

# How Covid-19 Crisis has impacted activities of Ohara Institute for Social Research

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# Publication of the Institute's 100-year History



- Ohara Institute for Social Research has published the *100-year History of Ohara Institute for Social Research* in March 2020 by Hosei University Press (in Japanese)
- Its main section (223 pages) records the Ohara Institute's activities from 1919 to 2019, and its appendix (63 pages) includes a chronological table, a list of publications, and a list of staff members.
- However, we could not celebrate its publication because of the rapid spread of Covid-19 in Japan.

# Government and University Policies Concerning the Spread of Covid-19

- On March 24, one-year postponement of Tokyo Olympic Game 2020 was announced.
- On March 25, the governor of Tokyo held an emergency press conference and warned a possibility of “an explosive spread of Covid-19,” and asked residents in Tokyo metropolitan area to refrain from going out unless necessary over the weekends and to work from home on weekdays.
- On April 7, the Japanese government issued “a State of Emergency in response to the Novel Coronavirus Disease.”
- To comply with “a State of Emergency,” Hosei University (the university with which the Ohara Institute is affiliated) started a campus lock-down from April 9.

# How the Ohara Institute Responded to These Situations

- The Ohara Institute announced on March 31 that it would close its reading room to users from April 1 to May 6.
- It was a hard decision to make because many researchers and graduate students (both in Japan and from overseas) use our collections of historical materials to write their articles, books, and dissertations.
- The Ohara Institute is located on one of the three campuses of the university, so it had to follow the university's decision of lockdown and closed the Institute itself on April 9.
- Activities of the Institute, such as archiving historical materials and cataloging books and periodicals, were suspended.  
Publication of *the Journal of Ohara Institute for Social Research* (monthly academic journal of the institute) was delayed.

# Activities during the Closure of the Institute

- The closure of the Ohara Institute lasted from April 9 to June 14. During this period, researchers and staff members worked from home, and held on-line meetings. For example, editing work of the institute's publications was done by researchers and staff members at home, texts were exchanged via e-mail, and information was shared through on-line meetings.
- From June 15, staff members and researchers resumed their work at the Institute (some of the researchers chose to work from home).
- Research meetings that we hold every month were held on-line from April. It was pleasant surprise for us that the number of participants in these research meetings increased after they went on-line. It became easier for those living far away from the Ohara Institute to participate in research meetings via internet.

# Conditions of Document Storage Space during the Closure of the Ohara Institute

- The Ohara Institute stores historical documents and books mainly in the third level basement of the library building.
- During the lock-down of the university, maintenance crew of the building changed its air circulation system.
- Because of the change, outside air was circulated within the building, and the humidity of the document storage space went up.
- High humidity increases the chance of the growth of mold on books and documents.
- After staff members resumed work on June 15, they asked maintenance crew to stop the circulation of outside air.



# Photos of the Document Storage Space



# Reopening of the Reading Room

- The Ohara Institute reopened its reading room to users from July 1. Since many of the users of the reading room (i.e., those who come to the institute to read and make a copy of historical materials) are from outside of the university, we needed to get an approval from the university's administration for the entry of "outside visitors" to the campus.
- To reduce the risk of possible spread of Covid-19, we limit a number of users of the reading room per day and ask them to watch their health and to wear face masks. We strongly discourage their visit to the institute if they are not feeling well.
- We also check their body temperature, if necessary.



# Reading Room of the Ohara Institute



# Reception Desk of the Institute

(Note protection sheets were set up, and a hand sanitizer is on the desk)



# How to Move Ahead under the Current Crisis

- We continue to digitalize our historical materials and make them available in our website.
- We are also planning to enhance the content of the Institute's English website by adding exhibitions of digitalized images of posters and other materials with English captions (see next slide).
- We seek a new way of holding conferences and academic meetings by using on-line tools.
- The Ohara Institute has published *The Labour Year Book of Japan* since 1920. Recording labor and social issues in the yearbook has been one of the main activities of the Ohara Institute.
- *The Labour Year Book* of 2021 will record how Covid-19 impacted labor market conditions, industrial relations, activities of labor unions and social movements, and labor policies.



We have put English captions to about 70-80 percent of 5,000 posters owned by the Institute. Currently, Japanese and English captions can be retrieved only by the data search system in Japanese. We are planning to create “poster exhibitions,” so that those who cannot write or read Japanese can view English captions of posters of various labor organizations and social movements.

【タイトル】第8回メーデーポスター，示威運動に参加せよ！日本労働組合評議会関東地方評議会  
【Title】The 8th Mayday Poster, Join the Protest! Japan Labour Union Confederation Kanto Confederation  
【人名・団体名】日本労働組合評議会関東地方評議会  
【Organizations/Names】 -  
【作成日】1927.05  
【資料の大きさ】32x47cm  
【請求記号】PA0785  
【画像】



English caption

【タイトル】春闘を勝ちぬこう！ 化学労働者の統一行動で  
【Title】Let's win through the Spring Offensive! Through a united action by chemical workers.  
【人名・団体名】全国化学産業労働者協議会／新海覚雄  
【Organizations/Names】 -  
【作成日】1966年  
【資料の大きさ】51.5cmx72.5cm  
【請求記号】PB4245  
【画像】



English caption