

# **Paul Thalmann / Clara Thalmann Papers 1920-1986**

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## Paul Thalmann / Clara Thalmann Papers

**Period** 1920-1986

**Total size** 0.9 m.

**Consultation** Not restricted

### Biography

Paul (Pavel) Thalmann: pseudonym Franz Heller; born in Basel, Switzerland 1901, died in Nice, France 1980; journalist; influenced by the Swiss libertarian Fritz Brupbacher; secretary of the Swiss communist youth movement 1921-1925; delegate to the congress of the Communist Youth International in Moscow in 1922, where he was influenced by the circle around Trotsky; attended a party school in Moscow from 1925 to 1928; became editor of the Basler Vorwärts in 1928, where he met Clara Ensner;

Clara Thalmann-Ensner: born in Basel 1908, died in Nice 1987; Thalmann and Ensner: were both expelled from the Kommunistische Partei der Schweiz in 1929; Thalmann became editor of the Arbeiter-Zeitung in Schaffhausen in 1932; active in the Kommunistische Partei Opposition and Trotskyist groups in Basel and Zurich; went to Spain in 1936; both joined the anarchosyndicalist Durruti Column; imprisoned by the communists in Barcelona and Valencia in 1937; during the Second World War they lived in Paris helping German refugees; after 1945 involved in agitation against the Soviet Union and for the liberation of Algeria; started the Serena guesthouse in Nice in 1953; in touch with new generations of student activists during the sixties and seventies; published their memoirs in the 1970s; in the documentary 'Die lange Hoffnung' of 1983 Clara Thalmann and Augustin Souchy revisit sites of the Spanish Civil War.

### Content

Papers mainly from 1960 onwards. Notes and other personal documents 1920-1986; correspondence with Federico Bach 1968-1969, H. Benzion 1960-1977, Louis Bonnel 1981-1984, Jean-Jacques Cellier 1982-1986, Ante Ciliga 1979-1983, Arthur Cravan 1979-1985, Jean Daniel 1970-1981, Winand Ehls 1984-1986, Katia Landau 1968-1986, Gaston Rolland 1976-1984, Alfred Rosmer 1964 and n.d., Albert Utiger 1980-1986, Herbert and Greta Wehner 1984-1985 and others; manuscripts of, and files on their memoirs 'Wo die Freiheit stirbt', 'Revolution für die Freiheit' and 'Combats pour la liberté' and on documentaries about their involvement in the Spanish Civil War 1964-1986.

### Administrative information

#### Processing information

List made by Bouwe Hijma in 1993

### INTRODUCTION

Paul (Pavel) Thalmann was born on 30 September 1901 in Basel into a Roman Catholic workers' family. Members of his family worked in the textile industry. Impressed by the Russian Revolution he joined the youth movement in Basel and he was secretary of the Swiss communist youth movement from 1921 to 1925. In 1922 he was a delegate to the congress of the Jugendinternationale in Moscow, where he was attracted by the circle around Trotsky. In 1925 he was sent to a party school in Moscow for three years together with Hermann Erb from Schaffhausen and Ernst Illi from Zurich. Returning in 1928 he became editor of the Basler Vorwärts and met Clara Ensner his future lifelong comrade, who was born into a working class family in Basel in 1908. In 1929 he came in conflict with the communist party which excluded him together with some other members.

Afterwards he was active in the Kommunistische Partei Opposition and in Trotskyist groups in Basel and Zurich.

He also tried to continue his journalistic career and in 1932 became editor of the Arbeiter-Zeitung in Schaffhausen. In 1936 the Thalmanns became engaged in the Spanish Civil War. Clara left in July to participate in the Spartakiade in Barcelona which was called because of the outbreak of the Civil War.

Paul came to Spain as well and was correspondent for some Swiss papers. Later on they served in a battalion of the Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista ( POUM ) and afterwards they joined the German anarcho-syndicalists in the militia column ' Durruti '. Under the pseudonym Franz Heller Paul Thalmann had written the leaflet 'Für die Arbeiter-Revolution in Spanien'. He and Clara were kept in prison by the communists in Barcelona and Valencia in 1937. Finally they were able to leave Spain after intervention by the Sozialistische Arbeiter-Internationale. Protected by their Swiss identity papers the Thalmanns lived in Paris during the Second World War, where their house was a relative place for a lot of refugees.

After 1945 they engaged in agitation against the situation in the Soviet Union and in favor of the liberation of Algeria.

In 1953 they moved to Nice where they started the Serena guesthouse, a well-known place within their great circle of friends. Because of their involvement in the Spanish Civil War, Paul and Clara Thalmann were at the end of the sixties and in the seventies 'rediscovered' by a younger generation of the students and political activists. In 1974 they published their memoirs 'Wo die Freiheit stirbt'. Later on an enlarged version was published under the title 'Revolution für die Freiheit. Stationen eines politischen Kampfes' and translated in English and French. These memoirs concentrate on the years in Moscow, the engagement in the Spanish Civil War. On March 16th 1980 Paul Thalmann died in Nice. Clara remained very active and returned in 1983 together with her earlier comrade Augustin Souchy to Spain to visit sites of the Spanish Civil War. Of this trip, the Medienwerkstatt Freiburg made the documentary 'Die lange Hoffnung' which registered the emotions they experienced after all these decades. Clara Thalmann died on January 27th 1987 in Nice.

The papers of Paul and Clara Thalmann were given to the International Institute of Social History in 1992.

Books and periodicals have been transferred to the library and photographs, posters, tapes and two painted portraits to the audiovisual department of the Institute.

## LIST

### Diaries and memoirs

- 1-8     Memoirs and other notes of Paul and Clara Thalmann. n.d. 2 volumes, 5 quires and 1 cover.
- 9       Three diaries of Clara Thalmann. 1986. 1 folder

### Correspondence

- 10-122   Letters received, and copies of letters sent by Paul and Clara Thalmann. Alphabetically arranged by family names. 1925-1986 and n.d. 13 folders
  - 10     Abendroth, Wolfgang. 1970.
  - 11     Adelson, Erena A. 1973.
  - 12     Ali, Hannelore. 1972.
  - 13     Anders, Willi. 1970, 1973, 1980, 1983-1985.
  - 14     Arquer, Jordi. 1960, 1974.
  - 15     Bach, Federico. 1968-1969.
  - 16     Bailly, Julie. 1981-1982.
  - 17     Behrmann, Andrea. 1984.
  - 18     Benzion, H. ( International Rescue Committee Paris). 1960-1963, 1973, 1975, 1977.
  - 19     Bercher, Louis. 1973.
  - 20     Berthault, J. 1984.
  - 21     Beuthner, R. & R. n.d.

- 22 Bolloten, Burnett. 1985-1986.
- 23 Borkenau, F. 1985.
- 24 Borkman. 1964.
- 25 Bortfeldt, Hermann (Raymond). 1982, 1985.
- 26 Broué, Pierre. 1977, 1984, n.d.
- 27 Buselmeier, Karin. 1984.
- 28 Buttinger-Gardiner, Muriel M. 1959-1960, 1962-1964, 1969, 1974, 1985, n.d.
- 29 Castro, Elsa , Elena and Ferreira de. n.d.
- 30 Cellier, Jean-Jacques (Editions La digitale). 1982-1986.
- 31 Ciliga, Ante (Na pragu. Sutrasnjice. Revue croate trimestrielle). 1979-1983.
- 32 Coppée, Louis. 1972.
- 33 Cravan, Arthur (ps.) 1979-1980, 1985, n.d.  
N.B. With a note by Jean-Jacques Cellier on 'Arthur Cravan' , sent to Kees Rodenburg, IISH, 11.12.2011.
- 34 Criot. 1960.
- 35 Cuttat, René (Consulat de Suisse, Bordeaux). 1940.
- 36 Cviklinski, Stanislas. n.d. [illegible].
- 37 Daniel, Jean. 1970-1972, 1975, 1981.
- 38 Darmstadt, Emma. 1940.
- 39 Dazy, René. 1977.
- 40 Dechezelles, Yves. 1980, 1984.
- 41 Deligtisch, Hugo. & Margaret. 1970, 1985-1986.
- 42 Drucker, Erich. 1980.
- 43 Dufrasne, Claude. 1983.
- 44 Eckstein, Günther (George) & Ruth. 1977-1978, 1980, 1982, 1984-1986.
- 45 [Edo], Luis [Andres]. 1984, 1986.
- 46 Ehls, Winand. 1984-1986.
- 47 Ensner, Paul. n.d.
- 48 Fallen de Droog, Ernst. 1966.
- 49 Fisera, Vladimir. 1980, n.d.
- 50 Fontseré, Carles. 1986.
- 51 Freund, Jacob. 1977.
- 52 Frölich, Rosi. 1985.
- 53 Futran, Eduard. 1939.
- 54 Galanty, Ernst. 1974.
- 55 Gräff, Erwin. 1979-1981.

- 56 Guérin, Daniel. 1983.
- 57 Guilloux, J.F. 1985.
- 58 Hackl, Erich. 1985.
- 59 Haug, Wolfgang ( Trotzdem Verlag ). 1984-1986, n.d.
- 60 Haener, Daniel. 1981.
- 61 Henschke, Gerhard. 1985-1986.
- 62 Huber, Peter. 1986.
- 63 Joos, Edi. 1969-1973.
- 64 Krebs, Robert. 1926, 1928.
- 65 Landau, Katia. 1968-1969, 1979-1986.
- 66 Landolt, Brigit. 1975.
- 67 Lanneret, Pierre. 1963-1964, 1969-1970, 1975-1976, 1980-1986, n.d.
- 68 Larsen, Gusti en Salla. 1967-1968, 1985, n.d.
- 69 Leo, Rossella di ( Centro Studi Libertari 'G. Inelli' ). 1986.
- 70 Leonhard, Susanne. 1966.
- 71 Liberdad Verlag Berlin. 1984.
- 72 Lindborn, Tage (Arbetarrörelsens Arkiv). n.d.
- 73 Lüthy, Herbert & Lang, Antoinette. 1963, 1972-1973, 1980-1981, 1982, 1984-1985, n.d.
- 74 Maitron, Jean. 1982.
- 75 Mann, Louis D. 1980.
- 76 Martinet, Jean Daniel. 1964.
- 77 Mattick, Paul en Ilse. 1970.
- 78 Monatte, [Pierre]. [1953].
- 79 Moneta, Jakob. 1980.
- 80 Montaudon, Dominique en Ségur, Roger. n.d.
- 81 Müller-Bilitza, Brigitte. n.d.
- 82 Müller, Jrma. 1976.
- 83 Nelki, S.W. 1977.
- 84 Nickel, Hans A. 1977.
- 85 Nunez, Ernesto. 1978.
- 86 Olsen, Alex & Hilde. 1984.
- 87 Pampuch, Bernhard. 1973.
- 88 Pampuch, Thomas. 1980.
- 89 Pennekamp, Alfred. With annexes. 1977.
- 90 Petterson, Ivar. 1984.
- 91 Pfeffer, Siegfried. 1967.

- 92 Ratzfelde, Erich. 1973.
- 93 Reberieux, Madeleine. 1982.
- 94 Roche, Gérard. 1984-1985.
- 95 Roger, Ellen. 1986.
- 96 Roger, Gaston. 1976-1977, 1979-1981, 1983-1984.
- 97 Rosmer, Alfred & Marguerite (Mika). 1964, n.d.
- 98 Rubel, Maximilien. 1982-1983.
- 99 Salomon, Louis & Ilse. 1975, 1981, 1985-1986.
- 100 Schaper, Hans F. 1986.
- 101 Schmeda, Astrid. 1986.
- 102 Schnidt, Inge. 1982.
- 103 Sharron, Mark. 1972, 1985.
- 104 Simon, Henri. 1986.
- 105 Soeder, Alfons. n.d.
- 106 Sperber, Manès 1980.
- 107 Spillmann, Hans-Rudolf. 1978-1979.
- 108 Steffen, Ludwig. 1979.
- 109 Stiftung Studienbibliothek zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung (Zurich). 1980.
- 110 Underwood, Dick & Virginia Lee. 1968, 1973, 1980, 1986, n.d.
- 111 Underwood, Pym. 1971, 1973-1974, 1986.
- 112 Unionsbuchhandlung Basel. 1925.
- 113 Utiger, Albert. 1980, 1982-1984, 1986.
- 114 Wallach, Erica. 1977, 1985.
- 115 Walter, E. 1946.
- 116 Wehner, Herbert & Greta. 1984-1985, n.d.
- 117 [Winter], Hannes. n.d.
- 118 Wittlin, Karl. [1965/66], 1971.
- 119 Wobmann, Karl. 1986.
- 120 Wollenberg, Erich. 1957.
- 121 Wolpert, Vladimir M. 1980.
- 122 Woppelt-Stau, Annete & Thomas. 1984.
- 123-149 Incoming letters received by Paul and Clara Thalmann. Alphabetically arranged on first names. 1961-1986. 2 folders
  - 123 Anne & Hans. 1973.
  - 124 Barbara & Harro. 1976.
  - 125 Brian. 1971.
  - 126 Brigit. n.d.
  - 127 Claire & Jef. 1981-1982.

- 128 Cornelia. 1975.
- 129 Dagmar. 1976, 1978, 1985-1986.
- 130 Detlef. 1976, 1980.
- 131 Hubert. 1977.
- 132 Inge. 1986.
- 133 Jaurel & Mathilde & Moneta. 1961.
- 134 Karin. 1975.
- 135 Karin. 1982.
- 136 Kaufmann. 1972.
- 137 Kurt. 1978.
- 138 Lea. 1985.
- 139 Liesbeth. 1975, 1977.
- 140 Lou & Sherry. 1973, n.d.
- 141 Luba. 1974, n.d.
- 142 Marcel & Marguerite. 1978.
- 143 Mike. 1976.
- 144 Rita. 1975-1976, 1984, n.d.
- 145 Roger. 1971.
- 146 Rolf. 1975, 1977.
- 147 Sigrid. n.d.
- 148 Susanne Stujel (?). 1986.
- 149 Thomas & W[...]. 1974.
- 150 Incoming letters. Illegible signatures. 1925, 1927, 1949, 1958-1959, 1962-1963, 1965, 1967, 1972-1974, 1977-1980-1981, 1983-[1984], 1986, n.d. 1 folder

## Personal documents

- 151 Testimonials for Paul Thalmann from Bachofen-Dennler & Sohn Baugesellschaft, Bell A.G. Groß-Schlächtereier-Wurst-Fabrik and Vacuum Oil Company in Basel. 1920, 1923. 3 pieces
- 152 Documents relating to the military service of Paul Thalmann. 1925, 1939, n.d. 1 cover
- 153 Passports and other identity documents of Paul and Clara Thalmann. 1926, 1928, 1931, 1937, 1940, 1945, 1948, 1952, 1962, 1964, 1969, 1978-1979. 1 folder
- 154 List of German titles in the 'Thalmann-Bibliothek'. With annexes. [c. 1980]. 1 cover
- 155 Adress- and telephone notebooks. n.d. 3 quires
- 156 Visiting card 'P. Thalmann. Journaliste'. n.d. 1 piece
- 157 New Year card Paul and Clara Thalmann. n.d. 1 piece
- 158 Mourning card announcing the death of 'Pavel' Thalmann. 1980. 1 piece
- 159 Obituaries of Paul Thalmann. 1980. 4 pieces



## Manuscripts and publications

### On Paul and Clara Thalmann

- 160 Manuscript 'Zum Gedenken an Paul Thalmann' by Max Wullschleger. [1980]. 1 piece
- 161 Correspondence and other documents relating to a biographical sketch of Paul Thalmann written by Louis Bonnel. 1981-1984. 1 folder
- 162 Manuscript of an interview of Clara Thalmann by Winand Ehls and Axel Wagner for Black Star Press. 1984. 1 cover
- 163 Manuscript 'Itinéraire exemplaire' by Carlos Semprun Maura on the life of Paul and Clara Thalmann. n.d. 1 piece

### By Paul and Clara Thalmann

- 164 Correspondence with the Walter-Verlag AG in Olten, Switzerland relating to the publication of 'Wo die Freiheit stirbt'. 1971-1976. 1 folder
- 165 Part of the manuscript of the French translation of 'Revolution' ('Combats'). 1973. 1 folder
- 166-167 Articles about the life of Paul and Clara Thalmann and reviews of and other documents relating to 'Wo die Freiheit stirbt'/'Revolution für die Freiheit' and 'Combats pour la liberté'. 1974-1977, 1980-1981, 1983-1985. 2 folders
- 168 Manuscript 'Where freedom dies. Stages of a political struggle' (translated by Pym Underwood ) and other documents relating to the English translation. 1977. 1 folder
- 169 Documents relating to the French translation of 'Wo die Freiheit stirbt'. 1980-1983. 1 folder
- 170 Manuscript of 'Wo die Freiheit stirbt'/'Revolution für die Freiheit'. N.d. 1 cover
- 171 Manuscript of an account of Paul and Clara Thalmann's imprisonment in Spain. (c. 1937-1938). 1 piece

### By others

- 172 Manuscript 'Der Auszug aus Paris'. Anonymous. [1940]. 1 piece
- 173 Manuscript of the "Lizentiatsarbeit" 'Die Arbeiter-Parteien in Schaffhausen' by Edi Joos. 1969. 1 folder
- 174 'Karl Osner May 26, 1901-April 3, 1972', Memories of Osner , written shortly after his death. [1972]. 1 piece
- 175 'Rede von Rosi Frölich (86 Jahre) anlässlich des 80. Geburtstages von Hans T. am 1.9.1974'. 1 piece
- 176 Manuscript of an interview with August Souchy for Black Star Press and other documents relating to Souchy. 1976, 1982-1984. 1 folder
- 177 Manuscript 'Thesen (Sätze) and die Türen der Universität Zürich genagelt' by Walter Nelz. 1977. 1 quire
- 178-179 Manuscript of the "Lizentiatsarbeit" 'Die internationale Brigaden im spanischen Bürgerkrieg 1936-1939' by Albert Utiger . Part1: Text, Part II: Anmerkungen, Abkürzungsverzeichnis, Bibliographie. 1980. 2 volumes
- 180 Alber Utiger , 'Krieg der Ideen, Vorgeschichte, 1936-1939: Der Bürgerkrieg, Das Gesicht der Revolution' & Alois Müller , 'Die Plakate: Bilder als Waffen'. 1986. 1 quire
- 181 Manuscript 'Les fous de Paris. Le drame de nos jours. (Texte d'un film surréaliste)' by Ante Ciliga. 1986. 1 cover

- 182 Manuscripts 'La structure de l'état soviétique', 'Structure et composition du parti communiste de l'U.R.S.S. and biographical sketches of N.S. Khrouchtchev and G.M. Malenkov [by Nicolas Lazarewitch]'. n.d. 1 cover
- 183 Manuscript 'La Deuxième Internationale'. Anonymous. n.d. 1 piece
- 184 Manuscript in French on the Spanish Civil War. Anonymous. n.d. 1 piece
- 185 Manuscripts 'Solschenizyn - Russland und die revolutionäre Linke' en 'Solschenizyn - Russland und die "Neue Linke" '. Anonymous. n.d. 2 pieces

## Documents on conferences

- 186-187 Documents relating to the participation of Paul Thalmann in a conference of former students of communist party schools at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. With manuscripts 'Westuniversität in Moskou' and 'Bemerkungen zur Bildung der Kader in der kommunistischen Bewegung' by Paul Thalmann. 1969, n.d. 2 folders

## Documents on films and television programs

- 186188- Documents relating to the documentary 'Deutsche im spanischen Bürgerkrieg' made by Wanda Bronska-Pampuch for the Westdeutscher Rundfunk. 1964-1967 en 1972. 1 cover
- 189 Documents relating to the documentary 'Les deux mémoires' on Spain planned by George Semprun for Productions Filmanthrope. 1972. 1 cover
- 190 Documents relating to the documentary 'Schweizer im Spanischen Bürgerkrieg' made by Richard Dindo , and other documents relating to the fortieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and the role of Swiss volunteers. 1973-1976, n.d. 1 folder
- 191 Announcements and reviews of the documentary 'Die lange Hoffnung' ( Medienwerkstatt Freiburg ) on the return of Carla Thalmann and Augustin Souchy to locations of the Spanish Civil War, and other documents on Medienwerkstatt Freiburg. 1984-1986. 1 folder

## Other documents

- 192 Manuscripts of the French translations of the records of the International Socialist 'Zimmerwald' Conference in 1916, n.d. 1 folder
- 193 Testimonial of the authorities in Omsk on practical activities done by Paul Thalmann during his stay in Moscow. 1926. 1 piece
- 194 Letter of N.N. to Paul Thalmann on his stay in Moscow. 1928. 1 piece
- 195 Copy of a letter of the Kommunistische Internationale to the Swiss communist party on the publication of an article written by Thalmann. 1929. 1 piece
- 196 Document relating to the exclusion of Paul Thalmann an others out of the communist party. [1929]. 1 piece
- 197 Copy of a report by the 'Polizei-Inspektorat Basel-Stadt' on Paul Thalmann. 1935. 1 piece
- 198 Copy of a letter on the Spanish Civil War in particular the flights near Brunete in July 1937. 1937. 1 piece  
N.B. Incomplete.
- 199 Document relating to the communist c.q. Trozkyist opinion of emigrants in Basel and Zurich and a copy of a part of an article on the sentence of supposed spionnes in 1939. [1938] en z.j. 2 pieces

- 200 Copy of a letter to Ruth on the 'affaire Nicole', press clippings on Léon Nicole and the affaire Loew/Haug and leaflet 'Genosse Nicole, ich kann nicht mehr schweigen!' by Leo Loew. 1947, 1951-1953. 1 folder
- 201 Copy of a letter by Paul Thalmann to 'Lieber Max' on the book 'Mein Leben. Weg und Unweg eines schweizer Sozialdemokraten' by Walther Bringolf. 1965. 1 piece
- 202 Statement of Paul and Clara Thalmann about Michel Wolpe (WOOP). n.d. 2 pieces

## Documentation

- 203 Le Réveil Prolétarien. Organe du Groupe Révolutionnaire Prolétarien, later Le Réveil Prolétarien. Organe de l'Union Communiste Internationaliste (pour la Quatrième Internationale). 1944. 2 pieces
- 204 Press clippings on French politics out of German and Swiss newspapers and periodicals, sent by the Bureau International de Documentation in Paris. 1947-1952. 1 cover
- 205 Newspaper article on Emil Arnold, editor of the Vorwärts, sentenced for insulting Paul Thalmann. [1952]. 1 piece
- 206 Obituary of Alfred Rosmer. [1964]. 1 piece
- 207 Press clippings because of the fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. 1986. 1 cover
- 208 Article 'Krise und Perspektiven des Anarchosyndikalismus in Spanien' by Luis Andres Edo. n.d. 1 piece
- 209 Article 'L'odyssée tragique des Allemands antinazis exilés en France' by Rodolphe Prager. n.d. 1 piece