 12:00

Theodore A. Gill, John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY): "Dietrich Bonhoeffer as Artist."

Harry F. Booth, Dickinson College: "Nature and Man in Bonhoeffer."

The meeting rooms will be found in the AAR program book. Please note the arrangement regarding papers. They will not be read at the meetings, but will be mailed to participants in advance; this permits careful preparation and allows the actual meeting time to be devoted to discussion. While some additional copies will be available in Chicago, you are urged to "register" for the Consultation by sending your name and address to the Secretary of our Section:

Dr. Geoffrey B. Kelly, La Salle College, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19141. Papers will then be mailed to you from the authors several weeks before the Chicago meeting. To simplify logistics, please write Geff Kelly who will compile the mailing list, not the individual authors. During the summer, Larry Rasmussen will be contacting a number of people to see if they would like to initiate discussion as respondents to the papers; if you wish to volunteer you could write Larry at Wesley Theological Seminary, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20016. The AAR staff is reserving a table for a business meeting over breakfast on Saturday morning; see the official program book for details. At the Friday morning session arrangements will be made for everybody interested to meet with the Executive Committee on matters of policy and future plans. There is no registration fee for the Consultation itself, but AAR regulations include registration for the whole convention. If you are not a member of AAR or one of the other CSR societies, you may register and make reservations by writing, after September 1, the CSR Executive Office, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G5. Members of the CSR societies will automatically, of course, receive program books and forms for registration and reservations in September.

Bonhoeffer Anniversary Celebration in Europe, 1976

News arrived from the West German Section this spring of initial plans to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Bonhoeffer's birth next February. Definite arrangements have not been completed; hopefully they will be available in time for the next Newsletter early in the fall. The World Council of Churches has responded favorably to a suggestion for a commemorative day in Geneva next February 6, to be part of a celebration jointly sponsored by the WCC, EKID and the International Bonhoeffer Committee. A program draft has been written by the West German Section, and our own Executive Committee discussed it during its May meeting and has forwarded comments and suggestions to Germany.

Plans presently call for a commemorative address by an eminent speaker, and a three day conference of scholars, perhaps in Bossey. The program of the conference would include both major lectures and opportunity for scholars to share their work. Our Executive Committee commended the concept that this should be both a contemporary and a catholic event, not a nostalgic or parochial one. We hope to have participants from many Christian denominations, Jewish representatives, women scholars, people from third world countries as well as from East and West.

Until more details become available, members might consider both

possible papers they would like to contribute, and how they might finance such a trip. The latter will obviously have to be a matter for individuals and their institutions, since the International Bonhoeffer Committee does not have travel funds. Any suggestions for the commemorative day and the conference could be sent directly to: Dr. Hans Pfeifer, Internationales Bonhoeffer Komitee, Sektion Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 4 Dusseldorf 31, Alte Landstrasse 121; a copy of such letters to Geoffrey Kelly would simplify communications. At this point it would probably be simplest to hold paper proposals until after more details in the fall Newsletter.

Dissertation Abstract

From time to time we plan to include in the Newsletter reviews, abstracts and so on, to make recent Bonhoeffer work quickly known and to introduce studies (especially in other languages) which might otherwise be overlooked. The first is the following abstract of Thomas I. Day's doctoral dissertation, recently defended at Union Seminary. Tom is a member of the Executive Committee (our "European connection" so to speak) and is currently working at the Paedagogische Hochschule in Berlin as student chaplain (1000 Berlin-West 45, Freiwaldauer Weg 5). The abstract will serve as an appetizer for his paper at the Consultation next fall.

✓ "Conviviality and Common Sense: The Meaning of Christian Community for Dietrich Bonhoeffer."

Theology is communal thought which can be understood only when set within and filled out by its specific social context. Neglect of the communal locus of Bonhoeffer's theology has made it a Ouija board, revealing different messages to as many as put their hands to it. This study uses insights from the Jesus tradition and the sociology of knowledge to investigate the meaning of Christian community for Bonhoeffer. It focuses on that point where ecclesiology and ethics converge, where the church becomes responsible and where mature Christians remember and realize who they are. It shows how his churchy, conservative Christological concern develops into the explosive core of his theological ethics, thus taking up the intention of his own dissertation, to show the social intention of every theological proposition, without, however, reducing theology to sociology.

Chapter One proposes the method of the study and many of its conscious and unconscious suppositions and limits.

Chapter Two describes Bonhoeffer's aristocratic, authoritarian

family milieu, the supposititious ecclesiology he attempted to cast in a descriptive, sociological mode, his first articulation of a discrete decisional ethic, and the concretizing of his thought occasioned by his experiences in Barcelona and New York. His family remained his model for human community. However, his encounter with oppressed Harlem Blacks and socially committed Whites sent him back to Berlin with his view shifted from the phraseology to the realities of Christian communities.

Chapter Three describes the partial politicization of the academic-turned pastor, his beginnings towards a political theology in the crisis years of 1932-33, his commitment in the subsequent struggle, and the demanding theology born in the community of those trying to stand uncompromisingly apart from national delirium in solidarity with its victims.

Chapter Four follows the priorities and perspectives of the unemployed pastor increasingly in league with a "new alliance" of believers and non-believers conspiring to topple Hitler and stop the war. The politics of piety required secular conspiracy. Bonhoeffer's ethical writings aimed to free the consciences of a conservative elite and mobilize them to decisive action. More critical than constructive, the essays mirror the contradictions between the Good News he wanted to proclaim and the authoritarian structures he still thought it called for.

Chapter Five deals with a political prisoner's attempt to recoup his past, the insights which he began to develop towards a newly earthy ethic, and his provisional proposals for Christian community beyond ground zero. His renowned "new theology" is seen as a "tool for the struggle" for which he was preparing.

Bonhoeffer called Christians to abandon the shelter of religion and social privilege, to risk new forms of living together and together to search the tradition for resources for secular solidarity. The pack of penultimate questions with which he left us holds clues for a new beginning towards conviviality and common sense.

News in Brief

The Executive Committee met on May 8 at the Koinonia Foundation in Baltimore. Present were John Godsey, Clifford Green, Geoffrey Kelly and Larry Rasmussen. The chief items of business were: the agreement with Union Seminary on the ground rules for the regional Archive; discussion of the plans of the West German Section for the meeting at Geneva in February, 1976; plans for the Bonhoeffer Consultation at AAR meeting next fall; discussion of initial investigations about foundation support; and plans for

publishing as soon as possible the English Language materials of the Bonhoeffer Bibliography.

An apology is due anybody who had to pay "postage due" on some Newsletters in the last mailing. We certainly paid the full amount--another foul-up to the credit of the postal service!

Charles R. Streich, a doctoral candidate at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and a faculty member at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia reports work in progress on his dissertation; his subject is: "Death in the Life and Thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer."

Eberhard Bethge retires this summer from his position as Director of the Pastorkolleg at Rengsdorf. He will be moving to a new house near Bonn. We wish him and his wife Renate a happy "retirement" which we can be sure will not be idle!

Conrad van Ouwerkerk, for a time on the faculty at Williams College and now teaching in the theological faculty of the Rijksuniversiteit Te Leiden is writing a review of M.F.M. van den Berk, Bonhoeffer, boeiend en geboeid. We had hoped to include the review in this Newsletter; we will apply all necessary encouragement to have it appear in the first fall issue!

The AAR now has an official request from our Section to be recognized in the status of an "Affiliated Organization." Favorable action is anticipated at the Fall meeting of the AAR Executive Committee. This status offers certain substantial help; for example, our plans for the Fall Bonhoeffer Consultation are largely handled by the AAR staff. It is quite fitting, accordingly, that our members support the AAR by becoming subscribing members. While this might not be appropriate to everybody--overseas members, pastors, for example--it would seem appropriate for those of us in faculty positions. A check of our membership list reveals that a good many members of the Bonhoeffer Committee Section are already AAR members, and this allows the AAR to act on our request. Those for whom it is appropriate, and who are not presently members of AAR (or one of the other CSR societies) are urged to consider this request from the AAR.