

MIDA – Modern India in German Archives, 1706-1989

The research programme engages with the history of Indian-German entanglements in the political, socio-economic and intellectual spheres. The project is funded by the German Research Council (DFG).

A core part of this project is an online research portal, which consists of 3 pillars:

- **Database:** contains systematic information about collections on modern India in German archives, among them well-known institutions as the Bundesarchiv (Federal State Archives) in Berlin, as well as previously overlooked archives such as the Archiv der Jugendbewegung (Archive of the Youth Movement), Burg Ludwigstein. The platform is continuously growing.
- **Archival Reflexicon:** a collection of essays on historical or methodological themes, that illustrates how to navigate India-related holdings in German archives; provides analysis of specific topics that emerge from the engagement with the new material; and reflects on the process of tracing and indexing information on dispersed archival holdings in an online platform.
- **Thematic Resources:** provides research data generated in the MIDA project.

We think that these continually growing online resources will be of interest to all scholars of Modern Indian history and will open new research questions in a highly significant field of entanglement. We would like to invite users to get in touch with us with feedback, suggestions or contributions.

Links & Contacts

MIDA

MIDA Database <https://www.projekt-mida.de/>

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Extended Archives of Indian Labour

Selected material online

<http://www.indialabourarchives.org/>

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ILO Reports

CeMIS Website <http://www.uni-goettingen.de/en/ilo>

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Enid Perlin Collection

See CeMIS Website

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Digital Collections & Online Databases at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS)



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Extended Archives of Indian Labour

The project aims to make material on labour and on trade union movements accessible in an online database. A specific focus of the database is material on post-colonial India, for which archival material is generally hard to obtain. The project is jointly coordinated with the Association of Indian Labour Historians, involves several partners and is supported by the International Centre of Advanced Studies 'Metamorphoses of the Political' (ICAS:MP).

The collection includes:

- Documents and pamphlets of the *All Indian Trade Union Congress*. The collection focusses on a period ranging from the late 1930s to the late 1990s, and includes correspondence between trade unionists, documentation of annual meetings and of labour disputes, and studies into the condition of workers. Further scans from the archives of the AITUC are planned.
- Ca. 80 Volumes of the *Labour Law Reporter* between 1940s and the early 2000s. The journal documented a wide range of legal cases, giving details on the development of labour law in post-colonial India, as well as on legal disputes between workers and employers.
- Scans of the *Indian Labour Gazette* for a period between the 1920s and the 1980s. The current collection contains gaps. Further scans are planned.

A small selection of the material has been made available online. Further material will be made public on the CeMIS website and in the digital collections of the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam.

ILO Reports

In 1919, India was one of the 42 'founding members' of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The subcontinent's worlds of labour have attracted considerable international attention ever since. In 1928, the ILO set up a 'regional office' in New Delhi, of which Dr. P. P. Pillai, an economist and former League of Nations official, served as director until 1947. From January 1929 until December 1969, the Delhi office prepared **detailed monthly reports** on the Indian labour scene and related problems of social and economic policy, which were regularly sent to the main offices in Geneva and (during World War II) in Montreal.

These reports may be used as an important resource for a variety of research projects on India's labour and social policies during the late colonial and early postcolonial periods. The originals are preserved in the ILO Archives in Geneva. In a joint effort, historians at the Centre for Modern Indian Studies at the University of Göttingen and of the International Labour Organization's 'Century Project' have now digitized the almost complete set of these reports. A searchable **finding aid** containing the tables of content of all reports facilitates the use of this collection.



(Oral histories of Coimbatore cotton textile mill workers collected by Enid Perlin

Comprising of interviews conducted with 145 mill-workers, the data collected by Enid Perlin during her doctoral field-work presents a rich life history of cotton textile mill-workers in Coimbatore, spanning close to 4 decades from the early 1930s to 1975-76. The interviews, conducted in English and Tamil, include details on wages paid to mill-workers, prices of essential commodities traced over a period of four decades, recollections of epidemics and famine, changes wrought by the introduction of new machinery in the labour-process, and a recollection of infrastructural changes in Coimbatore and surrounding villages.

The interviews are available in the form of digital **audio recordings** and **survey questionnaires**. In addition, we have prepared detailed meta-data in English. These contain

- summaries of the interview(s)
- biographical profiles of mill-worker(s)
- highlights of specifically unique details that pertain to the life of the mill-worker interviewed.

We are currently working on making the digitized recordings, questionnaires, meta-data and other documents, available to the researchers interested in a fascinating period of social change, described through the lives of those who lived and experienced it. This data will be made public on the CeMIS website and through other digital archive sources.