

INTERNATIONAL BONHOEFFER ARCHIVE AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE

English Language Section

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With June comes the opportunity to turn to those projects which have been waiting patiently through the academic year. This Newsletter, which I had hoped to send out early in the spring, now makes its first appearance. It is being sent to all those who wrote me in response to the announcements in several American and British journals, and to many others whose writings suggest that they may be interested in the work of the International Bonhoeffer Committee. Here I would like to outline the background and functions of the Committee and its regional sections.

1. International Bonhoeffer Kongress

The Bonhoeffer Committee was formed at the International Kongress which met at Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth on October 6-13, 1971. Meeting under the theme "Praxis und Theorie des politischen Engagements der Kirche," the congress was organized by Eberhard Bethge and Ferdinand Schlingensiefen with the help of a preparatory committee. Some seventy participants from most European countries and the United States attended. Several papers from the congress were published in the November-December, 1972 issue of Evangelische Theologie.

The English-speaking world was represented by a contingent from the United States: Paul Lehmann (Union Seminary, New York); Frederick Herzog (Duke University, Durham, N.C.); Edward Hueremann (United Presbyterian Church, New York); Wallace Alston (Durham, N.C.); Virgil Moorefield (Baptist Seminary, Rüslikon, Switzerland); William Peck (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill); Larry Rasmussen (now Wesley Seminary, Washington); and myself.

In addition to plenary lectures and discussions, and discussion groups on papers, several working groups considered

Bonhoeffer's theological legacy in relation to contemporary issues. One of these working groups considered the present situation of the Bonhoeffer Nachlass, the establishment of an archive, and ways of making material available for Bonhoeffer research. From this group came the proposal for the International Bonhoeffer Committee. The proposal, and the members of the preparatory group which would officially organize the Committee and its work, were voted by the members of the congress. The purpose of the Committee is concisely expressed in its original German title: I.B.K "zur Sicherung des Nachlasses und Förderung der Forschung."

The members of the preparatory group for the Committee were chosen to represent regional sections, as follows: Eberhard Bethge (International Chairman); Ferdinand Schlingensiepen and Ernst Feil (Federal Republic of Germany); Carl-Jürgen Kaitenborn (DDR); J. S. Weiland (Holland); F. Lehel (E. Europe); Jørgen Glenthøj (Scandinavia); and myself, for the English language section.

2. Aim of the International Committee

The International Committee has not met since its formation, effort in the meantime going into organizing the regional sections through which most of the work will be done. The organization of the West German section is virtually complete, I believe, and this Newsletter will bring the English language section close to completion.

Most of the discussion at the Kaiserswerth meeting in the group which proposed the Committee, concerned organizing an archive and making materials available to scholars. At present, all Bonhoeffer papers are in the keeping of Eberhard Bethge at his home in Rengsdorf. Consequently, he is inundated with requests for assistance by people writing dissertations and pursuing research. A good deal of unpublished material is not in a form which is accessible (e.g., seminar papers in Bonhoeffer's handwriting!). The location of a permanent "home" for these materials obviously must be decided; Berlin, Bonn and Munich have been discussed as locations for a permanent archive, and the latter two seem the leading contenders at present. However, the matter of locating and organizing a "central archive," which will eventually contain the materials now in Bethge's possession, is the responsibility of the West German regional section.

In the meantime, I can report two projects in process. For years Bethge has been collecting--along with many others of us--bibliographical cards; much of the fruit of this labor can now be found in the bibliography of Ernst Feil's book. In 1959, Bethge, Feil and I began talking about a complete international bibliography, and work has proceeded to that end. Kaiser is sympathetic to this venture, and will probably publish it in

the future. Obviously, if this is to be a really complete international bibliography, it will take a good deal of work--a central editor would have to coordinate the efforts of many language editors. I have the English materials in fairly complete form, though obviously the help of others would make the record more complete; that can be taken up in a later Newsletter. The actual planning of the international bibliography, which I would like to see published as soon as possible, is in the domain of the International Committee. Once the basic international bibliography is published, it could easily be kept up to date with supplements at regular intervals.

Another project of special interest to those writing dissertations and doing research involves the seminar papers and the original manuscript of Sanctorum Communio. Perhaps not many people realize that the published editions of that text, both German and English, do not give all the material in the original. This should be made available immediately. So should Bonhoeffer's seminar papers. Some of these have now appeared in Gesammelte Schriften V, which was published some months ago. In cooperation with Bethge, I have been working on the others. Those who are familiar with the microfilm made at Harvard when Bethge was there in the late 50's know that Bonhoeffer's handwriting is almost indecipherable to the uninitiated eye! Those papers which have not been published in GS V will be published, in typescript, along with the complete original text of Sanctorum Communio, in a microfilm edition. I have been working on this on and off since 1969, and the Board of Microtext of the American Theological Library Association will produce and distribute the microfilm; the Board has also contributed to the cost of the project, as the expense of transcribing the handwriting is considerable. Hopefully, the material will be ready for microfilming late this year--that is a realistic hope, though not a promise!

The main concern of the International Committee, as I see it, will be to plan the organization of the central archive in Germany and to help coordinate the work of the regional committees. Probably the International Committee will need to meet in the next year or so to consider the progress which has been made since Kaiserswerth; but no meeting date has yet been arranged.

3. English Language Section

Presumably some sort of minimal organization needs to be set up quickly, such as a steering committee. And perhaps this should include a couple of corresponding members, especially from Great Britain, since the Section is not envisaged simply as an American operation. Those who would be interested in this could let me know. Perhaps we could have a gathering of interested people at the AAR Annual Meeting in Chicago next November.

The work of the International Committee in furthering research will mainly be done through the regional sections. To

this end, we plan to set up three archives, the "central archive" in Germany, and two regional archives--one for Eastern Europe, and one in the United States to serve the whole English speaking group.

Preliminary plans call for the central archive to contain the complete Bonhoeffer corpus. This includes all published primary sources, and the originals of all manuscripts, papers, notes, letters and so forth. One of the major tasks will be to provide transcribed copies of handwritten materials, especially unpublished papers. Such material could then be available for scholars in microfilm or photocopies, through the regional archives. The central archive in Germany would also contain a complete collection of secondary literature in German, including copies of unpublished dissertations, and presumably also a generous selection of secondary literature from other language groups. Obviously a catalogue of archive materials would be necessary; one way to provide this would be in connection with the bibliography and its supplements.

The regional archive in the United States is to serve the whole English language constituency. No location has yet been decided. However, Union Theological Seminary in New York has strong historical connections with Bonhoeffer from his post-doctoral studies there in 1930-31 and his visit in the summer of 1939. I have made a preliminary inquiry to the Union library about their interest in housing and servicing the regional archive; if the response is encouraging, I assume that the steering committee would consider options and then make a formal request. Any suggestions on this, particularly from those in other countries, are most welcome. Also, anyone having access to foundation grants, which would help finance the setting up and servicing of the regional archive, is heartily urged to let me know!

As I presently see it, the regional archive would contain: (1) a complete collection of the published primary sources; (2) copies of unpublished primary sources prepared under the auspices of the International Committee and distributed through the central archive; (3) a complete collection of English-language secondary sources (books and articles); (4) as complete as possible a collection of unpublished materials in English, especially unpublished dissertations and theses; (5) a generous selection of secondary sources in other languages, both published books and articles and unpublished dissertations, and particularly items difficult to secure (have you ever tried to get Ricouer's article on the "non-religious interpretation"?!).

A cooperative network of the central and regional archives would thus provide ready access to all materials necessary for research.

Both the regional and the central archives could be used in several ways. Some scholars and doctoral students might wish

to work "on location" in summers, while on vacation, during a sabbatical leave, etc. Others would want to borrow materials on interlibrary loans. Some might request xerox or microfilm copies of articles or unpublished material--I think that there would have to be a charge to cover costs on this.

Hopefully, a lot of material (especially published and unpublished secondary sources) could be acquired for the regional and central archives by donations of offprints, etc. by authors. However, please do not inundate me with materials until we have a home for the regional archive!

I want to stress two points which I trust have been implicit above. The discussions at Kaiserswerth were explicit, indeed adamant, on the point that organizing the International Committee and archives was definitely not an effort to establish a "Bonhoeffer school," and certainly not an attempt in any way to control or influence research. The purpose is simply to organize material and facilitate scholarly communication to aid research.

Various other possibilities related to the International Committee and the regional section have been mentioned by those who wrote me in response to journal announcements. Occasional conferences, information about seminars being taught, and translation projects are among them. The initial group who organized the Kaiserswerth congress did not make any plans for a similar conference in the future. But such events on a regional scale may be useful. It seems to me that in a year or so, after the archive program has been set up, we would be in a better position to consider other meetings or projects. However, please send in any suggestions you may have for ways in which the International Committee, the regional section, and the archives could be helpful.

4. Some Work in Progress

Eberhard Bethge has recently published Gesammelte Schriften V, as I am sure everybody is aware. The sixth and final volume is now in the works and can probably be expected later this year.

I have already mentioned the bibliography project, and the microfilm of Sanctorum Communio and the seminar papers. Also in preparation is a translation of Kuske's Das Alte Testament als Buch von Christus by Dr. S. T. Kimbrough (European Executive Secretary, Christian Arts Inc., Bonn) to be published by Westminster Press; Dr. Kimbrough reports that it will be at least 1974 before it appears. Various dissertations and articles are being written, and perhaps it might be possible to list these when a more complete knowledge of such work being done is available.

5. Membership

I would be grateful if you would bring this Newsletter to the attention of anyone you know who would be interested. Most people who have written in have indicated their desire to join the regional section of the International Committee. It would help if everybody wanting to be a member would complete the form below, even if you have already written requesting membership. Members will have access to all the services of the International Committee and the regional archives, and will receive the Newsletter regularly.

We will need to have an annual subscription to finance correspondence, the Newsletter and so on. I think US\$ 10 would be a modest and reasonable amount for an annual subscription. Would you please enclose a check or international money order, payable to "Bonhoeffer Committee" with the membership form.

The response in letters to the announcement of the International Committee was enthusiastic. I am sure the archive and work of the regional sections will be valuable and creative, and I look forward to working with you on the project. A list of members will be printed in the next Newsletter. Please do not hesitate to write to communicate your interests, and information about work in progress.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

International Bonhoeffer Committee--English Language Section

Please return, with a US\$ 10 subscription to

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ACADEMIC OR CHURCH POSITION (if relevant)

