Article

Drucker's Intellectual Developments in the 1930s' European Years in "Drucker's Oral History Interviews" and Other Documents

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Abstract This paper will investigate some of the unexplored aspects of Drucker, particularly his years during the Vienna, Frankfurt, and London periods of the 1920s and 1930s. To this end, we will outline our research using materials from the collection of the Drucker Archives in Claremont, California.

Key Words: Drucker Archives, Drucker in 1930s, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and London, correspondences

1. Preface

The Drucker Institute was founded in 2007 as a central organization to integrate and manage the collection and preservation of the records of Drucker's activities and as a support organization for leaders in various fields responsible for solving social problems. The intention to continue Drucker's intellectual legacy was already in place, and although there were initial candidates from Wharton Business School, New York University, and other research institutions, Robert Klitgaard, president of Claremont Graduate University, ultimately accepted the proposal. However, the predecessor organization began as the Drucker Archives (now part of the Drucker Institute), and it was not until May 2006 that it was formally reorganized as an institute.

Board members included Jim Collins, Paul O'Neill (former chairman of Alcoa), A.G. Lafley (chairman and CEO of P&G), Nobuhiro Iijima (president of Yamazaki Baking Company), and Masatoshi Ito (honorary chairman of Seven & i). In particular, Bob Buford played a pivotal role as the first Chairman of the Advisory Board. Rick Wartzman, award-winning journalist for the Wall Street Journal and the Los Angeles Times, joined the board, and to date, most of Drucker's intellectual property is available online.

The Drucker Archives are extremely important because they contain valuable documents such as correspondence, lecture transcripts, and articles that have never before been published but have received little attention. In this paper, we will discuss Drucker's activities in the 1930s, which have not yet been fully understood, based on the results of our two previous visits to the Drucker Archives and interviews with Drucker.

It was a significant event in the late 1990s when the

Drucker Archives attempted and began to collect Drucker materials. First, it is necessary to say a few words about the origins of the project called the Drucker Archives.

2. The Unpublished Documents: Drucker Archives

According to one of its founders, Rick Wartzman, the Archive was officially launched in 1998, seven years before Drucker's death at the age of ninety-five. Unofficially, however, the inspiration came from the foresight of Bob Buford, a close friend of Drucker's who served as president emeritus of the Drucker Institute, and Jack Shaw, former dean of the Drucker School.

Today, the Drucker Institute has over 10,000 documents, photographs, videos, certificates, and artifacts that are valuable in understanding Drucker's personality and accomplishments. After Drucker's death, his wife, Doris, continued to donate the collection, and the search for Drucker artifacts continues. The archive has been actively expanded since Bridget Lawler, a full-time archivist, joined the Institute in 2009. In the context of the Institute, since the deaths of Drucker in 2005 and his wife Doris in 2014 (at the age of 103), the release of materials related to the Drucker family has progressed. This includes correspondence, lecture notes, interview transcripts, and audio recordings. The collection includes rare materials such as doctoral dissertations and other German-language documents written as a young man in Nazi-occupied Germany, where the threat of totalitarianism was a nightmare, journalistic materials after his trip to the United States, and more than 10,000 pieces of correspondence.

With the exception of *Adventures of a Bystander* (1979), descriptions of Drucker's personal life have been far from adequate, and the often-questionable basis of his writings has left many aspects of his words and deeds unexplained for research purposes.

The Drucker Institute has played a prominent role in the study of Drucker's personality and views. Since 1999, the Drucker Archive has been conducting the "Drucker's Oral History Interviews" project, including interviews with Drucker himself, with a passion unparalleled in the world. This is a valuable record of Drucker's life in the 20th century, both as a personal story and in relation to the historical background, through interviews with those involved.

The interviewees are researchers from the Drucker Archives and Claremont Graduate University, including Karen Linkletter (historian of MLA Institute) and Amy Donnelly (graduate student in the history department at Claremont Graduate University). This Drucker's Oral History Interviews project began in June 1999, perhaps in anticipation of Drucker's death, when he and his wife donated manuscripts and memorabilia to Claremont Graduate University, and the "Peter F. Drucker Archives: A Living Legacy" as its starting point. As part of its mission to continue to make Drucker's ideas, ideals, and philosophy available, accessible, and enduring, and to make the papers and publications available for scholarly research and projects, the Claremont Graduate University under the direction of Ann Weaver Hart, has worked with Drucker. It has begun collecting written and oral information from more than thirty people who worked with Drucker. The interviews were conducted from August 1999 to March 2000, sometimes in person at their homes and sometimes via telephone.

The interviewees include Drucker himself, his wife Doris, Marty Davidson (President of Southern Pipe and Supply Company), Sonia and Vera Gold (former professors at Claremont Graduate School), Bradley Jacobs (former Orange County Assessor), Mark Willes (Editor-in-Chief of *the Los Angeles Times*), Patrick Wide (Finance Chair of the Girl Scouts of America), John Bachman (Managing Partner of Edward Jones & Company), John McNeese (former Chairman and CEO of The Colonial Group), Bob Buford (President of the Buford Foundation), and William Pollard (Chairman of ServiceMaster LLP).

Drucker himself was interviewed twice, on August 26, 1999, and on March 17, 2000. In these interviews, Drucker mentioned influential events in his life, and described in detail his first teaching position in the U.S., how he became involved in management consulting for private companies and public institutions, government consulting during World War II, and his influence on the Japanese business environment.

For example, in "Drucker's Oral History Interviews," his wife Doris told about his life in the U.S., along with his family, from the late 1940s to the early 1950s. She reminisced about life in Vermont, raising children, and the educational environment. He also touched on his later work as a patent agent, editor, and market researcher. "Drucker's Oral History Interviews" were a fascinating account of Drucker and the people around him, told in the unique way of a person living in the United States¹).

3. Drucker's Four Cities from 1920s to 1930s: Vienna,

Hamburg, Frankfurt, and London

In the following, we will examine the unique reality of the materials in the Drucker Archives' collection by reviewing correspondences from the late 1920s (the oldest available material), the Frankfurt period in the early 1930s, and the London period in 1934, as examples.

3.1 Bume & Reif, 1927

One of the most notable features of the Drucker Archives is that at the end of 1927, Drucker was employed as an apprentice at the Hamburg trading company Bume & Reif, where he left his impressions at the beginning of his working life. He was one of seven people who joined the company, including Beertolt Freiberg, who remained in contact with the Gymnasium graduates until later and contributed to Drucker's 1970 essay on his 60th birthday. As far as this selection was concerned, it showed a marked departure from the course of ordinary intellectuals as early as the beginning of his working life. The difference was clear in the position he dared to choose in a foreign country, so to speak, as a high-ranking government official in Vienna.

Soon after his arrival, he was assigned to all departments of the overseas export business, then to logistics, insurance, bookkeeping, and later to the technical department (mainly machinery exports to Japan and South America), and finally to the parts department. His main job was to post invoices to a ledger, and although he had no experience in paid work, his work attitude was diligent and well. The following certificate of employment issued by Bume & Reif on December 31, 1928, gave some indication.

"Mr. Drucker has been particularly zealous in every task assigned to him, has always been diligent and punctual, and has shown a quick grasp of things, so that we have been thoroughly satisfied with his performance and, now that he has completed his apprenticeship with us, wish him the best in his future career."²⁾

On the other hand, there was another rare opportunity during his time in Hamburg that had a major ideological impact on him. This should have raised some interesting aspects of his spiritual foundation. Once he became self-supporting, he made up his mind to stop cramming. Although he was enrolled in law school while working, there were no evening classes at the university in the first place, and he never attended a single lecture. Instead, the experience of high-quality reading took up almost all of his spiritual cultivation.

Interestingly, throughout his life, Drucker recognized the benefits of self-study in his area of interest. His workday began at 7:00 and ended at 15:30, so on his way home from work, he went to the Hamburg Public Library branch across the street to indulge in reading books on philosophy and social science, thereby developing himself independently. Although he said his reading was unplanned and undirected, he later recalled that he received more education at the Hamburg library than he had received at the Gymnasium and at the university combined. It meant the acquisition of a living environment that was completely different from his time at the Gymnasium.

3.2 Life as a Journalist, 1929-1933

Drucker, about to turn 20 years old, was trying to find a place to make the most of himself in his career as a reporter for a newspaper. This newspaper was the Frankfurter General Anzeiger, where he worked for about four years, from 1929 to 1933. He later said the newspaper was similar to the Boston Globe in the United States. Founded in 1867 by Karl Holzmann and others, it was a rival to the Frankfurter Zeitung and was the most subscribed daily newspaper in Frankfurt and the Rhine-Main area. It had a circulation of 500,000 and 14 editors. Although economic and financial affairs were the main focus of the paper, in practice all editors were responsible for articles in all fields. When they were short -staffed, they had to go out to report and write for the international, arts, and home sections, and they also dared to cover political party rallies and Nazi officials such as Breuning and Hitler.

Frankfurter General Anzeiger was operating in a post-World War I personnel shortage. Mid-career reporters and editors were lost in the war, and in order to build up the press corps, a considerable number of young people also had to be accepted and entrusted with positions of responsibility. Therefore, this difficult human resource situation led him to become a reporter and editorial writer for the international section two years after joining the company and to be promoted to one of the chief editors relatively early in his career. With 14 or 15 reporters and several editors, he published a newspaper of 48 or 64 pages daily except Sunday.

One of the most memorable moments in his career as a journalist was his encounter with Erich Dombrowski. Dombrowski, who held the position of editor-in-chief, regularly evaluated Drucker's work and at regular intervals, requested that the two men meet to discuss the next issue of the paper. Drucker later praised Dombrowski's guidance, which he described as the most demanding yet fair and instructive. "One thing I learned as a journalist is to meet deadlines," Drucker said before recounting an anecdote from his early days at the firm about a harsh reprimand.

"I had never been in a newspaper...it's a morning paper and afternoon paper, so we went to work at 6 in the morning. And I took the first streetcar on January 2 in Frankfurt...And that streetcar stopped outside that newspaper building at three minutes pass 6. And there stood the editor-in-chief...and he said, 'Young man, if you're here tomorrow at five minutes past 6, you don't have to come in.' And I said, 'The only streetcar—the first streetcar—starts at 5:28.' Whereupon he took the telephone...and woke up the mayor of Frankfurt, and the next day the streetcar line started at five minutes past 5, and I was on it."³⁾

Dombrowski was not concerned with his circumstances but demanded a sincere response to the responsibilities demanded by society. As a practical philosophy, this thinking also shows significance in his later managerial theories. In this way, Dombrowski's career as an editor, as a response to a crisis and as an activity of discursive practice, acquired significance as an intellectual whose journalistic character is often emphasized in his later work.

He was contemplating writing a book in this connection. Drucker's first book as a scholar was published in 1933, during his stay in Frankfurt. It was *Friedrich Julius Stahl*, a Jewish conservative politician and national philosopher, who had emerged through his research on 19th-century political history. He understood that Germany after 1815, when Stahl was active, closely resembled the year 1932 on the eve of Nazism and wrote about Stahl as a defender of conservatism with a focus on its modernity.

During his academic life at the Frankfurt University, Drucker included Stahl as one of the three conservative thinkers, along with Wilhelm von Humboldt (founder of the University of Berlin) and Josef von Radovitz (President of the Prussian Army). Conservatism, which had created the European political order, became precarious after World War I. In particular, with the rise of Nazism to power, conservatism was forced to disappear virtually. This trend needed to be understood in the context of the ideas and actions of modern conservatism. Drucker, however, did not shy away from his hatred of the Nazis, a 19th-century Protestant of Jewish origins. In the July 1932 elections, the Nazis became the leading party, and in January 1933, soon after Hitler became chancellor, he took advantage of the arson attack on the parliament building in Berlin on February 27, and in March, he passed the Plenipotentiary Law.

He was advancing an argument that accompanies Stahl's person and accomplishments. He saw the world as a place where God, who is beyond man, rules history, and that man, who could not be perfect, was beyond his ability to interpret the world through reason alone. This he calls "the first principle" about the world, and he believed there must have been a center before or beyond rationality. The world could not be explained by rational cessation by reason. This understanding of Stahl's was essential because it drew attention to the fact that the center of the theory of power is based on unmanipulated authority. As his childhood friend, Berthold Freiberg, later recalled, "Yet the truly important work by Drucker, the work that foreshadowed his entire subsequent development, was an entirely different one, written at about the same time and published in early 1933, just before the Hitler dictatorship snuffed out free inquiry and independent scholarship in Germany. Its title was Fr. J. Stahl; Konservative Staatslehre & Geschichtkliche Entwiclung Motrueringan (which can be freely rendered as "Fr. J. Stahl; Conservative Philosophy and Historical Continuity"). In retrospect, this-to master discontinuity, to synthesize freedom and responsibility-had to lead him to the area in which his life's work has been concluded."4)

Politics, speech, and faith act as a point of relief against the unpredictable fluctuations of the future and contribute to securing islands of safety in the stormy waters of uncertain political and social change. While maintaining this faith at the center, he pointed out that both polarities should be used creatively in the tension between continuity and change. In this sense, Stahl's creativity in this 19th-century German politics was very similar to the human situation in the context of totalitarian rule in the 1930s, and rather than avoiding this contradiction, he accepted it as an opportunity to shape reality. For this reason, Stahl can be interpreted as a book in defense of conservatism, outraged by the amplification of falsehoods by Nazism. The influence of conservatism in this respect was already clearly expressed in the Stahl. If we look at Drucker's political views, it is noteworthy that he consistently maintains a conservative tone.

First of all, he had to get the book published anyway. Of course, it could not be published anywhere. Drucker, therefore, tried to approach Oskar Siebeck, a Tübingen-based Mohl company. He was trying to sell himself under the title of "*Frankfurter General Anzeiger*, International Correspondent and External Lecturer at the Frankfurt University Seminar of International Law." In a letter dated April 4, 1933, he wrote to Siebeck as follows.

"This work is an attempt to extract the basic problems of the conservative state doctrine from the last established conservative system - the doctrine of Friedrich Julius Stahl, which is at the same time the only conservative system of Protestantism, and to present them by its example. I believe that such a scientific penetration of the conservative political problem is extremely topical and important today. The bewildering abundance of moist, very short-lived 'conservativisms' that have haunted the last few years up to the present seems to me to speak both for the need of a scientific treatment and for the lack of all the foundations for it. This little work can only make a very modest contribution to this great task; but I am of the opinion that just such a half-scientific, half-political discussion would be of special interest today. For this reason I have decided to publish this small essay, which has been ready for some time, even though it was originally intended for a larger work on conservative thinking about the state, for which I will need years due to my work overload." 5)

In his self-recommendation, he enclosed a letter of recommendation from Artur Paumgarten, one of his supervisors at Frankfurt University, and other recommenders included his uncle Hans Kelsen, who was teaching at the University of Bonn at the time. It was clear that Drucker made his pitch to Mohl publisher with extraordinary zeal. Soon after, Siebeck carefully read the draft and accepted it for publication. Moreover, the company gave Drucker the honor of commemorating the publication of the 100th issue of its series. In his April 6, 1933, reply, Siebeck wrote, "I have decided to publish this manuscript in a number one number down in the series. This is just the 100th issue. We think that your manuscript is suitable for it."⁶

Mohl's main areas of publishing were law and politics, culture, and Jewish thought. As for intellectuals around Drucker, his uncle Hans Kelsen published his Ph. D. dissertation (1911), which was published by the company by Paul Siebeck, the company owner a generation earlier. The company was also known as the publisher of Max Weber. The 32-page pamphlet *Friedrich Julius Stahl: The Conservative State and Historical Development*, begun in German in 1932, was published on April 26, 1933, as a political work.

By the way, 'conservatism,' as Drucker uses it is a concept with diverse connotations and was difficult to define in a single sense. He, unfortunately, did not have developed a coherent approach, nor does he have developed a clear argument in terms of political history. What can be said for certain, however, was that with this small book, he unambiguously accused the world of defection and deviation from orthodox political society with the rise of Nazism.

For the Nazis, Stahl was nothing more than a representative intellectual of the xenophobic spirit and a dangerous Jewish politician who should be excluded from German jurisprudence. It did not take long for the Nazis to realize the underlying intent of the accusations in the book. The book was burned after Drucker left Germany.

It was discovered in 1970, however, some received the claims correctly. Walter Hallstein, who was exposed to the "Stahl" as a Frankfurt jurist at the time and later became the first president of the European Economic Community, told Drucker that his "encounter with this book allowed me to distance myself from the Nazis."⁷⁾

3.3 London, 1934

When we look at Drucker in London after 1933, it seems quite reasonable to assume that he went to Cambridge University, eager to contact academia. This can also be traced by his later correspondence with Karl Strupp, his supervisor in Frankfurt. After being expelled from Frankfurt University in 1933, Strupp continued his academic activities in France. Even during that time, however, he seemed interested in Drucker's future as a scholar and was concerned about his career path. In a letter of recommendation by Strupp dated May 3, 1933, an attempt to arrange a teaching position at a foreign university is acknowledged.

"I had known Dr. Drucker for many years. At the beginning, I was amazed by his extensive knowledge, especially of history, and his quick wittedness in his lectures, which I attended for the purpose of discussion. I also invited him to participate in my international law seminar. The seminar is open only to students at a very high level. It is also a regular meeting of lawyers who have passed the national examinations. In a demanding environment, his lectures (he had already written his doctoral dissertation) and his participation in excellent discussions quickly earned him a central position. I made him my assistant, and he excelled there as well. I am sorry to see him go abroad, but I would be happy to recommend him to any research institution that would accept his abilities."⁸⁾

This was written shortly after Strupp's expulsion from the university at the same time. It can be read as a human consideration for a former assistant with great expectations for his future. However, his efforts to recommend her did not bear fruit.

Furthermore, a year after Strupp's letter, there was a record of Drucker's search for an academic post. In 1934,

he applied for an academic post in the U.S. to support German researchers forced to leave the country. This was Drucker's modest attempt to obtain a position at the university, but his intentions were not accepted. He was rejected because no one in Frankfurt had heard of Drucker, and he was forced to abandon his bid for an academic post.

It was clear that his academic post was not budding, but his writing career unexpectedly blossomed to save him. He used his experiences in Germany to contribute a report to a book titled *Germany: The Last Four Years*, in which he denounced the social contradictions and alienation of the Nazis that were difficult to see from a foreigner's point of view. According to the publisher, Walter Leighton, it was intended to "express objections to official German statistics." The book was published in February 1937, based on a reconstruction of a feature article that appeared in *The Banker*, the official newspaper of the Bank of England, and subtitled "An Independent Study of the Consequences of National Socialism."

Although fragmentary, the work was co-authored by 12 German exiles with military, financial, and industrial backgrounds, using "Germanicus" as their joint pseudonym. Even though he was staying in England, his safety was probably the direct reason for using this pen name. It must also have been spurred by the fact that the report described the threat that the Nazis were overthrowing all standards of value in German national life. One of Drucker's writing assignments was a section on "Newspapers," in which he pointed to the plight of the Nazis as they reorganized the press and squeezed subscriptions.

"After Hitler's accession to power, therefore, Nazi policy was no less concerned with the task of improving the precarious financial position of its own press than with converting by all possible means everyone connected with newspaper work into 'soldiers of the new State.' The suppression, on March 29, 1933, of the Socialist and Communist press enabled the various Nazi newspapers to take over the property and up-to-date machinery of their former rivals. Even this, however, did not strengthen their position. For one thing, the number of official Nazi newspapers themselves increased from 119 to 379. And for another, the old readers of the Socialist press were naturally reluctant to acquire new habits."⁹

In the above connection, Drucker, drawing the attention of English-speaking readers, charges that in National Socialist regimes, productivity is also markedly inhibited in all corporate activities. He relies on the firsthand experience he witnessed in Frankfurt.

It should be added that the book, with its thorough criticism of the Nazis, was banned in Germany less than two weeks after its publication. Despite this, The Banker continued its special issue on the German economy in 1940 and maintained its hardline confrontation with the Nazis.

On the other hand, his inner world, or the composition of his spirit, underwent a remarkable transformation. It was an encounter by chance with Japanese art at 2 p.m. on May 7, 1934, in the Burlington Arcade, where he had taken shelter from a torrential downpour on his way home from work. The impact of that encounter was a gospel that would last throughout his life. In the last year of his life, in 1999, Donnelly recounted the story in an interview titled "Drucker's Oral History Interviews."

"June 7, 1934, 2:00 p.m. Saturday, I was working in a London bank. It was one of the glorious June days you can sometimes get in England, so I walked home, and we only worked till 12:00 on Saturday. It was a long walk home from the city to Hempstead and just as I was going—do you know London? Halfway at Piccadilly Circus a storm hit, and I ducked into the first enclosed space which was the Burlington arcades. That's where the Royal Academy had its annual exhibition of paintings and instead of its usual horrible paintings, there was their first travelling exhibition, Japanese paintings. The Japanese government had sent to the West. And I was hooked for life."¹⁰

There was realism in the Japanese art exhibitions that was quite different from the European world, which had to be seriously nihilistic. This encounter also stimulated his inner cognitive faculties, helping him locate the place of perception and spirituality. The following passage from his wife Doris, with whom he would later share his collection, makes this clear¹¹: "For Peter in particular, seeing Japanese art was not only an esthetic experience, it became a necessity, as he said 'to recover my sanity and perspective of the world.'

Thus, the greatest reward was the discovery of the perceptual world, a spiritually enlightening experience that could cleanse the mind of modern consciousness.

However, the Japanese art exhibition described in the "Drucker's Oral History Interviews" are not free from doubts about the accuracy of the description. According to research by Kazuko Matsuo, curator of the Chiba City Museum of Art, no record of a Japanese art exhibition being held in London in the same year, and the dates given by Drucker (e.g., date and day) are also inconsistent. As we will see later, it is necessary to point out the inaccuracies in Drucker's historical narrative, and the doubts that arise from such inaccuracies. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that during his London period, Drucker developed a fundamental interest in Japanese art, a positive affirmation of Japanese history, culture, spirituality, and spirit, and a critical viewpoint toward the modern spirit that characterizes Europe.

4. Tentative Conclusions and Future Perspectives

The fact that Drucker's personality and achievements have the potential to significantly contribute to the new challenges of our time is reflected in the fact that his books are still being read with management as the core of their content.

Even after his death, the Archive has continued collecting valuable materials to bring integration to research. Now, materials from various periods are available to the general public through the Internet,. This feature provides an important perspective on the true face of Drucker as a person. His writings are not formally placed in the management category but are fundamentally the result of substantive observations made in Europe and the United States during the 20th century. In this sense, it is primarily based on the involvement and actions of people and society, and at the same time, it does not exist independently of the trajectory of his own life. For example, the origin of Drucker's conceptualization of management is the result of his systematization based on his disciplines at GM and is based on these experiences as a major premise. Drucker's other achievements can also be seen as products of this experience.

From this perspective, the Archive's efforts will benefit not only Drucker scholars and practitioners but also the public who share their interest in Drucker's work.

From the above, the contribution of the archive can be confirmed in at least the following three points.

1. The Archive has made it possible to verify Drucker's words and deeds in Europe in line with his life process through his passport, correspondences, etc.

2. Especially in the U.S., some materials show the basis of his thinking in the form of newspaper articles, lecture transcripts, in his attempt to extract his judgment from his actual experiences during the Nazism era.

3. The existence of materials that show the basis of Drucker's thinking in newspaper articles and lecture transcripts.

The existence of materials that show third-party evaluations of Drucker and the judgments that accompany them.

Indeed, an archive that includes these three points will be significant for future research.

In particular, there has been a tendency to underestimate the validation of Drucker's interpretation of his person and achievements, and to infer the original intention of Drucker, regardless of his intentions. The archival materials discussed in this paper are only a small part of this trend, and it is expected that the number of materials will continue to increase. The intellectual debt to the archives associated with the large number of Drucker-related materials in Japan and abroad is enormous.

On the other hand, it is also important to note the documents related to Japan, which this paper cannot be mentioned. It also paves the way for research on what role Drucker could have played in Japan's transformation into an economic superpower after World War II. In today's "lost 30 years," Drucker is a valuable resource for sharing Japan's postwar history and encouraging a reconsideration of management characteristics and Japanese cultural traits. The trajectory of Drucker's collection of Japanese art has yet to be fully elucidated, and it provides an indispensable

perspective in the comprehensive exploration of Drucker's thought.

What we have described in this paper is only a small portion of the materials in the Drucker Archives' collection. We will continue our research to gain a fuller picture of Drucker's person and achievements through further examination of these valuable materials and will publish the rest of this article in a separate paper.

Special Acknowledgments

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