Newsletter 3 – November 2012

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Are you interested in the technical implementation of the HOPE project?

Are you interested in the historical importance of our HOPE collections that will be going online in the next few months and years?

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1.) Election campaigns in the 20th century – examples from the collections of HOPE partners

In our wonderful new world of YouTube, Twitter and Facebook, it might be worth recalling: there were times when election campaigns took place 'off-line' – on streets and market squares, in political party buildings and smoky pubs. Even if many people today no longer really know whether election campaigns are the climax of democracy or merely necessary rituals, they are a salient part of our political culture and leave traces – historical sources such as posters, postcards, flyers, photographs and films as well as giveaways ranging from balloons all the way to rubber ducks.

Just look at Germany, where election campaigns in the first quarter of the 20th century not only became more lively, but also evolved from a demonstration for democracy into a rough struggle with political opponents. At the beginning of the Weimar Republic, for example, the scene was still dominated by election posters with lots of text. But visual images became more and more important over time – the period was marked by the rise of the popular yellow press, while film also began to help shape the opinions of voters. In particular the Social Democracy (SPD) continued to attempt to sway voters by using posters containing texts. At the same time, their own images were guided by the desire to protect and preserve the young democracy.

Political culture of the Weimar Republic had a major impact on the activities of soldiers in free corps, assassination attempts on Democratic politicians such as Matthias Erzberger or Walter Rathenau and right wing coup d'état attempts such as the Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch in 1920. As a result of increasing violence in the middle of the 1920s, it became important to have bouncers in order to protect events against uninvited guests who were attempting to provoke mass punch-ups. This calamitous political culture was manifested on the streets by street battles and marches. It was reflected in posters and other advertising by the SPD constantly focusing on the democracy and symbols of the young republic. This included above all the black-red-gold flag, which also lent its name to the protective association "Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold", dominated by Social Democrats. This inter-party alliance of Democrats had more than one million members at the end of the 1920s, but was ultimately only a minority on the streets.
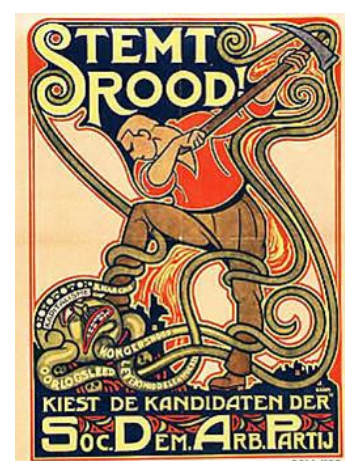
The rise of National Socialism forced the SPD as well as all of the German parties to react. Social Democrats, trade unions and workers' athletics clubs formed the "Eiserne Front" in 1930. A clear symbolic language was developed for the first time in the rear-guard battle against National Socialism – as illustrated by the three-pronged arrow against Nazism, Communism and the Imperial Throne. As far back as the end of the 1920s, the SPD was using this new symbol-based strategy in election campaigns in films, even if its success was rather limited. Elections more and more began to turn into a last-ditch defence against National Socialism, with Social Democrats reverting to the pattern of agitation employed during the period of the Empire.
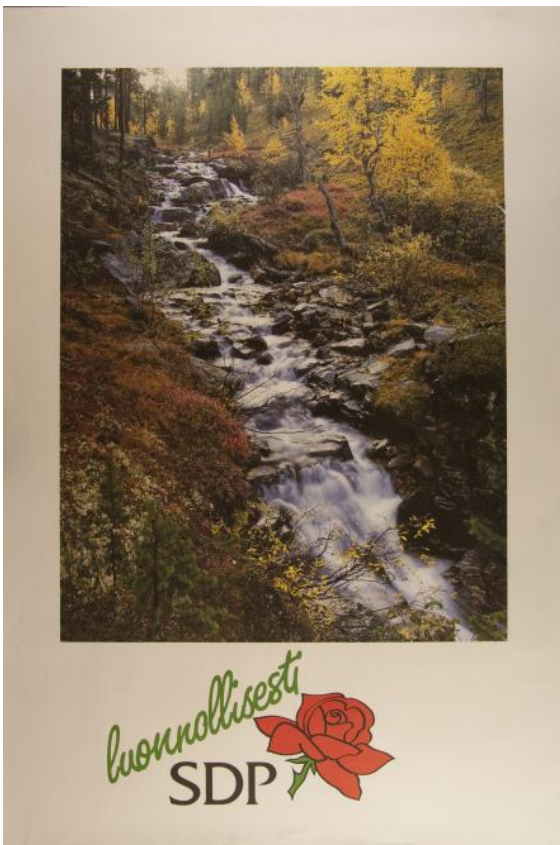
Professionalisation, personalisation, 'media-isation' – these three terms aptly sum up the development of political communication characterising election battles in the 20th century on the whole. This can be witnessed in all political systems, although here a few headlines in European political party history warrant closer inspection. In addition to two SPD election posters from 1919 and 1932 from the *Archiv der sozialen Demokratie der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung* (FES), a "Stemt Rood!" poster from Amsterdam's *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* deserves mention: designed in 1918 by Albert Hahn for the Dutch Social Democrats, this is a real artwork in election campaigning. The Belgian Socialists appealed to voters with "Pour la joie & la sante de nos enfants" in 1938, making use of photography at an early stage. The Ghent *Amsab-Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* is also the source of a 1950 poster featuring unmistakable symbolism and calling on the population to cast their vote "against the black hand of the clerical dictatorship".

An election poster from the Finnish Social Democrats from 1954 provided by *Työväen Arkisto* (TA) ascribed to a belief in progress widespread at the time – from safe-and-secure jobs in prospering industries all the way to prospering families in their own homes. While the 1963 photograph poster from the *Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv* exhibiting a picture of a referendum bears witness to a unique feature of the Swiss political system, two additional posters illustrate another trend – the growing tendency towards personalization: the likeness of Chancellor Willy Brandt dominated campaign advertising for the German Bundestag election in 1972 (FES), while Portugal's Socialists continued to bank on the popularity and charisma of Mário Soares in 1979. The party founder and long-serving Portuguese Minister and President can be seen in another archive photograph from the *Fundação Mário Soares,* in this case at an appearance during the election campaign of 1986.

In the following year, year one following the nuclear disaster of Chernobyl, environmental issues were also preoccupying the Finnish Social Democracy, as its election poster (TA) illustrate. Elections and electoral campaigns were only possible in Hungary once again, on the other hand, after 1989: the document from the *Open Society Archives* shown here exhibiting a title page from a "situation report" by Radio Free Europe with information on "the rebirth of political parties" tells a story in itself. These are only a few examples from the collections of our partners that will hopefully arouse your desire for more – so "Vote for HOPE!"

2.) Digital preservation and delivery made easy

(Truly) Frequently asked questions

Do you recognize yourself here? You house a large volume of collections. Those may consist of letters, photographs, video, audio and other paraphernalia. Some of it is catalogued, lots of it is not or at best accompanied with an unconventional manifest. Much of this content is digital or will become so; and it is precariously stored on disks, CDs and other various digital media. Furthermore you are emotionally traumatized by the seemingly endless discussions with colleagues and unable to decide how the material can be put into safe storage. Yet all seem to agree the material should be preserved – if not now, then in the future – so as to provide conditional and comprehensible access to the content you so carefully store to your own self, social scientists and the general public.

If the answer is yes, then you probably are already aware of best practice on digital preservation and repository frameworks such as those developed by the Library of Congress or the Open Planets Foundation. The main bottleneck, however, still remains the costs, lack of technical staff (maintainers and developers alike) and technical infrastructure.

Fortunately if your domain covers of hovers in the area of social history, culture and art, then the exploits of the HOPE project will interest you in particular. It has led to the development of tools and a service provider that hosts them: both can offer you a reasonable, quick way out of your predicament.

Social History Services

The Social History Services is a package of digital services that is maintained, hosted and utilized by a group of content providers. The largest contributor as yet is the *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* in Amsterdam. Its approach is to ease your digital preservation tasks using the smallest amount of technological muscle possible and still meet the aforementioned general needs of content providers.

To date we have developed and offer you three types of flagship services:

1.   The object repository framework to preserve master files and distribute its content online.

2.   A PID web service to create persistent identifiers and bind these to resolvable URLs.

3.   A viewer to display related files like books, diaries, letters and papers.

Object repository framework

The object repository is a light-weight, heavy storage and distribution service. It is composed of independent modules that can be told to work together with a simple instruction. Essentially you can use it to:

-       Ftp bulk digital material to a staging area.

-       Store master files. Like video, images, xml documents… Anything really.

-       Replicate derivative and master files. If something breaks, it can still recover all data.

-       Spawn three levels of smaller versions of audio, video and images. Typically it is this content you can refer to via other websites.

-       Accepts any custom derivative you may want to add. Let's say a thumbnail for a master PDF.

-       Create persistent identifiers (more about this later). Naturally you can also feed it your own persistent identifier per master file. The repository chats with the Handle System-compatible PID web service to bind the URLs to the repository.

We aim to enrich your data with more functionality when the technology and need becomes available:

-       OCR.

-       Download content in batches based on Mets documents.

-       Identification of unknown files using tools like Fido or DROID.

- Automatic recognition of the names of people, places and dates or periods. This information will greatly enhance the find ability of your collections to researchers and interested alike.

- Self-repair of damaged files.

- Conversion of master content to contemporary standards.

The shared object repository is a Social History Services' service – we call it the SOR. You can join this fellowship if you like. We have pre-released the source code of the repository for you to play with. A concise manual on how to set it up and install the package will follow in 2013. See:

https://github.com/iish/object-repository-admin

https://github.com/iish/object-repository-scripts

https://github.com/iish/object-repository-servicenodes

PID webservice

Another essential ingredient for durable storage and stable distribution of content is persistency. You want to make sure that the links to your stored content (and other resources like websites) do not sever when you move things about.

A tried-and-proven solution to this is handing out persistent identifier: it is a simple URL that does not change and redirects a web user to the much more changeable location that holds your content. This will enable others (and yourself) to build a stable service based on a domain of knowledge. In some cases services like _Europeana_ will not accept your content without persistent identifiers.

Just add a PID value in your catalog, spreadsheet or any other container and notify the PID webservice about them. Regardless of the programming language or environment your catalog and archival system solutions run in; you will be able to smoothly steer the webservice. Even if a vendor-based catalog is unable to store a custom PID value, the webservice can accept your catalog's local identifier and substitute it with a PID value stored in the PID webservice's database.

The object repository has native support for the PID webservice and calls it on your behalf. Like the shared object repository it is hosted by the Social History Services. To use it contact us and register at CNRI to obtain a Handle System account. If you would like to host your own PID webservice, download the code and build at https://github.com/iish/Pid-webservice.

Visual presentation

We note that derivative material can be accessed when it is stored in the shared object repository. That is fine for single files; yet many persons would like to present digitized content as an ordered 'whole' that can be paged through similar to an online book.

As the Mets standard describes the relationship between such digitized content, we have developed a Mets-making application. It takes a simple, flat CSV file you need to make for it to spew out Mets.

For the visual presentation we have created a viewer that – like a YouTube movie - can be embedded on your own webpages. This viewer takes your Mets document and passes it on to the Visual Mets, which return all the information needed for it to render the pages.

As before, the Visual Mets viewer and web service is hosted by the Social History Services. Contact us to use it. And you can create and set up your own Visual Mets viewer pleasure by downloading the source and builds at https://github.com/IISH/Visual-Mets.

A final word

We believe that digital preservation is not the same as cataloging the material. The former is quite independent of the latter, which can take up a large amount of time – something none of us have. So we are offering our service to you and would encourage to use it so content is not lost forever by accident or through outdated formats. And it is also important that you are able to unlock your digital resources to others who can explore the gray digital material. The cataloging and

refinement can come later – be it by the human mind using a catalog or via intelligent software at the object repository.

If you want to use any or all of the Social History Services then contact servicedesk@socialhistoryservices.org for information. HOPE to see your content soon!

3.) News in brief

Henk Wals new IISG director and HOPE coordinator

Henk Wals is the new director of Amsterdam's *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis* and also new HOPE project coordinator. He succeeds Erik-Jan Zürcher, who stepped down earlier. Henk Wals has been deputy director of the IISG from 1993 until 2004. He studied Social and Economic History at the University of Amsterdam and entered employment at the IISG in 1982. In 2000, he gained his PhD with a study on survival strategies of construction workers in Amsterdam during the first quarter of the 20th century. In 2004 he was appointed director of Huygens Institute for the History of the Netherlands, a fellow Institute of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Five new HOPE Network Partners

We are happy about five new partners participating in the HOPE network: *Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations - Kheel Center* (New York, USA), *Arbejdermuseet & Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv* (Copenhagen, Denmark), *Arbeiderbevegelsens arkiv og bibliotek* (Oslo, Norway), *Ústav pro Soudobé Dejiny* AV CR (Praha, Czech Republic) and *Ośrodek KARTA* (Warsaw, Poland). Welcome you five and thanks for joining us!

Tagging Tool Release Announcement

The HOPE Aggregator Team is pleased to announce the release of the Tagging Tool. The tool allows authorized users to bulk-tag descriptive units and resource records of the HOPE information space. The former with historical themes, in order to enable uniform selective queries, the latter with "export tags", in order to automatically publish tagged resources towards tag-specified social sites.

The HOPE Partners:

 Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen - Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Netherlands

 Amsab-Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Belgium

 Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro, Italy

 Bibliothek der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung / Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Germany

 Fundação Mário Soares, Portugal

 Schweizerisches Sozialarchiv, Switzerland

 Työväen Arkisto, Finland

 Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, Austria

 Nyílt Társadalom Archívum / Közép Európai Egyetem, Hungary

 Centre d'Histoire Sociale du XXe Siècle, Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne / Centre national de la recherche scientifique, France

 Génériques, France

 Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche - Istituto di Scienza e Tecnologie dell'Informazione, Italy

 Stichting European Digital Library - Europeana Foundation, Netherlands

If you have any questions, just get in touch with:

Dr. Sebastian Scharte (V. i. S. d. P.)
HOPE Coordinator for Dissemination & Networking
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung – Archiv der sozialen Demokratie
Godesberger Allee 149

D-53175 Bonn

Sebastian.Scharte@fes.de