

**Otto Rühle - a Dresden
Social Pedagogue**

Biographical data Otto Rühle:

23/10/1874	Born in Großvoigtsberg/ Saxony
1889-1895	Attends the Teacher training seminar in Oschatz
1895	Home tutor position at Borna Castle
1896	Assistant teacher in Oederan
1898-1906	Travel writer/ Editor at various newspapers (Hamburger Zeitung, Chemnitzer Volksstimme; Harburger Volksblatt, Volkswacht Breslau)
1907-1913	Itinerant teacher of the SPD's "Central Education Committee"
1912-1918	Member of the National parliament for the constituency "Pirna- Sebnitz" (up to 1/1916 as a member of the SPD parliamentary group; thereafter as independent)
20/03/1915	In the Reichstag, Rühle votes against the war loans together with Karl Liebknecht
1917-1919	Establishment of a children's recreation home in Mulda near Freiberg
1918	Briefly Chairman of the United Revolutionary Workers' and Soldiers' Council Dresden
ca. 1922	Together with his wife Alice Rühle-Gerstel, Rühle establishes the publishing house "Am andern Ufer" in Dresden (Buchholz-Friedewald);

The publisher issues e.g. Am andern Ufer. Blätter für sozialistische Erziehung. (1924); Die Seele des proletarischen Kindes (1925); *Das proletarische Kind. Monatsblätter für proletarische Erziehung.* (1.1925/26; 2.1926); Schwer erziehbare Kinder. *Eine Schrifttenfolge* (1926/1927).

1939-1943

24/06/1943

Trotsky counter-process (Chair: John Dewey)
Income from Casual work
Otto Rühles dies of heart failure, suicide
Of Alice Rühle-Gerstel



Otto Rühle (1874-1943)

10/1932	Alice and Otto Rühle move their residence to Prague
11/1935	Otto Rühle emigrates to Mexiko; Alice Rühle-Gerstel follows him 1936
01/1936/1938	Advisor to the Mexican Ministry of Education
1937	Commission member of the

Social Pedagogy

In the first third of the 20th century, Otto Rühle developed a social pedagogy that drew its theoretical principles from analyses of the reality of education and the family structures of the industrial proletariat. Rühle's socio-political demands in the German Empire focused on improving the living conditions of the proletariat and on a comprehensive social mission for the contemporary elementary school.

Rühle, whose immediate sphere of activity was primarily in Saxony and Prussia, based his studies of the proletarian child e.g. on empirical investigations of the Saxon industrial regions of Dresden, Chemnitz, and Leipzig. In 1904, in "Das sächsische Volksschulwesen" (*The Saxon Elementary School System*), he dealt with the legal regulations and the educational practice at the Saxon elementary schools, and in 1911 his monograph "Das proletarische Kind" (*The Proletarian Child*) was published.



Alice Rühle-Gerstel (1924)

With his papers on socialization theory of the proletarian child, Rühle contributed pioneering work to the **sociology and psychology of the proletarian child** as well as to the **pedagogy and sociology** of deviant behavior. In the context of workers' education, he introduced his positions on the socialization conditions of proletarian children as well as on an education that respects the child in individual lectures and courses starting in 1896. As a traveling teacher for the SPD (1907-1913), he gave a large number of lectures on educational issues in Saxony.

With the educational supplement "The Proletarian Child" published in 6 newspapers in the years 1912-1915, Rühle tried to familiarize parents with the findings of contemporary psychology and pedagogy

and to give them educational advice.

Rühle did the editorial work for the supplement from Dresden, as he was living in Hellerau at the time. In the Reichstag, where he had held a seat for the constituency of "Pirna-Sebnitz" since 1912, he also repeatedly advocated dealing with children in a way that respected their development. In his speeches in the national parliament, he criticized e.g. the inadequate legal provisions in Saxony and Prussia with regard to combating child labor.

Materialistic individual-psychological theory of education

His direct experience with the development of consciousness and the principles of education in the proletariat led Rühle to critically reflect on his own views on educational theory and practice during the Weimar Republic, and to examine the connection between social milieu and individual coping behavior from a material, individual, psychological perspective in his social-educational writings.

In 1925, Rühle published his book "Die Seele des proletarischen Kindes" (*The Soul of the Proletarian Child*) in the publishing house "Am andern Ufer", which he and his wife Alice Rühle-Gerstel had founded in Buchholz-Friedewald (near Dresden). The publishing house also published the series "Schwer erziehbare Kinder" (*Troublesome children*), in which 20 authors presented their positions on educational issues.

Alice Rühle-Gerstel published "Freud und Adler" (1924) and "Der Weg zum Wir" (1927), which became the starting point of controversies between Marxists and psychologists and between Marxist psychoanalysts and individual psychologists. Alice Rühle-Gerstel, who studied philosophy and literary history in Munich, got to know Otto Rühle in the early 1920s.

Her writings focused on the relationship between psychoanalysis, individual psychology, and Marxism, as well as on the question of gender.

In "Das Frauenproblem der Gegenwart. Eine psychologische Bilanz" (1932) (*The issue of women in contemporary society. A psychological assessment*), she dealt with the gender-hierarchical structures of modern societies and their individual anchoring in women and men. In 1925/1926, Otto Rühle and Alice Rühle-Gerstel



Carl Sternheim and Otto Rühle (1924)

headed the educational community The Proletarian Child in Dresden, and in 1924, together with Grete Fantl, they founded the Marxist Individual Psychological Working Group Dresden. A first congress of Marxist individual psychologists that was initiated by the working group took place in Dresden in April 1927, a second one in Vienna in September 1927. In his writings of the 1920s, Rühle discussed the issue of the interaction between social milieu and individual coping behavior and the question of authority as a social and educational phenomenon. In his writings, he dealt intensively with contemporary women's questions, juvenile delinquency, individual and collective forms of protest by young people, and sexuality. In his political writings of the early 1930s, Rühle criticized the ideology of the National Socialist movement as well as the totalitarian system of the Soviet Union.