

THE DOCUMENTATION
AND COLLECTION
PROFILES OF
POLITICAL
FOUNDATION
ARCHIVES IN
GERMANY

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THE MANDATE OF THE ARCHIVES

The political foundations are involved in the process of policy development and political decision-making. They are legally and de-facto independent of their respective affiliated political parties and are predominantly state-financed. Their educational offers and scientific facilities are open to the general public. The mandate and responsibilities of the political foundation archives are defined in the German Federal Constitutional Court Decision of July 14, 1986, the so-called "Foundation Decision" ("Stiftungsurteil"). These principles are, furthermore, laid down in the Joint Statement of the Political Foundations of 1998 and in the statutes and rules of procedure of the various political foundations.

Each political foundation has an archive, which aims to preserve the historical tradition of its respective political party. These archives are responsible for collecting, appraising, and making available records of their associated party. Beyond this, they are involved in scientific research. The intent is to comprehensively document the founding and development processes of the party and the activities of its officials and politicians. Beyond documentation and research on the historical developments within their respective associated political party, the archives also provide insight into related socio-political movements and their roots. In fact, they can to

some extent be described as information service centers providing a solid basis for the answering of manifold research inquiries. In addition to performing own scientific research, the archives through events, exhibitions, publications and internet presence make a significant contribution to historical and political education.

Through a common documentation and collection profile, the archives of the political foundations thrive to achieve standards for the systematic and regular preservation of analog and digital records, while ensuring a competent processing and analysis of these sources. This profile is the basis upon which:

- Relevant material is identified and acquired
- An orderly takeover of these sources is ensured
- Assessment of archive relevance of material is implemented
- Sources are processed according to a strategy of assessment
- Historically and politically significant sources are provided and utilized
- Supplemental and non-record material is acquired
- Physical and human capital can be more efficiently applied.

ANALOG AND DIGITAL RECORDS

The archives preserve the records of their associated political party from its inception to the present, including material on predecessor organizations, relevant socio-political movements and related German and international organizations and federations. The main focus of collection is on the records of the party leadership, from the prominent federal echelon to the level of State (Bundesland), regional and local politics, as well as, on material from the parliamentary groups.

In the Media Age, the acquisition, processing and retrievability of digital records proves to be a particular challenge to archives. This pertains not only to the preservation of websites and accounts in social networks according to provenience, but also to data of file systems (data carriers and e-mail attachments, text documents, audio recordings) and document management systems. The retro-digitization of analog documents and objects ensures the preservation of archive holdings and allows for broad accessibility to these holdings regardless of a user's location.

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORDS

1. Political Parties

- Party conventions
- Party executive committee and national/regional party headquarters
- Working groups, special interest groups, study groups, commissions, organizational platforms, youth groups
- Press and public relations, election campaigns
- Further party bodies, such as arbitration tribunals
- Party sub-divisions at the State, regional and district level
- Former political parties in the Soviet Occupation Zone and in the German Democratic Republic, also democratically renewed or newly founded after the Peaceful Revolution of 1989/90

At the federal, state and district level, the aim is to achieve a complete compilation of documents on the party organization. At the local level, the focus is on those party chapters of particular historic and political relevance.

2. Party Parliamentary Groups

- Party parliamentary group in the German Bundestag, in particular records of the Party Chairman, as well as, of the Executive Committees and working groups
- Party parliamentary groups in the State Parliaments with emphasis on executive boards and working groups, taking into consideration regional characteristics
- Party parliamentary group in the European Parliament

3. Leading Politicians

Records of politicians are of outstanding significance. Parliamentarians, as well as other high-ranking public officials, are normally put up for election by their political parties, and are, generally, also prominently active there. Much of what is discussed by politicians and parliamentarians at the legislative and executive level has its origin in party activities and initiatives. For biographical research, personal documents of politicians are indispensable as a historic source since they shed light on the activities, motives and personal settings of these persons. They are essential as a substitute for records that no longer exist (for example: Documents of the SPD, "Zentrum Party", BVP, DDP, and the trade unions destroyed in 1933, in part by party officials themselves. Or, early records documenting the beginnings of the CDU and CSU, which were disposed of when they were considered no longer relevant)

and as a supplement for records of government authorities and party bodies. These documents complement the records of government authorities, of the parties, of parliament and of the party parliamentary groups at the federal and state level. Primarily these persons are members of government, the parties, parliament, and the party parliamentary groups at the federal and state level.

- Party chairmen, secretary generals, managing directors, members of the party executive boards, members of the party presidiums
- Founding members and inspirational contributors of political ideas
- Federal Presidents, heads of government, Ministers, State Secretaries, including their advisors and staff members, outstanding parliamentarians with leadership positions in party parliamentary groups and parliament
- Local leaders with influence on federal and state politics
- Elected representatives and officials at the European and international level (Chairmen, Secretary Generals, Heads of Parliament, Committee Chairmen in the European Parliament, EC/EU-Commissioners, and Cabinet Heads), as well as, innovative thinkers on the political process of European unification
- Other influential personalities from related social and political movements
- Members of the executive boards of the political foundations

4. European Parties, Associations, and Committees

- Records of European and international organizations and federations, including their predecessors

5. Predecessor and Other Related Organizations, including Party-Affiliated Bodies

- Collections on aligned political movements
- Predecessor organizations of the respective political party, including parties merged
- Democracy movements in the former GDR
- Substituted and supplemental records of organizations in the political environment, for example: student, women's, youth, and senior citizen organizations, political initiatives, economic associations, and institutes involved in political education, as well as, document collections on their leading representatives

6. Independent Organizations

- Further collections from independent sources, as well as, from affiliated organizations, e. g. trade unions

7. Political Foundations

- Records of the executive bodies and directorates (Board of Directors, General Assembly of Members, Board of Trustees, Office of the Chairman, as well as, of the Secretary General with deputy
- Documents showing the strategic alignment and orientation of domestic and international work done

8. Media Archives and Other Collections

Photographs

- Of leading representatives of the parties and their organizations
- Documenting party events, panel sessions, and congresses
- Photo archives of organizations
- Showing historical events and socio-historical developments
- Deposits and (partial) bequests of photographers

Posters, Pamphlets, Flyers, and Wall Newspapers

- Of Election campaigns at the Federal, State, and local level, as well as, at the European level
- Organized events
- Specific topics and campaigns

Films, Videos, Sound Recordings, TV-Documentaries

- Live recordings of party events, congresses and board meetings
- Election commercials
- Films of the parties and organizations
- TV- documentaries

Objects

- Flags, banners, and placards
- Busts, honorary needles, badges and medals

Small Advertising Material

- Advertising material for party image-building and campaigning, such as pins, pens, cigarette lighters or stickers

Press (Clipping) Archives

- Material illustrating the published opinion on political issues and events in Germany, particularly regarding party processes and developments. Furthermore, press-related material on the historic development of the political foundations and their domestic and international activities
- Opinion polls

9. Library Collections

Beyond archival material in a narrow sense, the archives of the political foundations gather printed matter, newspapers, and so-called "grey literature". These holdings supplement the records of the political parties, their parliamentary groups, related organizations, and of bequests. Often these sources exemplify the results of discussions that can be traced back to the factual material incorporated in the inventories of the archives. Generally, these holdings are not collected by libraries and, if so, this is not done there on a systematic basis.

Printed Material

- Charters, statutes, election programs, policy programs, activity reports, brochures
- Publication series of the parties and their parliamentary groups

Party Newspapers

- Printed newspapers
- Analog and digital newsletters
- Press services

Publications of Other Political Parties and Further Organizations

- Activity reports
- Publications on projects of the political foundations
- Publications of related organizations

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Hanns Jürgen Küsters

Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik (ACDP) der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung



Anja Kruke

Archiv der sozialen Demokratie (AdsD) der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung



Ewald Grothe

Archiv des Liberalismus (ADL) der Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit



Renate Höpfinger

Archiv für Christlich-Soziale Politik (ACSP) der Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung



Christoph Becker-Schaum

Archiv Grünes Gedächtnis (AGG) der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung



Jochen Weichold

Archiv Demokratischer Sozialismus (ADS) der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

EDITORS



Konrad Adenauer Stiftung

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

Rathausallee 12

53757 Sankt Augustin

Tel: (02241) 246-0

Fax: (02241) 246-2508

E-mail: zentrale@kas.de

➔ www.kas.de

Friedrich Naumann
STIFTUNG **FÜR DIE FREIHEIT**

Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung

für die Freiheit

Karl-Marx-Straße 2

14482 Potsdam

Tel: (0331) 7019-0

Fax: (0331) 7019-188

E-mail: info@freiheit.org

➔ www.freiheit.org

 **HEINRICH
BÖLL
STIFTUNG**

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung e.V.

Schumannstraße 8

10117 Berlin

Tel: (030) 28534-0

Fax: (030) 28534-109

E-mail: info@boell.de

➔ www.boell.de

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT** 
STIFTUNG

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung e.V.

Godesberger Allee 149

53175 Bonn

Tel: (0228) 883-0

Fax: (0228) 883-9218

E-mail: presse@fes.de

➔ www.fes.de

 **Hanns
Seidel
Stiftung**

Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung e.V.

Lazarettstraße 33

80636 München

Tel: (089) 1258-0

Fax: (089) 1258-356

E-mail: info@hss.de

➔ www.hss.de

 **ROSA
LUXEMBURG
STIFTUNG**

Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung e.V.

Franz-Mehring Platz 1

10243 Berlin

Tel: (030) 44310-0

Fax: (030) 44310-230

E-mail: info@rosalux.de

➔ www.rosalux.de