

# Erich Mühsam chronology

2003

Mühsam chronologies in print include: Chris Hirte. Erich Mühsam: “Ihr seht mich nicht feige.” Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 1985 (pp.453-456 and passim) and: Chris Hirte (ed.). Erich Mühsam: Tagebücher 1910-1924. Munich: deutscher taschenbuchverlag, September 1994. Other chronologies can be found online at anarchismus.at, The Daily Bleed, the Erich-Mühsam-Gesellschaft, Irina und Conrad Piens’ Mühsam website, zeno.org, and the Erich Mühsam page of the Deutsches Historisches Museum.

1838

Birth of Siegfried Seligmann Mühsam, Erich’s father.

1871

January 18: Founding of the German Reich.

1875

German Social Democrats unite with the Lassallians.

1876

July 1: Death of Mikhail Bakunin.

1878

April 6: Erich Mühsam is born in Berlin as the fourth child of apothecary Siegfried Seligmann Mühsam and his wife Rosalie (née Cohn) (their first child, a son, died in infancy).

October 19: The first of Bismark’s Anti-Socialist Laws is approved by the Reichstag, and is signed into law on October 22 by Kaiser Wilhelm I.

1878

May 11 (ca. 3:30 pm): Max Hödel (b. 27 May 1857) attempts to assassinate Wilhelm I with a pistol during the emperor’s daily carriage ride down Unter den Linden in Berlin. [cf. Carlson, Vol.I, pp. 115-137]

June 2 (2:30 pm): Dr. Karl Eduard Nobiling (b. 10 April 1848; aka “The Crazy Doctor” — of philosophy: dissertation on agricultural history) attempts to assassinate

Kaiser Wilhelm I with a double-barreled shotgun during the emperor's daily carriage ride down Unter den Linden in Berlin [cf. Carlson, Vol.I, pp. 139-171; according to Barbara Tuchman, Hödel and Carl Nobiling represented "the last and only activists" of the German anarchist movement: "Otherwise, German Anarchists remained theorists, except for those who got away to America" (Barbara Tuchman. *The Proud Tower*. p.119)].

1879

February: The Mühsam family moves to Lübeck.

1880

November 14: August Reinsdorf is arrested by the Berlin police for plotting to blow up the Reichstag, while it was in session, by tunneling under it and placing charges at critical stress points (a plan which he had communicated to Johann Most). [cf. Carlson, Vol.1, p.285]

1883

May 10: Eugen Leviné, a future leader of the Munich Council Republic, is born in St. Petersburg.

September 28: August Reinsdorf planned to blow up Kaiser Wilhelm along with other royalty and dignitaries at the dedication ceremony of the Niederwald-denkmal; the actual attack was carried out by his collaborators Franz Rupsch and Emil Küchler [cf. Carlson, Vol.1, pp.283-302].

1885

January 13: Frankfurt Police Chief Karl Ludwig Franz Rumpf is assassinated in the night. Julius Lieske, an anarchist and journeyman cobbler, was convicted of the deed on poor evidence and ultimately executed by axe to the neck at 8:02 am on 17 November 1885 [cf. Carlson, Vol.I, pp.302-20. *The New York Times*, on 28 November 1885, ran the following notice in the "City and Urban News: New York" section: "The International Working People's Association will hold a meeting in Germania Hall, No. 291 Bowery, at 3 o'clock to-morrow afternoon, in memory of Julius Lieske, the German who was executed at Kessel last week for the murder of H. Rumpf, of the German Secret Political Police."].

1887

Siegfried Mühsam is elected to the Lübeck city parliament.

1888

June 15: Kaiser Wilhelm II ascends the throne.

1890

The 12 year-old Mühsam is held back a grade for the first time; he is forced to repeat the next two grades as well, so that he ends up at 17 years of age with 14 year-old class mates [Hirte, *Ihr seht mich nicht feige*, p.47].

Beginning in 1890, the new Reichskanzler Leo Graf von Caprivi sets the "New Course" (Neuen Kurs): "an aggressive foreign policy, massive build-up of arms, chau-

vinism, elaborate restrictive measures against the Social Democrats – in short: preparation for war”. [Hirte, p.67]

1896

Mühsam anonymously publishes a sarcastic commentary on a speech given by his school principal, Direktor Schubring of the Katharineum (parodied by Thomas Mann in *Buddenbrooks* as Direktor Wulicke), in the Socialdemocratic *Lübecker Volksboten*

January 11: Mühsam is expelled for “socialist intrigues” (Umtriebe). He finishes his schooling with the tenth grade, obtaining a diploma (mittlere Reifezeugnis) at a distant, rural school in Parchim (Mecklenburg), which he attended for about six months [Hirte, p.51-5, quotes letters from Mühsam to his parents ranging from mid-April to mid-November].

1896-1899

Mühsam’s apprenticeship in pharmacy.

1898

Mühsam’s first essays and poems are published.

September 10: Luigi Luccheni assassinates Empress Elizabeth of Austria as she is about to board a steamship in Geneva.

1899

Mühsam’s mother dies. Over the next two years, he works as an apothecary’s assistant (Apothekengehilfe) in Lübeck, Blomberg (Lippe), and Berlin.

1900

Mühsam moves to Berlin.

July 29: Gaetano Bresci shoots and kills King Umberto of Italy in Monza (Lombardy).

Fall: Starts work at the pharmacy on Weddingplatz, but quits before the year is out, ruining his father’s plans of Erich following him in business and eventually inheriting the pharmacy. [Hirte, pp.81, 89]

December: Mühsam’s first meeting with Heinrich Hart.

1901

He becomes deeply involved in the Hart brothers’ “Neue Gemeinschaft” (New Community). Start of his friendship with Gustav Landauer. [Hirte, p.88]

January 1: Mühsam becomes a freelance writer and bohemian in Berlin.

1901-1904

Mühsam publishes in *Simplicissimus*, *Gesellschaft* and *Aktion*.

As an evolving proponent of “literary Anarchism”, Mühsam, influenced by Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865), Michail Bakunin (1814-1876), and Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921), as well as by Max Stirner (1806-1856) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), cultivates a personal style which he terms “sentimental anarchism” [Gefühlsanarchismus].

1902

In the summer, moves to Friedrichshagen on the outskirts of Berlin; he commutes frequently between the two.

Mühsam makes his first contacts with anarchist groups; begins performing as a cabaretist in Berlin.

After an invitation from Albert Weidner, Mühsam begins contributing (under the pen-name "Nolo") to the bi-weekly *Der arme Teufel* starting with the first issue.

[...this gap soon to be filled!...]

1932

Joseph Goebbels identifies Mühsam as one of the Jewish agitators (Wühler) who the National Socialists will make short work (kurzen Prozeß) of once they come to power.

The *Liberation of Society from the State (Befreiung der Gesellschaft vom Staat)* first appears in the anarchosyndicalist journal "Internationale"

July 20: KPD proposes to the SPD and labor unions a general strike for the date to protest the scheduled ...The Social Democratic government of Prussia to be replaced on this date by the Reichswehr.

1933

January: "Die Befreiung der Gesellschaft vom Staat" is published as a special edition of *Fanal*, Berlin: Fanal-Verlag.

February 27: On the day of the Reichstag fire, Mühsam is arrested by members of the SA and taken to the Lehrter Strasse jail.

February 28: Without a trial he is arrested by the SA, and serves time in Lehrter Strasse jail, Sonnenburg concentration camp, Plötzensee prison, Brandenburg concentration camp, where he experiences torture and abuse.

While in Plötzensee he creates the "Verse und Bilder für Zenzl".

April 6: Mühsam's 55th birthday; the SA breaks into the protective custody unit [Schutzhaft] where Mühsam is being held and takes possession of the political prisoners, who are brought to the dilapidated Sonnenburg prison, now being used as a concentration camp [Hirte, p.439]

1934

February 2: Transported to Oranienburg concentration camp on an open truck.

July 1: The SS (specifically, the "SS-Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler", under the command of a certain Eicke) takes over Oranienburg concentration camp from the SA.

July 9, evening: Mühsam is ordered to go to the commandant's office.

July 10, night: Mühsam is murdered by SS-guards and his body hung in a latrine; international protest ensues. [Hirte, p.448]

July 15: Zenzl Mühsam emigrates to Prague.

July 16: Buried in a poorly attended ceremony at the Waldfriedhof Berlin-Dahlem. [Hirte p.450; see the passage from Susand Leonard and Frederic V. Grunfeld quoted in the "Documents" section]

July 23: Memorial celebration for Mühsam is held by the "Pariser Exil des Schriftstellerverbandes" [cf. Hirte, p.448].

1935

The hundreds of unpublished essays, poems, articles and plays constituting Mühsam's literary estate (including diaries, letters, and manuscripts) end up in the hands of the Soviet "People's Commissar for Internal Affairs" (NKWD), which takes them to Moscow, to be archived in the Maxim Gorki Institute.

1936

Zenzl Mühsam travels to the Soviet Union at the invitation of the International Red Aid. She turns over Mühsam's literary estate (consisting of manuscripts, diaries and letters) to the Maxim Gorki Institute in Moscow. She is subsequently arrested, spending most of the next twenty years in various internment camps and penal facilities. [see the "Documents" tab several brief accounts of Zenzl's travails after Mühsam's death]

1949

December: Mühsam's autobiographical *Namen, Menschen: Unpolitische Erinnerungen* is published in the German Bundesrepublik.

1956

Zenzl Mühsam returns to Germany and takes up residence in Berlin-Pankow.

1962

March 10: Death of Zenzl Mühsam.

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