

Review Articles

Documentation in Germany

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Dokumentation. *Die Dokumentation und ihre Probleme. Vorträge . . . der Ersten Tagung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Dokumentation vom 21. bis 24. September 1942 in Salzburg.* Leipzig, Harrassowitz, 1943, 205 p. il. index.

The Schweizerlexikon (1946), after giving perhaps the most satisfactory definition of the word "Dokumentation" and after a short historical note, lists a number of significant references including among others the publications of the International Institute of Bibliography at Bruxelles, the communications of the International Federation of Documentation at The Hague, and as the last title the volume under review.

Only recently has this work become available to students outside of Europe and, although six years will soon have passed since the meeting at Salzburg occurred which is documented in it, many librarians, archivists, and research men in general will want to be made aware of the manifestations of intellectual cooperation and planning in the other camp.

A quotation from one of the eighteen papers printed in this work, written by Walther Parey, then executive secretary of the Verein Deutscher Ingenieure, may indicate the spiritual tenor in which this small group of "documentalists" met at Salzburg in September 1942: "If carried on in the spirit of service and assistance to the community (=Gemeinschaft), not for its own sake but as an important aid to scientific labor, documentation, among other forces, is destined to bring about reasonable efficiency in intellectual labors; then too, it will be capable, some day again, of helping to reduce beneficially the burden upon the intellectual workers, which has increased beyond capacity." (p. 84)

It would probably be unwise to see in this statement much more than an expression of the increasingly common general mood prevailing during the recent stages of the so-called industrial revolution. True, at the time of the Salzburg meeting, the participants as well as their colleagues around the globe

worked under the pressure of war conditions. Yet the naïve assumptions revealed by some of the apparently loyal servants of the Nazi state present, and the equally honest expressions of liberal and even international views on the part of others appear to indicate that at this level of effort or in this quarter of the European intelligentsia, hardly faint rumblings were apprehended of the turning of fate, so clearly seen already at that time by such men as General Beck and his group. One may begin to fathom the depth of the tragedy and sense the marionette-like quality of a meeting such as this, when one reads in Hans Bernd Gisevius' *Bis zum Bitteren Ende*, of the movements and plans taking shape in the general headquarters of the home army born from genuine despair and intended to stem the tide from within. It is extremely doubtful whether any of those men at Salzburg had the slightest real knowledge of these attempts behind the swiftly changing scenes of the visible stage, up to this time a continuous series of successes.

The meeting of the Gesellschaft, though sponsored by the authorities, was little more than an extended council meeting. Though "hervorragende Fachleute des europäischen Auslandes" were said to be present, only Germans are reported as authors of the papers recorded. The aim of the meeting was to attempt systematization of objectives and procedures of the Gesellschaft, which had been founded as a successor to the German Committee on Standardization for Libraries, Books, and Periodicals. Another stated objective was to continue and possibly improve upon the work of the International Federation of Documentation.

Among the authors are five librarians. Three of these are well-known beyond the German borders: Fritz Prinzhorn, Danzig, who functioned as chairman at the meeting, Sigmund von Frauendorfer, Rome, and Rudolf Juchhoff, for a number of years head of the Auskunftsbüro and of the D.G.K. The thirteen other contributors are distributed according to their professional functions as follows: two archivists, one of them Ernst

Zipfel, then the national archivist; one representative of museums, Director Kohlhaussen of the National Museum at Nürnberg; Chr. Caselmann of the Ministry of Education; M. Pflücke, deputy chairman of the German Chemical Society and editor in chief of the *Chemisches Zentralblatt*, who acted as vice chairman at the meeting; Walther Parey, executive secretary of the German Society of Engineers; W. Grävell, a director of the Central Statistics Office; R. Immel, a division head of International Institute of Forestry, Berlin; a medical administrator, R. Pfaffenberg; one representative each of the Agfa and Zeiss-Ikon corporations; and finally, a radio executive and an archival expert of the Ministry of Propaganda.

In the following an attempt is made to characterize the contributions in the order in which they appear in the book.

Prinzhorn, in his role as chairman, essays an exposition of basic problems and tendencies. He underlines the dynamic nature of documentation pointed out by van Riemsdijk the year before in Communication 8 of the F.I.D. He predicts that, having had its origin in the technical and social sciences, documentation is bound to affect all areas of systematic intellectual endeavor. With such men as Godet, Lemaitre, and Dahl he does not expect complete inclusion in the process of the large general research libraries. He predicts that, and how they will have to be brought in through their special collections. To American documentalists it will be of interest to hear that as a practical way of reaching over-all efficiency in the distribution of resources he suggests organization and delimitation of individual depositories first. Repeatedly it is brought out that most successful and thorough documentation is possible only in special libraries, which are tied up with abstracting services. What Prinzhorn has to say on adequate periodical collections (his specialty), on special collections and their cooperative care, on need for better statistics, better organization of bibliographical and abstracting services, then on the need for tying into the general documentation scheme such relatively neglected and recent media as archives, museums, picture and film collections as well as newspapers and sound recordings furnishes a background for some of the papers to follow and points toward future

goals. The author ends by stressing the need for developing special areas cooperatively, whereupon the over-all problems may be tackled more wisely and gaps may be closed with more assurance of adequacy, nationally and internationally.

The four following papers deal with archives, museums, picture and film collections, and sound recordings. They do little more than provide very instructive and enlightening general descriptions of the materials involved, of the methods by which they have been created, organized, and made available up to this time. One could hardly expect more from these relatively new areas; what is presented is a minimum core of knowledge necessary to a successful participation in a general documentation program.

In Zipfel's contribution on archives two statements interest particularly. After tracing the historical evolution of present-day archival administration, with due acknowledgment of the decisive French influence, the author asserts with pride that "today the accessions of the state archives, except for records of the most recent times, are available to any student and amateur without restrictions" (!) Then he outlines the research projects under way, which are intended to maintain the high standards of the publications of the Prussian archives. He frankly discusses the "Westplan" (there is also an "Ostplan"), already partly completed at the time. This project has as its aim a complete inventory of the sources of German history found in Belgian, Danish, Dutch, and French archives.

H. Kohlhaussen divulges very interesting views on the nature and purpose of museum collections, but does little more than emphasize the difficulty of systematizing these and using them for general documentation.

Chr. Caselmann has pedagogical views on the scientific film and its use. On the other hand, he has a great deal of useful information on the production, organization, and conditions of use of the extensive film collection under immediate and indirect control of the Ministry of Education. He also stresses the relative lack of knowledge and of finding media regarding pictorial collections.

H. Dominik describes the various processes of making sound recordings. When he reports on the extensive collection of matrices in the central archives of sound records main-

tained by the Reichsrundfunk, one becomes curious to know whether this unique record of the recent past has come to us intact. Of more than passing interest is the suggestion that the records produced by the magnetic process, which are possessed of superior tone fidelity, may be more permanent than was first assumed.

Ten contributions on documentation in special fields follow. Among them, those by Walther Grävell on statistical documentation, Hans Richter on social documentation (actually descriptive of the labor front library brought together by pillage) and by Rudolf Pfaffenberg on medical documentation, are likely of most interest to students of the aims and methods of the Nazi state. Yet, even here close scrutiny may reveal useful hints, as for instance the use of documentation in combating epidemics and other diseases.

The other papers throughout are of high professional caliber, and merit the attention of specialists and documentalists generally.

Maximilian Pflücke discusses from a high plane of objectivity documentation as developed in chemistry, one of its oldest spheres of application. This study is appropriately adorned with a portrait of Gustav Theodor Fechner, the founder of the *Chemische Zentralblatt*.

Walther Parey does an equally instructive job for technology. Worth mentioning specially is his belief that the method of choosing reviewers in the field as practiced by German abstracting journals results in a product superior to that achieved by comparable American institutions using permanent office staffs. An important contribution is further a classification of types of engineers (research, development, patent, construction, plant engineers) and the observation that this vertical differentiation together with the horizontal distinction of fields of engineering such as civil, mechanical, chemical, electrical, and others makes it clear that centralized documentation is hardly possible in this area. Impressive is Parey's statement that German engineers had at their disposal the "greatest technical library in the world," the German Patent Office, which in 1940 had 400,000 volumes of books and a collection of around 10,000,000 descriptions of patents, all of which was administered by a force of 600 academically-trained experts.

That this great reservoir was not thoroughly integrated into a general documentation system, may well have meant failure in a number of important objectives.

Wilhelm Gülich and Fritz Hellwig make valuable contributions to the subject in the economic sphere. Whereas the former enters into a searching analysis of the aims and methods of economic research, the latter gives a most interesting description of archival establishments in the economic structure of central Europe, especially of Germany. Archivists will want to know that German archivists have recognized the value of cataloging archival materials rather thoroughly, with numerous cross references, though of course they still adhere strictly to the principles of "respect des fonds" and of "provenience" in the arrangement of the records themselves. American colleagues will sympathize with the statement that during the war the German archivists were confined largely to hoping that offices would continue to transfer their records, that no valuable materials were sold for old paper and that air raid protection would prove effective.

Sigmund von Frauendorfer and Richard Immel give very thorough and vivid accounts of their respective fields, *i.e.*, agriculture and forestry. Von Frauendorfer's contribution in agriculture is well-known in the U. S. The more recent rapid strides in the documentation of forestry were first summarized by F. Grünwoldt in 1940. R. Immel brings the account up to date.

Rudolf Juchoff deals with the historical sciences and uses the opportunity to point out that the humanities have known the basic meaning of documentation for a long time. In support he cites a definition from the *Grande Encyclopédie* 1870 and mentions a number of important handbooks such as Iwan Müller's *Handbuch* for classical archaeology and Paul's *Grundriss* for Germanistic studies. However, he concedes that generally the humanistic and also, to a lesser degree, the exact sciences are still proceeding at a more leisurely pace. One area which he classifies apparently with humanistic studies, seems to him to approach the speed of reporting in technology, that of cultural geography (in Germany especially *Landeskunde* and *Auslandskunde*). On one example, Triepel's *Hegemonie* and the research behind it, the

author shows then, that though differing from technological documentation in speed, in essence the process is the same in humanistic research. He succeeds, it appears, in convincing the reader that "Documentation is . . . at best hard necessity . . . and that all documentation has the same objective: economy in intellectual production."

Three final papers are concerned with photographic reproduction and microphotography. Erich Mehne discusses microphotography from the archivist's angle and suggests that filming is the best method for quick preservation of materials and that permanent preservation is best insured by reproduction on glass plates, supplemented by multiple storage in air conditioned rooms, with diapositives for control. For most efficient use of a photographically reproduced collection he advocates, in preference to film rolls and film strips, arrangement of film sections with individual documents on 9 x 12 cm. cards, which are labeled and may be systematically organized (= Plan-oder Blattfilmverfahren).

Of reading machines Mehne demands these qualities: simple handling, possibility of enlargement, cheapness of construction for mass-consumption.

Walther Rahts goes into detail about the methods of copying records and books by filming, contact-printing, and reflex photography. He too advocates the use of the Blattfilm method for convenient collecting and arrangement of film materials, standardized to 2 x 9 pages on 9 x 12 cm. cards. He reports on an interesting departure in copying construction elements from a draw-

ing, scale 1:6, into a drawing, scale 1:4, which resulted in a saving of time of over 500 per cent.

Hermann Joachim reports on a number of cameras used in photographic reproduction as well as on novel reading devices. Among the latter is a reading machine which is equipped with a film holder in front and below the reading surface, and which has a light source outside of the machine to keep it from heating the apparatus. Joachim's article is illustrated by four plates, and the reading machine mentioned can be seen on one of them.

If the reviewer were asked to point out a few outstanding qualities in the work, he might mention these two: first the emphasis on international cooperation on the part of a number of the contributors, notably the agriculturalist von Frauendorfer and the forester Richard Immel; second, the insistence of finding effective means of conditioning the various types of users of the products of documentation through various means of formal and informal training, at length discussed by von Frauendorfer and also by the engineer, Walther Parey.

A cursory analysis such as this review can at best attempt to interest potential readers. Perhaps the book should be translated if only to incorporate it more securely in the apparatus of the Western documentalist and to make possible a more generally fair and sympathetic appraisal. For, "Here ye strike but splintered hearts together—there, ye shall strike unsplitable glasses!" (H. Melville.)—*Icko Iben, University of Illinois.*

Bookbinding

Bookbinding, Its Background and Technique.

By Edith Diehl, New York and Toronto, Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1946. 2v.

Miss Diehl has made a useful contribution in Volume I (The Background), wherein she traces the broad outlines of developments in the practice of bookbinding since its inception, and analyzes the principal characteristics of the major styles in bookbinding decoration. Considering the necessary restrictions on space, no work of such scope can hope to be encyclopedic, and Miss Diehl makes no claim that her essay represents the exception.

Nevertheless, she has performed a valuable service, for which students and connoisseurs will be grateful, by presenting a selective bibliography of bookbinding literature that will take the serious investigator more deeply into special phases of the subject. Although the bibliography itself makes no attempt to evaluate the works listed, in many instances Miss Diehl's textual comment provides the careful reader with the necessary critical clues.

Earlier investigators into bookbinding decoration habitually sought to strengthen their arguments by arbitrarily linking the major