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ERIC DORN BROSE

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CHRISTIAN LABOR AND THE POLITICS OF
FRUSTRATION IN IMPERIAL GERMANY

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Eric Dorn Brose

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1978

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an analysis of interest group politics in Imperial Germany. The organizations studied are the numerous associations which made up the Christian labor movement. Chapters 1-4 investigate the anti-liberal origins of Christian-social thought and analyze the process whereby these social criticisms were translated into social and political action. This part of the study also pays special attention to the opposition Christian organizers encountered from church, state, and bourgeois political circles in trying to initiate a Christian labor movement. Once a sustained movement got underway in the 1890's, Christian laborers experienced additional problems implementing their socio-political plans. These political difficulties will be examined in Chapters 5-12. By concentrating on the frustrations experienced by the Christian labor movement, this study sheds light on the rigid, authoritarian nature of church, state, and society during the Imperial Period. These frustrations did not augur well for the future of the empire, for, denied certain basic rights by the established order, German workers were alienated from that order on the eve of the first major challenge the empire faced in 1914.

Considerable methodological barriers stood in the way of this study. During the first bombing raids over Cologne in 1942, the archives of the General Secretariat of the Christian trade unions and the Rhenish Center Party were totally destroyed. Consequently, twenty-five repositories in East and West Germany had to be visited before sufficient material could be collected. With most pieces of the mosaic in place, the first study of Christian labor based on archival evidence can now be presented.

There are other reasons why a study of this sort is justified. The nature of the movement, for instance, has been obscured by previous historians. In an apparent attempt to embarrass the emerging Christian unions,

Socialist authors like August Erdmann and Otto Hue depicted their rivals as lackeys of conservative church and middle class groups.¹ The same theme was propagated by Arnold Brüggmann in 1943,² and, logically enough, by East German historians after the Second World War.³ Nor have some West German writers avoided the temptation of seeing underdeveloped class-consciousness in an organization that was often forced to compromise with the powerful forces it encountered.⁴ As the present study shows, however, the philosophies of St. Thomas Aquinas (Thomism) upon which Christian labor leaders based their criticism of laissez-faire industrialism provided the intellectual foundation for a very ambitious movement. From its origins in the mid-1800's, the Christian-social movement rejected existing economic institutions and advocated a far-reaching alteration in the system of private-property rights. This underlying social militancy was passed on to the Christian trade unions after the turn of the century, making acceptance of these unions by employers, conservative prelates, and the state virtually impossible.

Despite the aggressive nature of the movement, nevertheless, Christian workers remained aloof from their Socialist and Liberal counterparts--the "free" and Hirsch-Duncker trade unions. The latter were opposed as agents of secularism and enemies of the Christian Weltanschauung, while the Socialist unions were criticized as the shock troops of the revolutionary Social Democratic Party (S.P.D.) and the proponents of socialization of

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1. August Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland (Stuttgart: J.W.H. Dietz, 1908); August Erdmann, Die christlichen Gewerkschaften insbesondere ihr Verhältnis zu Zentrum und Kirche (Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz, 1914); Otto Hue, Die Bergarbeiter: Eine historische Darstellung der Bergarbeiterverhältnisse von der Ältesten bis in die neueste Zeit (Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz, 1910-13), 2 volumes.
 2. Arnold Brüggmann, Sozialer Katholizismus im 19. Jahrhundert (Frankfurt a. M.: Deutsche Kunst und Verlagsanstalt, 1943).
 3. See the appropriate chapters in Dieter Fricke (ed.), Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland (Berlin: Das europäische Buch, 1968), 2 volumes.
 4. Michael Berger, Arbeiterbewegung und Demokratisierung (Freiburg i.B., Dissertationsdruck Johannes Kraus, 1970); Klaus Saul, Staat, Industrie, und Arbeiterbewegung in Kaiserreich (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1974).

the means of production. Christian labor leaders, on the contrary, wanted to establish a right of codetermination (Mitbestimmung) with employers similar to that which exists in West Germany today. An understanding of the reasons behind the divisions in the German labor movement is highly important, for the incessant squabbling among German proletarians weakened trade unionism and inhibited the progress toward social betterment which all three groups desired.

The Christian labor movement has also been labeled, erroneously, a purely Catholic and/or Center Party phenomenon.⁵ To be sure, the intellectual origins were Catholic and for the first two decades of the Imperial period contacts with Protestants were rare. With the founding of the Christian miners' Gewerkverein in the 1890's, however, emphasis was placed on the nondenominational nature of Christian trade unionism. At a time when historians of the Wilhelmian era are becoming more and more interested in bourgeois interest-group politics⁶, an analysis of Christian labor's Evangelical wing and the opposition it encountered is particularly significant.

This dissertation will not ignore, however, the tension-ridden relationship between Christian labor and the Catholic Center Party. Passed over by researchers for years, the Center Party has recently begun to receive the attention that it deserves. Thomas Nipperday and Ursula Mittmann⁷ have analyzed Center Party organization and the workings of the Reichstag Fraktion, Ronald J. Ross⁸ has contributed an informative essay on the

5. See Berger's work cited in note 4. This holds true for many other works as well.

6. James C. Hunt, "The Bourgeois Middle in German Politics, 1871-1933: Recent Literature," Central European History (March, 1978), Vol. 11, No. 1, pp 83-106.

7. Thomas Nipperday, Die Organisation der Parteien vor 1918 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1961); Ursula Mittmann, Fraktion und Partei: Ein Vergleich von Zentrum und Sozialdemokratie im Kaiserreich (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1976).

8. Ronald J. Ross, Beleagured Tower: The Dilemma of Political Catholicism in Wilhelmine Germany (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976).

tensions within the Catholic community, and David W. Hendon's dissertation has probed the relationship between the Center and Christian agrarian groups.⁹ The present study will add to Center Party research by clarifying the relationship between labor and the rest of the party. In so doing, the work sheds light on many previously misunderstood developments.

The present study will also improve our understanding of the church's view toward labor organizations. Throughout the period discussed here, moral and theological objections to the strike, as well as the fear that independent Catholic or Christian organizations would be infiltrated by Socialists and atheists, led many clergymen to form special labor associations run by the Catholic church. This opposition was one of the most effective barriers to Christian labor's program, for without the consent of the church, many devout religious workers refused to join the movement. Others turned in agner to the Socialists or Liberals.

Another contribution to be made here concerns the nature of the political system during the Imperial period. Recent historians have spent considerable time and effort attempting to prove that the Bismarckian system was evolving inexorably toward Western-style parliamentarism.¹⁰ These authors concentrate on the leverage exerted by the Reichstag over tax questions, as is traditional when discussing the rise of parliament in England and France. The Kaiser, the Chancellor, and the federal states were far more suspicious of social reform, however, than financial reform. A truer test of the strength and influence of parliament, then, would come in this latter area.

9. David W. Hendon, "The Center Party and the Agrarian Interest in Germany 1890-1914," Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1976.

10. Manfred Rauh, Föderalismus und Parlamentarismus im Wilhelminischen Reich (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag. 1973; Manfred Rauh, Die Parlamentarisierung des Deutschen Reiches (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag. 1977); U. Bermbach, Vorformen parlamentarischer Kabinettsbildung in Deutschland (Cologne, 1967); D. Grosser, Vom Monarchischen Konstitutionalismus zur parlamentarischen Demokratie (Den Haag, 1970).

The history of Christian labor politics is an excellent test of this thesis. Unlike the Socialist unions, which were generally more interested in an economic, "self-help" struggle for power with employers, Christian labor leaders sought from the 1870's on to push their social demands through the Reichstag and in this way impress Kaiser and Chancellor with the workers' desires. Christian laborers also went to great lengths to convince Germany's ruling elite of the devout and patriotic nature of the movement for Christian social reform. But, despite the fact that parliament stood behind certain of the Christian trade unions' minimal demands from the 1890's on, the Reichstag was too weak to implement any of its major programs. The capricious, semi-absolutist manner in which decisions were made by the leaders of Imperial Germany stands in contradiction to the nascent parliamentarism others claim to have discovered.

The final theme which runs through this study concerns the vast gap which separated the Catholic and Protestant communities in Imperial Germany. As a movement uniting both confessions, Christian labor depended on harmony and good will between them. Time and again, however, the mutual hatreds and suspicions of Lutherans and Catholics disrupted relations within the Christian trade unions. The same situation made it difficult to create the broad, non-denominational coalition of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forces which Christian labor felt was required to force passage of its bills. Religious tensions also added to the instability of a country that was already experiencing tremendous domestic pressures from industrialization.

This study would not have been possible without generous assistance from many different sides. Thanks are due the German Academic Exchange Service, which provided travel funds, living expenses, and health costs from August 1974 to July 1976. Throughout this period, and after my return to the United States, I also received invaluable advice on source material from the staffs of the numerous archives and libraries which were visited. I would particularly like to thank Dr. Löhr of the Stadtarchiv in München-Gladbach, Dr. Wermter of the Stadtbibliothek in München-Gladbach, Dr. Trumpp and his associates at the Bundesarchiv in Coblenz, Dr. Romeyk of

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CHAPTER 1

KOLPING, KETTELER AND THE FIRST CHRISTIAN-SOCIAL MOVEMENT

No social group in Germany was economically more hardpressed in the second third of the nineteenth century than the old estate of artisans and handicraftsmen.¹ Already threatened by industrial competition from abroad, their situation was made all the worse by the coming of commercial freedom and the attendant onslaught of industry and mechanization at home. Unable to compete without effective tariff or guild protection, handicraftsmen were forced to reduce wages, lay off journeymen, or else join the landless peasants and unemployed journeymen in seeking factory employment. Journeymen in turn found it increasingly difficult to establish their own shops and were consequently locked into a marginal existence of low pay and periodic unemployment. Some sought an outlet in factory employment, while others began to drink, engage in petty crime, or turn against their masters. Strikes and boycotts increased tensions in the workshop, and even more alarming to conservative observers, the young workers began forming secret societies to further "republican" aims. The normally inactive Diet of the German Confederation thought the situation serious enough in 1840 to warrant a series of stern measures outlawing the societies and restricting journeymen in their trade union-like actions against masters.² The latter's frustration with the advance of industry

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1. The classic work on the subject remains Gustav Schmoller's Zur Geschichte des deutschen Kleingewerbe im 19. Jahrhundert (Halle: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1870). See also: Heinrich Bechtel, Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Deutschlands (Munich: Verlag Georg D. W. Callweg, 1967), pp 337-43.
 2. Albert Franz, Der Soziale Katholizismus in Deutschland bis zum Tode Kettelers (München-Gladbach: Volksvereinsverlag GmbH., 1914), p 113.

and technology and the growing alienation of journeymen faced with bleak prospects at every turn played a significant role in the revolutionary disturbances which shook Germany in 1848-49. A boon to some, industrialism brought only ruin, anger, and despair to many artisans.

Catholic conservatives reacted to this systematic unraveling of the old social and economic order by advocating a return to the estate, or corporate, institutions which in their eyes had created social stability and harmony in centuries past. The Prussian romanticist Adam Heinrich Müller was perhaps the first to respond in this way.³ The great mass of the people in medieval times, he wrote in the 1820's, had been protected against insecurities and misfortunes by the benevolence of the landlord, the material benefits of the guild, the charity of the church, or the selflessness and magnanimity of the family and local community. There now arose in place of this organic society an artificial commercial system which put the individual at the mercy of capricious market forces, reducing once proud masters, journeymen, and small landed proprietors to a state of industrial servitude. Müller blamed the decline of this corporate order and the plight of the industrial proletariat on the hedonism and individualism of the predominantly Protestant entrepreneurial class. "Where once the clergy stood, the industrialists now rule; in place of God, they install gold."⁴ The prerequisite for any improvement in the material situation of the workers and artisans was therefore a far-reaching spiritual reform, which to Müller meant a mass conversion, as he himself had undergone, to Catholicism. This neo-Catholic revival would facilitate the state's task of recasting society along estatist (ständisch) lines. Noblemen, clergy,

3. This paragraph is based on Franz Josef Stegmann, "Geschichte der sozialen Ideen im deutschen Katholizismus," in Helga Grebing (ed.), Geschichte der sozialen Ideen in Deutschland (Munich-Vienna: Guenter Olzog Verlag, 1969), pp 337-38, 361-62; Edgar Alexander, "Church and Society in Germany," in Joseph N. Moody (ed.), Catholic Social and Political Movements (New York: Arts Inc., 1953), pp 377-81; and Ralph H. Bowen, German Theories of the Corporative State (New York: McGraw Hill, 1947), pp 31-38.

4. Quoted in Bowen, Corporative State, p 37.

and the Bürger or Mittelstand--an estate comprising peasants, artisans, as well as doctors, lawyers, and other professionals--would be joined by a new industrial estate of workers and employers. Craftsmen and others would once again enjoy their corporate honors, and industry would be "reduced to its proper sphere and brought into balance with the other estates."⁵ From the beginning, then, Catholic social criticism was characterized by a fervently religious anti-liberalism.

Müller found theological justification for his views in the writings of the medieval Catholic scholar, St. Thomas Aquinas. The ideal "Thomistic" society rested on the foundations of autonomous social corporations. Noblemen and peasants, master and apprentice, and the church would each have their own self-regulating organizations. There would be no monopoly of either the ownership or the use of property, and disharmony between the estates of society was no more possible than disharmony between the limbs of the human body. Writing at a time when social relationships such as these were to some extent reality, not a romantic dream, St. Thomas felt that the religio-corporate order was based on "natural" laws determined by God. To some devout Catholics like Müller, therefore, the accumulation of capital by a small number of entrepreneurs, and the accompanying social misery of early industrialization, were signs of spiritual decay.

The Bavarian engineer turned philosopher Franz von Baader also saw the root cause of social ills in the dissolution of those social and economic ties which had existed under the religio-corporate system.⁶ Baader had witnessed the erosion of guild privileges and the rise of the

5. Ibid., p 37.

6. For works on Baader, see Stegmann, "Soziale Ideen," pp 337-39, 361-63; Alexander, "Church and Society in Germany," 401-06; and Bowen, Corporative State, pp 46-53.

Lumpenproletariat in England as young mining technician during the mid-1790's, and he became quite alarmed in the 1820's and '30's when it first became evident that the same process was underway in Germany. In a special report to the Bavarian government in 1834 he urged the crown to learn from England's experience and avoid the problems she had encountered.⁷ In England, as now in France and Germany, liberals had used the principle of equality before the law to destroy the social and economic privileges of the old estates and corporations. It was important to realize, however, that the principles of individual freedom introduced by these so-called constitutional governments had not created true freedom. Without some form of corporate liberty within society, the laboring classes had become socially disenfranchised, as evidenced by their shameful dependence on capitalists. Baader advocated the reimplementation of guild privileges and in addition, the granting of corporate status to the proletariat. Special labor chambers should be created in which priests would represent the worker's interests before the state. In this way proletarians could be shielded from the "demagogues and quarrelsome lawyers"⁸ common to most parliaments and protected from the abusive conditions of industrialism. Only through these chambers would the laborers find their rightful place next to the other estates within the community.

The circle of Catholic corporatists had grown by the late 1840's and '50's. The Badenese nobleman Ritter von Buss came before the first nationwide gathering of Catholics in Mainz in 1848 and called for "the reorganization of the state in the spirit of Christian democracy. In this framework we must reconstruct large corporations, comparable to the guilds of old...The journeymen must again sit at the table together with their masters so that they will not feel slighted and consequently become merged with the rabble

7. For the remainder of the paragraph I follow Baader's ideas as abridged and published in 1835 under the title Über das dermalige Missverhältnis der Vermögenslosen oder Proletaires zu den Vermögen Besitzenden Klassen der Societät. The pamphlet is reprinted and translated in Alexander, "Church and Society in Germany," pp 536-39.

8. Ibid., p 405.

of proletarians."⁹ In 1849 Buss' countryman Heinrich Andlaw advocated the abolition of the parliamentary system in Baden and the substitution of a chamber of estates (Ständehaus) with equal representation for landowners, industrialists, traders, and artisans.¹⁰ These ideas were propagated more systematically after 1852 by the Bavarian publicist Joseph Jörg, editor of the monthly Historisch-politische Blätter. Jörg felt that society had been "deChristianized" by liberalism and, as Baader before him, argued for the cooperation of the proletariat into a corporate state (Ständestaat) more in keeping with the tenets of Christian faith.¹¹ Similar views were represented by Dr. Christoph Moufang, editor of Der Katholik and head of the large Catholic seminary in Mainz.

These two journals soon gathered about them a moderate following of aristocrats and clergymen in Bavaria, Baden, and the Rhineland. But it was the Catholic nobility of Westphalia which responded most enthusiastically to the estatist program. Led by Wilderich von Ketteler, Prussian Landtag deputy from Thüle, they rejected liberal constitutionalism in Prussia and longed for a return to the medieval concept of rule by monarch, church, and Stände, each with their own privileges and prerogatives.¹² The new corporate order, it seemed to them, could be built on the foundations of the provincial diets which had arisen in Prussia in the 1820's. Opposed by the brothers, Peter and August Reichensperger, who led the predominant "liberal Catholic" wing of the Catholic Fraktion in the Prussian diet, Ketteler and his followers bolted the party in 1853 and returned to their estates. At the end of the decade, corporatism

9. Quoted in Ibid., p 408.

10. Karl Bachem, Vorgeschichte, Geschichte und Politik der deutschen Zentrumspartei (Cologne, Verlag J. P. Bachem GmbH, 1929), Vol. 2, pp 269-70.

11. Stegmann, "Soziale Ideen," pp 351-52.

12. On Ketteler and the Westphalians, see Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 2, p 214; and Ferdinand Jacobs, Von Schorlemer zur Grünen Front (Düsseldorf: Verlag Haus Altenberg, 1957), p 12. Ketteler's brother Wilhelm Emmanuel was the Bishop of Mainz.

remained what it had been since the 1820's--a topic for journal articles and salon discussions.

The call for a corporate reorganization of state and society would be heard recurringly throughout the century and was a concept never to lose completely its attraction for Catholic conservatives. But many at mid-century who took for granted the superiority of statist political institutions were content to limit their activity to less ambitious reform efforts designed to bolster the moral, social, or legal position of the individual estates. These endeavors were seen not only as prerequisites for the more far-reaching plans of Müller, Baader, and the Westphalians, but also as more immediate solutions to the mounting problems facing artisans, factory workers, uprooted peasants, and others. The attempt made in Switzerland and southern Germany to form "Christian factories" where work was performed in church and interrupted by frequent prayer sessions was characteristic of these efforts.¹³ In Westphalia, too, small farmers led by the ex-cavalry officer Burghard von Schorlemer-Alst vainly sought to thwart the flight of the peasantry to the cities and factories by creating "Christian peasants associations."¹⁴ The first and perhaps most famous of these initiatives, however, was that of the "social priest" Adolf Kolping, who in 1847 moved beyond the realm of charity, Sozialkritik, and vague political planning to found the first Christian labor organization.

13. Stegmann, "Soziale Ideen," pp 357-58.

14. On the founding of the peasant associations, see Schorlemer-Alst to Bishop W. E. von Ketteler, 15 February 1862, reprinted in Otto Pfülf S. J., Bischof von Ketteler: Eine geschichtliche Darstellung (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1899), Vol. 2, pp 179-80; and Jacobs, Schorlemer, pp 7-16. Pfülf's work is invaluable to the historian of the early Christian labor movement because it is based on Ketteler's private correspondence, only part of which appears in Dr. J. M. Raich's Briefe von und an Wilhelm Emmanuel Freiherr von Ketteler (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1879). (Hereafter cited as Raich, Ketteler's Briefe).

Kolping was himself of working class origin, having learned the shoe-making trade as a youth in Cologne.¹⁵ Intelligent, sensitive, and deeply religious, he had trouble adapting to what seemed to him the slovenliness, intemperance, brutality, and immorality of the workshop milieu of the 1830's. In 1836, therefore, he started back to school with the aim of becoming a priest, determined perhaps already then that his would be a social ministry. While studying theology in Munich in the early 1840's, he became enthused with the idea of forming canonical brotherhoods for journeymen to combat the spirit of individualism, materialism, and religious cynicism which he held responsible for the social disintegration of the day. But on the advice of one of his colleagues, the future Bishop of Mainz, Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, Kolping abandoned this church-oriented approach. As Ketteler rightly pointed out, given the turbulent atmosphere of the day, the canonical fraternity would never appeal to the hardpressed journeymen, nor would it attract those already hostile to the church. His associations should not ignore the important role of Catholicism in solving the social question, but they had to be socially active organizations only loosely affiliated with the church.¹⁶

The journeymen's unions (Gesellenvereine) which Kolping later founded, beginning with the first in Elberfeld in 1847, performed the essentially social function which Ketteler had advocated and were able to attract over 60,000 young workers throughout Europe by the time of Kolping's death in 1865.¹⁷ Perhaps most important to the young artisans themselves was the

-
15. For general discussions on Kolping, see Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, pp 111-45; Wilhelm Dockhorn, Die christliche-soziale Bewegung in Deutschland (Halle: Buchdruckerei des Waisenhauses, 1928); pp 28-31; and Emil Ritter, Die katholisch-soziale Bewegung und der Volkverein (Cologne: Verlag J. P. Bachem, 1954), pp 88-91.
 16. Ketteler described his conversation with Kolping to one Father Engelhardt from Bingen in 1876. Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, p 120, No. 2.
 17. These included 24,000 active, Catholic members and approximately 35,000 inactive, Protestant members. The latter were excluded from the administration of the unions, but enjoyed the same material and educational benefits. Arnold Brugmann, Sozialer Katholizismus im 19. Jahrhundert (Frankfurt am Main: Deutsche Kunst- und Verlagsanstalt, 1943), p 101; Alfons Gornik, Die Entwicklung der nichtsozialdemokratischen Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland (Halle: Hofbuchdruckerei von C. A. Kaemmerer and Co., 1909), p 10.

net of hostels which spread from the Rhineland to Southern Germany, Switzerland, and Austria as the movement gained momentum in the 1850's. Here journeymen could find good company and inexpensive room and board; they were encouraged to use the money thus saved to establish savings accounts which could help in times of need or later when they established an independent shop. The Kolping Vereine also provided the wandering craftsmen with an opportunity to improve their education. Classes in reading and writing were offered along with more advanced subjects such as French.¹⁸ Furthermore, the club reading room gave union members access to general reading material as well as more specific trade-oriented literature. Religion, of course, was not forgotten. Three or four times a year the parish priests and master craftsmen who supervised the unions accompanied the Catholic members to communion. In addition to historical and semi-political themes, weekly lectures also discussed the teachings of the church on marriage, the family and the Christian community.¹⁹

With this combination of social, educational, and religious services, Kolping hoped to create a cadre of devout, industrious journeymen, proud of their craft and unsusceptible to radical, anti-Christian ideas. As masters they would also be prepared to reestablish in their shops that patriarchal, familial relationship between master and journeymen which Kolping had found so sorely lacking in the days of his youth. Kolping realized, however, that his efforts to create social harmony would be unsuccessful unless the state, too, came to the aid of the artisans. Having witnessed the short-lived uprising of handicraftsmen in Elberfeld in 1849, it seemed all too clear to him that the alternative to the maintenance of a viable Handwerkerstand was social chaos and revolution. The

18. August Bebel, My Life (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1912), p 37. The future leader of the German Socialists describes a visit to the Gesellenverein in Freiburg in 1858. He became an inactive member at that time.

19. Dockhorn, Christlich-soziale Bewegung, p 30; Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, pp 133-34.

political movement which developed among German artisans in the two decades after the founding of the first Gesellenverein thus had Kolping's fullest sympathy. Usually treated as non-existent, the political leanings of the Gesellenvereine must also be discussed if the movement is to be thoroughly understood.²⁰

The journeymen's unions arose as German artisans were losing one battle after another to the doctrine of laissez faire-laissez passer. It is not surprising, therefore, that Kolping was decidedly anti-liberal in his political beliefs. This was already evident by the time of his conversation with Ketteler in Munich in the early 1840's; by 1848-49 he viewed his journeymen's unions as the first step along the road to a corporate reconstruction of society.²¹ But as the movement spread from Elberfeld to Cologne and the other large cities of the Rhineland in the early 1850's, he abandoned these designs. He realized that as one man he could only do so much²²; perhaps he also sensed that the new industrial age would eventually triumph over all those relying on older forms of production. This did not prevent Kolping, however, from openly chastising the government on more than one occasion in the columns of the Gesellenverein newsletter for "unsatisfactory legislative protection of the handicraft trades."²³

20. The Gesellenvereine are depicted as essentially non-political organizations in Dockhorn, Christlich-soziale Bewegung, p 30; Gornik, Entwicklung der nichtsoziale-demokratischen Arbeiterbewegung, p 10; Ritter, Volksverein, pp 90-91; and Stegmann, "Soziale Ideen," p 345. Franz supplies much evidence concerning the political nature of the unions, then contradictorily argues that they were non-political. Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, p 137.

21. Franz Schnabel, Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert (Freiburg i.B.: Herder and Co. GmbH., 1937), Vol. 4, p 208; Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, p 126. The latter records that Kolping considered "all kinds of reform ideas" in the years 1848-49 and abandoned these "idealistic plans" with great reluctance. Schnabel refers specifically to corporate reorganizational schemes.

22. Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, p 126.

23. Quoted in ibid., p 134. A similar quote appears on p 129.

Similarly, the reading rooms of union hostels were stocked with conservative Catholic newspapers which, along with the unions' weekly lectures and discussions, also propagated the same critical views.²⁴

Because of this bias, the ever cautious Prussian government classified the unions as political organizations under the Vereinsgesetz of 1850.²⁵ But an objective observer like the popular writer W. H. Riehl also detected in the movement a nascent political activism.²⁶ There is evidence, moreover, to suggest that the success of the movement among young journeymen was a direct result of the fact that the Gesellenvereine did not ignore the political nature of the social question like so many other clubs in the "reactionary" fifties.²⁷ By the late 1850's, in fact, those union members who had been able to establish their own shops were founding more overtly political masters' organizations with the aid of Gesellenverein priests and other Catholics sympathetic to the artisans' cause.²⁸

In the forefront of this movement stood the spokesman for the Catholic artisans of Aachen, Gewerberat Nicholas Schüren, who in June, 1860, had published a pamphlet under the title The Solution to the Social Question. This publication advanced the same "guild-reactionary" views aired later that summer in Berlin by the founders of the German Handwerkerbund, a pressure group pledged to restore the old legal privileges of the guilds, and was received warmly at union headquarters in Cologne. In response to the inquiries of Archbishop Geissel of Cologne, Kolping wrote that the work was written "in such a good, charitable spirit and with such expert knowledge of actual conditions that its author can only be praised and encouraged. The parts concerning the reconstruction of the future are less

24. Bebel, My Life, p 37.

25. Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, p 137.

26. Brueggemann, Sozialer Katholizismus im 19. Jahrhundert, p 99.

27. Bebel recalls that the reading rooms helped satisfy his interest in politics. "For clubs of a purely social nature I had neither money nor inclination." Bebel, My Life, pp 36-37.

28. Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, pp 134-45.

certain, but this takes nothing away from the work as a whole."²⁹ Geissel agreed with Kolping and did not attempt to curb Schüren's activities. Thus when the German Handwerkerbund spread its activity to the Catholic West in 1862, it found many active supporters for its anti-liberal cause. Schüren became editor of the monthly journal, Soziale Revue,³⁰ and Catholic masters' associations from all over the Rhineland flocked to the new interest group.³¹ Encouraged by the emergence of its new Rhenish wing, the Bund's executive committee felt confident of winning more widespread backing from the Catholics' annual political conference (Katholikentag), scheduled to meet in Frankfurt in September, 1863.³²

The bid of the Handwerkerbund for Catholic political support came at a time when labor questions had attained a much broader significance for German Catholics. Nothing intensified Catholic interest in these matters more than the rapid expansion of the Liberal cooperative movement under the Saxton Landtag Deputy, Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch. From modest beginnings in the late 1850's, Schulze's loose organization of consumer-, credit-, and raw materials-purchase cooperatives had spread throughout Germany and could boast a membership of over 125,000 small businessmen, artisans, and factory workers by late 1863.³³ Schulze's purely economic approach was upsetting to Catholic clergymen who felt that religion was the only solution to the social question, but his efforts would not have been cause for such great alarm had Catholics not interpreted the movement

29. Kolping's reaction to the pamphlet is quoted in Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 182.

30. Ritter, Volksverein, p 71; Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 182.

31. Theodore S. Hamerow, The Social Foundations of German Unification 1858-1871 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), Vol. 1, p 127.

32. See the letter of the Bund's executive committee to Bishop Ketteler, 25 June 1864, printed in Raich, Ketteler's Briefe, pp 300-303. The reader should also consult E. Filthaut, Deutsche Katholikentage (1848-1958) und soziale Frage (Essen: Hans Driewer-Verlag, 1959); and Johannes Kissling, Geschichte der deutschen Katholikentage, (Münster: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1922), 2 vols.

33. Hamerow, Social Foundations, Vol. 1, p 176.

with some measure of justification as a front for the political designs of the north German Liberals. Indeed Schulze, Rudolf von Bennigsen, and others in the Nationalverein realized that their goal of progressive reform in Prussia and a Prussian-led unification of Germany could not be realized unless the economic success of the cooperatives could be translated into political support at the polls. The "educational clubs" which sprang up after 1861 in close association with the cooperatives were promoted with this result in mind and help to explain the parliamentary success which the Liberals had obtained throughout Germany by 1863.³⁴ Catholics opposed to the abolition of the denominational school and the exclusion of Catholic Austria from German unification were beginning to realize that the rights and interests of the church could not be adequately defended unless Catholics attracted more working-class support.

The emerging spokesman for this point of view was Kolping's old acquaintance, Wilhelm Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz since 1850. During Ketteler's first decade in Mainz, the Catholic church enjoyed a fairly comfortable relationship with secular authorities in Germany. The Prussian constitution of 1850 guaranteed the church the right to manage its own schools along with other privileges of autonomy, and in the course of the 1850's favorable concordats were signed with the Vatican by Hessen, Austria, Württemberg, and Baden. Only in Bavaria was the church still denied rights of self-rule.³⁵

34. Werner Conze, Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der liberalen Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland: Das Beispiel Schulze-Delitzschs (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, Universitätsverlag, 1965), p 20; and Bebel, My Life; pp 44-58. According to Conze, Schulze was primarily responsible for the close relationship between the cooperatives and educational clubs. Bebel was a leading member of the latter organizations and left the following impression of their nature: "The more far-sighted liberals quickly recognized the importance of securing the support of the workers, and to this end lent themselves to the promotion of workers' unions, and sought to put trustworthy men at the head of them...the directors of most of these societies, or those who actually pulled the wires, did their best to make them serve party interests."

35. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 2, pp 221, 251, 294, 346.

The rise of liberalism in the early 1860's, however, threatened this positive state of affairs. Concordats with the Vatican were revoked by Liberal majorities in Baden in March, 1860, Württemberg in March 1861, and a similar setback appeared likely in Prussia. Elections in December 1861 and May 1862, produced an absolute Liberal majority and decimated the once numerous ranks of the Catholic Fraktion, especially in the Rhineland, where only 5 of 39 members survived.³⁶ Thus in February 1862, with the church in peril and elections approaching in Hessen, Ketteler issued a call to action under the title Freedom, Authority, and the Church.³⁷ In it the bishop suggested specific goals for the upcoming struggle. Clearly influenced by Moufang, Jörg, and his brother Wilderich, Ketteler urged Catholics to reject existing constitutional forms and work to secure an estatist constitution. In adopting such an oppositionist stance, they would not be compromising their religious beliefs. For, as St. Thomas Aquinas believed, it was natural and God-ordained that men, just as the individual parts of any organism, should belong to some larger social body or corporation. In the place of parliamentary rule by individuals, Catholics should thus substitute a new corporate order which would guarantee privileges of autonomy within society not only to the church but to all corporations and estates.³⁸ The Liberal demon had to be fought wherever it raised its head, whether it be in the church, among the nobility, or among artisans.

The pressure on Catholics to confront the social problem increased in early 1863 because of the appearance of Ferdinand Lassalle on the German political scene.³⁹ The Socialist author, philosopher, and self-styled attorney

36. Ibid., Vol. 2, pp 174, 253, 296.

37. W. E. von Ketteler, Freiheit, Autorität, und Kirche (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1862), p 145.

38. Ibid., pp 119-20.

39. For works on Lassalle, see Hermann Oncken, Lassalle: Eine politische Biographie (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1923); and George Brandes, Ferdinand Lassalle, (New York, 1925).

from Breslau rejected Schulze's view that laissez-faire economics and "self help" cooperatives could improve the position of the artisan or factory worker, and called upon the state to take the lead in financing small cooperative workshops. These, he felt, would eliminate the laborers' dependence on the "iron law" of wages, according to which the workers' pay would not rise above his subsistence needs in the long run. To assure state aid in this and other areas, he urged the workers to organize their own political party and push for universal manhood suffrage. Thus in February 1863, after a Saxon labor delegation had come to Berlin, asked for Liberal support of an independent workers' congress, and was flatly refused, the Saxon workers took their appeal to Lassalle.⁴⁰ By June 1863, the new labor party which he created had already commenced agitation and was beginning to win adherents among the artisans, journeymen, and factory operatives of Protestant Saxony as well as in the western cities of Elberfeld, Düsseldorf, Cologne, and Mainz.

Lassalle's idea of transforming the proletariat into a class of small-scale artisan-producers appealed to Ketteler, Moufang, and others who were not ready to accept the fact that the factory system was there to stay.⁴¹ Lassalle was also known for his religious tolerance, which appealed to Catholic clergymen at a time when the church's enemies were gaining strength. But Ketteler and his followers looked askance at the new tribune's advocacy of popular sovereignty. The Liberals had already abandoned the only viable means of constraining the passions of the masses by rejecting the Christian Weltanschauung as a basis for education. Under the influence of the equally materialistic philosophy of Lassalle, the sovereign masses would not be content with the cooperative workshop. They

40. Hermann Oncken, "Der Nationalverein und die Anfänge der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1862-1863," in Archiv fuer die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung (1912), Vol. 2, p 121.

41. W. E. von Ketteler, Die Arbeiterfrage und das Christenthum (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1864), p 138 ff and Pfuehl, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 189.

would raise even more far-reaching demands, become uncontrollable, and eventually abolish the institution of private property altogether. And this, to Ketteler, was unthinkable.⁴²

The bishop, it must be emphasized, was no defender of complete and unattenuated property rights. Referring once again to the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Ketteler believed that every man had a God-given right to possess property.⁴³ Only through ownership of material things would he be able to care for his family, develop his potentialities, and achieve his destiny. It followed from this that no individual or class could abuse the right of private ownership at the expense of others in the community. Thus the social function of property not only limited the use of property, but the right of property itself. Such an approach was obviously not shared by the modern entrepreneur.

Socialization of property, on the other hand, was no less objectionable to "Thomists". St. Thomas and his followers believed that collective ownership was simply not in conformity with human nature.

First, because every man is more careful to procure for himself alone rather than that which is common to many or all; since each one would shirk the labor and leave to another that which concerns the community...Secondly, because human affairs are conducted in more orderly fashion if each man is charged with taking care of some particular thing himself, whereas there would be confusion if everyone had to look after one thing forever. Thirdly, because a more peaceful state is assured to man if each one is contented with his own. Hence it is to be observed that quarrels arise more frequently where there is no division of things possessed.⁴⁴

The institution of private property was therefore a natural order of things which reflected the wisdom of God. Socialism was unworkable and could only result in chaos. Frightening portents such as this made the need for a counter-program of Christian-social action still more obvious to Catholic

42. For Ketteler's views on the Lassalleans, see Ketteler, Arbeiterfrage, pp 62-96.

43. For the views of Ketteler and St. Thomas, see New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 11, pp 850-52.

44. Quoted in ibid., p 850.

social activists in the early 1860's. Reluctant to see the church itself play an overt role, Ketteler looked to the upcoming Katholikentag as the best instrument to initiate and promote these efforts.

The Frankfurt Katholikentag of 1863 was thus devoid of the casual atmosphere which had characterized many of these autumnal gatherings.⁴⁶ The main address was delivered by Dr. Christian Vosen, a religious teacher from Cologne and close personal friend of Kolping. After a fairly positive assessment of the Liberal and Socialist cooperative movements, he ended by recommending the founding of "Christian cooperative workshops." A lengthy debate ensued after the completion of this presentation, but the delegates were unable to agree on the proper course to follow. Most present were content to rely on the traditional means of charity to solve society's ills and were wary of lending their support to radical, anti-industrial concepts such as the cooperative workshop. Others were more amenable to such ideas but were unprepared to seize the initiative in such a controversial area before the church itself had spoken authoritatively

45. Previous historians have assumed that Ketteler was first moved to take a closer look at the social question by the Frankfurt deliberations. See Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, p 240; Brueggemann, Sozialer Katholizismus, p 115; Ritter, Volksverein, p 95; Hogan, Ketteler's Interpretation of the Social Problem, pp 90-91; and Filthaut, Deutsche Katholikentage, p 47. More likely is the interpretation given above. Until a central committee was created in 1868, the local committee was responsible for preparing the agenda. That Ketteler exerted influence on the neighboring Frankfurt committee is evidenced by the opening resolution of Dr. Johann Heinrich, one of Ketteler's church canons, as well as the fact that Moufang, Wilderich von Ketteler, and Johann Falk, editor of the Mainzer Journal and vice-chairman of the Mainz Piusverein, all played key roles at Frankfurt. This author agrees with Pfülf that the Frankfurt Katholikentag "had Ketteler's stamp on it." Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 180.

46. This paragraph is based on Kissling, Geschichte der Katholikentage, Vol. 1, pp 392-95, 437-39; Filthaut, Deutsche Katholikentage, pp 46-47; Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, pp 180-82; and Ritter, Volksverein, pp 79-80.

on the matter. The delegates finally united around a compromise resolution advising Catholics to devote serious attention to the study of the social question. Such half-hearted measures, however, failed to satisfy Ketteler. He was now forced to consider more direct forms of church intervention.

By late 1863, Ketteler was hard at work on his own social manifesto. Appearing in March 1864 under the title The Labor Question and Christianity, his work was designed to provide Catholics with clear guidelines for social action. Ketteler first engaged in a lengthy critique of commercial freedom in terms reminiscent of Müller and Baader, but in part also unmistakably Lassallean in tone. It was true that guilds had been too restrictive and had benefitted relatively few with their associations. But this was no reason to abandon the idea of corporate social organization altogether. Without the protective relationships of the association, factory workers stood alone before the capitalists and were subjected to the cruel dictates of the iron law of wages. And what was worse, once independent handicraftsmen were being forced to endure the same fate.⁴⁷ This process of social and economic transformation seemed cruel and inhuman to Ketteler. The proud Handwerkerstand was being "reduced to atoms and then mechanically reassembled," pulverized into "grains of dust equal in value, into particles which a puff of wind may scatter in all directions."⁴⁸ If this social atomization were to be halted, the principle of association rooted in German tradition had to be reintroduced in such a way that the good aspects of the guilds could be blended with the better aspects of the present order.⁴⁹

In his last chapter, Ketteler then offered a number of suggestions which he felt could accomplish this task.⁵⁰ A more complete development of the

47. Ketteler, Arbeiterfrage, pp 15-16, 25.

48. Ibid., pp 53, 57.

49. Ibid., pp 25, 49-50, 112.

50. Ibid., pp 115-16, 119-48.

Gesellenvereine and widespread support for the German Handwerkebund would help in creating a viable corporative life for the workers, but the efforts of these organizations alone would not suffice. Clearly impressed with the Liberal and Socialist labor programs, the bishop encouraged Christian reformers to expand their activity in this direction as well. Christian educational clubs should take the place of their Liberal counterparts and, once the workers were united in the bond of Christianity, true cooperatives could be created. The consumer cooperative could provide cheap bread, the credit union, a low-interest loan, and the raw materials-purchase cooperative, inexpensive wood, bricks, etc. However, without the humbling influence of church teachings, selfishness would soon come to the fore and ruin these operations. "The future of the entire cooperative movement belongs therefore to Christianity."⁵¹

Ketteler was particularly taken with the idea of cooperative workshops and included these with his other recommendations. But his suspicion of the strong Liberal Fraktionen in Germany led him to reject Lassalle's plan of state subsidization. Rather Christian charity would be capable of raising "even the largest sums of money,"⁵² ...like the Peter's Pence, an annual collection among the Catholic faithful taken to Rome. Aside from these general remarks, however, no practical blueprint for the creation of cooperative shops was given in the book. He had achieved his purpose, Ketteler humbly concluded, if he had succeeded in pointing out just some of the Christian solutions to social problems and in "making Christian hearts... turn in the direction of this vast field of [social] activity to which God is directing them."⁵³ This was what Ketteler had hoped would occur in Frankfurt.

Ketteler may have been influenced in his plans for a Christian cooperative movement by a similar development already underway in the Rhineland by 1864.

51. Ibid., p 136.

52. Ibid., p 115.

53. Ibid., p 113.

Two Catholic labor associations (Arbeitervereine) had been founded for factory workers and artisans in the Ruhr in the early 1860's, while six similar organizations had been established for miners (Knappenvereine).⁵⁴ Formed on the initiative of socially conscious parish priests, the Arbeiter- and Knappenvereine were patterned largely after Schulze-Delitzsch's cooperatives and provided material benefits such as small loans and mutual sickness and burial funds. Unlike the Liberal societies, however, members were assembled regularly for religious and moral instruction.⁵⁵

Ketteler was well informed about new developments in the labor world and probably saw these organizations as the nucleus for his own cooperative schemes.⁵⁶ He must have been pleased, therefore, by the stimulus which his book gave this young movement. Five new Arbeitervereine were joined by an equal number of Knappenvereine in the mid-1860's.⁵⁷ Ketteler's 1864 publication, which ran through three editions in as many months, was also responsible for the proliferation throughout the west of the St. Joseph's Savings and Loan Associations (Spar-und Darlehnsvereine). The latter catered almost completely to small shopowners and established handicraftsmen and were formed in cities like Münster, Recklinghausen, or Elberfeld, where miners and factory workers were not yet in the majority.⁵⁸ The Arbeiter-, Knappen-, and St. Joseph's Vereine may have attracted as many as 5,000 backers by 1869.⁵⁹ Though only a fraction of the Liberal cooperative movement, this was nevertheless a respectable beginning.

54. Ritter, Volksverein, p 76.

55. Hans Georg Kirchhoff, Die staatliche Sozialpolitik im Ruhrbergbau 1871-1914 (Cologne and Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1958), p 25.

56. See Ketteler, Arbeiterfrage, p 136, and Ketteler's private notes of late summer, 1864, printed in Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 199.

57. Ritter, Volksverein, p 76.

58. Rudolf Meyer, Der Emancipationskampf des vierten Standes (Berlin: Verlag von August Schindler, 1874), Vol. 1, pp 333,335.

59. No complete statistics exist, but Meyer provides a few isolated figures which permit the above approximation. Ibid., pp 338-42.

The Christian cooperative workshops met with far less success. It was a measure of Ketteler's enthusiasm for the idea, however, that he was among the few in Germany who actually tried to translate the concept into reality. The Frankfurt presentations had apparently not provided him with ample information on these shops, for in mid-January 1864, while still writing The Labor Question and Christianity, he drafted an anonymous appeal to Lassalle. In it he described his own plan to establish five producer cooperatives for industrial workers. He intended to capitalize each firm at 10,000 gulden and wondered if Lassalle thought the idea practical. As he was unable to determine whether the five associations should be united under a central direction or set up separately, would Lassalle be willing to outline a plan of organization?⁶⁰ The cautious Lassalle responded evasively, unwilling to send detailed thoughts to an unknown correspondent.⁶¹ Ketteler then instructed Moufang to write to Victor Huber for advice, but the Protestant social reformer also refused to comment, claiming unfamiliarity with Hessian industrial relations.⁶² Ketteler was consequently unable to make any specific recommendations when The Labor Question and Christianity went to press.

On his own now, Ketteler groped his way toward a workable statute. By late Spring 1864, he had worked out the details and was prepared to build the first workshops on land purchased with his own funds.⁶³ As notations from his personal papers make clear, the bishop also envisioned a large roof organization, whose purpose would be to capitalize all sorts of worker-run shops and factories, promote consumer coops and credit unions, and sponsor more conventions of the German Handwerkerbund.⁶⁴ Interestingly

60. Ketteler to Lassalle, 16 January 1864, printed in Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, pp 183-84.

61. Lassalle to Ketteler, 21 January 1864, printed in ibid., p 185.

62. Huber to Moufang, 29 January 1864, printed in ibid., p 186.

63. Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 201.

64. Ketteler's notations from late summer 1864 are printed in ibid., pp 197-99.

enough, Ketteler also considered a fourth option--the trade union. He had observed the development of the trade union in England and knew that it was already a form of organization popular among German workers. Unions should be legalized and workers encouraged to join, but the latter should not assume that the union alone could remedy social ills. "Trade unions are justified as are the cuts on a sick body. Presupposing a condition of illness, they are relatively good."⁶⁵ For this reason trade unions were not mentioned along with the other activities of his promotional society. Unlike the trade unions, Ketteler's workshops would replace the "sick body" of the economy with an altogether new and healthy organism.

It was not long, however, before Ketteler was induced to reconsider his earlier assessment of the trade union. After stretching his own finances to the point of indebtedness, Ketteler was exasperated to learn that the remainder of the funds necessary for capitalization was not forthcoming from charitable donations. His faith in the willingness of the wealthier classes to aid the workers had proved unrealistic. The Mainzer Journal, Ketteler's political mouthpiece, complained angrily: "If the hundreds of thousands of rich factory lords and other superabundant money magnates would just once open their hearts and expend about a tenth of their annual profits for the common good in the same manner that Bishop of Mainz does annually with almost his entire income, the labor question would be happily solved."⁶⁶

The financial collapse of most of the "Christian factories" in March 1865 further undermined Ketteler's hope of creating a new labor order.⁶⁷ The worker obviously did not have access to the necessary funds or possess adequate business acumen to manage his own firm. But there were other discomfiting developments. Since the founding of the Handwerkerbund in

65. Ibid., p 197.

66. Quoted in Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 201.

67. Ibid., p 202.

1860, commercial freedom had been legislated in nine more German states. Still hoping to stem the tide, a third convention was held in Cologne in September 1864 after a petition had been submitted to the various governments of the Confederation. When these efforts produced no results, the movement began to crumble, even though in Prussia the government had not yet acceded to Liberal demands. By mid-1865, the German Handwerkerbund had ceased to function.⁶⁸

Thus in March 1865, with proceedings already in motion in Berlin to legalize trade unions, Ketteler drew up new organizational plans. Private notes made at the time indicate that he was thinking in terms of merging the trade union concept with the religious cooperative approach of the Catholic Arbeitervereine.⁶⁹ Trade associations should be formed, he wrote, for all workers of each branch of industry. The basic function of the organization would be that of the trade union, but the association had to "afford its members material and moral protection in the sense of cooperative self-help."⁷⁰ Further notes show that Ketteler had not abandoned his corporatist ideas of early 1862.⁷¹ Indeed far from sowing seeds of embitterment and opposition in society, these "Christian" trade unions were to be systematically and harmoniously integrated into it. District federations could be formed to serve as courts of appeal for the member unions, administer common funds, and represent the workers in negotiations with other estates and corporations. With the backing, significantly enough, of the church, the unions could then work to secure state recognition of the district federations as legally competent bodies with legislative authority to regulate the affairs of labor. The rest of Ketteler's scheme was taken directly from the pages of Freedom, Authority, and the Church. Nobles, peasants, merchants, artisans, and the church would enjoy similar autonomous positions, and to insure a minimum of social and political

68. Hamerow, Social Foundations, Vol. 1, pp 121,127.

69. Ketteler's notes are printed in Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 202.

70. Ibid., p 202.

71. The notes are undated, but apparently were made in the mid-1860's. Ibid., p 203.

friction, Ketteler hoped that an organization comprising all estates and corporate bodies could be created. The mechanism and institutional structure of the new Christian order which he had described in such general terms three years earlier now appeared clear to the social activist from Mainz.

A number of developments after 1865 induced Ketteler to move beyond the planning state and press for the realization of these goals. For one, the death of Lassalle in 1864 brought J. B. Schweitzer to the head of the General German Workers Alliance, Lassalle's labor organization. The new leader, however, had none of Lassalle's moderation and tolerance in questions of religion. The Catholicism of the Hapsburgs, wrote Schweitzer in May 1866, was the "curse" which had directed the Austrian imperial family against "every movement to improve conditions in Europe."⁷² Anti-Catholic remarks such as this, and reported instances of pro-Protestant agitation by Alliance speakers, prompted Ketteler to question whether Catholic workers could continue to belong to such an organization.

When I consider the General German Workers Alliance as it has developed into its present form and its present leadership, I cannot say without reservations that I consider membership within the organization compatible with the duties of a conscientious Catholic. The direction of the Alliance seems to me to have progressively gone over to the kind of people who turn everything they do, no matter what the immediate goal, to the final end of promoting their disbelief and their hatred of Christianity and the church.⁷³

The defeat of Austria in July 1866 was even more jolting to Ketteler. By early 1867, Prussia had forged a confederation of North German states which left Rhenish and other Catholics distinctly in the minority. The feeling of vulnerability was heightened by the system of universal manhood suffrage which Bismarck instituted for the new North German Reichstag. Not only were Catholics exposed to the anti-clerical attacks of the numerically superior Liberals, but now the Socialists could begin to

72. Ketteler to three Catholic members of the Lassallean organization in Dünwald, 25 May 1866, printed in Raich, Ketteler's Briefe, pp 332-38.

73. Ibid., pp 333-34.

mount an assault on the Catholic masses. Three general elections in 1867/68 brought intense political agitation to Germany, especially in the populous industrial centers of Rhineland-Westphalia, where nearly 20,000 workers and artisans voted "red."⁷⁴ The age of mass politics had dawned in Germany.

Ketteler was no more in favor of Bismarck's experiment with a universally elected parliament than he had been with Lassalle's plans four years (earlier. The Ständestaat, the bishop wrote in February 1867, was the truest) and most genuine form of popular representation.⁷⁵ A corporate chamber would be more useful than an assembly "where a few party leaders come together with a great number of blind comrades."⁷⁶ Ketteler now realized that his idea of an "estatist constitution" was unrealistic, for it would be impossible "with one leap"⁷⁷ to formulate a code of laws capable of establishing such an organic order. But if an enduring political establishment were to be created, gradual steps in the direction of corporation had to be taken. Foremost among these would be legislation to strengthen the associational ties of the old estates and to create new bonds of union for groups such as industrial workers. On this sound basis, progress could be made toward the ultimate goal of the Ständestaat.⁷⁸

In keeping with his private notes of the mid-1860's, Ketteler next sought to enlist the aid of the church hierarchy for his gradualist program. Shortly after the constituent assembly of the North German Confederation convened in Berlin in February 1867, Ketteler wrote to Bishop Martin of Paderborn requesting that a conference of German bishops be held to

74. Dieter Dowe, "Organisatorische Anfänge der Arbeiterbewegung in der Rheinprovinz und in Westfalen bis zum Sozialistengesetz von 1878," in Juergen Reulecke (ed.), Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr (Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag GmbH., 1974), pp 69-73.

75. W. E. von Ketteler, Deutschland nach dem Kriege von 1866 (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1867), p 106.

76. Ibid., p 106.

77. Ibid., p 106.

78. Ibid., p 106.

formulate positions on the important social, political, and cultural issues effecting the church.⁷⁹ Martin responded positively, and later that year plans were finalized for a bishops' conference which was to meet in Fulda in late October 1867. In the meantime, Pope Pius IX had announced that deliberations for the forthcoming Vatican Council would commence in December 1869.⁸⁰ Ketteler hoped to convince his fellow bishops of the need for a more active church involvement in the social reform movement and with their support, win the backing of the Vatican Council and the Pope for similar resolutions.⁸¹

The idea was bold, but in 1867 the church must have appeared to Ketteler as the most likely engine for his political designs. The Katholikentag had potential for political influence but had thus far proved ineffective as a means of taking meaningful action. Too, the various Catholic Fraktionen were everywhere weak and on the wane. In Prussia, for instance, the Catholic party had lost more and more ground after 1862 and had finally disbanded in 1867.⁸² Catholic representation in the Reichstag was also weak and disunified. Ketteler was enthusiastic about the possibility of "a general movement"⁸³ among Catholics and his earlier writings had always encouraged Catholics to be more active politically, but until this occurred the church would have to fill the vacuum. Ketteler must have been somewhat relieved, therefore, when the bishops agreed to place the social question on the agenda of the next conference in September 1869, three months before their departure for Rome.⁸⁴

79. Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 379.

80. Ibid., p 380.

81. W. E. Hogan, The Development of Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler's Interpretation of the Social Problem (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1946), pp 173-74.

82. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 2, pp 203-04.

83. Ketteler to the Roman prelate Dominicus Bartolini, 4 December 1867, printed in Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, pp 297-99.

84. Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, pp 380-81.

While Ketteler pieced together his campaign to reorganize society along corporate lines, his followers in the West were considering political action of their own. The first sign was the founding of the monthly Christlich-soziale Blätter in late March 1868 by Joseph Schings, a young priest from Aachen inspired by Ketteler's writings. The co-editor was Nikolas Schüren, inactive in the labor movement since the Cologne convention of the Handwerkerbund. Like Ketteler, the two were worried about the growing socialistic tendencies among the workers and artisans, but were even more concerned with the threat of the liberals.⁸⁵ The latter had resumed their efforts to introduce industrial freedom after the founding of the North German Confederation and by early April 1868 the Reichstag was ready to debate Liberal legislation designed to remove the last vestiges of guild control in northern Germany. In anticipation of these measures, a group of die-hard artisans gathered in Quedlinburg in August 1867 and formed the North German Handwerkerbund, whose first convention met in Hanover as the Reichstag prepared to debate the Liberals' bill.⁸⁶

The founding of the Christlich-soziale Blätter must be viewed above all in conjunction with these developments. The first issue appeared only days before the opening of the Reichstag and railed against "the false economic principles of liberalism."⁸⁷ Subsequent issues paid tribute to the concept of the cooperative workshop as the best defense against factories.⁸⁸ Schings and Schüren even accepted the strike activity of the first "worker coalitions" as a contribution to the overall struggle

85. Ritter, Volksverein, pp 68,71.

86. Hamerow, Social Foundations, Vol. 2, pp 351-52.

87. Quoted in Franz Josef Stegmann, Der soziale Katholizismus und die Mitbestimmung in Deutschland (Munich: Verlag Ferdinand Schoeningh, 1974), p 53, No. 80.

88. Ibid., pp 53-54.

against liberal industrialism.⁸⁹ Such views were in keeping with the growing feeling of desperation among German handicraftsmen and presaged the day when artisans and journeymen would themselves participate in forming the first trade unions.

The initiative from Aachen was seconded by Johann Breuer, a school-teacher from Elberfeld who years earlier had helped Kolping found the first Gesellenverein. Alarmed by the dual threat of liberalism and socialism, Breuer felt the time had come for greater cooperation among the various Catholic labor associations of the West. On his suggestion, representatives of these organizations were invited to a conference in Crefeld in late June 1868.⁹⁰ It quickly became evident, however, that little would be accomplished. No doubt in response to an agenda which made no provision for discussion of the miners' and factory workers' problems, no Arbeiter- or Knappenvereine sent delegates.⁹¹ Consequently, the artisan wing of the movement predominated at Crefeld. Along with Schings, Schüren, Breuer, representatives from the large St. Joseph's Vereine of Aachen and Elberfeld, and the Christian cooperative workshop of Recklinghausen--the only one ever established--were present.⁹² Prevented by the poor turnout from formulating forceful resolutions on the social question, the delegates nevertheless resolved to form a "Christian-Social Party," the statutes for which would be formulated by a second conference in 1869.⁹³

89. Eberhardt Naujoks, Die katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus in den ersten Jahren des Bismarckschen Reiches (Berlin: Junker und Dwennhaupt Verlag, 1939), p 82.

90. Ritter, Volksverein, p 68.

91. Victor Huber commented on the agenda in a letter to Bishop Ketteler, 16 June 1868, printed in Raich, Ketteler's Briefe, pp 385-86. See also Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, p 82.

92. Johannes Kaster, Die christlich-sozialen Ideen und die Gewerkschaftsfrage (München-Gladbach: Volksvereinsverlag BmbH., 1922), p 38; Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, p 245; Meyer, Emancipationskampf, Vol. 1, pp 338-42. Kaster notes that representatives from these cities were present. Information from Franz and Meyer points to these specific organizations.

93. Meyer, Emancipationskampf, Vol. 1, p 326; Nitti, Catholic Socialism, p 132.

Such a party, the delegates proclaimed, would be the most effective means of saving the "Bürger- and Hanwerkerstand."⁹⁴

The danger of this indifference toward the 'proletarians' cause became evident soon after the Crefeld conference. In July 1868, the Reichstag passed bills introducing freedom of enterprise throughout the North German Confederation, providing cooperatives with legal corporate status, and legalizing the trade union and the strike. The Liberals and Socialists wasted no time in founding their own trade union movements. Schweitzer's organization broke first ground in this field at a special congress in Berlin in late September, followed only days later by the formation of another association under the tutelage of two Prussian liberals, Max Hirsch and Franz Duncker. With little hope left for the guilds and the way cleared now for new forms of organizational activity, thousands of displaced journeymen and handicraftsmen flocked to these new unions. Along with miners and factory employees, the first liberal organizations were formed for printers, mechanics, carpenters, painters, potters, shoemakers, tailors, and other former artisans.⁹⁵ The Hirsch-Duncker unions claimed 30,000 members in May 1869, while the Lassalleans boasted a following of about 50,000 at this time. Dwarfing both organizations, it should not be forgotten, were Schulze's cooperatives which had risen meteorically to a membership of 304,000 by 1869.⁹⁶ The time for Ketteler's trade union scheme of 1865 seemed as ripe now as it would ever be.

To be sure, the bishop had observed the rise of the Liberal and Socialist trade unions with great apprehension. He spoke of this concern in an

94. Quoted in Karl Heinz Schürmann, Zur Vorgeschichte der christlichen Gewerkschaften (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1958), p 38.

95. Wolfgang Schroeder and Peter Haferstroh, "Verband der deutschen Gewerkvereine (Hirsch-Duncker) 1869-1933," in Dieter Fricke et al., Die bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland (Berlin: Das europäische buch, 1968), Vol. 2, pp 685-86.

96. For the above statistics, see ibid., p 685, and Hamerow, Social Foundations, Vol. 1, pp 176, 254.

address before the workers of Offenbach in late July 1869.⁹⁷ The German workers had to organize, he began, if they were to avoid destruction at the hands of centralized wealth. But there were already signs that the union movement in Germany would be a failure. He did not feel the workers could successfully organize without outside assistance, but who could guarantee that the Liberal and Socialist leaders would really strive for the common good of the workers and not deceive and exploit them just as the capitalists had done?

Without religion, we all become the victims of our self-love, whether we be rich or poor, capitalists or workers. We exploit our neighbor as long as we are in possession of the power to do so. As justified as is the movement among German workers to organize, it will be successful only when its leaders renounce their hatred of Christianity and take up at least a respectful, benevolent position toward religion and the church.⁹⁸

The necessity of this moderate, Christian approach to labor problems could be illustrated, Ketteler continued, by the struggle over higher wages. The strike was an effective and worthy method of raising wages, but such increases were not limitless. Indeed, the natural limit of the workers' pay was reached when wage demands became so high that the capitalist no longer earned a worthwhile profit. He would then invest his funds elsewhere, leaving the overambitious workers unemployed. To insure that wage demands did not exceed this natural limit, religious and moral instruction was absolutely necessary. The laboring class had to be imbued with a noble moral outlook and conduct itself in an upright, Christian, and religious fashion. Otherwise, he concluded, the laborers would fall prey to the designs of selfish men. "The power of wealth without religion is an evil thing. So, too, is the strength of the worker without religion. Both can lead to destruction."⁹⁹ Ketteler seemed to be rejecting the

97. W. E. von Ketteler, Die Arbeiterbewegung und ihr Streben im Verhältniss zu Religion und Sittlichkeit. Eine Ansprache gehalten auf der Liebfrauenhaide am 25 Juli 1869 (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1869).

98. Ibid., pp 5-6.

99. Ibid., p 12.

idea of another labor organization and advocating instead an intense effort to bring the already existing union movements under the influence of Christianity. This would have been consistent with his private notes of 1865 which called for a close working relationship between the church and independent trade unions.

Ketteler's Offenbach address was delivered one day before he completed the final draft of his presentation for the Fulda bishops' conference.¹⁰⁰ In this document, Ketteler left no doubt as to his intentions. The social question, he wrote with an eye on the forthcoming Vatican Council, was one that affected all the countries of Europe. Industrialism had spread to the continent from England and was continuing to advance in inexorable fashion. This development was dispossessing the old Mittelstand, one of the chief foundations of church and state, and creating in its place "the dissatisfied and the wearied proletariat."¹⁰¹ This new class of industrial workers was characterized by a sense of hopelessness and uncertainty which led quickly to despair, bitterness, and a hatred of the upper classes. Private entrepreneurs could improve this situation by founding factory welfare organizations. The state, too, could help by banning child, adolescent, female, and Sunday labor, reducing work hours, introducing factory inspections, closing all unsafe factories, granting indemnities to disabled workers, and by providing labor organizations a greater measure of autonomy.

But the bishops should not think, the document continued, that private individuals and the state were solely responsible for ameliorating social abuses. The church, too, should become involved, for in their present impoverished state, proletarians were no longer effected by traditional religious teachings. Unless bold new programs were adopted, he warned, the workers would be lost to anti-Christian parties such as the Liberals

100. The final draft, dated 26 July 1869, is reproduced in Johannes Mumbauer (ed.), Wilhelm Emmanuel von Kettelers Schriften (Munich: Verlag der Jos. Koesel'schen Buchhandlung, 1911), Vol. 3, pp 145-66.

101. Ibid., p 146.

and Socialists. Seminaries should adjust their curricula to include courses in labor relations, church stipends should provide certain priests with the opportunity to study political economy in the universities, excursions could be sponsored to study industrial conditions in France and England, and special care taken in the selection of priests for industrial parishes. Ketteler felt confident that such programs would produce at least one priest who could do for the workers what Kolping had done for the journeymen. He could help found new labor organizations, inform members of their rights and obligations, and instill in the workers trust and faith in God. The "new Kolping" would also encourage entrepreneurs to construct workers' housing, improve shop conditions, raise wages, initiate profit-sharing plans, and establish other welfare institutions. He was to be the "apostle of peace between capital and labor."¹⁰²

Kettler stopped short of advocating a centralized, church-controlled union movement. Such an organization, he noted, would be weak, artificial, and unable to adapt to local circumstances. Obviously the bishop feared that a church movement would fail to catch on in areas like the Ruhr where Catholics and Protestants were mixed and preferred, instead, that the unions organize on a local or regional basis and remain independent of the bishops. The hierarchy could stay in touch with the movement through its priests and by way of special lay representatives who would report regularly to each bishop on the physical, intellectual, moral, and religious condition of the workers in that diocese. These diocesan representatives could then meet annually to consider further ways and means for the church to aid the laborers. Between these diocesan gatherings and the already established bishops' conferences, Ketteler would have the political mechanism he needed to work jointly with the unions for

102. Ibid., p 163.

corporate freedoms.¹⁰³ Labor reforms such as those mentioned earlier could then be formulated and administered by the workers themselves. By fostering and encouraging the labor movement, the church would thus make an important contribution to the realization of the new social order which he envisioned.

The actual presentation was made on September 5, 1869, but was largely unsuccessful in achieving its purpose. Some of the bishops agreed to act on his recommendations, and Archbishop Melcher of Cologne actually established a commission to investigate industrial conditions.¹⁰⁴ But most bishops were not moved to action. To a generation of clergymen unaccustomed to social and political activism on the part of the church, Ketteler's ideas were too radical. The employer's superior position in society was regarded as given; the workers should accept their lowly position and direct their attention to a better life in the hereafter. The conference disposed of the matter in a single afternoon, resolving that it would be extremely difficult to frame any detailed questions regarding the church's social activities which could serve as a basis for discussion by the Vatican Council. It was decided nevertheless that Ketteler's program be kept in mind and "an effort made to renew the interest of the coming Council in the duty of the church to take care of the poor."¹⁰⁵ But the clerics who gathered in Rome were no more inclined

103. The church should "encourage, recognize, instruct, and give assistance to trade unions." Ibid., p 162. In 1865 Ketteler wrote that that the church should examine the statutes of new labor organizations, encourage unions "to make proposals, and later, to formulate a constitution for the working class." Other notes called for "autonomous legislation within the unions' proper sphere of interest." Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, pp 203-03. Although Ketteler did not elaborate on the political role of the diocesan and bishops conferences at Fulda, it seems clear that these institutions were designed to implement the plans outlined privately four years earlier.

104. Hogan, Ketteler's Interpretation of the Social Problem, p 173.

105. Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, p 436, quotes from the protocol of the Bishops' conference. As far as this author knows, the protocols of the Fulda conferences are still not accessible to researchers.

toward a greater social activism than the Fulda conference had been. The Council, whose deliberations ended in July 1870, failed to give to social Catholicism that spark which Ketteler had hoped it would. Pope Leo XIII would eventually second Ketteler in 1891, but in the meantime, the church was to give no direction or guidance to the social reform efforts of some of its members. This left the Catholic-social movement at a tremendous disadvantage, for without the moral sanction of the church, most Catholics remained socially indifferent.

While Ketteler made ready to salvage as much of his program as possible in Rome, Schings and Breuer pushed on with their plan for a Christian-Social Party. Recent developments pointed to the forthcoming Katholikentag in Düsseldorf as the logical focus of their activity. During the winter of 1868/69, a provisional committee of the Katholikentag had drawn up plans for a permanent central committee consisting of one to three representatives from each diocese. The task of the central committee would be to prepare the Katholikentag's agenda, execute its resolutions, and promote the various Vereine.¹⁰⁶ As September 1869 approached, Schings, Breuer, and the executive board of the St. Joseph's Verein of Elberfeld urged the provisional committee to scrap its plan and establish instead a Christian-social party similar to Schweitzer's General German Workers Alliance.¹⁰⁷ Catholic labor associations, the Gesellenvereine, and all other organizations associated with the Katholikentag would provide the new party with the broad base necessary for political effectiveness. Schings and Breuer also planned to work with tolerant Protestants. It would be a "Christian," not a Catholic party.¹⁰⁸

Since the conference at Crefeld, moreover, the Christian-socialists had swung into line with the more progressive, worker-oriented views

106. Kissling, Geschichte der Katholikentage, Vol. 1, pp 410-11.

107. Meyer, Emancipationskampf, Vol. 1, p 328; Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, p 84.

108. Meyer, Emancipationskampf, Vol. 1, p 343.

emanating from Mainz. This resulted in part from the dictates of political expediency. No party based in the industrial West could hope to survive in the long run without at least appealing to the urban proletariat. Breuer, who had been a leading figure in Elberfeld politics since 1845, must surely have realized this. But there were other reasons. Schüren had left the Christlich-soziale Blätter in early 1869, disappointed over the coming of anti-guild legislation the previous summer. The editorship was thus left in the hands of the younger, more impressionable Schings. The latter continued to represent Schüren's more guild-oriented views until Ketteler's Offenbach speech caused him to broaden his outlook on social reform. Schings and other priests who heretofore had only supported the Handwerkerbund now responded enthusiastically to Ketteler's message. By fall 1869, the new Christian-Social Party was willing to organize Christian workingmen in cooperatives and trade unions, pressure parliament for protective labor legislation, and cooperate with the church to further Ketteler's ultimate goal of an organic, decentralized Ständestaat.¹⁰⁹

These plans came to nought. The Düsseldorf Katholikentag of 1869 paid lip service to the program of the Christlich-soziale Blätter, but rejected the idea of politicizing the Catholics' national caucus. Katholikentag leaders feared that a party formed mainly to pursue social reforms would alienate middle and upper class Catholics and suggested instead that a special "social section" be formed under the direction of the central committee to promote Catholic labor associations and unify their activity. This resolution differed very little from a resolution passed in 1868. And, far from forming the basis for a new party, the associations

109. Franz, Der soziale Katholizismus, p 122; Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, Vol. 31, p 297; Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, pp 82-83; Vicar, J. P. Pfeiffer of Aachen to Ketteler, 21 August 1869, printed in Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 2, pp 438-39; Ritter, Volksverein, pp 71-72; Meyer, Emancipationskampf, Vol. 1, p 77; Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 1, p 437.

were to remain essentially economic and educational in nature. Furthermore, neither Schings nor Breuer were granted seats on the special commission. In their places were Professor Schulte of Paderborn and Vicar Gronheid, head of a Catholic "people's bank" in Münster. Chairman of the social section charged with furthering the workers' cause was Burghard von Schorlemer-Alst, a Westphalian agrarian.¹¹⁰

The emergence of Schorlemer in such a role was highly significant. Though very paternalistic in his political views, Schorlemer was not a onesided proponent of agrarianism. He realized that liberalism was making the workers' and artisans' struggle for independence just as difficult as that of the small farmer.¹¹¹ Consistent with these views, Schorlemer had participated in a series of conferences which Wilderich von Ketteler, Hermann von Mallinckrodt, and other Westphalian noblemen had convened in Soest almost without interruption since late 1863.¹¹² The Soest conferences were a direct result of the somewhat greater interest in the social question generated by the Frankfurt Katholikentag and were originally seen as a means of encouraging the Catholic Fraktion to adopt a program more in keeping with the anti-liberalism of the Westphalians. But the virtual disappearance of the Prussian Fraktion in 1867, and the approaching state and national elections of 1870, gave rise in Soest to talk of forming a new party altogether. By summer 1869, Mallinckrodt had formulated the first draft of a party program and was ready to present it to other Catholic deputies in Berlin for their perusal. Hoping to avoid the intra-party conflicts of the 1850's and attract as many adherents as possible, even among Protestants, the Westphalians did not wish to press their own corporatist views too emphatically. The party would champion all that was "genuinely progressive," but would be

110. This paragraph is based on Filthaut, Deutsche Katholikentage, pp 57-59; Kissling, Geschichte der Katholikentage, Vol. 1, pp 440-42; Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, pp 83-84.

111. Meyer, Emancipationskampf, Vol. 1, pp 328-29.

112. For information on the Soest conferences, see Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 3, pp 97-100.

"deeply Christian and truly conservative."¹¹³ The outmaneuvering of Schings and his followers at Düsseldorf must thus be interpreted as an attempt to incorporate the Catholic labor associations into the broader, more conservative political movement developing in Westphalia. In return for an assurance that the new party would push for labor legislation "and greet all efforts which the church originates to heal the social and moral wounds of our time,"¹¹⁴ the Christian-social activists agreed to cooperate.

The Westphalians did not, however, represent the views of most German Catholics. This was made quite clear in June 1870 when the Kölnische Volkszeitung published a political program which made no mention of social reform.¹¹⁵ Author of the program was the Westphalians' old nemesis, Peter Reichenperger, who claimed to speak for "Catholic men from the different parts of the country."¹¹⁶ Reichensperger was not completely opposed to the cause of social reform. In 1847, for instance, he had advocated introduction of guilds in modern form.¹¹⁷ To Reichensperger, however, social misery was something which had to be accepted as given. The proper approach to social problems was one of patience.¹¹⁸ For the time being, at least, Catholics should concern themselves with the need to protect the confessional school and the church's priestly orders from the onslaught of the Liberals.¹¹⁹ Schorlemer and his Christian-social allies insisted that the party "support the efforts of the Christian social labor associations,"¹²⁰ but when the newly elected deputies of what came to be known as

113. Dr. Huelskamp, member of the Katholikentag central committee, to Landtag deputy Joseph Krebs, 14 June 1870, printed in Ibid., pp 103-04.

114. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 3, p 103.

115. The Cologne program is printed in Edward Huesgen, Ludwig Windthorst (Cologne: Verlag und Druck von J. P. Bachem, 1907), pp 80-81.

116. Quoted in ibid., p 80.

117. Stegmann, "Soziale Ideen," p 349.

118. Filthaut, Deutsche Katholikentage, p 36.

119. This was the central theme of the election proclamation. Huesgen, Ludwig Windthorst, pp 80-81.

120. Quoted in Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 3, p 108.

the Prussian Center Party gathered in Berlin to formulate a definite program in mid-December 1870, no mention was made of labor legislation. The 50-man Fraktion had been formed, the program made clear, exclusively to defend "the freedom and independence of the church and its institutions."¹²¹ As in 1853, the Westphalians had been unable to prevail upon the more numerous faction around Reichensperger.¹²²

Even more damaging setbacks occurred in 1871 despite the fact that Ketteler himself made every effort to revive the faltering movement. The bishop had returned from Rome the previous summer, disillusioned with the social ambivalence of the church, but determined "to solve the social problem in a Christian sense."¹²³ The elections to the new all-German Reichstag in March 1871 seemed to provide him with such an opportunity. He ran successfully as an independent, but hoped to win the support of the other Catholic deputies for a new program which he had formulated in late 1870.¹²⁴ Among other things, the draft advanced the now familiar idea of semi-autonomous labor organizations--a point defended openly by Moufang and Schings during the campaign.¹²⁵ Showing greater political realism than earlier proposals, the new program also suggested formation of a "corporate Senate" to deliberate jointly with the Reichstag.¹²⁶

121. The program of the Prussian Center Party is printed in ibid., p 128.

122. Bachem's official party history deemphasizes these tensions, but does not completely overlook them. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 3, pp 105-16. George G. Windell, The Catholics and German Unity 1866-1871 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), pp 278-80, discusses the Elberfeld conference and its aftermath, but detects no party infighting.

123. Ketteler to Canon Haffner, 6 May 1870, printed in Raich, Kettelers Briefe, p 410.

124. Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 3, p 265. Ketteler's program was published over two years later under the title Die Katholiken im Deutschen Reich: Entwurf zu einem politischen Program (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1873), 150 pp.

125. Meyer, Emancipationskampf, Vol. 1, pp 71-77. Moufang developed these ideas in a speech in Mainz on 27 February 1871. Schings went into even greater detail in the March number of the Christlich-soziale Blätter, elaborating a "Christian-social program".

126. Ketteler, Die Katholiken im Deutschen Reich, pp 62-65.

When Ketteler arrived in Berlin, however, he discovered that the party leadership had already agreed on a program without consulting him.¹²⁷

Like the Prussian Fraktion, the Reichstag deputies were primarily concerned with the threat of anti-Catholic legislation and would go no farther on the social question than expressing their intention to further "the moral and material welfare of all classes."¹²⁸ Feeling that Socialist or Liberal domination of the labor movement presented the greatest threat to the church in the long run. Ketteler formulated a parliamentary resolution under the heading "The Further Development of the Rights of German Labor" and prepared to introduce it in the Reichstag.¹²⁹ But he abandoned this attempt too after learning that the Center would not support him.¹³⁰

Like Ketteler's Fulda initiative of 1869, the Christian-social program of 1871 was simply too ambitious for the times. It is highly doubtful that the majority of middle-class Centrists shared the strong anti-social feelings of Dr. Johann Sepp of Munich, who lambasted Schings for perpetrating a hoax designed to sow seeds of discontent among otherwise satisfied laborers.¹³¹ However, such views were so widespread, especially among Catholic employers, to warrant caution on the part of the Center leaders. Reichen-sperger and Fraktion leader Ludwig Windthorst were also concerned that labor legislation, though justified in principle, might arouse the government and the business-oriented Liberals, thus jeopardizing the Center's defense of the church. With the beginning of the so-called Kulturkampf in July 1871 the last chance that these leaders would offer immediate support to the Christian socialists disappeared. "We must first win liberty for

127. Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 3, p 257.

128. The program of the Reichstag Center is printed in Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 3, pp 137-38.

129. Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 3, p 257.

130. Fritz Vigener, Ein deutsches Bischofsleben des 19. Jahr undert (Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1924), p 711.

131. Filthaut, Deutsche Katholikentage, pp 57-59; Kissling, Geschichte der Katholikentage, Vol. 1, pp 440-42.

the church," said Windthorst, "and then we can throw ourselves into the social reform movement."¹³²

The Westphalian noblemen in the party were more prone to social action, but as members of the upper class they were sufficiently removed from the labor world to place a lower priority on social legislation than Ketteler and the workers preferred. Schorlemer and his followers, moreover, were preoccupied themselves with the escalating Kulturkampf and by 1872 had postponed all plans to aid the proletariat. Worried about the prospering Liberal and Socialist labor movements, Schings, like Ketteler, had trouble understanding the timid approach of the Westphalians.

The spirit of pessimism still reigns in those circles where we seek the best fighters with the sharpest weapons--among those Catholics who stand out because of their social position, scientific knowledge or superior material means. They are convinced that only the hand of the church can save us from the [social] storm raging about us, but do not have the courage to put the church's undying strength to the test. They possess a belief, but will not act, they desire a Christian-social movement, but have no conception of social work or social conditions, they call for help, but shake their heads when it is near. This is a sad, dangerous standpoint which at the same time makes us look ridiculous in the eyes of our enemies. Will it soon be overcome?¹³³

It was not.

By the early 1870's, however, a younger generation of radical priests and working-class followers were beginning to take matters into their own hands. The situation became particularly acute in Aachen. In the wake of Ketteler's Offenbach address, the young chaplain Eduard Cronenberg founded A Catholic Arbeiterverein and began to urge immediate social and political

132. Quoted in George Metlake (Laux), Christian Social Reform Program Outlined by Its Pioneer Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler (Philadelphia: The Dolphin Press, 1912), p 184.

133. Quoted in Franz Hitze, Die soziale Frage und die Bestrebungen zu ihrer Lösung (Paderborn: Bonifacius-Druckerei, 1877) p 170.

action.¹³⁴ During the Reichstag campaign in February 1871, Cronenberg chastised his fellow Catholics for preaching to the workers about industriousness, which the factory foremen saw to quite adequately, and thriftiness, which was unnecessary considering the low level of wages. He also rejected emphatically the attitude prevalent in Center Party circles that social problems weren't ripe for a solution and could only be ameliorated gradually. In order to prevent social revolution, legislators had to proceed immediately with a genuine program of social legislation. Cronenberg also spoke out against the hesitation of conservative churchmen. "The interests of the Catholic people extend farther than the interests of the Catholic church."¹³⁵ The insubordinate tone of this latter remark moved church, professional, and entrepreneurial circles in Aachen to lodge complaints with Archbishop Melcher in Cologne. Cronenberg's appeals to the workers, it was charged, contradicted Christian principles, were too democratic, and generated unrealistic wishes and hopes among the workers. Church authorities in Cologne agreed and warned Cronenberg to moderate his political activities or face transfer.

These political differences were followed by economic disagreements in the following year. In mid-May 1872, the weavers of a large plant in Eupen struck when the owner refused to raise wages. Catholic textile manufacturers in the Eupen area responded by locking out their employees until the original strikers resumed work. Cronenberg offered the financial support of the Aachen Arbeiterverein to the strikers, tried to calm them somewhat, and then published a note protesting the employers' move. Due to the growth of liberalism and socialism, the note began, a regrettable conflict of interests had developed between capital and labor. The Arbeiterverein in Aachen had always sought to mitigate these altercations

134. The following discussion of Cronenberg is based on Herbert Lepper, "Kaplan Franz Eduard Cronenberg und die christlich-soziale Bewegung in Aachen 1868-1878," Zeitschrift des Aachener Geschichtsvereins, Vol. 79 (1968), pp 57-148. (Hereafter cited as Lepper, "Kaplan Cronenberg".)

135. Quoted in ibid., p 71.

on the basis of Christian principles, but the Eupen employers had acted in a thoroughly unChristian way by attempting to starve their workers into submission. If the owners continued to mistreat their employees, the pronouncements of the Socialists concerning "the hardheartedness, cruelty, and brutality of the bourgeoisie"¹³⁶ would be confirmed. A bitter press polemic ensued as a result of this protest until in July, local Prussian officials asked Melcher to intervene. The Archbishop's office felt that Cronenberg's action had been incorrect, serving only to excite the workers. Cronenberg, who probably believed he was acting as a "new Kolping," again was told to conduct himself more prudently in the future. The fact that by 1872 his Arbeiterverein had attracted over 3,000 workers and artisans who otherwise might have joined Socialist organizations probably saved him from transfer.

The situation in the large Reichstag district of Essen was also deteriorating. Relations between the Center and Catholic labor began to worsen there not long after the founding of a "Christian-social Arbeiterverein" in January 1870. Backed by its 4,000 members, the association approached local party officials in the Ruhr in early 1871 with the request that Center candidates push for a shorter work day, Sunday rest, and accident insurance once in parliament.¹³⁷ A split in party ranks was avoided in the end, perhaps because the Essen Center nominated Fr. Joseph Krebs, dubbed "Red Krebs" by his more conservative colleagues.¹³⁸

As in Aachen, economic disturbances undermined Catholic unity in Essen in 1872. In Essen, however, the miners actually attempted to found an independent trade union after an abortive strike in June of that year had taught them the necessity of permanent organization. Supported by

136. Quoted in ibid., p 75.

137. Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, p 101.

138. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 3, p 123.

Chaplain Laaf, leader of the Essen Arbeiterverein, Catholic workers opened negotiations with the Lassalleans shortly after the end of the strike. These talks led to the formation of the Association of Rhenish-Westphalian Miners in October 1872. Older priests in the area immediately assailed Laaf and the younger clergymen who backed him for allegedly leading the Catholic workers into the Socialist camp. More serious altercations were prevented by the dissolution of the new union by the Prussian Ministry of the Interior in early 1873. Alarmed by the rash of strikes coinciding with the economic upswing of 1871-72, the government had begun to question the wisdom of legalizing the trade union. Officials therefore adopted the strictest possible interpretation of the industrial code of 1869 in an attempt to impose peace on the warring economic parties.¹³⁹ That this was an employers' peace goes without saying.

1873 witnessed the spread of this more radical strain of Christian socialism.¹⁴⁰ In an effort to further the economic and political aims of the Arbeitervereine, Cronenberg convened a special congress in Aachen in December 1873. His opening address established the tone of the meeting. The Christlich-soziale Blätter had fallen silent on social matters and could no longer be supported, nor could the Katholikentag, which was only willing to discuss issues of religion and charity. Because its social section had also ceased functioning, the Christian-social Vereine had to act independently. Representing 61,000 Catholic workers and artisans, the delegates passed resolutions demanding enactment of a 10-hour day for factory workers, an 8-hour day for miners, banning of all female labor, and elimination of work on Sunday. Other resolutions illustrated the drift toward trade unionism. The Vereine should strive for unlimited

139. Report of the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, 27 July 1878, RD 30428, HSA Düsseldorf; Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, p 118; Kirchhoff, Staatliche Sozialpolitik im Ruhrgebiege, pp 24-27.

140. For the Aachen Congress of 1873, see Lepper, "Kaplan Cronenberg," pp 77-81.

coalition rights, the right to codetermine factory work rules, and the right to participate on an equal footing with employers in the arbitration of wage disputes by commercial courts. The cooperative approach of the 1860's was also emphasized. The Christian-social associations should form building societies, sublet inexpensive flats for workers, and establish work colonies to produce cheap food and clothing. To facilitate economic efforts, district labor federations should be formed as a step toward a union of all "Christian workers" in the Reich. A seven-man committee was elected to execute these resolutions.

The Aachen congress represented an attempt on the part of socially conscious parish priests, artisans, and certain industrial workers to implement the program which Ketteler was unable to execute himself. Indeed the congress had merely repeated demands which Ketteler had made at Offenbach, Fulda, or in his Christian-social program of 1870, which was withheld from publication until early 1873.¹⁴¹ The bishop must have realized that the Aachen delegates were prepared to take those "gradual steps" toward corporatism which he had mentioned in 1867, for in response to the telegram of the congress, Ketteler sent his best wishes for full success.

The economic recession which hit Germany after 1873 temporarily prevented the Christian-socialists from proceeding farther with their economic plans. Their demands on the Center Party, however, had already been made. To the appeal of the Aachen committee that he come forward in parliament to represent the interests of the laboring classes, Windthorst responded that laissez faire was still the ruling spirit in the Reichstag and that any social effort by the Center would be labeled as demagogic by the Liberals, thus further isolating the party and rendering more difficult its main task of protecting the church and the faith. Windthorst was undoubtedly right, but such logic failed to impress Cronenberg and his followers. The young priest challenged the official Center candidate for Aachen during

141. Lepper errs in stating that the delegates represented "thoroughly different social-political views" than those of Bishop Ketteler. Ibid., p 79.

the Reichstag elections of January 1874, and ran again after the death of his victorious opponent necessitated a by-election in January 1875.¹⁴²

Similar revolts appeared likely in Essen after Laaf's demands for a worker candidacy in 1874 were totally ignored. Anton Rosenkranz, a young miner who had helped found the short-lived union in 1872, recalled later that the members of the Arbeiterverein were incensed by the brusque treatment of Laaf and decided "then and there that things would turn out differently next time."¹⁴³ In the meantime, the Arbeiterverein maintained constant pressure on the Center deputy from Essen, Forcade de Biaix, by holding protest rallies together with the Socialists. A joint rally in October 1874 demanded that he oppose government legislation designed to prosecute workers for breach of labor contracts, and another in November demanded firm guarantees of coalition rights.¹⁴⁴

With two key Reichstag seats in jeopardy, local Center officials urged Melcher to put an end to these challenges by transferring the two Christian socialists.¹⁴⁵ That these complaints once again failed to dislodge Laaf and Cronenberg was not due, however, to any principled support for their efforts on the part of the Archbishop. Indeed, high church circles in Cologne feared that the two labor priests might arouse the workers' passions to the point where the Marxists and atheists would be the only beneficiaries.¹⁴⁶ But the 10,000 laborers amassed by the two

142. Huesgen, Ludwig Windthorst, pp 316-17; Lepper, "Kaplan Cronenberg," pp 88,95.

143. Quoted in Kalis, "Die christlich-soziale Arbeiterbewegung in Essen," p 62.

144. Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, pp 121-22.

145. Lepper, "Kaplan Cronenberg," pp 97-98; Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, p 122.

146. Report of the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, 12 September 1878, RD 30429, HSA Düsseldorf.

Arbeitervereine by 1875 still represented potential electoral support for the defenders of the church's religio-political interests in Berlin--provided the Center represented the workers' interests as well.

This placed the church and the Center, as Windthorst well knew, on the horns of a dilemma. Bold Catholic moves in the Reichstag might bring retaliation from the Liberals or the government, but without social initiatives in parliament revolt threatened from within the party. This predicament became even more evident as the months drew on toward the scheduled Reichstag election in January 1877. A second Christian-social congress met in Aachen in November 1875, repeated the demands of 1873, and resolved to nominate its own candidates for the upcoming elections.¹⁴⁷ The revolt had already begun.

Under this growing pressure, Center leaders looked desperately for some indication that the parliamentary risks of socio-political action were decreasing.¹⁴⁸ The hostile mood of parliament continued to prevent any serious consideration of such action during the 1874-76 Reichstag period, but there were some encouraging signs. The financial crash of 1873 had strengthened the prejudice of the agrarian-oriented Conservative Party against industry and moneyed wealth, and in connection with this perhaps, the Conservatives began cooperating with the Center on a number of minor social bills in 1874 and 1875. After a reconstituted Conservative Party came forward in July 1876 in support of agricultural tariffs, aid to the Mittelstand, and maintenance of the confessional schools, the Center's executive committee started to think in terms of a Center-Conservative alliance. If the Conservatives emerged from the election in 1877 somewhat stronger than they had been in 1871, this alliance would have a working majority in the Reichstag. As a quid pro quo for Center

147. Lepper, "Kaplan Cronenberg," p 81.

148. For the reasoning of the Reichstag Center leadership discussed in this paragraph, see Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 3, pp 330-33; and Huesgen, Ludwig Windthorst, pp 319-20.

backing in other areas, it was not inconceivable that the Conservatives would support a moderate program of social reform legislation for factory workers. The Center's parliamentary isolation would be broken and it would be able to argue convincingly before labor audiences that it was not merely a church-oriented party. In the long run the party's chief aim of repealing anti-Catholic legislation could be realized. This strategy had the additional advantage of outmaneuvering the now united Socialists, whose new program, adopted in Gotha in May 1875, called for enactment of social reforms in parliament. Along with the traditional demand of church freedom, the Center's electoral proclamation in December 1876 therefore included "reform of Germany's economic legislation"¹⁴⁹--a thinly veiled reference to tariffs--aid to the Mittelstand, and support for the legal demands of industrial workers.

This maneuver saved the Center from a major collision with the Christian socialists. Most of the Aachen delegations which had voted in 1875 to oppose the Center were satisfied with the December announcement and supported the party. But in Aachen and Essen, the two longstanding centers of opposition, such last-minute tactics failed. Center officials in Aachen invited Moufang to present the party's new program to the workers in late December 1876, but when all mention of specific measures that the Center would pursue were omitted from the speech, Cronenberg withheld his support and went ahead with plans for a Christian-socialist candidacy. However, because his standing had been impaired by a financial scandal in the Arbeiterverein earlier that year, Cronenberg stayed in the background and let Laaf run instead.¹⁵⁰

In Essen, events took a similar course. After the party renominated Forcade, Rosenkranz protested: "Forcade hasn't tended to the workers' interests and he has no feeling for the people. A man of the fourth

149. Quoted in Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 7, p 441.

150. Lepper, "Kaplan Cronenberg," pp 102-09.

estate has to enter the Center Fraktion this time so that the party learns something about the woeful state of the workers."¹⁵¹ With only a week remaining before the election, Laaf attempted to prevent a split with a three-part compromise measure. The workers would back Forcade if, firstly, he promised to represent the Christian-social program as presented by Moufang in February 1871, if, secondly, the Center Party allowed labor delegations to participate in Fraktion caucuses when social legislation was on the agenda, and finally, if the party nominated and supported a worker in Essen in 1880. When the last point proved too much for the Essen Centrists to accept, the Christian socialists nominated Gerhard Stötzel, a former Krupp employee and by then editor of a labor newspaper in Essen. Stötzel received fewer votes than Forcade, but defeated him in the runoff election with the aid of the Socialists, who gladly gave their votes to a fellow laborer. Laaf was less fortunate in Aachen and the official Centrist won a convincing victory. Thus Stötzel became the first non-socialist worker to enter the Reichstag. Once in Berlin, he joined the Center Fraktion in the hope that his presence would facilitate implementation of the Christian-social program of 1870-71.¹⁵²

The Conservatives and the forces grouped around the Center returned to Berlin greatly strengthened after the January elections, but still about 30 seats short of a majority. This naturally caused trepidation among the more cautious Center leaders. When the Reichstag convened in late February 1877, it seemed that Windthorst and Reichensperger still had no intention to act on the December promises. The Westphalians therefore seized the initiative. As one deputy later explained, Schorlemer appeared in party caucus in early March and proceeded to read a social resolution.¹⁵³

151. Quoted in Otto Hue, Die Bergarbeiter: Historische Darstellung der Bergarbeiterverhältnisse von der ältesten bis in die neueste Zeit (Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz, 1910-13), Vol. 2, pp 317-18.

152. Paul Moellers, "Die politischen Strömungen im Reichstagswahlkreis Essen 1867 bis 1878" (Ph.D. diss., Bonn, 1956), pp 296-312.

153. The deputy was the future party leader and Reich Chancellor, Georg von Hertling, Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben (Munich: Verlag der Jos. Koesel'schen Buchhandlung, 1919), Vol. 1, p 314.

"In order to make good a grave injustice, to avert a great peril, to restore labor, the source of all well-being, to its rightful honor, it is necessary to reverse the [laissez faire] direction followed thus far."¹⁵⁴ Freedom of enterprise should be curbed, master-apprentice relations regulated, Sunday factory work banned, female and adolescent labor curtailed, factory work rules standardized, and commercial courts created in which freely elected worker representatives could participate. Schorlemer's proposal also called for "promotion of corporate associations."¹⁵⁵

A heated discussion ensued "which Schorlemer brought rather forcefully to an end by ordering all participants to discuss the matter with him privately."¹⁵⁶

Schorlemer's action resulted in what came to be known as the Galen bill, named after Ketteler's nephew, Count Ferdinand von Galen, who defended the motion in parliament.¹⁵⁷ Galen used Ketteler's gradualist approach to corporate social reform, but for the first time made no mention of abolishing or altering Germany's political structure in the least. Economic institutions, however, were to be changed considerably. In one of the next Reichstag sessions the government should introduce legislation creating local and district associations for artisans and workers. Artisans could work within their corporations to establish clearly defined "borders" between industry and handicraft, while factory operatives would be provided with the legal status to negotiate and bargain with employers. Such bodies would recreate in modern form the corporate, "Christian-social order" which had existed in centuries past. The bill would have the support,

154. Quoted from Proposal No. 74, Anlagen zu den Verhandlungen des Reichstags, Period 3, Session 1 (1877), Vol. 46, p 274. (Hereafter cited as Reichstag-Anlagen.)

155. Ibid., p 274.

156. Quoted in Hertling, Erinnerungen, pp 314-15.

157. Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des deutschen Reichstags, Period 3, Session 1 (16 April 1877), Vol. 44, pp 501-04. (Hereafter cited as Reichstag Debates.)

it was hoped, of the Conservatives, who only weeks earlier had introduced a bill to regulate relations between apprentice, journeyman, and master in the workshop.¹⁵⁸

The Center and Conservative proposals were debated simultaneously in the Reichstag in mid-April.¹⁵⁹ Both were received negatively by the majority Liberals, but as Windthorst had feared in 1874, the Center's proposal was singled out for special criticism. One National Liberal charged that the Center had maligned the long-standing laissez-faire economic policy of the government and was supported in this criticism by a spokesman for Bismarck. Other Liberal speakers labeled the bill a throwback to the Middle Ages, the negation of modern development, even outright folly. Bebel's remarks were no less biting. Did the Christian world order refer, asked the Socialist leader, "to the age when Gregory VII ruled omnipotently, from the time when Leo X dissipated indulgences in Rome, from the age of the Peasant wars, or from the epoch when the first Christians lived together in a communistic society?"¹⁶⁰ Even the Conservatives refused to defend the Center's motion, not wishing, perhaps, to be associated with a bill so clearly influenced by the Bishop of Mainz. The Galen proposal was relegated to a commission which had not finished its deliberations when the spring session ended. According to parliamentary procedure, the bill was therefore automatically dropped. Fearing further attacks, the Center refrained from reentering its bill in the fall. With the overwhelming defeat of the Galen bill, the long campaign for Christian social reforms came to an end. Corporate demands would be raised again by others, but for the time being the coalition of government and Reichstag forces opposing the movement prevented further attempts.

158. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 3, pp 331-32.

159. Reichstag Debates, Period 3, Session 1 (16, 17, 18 April 1877), pp 495-519, 529-552, 555-577.

160. Quoted in ibid., p 571.

Despite these political setbacks, and the halting progress toward realization of the economic program announced in late 1873, the young movement enjoyed continued organizational success. Christian-social Arbeitervereine claimed at least 60,000 members in Prussia's western provinces in the mid-1870's¹⁶¹ and had largely rid these districts of Socialist and Liberal competition. The Socialist trade union movement was able to maintain the overall level of 40-50,000 it had reached in 1870, but members were recruited primarily from northern and eastern Germany.¹⁶² The Socialists' failure to attract union members in the west was accompanied by equally disappointing political developments there. The United Social-Democratic Labor Party, for instance, numbered only 2300 in all of Rhineland-Westphalia in 1875.¹⁶³ "The priests are the most dangerous enemy of our cause," admitted a frustrated Lassallean. "They come forward at the decisive moment with our program and say: 'We want the same thing, but religion must be guaranteed'."¹⁶⁴ The Liberal cooperative movement had expanded to well over a million members by 1875, assuring the Progressives and, to a lesser extent, the National Liberals of continued support from small businessmen and artisans throughout Germany. Among the increasingly important working classes, however, the Liberals faltered. The Hirsch-Duncker unions virtually disappeared in the Ruhr, shrinking with the economy to a level of about 20,000 in other parts of Germany by 1875.¹⁶⁵

In an effort to further enhance Christian-social supremacy in western Germany, the Aachen congress of November 1875 urged all Vereine to actively recruit Protestant workers and artisans. In some cities such as Bochum and

161. Lepper, "Kaplan Cronenberg," p 81, notes that only half of the existing Christian-social Vereine sent delegates to the first Christian-social congress in December 1873. These delegates, nevertheless, represented 61,000 workers and artisans.

162. Heinz Joseph Varain, Freie Gewerkschaften, Sozialdemokratie und Staat (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1956), p 8; Dieter Dowe, "Organisatorische Anfänge der Arbeiterbewegung," p 74.

163. Dieter Dowe, "Organisatorische Anfänge der Arbeiterbewegung," p 73.

164. Quoted in Ritter, Volksverein, p 68.

165. Franz Hitze, Die Soziale Frage, p 99; Schroeder and Haferstroh, "Verband der duetschen Gewerkvereine," p 685.

Wuppertal, the Christian-social Vereine were quite successful, claiming a Protestant membership of 50 percent. In Essen this interconfessional cooperation took the form of a close political and economic relationship between Laaf's Christian-social Arbeiterverein, which had a few Protestant members, and the less numerous Lassallean Protestants, who were organized mainly along party lines. A similar situation existed in predominantly Protestant cities like Gelsenkirchen and Dortmund. Catholic workers there either joined or worked closely with the so-called "free Knappenvereine" which had been founded after 1867 by the Lassallean miner Ludwig Schröder. When Ruhr employers began to lower wages, lengthen the work day, and lay off workers in the mid-1870's, Christian and Socialist workers were therefore ripe for joint trade union activity.¹⁶⁶

By mid-decade, however, the trade union question had been seriously complicated by the radical drift of the Socialist movement. Although Lassallean planks such as cooperative workshops were retained in the Gotha Program of 1875, Marxist demands such as the "emancipation of labor from the monopoly of the capitalist class" and "the socialization of the means of production"¹⁶⁷ were also included. Already uneasy with Lassalle and Schweitzer in the 1860's, most Christian socialists stiffened in their opposition to the Socialists in the wake of the Gotha Program, sensing therein an invitation to chaotic mass rule, Godlessness, and revolution. The Christian-social Vereine were no longer looked upon by many Arbeiterverein priests as instruments to Christianize the entire labor movement, but rather as bulwarks against the spread of Marxism to the Catholic parts of western Germany. Trade unions, similarly, had to be exclusively Christian organizations to guard against Socialist attempts to exploit the union movement for political purposes. Thus, as talk of trade unionism increased among the workers of the Ruhr in 1874, '75, and '76, many Christian-social leaders departed

166. Lepper, "Kaplan Cronenberg," p 81; Gottwald and Hildebrandt, "Christlich-soziale Vereine 1868-1878," p 266; August Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland (Stuttgart: J.W.H. Dietz, 1908), p 381.

167. Quoted in Vernon L. Lidtke, The Outlawed Party. Social Democracy in Germany 1878-1890 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966) pp 333-34.

from Ketteler's original idea of a unified trade union movement espousing Christian principles and laid plans for separate, anti-Socialist trade unions.¹⁶⁸ Center Deputy Gerhard Stötzel founded one such organization for wood workers, stonemasons, and metal workers in 1875, but resistance from employers limited the success of the experiment. The new Reichstag deputy was planning another union for the areas' most important group of workers, the miners, in 1877.¹⁶⁹

His efforts were cut short in the spring of 1877 by Ludwig Schröder's attempt to found a trade union for all miners in the Ruhr.¹⁷⁰ He began

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168. Ketteler also drifted in this anti-Socialist direction. See his letter to an unnamed person in Essen--probably Laaf or Essen Center leader Matthias Wiese--dated 1874, quoted in Correspondenz für die H. H. Präsidien katholischer Arbeitervereinigungen, No. 11, 15 September, 1888, p 123, St. Bib. München-Gladbach.
169. August Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 383; Franz Wieber, "Franz Wieber," in 25 Jahre christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1899-1924 (Berlin: Christlicher Gewerkschaftsverlag, 1924), pp 169-70.
170. The Ruhr miners' movement of 1877/78 gave rise to a number of partisan historical accounts. August Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 381-89, and Otto Hue, Die Bergarbeiter, Vol. 2, pp 313-30, are written from the Socialist party viewpoint of the early twentieth century, while the "Christian" or Center Party interpretation appears in Otto Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung Deutschlands mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bergarbeiter- und Textilarbeiter-Organisationen (Karlsruhe: Druck und Verlag der Braunschen Hofbuchdruckerei, 1905), pp 32-34, and Heinrich Imbusch, Arbeitsverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisationen im deutschen Bergbau (Essen: Verlag des Gewerkvereins christlicher Bergarbeiter, 1908), pp 252-58. The former works concentrate on criticism of the cautious, halting attitude of church and Center circles toward the participation of Catholic workers in trade unions, while the latter works chiefly blame the Socialists for attempting to exploit the miners' movement for party purposes. The later account of Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, pp 124-29, is based on a somewhat unreliable source--the Essener Volkszeitung, organ of the Essen Center Party. An interesting addition to the body of information on the Ruhr miners' movement of the 1870's is a lengthy letter which Anton Rosenkranz and his son sent years later to Müller in response to the latter's work. Dated 27 September 1915, it seems highly likely that the letter was actually written in 1905, when Müller's book first appeared. See Pastor Rosenkranz to Otto Müller, 27 September 1915, Archiv der katholischen Arbeitnehmerbewegung Westdeutschlands, Vol. 5, KfZG Bonn. (Hereafter cited as Rosenkranz to Müller, 27 September 1915, KfZG Bonn.)

agitation near Dortmund in April, urging workers to stand up for "their rights" and fight the wage decreases, over-time, and layoffs imposed by the mine owners. Schröder's initiative was received enthusiastically by Catholic workers farther to the west in Essen.¹⁷¹ Led by Laaf and Rosenkranz, Catholic workers there had cooperated with the Lassalleans on a number of occasions in the early 1870's, coming to trust them as faithful Christians and opponents of Marxism. The fact that Lassalleans outnumbered Marxists five to one in the Ruhr after the Gotha union contributed to the willingness of the Laaf-Rosenkranz faction to continue this cooperation. Catholic workers were also influenced by the example of the Handwerkerbund, the Gesellenvereine, and Schorlemer's peasant associations; if Catholics of other estates could cooperate on a nondenominational basis to further social and economic goals, then so could the workers.

In mid-1877, therefore, Rosenkranz presented a rather ambitious plan to the mastercraftsmen, priests, and fellow workers who sat on the executive board of the Christian Arbeiterverein in Essen. The miners and metal workers of Rhineland-Westphalia should first form a trade union to push for demands such as Sunday rest, the eight-hour day, etc. All discussion of party politics and religion would be forbidden so that workers of all faiths and political persuasions could be attracted. Agitation would then spread to the coal and steel areas of the Saar, the Harz, and Silesia. These district associations could later unite in a national federation so powerful that strikes would no longer be required to obtain concessions from employers. With the critical backing of Father Laaf, the executive board agreed to the plan. After Schröder gave his consent, a joint rally was scheduled in Essen on November 18, 1877, to assure the backing of skeptical Catholics. Laaf was to deliver the main address.

The Essen rally was only a marginal success. As Rosenkranz later explained, "opponents of the cause"¹⁷² intervened at the last minute to prevent Laaf

171. The remainder of this paragraph, and the following paragraph, are based on Rosenkranz to Müller, 27 September 1915, KfZG Bonn.

172. Ibid.

from appearing. This oppositional faction was led by Matthias Wiese, owner of a textile factory in Werden and leader of the Essen Center Party. Wiese was more socially conscious than most employers in western Germany, having promoted the idea of factory safety and labor welfare programs throughout the Ruhr. But he was afraid that a national union led by the workers might quickly become "too great a power"¹⁷³ for local employers to resist. In order to prevent Laaf from speaking at Essen, Wiese presumably obtained firm support from Archbishop Melcher in Cologne, for Laaf was obviously not one to follow orders from the Center.

Stötzel further complicated matters by energetically opposing the plan in favor of a "Christian-social" union. Devout Catholics would never back Rosenkranz, he reasoned, "out of fear for the Socialists."¹⁷⁴ In Stötzel's case the wish was father of the thought. One of the most radical Lassalleans in Berlin, Wilhelm Hasselmann, was present at the rally to support the union, thereby giving many the impression that the Socialists intended to exploit the organization for political purposes. Rosenkranz was finally able to secure a slim majority of the nearly 5,000 workers present for his proposal, but with the moral support of Laaf, only a few hundred workers actually registered as members.¹⁷⁵

Systematic agitation in late November 1877 soon compensated for the setback at Essen. Assemblies held throughout the Ruhr succeeded in attracting thousands of Arbeiter- and Knappenverein members of both faiths.¹⁷⁶ The success of the movement was so rapid, in fact, that Center officials in the Ruhr convened a meeting in Steele in early December to discuss the

173. Ibid.

174. Quoted in Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 383.

175. Hue, Die Bergarbeiter, p 320.

176. Rosenkranz to Müller, 27 September 1915, KfZG Bonn.

party's stance toward the new union.¹⁷⁷ Invited were local party officials from all Reichstag districts in the Ruhr, the editors of all party newspapers in the area, and representatives of the largest Christian-social labor organizations. According to Rosenkranz's account, the conference agreed to support his plan wholeheartedly.

To his great surprise, however, many of the editors who had been present at Steele did just the opposite. One of the journalists, the new editor of the Christlich-soziale Blätter, Father Arnold Bongartz, confessed shortly after the Steele conference to Laaf and Rosenkranz that he feared the union "would steer a socialist course as soon as you turn your back."¹⁷⁸ Editor Rittweger of the large Dortmund paper, Tremonia, admitted sheepishly that the hostile articles had come "from journalists I could not turn down."¹⁷⁹ It was soon made public that 'the journalists' were from the powerful Center newspaper in Berlin, Germania. The Berlin Center faction had organized two conferences in Dortmund in mid-December, attended by Catholics opposing Rosenkranz from Essen, Bochum, and Dortmund. Their plan was to found a separate Christian-social union as Stötzel had suggested in November.¹⁸⁰

In the meantime, this oppositionist faction opposed the Rosenkranz-Schröder organization as a danger to the religious interests of Catholic workers. Reflecting his own doubts, and perhaps further pressure from the Archbishop of Cologne, Laaf too began to criticize Rosenkranz's original plan, singling out the fact that Hasselmann, not Schröder, had assumed most of the burden of agitation since November. As the weeks drew on toward the union's

177. On the Steele conference, see ibid.

178. Ibid.

179. Ibid.

180. Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, p 125.

constituent assembly in early February 1878, Catholic members either balked from joining or actually withdrew their support from the new union. The exodus was so rapid that Christian-social workers represented only about 25 percent of the delegates who gathered in Essen on 2 February to approve the statutes of the organization.¹⁸¹

Rosenkranz did all in his power at Essen to reverse this trend and regain the all-important Catholic support he had lost. He won support for resolutions forbidding all discussion of political matters at union meetings, banning the distribution of political literature at rallies, and excluding all non-workers from participation in union functions--a move aimed directly at Hasselmann. Rosenkranz even renounced his earlier preference for a national organization to appease those Catholics who feared that Protestant Socialists and atheists would predominate in any union representing all of Germany. These efforts were to no avail. When Laaf rose to speak it was not to support Rosenkranz, but rather to encourage those Catholics present to form a union of their own.¹⁸²

The statutes for the latter organization appeared in the Essener Volkszeitung in late February 1878 and again in the March number of the Christlich-soziale Blätter. They appear to have been the joint work of Laaf, Stötzel, Rittweger, Bongartz, Wiese, and others who had attended the Dortmund conferences in December. Unlike the "Hasselmann-Rosenkranz union", which was designed merely "to curb the might of the capitalists,"¹⁸³

181. Ibid., pp 125-26; Three of the four workers elected to the new unions' executive committee were socialists. In December 1877, according to Rosenkranz, the Christian-social workers had greatly outnumbered their Socialist comrades. Rosenkranz to Müller, 27 September 1915, KfZG Bonn.

182. Rosenkranz to Müller, 27 September 1915, KfZG Bonn; Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 385.

183. Quoted in Naujoks, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und der Sozialismus, p 128. The fullest discussion of the statutes appears in Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 33-34.

Bongartz, Wiese, and the sponsors of the Christian union intended to maintain harmonious relations between capital and labor by intermediating between employers, workers, and state mine officials. Demands could be exchanged, compared, compromised, and a fair solution reached. Owners were also asked to contribute to a workers' support fund which would not be used for strike purposes unless all peaceful methods of negotiation and arbitration had been exhausted.

The latter clause proved singularly naive. In late February 1878, the Association of Ruhr Mining Interests announced curtly that workers joining either the Christian or the Rosenkranz-Hasselmann union would be summarily dismissed. Rosenkranz and others were fired, blacklisted, and their union, which had managed to attract 17,000 miners, crushed.¹⁸⁴ The employers' move also led to the immediate retreat of Bongartz and Wiese. Neither was prepared to engage in a struggle against the owners which they felt could not be won. They emphasized, however, that the idea of a Christian trade union had not been given up for good. "A time [of economic boom] will come when employers need their workers, when owners will be very, very cautious about threatening dismissal. Then we can return to our plan."¹⁸⁵ Not content with this reasoning, Laaf decided to push on with the idea in early April, but could find no workers to back him.¹⁸⁶ Fearing the loss of their jobs, the Catholic miners of the Ruhr had postponed their plans too.

The Schröder-Rosenkranz initiative had thus exposed a fault in the Christian-social structure. The lines of fissure reflected the inherent contradictions of Catholic SozialKritik itself. Since the days of Müller and Baader, Catholic social activists had defended the concept of harmony between the

184. Ibid., p 34; Rosenkranz to Müller, 27 September 1915, KfZG Bonn.

185. Quoted in Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 34.

186. Rosenkranz to Müller, 27 September 1915, KfZG Bonn.

various parts of the social "organism"--a concept epitomized by the union of master, journeyman, and apprentice in the workshop--while simultaneously propagating an anti-capitalistic attitude which presupposed a certain amount of disharmony between capital and labor. With the growth of a militant Socialist movement in the 1860's and 1870's, Christian socialists began gravitating toward one concept or the other. Conservatives like Wiese, Bongartz, and the Germania faction continued to criticize liberal industrialism, but leaned much closer to the patriarchal "guild concept" of labor relations. Close supervision of the workers by priests and other patrons was favored, the strike all but rejected, and cooperation with the Socialists ruled out completely. Cronenberg, Laaf, Rosenkranz, and most Catholic workers moved in the other direction. The prerequisite for social harmony, they argued, was a far reaching reduction in the property rights of the entrepreneur. Strikes were regrettable, but justified under prevailing social conditions, as was economic cooperation with moderate Socialists in "politically neutral" trade unions.

This latter point caused further difficulties. Though anti-Marxist in their political views, Rosenkranz and the minority of Catholic workers considered the unity of labor all important, while Laaf, Cronenberg, and the majority of Catholic workers found cooperation with Hasselmann or the Marxists much more repugnant than a division in labor ranks. The rise of Marxism caused even Ketteler to question the advisability of a unified trade union movement. "The moment of decision has now come for Christian workers," he wrote in 1874. "Since some labor party leaders have dragged religion into the labor question and openly preached atheism and hate against Christianity and the Catholic church, Christian workers can no longer follow. I deplore this departure from the program of Lassalle, who kept religion out of the labor question and protected the religious beliefs of the workers."¹⁸⁷ Shortly before his death in July 1877, however,

187. This quote is taken from a letter Ketteler sent to an unnamed follower in Essen in 1874, cited in Correspondenz für die H. H. Praesides katholischer Arbeitervereinigungen, No. 11, 15 September 1888, p 123, St. Bib München-Gladbach.

Ketteler reaffirmed his belief in the district trade union federation uniting all workers. "The only danger is that these large federations could become the tools of revolutionary movements. But if jurisdiction is limited to the district and all politics banned, this won't occur."¹⁸⁸ The Christian socialists were thus greatly divided over the labor question in 1877-78. These divisions would grow wider in succeeding decades.

The passage of the anti-Socialist laws in October 1878 postponed further tension over the labor question among Catholics. Alarmed by the steady increase in Socialist votes, Bismarck had decided to reverse the trend with force. Socialist party organizations were closely regulated and Socialist party adjuncts such as trade unions completely suppressed. On the advice of employers in the west, local and provincial officials applied the laws with equal severity to the thriving Christian-social associations.¹⁸⁹

Scores of Arbeiter- and Knappenvereine were dissolved by the government, and others avoided this fate only after eliminating all controversial political and economic activities. Membership plummeted as a result. Bongartz reported in 1879 that Arbeiter-, Knappen-, and St. Joseph's Vereine had only about 12,000 members in western Prussia. Rosenkranz was eventually forced by employers to leave Essen, and other labor leaders were cowed into submission. To make matters worse, Cronenberg was finally removed from his post by church authorities in Cologne.¹⁹⁰ Rebuffed by employers, the government, the Reichstag majority, and many within the church and Center Party, the Christian labor movement, as indeed the German labor movement, lay in shambles at the end of the decade.

188. Quoted in Pfülf, Bischof von Ketteler, Vol. 3, p 300. Ketteler was preparing another major work on the labor movement before his death in 1877. Pfülf reprints excerpts from the unfinished manuscript.

189. Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, 12 September 1878, RD 30429, HSA Düsseldorf.

190. Arnold Bongartz, Das katholisch-soziale Vereinswesen in Deutschland (Würzburg: Bonifacius-Druckerei, 1879), p 105; Rosenkranz to Müller, 27 September 1915, KfZG Bonn; Lepper, "Kaplan Cronenberg," pp 145-46.

CHAPTER 2

MÖNCHEN-GLADBACH, RERUM NOVARUM, AND FURTHER DISPUTES OVER CORPORATISM

From 1878 to 1894, the idea of a Christian trade union movement, or at least a Christianization of Liberal and Socialist organizations was blocked from realization. The repressive socio-economic milieu which existed after passage of the Anti-Socialist Laws worked against the Christian-socialists, but this factor was less important than others, for by the mid-1880's the state had relaxed its hold on labor unions, and in 1890 the Anti-Socialist Laws were dropped altogether. The real barriers to Christian socialism during these years, in fact, were within the Catholic camp itself. Assuming that Christian labor organizations independent of the church would inevitably turn to the Socialists, Catholic priests, employers, and other representatives of the middle and upper classes opposed Christian trade unionism. Nor did the Center Party 'throw itself into the social reform movement,' as Windthorst had predicted in the 1870's. These setbacks will be analyzed in the present chapter.

After Ketteler's death in 1877, the intellectual center of the Christian labor movement shifted from Mainz to the growing textile town of Mönchen-Gladbach. It was here during the 1870's that Franz Brandts, a factory owner dedicated to the social teachings of the Catholic Church, adopted enlightened management practices that would have pleased Ketteler, or even St. Thomas himself. Brandts eliminated Sunday and nighttime work, curtailed child and female labor, shortened working hours for men, introduced health insurance, improved safety conditions, and founded a factory committee so that workers could voice their grievances and administer the

plant's welfare institutions. With these committees, Brandts hoped to lay the groundwork for a new industrial order in which capital and labor would jointly supervise certain aspects of factory operations, unhampered to any great extent by the state, which Brandts, as many Catholics during the Kulturkampf, did not trust.¹

Such institutions appeared even more necessary after passage of the anti-Socialist laws. Suppression of the labor movement, feared Brandts, would only play into the hands of the Marxists. During the winter of 1878/79, therefore, he contracted fellow employers and other "friends of labor" concerning the establishment of a new organization that would enable workers to share some of the benefits of modern industrialism. An article in Christlich-soziale Blätter in June 1879 was followed by further discussion at the Aachen Katholikentag in August, and by May 1880 the Catholic employers' association Arbeiterwohl had been founded.² "Based on the firm belief," began the by-laws,

that an effective struggle against the abuses which often result from modern industry and are a dangerous threat to bourgeois society can only be solved by Christian principles, Catholic industrialists and other friends of labor have united in an association to improve the status of the working class in Germany without pursuing ulterior political motives.³

Joining Brandts on the executive committee were Dr. Christoph Moufang of Mainz, Farther Arnold Bongartz of Rellinghausen, Matthias Wiese of Essen

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1. The most informative biographical material on Brandts is found in Parts 2 and 3 of Emil Ritter's unpublished work, Die Männer von Mönchen-Gladbach, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn. Ritter's sketches are extremely valuable, for they are based to a great extent on non-extant private materials. For this paragraph, see Part 2, pp 6, 11-19, Part 3, p 13.
 2. Ibid., Part 3, p 11; Franz Müller, Franz Hitze und sein Werk (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1928), p 56; Ritter, Volksverein, pp 129-31. The Müller biography of Brandts' associate Franz Heitze is also invaluable to the historian, for it too is based on solid research in pre-WW II Mönchen-Gladbach.
 3. Quoted in Müller, Franz Hitze, pp 56-57.

Dr. Georg Hertling of Bonn, and four of Brandts' fellow Catholic employers from western Germany.⁴ Bongartz served as administrative secretary of the organization until the fall of 1880, when ill-health caused him to surrender his duties to a young theologian from the Sauerland, Franz Hitze.⁵

Hitze had studied at the University of Würzburg in the mid-1870's. Thereafter he continued his academic work in Rome where he came into contact with the writings of Ketteler, Jörg, Karl Marx, and the leader of the Austrian corporatists, Baron Karl von Vogelsang. This resulted in the publication in early 1880 of his first major tract: Capital and Labor and the Reorganization of Society. Like Marx, Hitze felt that capitalism would be superseded by other socio-political institutions, but here the two men parted ways. Unlike the classless society of Marx, Hitze envisioned an economy controlled by seven distinct estates: small farmers, small traders, artisans, workers, large farmers, large traders, and industrialists. Each estate would administer its own internal affairs in regional chambers. These regional bodies would then send delegates to a corporate senate which would participate with the crown in the formulation of national economic legislation.⁶ Among other things, Hitze's legislative program included restoration of many of the old guild privileges, low-interest state loans for artisans and shopkeepers, sale of state lands to small farmers, nationalization of banks, insurance companies, and railroads, progressive income taxes, obligatory health, accident, and old-age insurance, arbitration tribunals, factory inspections, a legal maximum workday, and greater freedoms for trade unions.⁷

With the aid of the corporate state, Hitze hoped to place small businessmen, peasants, artisans, and workers on an equal political and economic footing with the traditionally more powerful estates. If implemented,

4. Ibid., p 57.

5. Ritter, Die Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 3, p 11, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn.

6. Franz Hitze, Kapital und Arbeit und die Reorganisation der Gesellschaft (Paderborn: Bonifacius-Druckerei, 1880), pp 404-06, 422-23.

7. Hitze had discussed the specifics of his program a few years earlier. Hitze, Die soziale Frage, pp 260-84.

Hitze's plan would have completely remodeled state institutions, drastically altered the distribution of income, and severely attenuated property rights in the private industrial sector. Like Adam Müller 60 years earlier, the young corporatist wanted industry reduced to its proper sphere and brought into balance with the other estates.

It is somewhat surprising, therefore, that he was asked to become manager of the new employers' association. The way was paved by Bongartz and Chaplain Lissen, a former member of Kolping's Gesellenvereine, both of whom had fewer qualms about Hitze's far-reaching views. The final decision, of course, rested with Brandts. But his personal impression of Hitze when they met in the fall of 1880 was a good one, aided apparently by the fact that Brandts was not thoroughly familiar with Hitze's writings and did not learn much more from the reserved young author during their interview.⁸

It was not long, however, before relations within Arbeiterwohl deteriorated. Bongartz wanted to use the Christlich-soziale Blätter to defend Hitze's writings, but was prevented from doing so by Joseph Broix, a Neuss factory owner whose financial contributions held the journal above water.⁹ Hertling had his differences with Hitze too, as the following letter indicates:

My opposition to Hitze is based on the fact that he is prejudiced in favor of the workers, accepting in his goodheartedness everything which is desirable and beneficial to them, without considering that the power of the state ought not to be called upon so readily. He is an outright state socialist, while I not only want to leave room for individual freedom and private initiative, but also see a serious danger in the future increase of the state's base of power and authority. But, because most people are ruled by sympathies and antipathies, not by reason and principles, it happens that Catholics in the Rhineland and Westphalia have allowed their aversion to Big Business, which is primarily in liberal hands, to lead us blindly into state socialism.

8. Ritter, Die Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 3, p 11, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn; Müller, Franz Hitze, p 54.
9. Ritter, Die Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 3, p 11, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn.

What Brandts did for his workers "out of goodwill," Hertling concluded, "is to be forced upon liberal factory owners [by Hitze]."¹⁰ These disagreements surfaced in the well-known polemical exchange between Hitze and Hertling in 1882.

Differences of opinion between Hitze and Brandts did not become public, but their relationship was also quite stormy at first. The activism of Schings and Breuer lived on in Hitze, and anything resembling the "radical-political twaddle"¹¹ of the 1870's Brandts could not countenance. The Catholic employers of western Germany were in an angry mood after these experiences, especially entrepreneurs in Aachen, "who had been burned"¹² by the radicalism of Cronenberg. Too, given the reaction of Bismarck to the Galen Bill, all talk of corporatism was highly dangerous to the church and its persecuted followers. The only thing preventing an open break between Hitze and Brandts, in fact, was the calming influence of Frau Brandts, who effected reconciliations at the dinner table on more than one occasion.¹³

The turning point in the development of Hitze's political views occurred from 1882 to 1884, when another faction in the Catholic camp led by Karl von Löwenstein, chairman of the Katholikentag's central committee, actually attempted to implement the ideas of Hitze and the Austrian Vogelsang.¹⁴ Like Brandts, Löwenstein worried about the potentially revolutionary effects of the anti-Socialist laws and believed that more viable alternatives should be found. Influenced by the corporatist doctrines of Ketteler and Vogelsang, Löwenstein urged the Aachen Katholikentag in 1879 to examine the possibility of reconstructing an estatist order. Lack of interest among Catholics forced him to abandon the project in 1880, but events in

10. Hertling to his wife Anna, 13 February 1879, Hertling Papers 12, BA Koblenz.

11. Hitze to Father Otto Müller, 6 November 1918, Archiv der katholischen Arbeiterbewegung Westdeutschlands, Vol. 5, kFZG Bonn.

12. Ibid.

13. Müller, Franz Hitze, p 59.

14. For the following discussion of Löwenstein, see Ritter, Volksverein, pp 82-87; and Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 4, pp 125-31.

the following year convinced him that he should renew his efforts. The government entered its first social insurance bill in April 1881 and, meeting no success, was prepared to double its efforts when the fall session began.

Löwenstein interpreted the government's action as a desperate attempt to regain the workers' support after use of force had failed. If progress toward social equality could not be halted, as Löwenstein had suspected for years, Catholics had to seize the initiative to prevent the government from taking all the credit for social reforms. By pursuing an even more ambitious program of labor legislation, they could attract a mass following of workers and artisans. Not only would the labor movement be "Christianized," but in alliance with the workers, Catholics would become indispensable to the government, thereby acquiring a certain invulnerability to future Kulturkämpfe.

Löwenstein initiated this plan at the Frankfurt Katholikentag in September 1882 and succeeded in establishing a special committee whose task was to formulate a labor program for the Center Party. After a series of conferences at his chateau in Haid during 1883 and '84, the committee published the so-called "Haid Theses." The influence of Hitze and Vogelsang, who were both members of the committee, is unmistakable. In order to effect "a thorough reorganization of social relations in accordance with the dictates of Christian natural law,"¹⁵ the Haid committee recommended a living wage, a maximum work day, health, accident, old age, widows', orphans, unemployment insurance, and significantly enough, far-reaching labor codetermination in industry:

With the prudent encouragement of the state, employees' unions can join factory owners to form associations of a higher authority. These associations would not merely protect the interests of workers and employees, but in accordance with the principles of the corporative system, would also strive for the regulation of production so crucial to the maintenance of stable labor relations.¹⁶

15. Quoted in Ritter, Volksverein, p 84.

16. Quoted in ibid., p 86.

As the culmination of these revolutionary changes, Löwenstein and his followers advocated the Ständestaat.

The reaction in Center Party circles was understandably one of great alarm. Windhorst feared above all that Löwenstein's plans would generate strife between the various social groupings within the Fraktion.¹⁷ Others recalled with displeasure the ridicule which had greeted the Galen Bill only seven years earlier.¹⁸ An overwhelming majority was apprehensive lest such a bold Catholic move cause religious tensions to flare up at a time when they were just beginning to recede somewhat. This appeared especially likely after Vogelsang defended the theses in a series of articles in July 1884 as the definitive "Catholic-social program."¹⁹ Even Moufang, Jörg, and the Westphalian faction around Schorlemer questioned the wisdom of Löwenstein's move and refused to support the Haid theses.²⁰ In the 1860's, corporatism had had the added appeal of insulating the church against liberal parliamentarism. By the 1870's and '80's, however, the liberal parties were on the wane and the Center had become the second largest party in the Reichstag with nearly 100 seats. Universal manhood suffrage now appeared to be the most effective means of protecting Catholics against governmental attacks.²¹ The Center's Christian-social wing

17. Ritter, Die Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 3, p 30, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn.

18. Ibid., p 49.

19. Ritter, Volksverein, p 83.

20. Ibid., p 83; Schürmann, Vorgeschichte der christlichen Gewerkschaften, p 71. Neither author explains the rationale of the Christian socialists.

21. See Hertling's speech before his constituents in Koblenz on 7 August 1875; Hertling, Erinnerungen, Vol. 1, pp 277-80. Karl Bachem summed up the Catholics' strategy to a political associate some years later, "on the whole the main point is: maintenance of the Center's parliamentary position. That is the A-B-C of all political wisdom for us. As long as we hold this [position] nothing will happen to us. As soon as we lose it, we're in the greatest danger." Bachem to Weillbächer, 18 May 1901, Bachem Papers, 133, HA Köln.

was still anxious to curb the economic power of the entrepreneurs, but a corporate parliament as such was no longer deemed necessary. Big Business could be reformed privately, as Brandts advocated, or by pressure on existing political institutions. When presented before the Amberg Katholikentag in September 1884, Löwenstein's program was quickly by-passed for discussion of less divisive issues.

By 1884 Hitze too had begun to modify his estatist program. The Center's ability to amend Bismarck's social bills, coming at a time when Hitze had joined both the Prussian and Reich Fraktionen in Berlin, increased his appreciation for parliament and the exigencies of political life. The disputes in Arbeiterwohl and the fiasco of the Haid theses also made an impression on the 33-year old social reformer.²² Hitze's work at Mönchen-Gladbach, moreover, had shown him that the workers themselves were not prepared to share the government on equal terms with the other estates. The essential ingredient--pride in one's social position--was missing. Hitze had grown up among the proud peasants and artisans of the Sauerland and, based on his observations there, had included the "workers estate" in his blueprint of the new corporate order. But the proletarians, he soon discovered, were really not an estate at all. Sullen and bitter, the proletariat was not prepared to work harmoniously with other groups in society. The workers would have to be taught professional pride, or Standesgeist, as Kolping called it, before any corporate reconstruction of society could succeed.²³

For all these reasons, then, the idea of parliamentary rule by the estates seemed less desirable to Hitze as the decade wore on. But it is misleading to assert, as have many historians, that Hitze swung over completely

22. Ritter, Die Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 3, pp 48-49, Ritter Papers, ER/D-16, p 48, KfZG Bonn; Ritter, Volksverein, p 133.

23. The above is based on the unpublished manuscript of future Volksverein leader August Pieper, Die Geschichte der Volksvereins für das katholische Deutschland, Part 2, p 225, Box 15/1/2, St A MG. (Hereafter cited as: Pieper Manuscript.)

to an advocacy of existing economic institutions. The ideas he defended after the mid-1880's were no less a threat to the unattenuated property rights of the German business community.²⁴ After workers had gained experience in local factory committees like that established by Brandts, special "chambers of labor" could be formed uniting these committees on a regional level. These regional bodies would present the workers' demands to chambers of commerce, municipal and state governments, or the Reichstag. Hitze's social reorganization was to be completed with a national network of trade unions and employers' organizations which, as adjuncts to the professional chambers, would engage in collective bargaining and otherwise regulate labor relations.²⁵ Though a less radical variant of his earlier plan, these proposals would also affect "a new ordering of the relations between capital and labor."²⁶

The strategy adopted in Mönchen-Gladbach for the implementation of these ideas reflected the patriarchal, cautious views of Brandts and his now sobered junior associate. To allay the fears of church leaders, government officials, and employers, Catholic workers would be systematically educated for their future role as trade unionists by Arbeiterverein priests appointed by the bishops. Such an approach would also shield the laborers from Socialist agitation which, despite the anti-Socialist laws of 1878, had never completely disappeared.²⁷ Secondly, Arbeiterwohl and its journal of the same name would attempt to persuade employers to establish factory committees and welfare institutions.²⁸ As explained above, these bodies were seen as the foundation of the new corporative economic

24. See Stegmann, "Soziale Ideen," pp 392, 394-95; Brüggmann, Sozialer Katholizismus, p 254; Dockhorn, Christlich-soziale Bewegung, p 58; and Bowen, Corporative State, pp 110-11.

25. Pieper Manuscript, Part 2, p 226, St A MG.

26. Hitze, Kapital und Arbeit, p 51.

27. Hitze to Father Otto Müller, 6 November 1918, Archiv der katholischen Arbeiterbewegung Westdeutschlands, KfZG Bonn; Ritter, "Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach," Part 3, pp 22-23, 25-26, 30, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn.

28. Ritter, Volksverein, p 134.

order. And thirdly, Brandts' employers' organization would mollify opposition to Arbeiterwohl's decentralized reform proposals in government and parliamentary circles. This could be accomplished by articles in Arbeiterwohl, in-depth statistical studies (Gutachten), and generally, by establishing Mönchen-Gladbach as a national center for the study of social problems and their solution.²⁹

This third category of political goals was left largely unfulfilled at the end of the decade. Brandts and his associates had no trouble convincing the Center Party that Bismarck's social insurance program be amended to reduce the degree of Reich, or as Catholics saw it, thinly veiled Prussian control, but with the exception of the health insurance bill of 1883, the path-breaking reforms of the 1880's (workmen's compensation, 1884; old-age pensions, 1889) were administered to a great extent from Berlin.³⁰ Somewhat more success was registered in the private sector. Nearly 200 Catholic employers had joined Arbeiterwohl by 1890 and the association's journal, edited by Hitze, had attracted 1800 subscribers.³¹ Only two owners had emulated Brandts' factory committee by 1888,³² but in the fall of that year an influential convert was made. Impressed with Mönchen-Gladbach's program, Baron Hans von Berlepsch, Regierungs-präsident in Düsseldorf, joined Brandts in founding the Public Welfare Association of Leftbank Rhineland (Linksrheinischer Verein für Gemeinwohl). By January 1889 a set of model statutes for factory committees had been

29. See Ritter, Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 3, p 30ff, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn.

30. Ibid., pp 30ff; Brüggmann, Sozialer Katholizismus, pp 192-96.

31. Ritter, Volksverein, p 135.

32. Max Hering, Arbeiterausschüsse in der deutschen Industrie (Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker und Humblot, 1890), pp 58-101.

formulated, and by spring the idea of minimal codetermination was beginning to spread slowly among the textile manufacturers of the lower Rhine.³³

The process of educating the Catholic proletariat, meanwhile, had hardly progressed at all. Catholic Arbeitervereine claimed about 35,000 members in July 1889 and Knappenvereine added another 9,000.³⁴ These unimpressive figures, however, did not even reflect actual worker membership. Artisans, small businessmen, and civil servants often joined these associations "as a good cause,"³⁵ and well-to-do Catholics were frequently included on membership lists as honorary members.³⁶ Even more disappointing was the attitude of the local clergy. Activist chaplains like Schings and Cronenberg were either dead or disciplined by the 1880's, and with the disappearance of overt Socialist activity in 1878, most parish priests in the West lapsed into a false sense of security. Their approach to the labor question was, as one historian puts it, "primitive enough to make you think."³⁷ The workers were not instructed in labor relations or social politics, but instead were offered morality plays, travelogues, beer evenings, and

33. Ibid., pp 13, 58-101, 167; Ritter, Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 3, p 29, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn; Hans von Berlepsch, Sozialpolitische Erfahrungen und Erinnerungen (Moncher-Gladbach: Volksverein-Verlag, 1925), pp 23-25. Significantly enough, Berlepsch notes that he knew almost nothing about the social question before coming to western Germany in the late 1880's. His relationship with Brandts must therefore have been an educational one at first. It is also interesting to note that the "arm-chair socialists" in the Verein für Sozialpolitik did not become involved with the question of workers' codetermination until 1890. Brandts must therefore have been alone as Berlepsch's instructor.

34. Dieter Fricke and Herbert Hottwald, "Katholische Arbeitervereine 1881-1945," in Fricke, (ed.), Die bürgerlichen Parteien, Vol. 2, p 259. See also the unpublished manuscript of church labor leader Dr. Otto Müller, Eine Geschichte der katholischen Arbeitervereine, p 4, KAB Haus Köln. (Hereafter cited as: Müller Manuscript.)

35. Müller Manuscript, p 4, KAB Haus Köln.

36. Ibid., p 4.

37. M. P. Fogarty, Christian Democracy in Western Europe (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1957), p 30.

sing-alongs. In one case a Catholic glee club simply changed its name to Arbeiterverein and then continued to perform the same function as before.³⁸ For most priests and lay leaders, in fact, the Arbeitervereine were important only as a means of attracting followers for the church and Center Party. Education in class or estate consciousness, reasoned many, would only benefit the Socialists. "I still remember vividly," recalled a Christian labor leader years later, "how one chaplain in Duisburg shuddered when a Catholic worker said 'we workers' at a political rally."³⁹ For the clergyman this had been the "storm-warning signal of the revolution."⁴⁰ Small wonder, then, that the workers did not join Arbeitervereine in greater numbers as had been hoped.

Events in the labor world, meanwhile, were rapidly overtaking the stymied Christian-socialists. The relaxation of the anti-Socialist laws in 1881 and the introduction in 1883 and '84 of compulsory health and accident insurance partially supervised by labor organizations once again created an atmosphere conducive to the growth of trade unions. The Hirsch-Dunsker unions, which alone had survived the government's crackdown in 1878, almost tripled in size after 1882 to a membership of 62,600 in 1889.⁴¹ The Liberal unions recruited most of their members from Berlin, Hamburg, and the industrial centers of Saxony, but had also made significant in-roads among the Catholic miners and metal workers of the Ruhr.⁴² The Socialist "craft associations" (Fachvereine) began to revive in 1882 and '83 and quickly expanded to a level of 135,000 by early 1889.⁴³ Like the Hirsch-Duncker

38. Muller Manuscript, p 4, KAB Haus Köln.

39. Quoted in the unpublished memoirs of Volksverein official Anton Heinen, Mein Leben als Volksbildner: Worum es mir ging, p 8, Box 15/1/6, St A MG (Hereafter cited as: Heinen Manuscript.)

40. Ibid., p 8.

41. Schröder and Haferstroh, "Verband der deutschen Gewerkvereine," in Fricke (ed.), Die bürgerliche Parteien, Vol. 2, p 685.

42. Max J. Koch, Die Bergarbeiterbewegung im Ruhrgebiet zur Zeit Wilhelms II (Düsseldorf: Droste-Verlag, 1954), p 32.

43. Statistics and comments on the socialist unions are based on Vernon L. Lidtke, The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany 1878-1890 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp 180-82, 292-93.

organizations, the Socialist unions were based mainly in northern and eastern Germany. This changed quickly, however, during the great miners' strike in May 1889. Thousands of Catholic miners flocked to a newly formed miners union with covert Socialist leanings in the Ruhr, while similar developments were underway in the Saar. The westward expansion of the Socialist union movement after 1889, and more importantly, the general economic upswing which began at the end of the decade boosted membership in Socialist unions to over 320,000 by late 1890. If the Christian socialists were to avoid permanent loss of the organizational advantage they had once possessed in the Catholic districts of the West, immediate action was necessary.

Mönchen-Gladbach was well aware of the danger. Brandts responded to the challenge in early 1890 by establishing a trade union for his workers. Other Arbeiterwohl employers were invited to follow suit,⁴⁴ but all evidence would suggest that none did so. Joseph Broix, who had taken over the editorship of Christlich-soziale Blätter after Bongartz's death in 1883, probably spoke for the overwhelming majority of his Catholic colleagues when he wrote in late 1890 that it would be a mistake to found Christian-social unions. This was tantamount to fighting the Socialists with socialism and could therefore only further the cause of revolution. Christian forces should employ religion to combat the false socialist notion of utopia on earth.⁴⁵ Broix's article only underscores what has been said thus far concerning the strong psychological aversion in the Christian camp to anything that smacked of Marxism. Socialism was more than a threat to the "Herr im Haus" position of the entrepreneur, it would also lead to unruliness and disorder after uneducated workers came into possession of means of production they were unable to handle. Worker control of the state, one can well imagine, was even more frightening to men like Broix.

44. Ritter, Volksverein, p 135.

45. Christlich-soziale Blätter, No. 12, December 1890, pp 697-98.

Views such as these were quite common in church and business circles after the miners strike of 1889. Hitze adopted plans, therefore, that took into consideration the hesitant attitude of German Catholics, and his own doubts about the preparedness of the Catholic proletariat. One of his associates in Mönchen-Gladbach described the ideas that began to take shape in Hitze's mind in the early 1890's:

The cautious tactic of Hitze at the beginning of the 1890's is understandable for many reasons related to the nature of the times. Above all, the Catholic workers lacked capable leaders and were still uneducated in the social and political sense. Too, he had to introduce the new ideas in known forms so that he could slowly convert priests who were socially conscious, but reserved, having come up from the old school. Hitze was already convinced in 1890 that nondenominational trade unions were necessary. The Socialist trade unions were still harassed by the S.P.D., without far-sighted union leaders, only organized on a local basis, had no union literature, etc. Their strike movement was wild. So Hitze felt the only example to follow was that of the English trade unions, to which the "arm-chair socialists" had already pointed. The Katheder-sozialisten, however, showed no concern for the schooling of the workers, which lay nearest to Hitze's heart...Knowing the workers as he did, Hitze had to conclude that the majority was not ready for independent union leadership. He believed, therefore, that he should first train a group of leaders in special trade sections (Fachsektionen) within the Arbeitervereine.⁴⁶

These 'trade sections' would serve merely instructional purposes, Hitze's associate concluded, and were not seen as an end in themselves. The end goal was trade unionism.

Like Ketteler, Hitze clearly preferred to further the Christian cause from within existing Socialist and Liberal trade unions. How long Hitze felt it would take before "solid Christian elements come to the fore,"⁴⁷ as he wrote in the fall of 1889, cannot be determined. While Hitze pondered these problems, a few Catholic social activists in western Germany pursued the idea of separate Christian or Catholic counterunions. This, it will be recalled, was the approach adopted by Bongartz and Wiese in 1878.

46. Pieper to Brust, 25 January 1924, Führer-Korrespondenz, No. 3, March 1924, St Bib MG.

47. Quoted in Ritter, Volksverein, p 293.

The most ambitious plan was drawn up in Aachen by Chaplain Fink, leader of what remained of Cronenberg's following from the 1870's. Alarmed by the presence of Socialist organizers in the area, he founded a Catholic trade union for weavers in July 1890. The statutes of the organization called for improvement of the workers' moral and economic condition and arbitration boards to maintain peaceful relations between workers and employers. To insure that the union remained within these bounds, Fink sat on the executive committee as "clerical adviser."⁴⁸ Once established in Aachen, Fink hoped to found unions for Catholic industrial workers in other areas of Germany and unite these organizations in a central association of Catholic trade unions.⁴⁹

Similar plans were being formulated by Chaplain Peter Oberdörffer, editor of the Kölner Correspondenz, a newsletter for Arbeiterverein priests in the Archdiocese of Cologne. In January 1891 he published model statutes for Catholic trade unions.⁵⁰ Like Fink, Oberdörffer saw the need for clerical advisers to keep the otherwise independent workers from raising unreasonable demands upon their employers. In the event that wage disputes could not be settled peacefully, however, Oberdörffer was prepared to join Protestant unions in any strike activity. Any closer cooperation with Protestants was ruled out as "a danger to the faith"⁵¹ and a hindrance to the effectiveness of the clergy's advisory role.

A third faction in the Ruhr, led by Johannes Fussangel, editor of a Center newspaper in Bochum, and Lambert Lensing, owner of Tremonia in Dortmund, was also trying to organize Catholic workingmen.⁵² Active supporters of the workers' cause for years, both had welcomed the formation of a miners'

48. Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 56.

49. Fink to Archbishop Fischer, 23 October 1910, Gen. 23. 61., Vol. 1, Erzb. Registratur Köln.

50. Kölner Correspondenz, No. 1-2, 1 January 1891, pp 30-32, St Bib MG.

51. Kölner Correspondenz, No. 9-10, 12 August 1890, p 161, St Bib MG.

52. On Lensing and Fussangel, see Koch, Die Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet, pp 31, 46, 50, 54, and Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 391-94.

trade union in July 1889. But after three executive committee members of the new organization ran as Socialist candidates for the Reichstag in February 1890, Lensing and Fussangel withdrew their backing and, along with Gerhard Stötzel, formed the Christian miners' association Glückauf. Though nominally interconfessional, Glückauf was really an attempt to split the large Catholic minority away from the Socialist union, thereby preserving the Center's constituency in the large Reichstag districts of Dortman, Bochum, Gelsenkirchen, and Essen.

None of these efforts was successful. Despite the fact that Fink advocated closely supervised Catholic unions, conservative priests in Aachen undermined his plan by forming special "trade sections" within the city's Arbeitervereine. Adding to Fink's problems, Catholic textile owners in the area openly opposed him. Intimidated by their priests and employers, the overwhelming majority of Aachen workers refused to join the new union, thus dashing Fink's hope of a national association.⁵³

Oberdörffer experienced no more success with his proposals. This was probably a result of the fact that he received no support from the German hierarchy. The pastoral letter of the Prussian bishops in August 1890 made no mention of independent trade unions and called only for the founding of religious Arbeitervereine under the leadership of the church. Moreover, only the most devout Catholics were to be admitted to these associations. It was better to begin "with a small number of truly religious members and grow gradually" than to ruin the associations "out of a desire for rapid external expansion."⁵⁴ With no real encouragement from their bishops, it is not surprising that the bulk of Arbeitervereine priests, whose attitudes were described earlier, refused to follow either Fink or Oberdörffer.

53. Fink to Archbishop Fischer, 23 October 1910, Gen. 23. 61., Vol. 1, Erzb. Registratur Köln; Wilhelm Kulemann, Die Berufsvereine (Jena: Verlag von Gustav Fischer, 1908), Vol. 2, p 367.

54. Quoted in Fricke and Gottwald, "Katholische Arbeitervereine," in Fricke (ed.), Die dürgerlichen Parteien, Vol. 2, p 259.

The Christian miners' association Glückauf was no less a fiasco. On the one hand, Catholic Knappenverein leaders in the Ruhr showed a complete lack of enthusiasm for the new union, claiming that they had no time for such matters.⁵⁵ But the majority of Christian miners were also unmoved. Clearly an attempt to sabotage the older union for political purposes, few workers of either faith joined Glückauf and it soon collapsed.⁵⁶ The Alter Verband, as the socialist union was now dubbed, continued to expand in the meantime, reaching a level of 36,800 by December 1891--about 28 percent of all miners in the Ruhr.⁵⁷

Circulated in May 1891, Pope Leo XIII's famous encyclical Rerum novarum came at a very propitious moment for Hitze, Oberdörffer, and others who were attempting to overcome the social lethargy and indifference of most German Catholics.⁵⁸ The document was basically an attempt to apply Thomistic philosophy to the manifest social problems facing the modern world. Thus, while the institution of private property was defended at length as part of a natural order, the Pope also urged European Catholics, and the states governing them, to intensify efforts to relieve the plight of the proletariat.

The poor are members of the national community equally with the rich; they are real component living members which constitute, through the family, the living body, and it need hardly be said that they are in every state very largely in the majority. It would be irrational to neglect one portion of the citizens and favor another; and therefore the public administration must duly and solicitously provide for the welfare and comfort of the working classes; otherwise, the law of justice will be violated which

55. August Brust, "August Brust," in Bernhard Cwiklinski (ed.), August Brust: Gründer und Vorkämpfer der christlichen Gewerkschaftsbewegung in Deutschland (Essen, n.p., n.d.), p 10. This pamphlet is located in the private library of Dr. Bernhard Koch, General Secretary of the Christian Trade Union Alliance in Bonn.

56. Koch, Die Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet, p 55.

57. Alter Verband statistics are found in the files of the Provincial Governor of Westphalia, Oberpräsidium 2830, Vol. 2, St A Münster.

58. Pope Leo XIII, On the Condition of the Working Classes (Pittsburgh: The Pittsburgh Observer, 1891).

ordains that each man shall have his due. To cite the wise words of St. Thomas of Aquinas: 'As the part and the whole are in a certain sense identical, the part may in some sense claim what belongs to the whole.'⁵⁹

Such efforts to aid the poor would include social legislation as well as promotion of labor organizations genuinely committed to the task of improving the workers' economic situation. For like Ketteler before him, the Pope felt that man possessed a natural tendency, and hence a natural right, to form bonds with other men in private associations designed to promote the well-being of the members. This right had been described by St. Thomas, and references to this effect could also be found in the Holy Scriptures. "Woe to him that is alone," Leo reminded Catholics, "for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up."⁶⁰ The state was obligated, therefore, to create a favorable environment for associations to grow. "The state is bound to protect natural rights, not to destroy them."⁶¹

Leo was worried, however, that Socialists and anarchists would monopolize the European labor movement and exploit it for political, anti-religious purposes. Coinciding with the formation of the Second Socialist International in 1889, the German miners strike and the London longshoreman's strike seemed to confirm these fears. Under these circumstances Christian workingmen could do one of two things:

Either join associations in which their religion will be exposed to peril, or form associations among themselves--unite their forces and shake off courageously the yoke of so unrighteous and intolerable an oppression. No one who does not wish to expose man's chief good to extreme risk will for a moment hesitate to say that the second alternative should by all means be adopted.⁶²

Other passages from the encyclical make it clear that the Pope preferred exclusive Catholic associations which would bring workers and employers together in the same organization. These "mutual associations" would consider

59. Ibid., p 16.

60. Ibid., p 24.

61. Ibid., p 25.

62. Ibid., p 26.

the rights and duties of both capital and labor and appoint committees to settle disputes "should it happen that either a master or workman believe himself injured."⁶³ Strikes were a dubious phenomenon to be eradicated by eliminating the root cause.

When work-people have recourse to a strike, it is frequently because the hours of labor are too long, or the work too hard, or because they consider their wages insufficient. The grave inconvenience of this not uncommon occurrence should be obviated by public remedial measures; for such paralyzing of labor not only affects the masters and their workpeople alike, but is extremely injurious to trade and to the general interests of the public; moreover, on such occasions, violence and disorder are generally not far distant, and thus it frequently happens that the public peace is imperiled. The law should forestall and prevent such troubles from arising...But if by a strike or other combination of workmen there should be imminent danger of disturbance to the public peace...it would be right to invoke the aid and authority of the law.⁶⁴

The Pope did not insist, however, that all Christian labor organizations follow the pattern he had set down in Rerum novarum. The particulars of organization would have to depend on national character, practical difficulties encountered, and "other circumstances of fact and of time."⁶⁵ Thus the document included no categorical rejection of strikes or inter-confessional associations for workers alone. The general non-definitive nature of the encyclical had its obvious merits. But after the turn of the century, zealous factions in disagreement over the morality of the strike, cooperation with Protestants, or independence from church control would turn to Rerum novarum and find justification for their opposing views. In the long run the encyclical probably did more to hinder the Christian labor movement than to further it. For the time being, however, the document was a promising weapon in the hands of Christian-social activists.

While Pope, bishops, and interested laymen responded to the labor question, Center leaders took steps of their own to counteract the on-rush of the

63. Ibid., p 29.

64. Ibid., pp 18-19.

65. Ibid., p 28.

Socialists. Indeed neither suppression nor social insurance had halted the Center's great rival on the left. After setbacks in 1878 and 1881, the S.P.D. garnered over 500,000 votes in 1884, and over 750,000 in 1887. The Reichstag's refusal to renew the anti-Socialist laws in January 1890 led to even greater electoral victories in the following month. Though still trailing the Center, Conservatives, Progressives, and National Liberals, and the Reichspartei in terms of deputies, the S.P.D. nevertheless surpassed all other parties in popular strength with nearly 1,500,000 votes. With the Zentrumsturm in peril, party leaders met in a series of conferences after the elections to discuss methods to strengthen the organizational base of the party. These meetings resulted in the formation of the People's Associations of Catholic Germany (Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland) in October 1890.⁶⁶ The 20-man directing board included Brandts as chairman, Karl Trimborn, a Progressive lawyer from Cologne, as vice-chairman, as well as Hitze, Galen, Stötzel, and other Center deputies, editors, and priests. By creating a network of local offices or Volksbüros whose purpose would be to distribute literature, organize rallies, and win new members, the Volksverein hoped to attract a mass following loyal to church and Center and unsusceptible to the Socialists' doctrine of class struggle and revolution.

The success of the new organization was immediate. During its first two years, the Volksverein attracted nearly 125,000 members, founded 16 Volksbüros, and established a general secretariat in Mönchen-Gladbach under the able management of Dr. August Pieper, one of the few socially conscious priests from the Ruhr. Together with the Katholikentag and Center Fraktionen, the institutional structure of political Catholicism in Germany was complete.

By the early 1890's, however, it had become evident that the effectiveness of any political organization would depend to a very great extent on the

66. For the Volksverein, see Hüsgen, Ludwig Windthorst, pp 390-92; and Ritter, Volksverein, pp 139-51, 181.

political leanings of the trade unions. Lensing and Fussangel had realized this well enough, but their clumsy attempt to prevent Socialist domination of the union movement in the Ruhr had resulted in just that. In mid-December 1891, therefore, the prestigious Kölnische Volkszeitung, which was owned by Julius Bachem, a leading centrist from Cologne, took advantage of the general excitement following Rerum novarum to suggest that Catholics finally seize the initiative before it was too late.

In many big cities today we see scores of trade unions already fully organized and led by the Social Democrats. We find it quite difficult to understand the criticism made so frequently by Catholics that the Socialists misuse the trade unions for party purposes. It is only natural that the influence of the trade unions should benefit that party which has concerned itself with them most, and that is undoubtedly the S.P.D. The otherwise so active Center Party has been especially negligent in this area until now...[therefore] the executive committee of the Volksverein should become publicly involved with the question of what can be done to counterbalance the Socialist influence within the trade unions. The workers cannot be blamed for organizing on behalf of their interests, but the Socialists need not have the all-decisive word in this. It is regrettable that they still have it, but by no means surprising.⁶⁷

Discussion of the trade union question soon spread to southern Germany. Shortly after the publication of Rerum novarum, the leader of the Catholic workers of Munich, Father Lorenz Huber, formed an association of Arbeitervereine and began agitation for members. Like Hitze, Huber hoped that his efforts would eventually lead to the Christianization of the labor movement. He soon realized, however, that the labor movement would remain in Socialist hands unless churchmen could promise the workers an equally bold course of socio-political action. After numerous consultations with Catholic workers,⁶⁸ Huber therefore formulated a political program for the Catholic Arbeitervereine of Germany.

67. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 349, 20 December 1891.

68. Karl Schirmer, future Christian trade union leader, recalled that Huber first consulted the workers. Karl Schirmer, 50 Jahre Arbeiter (Duisburg: Echo Verlag, 1924), p 31. Huber's program of 1892 was published years later in M. Gasteiger, Geschichte der christlichen Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland (Munich: Buchhandlung der Verbandes sudd. kath. Arbeitervereine, 1908), pp 82-85.

Significantly enough, the program called upon the state to establish centralized trade unions for every branch of industry. These unions would then work within existing political institutions for social reforms. These would include Sunday rest, shorter hours, banning of overtime work, minimum wages, extension of Germany's social insurance, construction of inexpensive housing, labor exchanges, factory committees, chambers of labor, progressive income taxes, and reduction of tariffs. To facilitate the participation of unionists in parliament, Huber advocated payment of Reichstag and Landtag deputies. The program also included a series of far-reaching demands for peasants and artisans. Bachem had hoped to protect the Center by organizing the workers. Huber was responding, in essence, that in order to maintain the Center's lower class vote, the party would have to move much farther to the left. The conflicts which had shaken the Center in earlier decades thus appeared likely to break out all over again.

Huber presented this program to a small gathering of church and Arbeiterverein officials at Mainz in late August 1892. Hitze was also present as spokesman for Arbeiterwohl and the Volksverein. Huber first emphasized the need for agreement in Catholic labor circles over basic goals and warned that only by "presentation and energetic implementation"⁶⁹ of a common program could the Arbeitervereine hope to play a decisive role in the German labor movement. He recommended, therefore, that a commission be established during the upcoming winter to examine his program, or perhaps formulate a new one. The final program, however, should include specific demands upon the state and provide for "entry of the Arbeitervereine into the trade union movement."⁷⁰ With an eye on the Reichstag elections scheduled for June 1893, he asked that the commission's work be published before April 1.

Huber met only partial success. Most of those present felt it "out of place"⁷¹ to transform the labor associations per se into political organizations,

69. Quoted in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 84. Kölner Correspondenz, No. 12, December 1892, p 183.

70. Ibid., p 183.

71. Ibid., p 183.

but agreed that labor priests should have a "political guidepost"⁷² to enable them to clarify the issue of social reform for their workers. It was decided in the end that those present form a commission to consider three program proposals: the program already submitted by Huber, a second to be written by Oberdörffer, and a third by Hitze.

On the suggestion of Hitze, the meeting then agreed to an interim solution to the trade union question. All Arbeitervereine were to form trade sections. The decision reflected ongoing developments in the Socialist trade union camp. Representing 228,000 workers, delegates of the so-called General Commission of German ("free") Trade Unions had gathered at Halberstadt in March 1892 for their first nationwide congress. For shrewd observers like Hitze, the Halberstadt Congress was a sign that the free trade unions were beginning to assert their organizational independence from the S.P.D. The motions of the local trade union faction, which envisioned the unions as adjuncts of the party, had been overwhelmingly defeated by the more trade-union oriented, centralist majority around General Secretary Karl Legien. The latter had no intention of politically damaging the party, however, and was therefore careful to point out that the free trade unions would work hand in hand with the party to prepare the masses for the class struggle. As far as Hitze was concerned, Catholic trade sections (Fachabteilungen) had to be formed on a large scale to train leaders who would encourage further independence of the free trade unions from the S.P.D. It is highly doubtful, of course, that Hitze employed these arguments in defense of his trade sections.⁷³ Most in the Catholic camp were fearful that such a tactic would lead Catholic workers into the hands of the enemy. The Catholic Arbeiterverein leaders at Mainz also shrank from the idea of Christian trade unions for fear the Socialists would employ Hitze's strategy in

72. Ibid., p 184.

73. For the Halberstadt Congress, see Varain, Freie Gewerkschaften, pp 12-13; for Hitze's views, see Pieper to Brust, 25 January 1924, printed in Führer-Korrespondenz, No. 3, March 1924, St. B. MG. For the views of the majority at Mainz, see August Erdmann, Die christlichen Gewerkschaften ins besondere ihr Verhältniss zu Zentrum und Kirche (Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz, BmbH, 1914), p 44.

reverse. Fachabteilungen seemed the only safe approach to the labor question, especially with the free unions united in a national federation.

Soon after the Mainz conference, however, the controversy over the labor question flared up anew. For it quickly became evident that Oberdörffer's plans were just as far-reaching as Huber's. The former elaborated his ideas at a "practical-social course" held by the Volksverein in late September 1892.⁷⁴ "Modern society," Oberdörffer began, "is disordered and fatally ill. It threatens to collapse."⁷⁵ As the only cure for these ills, he recommended a corporate reconstruction of state and society. His program, in fact, was not unlike Hitze's first work of 1880. Oberdörffer proposed the same network of district and regional chambers crowned by a corporate parliament, but his plans called for only six estates, the sixth comprising both capital and labor. All new and existing industrial undertakings would be transformed into mutual ventures controlled by workers and managers. Wages would be regulated by joint committees and profits fairly divided. This was necessary, he continued, "in order to make the employer's factory also the workers' factory."⁷⁶ By altering existing property rights in this way, Oberdörffer hoped to Christianize Big Business, "the bearer of guilt for our social misery."⁷⁷ This program, he concluded, was merely a more precise formulation of the Thomistic principles set down in the encyclical Rerum novarum. Volksverein leaders had their doubts about the practicality of abolishing existing political institutions, but Oberdörffer's last point seems to have elicited the sharpest criticism.⁷⁸ The economic system needed drastic revision, but not in the name of the Pope. In predominantly Protestant Germany such an approach would not only be counterproductive, but could possibly result in new anti-Catholic outbursts.

74. Oberdörffer's talk is printed in the Kölner Correspondenz, No. 1-4, 1893, pp 1-34, St Bib MG.

75. Ibid., p 1.

76. Ibid., p 30.

77. Ibid., p 25.

78. Ibid., p 34.

An intensification of confessional prejudice and hatred would have been particularly damaging to Mönchen-Gladbach in 1892, for Arbeiterwohl stood to lose the not inconsiderable gains it had made in recent years. Indeed since the miners' strike of 1889, the arguments of Hitze and Brandts concerning labor codetermination had won official favor in Berlin. Both the Prussian Minister of Commerce and Industry and former Regierungs-präsident, Baron Hans von Berlepsch, and the privy councilor and former tutor of Wilhelm II, Dr. Georg Hinzpeter, had been won over to the idea of checking the economic power of the entrepreneur. The "Herr im Haus" concept of labor relations was not only unfair to the worker, they reasoned, but as the root cause of labor disturbances was also detrimental to the state. Berlepsch and Hinzpeter approached the young Kaiser with these arguments in late 1889/early 1890 and were able to convince him of the need for new social legislation.⁷⁹ The Imperial Manifesto of 9 February 1890 expressed the monarch's desire to extend the safety and insurance legislation initiated by his grandfather. More importantly, the manifesto also stated that the workers' "claim to equality of rights"⁸⁰ would be observed:

For the furtherance of peace between employers and employed the legal determination will be considered of the manner in which workers, through representatives who enjoy their confidence, may share in the settlement of joint affairs, and

79. Ritter, Männer aus Mönchem-Gladbach, Part 2, pp 20-21, Part 3, p 29, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG; Müller, Franz Hitze, pp 101-02; Wilhelm II, The Kaiser's Memoirs (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1922), pp 37-38; Berlepsch to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, 23 January 1890, reprinted in Born and Rassow, Akten zur staatlichen Sozialpolitik, pp 34-38; Diary entry of Count Alfred Waldersee for 3 February 1890, in Otto Meissner (ed.), Denkwürdigkeiten des General-Feldmarschalls Alfred Grafen von Waldersee (Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1923), Vol. 2, pp 99-100; Otto von Bismarck, Kaiser vs. Bismarck (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1921), pp 63-64; Karl F. Nowak, Kaiser and Chancellor (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), p 155; Kirchhoff, Staatliche Sozialpolitik im Ruhrbergbau, p 104.

80. Quoted in Bismarck, Kaiser vs. Chancellor, p 80.

be authorized to protect their interests by negotiation with the employers and the organs of My government. Through such an arrangement the free and peaceful expression of the workers' desires and grievances will be made possible, and the governmental authorities will be given an opportunity to inform themselves uninterruptedly of the conditions of the workers, and to keep in touch with them...For the preliminary consideration of these questions I intend to summon the State Council under My presidency, to be assisted by experts whom I shall call together for the purpose.⁸¹

Shortly before the manifesto was made public, Hinzpeter visited Mönchen-Gladbach under orders from William to request that Hitze and Brandts help draft the new bills and assure the support of the wary Center Party.⁸² Mönchen-Gladbach's efforts proved successful, and by spring 1891, the Reichstag had passed legislation creating arbitration tribunals for every district and factory committees for every firm with more than 50 employees. If this experiment were successful, William planned to create regional labor chambers (Oberausschüsse) that would negotiate with employers and the state concerning work conditions and termination of strikes.⁸³

The demands of Huber and Oberdörffer thus were awkward for Mönchen-Gladbach, for radical proposals such as these might induce the temperamental Kaiser to abandon social reform and turn on the "ungrateful" Catholics. There was also the danger that a far-reaching Arbeiterverein program would weaken the Center's commitment to social reform, which was grudging at best.⁸⁴ With memories of the Kulturkampf still fresh, most Centrists wished to avoid any further concentration of power in the hands of the Prussian bureaucracy or the Prussianized Reich bureaucracy. Hitze's probable course of action would therefore have been to delay publication of the Arbeiterverein

81. Quoted in ibid., pp 80-81.

82. Father Kirchesch to Eduard Schopen, 20 December 1909, Nr. B III 15.9, Bd. 1, pp 36-39, Bis A Trier; Ritter, Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 2, pp 20-21, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn.

83. Karl Erich Born, Staat und Sozialpolitik seit Bismarcks Sturz (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1957), p 12.

84. Nitti, Catholic Socialism, p 154.

program suggested by Huber in 1892. Such reasoning may explain the fact that a "draft proposal" without Hitze's signature appeared some four months late in July 1893.⁸⁵

Signed by diocesan Arbeiterverein officials from Cologne, Mainz, Munich, Breslau, and other smaller bishoprics, the program was a conservative combination of the proposals of Huber and Oberdörffer. Most of Huber's specific requests were included with the exception of his demand for gradual dissolution of large landholdings, which was dropped to make the program more appealing to anti-industrial agrarians in the Center. Huber's scheme for national trade unions was also set aside in favor of Oberdörffer's more patriarchal idea of worker-manager cooperatives. The Bavarian's preference for existing political institutions, moreover, was replaced by a general statement in favor of the corporative state. This, too, would hopefully appeal to conservatives fed up with the Reichstag suffrage and particularists who considered corporatism a step away from Prussian supremacy. To make the program even more enticing, the signers claimed papal authority for their proposal and, as Vogelsang had done 10 years earlier, entitled it "The Catholic Social Program."

After further negotiation with Volksverein officials in August 1893 had produced nothing but the old disagreements,⁸⁶ Oberdörffer and the commission majority attempted to force their views on the party leadership. Oberdörffer contacted influential priests, theologians, journalists, and Center deputies during the Winter of 1893-94 in the hope of winning broad backing for the commission's plans. With over 100 signatures appended, he then republished the program in late May 1894. Before the end of the summer, Oberdörffer and his followers could boast the support of numerous Reichstag and Landtag Center deputies, some of the most prestigious party

85. The draft printed in the Kölner Correspondenz, No. 9-11, 1893, pp 169-72, St Bib MG.

86. Ibid., pp 176-77.

editors, as well as an impressive array of church and Arbeiterverein officials.⁸⁷

The lack of support in key places proved Oberdörffer's undoing in the end. His attempt to elicit a vote of confidence from the powerful Center press association, the Augustinusverein, in late July 1894, faltered on the damaging criticism of Julius Bachem. Where did Oberdörffer find the authority to claim that his program was the "necessary consequence" of Rerum novarum? Did he really believe, Bachem asked mockingly, that the Reichstag would abolish itself?⁸⁸ Further setbacks occurred in late August at the Cologne Katholikentag. Pressured from Oberdörffer on the one side and the Center leadership on the other, the central committee placed the social question on the agenda.⁸⁹ The aging Schorlemer was asked to deliver the main address. His lengthy speech was a classic restatement of the Christian-social viewpoint. The cure for the "cruel process of industrialization,"⁹⁰ he made quite clear, was an organization of society along estatist lines. Because so many differences of opinion existed, however, the experienced parliamentarian refused to press any corporative demands upon the assembly. Moreover, he carefully avoided using the word "reorganization" and did not once mention corporatism in reference to the abolition of existing political institutions. A closed, stormy session of the social section followed Schorlemer's speech, but the Center leadership eventually prevailed.⁹¹ The Huber-Oberdörffer program was reduced to one sentence demanding "legal guarantees [for] and promotion of vocational corporations as the main [social] task of the state."⁹² As would occur time and again after

87. The program appeared in the Kölner Correspondenz, No. 8-11, 1894, pp 113-65, St Bib MG; see the signatures in ibid., pp 116-18.

88. For the views of Julius Bachem, see Ritter, Volksverein, p 204 and Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 9, p 150.

89. Kissling, Geschichte der Katholikentage, Vol. 2, pp 267-68; and Ritter, Volksverein, p 204.

90. Quoted in Filthaut, Deutsche Katholikentage, p 132.

91. Kissling, Geschichte der Katholikentage, Vol. 2, pp 267-68.

92. Quoted in Filthaut, Deutsche Katholikentage, p 135.

1894, the radical thrusts of the minority had been effectively parried in the interests of party unity.

Volksverein officials made a final assessment of the trade union question on the basis of the same rationale. However anxious Oberdörffer and his followers had been to present an ambitious political program, it was obvious to observers in Mönchen-Gladbach that the workers themselves had been carefully excluded from this action. Huber's plans for national trade unions and unionist parliamentary representation had both been rejected in favor of the patriarchal "mutual association." Nor was there any support for the trade union movement in other Catholic circles. The Cologne Katholikentag in 1894 would go no farther than recommending trade sections for Arbeiter- and Gesellenvereine,⁹³ a resolution which reflected the fact that both these organizations preferred the educational trade section to the trade union. Although the Encyclical Rerum novarum had produced a change in clerical views toward organizing workers, the majority of parish priests and diocesan officials interpreted the document as a sanction for the acceleration of the Catholic Arbeiterverein movement. Independent trade unions were still seen as the first step toward a radicalization, and eventually, a deChristianization of the Catholic proletariat.

The Center Fraktion, moreover, was still not committed to Mönchen-Gladbach's goals. Thus Hitze interpellated in the Reichstag in February 1895 concerning the government's refusal to legislate chambers of labor, supposedly part of the Center's program, only to see the Fraktion willing to support the Kaiser's anti-labor "Unsturzvorlage" a few months later in return for certain religious concessions.⁹⁴ William's oft-described desire to

93. Ibid., p 135.

94. For the Center and the Umsturzvorlage, see Otto von Bülow, Prussian Ambassador to the Vatican, to Chancellor Hohenlohe, 2 March 1895, Deutschland 125 Nr. 1, 6, AA Bonn; and Count Lerchenfeld, Bavarian envoy in Berlin, to Minister-präsident Crailsheim, 11 May 1895, reprinted in Born and Rassow, Akten zur staatlichen Sozialpolitik, pp 60-61.

stiffen Germany's laws of association in the wake of S.P.D. Reichstag gains in 1893 had clearly weakened Hitze's position in the Center. For many reasons, therefore, the time was not ripe to promote trade unions.

Rather, Fachabteilungen (trade sections) could be formed in the hope that Catholic workers thus trained might some day found their own trade unions or gain control of already existing Socialist and Liberal unions.⁹⁵ Of the two ideas, the latter was deemed superior. Mönchen-Gladbach's thinking was influenced no doubt by the decline of free trade union membership resulting from the depression of the early 1890's. From a level of 320,000 in 1890, membership had fallen to 225,000 in 1892 and remained at this point during 1893 and '94. The younger unions in western Germany were hit the hardest. Low wages and an abortive strike led to the collapse of the Socialist miners union in the Saar in early 1893 and the Socialist miners union of the Ruhr, the so-called Alter Verband, was also on the wane. The educational trade section was therefore a rather expedient compromise for Christian socialists in Mönchen-Gladbach. With the free trade unions faltering, Hitze and Brandts were given extra time to wage a campaign for independent trade unionism in the Catholic camp. When the economy turned upwards again, Catholic workers would hopefully encounter less opposition from church and Center and could bring their influence to bear on the free and Hirsch-Duncker unions. The increasing tensions between S.P.D. and General Commission after 1892/93 brightened the prospects of such an infiltration and strengthened the Volksverein in its resolve to refrain from promoting separate unions.

By 1894, however, Christian workers were taking matters into their own hands. In April of that year, plans were laid for a Christian miners' union by August Brust, a Catholic miner active in the Christian-social Arbeiterverein of Altenessen. Angered by the outspoken socialism and

95. Pieper to Brust, 25 January 1924, Führer-Korrespondenz, No. 3, March 1924, St Bib MG; Imbusch, Arbeitsverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisationen, pp 393-99. Also see below, Chapter 3.

atheism of the Alter Verband and further by the fact that middle class Catholics and Protestants had attempted to divide the miners for religious or political reasons for the last decade, Brust wanted to unite Ruhr workers in a powerful non-socialist union capable of exacting demands long ignored by the mine owners.⁹⁶ Strike activity was not, however, the only weapon Brust would employ. He also planned to petition the Reichstag to obtain legal corporate status for labor unions. As a legally recognized corporation, the union could more easily accumulate funds to operate labor exchanges, support unemployed workers, bargain with employers, and strike. In the long run, labor unions could work for legislation such as obligatory factory committees and labor chambers that would further attenuate the might of capital.⁹⁷ Justifiably, the miner felt sure the government would back these demands as soon as the proletariat was organized along Christian, non-socialist lines. He explained these feelings to a fellow miner after the founding of the union.

Today's entire economic system is false, and that comes from the power of a few capitalists. As much as the state would like to help, it can't if the workers, and especially the miners...don't stand united behind it. All we have to do now is organize, the rest will happen on its own. It won't be possible to implement my program for the workers right away, for unfortunately only a few miners know anything about real Sozialpolitik, that is about Christian Sozialpolitik. They would rather follow the dumbest and stupidest cries of the Social Democrats. Once we have the people organized, things will start to be clearer to them.⁹⁸

By the turn of the century, Brust's union would form the backbone of a national federation of Christian trade unions, influenced to a large extent by Mönchen-Gladbach, and eager to carry on the social struggle which Kolping, Ketteler, and others had initiated a generation earlier. Before Christian workers could reorganize Big Business, however, they had to overcome substantial opposition to their movement.

96. Karl Kühne, "Kampf um die christliche Gewerkschaftsidee," in Cwiklinski (ed.), August Brust, p 45.

97. Tremonia, No. 10 (1), 10 January 1895.

98. Brust to an unnamed colleague, 29 August 1894, printed in Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 407-08. Erdmann probably obtained the letter from one of the many Christian unionists who later joined the Alter Verband.

CHAPTER 3

THE EMERGENCE OF CHRISTIAN LABOR

The founding of the Christian miners' Gewerkverein, as it came to be known, is one of the most interesting, yet largely overlooked chapters in the history of the German labor movement. Unlike the more radical Socialist workers, whose only effective opponents when forming a union were the owners and the state, Christian proletarians had to contend with the fierce resistance of employers, government officials, parish priests and pastors, bourgeois party leaders, and, not surprisingly, the Socialist workers themselves. Given these barriers, it is truly remarkable that a Christian union was ever founded. For four years, indeed, the Gewerkverein was only nominally a union, shackled by political and religious leaders who feared the consequences of labor independence. This delay retarded the spread of Christian trade unionism to other districts of the empire and placed the movement that much farther behind the thriving Socialist organizations. These themes, and the question of a merger between Christian and Socialist unions, will be discussed in the present chapter.

After the collapse of Glückauf in July, 1892, Brust and fellow Catholics Hermann Köster and Johann Müller decided to establish an independent Christian organization as soon as the first opportunity presented itself.¹ The Socialist minus Alter Verband was already beginning to experience serious problems. Historians have given many explanations for the precipitous decline of this union in the early 1890's, but have overlooked the fact that wages in the Ruhr sank 12.3 percent from late 1891 to mid-1893. Employers increased pressure on the union during these

1. See Brust's recollections in Cwiklinski, August Brust, p 10.

months, and, as more and more members found themselves unable to withstand the harassment or shoulder the burden of dues, a large-scale exodus from the organization began. The Alter Verband lost about two-thirds of its backing in 1892 and 1893, slipping to a membership of 12,400 by March, 1894.² Sensing that the recession was almost over, Brust felt the time was ripe to draw up plans for his own Christian organization, force wages back to a higher level, and overtake the faltering Alter Verband.³

Brust's inclination to seize the initiative grew stronger in the spring of 1894. Since 1890, the English, French, Belgian, German, and Austrian miners had met annually to discuss international solutions to common problems. The Alter Verband and its sister federations in Silesia and the Saar had always selected spokesmen from their midst to form the German delegation at these congresses, giving the impression abroad that German miners were dominated by the Socialists. The embarrassment this caused Catholic Arbeiter- and Knappenverein leaders, who had no desire to visit

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2. Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 41, Imbusch, Arbeitsverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisationen, pp 348-359; Koch, Die Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet, pp 53-56, and Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiische Gewerkschaften (Bochum: Druck von H. Möller, 1900), pp 67-69, emphasize political and economic factors before or after the period of wage decline beginning in October 1891 and leveling off in January 1893 (See the wage statistics for Ruhr miners appended to Koch, p 148). Statistics in St.A. Münster, Oberpräsidium 2830, Vol 2, clearly indicate, however, that Alter Verband membership in the Ruhr peaked in January, 1892 at 36,965 and plummeted to 16,625 by December, 1892. Members continued to trickle away thereafter as a result of the continuing stagnation of wages.

The Alter Verband merged with other socialist miners' unions at Halle in September 1890. With the rise of Christian miners' groups in the 1890's, this union, too, came to be called the Alter Verband. Statistics in this chapter, however, refer exclusively to Alter Verband membership in the Ruhr. The reader may want to keep the following overall membership figures for the union in mind: 1890:58,000, 1891:58,000, 1892:34,126, 1893:16,126, 1894:16,019, 1895:5,332, 1896:5,551, 1897:11,968, 1898:17,887, 1899:20,478.

3. Bergknappe, No. 27, 7 July 1900.

these congresses, was further exacerbated by the often controversial behavior of the German delegates. In 1891, for instance, the German miners laid a wreath on the graves of the executed French communards in Paris, thus sanctioning the cause of revolution in the eyes of European conservatives. Therefore, when the Alter Verband nominated five members as delegates to the International Miners' Congress at Berlin in mid-May, 1894, Father Driessen, leader of the Christian-social Arbeiterverein of Essen, convoked a rally to make clear to everyone that his workers saw no value in the "unattainable, unpatriotic goals"⁴ of the international labor movement.⁵

The assembly was clearly a staged affair, with Köster, Müller, and an older, but still fiery Anton Rosenkranz, a Christian-social activist from the 1870's, playing insignificant roles next to Father Driessen and other speakers from non-working class circles. Brust, who was unable to attend the rally himself, wrote an angry letter to Köster a week later concerning the purely negative, anti-Socialist tone of the final resolution to be submitted to the other Catholic Vereine of the Essen area in early May.

[The Resolution] protests the initiative of [the Alter Verband] without announcing any action from the Christian associations to improve our economic position. If all that's going to happen, however, is to fight against the Social Democrats, then count me out. The Christian associations are always supposed to batter away against the Socialists, but when it comes to representing the miners' interests, the dear Christians hold back, that is, our leaders, with the exception of a few, don't concern themselves with such things. All right, if they won't help us economically, then I'll not let myself...be used as a battering ram. Let those who reared the Socialists, fight them too.⁶

4. Quoted in Tremonia, No. 76 (1), 5 April 1894.

5. For the remainder of the paragraph, see Hue, Neutrale oder Parteische Gewerkschaften, pp 76-77; and Imbusch, Arbeiterverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisationen, p 422.

6. Brust to Köster, 8 April 1894, printed in Imbusch, Arbeitsverhältnis Arbeiterorganisationen, p 423. One of the leaders of the Christian miners in 1908, Imbusch had access to much material in private hands.

Brust then outlined what he felt should be done. He wanted to transform the Catholic and Evangelical Knappenvereine into a local trade union led by the workers themselves. Such a transformation would guarantee the union an initial reservoir of members as well as access to accumulated self-help funds and other resources necessary to conduct economic struggles. Once established on an interconfessional basis in Essen, the union would spread to other parts of the Ruhr. Brust realized, however, that the transformation from Arbeiterverein to trade union could not occur overnight.

To merge the Arbeiter- and Knappenvereine right now into a trade union organization would be a mistake. First of all the Verein members are too few and too uneducated [in trade union matters]. The majority would perhaps leave the Vereine out of fear [of their employers] before joining a trade union organization. Secondly, unclean red elements could easily press their way into the Vereine, thereby [contaminating] the Christian, religious atmosphere of the latter, which is to be avoided under all circumstances...⁷

He therefore suggested an interim solution.

The Vereine would sooner consent to electing two or three members each to a general committee [Gesamtausschuss], so that it could look after their economic interests and take the necessary steps to promote and protect these interests. This would be adequate for a while. But then within each Verein, members would have to be schooled more thoroughly than heretofore in order to be ready later for a bigger trade union organization.⁸

To speed the transition from Arbeiterverein general committee in Essen to Ruhr-wide trade union, Brust wanted the Center's Volksverein to help finance a new labor weekly. It was assumed that Father Driessen, too, would lend a hand. The April protest rally had thus triggered the first spontaneous organizational activity among Christian workers since 1877.

Köster presented Brust's proposal to the executive committee of the Christian-social Arbeiterverein of Essen, which agreed to hold a second rally in May to discuss Brust's plans. The sparse attendance at this gathering was a good indication, however, that Brust had been right about

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

the indifference of most Catholic labor leaders in Essen to economic matters. As a result of this attitude, the workers were unusually sharp in criticizing their priestly overlords during the rally. The inactivity of the large Knappenbund in Essen was condemned as negligent (saumselig) and the miners urged to help themselves this time by employing whatever legal means necessary to improve their lot. A commission of seven miners led by Brust was selected to draft the statutes and economic program for a "Gesamtausschuss" of the confessional labor associations of Essen.⁹

Unknown to Brust and his colleagues, however, Church and Center leaders in Essen were making rapid preparations for another labor organization. The idea seems to have originated with Driessen, who quickly obtained the support of Essen Center leader Matthias Wiese and Rector Steinbusch, chairman of the Catholic Knappenbund in Essen. Driessen and Steinbusch were resentful of the miners' sharp rhetoric and wanted to found a church-controlled organization to replace Brust's Gesamtausschuss which they feared would make socialistic demands. Wiese had more complicated reasons for supporting the scheme. In 1878, he had promised to return to the plan of a Christian miners' union and, after Stötzel's loss to the Krupp-backed Reichspartei in 1893, such an organization must have been politically appealing. The S.P.D. was also beginning to establish itself in Essen (5,868 votes in 1893) and this, too, was on Wiese's mind. Impressed by the moderate, non-Marxist tendencies shown by Britain's miners during the international congress in May, he was eager to emulate the British example in Essen.¹⁰

The plan was announced at the annual festival of the Catholic Knappenvereine of Essen in early June 1894, Wiese urged the Verein members to work for the Catholic cause with the same fanaticism the

9. Tremonia, No. 102 (2), 7 May 1894; Bergkappe, No. 27, 7 July 1900; and Imbusch, Arbeitsverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisationen, pp 424-25.

10. For the origins of the plan to counter Brust, see Bergknappe, No. 27, 7 July 1900; Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 42; and Tremonia, No. 132 (2), 13 June 1894.

Socialists showed "for their bad cause."¹¹ The radical proposals of the German delegation at the recent International Miners' Congress in Berlin only underscored the need for "an organization of Christian miners following the English example."¹² Catholic labor associations should therefore recruit more and more members "so that the entire region is covered with a net of Christian Vereine."¹³ Center Deputy Gerhard Stötzel spoke after Wiese, urging that "more Catholic men gather under the banner of the Christian Arbeitervereine."¹⁴ Steinbusch concluded by announcing that Catholic miners in Essen would soon be called upon to organize in "English-style trade unions."¹⁵ The frequent references to Arbeitervereine indicate, however, that Catholics in Essen were leaning toward the idea of forming educational "trade sections" within these church-run labor associations.

The members of the preparatory commission were "flabbergasted"¹⁶ by the attempt to outmaneuver them, but soon regained enough composure to inform Wiese that they would stand firm.¹⁷ Brust claimed six years later that this ultimatum "thwarted [Wiese's] unhealthy plan."¹⁸ And yet, this could hardly have been the case. Wiese's willingness to join church leaders in founding "English-type" unions was ample indication that he had no fear of the miners' commission. For Wiese to have backed down, therefore, Brust must have made significant concessions of his own. Such reasoning explains Wiese's insistence later that summer that Brust be kept as chairman of the union.¹⁹ It would also explain the fact that Brust's opponents in the

11. Essener Volkszeitung, No. 131, 12 June 1894.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Bergknappe, No. 27, 7 July 1900.

17. See Heinrich Imbusch, 25 Jahre Gewerkverein christlicher Bergarbeiter (Essen: Verlag des Gewerkvereins christlicher Bergarbeiter Deutschlands, 1919), p. 30.

18. Bergknappe, No. 27, 7 July 1900.

19. Tremonia, No. 195 (1), 27 August 1894.

union were already beginning to grumble that he was cow-towing to influential personages just to stay at the head of the movement.²⁰

By late June 1894 Brust's willingness to cooperate with the Catholic power structure of the Ruhr was even more evident. Once Wiese and Steinbusch had been assuaged, he approached the large and influential Catholic Volksbüro in Bochum. The bureau chief, Friedrich Becker, had worked closely with Lensing and Fussangel, the founders of Glückauf, before joining the Volksverein organization in 1893 and was highly regarded by many Catholic workingmen. At Brust's request, the capable and experienced Becker assumed the task of drafting the by-laws for the busy miners on the preparatory commission.²¹ Evidence would also suggest that Becker consulted both Fussangel and Lensing in the course of July.²² Before work on the statutes was completed, however, Becker drafted a short declaration which was signed by Brust and mailed to over 200 confessional labor associations in the Ruhr.²³

A break had to be made, the declaration began, "with the uncertain and unpredictable system of wage suppression,"²⁴ but expropriation and socialization of property was rejected as a solution. Rather factory committees, collective bargaining, a minimum wage, labor participation in safety investigations, a voice for the workers in the administration

20. Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 476. Erdmann's source was Franz Wieber, leader of the Christian metal workers in Duisburg.

21. Oberbürgermeister of Bochum to Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg, 31 August 1894, and to the Oberpräsident in Munster, 7 November 1894, Oberpräsidium 6442, St.A. Münster.

22. Alter Verband sympathizers somehow gained access to the files of the old Rechtsschutzverein in Bochum, where draft statutes written by Fussangel were found. See Hue, Die Bergarbeiter, Vol. 2, p 456; too, Tremonia, No. 153 (1), 9 July 1894, printed a notice concerning the work of the miners' commission. Editor Lensing probably received the information from Becker or Fussangel.

23. Hue, Die Bergarbeiter, Vol. 2, p 456.

24. The declaration also appeared in Tremonia, No. 161 (1), 18 July, 1894, and other Ruhr newspapers.

of miners' support funds, reform of the state-regulated Knappschaftsvereine,²⁵ and the eight-hour day was favored. Becker also made some interesting revelations concerning the new union that would strive for these changes. Branches would be created for every mine in the Ruhr. These "locals" would elect officials to a central executive committee responsible for coordinating the union's collective bargaining and strike operations. The Arbeiter- and Knappenvereine of both faiths would elect the first executive committee and act as temporary locals until the union could establish itself. The election would take place at a constituent assembly in late August to which all Vereine were invited.

Brust's timetable had thus been considerably advanced. The transitional Gesamtausschuss had been dropped and a separate trade union established in its place. The organization would still rest temporarily on the foundations of the Arbeiter- and Knappenvereine, but was to begin agitation all over the Ruhr, not just in the district of Essen. Significantly enough, the acceleration of Brust's plans was the result of aid and encouragement he had received from influential Center newspapers and the Bochum Volksbüro. That Becker, Lensing, Fussangel, and others had political motives for doing so will soon become evident.

25. The Knappschaftsvereine of the Ruhr had evolved in the eighteenth century, coming under state regulation as a result of legislation passed in 1854 and 1865. Basically, they provided the same social services that Bismarck was attempting to develop on a national level--health, accident, widows', and orphans' insurance. These minimal programs were financed by equal contributions from employers and employees and were supposedly administered jointly by representatives of the owners and the so-called "miners' elders" (Knappschaftsältesten). In practice, however, the workers' voice was not always heard. The state also required that employers channel all funds obtained from disciplinary fines into a special account to be used for social purposes. The arbitrary administration of these "miners' support funds" (Unterstützungskassen) also led to frequent complaints. See Kirchhoff, Die staatliche Sozialpolitik im Ruhrbergbau, pp 45-47.

As might have been expected, the Alter Verband tried to foil these plans. Before Becker completed his July declaration, in fact, union headquarters in Bochum had received word of Brust's preparations and taken immediate preventive action. The desperate unionists hoped to stack Brust's constituent assembly with delegates pledged to the Alter Verband and opposed to the creation of another miners' union in the Ruhr. The Knappenvereine of the Ruhr were contacted in late June and an assembly scheduled for 29 July in Witten. Once Brust had been checked, a national miners' congress would be held in Berlin or Hanover to attain the unity of all German miners.

Neither of these moves was very successful. The Witten rally was well-attended, but only by the so-called "free Knappenvereine" which already sympathized with the Alter Verband. The delegates elected by these associations were denied admission to the Christian assembly in August--a move that succeeded despite numerous Socialist attempts to force an entry. As a result of this setback, the national miners' congress was postponed until December, but it too was unable to reverse the backward slide of the Alter Verband. Twelve hundred more members had drifted away by the end of the year, leaving only 11,200 to combat the emerging Christian movement.²⁶

Indeed it was not the Alter Verband, but socially conservative Protestants who posed the greatest threat to the realization of Brust's plans in 1894. Fully aware that his dream of a large, interconfessional miners' union depended on Evangelical as well as Catholic backing, Brust had attempted from the beginning to popularize his cause with the Protestant Arbeitervereine of Essen.²⁷ This task was rendered more difficult by the

26. For the Alter Verband's plans in 1894, see Tremonia, No. 153 (1), 9 July 1894 and No. 171 (1), 30 July, 1894; Imbusch, 25 Jahre Gewerkverein, p 31; and Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg to Prussian Minister of the Interior, 16 April 1895, Reg.D. 9039, H.S.A. Düsseldorf.

27. See Reisenstein's remarks in Tremonia, No. 183 (1), 13 August 1894; see also: Imbusch, Arbeitsverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisationen, p 425.

fact that most Evangelical Arbeiter- and Knappenvereine in the Ruhr were controlled by National Liberal parliamentarians, Conservative Party pastors, and lower-level mine functionaries (Zechenbeamten) as apprehensive about the aims of Germany's emerging trade union movement as they were about anything proposed by Catholics.²⁸ Evangelical reaction to the July declaration was thus quite negative. Protestant mine owners were alarmed by the document, drawing the exaggerated conclusion that the Christian organization would employ Socialist tactics such as the general strike. There was a strong suspicion, moreover, that Brust was really just a front for the religious and political interests of the "the Ultramontanes." The Center "was trying to take Protestant miners in tow by organizing a 'Christian' trade union."²⁹

To be sure, this concern was not altogether unjustified. Lensing had political reasons for backing Brust after the loss of Dortmund to the liberals in 1893, and Wiese, too, had hopes of attracting Protestant labor votes for Stötzel. In fact, both Becker and Heinrich Bringewald, a Catholic miner with close contacts to Fussangel, were urging Brust to de-emphasize the anti-Socialist politics which had failed with Glückauf and direct his union mainly against the business-oriented National Liberals. Brust may have sympathized with this anti-Liberal strategem, but he realized that such overt politicking would ruin his chances with the Evangelical Arbeitervereine. The Center's advice was therefore rejected. Unfortunately for Brust, the Protestants were not aware of this. Observing his contacts with the Center press and Volksverein, Evangelical leaders simply assumed the miner was part of a Catholic political maneuver.³⁰

28. Imbusch, Arbeitsverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisationen, p 435.

29. Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, No. 205, 27 July 1894.

30. Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, No. 224, 15 August 1894; Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 396-97; Bergknappe, No. 11, 15 July 1897, No. 2, 15 January 1898, and No. 36, 21 October 1899; Hue, Die Bergarbeiter, Vol. 2 p 456; also see the remarks of the National Liberal editor from Bochum, Rudolf Quandel, in Tremonia, No. 183 (1), 13 August 1894.

Faced with mounting charges that the union was merely a Center power play, the miners' commission took steps to redeem itself in the eyes of Protestants. Five more miners, four of them Evangelical, were asked to join the commission to establish parity between the confessions. In addition, Becker was apparently asked to stop working on the statutes, for he broke off relations with the commission shortly after the first Liberal press attacks in late July. Simultaneously, Brust was approached by Pastor Ludwig Weber of Mönchen-Gladbach, who wielded considerable influence in Protestant labor circles as an executive committee member of the National Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine and a close associate of former court pastor Adolf Stöcker, leader of the Conservative Party's Christian-Social wing.³¹ Of considerable importance to the history of Christian labor before and after 1894, this Conservative reform faction should be examined more thoroughly at this point.

Stöcker's Christian-Social movement was organized in 1878 out of the religiously motivated desire to save the workers of Berlin from the grasp of the Socialists. At first as an independent party, after 1881 as an autonomous organization within the Conservative Party, the Christian-Socials strove for protective legislation for artisans and factory workers, anti-capitalistic tax laws, mild anti-Semitic measures, and perhaps most important of all, increased social activity on the part of the Prussian Evangelical Church. Stöcker seems also to have envisioned transforming the Conservative Party into a large Protestant Volkspartei which would control the Reichstag jointly with the Center.³²

After a decade of moderate success in the Reich capital, the movement began to crumble. Stöcker's unwillingness to further radical anti-Semitic

31. See Brust's speech at Essen on 26 August, printed in Tremonia, No. 195 (1), 27 August, 1894; Oberbürgermeister of Bochum to the Oberpräsident in Münster, 7 November, 1894, Oberpräsidium 6442, St. A. Münster; and Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 413.

32. For Stöcker's early career, see Walter Frank, Hofprediger Adolf Stöcker und die christlich-soziale Bewegung (Berlin: Verlag von Reimar Hobbing, 1928), pp 39-131.

designs led to the secession of most of his petty bourgeois followers, while the Christian workers of Berlin deserted him as a result of his insufficient interest in promoting trade unions. The so-called "young Christian-Socials" led by Stöcker's protégé Friedrich Naumann were also dissatisfied. As far as Naumann was concerned, good Christians should fight the materialistic philosophy of the S.P.D., but accept the party's goal of socializing the means of production. The moderate, palliative means advocated by the court pastor did not enthuse them. On the other extreme, the Conservatives adamantly opposed the idea of opening the party to the lower classes. By 1893/94, in fact, Conservative leaders were encouraging the Kaiser and the Prussian Minister-President, Count Botho von Eulenburg, to discontinue social reform plans, introduce new anti-Socialist laws, and sweep away the Reichstag suffrage.³³

Faced with the reactionary drift of the Conservatives, a loss in Christian-Social voting strength, and the growing dissatisfaction of the younger members of the party, Stöcker and his "older" followers attempted to strengthen their hand by catering to the organizational needs of the proletariat.³⁴ Weber, who had played the largest single role in forming the National Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine in August, 1890, drafted a new social program for the Vereine in May, 1893, which advocated a nationwide system of trade unions linked institutionally to employers' groups. Such a scheme would advance the economic position of the workers, while also eliminating strikes, boycotts, industrial sabotage, and other perceived evils of the Socialist labor movement. During the fall and winter of 1893 and '94, Stöcker and his associate in the Conservative Fraktion, Dr. Georg Hüpenden, urged that these "trade unions" be granted corporate political rights.³⁵

33. Ibid., p 322; Theodore Heuss, Friedrich Naumann (Stuttgart: Rainer Wunderlich Verlag Hermann Leins, 1937), pp 64-91; Dietrich von Oertzen, Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben (Berlin: Verlag von Edwin Runge, 1915), p 123.

34. Frank, Hofprediger Adolf Stöcker, pp 320-23.

35. Ibid., p 322; Heuss, Friedrich Naumann, pp 87-88; Wilhelm Kulemann, Die Berufsvereine (Jena: Verlag von Gustav Fischer, 1908), Vol. 2, pp 110, 122-23.

A Coup d'Etat [explained Stöcker] will never help in the long run. Abrogation of universal suffrage after such long possession and use would drive poor people together to the last man, making them permanent enemies of the Reich. Such measures would place a...tinderbox of agitation in the hands of social and political democrats. I seek solutions that are less dubious. Let relative majorities decide things in the Reichstag, but above all add a second house to parliament that is based on vocational estates or local associations.³⁶

Significantly enough, Stöcker also spoke out in May, 1894 for Chaplain Oberdörffer's Catholic Social Program.³⁷ The pastor's desire for a Catholic-Protestant reform coalition had clearly not waned.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Weber approached Brust, for here was a promising opportunity to bridge confessional differences, progress toward well-ordered labor relations, and encourage the Right to take up the cudgel for social reform. To be sure, Weber had no more intention of playing into ultramontane hands than the National Liberals. His conversation with Brust in early August, 1894, was thus frank and to the point.³⁸ Weber wanted to know if Center Party leaders or priests were the real founders of the union and if it would tolerate all political views of its members. Brust managed to convince the Conservative pastor that his union was not being manipulated by ultramontanes, whereupon Weber agreed to help sell the plan to other Protestants.

Weber first broached the topic to his Christian-Social colleague Pastor Werth, chairman of the National Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine. After further consultation with Stöcker, Naumann, and other members of the committee, it was decided to invite Protestant Arbeiterverein leaders to a discussion of the trade union question in Bochum.³⁹

36. Quoted in Frank, Hofprediger Adolf Stöcker, pp 313-14.

37. Tremonia, No. 120 (2), 30 May, 1894.

38. For the conversation see Weber's memoirs, as quoted by Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 413.

39. See Weber's letter in Tremonia, No. 188 (1), 18 August, 1894. The protocols of the meeting are printed in Tremonia, No. 183 (1), 13 August, 1894.

With great difficulty, Weber was able to convince the other labor leaders at Bochum to meet with the miners' commission a few days later in Essen to review the July declaration and by-laws of the new union.

Although this second meeting resulted in increased Protestant support, it is doubtful whether it actually furthered Brust's cause.⁴⁰ Little by little the July declaration was revised to suit the suspicious Liberals. The corporatist criticism of the wage system was stricken and a statement inserted advocating maintenance of fair wages. All mention of the eight-hour shift was similarly erased, in favor of "reduction in shift time when it is deemed necessary for the protection of health and life."⁴¹ With Weber's backing, the commission succeeded in retaining its already limited demands of codetermination, but to insure that Socialist purposes could not be pursued, all discussion of politics was banned from union meetings. The union would promote "the spiritual, material and industrial interests of its members with legal means according to Christian principles."⁴²

The structure of the union was also altered. Reflecting employer opposition to the mine-by-mine locals, the Liberals insisted that all organizational functions be permanently transferred to the confessional labor associations. New members had either to belong to a Protestant or Catholic labor association or else obtain certification from police headquarters that they were not followers of the S.P.D. The individual associations would send representatives to a general assembly which in turn would elect the union's central executive committee. Protestants were guaranteed equal representation on this committee because it was felt that Catholics would always

40. Brief descriptions of the meetings are continued in Karl Kühne, "Kampf, um die christliche Gewerkschaftsidee," p 45; Imbusch, Arbeitsverhältnis und Arbeiter-organisationen, pp 430-31; and Westfälischer Merkur, 14 August, 1894 (clipping in: Oberpräsidium 6442, St. A. Münster). Parts of the revised statutes are printed in Imbusch, 25 Jahre Gewerkverein, pp 32-38; and Tremonia, No. 212 (2), 15 September, 1894.

41. Imbusch, 25 Jahre Gewerkverein, p 33

42. Ibid., p 33.

possess a majority in the general assembly. The executive committee was also required to submit all decisions to an "honory council" (Ehrenrat) controlled by middle and upper class dignitaries, who would then "advise" the workers.

This elaborate system of checks and guarantees virtually ruled out the type of anti-capitalistic endeavors that Brust had had in mind for the long run. He had come close to creating another anti-Socialist "battering ram," exactly what he said he would not do in April. Brust nevertheless agreed to these revisions because he realized that the 15-20,000 Protestant Arbeiterverein members of the Ruhr would not join a union without the support of their middle class leaders. Once in the union, the intimidated, submissive types would gain class consciousness and be ready to assume more control. As Brust explained to a colleague later that month, "all we have to do now is organize, the rest will happen on its own."⁴³

The personal diplomacy and tactical maneuvering which had absorbed Brust's time and energy since June seemed to have paid off as the delegates gathered in Essen for the constituent assembly. Spokesmen for 100 Catholic, 58 Evangelical, and 25 Christian-social Arbeiter- and Knappenvereine were present, representing about 20 percent of all miners in the Ruhr. This impressive showing could not hide the fact, however, that Christian labor unity was still quite fragile. Most Protestant associations had sent delegates with instructions to observe the proceedings and participate in debates, but not to vote for any resolutions. The elections to the union's executive committee had therefore been scheduled for a later assembly to give Protestant delegates time to report to Arbeiterverein superiors concerning Catholic reaction to the union's new program.⁴⁴

43. Brust to an unnamed colleague, 29 August, 1894, printed in Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 407-08.

44. Tremonia, No. 195 (1), 27 August, 1894; Mayor Vossman of Gelsenkirchen to Landrat Gelsenkirchen, 5 August, 1894, LA Gelsenkirchen 45, St. A. Münster; Dortmunder Zeitung, No. 228 (1), 20 August, 1894; Tremonia, No. 194 (2), 25 August, 1894.

Brust chaired the assembly with the obvious intention of preserving the crucial compromise worked out two weeks earlier.⁴⁵ He praised Weber's efforts, confirmed the political neutrality of the union, and made no criticism of the Protestant by-law revisions. He also defended the elimination of the eight-hour day from the July declaration and pledged that Christian miners would never participate in a general strike or cooperate with the Alter Verband as long as it stood under socialist leadership. Furthermore, Brust invited "legally informed friends of the cause from other estates"⁴⁶ to help the commission complete its work. He was referring to the State Mining Office in Dortmund, which was officially represented at the assembly.

Ludwig Weber's comments were also quite pragmatic. The controversial nature of the trade union movement in Germany necessitated great care in writing the organization's statutes. The labor movement was being observed by the state and one false step could result in repressive steps. In completing the statutes, the commission should therefore reach an agreement with the authorities. German workers had to be ready to take advice from those "higher-placed".⁴⁷ Weber's remarks were followed by the passage of a motion supporting the August revisions and entrusting the miners' commission with the task of completing work on the by-laws. An assembly would be convened in late October to ratify the final draft and constitute the union.

The closing remarks at Essen were delivered by Chaplain Peter Oberdörffer, whom Weber and the Christian-Socials may have asked to attend. Oberdörffer's campaign to restructure Germany's political and economic institutions was in full swing at the time and the chaplain probably considered the Essen meeting a good opportunity to promote his plans. As explained earlier, Oberdörffer wanted capital and labor to manage a firm as equals. The first step in this direction would be the creation of Christian labor organizations equal in strength to employer groups already in existence. Once

46. Ibid.

47. Tremonia, No. 195 (1), 27 August, 1894.

parity were obtained, the groundwork would be laid for the desired "mutual association." In the meantime, the workers and their priest-overseers would face one struggle after another with big business.⁴⁸ Oberdörffer therefore advised the delegates to avoid bitter polemics with the Social Democrats. He also urged the workers to prepare for strike action.

Given the worker's many enemies you will not be able to avoid waging war against your adversaries, but to do this you'll need money, money and more money! The union may have to support black-listed members and will also be in need of funds if a great strike (eine grosse Aktion) becomes necessary for economic reasons that do not violate Christian principles. In this sense I recommend that you proceed with your work in the spirit of unity, courage, and perseverance and you will not fail.⁴⁹

Coming from one of the most renowned labor leaders in the expansive Archdiocese of Cologne, such encouragement was very significant. But the chaplain's anti-capitalistic views were hardly appropriate at a time when confessional unity rested so precariously on the brink.

Oberdörffer, in fact, was not really interested in the success of Brust's interconfessional experiment. To facilitate the supervision of Catholic priests, he favored the creation of separate organizations for Catholic and Protestant miners and may have overstated his views at Essen to drive a wedge between the two faiths.⁵⁰ In the weeks after the August assembly it is highly likely that Oberdörffer also applied pressure on Church officials in Cologne to force the preparatory commission to consider drafting statutes for separate denominational unions. These efforts faltered on the opposition of Weihbischof Schmitz, who supported Oberdörffer's Catholic Social Program, but was convinced that inter-confessional trade unions were the prerequisite for "mutual associations" in the

48. Tremonia, No. 249 (1), 29 October, 1894.

49. Quoted in Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 402.

50. Kölner Correspondenz an die geistlichen Präses, No. 9-10, 12 August, 1890, and No. 5-6, 1895, St. Bib. München-Gladbach. In the latter issue, Oberdörffer asserted "that even for the miners, with their unique circumstances, it would have been better to establish two confessional organizations with the same statutes."

confessionally-mixed Ruhr. His defense of the proposed miners' union before the Catholic Men's Club of Essen in mid-October probably accounts for the fact that only a few Catholic Arbeitervereine withheld their support from Brust during the constituent assembly two weeks later.⁵¹

The debate over the nature of the organization had been complicated, meanwhile, by the employers' desire to introduce still more conservative statute changes. Like other industrialist organizations, the powerful Association of Ruhr Mining Interests had been alarmed by Oberdörffer's speech. Brust's refusal to cooperate with the Alter Verband, however, was considered more significant.⁵² The mine owners had not attacked the new organization since the increase of Evangelical influence in mid-August⁵³ and were still hopeful that Brust could be used to protect business interests against Socialist attacks.⁵⁴ The employer association therefore urged state mining officials in Dortmund to guide the writing of the statutes in such a way that the union would remain largely innocuous. Otherwise, the programmatic demands which had survived the Protestant revisions might result in the type of economic warfare that Oberdörffer was advocating.

Usually sympathetic to the owners' concerns, officials in Dortmund insisted that the commission make its intention to steer a peaceful course much more explicit. The miners responded submissively in early September by once again rewording the statutes. The demands of August were left unchanged, but the purpose of the organization was redefined as

51. For Schmitz's speech, see Tremonia, Nos. 246 (2) and 247 (1), 25-26 October, 1894. He refutes Oberdörffers' ideas on confessional unions here. That Schmitz felt a need to do so suggests that Oberdörffer was working against Brust in Cologne.

52. Rheinische-Westfälische Zeitung, No. 237, 28 August, 1894.

53. The last attack had occurred in No. 220 of the Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung on 11 August, 1894.

54. Imbusch, 25 Jahre Gewerkverein, p 38, notes that the entrepreneurs were only interested in "anti-socialist attack troops."

"the improvement of miners' moral and social position and the establishment and maintenance of peaceful relations between capital and labor."⁵⁵ There was no longer any mention of the 'material and industrial interests' of the workers and the function of the organization now bore a striking resemblance to the "yellow", anti-union associations formed by employers after the turn of the century.

For reasons that are not clear, the peace clause was removed from the statutes in late September, perhaps because Oberdörffer had intervened, or more likely, due to second thoughts on Brust's part.⁵⁶ But the renewal of open opposition from the mine owners and additional pressure

55. Evidence for the employers' initiative has been pieced together from a number of different sources. The statute was reworded at the commission's session of 2 September and printed in Tremonia, No. 212 (2), 15 September, 1894. Brust had stated at the Essen assembly in late August that the State Mining Office should be included in the final deliberations and Werth confirmed on 7 October that mine officials had indeed been consulted (Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, No. 278, 8 October, 1894). Imbusch mentions in his official history of the union that the Mine Office at this time sympathized with the views of the Association of Ruhr Mining Interests (Imbusch, 25 Jahre Gewerkverein, pp 39-40). And finally, mine officials, entrepreneurial circles, and business-oriented journalists all claimed in 1913 that the miner owners had been involved with the founding of the union in 1894 (Königliches Oberbergamt Dortmund to to the Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg, 15 October, 1913, and to the Prussian Minister of Trade and Industry, 19 November, 1913, Reg. Arnsberg I 1476, St. A. Münster). I have assumed that the owners used their close relationship with the Mining Office to exert influence on the union, rather than direct negotiations, which would have been counterproductive.

56. Müller, Franz Hitze, p 131, notes that the weeks after the assembly of 26 August had witnessed a "spirited dispute" over the wording of the statutes. The peace clause was removed...between 15 September, 1894--its first appearance in Tremonia--and 1 October, when the Evangelical Arbeiterverein of Langendreer discussed the statutes (Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, No. 279 (2), 9 October, 1894). See also Brust's remarks at Essen on 28 October in Tremonia, No. 249 (1), 29 October, 1894.

from Weber and Werth was enough to force the readoption of the new wording in mid-October.⁵⁷ Again the evidence is sparse, but it would appear that Brust considered resigning at this point.⁵⁸ With encouragement from progressive Volksverein leader Franz Hitze, who emboldened Brust by promising to accept a seat on the proposed Ehrenrat, the miner decided to stay on as union leader.⁵⁹

The owners' decision to tolerate trustworthy unions in the Ruhr did not enhance Brust's prospects with the Evangelical Arbeitervereine. Led by Rudolf Quandel, editor of a National Liberal newspaper in Bochum, and Hermann Francken, National Liberal Landtag deputy from Gelsenkirchen, the most adamantly anti-Catholic labor leaders have never shared Weber's confidence in Brust's political neutrality. Quandel had only agreed to participate at Essen, in fact, because he felt confident that church and Center would desert the organization as a result of the Protestant by-law revisions. The impressive Catholic showing at Essen and, above all, Oberdörffer's "advice" to the delegates illustrated the fallacy in this reasoning and induced Quandel and Francken to beat a hasty retreat. Agents were sent to other parts of the Ruhr to dissuade Protestants from joining the union. These efforts proved successful in September when the executive committee of the Rhenish-Westphalian Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine decided to adopt a completely "neutral" stance to the Christian miners' union. The Association would not support the organization publicly, and each Arbeiterverein could decide for itself

57. Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, No. 279 (2), 9 October, 1894; Tremonia, No. 249 (1), 29 October, 1894.

58. Brust insisted four years later that he had been very reluctant to accept a position with the union in 1894. (Bergknappe, No. 19, 1 October, 1898). Similarly, August Pieper wrote Archbishop Simar in 1901 that Brust "had been pressed" into service in 1894. Pieper to Simar, 27 October, 1901. *Generalia* 23.2, Vol. 3, Erzb. Registratur Köln.

59. Müller, Franz Hitze, pp 131-32, places the date of the conversation "a few weeks" after Hitze's speech before Catholic Arbeiterverein leaders in Cologne on 24 September, but before the constituent assembly of 28 October.

whether to attend the union's constituent assembly in October. The general commission (Gesamtausschuss) of the Association would discuss the matter further in November.⁶⁰

Such "neutrality" was hardly designed to encourage the individual associations. Weber therefore convened a rally at Gelsenkirchen on 7 October to counteract the growing skepticism among Protestant Verein leaders. He and Werth spoke persuasively on Brust's behalf and were able to elicit support for the main points of the completed statutes.⁶¹ But appearances could be deceptive. Religious prejudices and memories of Glückauf lingered, causing many Protestants to question the sincerity of Catholics like Brust, Köster, and Müller. By the end of October, in fact, it was clear that many Evangelical labor leaders had been unable to resist the anti-Catholic demagoguery of Quandel and Francken. The rank and file for its part was either afraid to speak up or else easily swayed by the prejudicial arguments of Arbeiterverein sponsors. District associations (Kreisverbände) in Recklinghausen and Witten-Hagen boycotted the constituent assembly on 28 October, while only scattered support was found in Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Dortmund, and Iserlohn. The sole Kreisverband fully represented was Bochum, and a motion advocating attendance passed there with a slim, one-vote margin. Of the 57 Evangelical Vereine present at Essen in August, perhaps 20 to 30 had returned in October.⁶²

60. Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, No. 224, 15 August, 1894; Westfälischer Merkur, 18 October, 1894 (clipping in: Oberpräsidium 6442, St. A. Münster); Landrat in Gelsenkirchen to Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg, 15 October, 1894, L. A. Gelsenkirchen 45, St. A. Münster.

61. Ibid.

62. Mayor of Gelsenkirchen to Landrat in Gelsenkirchen, 9 October, 1894, L. A. Gelsenkirchen 45, St. A. Münster; National Zeitung, 24 October, 1894 (clipping in: Oberpräsidium 6442, St. A. Münster; Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, No. 298 (2), 28 October, 1894; Police Commissioner in Fortmund to Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg, 18 February, 1895, Bestand 3, Stadtarchiv Dortmund; Tremonia, No. 36 (2), 6 February, 1895.

The final gathering did nothing to bridge the widening gap between Catholic and Protestant labor. Oberdörffer was the main culprit once again.⁶³ He first proposed that parity on the executive committee be discarded. Such an arrangement, he noted, presupposed the existence of "mutual distrust between the confessions".⁶⁴ Protestants were justified in suspecting, however, that Oberdörffer's sudden concern for appearances was merely a ruse concealing his desire to maintain Catholic control of the union. Matthias Wiese supported the motion, arguing that it would be sufficient to emphasize the fact that "Christians"⁶⁵ sat on the committee. Weber countered that Oberdörffer's motion would merely lend credence to the charges of Catholic insincerity made by men like Quandt and Francken. Weber's arguments carried the day, but the mere fact that the debate had occurred was ammunition for Protestant opponents of the union.

Oberdörffer's formal address to the delegates stimulated another untimely exchange. Indirectly criticizing the statutes, the chaplain advocated energetic representation of material interests and defended his earlier statement about ad hoc cooperation with the Alter Verband. These remarks brought Werth to his feet. It was always difficult to found an organization, he noted, but even harder to maintain it. He warned the delegates not to violate the statutes and to elect responsible officials to the executive committee. Weber seconded Werth. The Protestants in the union would never cooperate with Socialists. "I consider the Social Democrats the greatest evil of our time... Let me make it quite clear: Our union is no Kampfverein!"⁶⁶

63. A stenographic report of the assembly appeared in Tremonia, No. 249 (1), 29 October, 1894.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

Oberdorffer received more applause from the floor, but the miners on the commission cautiously avoided seconding him.⁶⁷ The statutes as revised in August and September had already been accepted by the delegates and Brust wanted to avoid creating "unnecessary difficulties for the young movement."⁶⁸ Thus the Trade Association (Gewerkverein) of Christian Miners for the Mining District of Dortmund, as the new union was called, came to life without further delay.

Little remained, however, of the bona fide trade union which Brust and Becker had envisioned in July. Strikes were all but ruled out by statute, leaving grievance petitions to employers and chambers of commerce as the only means to express the miners' 'moral and social' interests. Little material aid could be offered the members otherwise, for dues were set at 25 pfennige a quarter--less than one-third of what the Alter Verband asked. The Gewerkverein also depended on the confessional associations for tasks such as recruiting, dues collection, etc. and until the founding of the union newspaper Bergknappe in November, 1895, Lensing's Tremonia performed this service.⁶⁹ Decision-making authority, moreover, was divided between the executive committee and an Ehrenrat consisting of bourgeois labor leaders.

67. Imbusch, 25 Jahre Gewerkverein, p 37.

68. Ibid., p 37.

69. The union statutes were printed in entirety in Bergknappe, No. 45, 23 December, 1899; also see Bergknappe, No. 9, 24 August, 1896; Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 45; and Tremonia, No. 90 (1), 2 April 1895.

Representing the Catholics were Oberdörffer, Wiese, and Hitze. Weber, Werth, and Karl Legewitt, chairman of an Evangelical Arbeiterverein in Essen, represented the Protestants.⁷⁰ It was no slip of tongue, therefore, when Hitze referred to the union in October, 1895, as a "Fachabteilung".⁷¹ With its clerical advisers and "Nichtkampfverein" statutes, the Christian association was designed to function as an educational trade section.

The distinction between trade union and confessional trade section was blurred still further by the continued exodus of Protestants from the new organization. Meeting at Langendreer in mid-November, 1894, the general commission of the Rhenish-Westphalian Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine decided to uphold the policy of neutrality established by the executive committee in October. Weber had exerted all his influence to convince the commission that Christian trade unionism was the only effective means to combat the S.P.D., but had run headlong into Francken. The National Liberal parliamentarian charged that Weber had been duped by "hotspurs" like Oberdorffer into making "short-sighted concessions to demagogic ultramontanism."⁷² These personal invectives were so devastating that only 27 of the 65 Verein agents backed the pastor's motion of active support for the new Christian union.⁷³

70. Imbusch, 25 Jahre Gewerkverein, p 37; Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 413-414; Ritter Volksverein, p 295; and Der Arbeiter (organ of the Catholic Arbeitervereine of southern Germany), No. 15, 12 April, 1895. Oberdörffer was unable to cooperate with Weber and soon resigned. A Knappschaftsverein elder took his place. By 1895 or 1896, Wiese had also stepped down, interestingly enough, in favor of Heinrich Brauns. The future Weimar Labor Minister was then a parish priest in Essen-Borbeck. Werth died in 1896 and was replaced by another Knappschaftsverein elder. With Hitze attending to political duties in Berlin much of the year, the Ehrenrat was controlled, for the most part, by Weber and Brauns.

71. Tremonia, No. 279 (1), 11 October, 1895.

72. Kölnische Zeitung, No. 152, 16 February, 1898.

73. National-Zeitung, 20 November, 1894 (clipping in: Oberpräsidium 6442, St. A. Münster).

Francken and Quandel acquired an influential ally that winter in the person of Baron von Stumm, the patriarchal iron and steel magnate of the Saar. Stumm had observed the activity of Brust and Weber in the Ruhr and was determined to thwart similar attempts in his mines. Like the workers under Diederich, title character in Heinrich Mann's The Loyal Subject, Stumm's employees could count on "fatherly benevolence". Any challenge to his paternal authority, on the other hand, would be "shattered against an unbending will".⁷⁴ Thus in January, 1895, when Evangelical Arbeiterverein leaders sought to establish a legal-aid bureau, Stumm and his fellow owners blocked the idea until local pastors agreed that the agency would not be transformed into another Gewerkverein.⁷⁵ Not content with this victory, Stumm, an influential spokesman of the Reichspartei, carried his struggle against Christian socialism to the nation's parliament in Berlin. In two highly controversial speeches, Stumm blasted Weber as a dangerous agitator and Friedrich Naumann as an S.P.D. collaborator.⁷⁶ Stöcker defended his lieutenants in the Prussian Landtag in March, but in so doing, worsened the Christian-Social position. For the Kreuzzeitung, Stöcker's sole supporter in the Conservative press, turned on the court pastor, demanding that he dissociate himself from the young radicals.⁷⁷ Far from promoting the cause of the Christian-Socials, support for the Gewerkverein had led to a number of humiliating setbacks for Stöcker and his followers.

74. Quoted in Barbara W. Tuchman, The Proud Tower (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966), p 307. The reader should also consult Fritz Hellwig, Carl Ferdinand Freiherr von Stumm - Halberg 1836-1901 (Heidelberg: Westmark-Verlag G.m.b.H., 1936), pp 506-56.

75. See Naumann's Hilfe article of January, 1895, printed in Theodor Schieder (ed.), Friedrich Naumann Werke (Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), Vol. 5, pp 185, 745.

76. Reichstag Debates, Period 11, Session 3 (12 December, 1894; 9 January 1895), pp 77, 211.

77. Heuss, Friedrich Naumann, 93; Frank, Hofprediger Adolf Stöcker, pp 324-45.

Stumm's campaign, together with the decision of Rhenish-Westphalian Arbeiterverein leaders in November, encouraged all but a few of the Protestant associations that had voted to join the Gewerkverein to abandon Brust's cause.⁷⁸ Brust's following in Bochum dwindled to almost nothing and an assembly convened in early March to reverse this trend was so poorly attended that nothing could be accomplished. A similar situation existed in Iserlohn, and in Dortmund only three Protestant workers had joined the union by February. Making matters worse, the Rhenish-Westphalian commission refused to reverse its November decision during a meeting in mid-February. With this setback all prospects for a rapid increase in Protestant backing disappeared. The Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg reported in October, 1895 that Protestant workers were still refusing to join the Gewerkverein because middle class Arbeiterverein leaders had convinced them it was merely a well-disguised ultramontane plot.⁷⁹ Brust's plans for interconfessional labor unity had fallen victim to a cynical mixture of religious bigotry and political scheming.

The ongoing recession added to Brust's membership problems.⁸⁰ Reflecting the low demand for labor, the average miner's pay in the Ruhr had not

78. For the turnaround, see Tremonia, Nos. 36 (2), 49 (1), 62 (1), and 90 (1), for 6 and 19 February, 4 March, and 2 April, 1895; Franz Ulrich, Gewerkverein leader in Dortmund, to Dortmund Police Department, 22 January and 3 February, 1895, Bestand 3, Stadtarchiv Dortmund; and Imbusch, 25 Jahre Gewerkverein, p 34.

79. Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg to Prussian Min. of Interior, 26 October, 1895, Reg. D. 9039, H. S. A. Düsseldorf.

80. Unless otherwise noted, membership figures for the Gewerkverein and Alter Verband remainder of this chapter are based on the statistics submitted by the union to Prussian officials in the Ruhr. See L A Duisburg-Mühlheim 481-482, H. S. A. Düsseldorf; Oberpräsidium 2830 (2) and 2833, St. A. Münster; and Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg to Prussian Min. of Interior, 28 April, 1896, Reg. D. 9039, H. S. A. Düsseldorf.

advanced one pfennig from late 1893 to mid-1895. The succeeding 12 months brought only a sluggish 4 percent increase. With little hiring activity and a constant flow of workers into the Ruhr from eastern Germany, few miners of either faith took the risk, albeit slight, of joining the Gewerkverein and losing their jobs. Four thousand workers, mainly Catholic, flocked to the recruiting stations from January to March, 1895, then the pace slowed considerably. The next six months brought less than 900 new recruits, and by March, 1896, membership stood at only 6200, or about 4 percent of all Ruhr miners.⁸¹

Understandably enough, the more impetuous among those who had joined favored energetic action to improve their position. Union radicals had been pressuring the leadership to strike since February, 1895, and by spring, 1896, Brust, too, was growing impatient to force a wage hike.⁸² The passive economic activity of the Gewerkverein was a clear indication, however, that the Ehrenrat had no intention of giving in to the radical wing. In a joint meeting of executive committee and Ehrenrat in mid-June, 1895, the union decided to collect information from 88 mines concerning the administration of miners' support funds. A petition based on this time-consuming effort was submitted to the Association of Ruhr Mining Interests in March, 1896. To combat the arbitrariness of lower-level mine functionaries, the Gewerkverein requested that workers' committees be allowed to share management responsibilities in the administration of these funds. Beginning to wonder, perhaps, if the Gewerkverein had forgotten why it had been created, the owners' association did not deign to reply. Late in 1896, Bergknappe had to admit that the support fund petition had been a disappointing failure.⁸³

81. Koch, Die Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet, p 148; Tremonia, No. 90 (1), 2 April, 1895.

82. Regierungspräsident Arnsberg to Prussian Min. of Interior, 16 April, 1895, Reg. D. 9039, H. S. A. Düsseldorf; Bergknappe, No. 6, May 1896.

83. For the support fund petition, see Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 47-48; Tremonia, No. 166 (1), 19 June, 1895; and Bergknappe, Nos. 4, 5, 7, and 13, for April-May, July, and December, 1896.

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The union's request for wage increases fell on the same deaf ears. An article series running in Bergknappe from February to May, 1896, admitted that the owners had done a lot for their employees, but charged that workers with large families were not receiving adequate wages.⁸⁴ The paper, which was mainly the responsibility of Heinrich Brauns at this time,⁸⁵ appealed to the owners as Christians to grant a 20 percent wage increase. Pay rose less than 2 percent during the winter and spring of 1896.⁸⁶ Mainly concerned with the demand for coal and the amount of labor required for the desired level of production, owners were unmoved by the Ehrenrat's concept of "Christian moral duty". The Gewerkverein rank and file, meanwhile, grew more and more restless.

A crisis of a different sort was developing within the Alter Verband. In February, 1895, the leaders of the union, among them S.P.D. members Johann Meyer and Ludwig Schröder, were arrested on trumped-up charges and sentenced to three years imprisonment. Fearful of further suppression, 6000 miners deserted the organization immediately, and by April, 1896, a shrunken following of 3600 was all that remained of the once impressive Alter Verband. Under these circumstances it was only natural that many of the remaining and recently departed members began to blame not only the government, but also the S.P.D. for their troubles. Leader of this dissident faction was the former metalworker and editor of the union newspaper, Otto Hue. Only by dissociating the union from Marxist politics and emphasizing purely trade union goals could the Alter Verband hope to regain the 33,000 members it had lost since 1891. Such a

84. Bergknappe, No. 1-5, January-May, 1896.

85. Brust was still working full-time in the mines in 1896. It thus seems highly unlikely that he could have composed such a lengthy article series. Alter Verband charges that Brauns did most of the editorial work were probably true. See Bergknappe, No. 6, 1 May, 1897. For more evidence that Brauns often assisted Brust with editorial work, see Ritter, Die Männer aus Monchen-Gladbach, Part 6, pp 3-4, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn.

86. Koch, Die Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet, p 148.

"neutral" stance would also facilitate joint strike activity with the more successful Gewerkverein, whose leader, Brust, had always made the exclusion of Socialist politics on the union level the sine qua non for any such cooperation.⁸⁷ Thus internal pressures seemed to be forcing the two rival unions closer together in the mid-1890's.

Alter Verband Chairman, and S.P.D. Deputy Heinrich Möller, opposed Hue's strategy. Möller liked to consult Bebel and other party leaders before embarking on trade union actions and, as an outspoken Marxist, was not about to "creep into a hiding place"⁸⁸ with his views. Nor did cooperation with the Christian miners appeal to him. Brust was a marionette in the hands of priests and employers, while the Gewerkverein was little more than a glorified Knappenverein with no interest in the miners of Silesia and the Saar, let alone the international labor movement. Hue should concentrate on luring Christians into the Socialist camp, not on deals with leaders who flirted with the workers' enemies.

Hue's ideas began to seem less humiliating, however, after the Gewerkverein campaigned for "oppositionist" candidates in the Knappschaftsverein elections of June, 1896. If another, more radical wind were blowing in the Christian organization, common action against the bourgeoisie was possible. These new developments, and the popularity of Hue's views with the rank and file, induced Möller to offer Brust peace terms.⁸⁹ The two feuding unions would cease all politically biased

87. Ibid., pp 56-57; Regierungspräsident Arnsberg to Prussian Min. of Interior, 2 November, 1896, Reg. D. 9039, H. S. A. Düsseldorf; also see Brust's remarks at Essen cited in Tremonia, No. 195 (1), 27 August, 1894.

88. Möller to Hue, 14 March, 1897, printed in Bergknappe, No. 18, 1 November, 1897.

89. Möller to Brust, 13 June, 1896, printed in Bergknappe, No. 8, 1 August, 1896.

agitation and pursue only trade union goals. Möller left the exact form of cooperation in the Ruhr open, but proposed another German Miners' Congress for the national level.

Brust rejected Moller's proposals. The Christian leader suspected that Möller would somehow attempt to exploit the alliance for party purposes.⁹⁰ Besides, Brust was dealing from a position of strength. With more than twice as many members as the Alter Verband, it was highly likely that a continuation of hostilities would lead to the collapse of his once great rival. For months, in fact, Brust and Ehrenrat member Heinrich Brauns had planned to intensify competition between the two unions. All Christian Knappenvereine in the empire would be invited to a special congress at Bochum, seat of the Alter Verband, in early 1897. The delegates would formulate a program of labor legislation and discuss a plan to extend Gewerkverein influence to other mining districts in Prussia. Renowned Protestants like the "arm chair socialist" Adolf Wagner and the labor historian and former National Liberal Deputy Wilhelm Kulemann would join Hitzte on the speakers' platform, lending an aura of respectability to the whole affair. With its newly won prestige, the Gewerkverein would be able to recruit tens of thousands of non-organized Catholic and Protestant miners.⁹¹

Brust and Brauns had equally ambitious plans for other branches of industry. The two wanted Christian labor leaders in every corner of the Reich to follow the Gewerkverein's lead and challenge the supremacy of the free trade unions. Neither put any faith in the ability of Fachabteilungen to temper the religious and political intolerance of "the frees" (die Freien), nor did they feel there was any time to lose before founding a network of more viable, non-socialist organizations. To be

90. Brust to Möller, 15 June, 1896, printed in Bergknappe, No. 8, 1 August, 1896.

91. Bergknappe, Nos. 7, 10-11, and 13, for 1 July, 24 September, 24 October, and 24 December, 1896; and Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 51.

sure, the first signs of a Christian countermovement among non-miners were already in evidence by 1896. Christian railwaymen and tileworkers in Trier and Lippe-Detmold, respectively, had founded separate unions, and in Munich, too, the groundwork for several more Christian unions had been laid by Father Huber and the mechanic Karl Schirmer. With 259,000 unionists in the General Commission, however, Herculean efforts were needed if "the Christians" (die Christlichen) were to catch up. The Bochum Congress would initiate the struggle.⁹²

These developments could not have occurred at a more propitious moment for Ludwig Weber and the Christian-Social Party. The attacks of Baron Stumm and the Kreuzzeitung in early 1895 had been followed by far more devastating reversals in the winter of 1895/96. The Kaiser, the Oberkirchenrat, and the Conservative Party had denounced the Christian-Socials after Stöcker had proven unable to curb the social and political radicalism of Friedrich Naumann. The drama ended in February 1896 when the aging pastor split from both the Conservatives and Naumann to form a separate party. Naumann, in turn, founded his own "National-Social Union", an organization which he hoped would eclipse all parties on the left and center. To further these ambitious goals, the young vicar advocated, among other things, a merger of the Evangelical Arbeitervereine, the free trade unions, and the emerging Christian organizations. His first step was to back Hue in urging the Gewerkverein to abandon its

92. Huber to Schirmer, n.d. (1895), quoted in Ritter, Volksverein, p 296; Bergknappe, No. 15, 1 August, 1898; Der Arbeiter (Munich), No. 47, 22 November, 1895, and No. 5, 31 January, 1896; Kulemann, Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung (Jena: Gustav Fischer Verlag, 1900), pp 335-36; Gastеiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, pp 224-26; Karl Schirmer, "KarlSchirmer", in 25 Jahre christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 208.

independent existence.⁹³ Such a scheme was clearly designed to capture supporters for his new association at the expense of Center and S.P.D., but it was also threatening to fledgling parties like the Christian-Socials, who were dependent now more than ever on the political aid of the Christian proletariat. Considerations such as this explain Weber's wholehearted support for the Bochum Congress and the planned spread of the movement.

Hitze's feelings were mixed. Given the Kaiser's feelings against the S.P.D., a demonstration of patriotic workers in favor of labor reforms was by no means unappealing. Nor was Hitze opposed to a nationwide organization of Christian miners. The Alter Verband could no longer represent the workers effectively, and Hitze appreciated the greater degree of class consciousness among the miners. He stopped short, however, of advocating a general movement of Christian trade unions. Although very few trade sections had been founded since 1892, the Volksverein's co-founder clung to the hope that Catholic workers so trained could exert a salutary influence on the Socialist unions, which had still not advanced past the membership peak reached in late 1890 (320,000). Hitze was also worried that German trade unions would develop in a radical direction unless the proper socio-institutional framework were created for them. Until unions were granted corporate status, given their own vocational chambers, etc., the growth of unionism had to be viewed with certain misgivings. Furthermore, the church could be expected to balk at the plans

93. As early as 1895 Naumann advocated a unified trade union movement. Separate Christian trade unions were necessary in certain areas, he admitted, but should not be promoted as an end in themselves. See his Gedanken zum Christlich-sozialen Program, in Schieder (ed.), Friedrich Naumann Werke, Vol. 5, p 71. By late 1896 with the founding of his own party, however, Naumann had moved a step farther and advocated merger. Regierungspräsident of Arnsberg to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, 13 May, 1897, Reg. D.9039, HSA Düsseldorf.

of Brust and Brauns, and Center Party leaders still feared that labor independence would lead to Christian-social revolts like those of the 1870's.⁹⁴

These tactical differences emerged at the 43rd Katholikentag in Dortmund in late August 1896. Brust had been selected by the Dortmund organizing committee as one of the main speakers on the social question. In his speech, the miner made public the political strategy he had described to a colleague privately in 1894:

The working class is aware and thankful that much affliction has been relieved and many abuses eliminated by present social legislation. But social reform is not finished with health, accident, old age, and invalidity insurance, or safety legislation, nor has the social question been solved by these bills. A steady expansion of social legislation is required--for instance, with regard to the reduction of worktime...For this expansion of social legislation, however, a powerful initiative from the workers themselves is necessary...and to do this trade unions are needed.⁹⁵

For trade unions to influence legislation in a Christian fashion, however, it followed that the labor movement itself must first be Christianized, and to do this, separate Christian unions were needed. A resolution to this effect was introduced by Brust, but the Katholikentag's social commission, largely under Hitze's direction, rejected the motion in favor of the following, greatly altered version:

The 43rd General Assembly of German Catholics deeply deplores the fact that trade unions are frequently forced into unChristian endeavors and calls upon Catholic workers to do all in their power to return these unions to a Christian basis and keep them on the Christian path.⁹⁶

Hitze's preference for confessional trade sections is clearly evident.

94. For Hitze's views in the mid-1890's, see Reichstag Debates, Period 11, Session 3 (6 February, 1895), p 692; Pieper to Brust, 25 January, 1924, Führer-Korrespondenz, No. 3, March, 1924; Ritter, Volksverein, p 297.

95. Verhandlungen der 43. Generalversammlung der Katholiken Deutschlands zu Dortmund vom 23. bis 27. August 1896, pp 254-55, StBibMG.

96. Ibid., p 375.

Without Katholikentag sanction, Brust's recommendations were robbed of the effect they might otherwise have had on the German Catholic community. As far as can be determined, in fact, there were only two new unions in Aachen and Eupen toward the end of the year--some consolation, but hardly what Brust and Brauns had had in mind.⁹⁷

The Bochum Congress (31 January - 2 February, 1897) was equally disappointing in terms of spreading the movement. Brust intended to establish recruiting stations for his union in the Saar, the Siegerland, and Silesia. With the exception of the Saar, where the patriarchal Catholic Knappenbund (8,000 members) refused to cooperate, Knappenvereine from all these areas sent delegates. A joint commission was formed to settle the details of the plan, but due to the complexities of the Prussian Vereinsgesetz, which prohibited "political" organizations from maintaining state-wide ties, merger with the Gewerkverein was rejected. Though greatly disappointed, Brust found some satisfaction in the fact that his promotional efforts in the east-bank areas of Rhenish Prussia had at least succeeded in popularizing trade unions there. With additional encouragement from Adolf Stöcker and Heinrich Brauns, the Christian miners and metal workers of the Siegerland formed their own union in May, 1897.⁹⁸

The Bochum Congress, however, did improve the Gewerkverein's position in the Ruhr. With encouragement from Brauns and Weber, the delegates re-adopted Friedrich Brecker's 1894 program of eight-hour shifts, minimum wages, obligatory factory committees, permanent collective bargaining commissions, and limited codetermination. The impact of the assembly was increased by pro-labor remarks from Hitze, Wagner, and Kulemann, while the Gewerkverein general assembly, which was meeting simultaneously in

97. Regierungspräsident of Aachen to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, 7 April, 1897, Reg. D.9039, HSA Düsseldorf; Bergknappe, No. 6, 1 May, 1897; Müller, Christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 58-59.

98. Bergknappe, No. 6, June, 1896, and subsequent numbers that summer, No. 2, 26 February, 1897, and No. 19, 24 June 1899; Kulemann, Die Berufsvereine, Vol. 2, pp 346-48; Müller, Christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 26.

Bochum, added further impetus to the Congress's resolutions by empowering union leaders to negotiate with employers for a ten percent wage increase. A petition to this effect was submitted to the Association of Ruhr Mining Interests on 21 February.⁹⁹

The reaction of miners in the Ruhr was immediate. Membership, which had climbed slowly from 6200 in March, 1896 to 8250 in early February, 1897,¹⁰⁰ began to accelerate after the Bochum assemblies, and by March, Brust could boast a following of nearly 11,000. Convinced now that the Gewerkverein was not pursuing religious goals, Protestant workers were also beginning to join in greater numbers. As the Landrat in Gelsenkirchen reported, the Christian organization seemed to be "the rising sun"¹⁰¹ for the miners of the Ruhr.

Counsels in the Alter Verband were mixed as to the proper course of action. Möller was incensed by Brust's rejection the previous year and, together with S.P.D. leaders, wanted to hold a counter-demonstration to neutralize the effect of the Christian congress. Hue, on the other hand, was convinced that the Alter Verband's days as an independent organization were numbered. Membership in the Ruhr had still not risen above the 1896 low of 3400 and the Gewerkverein was gaining in popularity. The only way to influence future developments in the miners' movement, he felt, was close cooperation and eventual merger with the Christians.¹⁰²

99. For the Bochum Congress, see Bergknappe, No. 2, 26 February, 1897; and Imbusch, Arbeiterverhältnis und Arbeiterorganisationen, 00 483-485.

100. Bergknappe, No. 10, 2 July, 1897.

101. Landrat Gelsenkirchen to Regierungspräsident Arnsberg, 1 March, 1897, Reg. Arnsberg I 93, St. A. Münster.

102. See the observations of the Gewerkverein executive committee in Bergknappe, No. 2, 26 February, 1897; and the report of the Regierungspräsident Arnsberg to the Prussian Min. of the Interior, 13 May 1897, Reg. D. 9039, H.S.A. Düsseldorf.

Hue therefore presented his party opponents with a fait accompli by greeting the arriving Christian delegates in the columns of his newspaper on 30 January. He bemoaned the ongoing struggle between the two organizations, emphatically denied the Marxist orientation of the Alter Verband, and regretted that Socialist organizers had bitterly attacked Brust in the past.¹⁰³ Another article on 20 February found no difference between the political demands of the two unions, and asserted that the Bochum Congress had heralded the "beginning of the end of disunity among German miners."¹⁰⁴ The Ehrenrat would attempt to perpetuate present divisions, but to no avail. For when it came to championing the miners' rights, clear reason would gain the upper hand and "those who want to sever a natural bond [between workers]"¹⁰⁵ would be deposed and forced to flee. There would be no room for Weber, Hitze, and Brauns in Hue's "neutral" union.

Brust was too confident in the continued growth of the Gewerkverein and too suspicious of the Alter Verband to contemplate merger. Thus the executive committee issued a declaration rejecting the idea of merger with the Alter Verband. The statement ended, however, on a positive note. The continued existence of two unions did not preclude the maintenance of friendly relations. "Schiedlich-friedlich" would be the policy of the Gewerkverein in the future.¹⁰⁶

Coming on 21 February--the day of the Gewerkverein's wage petition--the new stance toward the Alter Verband takes on added significance. For it appeared that Brust was attempting to force the mine owners to the bargaining table by raising the spectre of a general strike.¹⁰⁷ Brust

103. See the report of the Regierungspräsident Arnsberg, cited above in Note 102.

104. Quoted in Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiische Gewerkschaften, p 84.

105. Ibid., p 84.

106. Bergknappe, No. 2, 26 February, 1897.

107. See the report of the Regierungspräsident Arnsberg cited above in Note 102.

added to this impression on 28 February by warning the employers that refusal to negotiate could lead to "a struggle".¹⁰⁸ Although Brust was clearly bluffing--the union treasury could not endure a strike for more than a day or two--he went even farther two weeks later, warning that the union would continue to press its demands "in accord with all the miners of the district".¹⁰⁹ Not surprisingly, the employers' refused to be cowed into submission by a paper tiger. The Ruhr Association claimed it had no authority in wage matters, then advised individual miners to avoid all dealings with "third parties"¹¹⁰ attempting to interfere with the writing of wage contracts. Brust's brashness and inexperience had created a very awkward situation for the young organization.

Hue had no intention of allowing the Christians to retreat. He felt a general action of some sort would improve relations between the unions still further, weaken the Ehrenrat, and lead, perhaps, to the desired merger. He therefore drew up plans for a joint protest rally at Bochum on 28 March. The owners' refusal to recognize trade unions as representatives of the employees would be singled out for special criticism and the Reichstag requested to grant unions corporate status. The workers would also reiterate the Gewerkverein's wage demands, and, if the owners still refused to negotiate, an attempt would be made to elicit a binding arbitration settlement from the newly created (1891) industrial courts. In the event of a strike, Hue wanted Möller to convince the French, Belgian, and British miners to refuse overtime work. In this way German markets--and the strikers' jobs--would be preserved.¹¹¹

108. Bergknappe, No. 7, 15 May, 1897.

109. Bergknappe, No. 3, 15 March, 1897.

110. Ibid.

111. Möller to Hue, 14 March, 1897, printed in Bergknappe, No. 18, 1 November, 1897; Bergknappe, Nos. 5-6 for 15 April and 1 May, 1897; and the report of the Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg cited above in Note 102.

Hue's wage initiative was obviously designed to appeal to the Christians' sense of legality and due process. On 27 March, however, Gewerkverein officials published a note in the bourgeois press dissociating themselves from the Bochum rally and advising members not to attend.¹¹² Nor would the union strike for higher wages. Rather, a petition would be submitted to the Reichstag demanding obligatory worker committees, more powerful arbitration tribunals, and corporate status for trade unions. For the months ahead the organization should concentrate on strengthening its financial base to be able to cope more effectively with employer intransigence in the future.

The Gewerkverein's refusal to join the Socialists at Bochum, even in a joint arbitration effort, weakened Hue's position and allowed Möller to regain control of the union. The Socialist deputy had disapproved of the merger strategy all along, sensing therein a threat to S.P.D. interests. He cooperated with Hue, nevertheless, to prevent the more popular editor from usurping the chairmanship and blocking an important avenue of party influence.¹¹³ The failure of Hue's conciliation efforts with Brust, however, caused a considerable shift of opinion within the union in Möller's favor. This shift probably explains Möller's unexpected victory over Hue's candidate (Thiemann) in the balloting for union chairman that Easter.¹¹⁴ With Möller in charge again, plans for cooperation with the Gewerkverein were discontinued, and, by May, 1897, relations between the

112. The note was published in Bergknappe a few weeks later (No. 4, 1 April, 1897).

113. The Regierungspräsident Arnsberg discusses Möller's tactical co-operation in the report cited above, Note 102. The friction between Möller and Hue surfaced in the former's letter of 13 March, cited above in Note 111.

114. Regierungspräsident Arnsberg to Prussian Min. of Interior, 9 November, 1897, Reg. D. 9039, H. S. A. Düsseldorf.

two unions were as bad as ever.¹¹⁵ Ironically, it was not just the bourgeoisie that was perpetuating working class divisions. For orthodox Marxists like Möller obviously differed little from Center leaders in viewing trade unions primarily as recruiting stations for a party. Proletarians would unite behind the S.P.D. or not at all.

The embarrassing circumstances surrounding the Gewerkverein's change of course in March gave Möller no opportunity to realize his ideal of Marxist hegemony in the Ruhr, strange though it may seem. Christian membership topped 13,000 in April and reached 15,000 by early July. This recruiting success can only be explained by the fact that wages had risen 5.5 percent since the Bochum Congress in February. With wages increasing and hiring on the rise, union membership was less risky and less burdensome financially. The Christian union was probably more appealing than the Socialist organization for the same reasons. For every new member recruited by the Alter Verband from February to June, 23 joined the Gewerkverein.¹¹⁶

Emboldened by this success, the Christian miners' union made yet another attempt to accelerate the growth of Christian trade unionism. The occasion was the third annual convention of Arbeiterverein members from the archdiocese of Cologne in June 1897. Oberdörffer had opposed creation of this convention on the grounds that it would weaken the authority of Arbeiterverein priests, but had been overridden by Archbishop Krementz, who agreed with Hitze and Brauns that the workers should at least be allowed to express themselves. This setback did not deter Oberdörffer, however, from continuing his opposition to labor independence. In a series of articles and speeches after 1894, he propagated the idea of Catholic confessional unions controlled by the church--an approach which was readily

115. See Brust's remarks at Aachen in January, 1898. Bergknappe, Nos. 5-6, for 1 and 15 March, 1898. Thiemann had continued to oppose Möller after the Alter Verband congress in April, 1897 and had been ousted from the executive committee as a result.

116. Koch, Die Bergarbeiter in Ruhrgebiet, p 148; Der Arbeiter (Munich), No. 24, 11 June, 1897.

accepted by a considerable number of Arbeiterverein priests in the diocese. These circumstances prompted Brust's supporters in 1897 to use the annual workers' convention, whose motions were not binding on parish priests, as a psychological lever against Oberdörffer's more conservative faction. A resolution called for acknowledgement of the Gewerkverein's success in the Ruhr and stressed the necessity of founding similar organizations without delay. Theodor Berse, one of Brust's colleagues, delivered the main address in favor of the motion and was backed emphatically by a still active Anton Rosenkranz. Brauns was there to defend the motion too. Failure to organize the yet loyal masses, he warned, would result in their lapse into absolute indifference or capture by the S.P.D.¹¹⁷ The motion was only partially successful. Significantly, it was Hitze who played the inhibiting role once again. Unlike the previous summer at Dortmund, the Center's social expert was no longer confident that educational trade sections within Catholic Arbeitervereine could effectively infiltrate and Christianize the free trade unions. The continuation of anti-Christian, pro-Socialist articles in the union press had apparently changed his mind on this point.¹¹⁸ But opposition in church and Center circles to independent trade unions remained, and there was still no sign that the unions would be granted corporate rights or chambers of labor. Hitze therefore advised the delegates to adopt a more gradual strategy:

117. Ritter, "Die Männer aus Monchen-Gladbach", Part 3, pp 52, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG, Bonn; Ritter, Volksverein, p 205; Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung; Kölner Correspondenz an die Geistlichen Präsidien, Nos. 1-2, 5-6 for January-February and May-June, 1895 and Nos. 5-6, May-June 1897, St. Bib MG; and Offizieller Bericht über den 3. Delegierten-Tag der katholischen Arbeitervereinigungen der Erzdiözese Köln zu Köln am 13. Juni, 1897, pp 15-19, St. Bib MG.

118. The socialist metal workers' organ, for instance, had criticized Christianity as "a poor imitation of Buddhism" and the story of Moses as "a crude Hoax". Quoted in Franz Wieber, "Franz Wieber", in 25 Jahre christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 172-73.

At the annual conference of Verein chairmen yesterday a resolution was passed that trade commissions be formed within every labor association. These will be the nucleus for trade unions to be founded later...Today, where specific interests are in special need of representation, we should dedicate ourselves again to the goal of trying to found Fachabteilungen that we can greet as the bearers of a great Christian trade union organization.¹¹⁹

Hitze's remarks led to a compromise wording of the Gewerkverein's proposal. Similar unions should be founded for other branches of industry where "the state of industrial relations"¹²⁰ warranted such organizations. This version, which allowed local priests to continue on as before, was accepted without further debate. Though disappointed, the delegates did not attempt to challenge their social and religious superiors.

Interconfessional unions had not been formally sanctioned by the church. Most of Oberdörffer's following was therefore unmoved by the convention's motion. But a few important converts were made in Aachen, Düren, Cologne, and Düsseldorf during the fall and winter of 1897/98.¹²¹ Despite the hostile attitude of many in church circles, 50,000 workers were organized in Christian trade unions in western Germany by spring 1898.

Developments in the Ruhr that spring were equally significant to the future of the Christian trade union movement. Since the early summer of 1897 Brust had experienced considerable difficulty within the union from a small but outspoken faction which opposed the leadership's ongoing feud

119. Offizieller Bericht über den 3. Delegiertentag...zu Köln, pp 18-19.

120. Ibid., p 19.

121. Oberbürgermeister of Crefeld to Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf, 14 March, 1898 and report of the Crefeld Police Department, 3 April, 1898, Reg. D. 9047, HSA Düsseldorf; Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 67-68; Heinrich Kurtscheid, "Heinrich Kurtscheid," in 25 Jahre christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1899-1924 (Berlin: christlicher Gewerkschaftsverlag, 1924), pp 219-20; Regierungspräsident in Cologne to King Wilhelm, 24 January 1899, Reg. D. 403/9045, LHA Koblenz; Kulemann, Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 373-74, 389, 399-400, 405-07; and Immelen to the editor of Der Arbeiter (Munich), 8 December 1897 printed in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 250.

with the Alter Verband. Led by the Evangelical vice-chairman of union, Johann Wahl, this minority was attracted by the idea of merger propagated by Naumann and the ever-persistent Hue. With employers organized in one powerful association, it seemed a betrayal of working class interests to perpetuate proletarian divisions. On New Year's Day 1898, Wahl openly repudiated Brust and the Ehrenrat by encouraging Christian workers to pay more attention to Hue's articles and speeches and, if non-organized, to join either the Gewerkverein or the Alter Verband.

Within two weeks Wahl had been denounced by the Gewerkverein general assembly and Ehrenrat and removed from his post.¹²² Brauns and Weber had initiated the disciplinary action with the emphatic approval of Brust, who wanted to tighten his hold on the union leadership. This goal seemed assured in mid-January when the general assembly granted him a handsome salary to edit Bergknappe, thereby enabling the miner to devote his full attention to union affairs. It was not long, however, before Brust began to assert himself against the Ehrenrat, which also limited his freedom of movement. Speaking at Aachen in late January, for instance, Brust defended the right of the chairman and executive committee to make all union decisions. In February and March, he grew even more assertive. As police reports from the time indicate, Brust's temperament seemed to have changed since the previous year. Able to quit the mines for the first time since his teen's and afford a few of the luxuries of life previously denied him, Brust was far less willing now to take advice from middle and upper class notables. As if to bolster his courage for the upcoming struggle with those who had intimidated him for so long, the ex-miner began to drink quite heavily.¹²³ The "love-child" had become L'Enfant Terrible.

122. For the dispute with Wahl, see Bergknappe, Nos. 2-4 for 15 January, 1 and 15 February 1898; and Regierungspräsident Arnsberg to Prussian Min. of Interior, 13 April 1898, Reg. D. 9039, H. S. A. Düsseldorf.

123. Bergknappe, Nos. 5-6, 1 and 15 March 1898; Police Commissioner in Essen to Regierungspräsident Arnsberg, 14 September 1898 and Landrat Essen to Regierungspräsident Arnsberg, 21 September 1898, Reg. D. 9048, H. S. A. Düsseldorf.

Brust's revolt against the authority of the Ehrenrat was triggered by events in the mines near Osnabruck in April, 1898.¹²⁴ Trouble between labor and management had first arisen there as a result of the owners' decision to continue operations on a religious holiday in early January (Twelfth Night). Similar disregard for church holidays in February prompted the miners to ask the Gewerkverein to expand its activity north to protect them during the clash that was considered inevitable on all sides. When over 300 miners were fired for honoring a Catholic holiday in late March, Gewerkverein agitators flocked to the area, recruiting nearly 1500 new members, who promptly announced their intention to strike if the disciplined miners were not rehired.

Incensed by Brust's violation of the union's pledge to maintain peaceful relations between capital and labor, Weber convened the Ehrenrat in an effort to bring a halt to the whole action.¹²⁵ The union's patriarchs recommended that he open negotiations with the owners, appeal to the Prussian Minister of Trade and Industry, and warn the miners not to strike. Brust cooperated with the Ehrenrat on the first two points, but refused to take its "advice" on the third. Rather, he urged the workers not to yield to management force and assured them that the Gewerkverein would not desert their cause.

This time Brust was not bluffing. Shortly after miners in Piesberg walked off the job on 12 April, the executive committee voted to support them. Weber had telegraphed union headquarters that he would tolerate no insubordination and his colleague Legewitt, too, had reminded union officials that "the Ehrenrat comes first, then the executive committee."¹²⁶ Brust's

124. For the details, see Tremonia, Nos. 154 (1), 157 (3), 160 (1), 163 (2), 166 (1), 174 (1), 175 (2), 176 (1), and 180 (1), for 6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 20, 21, and 23 April 1898.

125. An accurate documentation of Weber's efforts was printed by Brust in Bergknappe, No. 9, 1 May 1898.

126. Ibid.

defiance was contagious, however, and Weber and Legewitt were simply ignored. Aware that the proud miners could not be treated like children, Hitze backed down and participated in no more Gewerkverein meetings. Angered by Hitze's passivity, Weber and Legewitt resigned in disgust, much to the dismay of Stöcker, who, mindful of the upcoming Reichstag elections, had supported striking workers in Siegen only months before the Piesberg walkout. Not until 1904 would the Christian-Socials be able to reestablish ties to the Gewerkverein. Brauns, who had always been on good terms with Brust, continued to take part in union affairs from the proximity of his Borbeck parish after 1898.¹²⁷ But the power of the Ehrenrat had been crushed and the workers were in control of the union, just as Brust had predicted in 1894.

Similar trends were underway in other areas of the empire. In southern Germany, for instance, approximately 14,000 workers were organized in independent Christian trade unions by the summer of 1898. This growth can be largely attributed to the persistence of Lorenz Huber, Karl Schirmer, and his stonemason colleague Hans Braun. For well over a year after November 1895, plans for Christian trade unions had been blocked by Arbeiter- and Gesellenverein priests who felt their own organizations could provide the workers with all necessary aid and counsel. Faced with this impasse, Huber, Schirmer, and Braun arranged a series of conferences with church labor leaders in Munich. These meetings succeeded in establishing a modus vivendi between the rival groups whereby the unions would cooperate with church organizations on matters such as unemployment relief, labor exchange information, and other common problems. By summer 1897 ten Christian trade unions had been formed in Bavaria, the most powerful of which were Schirmer's textile workers and ex-railwayman Moritz Schmidt's railroad employees. The Bavarian example was emulated in other parts of southern Germany during the fall and winter of 1897/98.¹²⁸

127. Joseph Joos, Am Räderwerk der Zeit (Augsburg: Verlag Winfried-Werk GmbH, n. D.), p 32.

128. Kulemann, Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 373-74, 389-90; Schirmer, 50 Jahre Arbeiter, p 40; Der Arbeiter (Munich), No. 42, 16 October 1896, No. 46, 13 November 1896, No. 24, 17 June 1898, and Nos. 1, 7, 14, 19, 23, 30, 37, and 40 for 1 January, 12 February, 2 April, 7 May, 14 May, 4 June, 23 July, 10 September and 1 October 1897.

From the South, Christian trade unionism spread north to Berlin.¹²⁹ When the powerful Socialist metal workers union struck the Borsig Locomotive Works in late fall 1897, hundreds of Catholic workers who had refused to join the union for religious reasons were forced by picketers to take part in the strike. This situation placed church labor leaders in a very uncomfortable position. Catholic Arbeitervereine had been founded in Berlin in the early 1890's for the explicit purpose of preventing Catholic workers from straying into the socialist camp. For the same conservative reasons, Arbeiterverein priests had opposed the creation of Christian trade unions or Fachabteilungen with strike funds. Such funds, it was felt, would only encourage disorderliness among the workers.

The Borsig strike, however, forced Arbeiterverein leaders to consider more effective means of combating the socialist danger. The trade union question was placed on the agenda of the quarterly executive committee meeting of the Association of Catholic Arbeitervereine of Northeastern Germany (Berlin, Breslau, Danzig, Königsberg, and Heiligenstadt) in January 1898, but no decision was reached. Rather, a commission was formed to study the matter and make concrete proposals at the next meeting in April. This postponement prompted master carpenter Paul Weigel, the impatient leader of Berlin's Catholic workers, to take independent action. Only hours after the Arbeiterverein meeting, he founded an independent union for construction workers. In the course of 1898, other unions were founded for metal and wood workers, tailors, and butchers' journeymen. Due to the grudging acceptance of church leaders and bitter opposition from the Socialists, membership in these organizations had only risen to 700 by the end of the year.

129. Joseph Wiedeberg, "Josef Wiedeberg," in 25 Jahre christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 215-16; Johannes Kaster, Die Stellung der deutschen Katholiken zur Gewerkschaftsfrage (Monchen-Gladbach: Volksverein Verlag, 1921), pp 51-54; Gornik, Entwicklung der nichtsozialdemokratischen Arbeiterbewegung, pp 77-78; for the rise of Christian unions in Berlin.

Thus in many areas of Germany Christian workers had taken important steps toward independence from church and party control. In so doing, the question of ad hoc cooperation with competing trade union organizations was thrust into the forefront for the first time since Oberdörffer's half-hearted suggestions of 1894. In the Ruhr, for instance, even the Socialist Heinrich Möller had been impressed with the Christians' break from the Ehrenrat. When the Gewerkverein continued its radical policies in June by assaulting moderate Knappschaftsverein elders as "toadies and bootlickers",¹³⁰ he proposed that the two unions form an alliance for the elders' elections in November 1898. The Christian organization was asked to vote for Alter Verband candidates if they were "tried members",¹³¹ or if they merely had a good chance to win.

Although he felt that Möller was asking too much, Brust was eager to reach an agreement. Not only was he under increasing internal pressure to alter his stance to the other union, but more important from his point of view, neutral forces were once again gaining strength within the Alter Verband. Ludwig Schröder had returned from prison in April, eager to break off relations with the S.P.D. He was immediately elected vice-chairman of the union. Another new member of the executive committee, Eberhard Pokorni, had gone against the party in Bochum and voted for the Center during run-off elections to the Reichstag in June. Furthermore, Johann Meyer, who was known to support Schröder and Pokorni, was due for release from prison later that year.¹³²

Wishing to strengthen the neutral faction gathering around Hue, Brust decided to make a compromise offer. Both unions would unite around the

131. Möller to Brust, 22 June 1898, printed in Bergknappe, No. 20, 15 October 1898.

132. Regierungspräsident to Min. of the Interior, 13 April and 13 November 1898, Reg. D. 9039 and 9042, H. S. A. Düsseldorf; Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiliche Gewerkschaften, pp 104-05.

candidate from the strongest organization in each district. The Gewerkverein's numerical superiority would thus receive consideration. Brust also insisted that the Alter Verband nominate neither fanatical opponents of the Gewerkverein nor outspoken Socialists. Sensing that Brust's proposal was aimed directly at him, Möller broke off negotiations and began running separate Alter Verband candidates. Möller's decision returned inter-union relations to their former state of feud in the weeks before the elections, and by the winter of 1898/99, bitter press polemics had led to libel suits on both sides.¹³³

Rank and file pressure finally brought an end to the five-year feud that spring. Government reports indicate that the neutral challenge to Möller gained momentum after the elections, reducing his influence within the union. Conditions in the Gewerkverein were even more unstable. In February 1899 a number of general assembly members met to plot Brust's overthrow if he did not improve relations with the Alter Verband before the Knappschaftsverein replacement elections in July.¹³⁴ Pressed in a direction he had already considered seriously the summer before, Brust met with Hue on 26 June 1899 and agreed to cooperate with the Alter Verband in the future "on all labor-related matters."¹³⁵ Brust had finally left the job of fighting the Alter Verband to others.

The history of the Ruhr miners' movement in the 1890's illustrates a number of significant points. First, although clerical opposition to

133. See Brust's description of negotiations with the Alter Verband at Bochum in late June and his letters to Möller of 14 and 16 July 1898, printed in Bergnappe, No. 20, 15 October 1898; also see Bergnappe, No. 17, 1 September 1898.

134. Regierungspräsident Arnsberg to Prussian Min. of the Interior, 13 November 1898 and 27 November 1899, Reg. D. 9042, H. S. A. Düsseldorf; Police Commissioner in Gelsenkirchen to Regierungspräsident Arnsberg, 20 March 1899, Reg. Arnsberg I 74, St. A. Münster.

135. Quoted in Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiische Gewerkschaften, p 88. See also Bergnappe, No. 20, 1 July 1899.

Christian trade unionism was beginning to weaken as a result of free trade union gains, the Catholic Church had still not become the promoter of unionism that Bishop Ketteler had envisioned a generation earlier. Like Ketteler, Christian organizers in the 1890's had to contend with those who argued that social misery was not a violation of God's divine plans, rather a reflection of them. Too, the idea of emancipating labor from the tutelage of the church was unthinkable to prelates who assumed that the workers would be won over easily by clever Marxists and atheists. Brust's break from the Ehrenrat, his penchant for tough, crude rhetoric, and the fact that he signed an agreement with the Alter Verband in 1899 only increased the pessimism of conservative churchmen. As all intelligent adults who are treated like children, Christian workers who had no intention of joining the S.P.D. reacted angrily to the paternalism of their spiritual overlords.

The bourgeois parties of the Reichstag also feared Christian trade unionism. Hitze's unwillingness to support the promotional efforts of Brust and Brauns resulted in part from the fact that most in Center circles still saw independent unions as a potential threat to the party's voting strength. Without close party ties, Christian workers might run their own candidates as had occurred in 1877, or else vote for the S.P.D. The National Liberals and the Reichspartei resisted the unions too, sensing therein an ultramontane, Center Party plot and/or a weakening of the employer's economic strength. The Christian-Socials around Ludwig Weber and Adolf Stöcker were more progressive than most historians, who concentrate solely on the party's anti-Semitism, have assumed. But here too one detects a strong element of expediency, as well as a basic fear of what the workers would do without the advice of the upper classes. That the Kaiser, The Prussian Evangelical Church, and the Conservative Party fought the Christian-Socials, in turn, as "radicals", was a good indication that Germany's leaders could not be relied on to support the Christian labor movement. The largely negative reaction of bourgeois Germany to the goals of Christian labor was quite frustrating to workers who felt their religious devotion, patriotism, and opposition to Marxism should be rewarded with a sincere effort to improve the plight of the lower classes.

The many opponents of trade unionism in Germany watched nervously during the summer and fall of 1899 as other Christian unions in the Rhineland followed Brust's lead and cooperated with the free trade unions. These inter-union alliances, together with the changing political climate in Germany at the end of the decade, stimulated the great "merger" debate of 1899/1901. Before turning to this question, however, it will be necessary to discuss the drive to centralize the various Christian organizations--a process which culminated in Mainz in May 1899. For merger with the free trade unions into one "neutral" trade union federation did not become a serious issue until Christian workers had also formed a national organization.

CHAPTER 4

CENTRALIZATION EFFORTS AND THE QUESTION OF TRADE UNION POLITICS

The Christian trade unions had made significant progress since Brust began to carve out a niche for himself in 1894. By 1898 approximately 65,000 laborers had joined the movement. As the Christian trade union movement grew stronger, however, the need for a common program and central directorate became increasingly clear to Christian leaders. The various groups had little or no contact with one another and differed on many important issues. Most of the unions in southern Germany, for instance, were local organizations comprising several trades, unlike the Gewerkverein, which was striving to organize one trade nationwide. Furthermore, the tileworkers union in Detmold forbade strikes and included employers on the executive committee, while the Christian railwaymen of Trier were pledged to harmonious relations with state railroad authorities as well as open opposition to internal enemies of the state. Moreover, Immelen's unions in Aachen and Eupen had included clauses in their by-laws that could be construed as advocacy of electoral support for the Center Party. To the Gewerkverein as well as the overwhelmingly Protestant unions in Siegen and Detmold, such clauses were highly objectionable. These divergencies did not augur well for centralization efforts, but an attempt had to be made if the highly centralized free and Hirsch-Duncker unions were to be overtaken.

The issue was first discussed by a small group of Christian workers attending an international social conference at Zurich in late August 1897. Impressed by the highly structured trade union organizations of Germany, Switzerland, and Britain, and embarrassed by the dearth of Christian labor delegates at Zurich, the Christian workers met on the eve of their

departure for Germany to discuss what action could be taken to right the situation after their return home. Present at the caucus were Karl Schirmer and Hans Braun of München, Paul Weigel of Berlin, the Cologne metal worker Johannes Giesberts, and the secretary of the Catholic Arbeitervereine of Württemberg, Matthias Erzberger. All promised to promote Christian trade unionism, and more, to establish closer ties with one another in the process. A national congress was judged the best means to initiate such cooperation. The small gathering also decided that Schirmer should encourage Huber and other leaders in the prestigious South German Association of Catholic Arbeitervereine to make the necessary preparations. The decision, just as Brust's in 1894, was based on a realistic appraisal of the need to cooperate with church and bourgeois circles in the early stages of an endeavor that promised to be highly controversial.¹

Schirmer made his request after returning to München.² Unfortunately, there is little indication of the type of response he received. Moritz Schmidt's editorials in Der Arbeiter provide the only clues. On two occasions after the Zurich meeting he hinted that the proper time for a national conference had not yet come.³ Bavarians should first found more trade unions in order to avoid being overrun by the Rhinelanders. Bavarian particularism seemed to have prevented rapid realization of the plans drawn up in Zurich.

With the Bavarians dragging their feet, the initiative in preparing the congress passed from München to Christian labor circles in Aachen. Hubert Immelen's plans, however, were far more ambitious. He hoped to forge a

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1. Der Arbeiter, (München) No. 29, 22 July 1898; "Der internationale Arbeiterschutz-Kongress in Zurich und sein Einfluss auf die christliche Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland", in Jahrbuch der christlichen Gewerkschafter für 1909, pp 26-42; Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 249.
 2. Der Arbeiter (München), No. 29, 22 July 1898.
 3. Der Arbeiter (München), No. 43, 22 October 1897, and No. 1, 7 January 1898.

political lobby strong enough to prod the Center in the direction of social reform. At a special assembly in late September 1897, the Aachen association formulated a Reichstag petition demanding Sunday rest, the ten-hour day, unemployment insurance, and other labor reforms. Plans were then announced for a national conference in January 1898 to discuss the question of politicizing the embryonic Christian labor movement. It was high time, felt Immelen, that Christian trade unionists go beyond the usual well-meaning talk, and begin in earnest with the honorable work of social reform.⁴

Brust and Schirmer were contacted in the course of the fall and both agreed to participate at the January meeting in Aachen. Immelen had approached them primarily because they were the two most prominent Catholic workers in Germany--the only proletarians ever to address Katholikentage. But the meeting did not go as smoothly as Immelen had planned. Brust had learned in 1894/1895 how susceptible Protestants were to anti-Catholic demagoguery and wanted to avoid the internal strife that would surely follow if the Gewerkverein joined a movement aimed primarily at the Center Party. He also knew that similar prejudices would prevent Protestant unions in Detmold and Siegen from participating in Immelen's Center lobby.⁵ The ex-miner therefore delivered a forceful address advocating establishment of interconfessional, non-partisan trade unions.⁶ Immelen was quick to disagree.

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4. Regierungspräsident in Aachen to Prussian Min. of the Interior, 31 March and 3 October 1898, Reg. D. 9039 and 9042, H. S. A. Düsseldorf; Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, pp 249-50; Schirmer, "Karl Schirmer", pp 209-10; Immelen to editor of Der Arbeiter (Münich), n. d. (1897), printed in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 241.
 5. Brust to Immelen, n.d. (1898), quoted in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 258.
 6. Brust's speech at the Aachen meeting was printed in Bergknappe, Nos. 5-6, 1 and 15 March 1898.

I am of the opinion that in a certain sense, trade unions are already political because they pursue Sozialpolitik. Social Vereine that don't pursue politics are outmoded nowadays. Naturally, trade unions and labor associations are not political instruments to make politics on their own as a party. That [unions] adopt the social-political program of one certain party, however, and that their members orient themselves according to their convictions with one certain party in public life, is natural and understood... If trade unions line up with the party nearest them and attempt to exert influence on it, the effect will be to promote trade union interests. The related party is driven to promote the goals of the union. We [in Aachen] will stick to this [demand] and I don't want to see it obliterated.⁷

Preoccupied with political conditions in Catholic Aachen, Immelen had overlooked the fact--or chosen to do so--that Protestant workers would not be so willing to back the Center. When Schirmer agreed with Brust that party politics should be divorced from the Christian trade union movement, Immelen felt compelled to withdraw a pro-Center resolution which he had written before the conference. The Center editor made sure, however, that the initiative did not pass to Essen, or back to Munich. The Aachen workers, who were present in great strength, supported another resolution entrusting the Aachen textile union with the task of preparing a national congress by fall 1898. Brust protested the arrogance of the move, but Schirmer, who had failed in his own mission and longed for some form of political action, acquiesced.⁸

Immelen completed his preparations in early July 1898. The first Christian labor congress would meet at Mainz in mid-August and include discussion of the "social, economic and political situation" of the working class. All resolutions passed at Mainz would be submitted as petitions to the Reichstag. Significantly enough, Immelen had scheduled his congress two weeks before the Katholikentag. He had not mentioned the Center by name, but there can be little doubt that he was still trying to take the party in tow.⁹

7. Quoted in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, pp 252-53.

8. Ibid., p 253; Schirmer, "Karl Schirmer", pp 209-10.

9. Immelen's circular to the other Christian trade unions in Germany, dated simply "early July 1898", is printed in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, pp 254-55.

Brust had the most objections to the proposed format. In his opinion, the congress should formulate a trade union program, not initiate a political campaign. He admitted that Immelen's political agenda was worthy of brief consideration, but felt that a more thorough handling should be postponed until clarity was established on the matter of trade union goals. To make positively sure that the gathering in Mainz would not be awkward for the Gewerkverein, Brust wanted to delay the congress until representatives from the major Christian unions could meet and agree on a shorter, less political agenda.¹⁰

Determined not to lose the crucial backing of the Gewerkverein, Immelen conceded to Brust's demands. The congress was postponed until early September, and a debate over the nature of the new national organization was placed at the top of the agenda. Brust was given the privilege of delivering the main address; Immelen and Schirmer would present opposing arguments (Koreferate). Immelen also wanted to meet with Brust and other trade union leaders during the Crefeld Katholikentag in late August to discuss the matter further. Assuming that the congress agenda would be altered to suit Gewerkverein wishes, Brust and the executive committee agreed on 14 August to send a delegation of four to Mainz in early September, Schirmer and his colleagues in München had agreed to Immelen's plans in late July.¹¹ Evidence on the response of other Christian organizations is lacking, but it can be assumed that all, with the probably exception of the Bavarian and Prussian railroad unions, followed the lead of Essen and München.

The Crefeld meeting was held on 26 August 1898. It was hurriedly arranged by Brust almost certainly after consultation with Heinrich Brauns and

10. The various replies to Immelen are quoted or printed in Ibid., pp 256-58. See especially that of the Gewerkverein executive committee, dated 22 July 1898.

11. Immelen to Huber and Schirmer, 24 July 1898, quoted in Ibid., pp 258-59; Immelen to Brust, n.d., (probably early August 1898), quoted in Ibid., p 260; Bergknappe, No. 17, 1 September 1898; Der Arbeiter (München), Nos. 31-32, 5 and 12 August 1898.

other Catholic labor leaders in Mönchen-Gladbach. Present were Pieper of the Volksverein, Matthias Erzberger, Chaplain Hessdörffer, Peter Michels of the Crefeld textile union, and Brust. After a cursory search for Immelen, who could not be found, the meeting was begun without him.¹² Brust opened by recommending that the delegates first justify the need for Christian trade unions. The Gewerkverein leader was well aware of the need to counter Socialist charges that the Christians were undermining proletarian unity. The congress should then determine whether these unions would be local or national, confessional or interconfessional, partisan or politically neutral, and further define the goals and tactics of the movement. Other questions such as the union press and bureaucracy could also be handled.¹³

Erzberger, at this point, made a daring suggestion. The Mainz Congress should not be held in September, but postponed indefinitely. He was not in disagreement with Brust's agenda; rather, he wanted time to popularize the idea of a national organization among the highly particularistic South Germans. He proposed, therefore, that separate North and South German preconferences be held in the course of the upcoming year to settle the issues raised by Brust. Pieper, Brust, and Michels consented to these arrangements, and Hitze, who had missed the meeting too, also agreed when

12. Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, pp 259-60.

13. No minutes to the conference exist. It has already been established, however, that Brust intended to hammer out an agenda at Crefeld in time for the Mainz Congress in September. Gasteiger (p 259) also notes that the Crefeld meeting was the agenda-setting conference demanded by Brust in July. A comparison of the Gewerkverein's note to Immelen of 22 July (Gasteiger, pp 256-257) and the communiqué signed by the participants after the Crefeld session (Gasteiger, pp 260-61) supplies ample material to reconstruct Brust's presentation.

informed later that day.¹⁴ A circular was formulated and sent to the Christian labor organizations that had planned to attend in September, notifying them of the postponement. When Immelen learned about the meeting the next day he objected bitterly to the "one-sided, arbitrary, and unjust"¹⁵ nature of this decision. But with less than 5,000 workers to back him in Aachen, and no support from the Volksverein, Immelen's protests were as ineffective as Brust's had been in January. Turnabout was fair play.

The Volksverein's support for the idea of nationwide Christian trade unions led by men like Brust and Erzberger was consistent with efforts underway in München-Gladbach since early 1898. The economic upswing had been underway for almost two years, yet only two or three trade sections had been founded in western Germany. In the meantime, membership in Socialist unions had risen to 491,000, while Christian trade unions had tripled in size. After Brust's revolt against the Ehrenrat, moreover, it was apparent that Christian workers had gained too much class-consciousness to tolerate further "schooling" from priests and social

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14. Once again, the details of the meeting must be reconstructed. Michels was a newcomer to the movement and could not have turned the meeting around in this fashion. Hessdörfer was in league with Immelen (Bergknappe, No. 5, 1 March 1898) and must also be ruled out. As explained earlier, Brust was prepared to bring the matter to a close at Crefeld. Hitze's post hoc approval (Gasteiger, 259) indicates that the Volksverein had not proposed the change either. And finally, the idea of a separate conference for southern Germany has all the earmarks of south German origin. For the fact that Erzberger was in basic agreement with Brust's ideas on the trade union question, see the former's speech at Munich in February 1898, printed in Der Arbeiter (Münich), No. 5, 4 February 1898; and Klaus Epstein, Matthias Erzberger and the Dilemma of German Democracy (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), pp 401-04.
 15. See Immelen's circular of 29 August to the other Christian unions quoted in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 263.

betters. Thus Christian trade unionism was accepted as a fait accompli.¹⁶ Hitze and Pieper could not stand idly by, however, and allow political schemers like Immelen gain control of the movement and transform it into a narrow, confessional pressure group. The Volksverein, in fact, had designs of its own for the Christian trade unions. A broad-based social reform coalition was taking shape in 1898 and Mönchen-Gladbach intended for the Christian unions to play an important role. Highly significant, these developments deserve more attention at this point in the analysis.

Shortly after his resignation as Prussian Minister of Commerce and Industry in June 1896, Hans von Berlepsch approached Adolf Stöcker, Volksverein Chairman Franz Brandts, and other progressive industrialists, university professors, and bourgeois labor leaders with ambitious plans. Realizing that his energies were being expended uselessly in Berlin, where he no longer had the ear of the King or the Prussian Cabinet of Ministers, Berlepsch had decided to work outside government to promote his ideas of social reform. A new journal would be founded for the explicit purpose of raising the social awareness of Germany's highly conservative bureaucracy.¹⁷ Next, steps would be taken to encourage other governments in Europe to initiate social legislation. As a former minister, Berlepsch was well aware that William's unwillingness to proceed with social reforms was based to a considerable extent on the arguments of German businessmen concerning the need to protect German industry from cheaper foreign competition. Once international progress had been registered, reform coalitions could be formed in each country to promote further progress. For

16. Hitze lent his crucial support to pro-union resolutions at Arbeiter-verein conventions in Cologne and Münster, respectively, in June and December 1897. Pieper spoke out for the young movement repeatedly at the end of the year and also joined Schirmer in encouraging the efforts of Chaplain Küpper and Düren in January 1898. See above, Chapter II, p 35; Der Arbeiter (Münich), No. 48, 26 November 1897; Ritter, Volksverein, p 292; and Kulemann, Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 399.

17. Ritter, Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 2, pp 21-22, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG, Bonn; Berlepsch to Rottenburg, 4 August 1896, cited in Herbert Schwab", Gesellschaft für Soziale Reform", in Fricke(ed), Bürgerlichen Parteien, Vol 2, p 169.

Germany, Berlepsch hoped that unrelenting Reichstag pressure on the federal states would weaken Bundesrat resistance to reform, while the bourgeois labor movement, in turn, would pressure parliament as well as impress the Kaiser with the loyalty and patriotism of the working class.¹⁸

By October 1897, the first issue of Soziale Praxis, edited by the former progressive journalist Ernst Francke, had appeared.¹⁹ A committee was also formed in Brussels that fall in order to draft statutes for an international society of social reformers.²⁰ Throughout the winter of 1897/98, then, debate began in Germany concerning the necessity of greater cooperation to further social legislation at home. Very little is known about this debate, except that one faction, led no doubt by Friedrich Naumann and the more radical wing of the Society for Social Politics around Lujo Brentano and Heinrich Herkner, insisted that social progress in Germany could not be postponed until other countries such as France and Belgium caught up with Germany.²¹

Significantly enough, Volksverein General Secretary August Pieper was very heavily influenced by Naumann, Brentano, and Herkner during the discussions that fall and winter.²² By the Crefeld Katholikentag of

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18. For the Kaiser's views and Berlepsch's appreciation of them, see Wilhelm's proclamation of 9 February 1890, printed in Bismarck, The Kaiser vs. Bismarck, p 79, and Berlepsch to Hohenlohe, 29 May 1895, quoted in Born, Staat und Sozialpolitik, pp 120-21.
 19. Franz Brandts was one of the main financial backers of the journal. Dieter Lindenlaub, Richtungskämpfe im Verein für Sozialpolitik (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1967), Vol 1, p 189.
 20. Bergknappe, No. 32, 11 August 1900.
 21. Bergknappe, No. 3, 19 January 1901.
 22. Ritter, Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 4, p 11, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG, Bonn. Hitze, on the other hand, oriented himself with Berlepsch and Schmoller, who wanted to proceed slowly. See Hitze's remarks in Schmollers Jahrbuch, 1898, Heft 2, p 375; and Lindenlaub, Richtungskämpfe, Vol 1, p 189.

1898, in fact, Pieper had already advanced past the ideas of his more cautious mentor Hitze. He wanted to support the emerging Christian trade union movement in the hope, not unjustified at the time, that successful competition with the free unions would eventually force the latter to negotiate a merger on the basis of political and religious neutrality. To facilitate such a merger, Pieper wanted the word "Christian" omitted from the name of the new national organization. He feared that the title would strengthen the tendency of Catholic Church authorities to intervene in union affairs, thereby alienating non-Catholic workers, complicating inter-union relations, and dooming the Christian organization to a permanent existence of peripheral importance like the Hirsch-Duncker unions. Once the General Commission had been "neutralized", already existing tensions between the free trade unions and S.P.D. would increase. With outspoken Socialist deputies removed from their posts as union editors and chairmen, Pieper felt the "natural" desire of the proletariat to improve its lot within the existing framework of government and society would be greatly enhanced, and the trade union movement would become the major impetus for progressive, "evolutionary" social change. The S.P.D. would either become a reform party or face the loss of mass support.²³

To many observers in Berlepsch's coalition, the process of dissolution within the Socialist camp seemed far advanced by 1898. The growing controversy over trade union goals and tactics was the most widely cited example. The recession of the early 1890's had convinced many Socialists that the ultimate collapse of capitalistic society was drawing near.²⁴

23. Pieper to Brust, 25 April 1923, Pieper Papers 35, and Pieper to Otte, 29 November 1932, Pieper Papers 36, St. A Münster; Pieper Manuscript, Part 3, pp 775, 777, St. A. München-Gladbach; and Hitze's speech in Reichstag Debates, Period 9, Session 5 (9 March 1898), p 1438. Hitze limited his remarks to the inevitability of trade union--S.P.D. tensions and said nothing of a merger.

24. Heinrich Brauns, Die "freien" und die Hirsch-Dunckerschen Gewerkschaften bis 1907 (München-Gladbach: Verlag der Westdeutschen Arbeiter-Zeitung GmbH, 1907), p 40; Gerhard A. Ritter, Die Arbeiterbewegung im Wilhelminischen Reich. Die sozialdemokratische Partei und die Freien Gewerkschaften 1890-1900 (Berlin-Dahlem: Colloquium Verlag, 1959), pp 106, 125.

To be sure, even the dominant radical wing around Fraktion chief August Bebel had no intention of taking to the streets or rejecting the parliamentary role of the party. When underlying social and economic conditions had advanced to the right stage and society was permeated with socialist ideas, socialism could be legislated into existence "without the application of any means of force".²⁵ In this crucial, final stage, however, it was mandatory that all forces be concentrated in the hands of the party. The primary role of a trade union, therefore, was an auxiliary, political one.²⁶ Small wage increases, shortening of work-time, and improvement in job conditions were "Sysiphus labors"²⁷ at best, a retardation, at worst, of the spread of socialist consciousness among the masses.

Not all trade unionists were prepared to follow the advice of the true believers, however, especially after 1896, as the economic upswing increased the chances of successful trade union action. Otto Hue was probably the first to challenge the party openly, but in 1897, the prestigious, long-established printers' union joined the revolt. Contemptuously disregarding the attitudes toward trade unionism described above, the union initiated a campaign for permanent collective bargaining commissions (Tarifgemeinschaften) which brought forth howls of "treason"²⁸ from party purists. The controversy ended with the expulsion of the Marxist faction from the union and severance of relations with the S.P.D. in September 1897.²⁹ The lithographers followed suit in 1898, calling

25. See Bebel's remarks, as quoted in Vernon Lidtke, The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany 1878-1900 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), p 288.

26. See Bebel's remarks at the 1893 and 1896 party congresses, quoted in Brauns Die "freien" und die Hirsch-Dunckerschen Gewerkschaften, p 40; and Ritter, Sozialdemokratische Partei und die Freien Gewerkschaften, p 154. See also Varain, Freie Gewerkschaften, p 13.

27. Hue, Neutrale oder parteiische Gewerkschaften, pp 126, 129.

28. Ibid., p 141.

29. Der Arbeiter (Münich), No. 37, 10 September 1897.

for opposition to the Social Democrats.³⁰ The dissident faction in the General Commission was still a small minority³¹ at the time but Christian labor leaders like Pieper were confident that the quickening pace of the economy would drive more and more unions into the neutral camp.

Pieper, Naumann and others were also cognizant of subtle, yet significant shifts in the attitude of S.P.D. leaders toward the role of a socialist party in a bourgeois society. Even during "the heroic period" of the 1880's, radicals like Bebel, who expected the death knell of capitalism to sound in the near future, had devoted considerable time and energy to the promotion of social legislation.³² This paradox was explained to a certain extent by the fact that party moderates and fellow travelers expected the S.P.D. to take seriously its claim to represent the interests of the working class,³³ but there were theoretical reasons, too. As history progressed toward the inevitable downfall of capitalism, the party could promote reforms which would embody these ongoing changes. At some time in the future, as Vernon Lidtke explains, "it would be possible for the Social Democrats to introduce a fully socialistic program at the appropriate moment. When the moment would come, no one knew, but when it came there would no longer be an effective resistance to a socialist society".³⁴

30. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 28, 14 July 1900.

31. The miners, printers, and lithographers claimed 62,500 members in late 1899; the General Commission contained 580,000. See Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes der christlichen Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, No. 11, 2 September 1901, p 91.

32. Lidtke, The Outlawed Party, pp 233, 286.

33. Ibid., p 160, 164-71.

34. Ibid., p 287.

Significantly enough, these gradual reforms were considered acceptable only if proposed by the S.P.D. or occasionally by another party such as the Center. The party drew the line at reforms proposed by the government, which were opposed as paltry measures designed not to aid the proletariat, but to lure it away from the S.P.D. Bismarck's social reform legislation was rejected on these grounds, as was that of the young Kaiser in the early 1890's.³⁵ As the decade wore on, however, the party came under increasing pressure to abandon this obstructionist practice. South German Socialists around the ex-civil servant Georg von Vollmar began to urge the leadership to adopt a more positive parliamentary approach in 1891, and by the mid-1890's, free trade union leaders were complaining that the party's preoccupation with future developments had led to a disinterest in social reform.³⁶ After the renewed growth of the S.P.D. Reichstag Fraktion (44 to 56 seats) in June 1898 and the subsequent "revisionistic" campaign of the Socialist journalist Eduard Bernstein, party leaders undertook a reassessment of their oppositionist tactics.³⁷ As far as men like Pieper were concerned, the formation of a Christian trade union federation committed to the task of neutralizing the free trade unions could only accelerate the revisionistic tendencies in the Socialist camp. The idea, of course, was not unique. Naumann and the National-Socials had been pushing for a "neutral" trade union movement since the founding of the new party in November 1896.

Anti-Socialist considerations such as this explain Pieper's behavior at the Crefeld Katholikentag. Put most simply, Brust and Erzberger could be counted on to support Pieper's goals. In the South, Erzberger was considered a definite ally. He had already impressed superiors in

35. Ibid., pp 160, 275; Stegmann, Mitbestimmung, pp 105-06.

36. Beverly Heckart, From Bassermann to Bebel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p 19; Ritter, Sozialdemokratische Partei und die Freien Gewerkschaften, p 154.

37. On Bernstein see Ritter, Sozialdemokratische Partei und die Freien Gewerkschaften, pp 198-204; and Sidney Hook's introduction to the English translation of Bernstein's Die Voraussetzungen des Socialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie (New York: Schocken Books, 1961).

Stuttgart as a skilled political leader and was therefore well-suited to promote national unions in a highly particularistic corner of the Reich. Moreover, his advocacy of interconfessionalism, the prerequisite for neutral trade unions, was rare among South German Catholics.³⁸ In the North, Brust was an advocate of interconfessionalism and political neutrality who was attempting to use the trade union movement to promote Christian Sozial-politik, and in so doing, "stop the S.P.D. cold"³⁹ The Gewerkverein's flirtation with the neutral faction in the Alter Verband during the summer of 1898 was a promising step in this direction. Thus Brust, too, was seen as an ally. What little evidence there is suggests that Hitze was not ill-disposed to Pieper's ideas either, but that he probably advised extreme caution.⁴⁰

Pieper's influence in the labor world, and hence his ability to implement these neutral strategies, was greatly increased by another series of events in 1898. In July of that year, Archbishop Krementz sanctioned the creation of a centralized association for the Catholic Arbeitervereine of his diocese. He called upon Pieper to serve as chairman and on Father Otto Müller, Pieper's young protege in Mönchen-Gladbach, to be the secretary general.⁴¹ The restructuring was an attempt to strengthen the church's position with the workers in the wake of recent S.P.D. and free union advances in the West. But Pieper and Müller did not limit themselves to purely defensive measures. The two employed the controversial Arbeiterverein convention, described earlier, as an instrument for the promotion of interconfessional trade unionism. The fourth convention at

38. See Epstein, Matthias Erzberger, pp 9, 404; and Erzberger's 1898 pamphlet Christliche oder socialdemokratische Gewerkschaften? discussed in Epstein, pp 401-02.

39. See Brust's speech at Aachen in January 1898, printed in Bergknappe, Nos. 5-6, 1 and 15 March 1898.

40. Ritter, Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, Part 3, pp 61-62, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG, Bonn.

41. Pieper Manuscript, Part 3, pp 787, 805 ff., St. A. MG.

Essen in late October 1898, passed a resolution in favor of interconfessional trade unions on a Christian basis, then defined a Christian organization as one which openly professed a belief in God, obeyed the Ten Commandments, recognized the necessity of a natural order,⁴² and strove to eliminate social ills with legal, peaceful means.⁴³ To lend weight to the convention's resolution on the trade union question, Müller, Brauns, Giesberts, and other Christian trade unionists were commissioned to supervise the founding of Christian unions.⁴⁴ As Pieper wrote a few months later, "experience has shown that [execution of the conventions's] resolutions cannot be left to the initiative of the individual Arbeitervereine, and more, that if anything noteworthy is to be accomplished, permanent stimulation and guidance is necessary."⁴⁵ The work of the Essen commission would be facilitated by a new Arbeiterverein newspaper, the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, which Pieper placed in the hands of Johannes Giesberts, himself an advocate of eventual merger with the free unions.⁴⁶

While the Volksverein was strengthening its hold on the Catholic labor movement in the West, preparations for the first National Congress of Christian trade unions were brought to a close. After a brief, relatively frictionless period of negotiation and correspondence between Essen,

42. This refers to the necessity of private property as explicated by St. Thomas of Aquinas. See Chapter I, pp 12-13.

43. Otto Müller, Johann Giesberts, and August Pieper, Christliche Gewerkvereine. Ihre Notwendigkeit, Aufgabe und Tätigkeit. Auszug aus den Verhandlungen des 4. Delegiertentages der katholischen Arbeitervereine der Erzdiözese Köln zu Essen am 23. Oktober 1898 (Krefeld: M. Buscher, 1898), pp 2, 14, St. Bib. Mönchen-Gladbach.

44. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 932, 24 October 1898.

45. Mitteilungen an die Präsidien der katholischen Arbeitervereine der Erzdiözese Köln, No. 1, 24 June 1899, p 2, St. Bib MG.

46. Ibid., p 2; Ritter, Volksverein, p 292; Joos, Am Räderwerk der Zeit, p 37, and Johann Giesberts, "Aus der Gründungszeit", p 85, in Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 14, 6 April 1929.

Monchen-Gladbach, and Stuttgart, a trade union program was finalized in early November 1898.⁴⁷ Undoubtedly the most important aspect of the program was its acceptance of interconfessionalism. Without an explicit recognition that members of both Christian confessions were welcome, The Gewerkverein, the Lippe tile workers, the Siegen miners and metal workers, and others would never have participated in the new national federation. Discussion of specifically Protestant or Catholic points of religion was therefore strictly forbidden. It was stipulated, however, that the unions would stand "squarely upon Christian principles".⁴⁸ Thus, the draft program had not departed from the concept of "positive Christianity" adopted by the Fourth Arbeiterverein Convention at Essen two weeks earlier: "Christian" was broadly defined, but some profession of Christian belief was required of the organization. The minimal demand that Christian unions merely tolerate the political and religious views of all members--a concept which was dubbed "negative Christianity"--was not deemed adequate at Mainz.⁴⁹

47. See Brust's circular to other Christian trade union leaders, 10 October 1898, quoted in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 263. See also Gasteiger, 264; Epstein, Matthias Erzberger, p 404; and Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 103. The main participants in the negotiations were Erzberger, Giesberts, Brust, and the Gewerkverein Executive Committee. Similarities between the November program and the protocols of the Arbeiterverein convention at Essen (see above, Notes 54-55) indicate that Pieper, Müller, and Brauns also took part.

Gasteiger (pp 267-70) prints only the program agreed on at the South German preconference. Reports in Der Arbeiter (Münich), Nos. 48 and 50, for 2 and 16 December 1898, indicate, however, that the November program survived with no revision. Gasteiger's version can thus be accepted as the original.

48. Quoted in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 267.

49. For a more detailed discussion of positive and negative Christianity, see Heinrich Brauns, Die christlichen Gewerkschaften (München-Gladbach: Verlag der Westdeutschen Arbeiter-Zeitung GmbH, 1908), p 49; and Augustin Wiebbelt, Keine Neutralisierung der christlichen Gewerkschaften (Duisburg: Verlag der "Echo vom Niederrhein", n.d.), pp 10-13.

Other points in the program reflect Brust's desire to concentrate at first on purely trade union goals. In the absence of state labor exchanges, unemployment insurance, and adequate protection against sickness, accidents, and invalidity, the trade union would have to supply many of these services itself. It should also supervise safety procedures on the job, provide members with legal advice, and work for the establishment of worker committees, industrial courts, and other arbitration institutions. Petitions to entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce and the authorities were acceptable means to employ, but the unions would not hesitate to strike if necessary. Just as the capitalist had a right to the "largest possible" return on his investment, so too could the worker expect the "largest possible"⁵⁰ return from his labor. Because workers and employers threatened to be constantly at odds with one another in advancing such conflicting claims, however, the program recommended that Christian trade unions moderate their demands and conduct their operations "in the spirit of conciliation".⁵¹ The authors wanted to disassociate themselves from the theory and practice of the class struggle and propagate instead the idea of harmony between the "limbs" of the social body. Thus the corporatist doctrines of St. Thomas Aquinas, which had been the theological justification for München-Gladbach's programs since the 1880's, were now incorporated into the charter of the Christian trade unions. That the strike had not been rejected altogether, however, would later lead to altercations with clergymen who preferred a more conservative interpretation of Thomistic philosophy.

Though largely self-help in nature, the program did not ignore politics. Thus, "discussion of reforms to be achieved by constitutional means within the existing framework of society"⁵² was mentioned in the first paragraph

50. Quoted in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 270.

51. Quoted in ibid., p 270.

52. Quoted in ibid., p 267.

as an additional facet of trade union activity. This clause of the program provided the unions with the opportunity to pursue those far-reaching social reforms desired by Christian socialists in Essen, Mönchen-Gladbach, and elsewhere. The authors were quick to point out, however, that discussion of party questions was forbidden. "The trade unions shall be politically neutral, that is, they shall not attach themselves to any political party". This statement was the necessary corollary of interconfessionalism and the exclusion of confessional matters. It was also part of Mönchen-Gladbach's overall plan. The Christian unions could not advance the principle of neutralism unless they practiced neutrality themselves.⁵³

The paragraphs on trade union tactics, interconfessionalism, and party-political neutrality were accepted verbatim by trade union and Arbeiterverein representatives at two pre-conferences in December 1898. So, too, were clauses favoring nationwide unions for each branch of industry and workers as editors of union newspapers.⁵⁴ The question of labor independence, however, had not been completely settled as the delegates gathered for the National Congress at Mainz in mid-May 1899. Out of deference to the lingering preference for trade sections among Catholic clergymen of the South and parts of the North, the November draft program had included a passage recommending that Ehrenräte be established for all Christian unions. Brust, who for obvious reasons was a bitter opponent of the clause, managed with the backing of Schirmer to rally the Mainz Congress against the provision. A last-ditch attempt by Immelen to block labor independence by requiring that trade union editors have academic degrees, was similarly defeated.⁵⁵ Not only were the unions to be interconfessional and neutral, they were also to be free of outside control.

53. Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 108-09, who based his work to a great extent on discussions with Christian labor leaders, mentions this concern.

54. See Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, pp 268, 270.

55. Kölnische Volkszeitung, Nos. 473 and 477 for 23 and 24 May 1899; Epstein, Mathias Erzberger, p 404.

The crowning accomplishment of the Mainz Congress was the establishment of a national federation of Christian trade unions (Gesamtverband). Heading the organization was a 12-member central commission led by Brust, Erzberger, Weigel, Schirmer, and Braun. The commission would gather statistics, edit a new union newspaper, execute the resolutions of future congresses, and promote Christian trade unions of the variety outlined in the Mainz program (Mainzer Leitsätze).⁵⁶ Fulfillment of this last task had been made easier during the fall and winter of 1898/1899 by the establishment of numerous new organizations throughout the West, South, and East, and by the continued growth of the older unions. As a result, there were now 108,000 Christian trade unionists in Germany, 65,000 of whom had joined the national organization at Mainz. And, in certain areas of Germany like the Rhineland, Christian unions had managed to regain much of the ground lost to the free unions since the late 1870's. Within a decade, Christian laborers felt sure they could extend their influence to the Socialist strongholds of northern and eastern Germany as well.⁵⁷

56. Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, pp 273-74.

57. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 8 and 28 for 20 May and 7 October 1899, and No. 33, 18 August 1900.

CHAPTER 5

THE GREAT MERGER CONTROVERSY

The years 1899-1903 were disastrous ones for the Gesamtverband of Christian trade unions. Hopeful in 1899 of competing with the General Commission at the union level, prodding both free trade unions and S.P.D. into Hans von Berlepsch's reform coalition, and moving the government, in turn, to adopt a slate of progressive labor laws, the Christians would see all these goals foiled by mid-1903. As in earlier decades, the combination of church and state opposition to the labor movement was primarily responsible for these setbacks. Internal squabbles and the old nemesis of confessional prejudice added to the confusion. These developments form the basis of analysis in the following two chapters.

Mönchen-Gladbach's merger schemes had thus far been kept very private. Publicly, the Volksverein maintained that union with the General Commission was forever out of the question.¹ For those middle and upper class Catholics who had never come face to face with a Socialist or discussed issues with one in the cloak room of the Reichstag, even the slightest hint of cooperation with "Marxists" conjured up images of Jacobin radicalism, anarchism, or mob rule. Given the controversial nature of the subject, therefore, openness was considered too risky at first. Shortly before the Mainz Congress of 1894, however, Mönchen-Gladbach began to

1. Müller, Giesberts, and Pieper, Auszug aus den Verhandlungen des 4. Delegiertentages...zu Essen am 23. Oktober 1898, p 17, St. Bib. Mönchen-Gladbach.

publicize its views. By the winter of 1899/1900, the Volksverein's neutrality campaign was in full swing.²

The explanation for this turnabout is no simple one. With the creation of a national federation modeled after the General Commission in late May 1899, one prerequisite for merger had been established. But there were other more compelling reasons for the decision. For one thing, free and Christian workers were already drifting closer to one another as a result of the crescendoing strike movement.³ So strong was the feeling of proletarian unity in Crefeld, for instance, that labor priests encouraged Christian silk weavers to join a Socialist strike in January 1899 for fear the church would lose all contact with the workers if more prudent counsel were given.⁴ Events in the Crefeld wool industry that month took a more peaceful course, but here too, Christian and Socialist workers cooperated by forming a "social commission" to negotiate with employers.⁵ From Crefeld, the idea spread to Aachen and Mönchen-Gladbach, where similar commissions were formed for textile workers, respectively,

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2. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 6, 8 and 28, for 6 May, 20 May and 7 October 1899; Otto Müller, Christliche Gewerkvereine. Ihre Aufgabe und Thätigkeit (Mönchen-Gladbach: Verlag der Westdeutschen Arbeiter-Zeitung, 1899); Die Notwendigkeit und Aufgaben der christlichen Gewerkvereine (Mönchen-Gladbach: Volksverein Flugblatt nr. 15, 1899); Christliche Gewerkvereine (Mönchen-Gladbach: Arbeiter-Bibliothek, 1/2 Heft, 1900). The three brochures cited here were essentially the same manuscript, issued under various titles by Volksverein or Arbeiterverein presses in Mönchen-Gladbach from November 1899 to February 1900. Müller was largely responsible for the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung at this time. See Giesberts, "Aus der Gründungszeit", p 85.
 3. There were 483 strikes in Germany in 1896, 578 in 1897, 985 in 1898 and 1162 in 1899. Bergknappe, No. 31, 4 August 1900.
 4. Oberbürgermeister of Crefeld to the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf, 14 March 1899, Reg. D. 9049, H. S. A. Düsseldorf.
 5. Kulemann, Die Berufsvereine, Vol 2, p 374.

in August and September 1899.⁶ Quarrels between Christian and free unions were also set aside in the Ruhr. Gewerkverein and Alter Verband drafted a joint program for reform of the state-regulated Knappschaftvereine in August 1899 and formed alliances for miners' elections in July and November.⁷ The numerous examples of economic cooperation between political opponents in western Germany gave Mönchen-Gladbach a definite incentive to stay abreast of events and forge ahead with its neutralist plans.⁸

Volksverein circles were further encouraged by developments within the Socialist camp. In February 1899 Bernstein's tract on Evolutionary Socialism appeared and was received favorably by a considerable number of free trade unionists.⁹ At the third congress of the Socialist unions in mid-May, moreover, two resolutions were submitted that advocated formation of a "German trade union Bund"¹⁰ that would unite all existing trade union organizations in Germany. Neither resolution was debated, but the congress did put social legislative issues on the agenda for the very first time.¹¹ As a result of these revisionistic trends, an S.P.D. spokesman announced in June 1899 that his Reichstag colleagues would support a minor piece of labor legislation proposed by the government. Hitze, who followed the S.P.D. speaker, welcomed the path-breaking decision and expressed hope that the Socialists would continue to cooperate with the bourgeois parties in the future.¹² Not trusting the S.P.D. to

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6. Ibid., p 375; Regierungspräsident in Aachen to the Prussian Min. of the Interior, 3 October 1899, Reg. D. 9042, H. S. A. Düsseldorf.
 7. Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg to the Prussian Min. of the Interior, 27 November 1899, Reg. D. 9042, H. S. A. Düsseldorf; Hue, Neutrale oder Parteifische Gewerkschaften, p 100.
 8. Müller, Christliche Gewerkvereine. Ihre Aufgabe und Tätigkeit, p 38.
 9. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 6, 6 May 1899.
 10. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des dritten Kongresses der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands abgehalten zu Frankfurt a. M. vom 8. bis 13. Mai 1899 (Hamburg: Verlag der General Commission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, 1899), p 202.
 11. Ibid., pp 104, 161, 171. Resolutions concerning coalition rights and factory inspection were passed.
 12. Reichstag Debates, Period 10, Session 1 (13 June 1899), p 2514.

do this, Mönchen-Gladbach was prepared to force the party of the proletariat along the road to reformism by advancing the cause of neutral trade unionism.

The unity of all workers seemed even more important to Mönchen-Gladbach as a result of the developing social Reaktion in Berlin. As explained earlier, William II attached great significance to the loyalty of his working-class subjects. Highly patriarchal, he had always insisted that reforms such as labor chambers and corporate rights for trade unions were impossible as long as the workers supported the S.P.D. Consistent with these views, Wilhelm responded in true Bismarckian fashion to the Socialist electoral advances of 1893 and 1898. On the one hand, Germany's social insurance schemes were expanded and improved, albeit at a much slower pace than in the early 1890's. Earlier plans to improve the legal status of trade unions, however, were postponed indefinitely.

The spiraling strike movement in the late 1890's only increased these anti-union tendencies. Far from recognizing trade unions, William was now prepared to take draconian measures against them. During a speech at Bad Oeynhausen in September 1898 the Kaiser warned trade unionists that severe punishments would be meted out for workers who barred the access of non-strikers (Arbeitswilligen) to the job. Further details were announced during the Crown Speech in December, and the so-called Prison Bill (Zuchthausvorlage) was laid before parliament in March.¹³

In response to Wilhelm, the social reform faction gathering around Berlepsch introduced its own measures in late April 1899. The National Liberals, who had been drifting away from the "Herr im Hause" standpoint under pressure from the reform-minded Young Liberals, demanded a Reich Labor Office, while the Center and Progressives called for chambers of

13. On the Prison Resolution, see Bergknappe, No. 24, 15 December 1898; and Born and Rassow, Akten zur staatlichen Sozialpolitik, pp 107-08. See also the remarks of the Volksverein newsletter, Volksverein, printed in Bergknappe, No. 6, 1900. The short article warned of reactionary tendencies, emphasized the importance of trade unions, and recommended the two Volksverein brochures cited in Note 2 above.

labor that would counterbalance the strength of employers' groups.¹⁴ 172
A week later on 3 May Berlepsch invited party and trade union leaders to a conference in Berlin to debate the recently completed statutes of an international society for the promotion of labor legislation. The participants, which included Hitze, Stöcker, Naumann, Ernst Bassermann of the National Liberals, Richard Rösicke and Max Hirsch of the Progressives, and August Brust and Paul Weigel of the Christian trade unions, approved the by-laws and nominated a committee to pave the way for a special department of the International to push for social reforms at home.¹⁵

Hitze, Brust, and the others had delayed the actual founding of the German section, significantly enough, to give the committee time to recruit the free trade unions and S.P.D.¹⁶ Bebel informed the bourgeois leaders on 11 May, however, that his party had no faith in the effectiveness of a society composed of such "heterogenous elements".¹⁷ Undaunted by Bebel's letter, renewed attempts were made to soften the S.P.D. and expand the anti-Prison Bill front that summer and fall. "Arm chair socialists" Gustav Schmoller, Hans Delbrück, and Adolf Wagner appealed publicly to the patriotic feelings of rank and file Socialists, for instance, while Naumann and Brentano made preparations for a series of mass rallies against the new piece of anti-labor legislation.¹⁸ By intensifying its campaign for a neutral trade union movement, Mönchen-Gladbach felt it could aid these efforts. A powerful trade union commission would surely drive the S.P.D. and recalcitrant bourgeois deputies into the social reform movement.¹⁹

14. Preussische Jahrbücher, Vol 96, Heft 3, June 1899, pp 546-48.

15. Ibid., pp 548-49; Bergknappe, No. 32, 11 August 1900.

16. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 4, 26 January 1901; Bergknappe, No. 3, 19 January 1901.

17. Bebel to Professor Werner Sombart, 11 May 1899, quoted in Lindenlaub, Richtungskämpfe, Vol 2, p 420.

18. Ibid., Vol. 1, p 74, and Vol 2, p 426.

19. Pieper Manuscript, Part 3, pp 775, 777, St A MG; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 35, 1 September 1900.

As explained earlier, Pieper was convinced that the impetus for neutralizing the frees would have to come from the Christian trade unions. The unions were independent of the Volksverein, however, and, with the exception of Brust and Giesberts, showed no inclination to pursue such an overtly political strategy. Anxious lest the Gesamtverband fail to fulfill its mission, Mönchen-Gladbach issued a series of neutralist brochures in the winter of 1899/1900.²⁰ Unfortunately for Pieper and Müller, who authored the pamphlets, ambiguities and contradictions limited the effectiveness of this propaganda campaign. The most problematic aspect of the booklets was their seeming rejection of overt, "positive-Christian" goals for the movement.

There is no longer religious unity among the masses. There are also workers who are really Christians, as well as workers who call themselves Christian, but know very little about Christianity. For a thorough-going cure of our economic wrongs, however, the greatest possible union of all workers is necessary. We should, therefore, not exclude those from the labor organization who no longer possess positive Christianity in its true form, but still adhere to those just and moral laws of nature, that God has placed in the hearts of all men, even heathens.²¹

With no religious or confessional training, that is, even most non-believers could be counted upon to possess a sense of common decency and morality and a respect for religious fundamentals such as education of children, maintenance of the family, etc.²² Mönchen-Gladbach was placing its trust in natural laws or, as it was defined elsewhere, "the dictates of reason",²³ to moderate union affairs. Running throughout the whole pamphlet, moreover, was the implicit claim that the workers had a "natural right" to come together in neutral unions. That Leo XIII felt otherwise goes practically without saying.

20. See Note 2 above, p 198.

21. Christliche Gewerkvereine, Arbeiter-Bibliothek, 1/2 Heft, p 29.

22. Ibid., p 15.

23. See the final resolution of the Sixth Arbeiterverein convention at Cologne in May 1900, quoted in the protocols of the Prussian Bishops' Conference at Fulda, 21 August 1900, Appendix 7, p 31, Bertram Papers, I-A25-b7, A. A. Wrocławiu.

Clearly, Pieper and Müller wanted to remove as many barriers as possible to a free-Christian merger. In fact, the authors placed only one demand upon the free trade unions: the denunciation of Marxism. In raising this demand, however, Mönchen-Gladbach seemed to abandon its new-found trust in natural law. Here was one religious fundament--the God-ordained institution of private property--respect for which would not come naturally. Christian trade unions would have to purge the labor movement of all enemies of the natural order.

A Christian organization has to work toward driving the Social-Democratic spirit out of the so-called 'free' trade unions. [The Christian unions] have to try to bring the free trade unions closer and closer to the point where the frees denounce the S.P.D. (sich von der Partei lossagen). [The Christian trade unions] have to drive a wedge between the free trade unions and Social Democrats until the former are completely out from under the influence of the latter.²⁴

The point was abundantly clear. Inviting controversy and misunderstanding, however, the brochure concluded "that the word 'Christian' shall thus have no other meaning than anti-Socialist".²⁵ Once the Socialist unions stood squarely on the basis of existing society and rejected the idea of socialized production, the Christian unions should abandon their independent existence, merge with the free unions, and rely on natural laws to dictate reasonable trade union policies. The name "Christian" would be dropped at this time, for it would no longer be necessary to distinguish between Socialist and anti-Socialist trade unions," just as today no one speaks of Christian guilds, but simply of guilds."²⁶

Pieper and Müller did not want to divorce the unions from all overt association with Christian principles. On the contrary, the authors made it quite clear that neutral trade unions would be pledged to the preservation of natural (i.e. private) economic institutions sanctioned by God.

24. Müller, Christliche Gewerkvereine: Ihre Aufgabe und Thätigkeit, p 37.

25. Ibid., pp 28-29; Christliche Gewerkvereine, Arbeiter-Bibliothek, 1/2 Heft, p 29.

26. Müller, Christliche Gewerkvereine: Ihre Aufgabe und Thätigkeit, p 38.

Thus, although ambiguously phrased, the brochures could still qualify as "positive Christianity".

Well over 25,000 copies of Mönchen-Gladbach's brochures were sold by mid-1900.²⁷ The idea of a neutral trade union movement was accepted wholeheartedly by most Christian trade union leaders and used as agitational material by Christian unions throughout the Reich.²⁸ In most cases the workers interpreted the booklet as a justification for the cooperation of Center, Liberal, or Marxist workers in the same union as long as party-political issues were excluded from union affairs.²⁹ The unity of the workers was all-important.³⁰ By interpreting the brochures as a call for the union of workers of all political persuasions, Christian unionists had already advanced one step beyond Pieper and Müller, who had not been so tolerant of S.P.D. voters.

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27. Müller Manuscript, p 49, KAB Haus Köln. The brochure printed by the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung press (see Note 217 above) sold 25,000 copies, then a second edition was issued in mid-1900. The Volksverein versions must have sold thousands more. The total number of pamphlets and brochures issued by the Volksverein in 1900, for instance, was 1,000,042. See Brugmann, Sozialer Katholizismus, p 323.
 28. Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 116. Heinrich Brauns, Die christlichen Gewerkschaften (Mönchen-Gladbach: Verlag der Westdeutschen Arbeiter-Zeitung GmbH, 1908), p 46; Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiische Gewerkschaften, pp 138-39; Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 454, 456; Bergknappe, No. 44, 3 November 1900.
 29. The organ of the Lippe tile workers, Gut Brand, wrote on numerous occasions in 1900 that it had been a mistake to call the unions "Christian". On the suggestion of Giesberts, the union struck the clause forbidding Social Democrats to join in early 1901. See Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiische Gewerkschaften, p 138; and Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 8, 23 February 1901. Similarly, the Aachen textile union was forced "by the other Christian trade unions" in 1900 to strike the clause advocating Sozialpolitik in the spirit of the Center Party. See Kulemann, Die Berufsvereine, p 368. See also the remarks of Giesberts and Brust in June 1900 quoted below, pp 180-81.
 30. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 33, 18 August 1900. Giesberts noted years later that the paper became his responsibility not long after its founding. Giesberts, "Aus der Gründungszeit", p 85.

Despite the angry mood of Christian laborers following the Prison Bill, however, most did not feel that merger per se would occur for years. The exclusion of religious and political propaganda from the free-trade trade unions was still not a reality. Giesberts, Brust, and Schirmer were hopeful, nevertheless, that German workers could at least make a start toward unity by forming a loose cartel of Socialist, Liberal, and Christian workers along the lines of the Swiss Labor Alliance. The Swiss experiment, begun in 1889, had advanced to the stage of merger negotiations in the spring of 1899.³¹

Not all Christian leaders were enthusiastic about the brochure. This was especially the case in those unions where Christian workers were not in full control. Hubert Immelen of Aachen scoffed at the idea of a "poisoned, nondenominational, Social Democratic mish-mash",³² while Eugen Roth, Matthias Erzberger's successor as leader of the Christian workers in Württemberg, was incensed at München-Gladbach's alleged disregard for the concept of positive Christianity recognized at Mainz.³³ Rector Driessen of Cologne was perhaps the most active opponent of neutrality. Such a tactic, one of his followers wrote to Brust in May 1900, was irresponsible and naive. The attempt would result in the secession of the Christian workers or perhaps their capture by the S.P.D. The Christian trade unions, moreover, had more than a temporary mission to fulfill. They had to propagate "Christian justice, freedom and brotherly love"³⁴ among workers and employers for all time. A Christian union should proclaim its adherence to Christian principles in all economic activities.

It was this lack of "positive Christianity", then, which united all opponents of the brochure in the Christian camp. To be sure, there was

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31. Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, 469; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 28, 7 October 1899; Kulemann, Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 134; and Bergknappe, No. 35, 1 September 1900.
 32. Quoted in Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 524-25.
 33. Ibid., p 454.
 34. Hans Becker to Brust, 25 May 1900, printed in Bergknappe, No. 27, 7 July 1900.

a difference between professing a belief in God and the Ten Commandments and merely forbidding union members to ridicule these concepts. But the brochure's defense of a natural order more than qualified as positive Christianity. Mönchen-Gladbach was no less opposed, moreover, to the cooperation of Marxist and Christian workers in the same trade union. By interpreting "neutral" literally, most proponents and opponents of the brochure had misunderstood the Volkverein's strategy, which was anything but neutral. Considering the importance Pieper and Müller placed on the brochures, this confusion must have been very frustrating.

The negative reaction of most free trade unionists to the booklets was no doubt less surprising. Hans Bömelburg, national executive committee member and leader of the 83,000-strong stonemasons' union, agreed that discussion of religion should be excluded from union meetings and newspapers. Merger with the Christians, however, would never work. Along with social insurance legislation and political reforms to insure safety on the job, the union would also have to strive for elimination of problems like unemployment. But unemployment would continue to plague workers until the capitalist system itself were abolished. Unless Christian workers could accept this political reality, cooperation in the same trade union was impossible. The stonemasons' organ Grundstein was even more blunt. Workers of all religions and political persuasions were welcome to join the free unions, but neutrality should not be carried farther than this. Discontinuation of agitation for the ultimate goal of socialism could never be permitted. The wood workers (74,000) spoke out for the S.P.D. in similar fashion, as did the chairman of the General Commission, Karl Legien, who probably represented the vast majority of those free unionists (408,000) who remained silent on the issue. Membership in the free trade unions was open to all workers, regardless of political or religious beliefs. Union activity, however, would enhance the workers' awareness of the ongoing class struggle and these feelings would naturally be translated into support for that party

which believed in the Klassenkampf. Such definitions of neutrality were as one-sided as that proposed by the Volksverein.³⁵

The response of the slowly growing neutral faction in the General Commission (14 percent of membership in 1900) was equally problematic from Mönchen-Gladbach's point of view. Christian Tischendörfer of the lithographers union (6000), for instance, was urging Christian workers to abandon the Christian trade unions and work against the S.P.D. from within the free unions. Philipp Rexhäuser of the printers (29,000) proposed that the united trade unions form a parliamentary bloc independent of all parties, while the chairman of the tobacco workers union (18,500), Adolph von Elm, recommended creation of an extraparlimentary trade union congress to pressure the Reichstag parties into greater socio-political activity. The end result of this pressure politicking, he hoped, would be the socialization of the means of production by a decision of parliament.³⁶

The most emphatic proponent of neutralism remained Otto Hue, whose union had expanded to an overall level of 36,000 by mid-1900. Hue was convinced that the General Commission had no recourse but to merge with the competing Christian federation, for otherwise key industrial regions like the Ruhr, the lower Rhine, the Saar, Lorraine, and Silesia would be lost to the free unions.³⁷ As a preliminary step toward amalgamation of the two national federations, Hue wanted to effect an Alter Verband - Gewerkverein merger in the Ruhr. The Alter Verband general assembly laid the groundwork for Hue's long sought goal in April 1900 by ousting Möller as chairman and proclaiming the party-political independence of the

35. For the free union response, see Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 28, 32 and 35, for 14 July, 11 August and 1 September 1900; and Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiliche Gewerkschaften, p 125. Free trade union statistics for 1900 are found in Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 11, 2 September 1901.

36. Bergknappe, Nos. 14 and 15, for 7 and 15 April 1900; Ritter, Sozialdemokratische Partei und die Freien Gewerkschaften, pp 171-74.

37. Police Commissioner of Bochum to the Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg, 30 August 1900, Reg. Arnsberg I95, St. A. Münster.

union. The organization would also promote economic cooperation between free, Christian, and Hirsch-Duncker unions and seek to arbitrate labor disputes before striking.³⁸ Later that summer, Hue published a 157-page book entitled, Neutral or Party Trade Unions? The tract attempted to prove the necessity of a unified labor movement by illustrating the counterproductive nature of the miners' feud in the Ruhr. This nationwide alliance might not occur "in the near future", but it would certainly take place before "the recalcitrants" thought it would: "What is a decade in the course of human history?"³⁹ As the sales of the editor's book began to mount that fall, Hue joined Pastor Friedrich Naumann, founder of the struggling National Social Party, in an effort to negotiate a merger with the Gewerkverein.⁴⁰

A much more prominent participant in the neutrality debate that year was August Bebel, head of the S.P.D. national executive committee and Reichstag Fraktion. Insistent in the early 1890's that the free trade unions subordinate themselves to the political dictates of the S.P.D.,⁴¹ Bebel had, however, changed his mind by 1900. Although he outwardly blamed the bourgeois parties, not the Socialists, for the divisions in the trade union movement,⁴² he must have been aware that the party's attempt to dominate the unions had been a serious mistake. The move had driven thousands of religiously devout, non-socialist workers into the

38. Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiische Gewerkschaften, p 108; Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg to the Prussian Min. of the Interior, 24 November 1900, Reg. D. 9042, H. S. A. Düsseldorf.

39. Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiische Gewerkschaften, p 156.

40. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 62, 19 January 1901. The Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf reported to the King on 31 January 1901 (Reg. D. 403/9048, L. H. A. Koblenz) that the two unions seemed to have come closer to one another since October.

41. See Chapter 4, p 167 (facing page), Note 26.

42. August Bebel, Gewerkschaftsbewegung und politische Parteien (Stuttgart: Verlag von J. W. H. Dietz, GmbH, 1900), p 24.

hands of rival organizations and created numerous enemies for the S.P.D. within the General Commission itself. The party press was also feuding over the issue. The S.P.D.'s theoretical journal, Neue Zeit, and a number of leading party dailies including Vorwärts insisted that the free unions openly agitate for the Socialists, while the influential Rheinische Zeitung, party organ for Aachen, Cologne, and Bonn, was calling for a merger of the various union organizations along neutral lines.⁴³ With Reaktion threatening in Berlin and the controversy over revisionism far from settled, the party could not afford additional divisiveness. Thus Bebel took steps to end the debate. A public lecture on this issue in Weissensee near Berlin in February failed to attract sufficient attention, so on 31 May 1900, the S.P.D. leader agreed to speak at an assembly convened by the neutral lithographers in the large Gewerkschaftshaus in Berlin.⁴⁴

The speech contained three basic arguments. First, trade unions had to be politically and religiously neutral. In every factory or mine there worked laborers of differing political views, religious beliefs, and national origins. In order to present a strong front against employers, who were well-organized themselves, a union had to attract as many of these workers as possible and could not be concerned with the political or religious views of its members. Second, a union had to pursue Klassenkampfpolitik. Religious and party-political questions should be excluded, but reforms such as improved rights of coalition and assembly, elimination of Sunday and evening work, protection for working women and children, implementation of commercial courts, industrial inspectorates, labor chambers, and a Reich labor office, improvements for state workers, and legislation concerning tariffs and the cost of living were well within the sphere of trade union politics. Other political issues could be decided by each union member as he or she saw fit. And third, to be successful politically or economically, existing divisions in the labor

43. Hue, Neutrale oder Parteiische Gewerkschaften, p 125; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 28, 7 October 1899.

44. The speech was printed that year in brochure form. See Bebel, Gewerksbewegung und politische Parteien, pp 24.

movement had to cease. Bebel recommended a merger into one organization, but realized this would not occur overnight. A cartel of the various unions would have to suffice for the moment.

With its emphasis on religious and political neutrality, trade union unity, and practical social reform, Bebel's speech was cause for considerable enthusiasm among Christian unionists.⁴⁵ This excitement was tempered, however, by the sobering realities of yet existing inter-union differences. The complete socialization of the means of production advocated by many free unions and the persistence of anti-religious tendencies in free union speeches and articles could not be ignored. Moreover, with confusion over the nature of neutral unions in the Christian camp, Christian leaders were not eager to rush to the negotiating table. Before any such move could be considered, time was needed to clarify the issues raised by the brochures. A full-fledged debate over the neutrality issue was therefore omitted from the agenda of the second Congress of the Christian trade unions at Frankfurt in June, 1900.⁴⁶

But Brust, who chaired the Congress, was unable to avoid the debate. The issue was raised by one of Driessen's followers, who railed against the alleged abandonment of the Mainzer Leitsätze.⁴⁷ Giesberts countered with arguments favoring merger that echoed Bebel's arguments of the previous week.

45. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 23, 9 June 1900; Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 454.

46. Bergknappe, No. 28, 14 July 1900.

47. No protocols of the first two congresses at Mainz and Frankfurt were published. The following discussion is based on Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 450-56. The socialist journalist and Reichstag deputy was present at the proceedings. The reader should also consult the Kölnische Volkszeitung, Nos. 511-512, 5 June 1900; and Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 110-18.

The goal of our efforts remains the general, neutral organization. We Christian workers are together with workers of other beliefs in the factory, we live in the same house, we come across one another all the time, so why shouldn't we be in the same labor organization striving jointly for the raising of our living conditions? We can't ignore the 600,000 workers organized in free trade unions, nor can we hope to make believers out of the non-devout, even in 50 years. So let's take things as they are and try to get along with each other. If we can cooperate with other organizations on economic matters, I don't see why we can't merge completely if the organizations would just leave politics and religion out of the picture and be purely economic interest groups.⁴⁸

Brust seconded Giesbert and included a controversial thought of his own.

As I see it, we can calmly strike the word 'Christian' from the trade union movement. The belief [in Christianity], and the will to be unshaken in this belief has nothing to do with names... Neither the Christian nor the socialist Weltanschauung belongs in the union; if both sides would recognize this and practice this, all reason for further divisions would disappear and the neutral trade union would come into its own.⁴⁹

The debate deteriorated quickly after these remarks. Brust charged that the anti-neutral workers in attendance were dupes of Driessen, which was vehemently denied by the Cologne delegation. Giesberts was finally able to unite the delegates behind a motion entrusting the newly formed executive committee⁵⁰ with the task of establishing clarity on the issue before the third Congress in spring, 1901.

The Frankfurt debate proved to be a source of great embarrassment for the Christian trade unions. Observing the altercations at Frankfurt, Karl Legien proclaimed in the General Commission's weekly newsletter that the

48. Quoted in Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 455.

49. Quoted in ibid., p 456.

50. Due to the widely separated residences of the members of the national commission established at Mainz, this initial steering committee accomplished few of its assigned tasks. The national executive committee was a more manageable body, the majority of members living in Rhineland-Westphalia.

Congress had heralded the disintegration of the Christian trade unions. S.P.D. papers ran similar articles, as did Progressive organs.⁵¹ To make matters worse, Immelen, Driessen, and other former allies like Lambert Lensing of Tremonia intensified their attacks against "the Mönchen-Gladbach faction" within the national federation.⁵² Both Bergknappe and the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung swung over to the defensive in response to these criticisms, claiming that the brochure had been purely theoretical, and that merger with the free unions might not occur for 20 or 30 years.⁵³ But Brust was too much the polemicist to ignore his enemies completely. When the time came, Brust wrote defiantly, the Christian unions would not hesitate to merge with the free unions. The opposition of "half-dead old men"⁵⁴ like Driessen would not be able to prevent this. If the free trade unions wanted to begin by immediately forming a cartel, the Christians would not stand in the way.⁵⁵

As the neutrality debate raged that summer, Berlepsch's ideas for international social cooperation came to fruition. The International League for the Protection of Labor was founded in Paris in late July 1900, and shortly afterwards in Germany the Society for Social Reform sprang to life. By early January 1901, enough organizations and prominent personages had expressed interest in the Society to permit a formal constituent assembly in Berlin. The entire bourgeois reform movement was represented, — Berlepsch, Francke, Schmoller, Brentano, Naumann, Hirsch, Stöcker, Hitze,

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51. Bergknappe, Nos. 37-39, for 15, 22 and 29 September 1900; Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 155 (5), 7 June 1900; see also the protocols of the Prussian Bishops' Conference at Fulda, 21 August 1900, Appendix 7, pp 32-33, Bertram Papers, I-A25-67, A. A. Wrocławiu; and the Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg to the Prussian Min. of the Interior, 24 November 1900, Reg. D. 9042, H. S. A. Düsseldorf.
 52. Bergknappe, Nos. 39-40, 29 September and 6 October 1900.
 53. Bergknappe, No. 27, 7 July 1900; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 28, 31-33, for 14 July, 4, 11 and 18 August 1900.
 54. Bergknappe, No. 27, 7 July 1900.
 55. Bergknappe, No. 35, 1 September 1900. Neither did Giesberts fall completely silent. See his remarks of 18 August, 1900, quoted above, p 56.

Pieper, Giesberts, and Brust. The Catholic and Evangelical Arbeitervereine, the Christian and Hirsch-Durcker unions, and other bourgeois labor groups joined as corporate members. Still wary of such close cooperation with the bourgeois enemy, the free unions and S.P.D. remained aloof.⁵⁶

The major goal of the new organization was to create unity on social reform issues in the Reichstag.⁵⁷ Once parliament were united behind specific proposals, Kaiser and Bundersrat would surely yield. The Christian trade unions, who were represented by Giesberts on the executive committee of the Society, did not question the practicality of this approach, but were skeptical about the degree of commitment to social reform that could be expected from the bourgeois leaders of the organization.⁵⁸ To impress Berlepsch and the others with the need for far-reaching reform, Christian labor leaders began to discuss plans for a "German Workers Congress" of all non-socialist labor groups. The Congress would speak out on certain pieces of legislation and generally make the demands of the member organizations known. As a dramatic demonstration of bourgeois labor strength, the Congress would also force the free trade unions to the negotiating table, or at least accelerate the revisionistic course of the S.P.D.⁵⁹

The first major test of the Society for Social Reform illustrated the fallacy of the parliamentary strategy described above. The National

56. Bergknappe, No. 3, 19 January 1901; Schwab, "Gesellschaft für Soziale Reform," p 169.

57. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 3-4 for 12 and 26 January 1901.

58. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 4, 26 January 1901.

59. Two sources from fall 1903 (Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 19, 21 September 1903; and Ernst Francke's statement in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 1012, 3 December 1903) indicate that the idea of holding such a congress had been discussed by Christian labor leaders of the Society for Social Reform for several years at committee meetings. Giesberts' bold remarks in the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 4, 26 January 1901, offer some proof that the first such discussions took place during the winter of 1900/1901.

Liberal, Progressive, and Center resolutions of spring 1899 emerged from commission to their second reading before the full house on 16 January 1901. Bills calling for a Reich Labor Office and management-labor chambers connected to the already existing industrial tribunals--a compromise designed to cater to staunch conservatives on the Bundesrat--were passed by an overwhelming majority.⁶⁰ At first the federal councilors seemed amenable to the idea of chambers that would bring workers and employers together for the peaceful settlement of disputes.⁶¹ Only the Württembergians and Saxons felt the institutions would exacerbate already existing tensions and "be used by the Socialists for purposes of achieving their goals more quickly."⁶² In the end, however, both bills were rejected. In the absence of documentation, it can only be surmised that William, still desirous of stern measures against unions, squelched the plan. The Reichstag, at any rate, was not even informed that the wishes of the majority parties had been denied. Such was the "power" of parliament in Imperial Germany.

As far as Christian labor leaders were concerned, the humiliating defeat merely underscored the need to rid the labor movement of Marxist influence. Only when the entire working class was united in a reform-minded, patriotic organization would William become more amenable to improvements in the rights of labor. Long before 1901, however, the growing assertiveness of the Christians had prompted the government to bring an end to all talk of "neutral" trade unions. Provincial and subprovincial officials had greeted the emergence of Christian trade unions at first, since they saw in these organizations a potential dam against the free unions and the S.P.D. But the overthrow of the Ehrenrat in 1898, the cooperation of

60. Reichstag Debates, Period 10, Session 2 (16 January 1901), pp 725-743.

61. See Reich Minister of the Interior Posadowsky's inquiry to the various state governments, 10 January 1901, and their replies, in Reichsministerium des Innern Nr. 6765, ZSTA Potsdam.

62. Saxon Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Reich Ministry of the Interior, 24 January 1901, Reichsministerium des Innern Nr. 6765, ZStA Potsdam.

Christian and Socialist miners and textile workers in 1899, and the Frankfurt Congress of 1900 changed all this. The spectre of a radical, united proletariat now took the place of earlier, more sanguine visions.⁶³

Suspecting that the church could do more to control the situation, the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf, the Oberpräsident of the Rhineland in Coblenz, and the Prussian Minister of the Interior undertook a joint investigation of the matter which resulted in two significant steps. First, Archbishop Simar of Cologne was encouraged to exert his influence in Mönchen-Gladbach to prevent priests under his control from promoting cooperation with Socialist workers. Second, Archbishop Kopp of Breslau, who had been Chairman of the Prussian Bishops' Conference since the death of Krementz in 1899, was urged to take disciplinary action against the neutral faction within the Christian trade unions.⁶⁴

Simar was no opponent of the labor movement. He held the view, common in church circles since Rerum Novarum, that the workers had a natural, God-given right to organize. He was duly alarmed, however, by the apparently

63. For the early years, see the Regierungspräsident in Aachen to the King, 16 April, 1894, Reg. Aachen 403/9037, L.H.A. Koblenz; Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg to the Prussian Min. of the Interior, 16 April 1895, Reg. D. 9039, H.S.A. Düsseldorf; and the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf to the King, 31 January 1897, Reg. D. 403/9048, L.H.A. Koblenz. For the turnaround, see the Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg to the Prussian Min. of the Interior, 30 September 1898, Reg. D. 9042, H.S.A. Düsseldorf; Landrat in Mönchen-Gladbach to Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf, 2 March 1899, Reg. D. 9049, H.S.A. Düsseldorf; Oberbürgermeister Krefeld to Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf, 14 March 1899, Reg. D. 9049, H.S.A. Düsseldorf; and Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf to the King, 31 October 1899, Reg. D. 403/9048, L.H.A. Koblenz.

64. Oberpräsident of the Rhineland to Archbishop Simar of Cologne, 19 June 1900, Generalia 23.2., Vol 3, Erzb. Registratur Köln; Carl Bachem notation of 7 November 1900, Bachem Papers 386, H. A. Köln. Brust claimed in 1902 that the Kölnische Zeitung, National Liberal organ of the Rhineland, played a significant role in alarming government circles to the radicalization of the Christian unions in 1899/1900 and had first emphasized the need for Church-government intervention. Bergknappe, No. 12, 22 March 1902.

well-founded charges of the Prussian authorities against labor priests in his diocese. There was a great difference between organizing per se and marching hand in hand with the Socialists. Simar therefore asked Pieper if there were any truth to the allegations. Pieper's answer was well-reasoned and convincing. The Arbeiterverein priests of the lower Rhine has sanctioned the social commissions formed in 1899, but had always sought to cooperate with employers. Furthermore, they had never promoted socialistic tendencies among the workers. Greatly relieved Simar informed Coblenz that he had full confidence in the peaceful, constructive activity of his subordinates.⁶⁵

The government's initiative in Breslau was much more effective, for it coincided with a growing opposition to the Christian trade unions among Arbeiterverein officials in Kopp's sprawling Archdiocese. Led by Franz von Savigny, executive committee member of the Berlin-based Association of Catholic Arbeitervereine of northeastern Germany, this minority faction had always regarded independent organizations like Weigel's as an affront to church authority and a violation of the principles set down in Rerum novarum. Savigny's views received nationwide attention in an article series which appeared in the Märkisches Kirchenblatt shortly before the Mainz Congress in 1899. The articles accepted the natural right of workers to organize, but refused to admit that Leo XIII had intended to sanction independent, interconfessional trade unions. The main weapon of the union, the strike, was morally objectionable in too many cases, especially in industries like mining, iron and steel, and transportation, whose continued operation was indispensable to the community as a whole. The workers, moreover, were incapable of applying Christian principles of morality to economic life. Only the church could perform this task; hence, the necessity of priest-led, confessional labor associations.⁶⁶

65. Pieper to Simar, 23 July 1900, and Simar to the Oberpräsident of the Rhineland in Coblenz, 3 October 1900, Generalia 23.2, Vol 3, Erzb. Registratur Köln. The contents of Simar's letter to Pieper can be gleaned from Pieper's reply.

66. On Savigny, see Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 199-200; and Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, pp 458-60.

The article series was revised and printed as a brochure in the wake of Mönchen-Gladbach's neutral offensive of 1899/1900. With the aid of conservative Centrists grouped around the prestigious party organ Germania, the brochure was then distributed throughout the German Catholic community. One of the recipients, Church canon Franz in Breslau, was impressed by Savigny's arguments and brought them to the Archbishop's attention. At approximately the same time (May-June 1900), pressure to oppose the Christian trade unions was being applied by the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. A social conservative himself, Kopp needed little encouragement to speak out against neutralism. After further consultation with Franz and the archconservative Bishop Korum of Trier, Kopp left for Fulda to deliver the main address on the labor question.⁶⁷

Unlike other opponents of neutralism, Kopp understood that Mönchen-Gladbach's trade union program was based on an acceptance of a moral and just set of natural laws, including private property rights.⁶⁸ Much more pessimistic in his assessment of human nature, however, he refused to accept these minimum requirements as adequate. Would the neutral union, he asked the bishops, be able to convince heathen strike-pickers that it contradicted natural law to prevent non-strikers from continuing to work? Kopp did not think so. The only natural law at work in such a situation would be that which allowed "the most boisterous and unscrupulous"⁶⁹ to prevail. In order to prevent "unsuitable elements"⁷⁰ from dictating union policy, the reliability, firmness, and authority of the parish priest was necessary.

67. Kopp to Korum, 9 July 1900, Korum Papers 331, Bis. A. Trier; Carl Bachem notation of 7 November 1900, Bachem Papers 386, H. A. Köln; Carl Bachem, "Bericht über die Vor- und Nachgeschichte des Fuldaer Pastoralen vom 22. August, 1900", sent to Papal Nuncio Frühwirth in München on 28 July 1912, in Bachem Papers 321, H. A. Stadt Köln, (hereafter cited as Bachem, "Bericht", 28 July 1912); Carl Bachem notation of 13 February 1914, Bachem Papers 981, H. A. Köln; Erdmann, Die christliche Arbeiterbewegung, p 460.

68. Kopp's speech was appended to the protocols of the Prussian Bishops' Conference at Fulda, 21 August 1900, Appendix 7, pp 29-34, Bertram Papers, I-A25-67, A. A. Wrocławiu.

69. Ibid., p 32.

70. Ibid., p 32.

Kopp recommended, therefore, that Catholic priests abandon the Christian trade unions and revert to the concept of confessional "trade sections" first proposed by Hitze in 1892. Kopp's intentions would shortly be the source of great controversy, so the concluding passage of his speech should be quoted at length.

There is no obvious reason why Arbeitervereine cannot be divided into sections for each branch of industry, the sections discussing their special concerns, the Vereine those matters of general interest, but always under the direction of the clerical chairman. Agreements with neighboring Vereine and, from time to time, with non-Catholics, as well as a centralization [of the sections] for all Germany would also be possible. With this organization there are guarantees that moral laws will be obeyed in labor relations, that the associations will remain untouched by corrupting agitation, that they will guard against one-sided emphasis of the material element, and avoid a dangerous isolation from other classes of society. Such an organization, built on strictly Catholic foundations, would be capable of winning the trust of all circles, employers and the authorities included. If it were pursued seriously, bringing together the entire Catholic working class, it would represent, given the fact that the other labor groups are disunified, the greatest social power in Germany. It could save the workers and society from the grasp of the Socialists and make a much deeper impression on non-Catholics than organizations based on indifference [like the] interconfessional Gewerkvereine... The barriers which block the realization of these plans lie in the hesitation of a great, albeit well-intentioned part of the clergy [which] holds back for want of an authoritative stimulus... The excellent teachings of the Pope's Labor Encyclical are not known or understood, for otherwise it would not be possible for basic questions of organization, as the above, to arise. The Encyclical acknowledged the religious element as the basis for the entire organization...and did not intend that two organizations be constructed side by side, one half-religious, the other exclusively materialistic. It is time, therefore, that a new decree be directed to the clergy [urging] energetic support for the social tasks of the present.⁷¹

The pastoral letter (Hirtenbrief) to the parish priests, which had been written by Franz on the basis of Savigny's brochure, was even more explicitly directed against the Christian trade unions.

We are asking that Arbeiterverein leaders pay special attention to this matter... The Fachabteilungen within the Arbeitervereine will supply proof as they develop on a wide scale that no new,

71. Ibid., pp 33-34.

religious-neutral creations are required to defend and promote the material interests of Christian workers, rather than the Catholic Arbeitervereine are capable, and strong enough, to represent the material, class interests, as well as the spiritual well-being of their members.⁷²

The conference protocols record that the letter was read to the bishops by Kopp, approved unanimously, and sent to the printing offices for distribution to the various parishes, and the press, in October.⁷³

Center circles in the West reacted quickly. Karl Trimborn, leader of the Rhenish Center Party, hurried to Simar to inquire if the letter should be interpreted as a condemnation of the Christian trade unions. Trimborn was afraid that such a move would lead to an explosive increase in free union membership, which, in turn, would injure the Catholic cause in the political arena. Simar replied that the bishops had only intended to warn Arbeiterverein priests about certain dangerous tendencies within the unions, but did not wish to outlaw the whole movement. The Archbishop was under the impression that the phrase "religious-neutral" in the pastoral letter referred to the free trade unions, not the Christians. Obviously relieved, Trimborn relayed the good news to Julius Bachem, who printed the interpretation in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, hinting that Simar approved.⁷⁴ The crisis seemed to have passed.

It soon became evident, however, that this was not the case. On 11 October, Archbishop Nörber of Freiburg forwarded the Prussian Hirtenbrief to church canons in his diocese with an accompanying decree (Erläss) of his own.

72. The Pastorale appeared in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 893, 3 October 1900.

73. Protocols of the Prussian Bishops' Conference at Fulda, 21 August 1900, p 3 (as cited in note 70 above, p 203).

74. Kölnische Volkszeitung, Nos. 896 and 915, for 4 and 10 October 1900. Carl Bachem noted on 7 November 1900 (Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln) that Trimborn's conversation with Simar was the basis for his cousin's articles. The above description of the talk is based on the articles and a subsequent conversation between Carl Bachem and Simar. See Bachem's notation of 5 January 1901, Bachem Papers, 38b, H. A. Köln.

Unlike Bachem's articles, the decree reflected the true spirit of Kopp's letter. The Christian trade unions, he asserted, were moving ineluctably down the path to socialism, and in so doing, were preparing the yet numerous masses of loyal workers for capture by the atheistic S.P.D. To call an organization performing such a dubious task "Christian" was a mockery of the true meaning of the word. Taken in conjunction with the Hirtenbrief, Nörber's decree could have only one meaning: the exodus of Catholic workers from "Christian" organizations should begin at once.⁷⁵

Nörber's decree jolted Christian labor leaders to their senses. As usual, Brust was the most pointed in his comments. He scoffed at Bachem's attempt to interpret the Hirtenbrief in a favorable light. The letter, proclaimed Brust, was clearly directed against the unions. The enemies of the movement were mistaken, however, if they thought the unions would be weakened by "the accursed, unfortunate step".⁷⁶ On the contrary, it would only strengthen Christian workers in their resolve to reject the guardianship of the church. "The Christian proletariat has outgrown its children's shoes".⁷⁷

Brust's outburst earned him a stern reprimand from Hitze, but the unanimity of assent among Christian workers had an altogether different effect on Simar. Fearing that Christian unionists would indeed flock to the S.P.D. in protest, he contacted Gewerkverein leaders in Essen and sought to clarify misunderstandings about the Hirtenbrief. He also stated publicly in Bonn that the bishops had been asked to vote at Fulda before they could thoroughly examine Kopp's proposals. Simar's remarks

75. For Nörber's Erlass, see Bachem, "Bericht", 28 July 1912; and Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 915, 10 October 1900.

76. Bergknappe, No. 41, 13 October 1900.

77. Ibid.

emboldened Bishop Schneider of Paderborn, who now claimed that he had voted for the Hirtenbrief against his will, not wishing as the youngest bishop to oppose all the others.⁷⁸ Kopp, not surprisingly, was furious. "In the future," he complained to Korum, "we will have to ask every voter: is this your free, unforced will".⁷⁹ Simar's actions evoked a similar comment. "I think he's weak and confused; he made a helpless impression at the conference, not knowing what to answer, which explains this talk of 'surprise' in Bonn".⁸⁰ But unwilling to risk further embarrassing publicity, and a bit shaken himself by the workers' protest,⁸¹ Kopp made no attempt to rebuke Simar or force him to retract his statements.

Nörber's volte-face in late October must have been equally irritating to Kopp. Pressure had been building up on Nörber ever since he issued the decree. Several of his church canons had politely refused to forward the pastoral letter and decree to parish priests, and the Christian workers, too, were quite upset about the obvious exaggerations contained in the Erlass. Sensing that Savigny had painted too dark a picture of the unions, Nörber met with Catholic workers in Mannheim on 24 October and Freiburg on 2 November, assuring them that he would not oppose the spread of Christian trade unions in his diocese. He warned the delegations, however, to operate on the basis of positive Christianity and forget about merger with the free unions.⁸²

78. Carl Bachem to Simar, 26 January 1901, Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln; Trierische Lander-Zeitung, 23 January 1901 (clipping in Hohn Papers, Ergänzungsband 2, St. A. Mönchen-Gladbach); Kopp to Korum, 3 November 1900, Lorum Papers 331, Bis. A. Trier; Kopp to Korum Papers, 19 December 1900, Korum Papers 378, Bis. A. Trier.

79. Ibid.

80. Kopp to Korum, 3 November 1900, Korum Papers 331, Bis A. Trier.

81. Kulemann (Die Berufsvereine, Vol 2, p 175) received this information from Catholic Arbeiterverein sources in Berlin.

82. For Nörber's reversal, see Bachem, "Bericht", 28 July 1912.

With Simar, Nörber, and Schneider publicly opposed to the Fulda Hirtenbrief, the moment seemed ripe for conciliatory action on the part of the unions to allay the worst fears of the bishops concerning neutralism. The Christian trade union national executive committee met in Cologne on 8 November to discuss the matter. The leaders of all major unions except the anti-neutralist metal workers in Duisburg, led by Franz Wieber, were finally able to agree on the following compromise arranged beforehand by Giesberts and Brust.⁸³

We declare emphatically what is self-evident: that now, as before, [the Christian trade unions] recognize Christian principles as the guiding principles in the execution of trade union goals. A federation of all workers of the various industries in unified organizations is, to be sure, the goal we strive for, but we must insist that the activities of such associations never violate Christian principles. Due to the fact that such trade unions seem impossible under the prevailing conditions in the foreseeable future, we will hold to the program drawn up at the first Congress of Christian trade unions at Mainz, according to which our unions are to rest on an interconfessional, politically non-partisan basis.⁸⁴

Some ambiguities remained as to positive and negative Christianity, and the neutral union had not been denounced; but for the most part, the statement was a cleverly disguised retreat from previous positions.

It remained to be seen whether the concessions were great enough to please the bishops. Center and union forces in the West were especially worried that Savigny, who was considered the instigator of the whole affair, would engineer another coup de main against the unions. A number of steps were taken, therefore, to prevent this from occurring. At the behest of the Kölnische Volkszeitung, the Augustinusverein executive committee asked that all Center papers cease discussing the trade union controversy until

83. Giesberts, Protokoll des III. Kongresses zu Krefeld, p 40; Bergknappe, No. 49, 8 December 1900. Giesberts did not become a member of the executive committee until spring, 1901. It can thus be assumed that Pieper and Müller were also involved in the compromise.

84. Quoted in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 1013, 9 November 1900.

the press association's general assembly could meet in late November. Further polemics and flare-ups had to be avoided at all costs. On 26 November, the assembly listened attentively to Pieper's defense of the unions, then passed a motion advocating press support for interconfessional, politically non-partisan (politisch-unparteiisch) trade unions established on a basis of authoritative Christian principles. The word "neutral" was scrupulously avoided.⁸⁵

Three days later, Julius Bachem asked his cousin Carl Bachem, Reichstag and Prussian Landtag deputy from Crefeld, to join Hitze and Trimborn in obtaining a similar vote of confidence from the executive committee of the Reichstag Center Party. The leader of the Fraktion, Ernst Lieber, had spoken out against the Christian trade unions in the Reichstag on 24 November, adopting many of Nörber's criticisms of mid-October. Arguing, no doubt, that the Christian laborers were indispensable for the political survival of the Center in the West, Bachem won the support of all the leading Centrists except Lieber, who had been called away from Berlin.⁸⁶ Finally on 17 December, Bachem received the grudging support of Lieber too. The party's leader considered Brust "a dubious element",⁸⁷ and was still convinced that the Christian trade unions would merge with the frees, mainly because the church was not up to the task of preventing a further radicalization of the Catholic labor movement. But, outnumbered by the others on the executive committee, and soothed to a certain extent by Bachem, Lieber agreed that Hitze should defend the unions on the first suitable occasion in the Reichstag. This occurred in late January 1901.⁸⁸

85. Carl Bachem notation of 7 November 1900, Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln; Augustinus-Blatt, No. 12, December 1900, pp 83-85, St. Bib MG.

86. Julius Bachem to Carl Bachem, 29 November 1900 and Carl Bachem notation of 11 December 1900, Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln; and Reichstag Debates, Period 10, Session 2 (24 November 1900), p 144.

87. Carl Bachem to Hitze, 17 December 1900, Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln.

88. Reichstag Debates, Period 10, Session 2 (21 January 1901), p 774.

All that remained was to secure the support of the 11 of the 14 Prussian bishops who had not spoken out since Fulda. Accordingly, a lengthy memorandum (Denkschrift) attacking Savigny's position was prepared in Cologne by Julius Bachem. It was decided at the last minute, however, not to send the memorandum. Hitze felt the matter was already decided in the unions' favor. If the Denkschrift were sent, "the bishops' feeling of defeat would be strengthened and it could seem as if that had indeed been the purpose".⁸⁹ Carl Bachem had also learned that Kopp was still smoldering over the Kölnische Volkszeitung's "insolent, unprecedented jostling of the entire episcopate."⁹⁰ Kopp and Korum would remain resentful in years to come, unable to forget the fact that Cologne and Mönchen-Gladbach had managed to circumvent the directives of the hierarchy. The position of the other bishops is not known, but it seems reasonably certain that they continued to look askance at the independence of the Christian trade unions, though unwilling to condemn the organization after the complicated developments that fall.⁹¹

The anger of Korum and Kopp could not hide the fact, however, that the "infected West",⁹² as Kopp referred to it in 1910, had won no more than a Pyrrhic victory. Mönchen-Gladbach's plans to forge a unified labor movement had been completely scrapped,⁹³ and with them, Pieper's scenario of existence on the periphery of the labor world nudged closer to reality.

89. Carl Bachem notation of 12 January 1901, Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln.

90. Carl Bachem to Hitze, 17 December 1900, Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln.

91. See Simar to Carl Bachem, 29 January 1901, Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln. Simar noted here that his task of defending the Christian trade unions before the other bishops could well be a difficult one.

92. Kopp to Frh. Schalscha, 12 January 1910, printed in the Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 279, 9 October 1910.

93. In addition to the evidence already presented to support this statement, see Bachem, "Bericht", 28 July 1912. Here he writes that the plan had been "dropped immediately". See also Müller's warning that Arbeitervereine priests follow Nörber's advice with regard to neutralism, in Präsides-Korrespondenz, Nos. 5-6, 1901, pp 120-21, St. Bib. Mönchen-Gladbach.

In fact, the only politically important Catholic or Christian organization in Western Germany still advocating a neutral trade union movement, however meekly, was the national executive committee of the Christian trade unions. And by spring 1901, this body had weakened its already tenuous commitment still farther.

One factor contributing to the continued erosion of support for neutralism among Christian trade unionists were the admonishments from Archbishop Simar. The Archbishop was determined to shield the Christian trade unions from the wrath of Kopp and Korum and felt the Volksverein should facilitate this effort by rewriting its controversial brochures. Carl Bachem agreed, but was unable to convince Hitze, who wanted to avoid the controversy and confusion that yet another statement of tasks and goals would create.⁹⁴ Less overt methods were adopted instead. Giesberts was apparently forced to avoid all mention of neutralism in the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung after January 1901,⁹⁵ and Brust was urged to adopt "a calmer, more correct"⁹⁶ approach to labor relations. It was hardly a coincidence, therefore, that the Gewerkverein not only rejected Hue's advances that winter, but also broke the two-year alliance with the Alter Verband that spring.⁹⁷ As the anti-neutralist Franz Wieber put it, the "hot heads" had taken "a cold water cure."⁹⁸

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94. Brauns, Die christlichen Gewerkschaften, pp 53-54; quoted in Giesberts, Protokoll des III. Kongresses zu Krefeld, pp 30-31; The contents of Dingelstedt's letter were revealed during the fourth Christian trade union congress at Munich in 1902. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des IV. Kongresses der christlichen Gewerkschaften Deutschlands (München: Hans Beck Druckerei, 1902), pp 25-26.
 95. Simar to Carl Bachem, 29 January 1901 and Carl Bachem to Pieper, 3 February 1901, Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln.
 96. The last mentioning of neutralism occurred in No. 2 on 12 January 1901. Wieber claimed that Dingelstedt's letter, which was received in Mönchen-Gladbach, brought about the change in policy. See the Deutsche-Metallarbeiterzeitung, No. 45, 9 November 1901.
 97. Carl Bachem to Simar, 26 January 1901. Bachem Papers 38b, H. A. Köln.
 98. Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg to the Prussian Min. of the Interior, 11 December 1902 and Regierungspräsident in Munster to the Prussian Min. of the Interior, 31 December 1902, Reg. D. 9042, H.S.A. Düsseldorf.

The process of burying neutralism was taken one step farther at the Crefeld Congress in May 1901. In order to outmaneuver Wieber and block Savigny's on-going machinations, union leaders felt compelled to attenuate their already weakened position on neutralism. There was always a danger, however, that such a move would alienate the thousands of Christian workers who stood squarely behind Mönchen-Gladbach's original brochures. A resolution was submitted to the Congress, therefore, which expressed support for the November declaration, but reiterated that the question of a united organization of German workers had no practical significance in the foreseeable future.⁹⁹ More importantly, the leadership announced that it would allow unions with a dissenting opinion to belong to the national federation. This latter statement all but ruled out a merger, for Moritz Schmidt, Peter Molz, and the leaders of other state railway unions would never consider joining the Christian federation if it meant that their workers would soon be emersed in a "Socialist" organization. Wieber understood this well enough and agreed to retract the metal workers' charge that the November declaration had contradicted Christian principles.¹⁰⁰ Given his previous views on the matter, Wieber's return to the fold was evidence enough for any careful observer that merger with the free unions was no longer official policy in the Christian camp.¹⁰¹

Contrary to all expectation in the West, the Crefeld resolution played right into Savigny's hands. The young, impetuous nobleman had continued his intrigues against the Christian trade unions after the Fulda conference of 1900, but both Katholikentag and Augustinusverein had sided with his opponents. Savigny won what seemed to be a major victory in the fall of 1900 when Kopp removed Dr. Phillip Hille, pro-union General Secretary of the eastern Arbeiterverein association, and replaced him with the

99. Quoted in Deutsche-Metallarbeiterzeitung, No. 45, 9 November 1901.

100. The resolution is printed in Giesberts, Protokoll des III. Kongresses zu Krefeld, p 34.

101. Ibid., pp 80-81.

anti-unionist, Licenziat Fournelle, but by spring 1901, Savigny and Fournelle were still not in complete control. The association's annual convention rejected their proposal for trade sections in May, backing the less conservative resolution of the Hille faction. The delegates agreed to encourage Arbeiterverein members to join Christian trade unions as long as the unions offered guarantees that positive Christian principles would be observed. A commission was established to work out the details of union-Arbeiterverein cooperation before the next convention in May 1902.¹⁰²

News of the Crefeld Congress, however, eroded Hille's support on the executive committee. Savigny used the Congress' confirmation of the November declaration and the apparent defeat of Wieber to convince his fellow commiteemen that merger schemes had not been rejected in the West. Already skeptical since fall, the executive committee now agreed to begin work on draft statutes for separate Catholic trade unions.¹⁰³

The work dragged on through the fall and winter. On 10 April 1902, with the statutes completed, the trade union commission established by the Arbeiterverein convention the previous spring met for the first time. Fournelle, who sat on this body as well, opened the meeting by presenting the completed statutes for the commission's consideration. "Leading representatives"¹⁰⁴ of the Christian trade unions who had been invited by

102. See, for instance, the optimistic report of the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf to the King, 31 July 1901, Reg. D. 403/9048, L.H.A. Koblenz. Opposition to the free unions was also emphasized repeatedly in the Christians' national organ, Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, Nos. 8, 12-14 and 16, for 22 July, 16 and 30 September, 14 October and 11 November 1901 and No. 2, 27 January 1902. Johannes Giesberts was editor of the Mitteilungen, thus earning him a seat on the national executive committee.

103. Kulemann, Die Berufsvereine, Vol 2, p 177; Gornik, Entwicklung der nichtsozialdemokratischen Arbeiterbewegung, p 83; Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des IV. Kongresses der christlichen Gewerkschaften, pp 25-26; Bergknappe, No. 40, 6 October 1900.

104. Gornik, Entwicklung der nichtsozial-demokratischen Arbeiterbewegung, No. 40, 6 October 1900.

the commission to take part in the deliberations rejected these proposals outright, whereupon Fournelle made a compromise offer. His suggestion is illustrative of the basic disagreement that was driving the two Christian labor factions farther and farther apart. Would the Christian trade unions consent to the appointment of clerical representatives to decide union policy when moral and religious questions arose? After union leaders refused to compromise on the matter of independence, the commission decided to back Fournelle and the executive committee. A split in Christian ranks appeared unavoidable.

By summer 1902, the break was complete. Despite the protests of the Christian labor press in the West and South and considerable opposition within the Eastern association, the delegates to the poorly attended Arbeiterverein convention at Berlin in mid-May 1902 approved the statutes for trade sections, or "Catholic trade unions", as they came to be known.¹⁰⁵ The new splinter movement was sanctioned by Kopp, and Korum quickly added his support by leading the Arbeitervereine of his diocese into the East German association.¹⁰⁶ The Christian trade unions had escaped formal condemnation in 1900 only to find another equally serious challenge facing them in 1902.

Volksverein circles were doubly alarmed. Not only did the existence of the Christian trade unions seem to be threatened once again, but there were rumors circulating that the Volksverein itself would shortly come under Church fire. To forestall such a move, Mönchen-Gladbach submitted a memorandum to the bishops defending the Christian trade unions and the Volksverein's support for the movement. Kopp's reply was jolting. The memorandum was discussed at length during the bishops' conference in August, "but the episcopate expressed its unanimous and emphatic opposition to the ever-stronger mingling of Volksverein efforts with those of the

105. Ibid., pp 83-84. Gornik was probably referring to the leader of the Christian construction workers, Josef Wiedeberg, who had replaced Weigel on the national executive committee of the Christian trade unions. Wiedeberg resided in Berlin.

106. Kulemann, Die Berufsvereine, Vol 2, p 177.

Christian, neutral trade unions."¹⁰⁷ The bishops would discipline the Volksverein if it did not discontinue these pro-union policies.

Volksverein leaders must have doubted that the episcopate stood united behind Kopp, for they proceeded to defy him. Caucusing at Mannheim during the Katholikentag in late August 1902, the Volksverein steering committee pledged to continue its support for the Christian trade unions and resign in protest if the church made fulfillment of these promotional efforts impossible. The bishops were so informed.¹⁰⁸ Kopp did not deign to reply directly, but his remarks to Julius Bachem in early October indicate that the Volksverein's ultimatum had had the desired effect.

For the time being, the episcopate has no intention of taking action against the Christian trade unions. We want to let things develop and leave the decision to the passage of time. By no means should the issue give rise to a permanent quarrel between Catholics. This must be avoided at all costs. More than ever, we need unity. It must be acknowledged, moreover, that the issue is somewhat different in the West than in the East. In principle, of course, I hold to the Hirtenbrief, but in the West events thus far have taken a different course. Time must tell now whether 'Christian', interconfessional, or Catholic-confessional trade unions are best. Present developments in the West, on the other hand, present great dangers.¹⁰⁹

Kopp was obviously worried that bitter in-fighting would hamper the Center during the Reichstag elections in 1903. There was also a note of

107. Police Commissioner in Düsseldorf to Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf, 1 October 1902, Reg. D. 9053, H.S.A. Düsseldorf; Gornik, Entwicklung der nichtsozial-demokratischen Arbeiterbewegung, p 83.

Brust was informed by "friendly, reliable" sources--probably the Volksverein or Kölnische Volkszeitung--that two bishops (Kopp and Korum) "had ordered" the creation of Catholic trade unions. Bergknappe, No. 16, 19 April 1902.

108. Kopp to Prussian Landtag deputy Felix Porsch, 24 August 1902, Bachem Papers 169, H. A. Köln.

109. Pieper to Father Christ in Trier, 17 September 1906, Hohn Papers 15/2-1913, and Pieper Manuscript, Part 3, pp 814-15, St. A. München-Gladbach.

resignation in his voice. His eagerness to condemn the Christian trade unions was waning as it became evident that the Church would lose more than it would gain by such a move.

Korum assessed the costs differently. The Volksverein, he noted, was a Catholic institution created to unite the scattered Catholic forces for political service to the Catholic cause. And yet, after the bishops had warned parish priests about the dangers of the Christian, neutral trade unions, the Volksverein, "an expressly Catholic organization, led by Catholic men, and subsidized only by Catholics, has more or less openly opposed the bishops, the God-ordained counselors and overlords not only of Catholic teaching, but also of Catholic life, especially public life, which deals with affairs of such decisive importance."¹¹⁰ It was easy to understand, therefore, why the bishops would not tolerate the Volksverein's systematic promotion of the Christian trade unions. But there were other concerns. As Korum wrote, "I would also hold the Volksverein responsible, if, by promoting the 'Christian' trade unions, it endangered the political organization of the Center."¹¹¹ Anyone who understood the narrow, selfish nature of these unions would realize "that it had to come to this."¹¹² Thus Korum demanded that Pieper resign as General Secretary and that the organization conduct its operations in accordance with the dictates of the hierarchy.¹¹³ This was the first of numerous attempts to bring Mönchengladbach under closer church supervision. Neither Volksverein nor labor independence was tolerable to the Bishop of Trier.

The Volksverein had no intention of obeying. As Korum well knew, he could not discipline Catholics outside his diocese. And Simar, whose task this would have been, was opposed to such action. Korum's only recourse was

110. Notation by Carl Bachem of 6 October 1902 concerning Julius Bachem's conversation with Kopp, Bachem Papers 170, H. A. Köln.

111. Korum to Father Stein, Chairman of the Association of Catholic Arbeitervereine for the Diocese of Trier, 28 October 1902, Generalia 23.61, Vol 1, Erzb. Registratur Köln.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid. Stein was instructed to make this demand for Korum.

the Prussian Bishops' Conference, and its chairman, Kopp, had no taste for battle with München-Gladbach in 1902. Thus the danger passed once again.

But the price, as before, was high. The Volksverein's backing of the Christian trade unions eventually led to a stagnation of Volksverein membership in the diocese of Trier as well as those areas in eastern Germany under Kopp's supervision. More important for our purposes here, the Christian trade unions experienced the same fate. Attempts to spread the movement to the crucial industrial districts of Berlin, Silesia, parts of Saxony, and the Saar, faltered on the determined opposition of parish priests forewarned by their bishops about the dangers of Christian trade unionism. Devout Catholics in these areas joined Fachabteilungen, or, as was more often the case, remained non-organized. Those workers that had already formed Christian unions, such as the 44,000 railwaymen in Trier, steered clear of the national federation and formed an alliance with the confessional trade sections. Many Catholics, of course, joined the free trade unions. Most disappointing of all perhaps was the indefinite postponement of the German Workers Congress. Plagued by the threat from "Berlin", and other internal problems described in the next chapter, all plans of increasing the political influence of the Gesamtverband had to be delayed. With powerful enemies in Trier and Breslau, and eight times as many workers in the General Commission as the Christian federation (681,100 vs. 84,600), the likelihood that Christian trade unionism would prevail in Germany seemed slight indeed.

CHAPTER 6

TARIFFS, ELECTORAL POLITICS, AND THE ACCUSATION OF "CENTER PARTY UNIONS"

The reemergence of the old dispute over clerical supervision of the labor movement distracted München-Gladbach and the Christian trade unions from their socio-political plans. In the midst of the merger controversy, however, the unions were hurled into another critical situation which indefinitely postponed all talk of a workers' demonstration in favor of social reform. The crisis was precipitated by one of the most hotly contested political debates in Germany at the turn of the century--the question of tariff reform.

For such a debate, the Christian trade unions were sorely unprepared. The Mainzer Leitsätze called for 'discussion of reforms to be achieved by constitutional means within the existing framework of society', and in the first two years of its existence, the Gesamtverband publicly advocated corporate status for trade unions, compulsory arbitration, chambers of labor, unemployment insurance, improved health insurance, increased freedom of assembly, and the eight-hour day.¹ The organization had also issued a public protest against the Prison Bill.² With the possible exception of their participation in the Society for Social Reform, however, the Christian trade unions had not become involved in pressure politics and had no immediate plans to influence the general course of political events. The consensus at Mainz in May 1899 had been that political influence on issues such as tax, tariff, or suffrage

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1. Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 2, 29 April 1901, No. 6, 24 June 1900, and Nos. 2, 3, 5, and 6 for 27 January, 10 February, 10 March, and 24 March 1902; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 477, 24 May 1899.
 2. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 477, 24 May 1899.

reform would come by itself as the numerical strength of the unions grew.³ Thus the Mainzer Leitsätze were vague as to which methods the organization should employ in attempting to influence legislation and did not specify, as Bebel had in 1900, which issues, if any, lay outside the sphere of trade union politics. Further complicating matters, the guidelines forbade alignment of the federation with any one party, or presumably any one group of parties (S.P.D. and Progressives' Center and Conservatives, etc.). The rationale for this neutralist clause had been clear enough in 1899, but if the unions were to pursue politics, how could this be done without choosing sides? The tariff debate of 1900/02 illustrated the inadequacy of the Mainzer Leitsätze and generated tensions that came very close to creating a second permanent split in the Christian labor movement.

Franz Wieber was the first in the Christian trade union camp to discuss the tariff question. When the Bundesrat began deliberations over the issue in the fall of 1900, he wrote in Der deutsche Metallarbeiter, the organ of the Christian metal workers, that tariff increases worked against the proletariat by raising prices and negating the gains of hard-fought wage struggles. Tariffs seemed doubly threatening in 1900, with the economy showing signs of slowing down. It was the duty of the Christian trade unions, therefore, to block such legislation, "in other words, to get involved in politics".⁴ His article gave rise to widespread criticism among Christian unionists who were angry that Wieber, the self-professed crusader against socialism, had contradicted himself by advocating the Socialist and left-liberal position on tariffs.⁵ Not wishing, perhaps, to jeopardize his anti-neutralist campaign against München-Gladbach, Wieber did not pursue the matter farther.

Johannes Giesberts and August Brust were also quite opinionated with regard to tariffs. During the winter of 1900/1901, the two advocated

3. Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 16, 11 August 1902.

4. Wieber's article is quoted in the socialist Deutsche-Metallarbeiterzeitung, No. 35, 31 August 1901.

5. Ibid.

higher duties to protect agriculture, industry, and the jobs of German workers. Brust and Giesberts also suggested that the increased revenues be used to finance social insurance programs like widows' and orphans' insurance, one of Hitze's old demands.⁶ Though clearly in the material interests of the workers, the tariff-social insurance compromise also reflected ideological concerns. Well-schooled in Catholic social teaching, Christian labor leaders insisted that attention be paid to the material interests of all the estates that made up the social body. "Christian justice" demanded that farmers, artisans, industrialists, and factory workers enjoy some measure of material prosperity. Convinced of the righteousness of these views, neither Brust nor Giesberts had any qualms about expressing them in Bergknappe, organ of the Christian miners, and the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, which served as the official organ of numerous Christian trade unions.

With other Catholic unionists discussing the tariff issue, Wieber saw no reason why he should remain silent.⁷ As the metal worker had feared in 1900, the economic boom of the late 1890's had given way to a deepening recession, especially in the iron and steel industry, which had already laid off workers and lowered wages about 25 percent. Wieber found it impossible to understand, therefore, how his colleagues could contemplate action that would raise the workers' cost of living. "As things stand, the workers, not the agrarians, are the ones who will have to fight against hunger and misery in the near future."⁸ With such thoughts in mind, he urged the Gesamtverband central committee to speak out against Bulow's tariff package.⁹

6. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 45, 10 November 1900; and No. 15, 13 April 1901; Bergknappe, Nos. 9 and 13, 2 and 30 March 1901.

7. Wieber's views are discussed in Deutsche Metallarbeiterzeitung, No. 35, 31 August 1901.

8. Quoted in ibid.

9. Müller, Christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, p 141.

The central committee met in Cologne on 17 August 1901.¹⁰ Because the overwhelming majority favored the new tariff bill, backing for Wieber was rejected outright. So too was the idea of a pro-tariff stance. If the central committee openly advocated agricultural protection, reasoned the majority at Cologne, the Gesamtverband would surely be labeled a pro-agrarian, or what was worse, a Center party organization by the S.P.D. and Progressives. Confessional prejudices would come to the fore, Protestant and Catholic members would turn against one another, and the organization might fall apart. Thus the assembly censured Brust, Wieber, and the other union editors who had discussed the tariff question, urging them to adopt a stricter interpretation of the Mainzer Leitsätze. Gesamtverband resolutions concerning labor legislation and social insurance should be acted upon by individual union members within the party of their choice. "But political issues [such as the tariff] which set parties passionately against each other and are resolved exclusively from the vantage point of party doctrine should be kept out of the unions, if only to preserve the unity and solidarity of the movement".¹¹

Wieber refused to obey. One week after the central committee meeting he ran an article in Der deutsche Metallarbeiter¹² which mocked the idea common in Christian labor circles that workers should support the tariff out of a sense of Christian justice for the farmers. The article drew rebukes from Giesberts and other union editors in September 1901¹³ but Wieber would not be silenced. Far from it, he accused Giesberts and other union leaders of playing "love child"¹⁴ with Center Party agrarians,

10. For the meeting see ibid., p 141; Bergknappe, No. 45, 9 November 1901; and Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, Nos. 11-12, 2 and 16 September 1901.

11. Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 12, 16 September 1901.

12. The article is reprinted in Deutsche Metallarbeiterzeitung, No. 35, 31 August 1901.

13. Protokoll über Verhandlungen des IV Congresses...zu München, p 70; Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 12, 16 September 1901.

14. For Wieber's accusations, see Deutsche Metallarbeiterzeitung, No. 45, 9 November 1901.

then took his case to the union rank and file. A tour through rural southern Germany in October won few converts, but Christian workers along the lower Rhine and Ruhr were more interested. Assembly after assembly in Crefeld, Cologne, Duisburg, Mülheim a. Rh., Dusseldorf, and Essen spoke out against the new tariff proposal and called on the Christian trade unions to fight it.¹⁵ Christian leaders scoffed at the threat publicly,¹⁶ but privately, they expressed shock at the susceptibility of a growing minority of their followers to the arguments of Wieber and other anti-tariff agitators.¹⁷

The free trade unions were naturally delighted by all this. An emerging threat in 1899, the Christian counterorganization showed signs of serious internal dissension, perhaps collapse, in 1901. Thus Wieber's revolt was covered at length in the Socialist and free union press and the tariff issue exploited to the hilt.¹⁸ This propaganda was not without effect, especially in the Ruhr, where the Alter Verband began to gain considerable ground on the Gewerkverein. The freers were not alone, however, in seeking to exploit the Gesamtverband's growing troubles. The rallying call of free trade had led to the formation of a wealthy new interest group, the Commercial Treaty Association (Handelsvertragsverein), which also hoped to reap advantage from the anti-tariff upsurge in the Christian camp.¹⁹ Unexplored by previous historians, this latter threat should be examined in some detail.

15. Ibid., Nos. 45 and 49, 9 November and 7 December 1901.

16. Westdeutsche Arbeiterzeitung, Nos. 43-45, 26 October, 2 November and 9 November 1901.

17. Rhenish Center leader Karl Trimborn described Giesbert's remarks to this effect at a caucus of the Reichstag Fraktion on 27 November 1901. See Carl Bachem's notes in the Bachem Papers 172, H. A. Köln.

18. Deutsche Metallarbeiterzeitung, Nos. 35, 45, 49, and 51 for August, 9 November, 7 December, and 21 December 1901; Landrat in Essen to the Regierungspräsident, 3 September 1901, Reg. D. 9052, H.S.A. Düsseldorf.

19. For a general discussion of the Handelsvertragsverein, see Ludwig Elm, Zwischen Fortschritt und Reaktion (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), pp 84-95.

The Commercial Treaty Association was founded in November 1900 by leaders of the Progressive Alliance (Freisinnige Vereinigung), a small left-wing party of bankers, light industrialists, and laissez faire intellectuals. The most important goal of the organization was to commit the National Liberal Party to the cause of free trade. With additional backing from the S.P.D., the radical South German People's Party, and the moderate Progressive People's Party (Freisinnige Volkspartei), the Handelsvertragsverein would command 151 seats in the Reichstag--48 short of a majority when all deputies were present.²⁰ Given the pro-tariff position of the Conservatives, the Reichspartei, and most of the right-wing splinter parties in the Reichstag, the Commercial Treaty Association had no choice but to approach the Center for the necessary votes. The protectionist bent of Center agrarians further narrowed the list of possible recruits to those Center deputies representing working class or largely urban constituencies. The Gesamtverband's position on the tariff question suddenly loomed very large in significance.

For help in winning over the Christian trade unions, the Handelsvertragsverein approached Pastor Hermann Köttschke, leader of the Düsseldorf branch of Naumann's National Social Party.²¹ The Evangelical Minister had close ties to the workers of the lower Rhine, was a good speaker, and apparently well-liked. He was joined by Pastor Wohlleben of Cologne, another Protestant active in the labor movement. With funds made available by the Handelsvertragsverein the two founded the Westdeutsches Volksblatt,

20. In reality, the association needed far fewer than 48 seats, for absenteeism was a problem in the Reichstag at this time. During the vote over the tariff bill in December 1902, for instance, only 302 of 397 deputies showed up. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol 6, p 161; Hertling to his wife Anna, 18 October 1902, Hertling Papers 15, B. A. Koblenz.

21. This paragraph is based on the report of the police commissioner of Düsseldorf to the Regierungspräsident, 1 October 1902, Reg. D. 9053, H.S.A. Düsseldorf; Bergknappe, No. 46, 16 November 1901; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 42, 19 October 1901; and Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 17, 25 November 1901.

which began to print articles against tariffs in the name of the Christian trade unions. The wealthy "pocket-book association"²² (Portmonnaieverein), as Brust referred derisively to the left-liberal pressure group, also distributed a pamphlet through Kötschke urging Christian unionists to force the Gesamtverband to adopt an anti-tariff position. The authors of the pamphlet felt confident that the Center would not impose voting discipline on the Fraktion if it were clear that by supporting the tariff, labor backing would be lost. Hard-pressed deputies from the West and parts of the South would thus be free to vote against the unpopular duties, while agrarians could satisfy their constituents by accepting the tariff hike. The booklet was printed in great volume and offered to the various Christian unions of the West without charge.

These efforts met with very limited success. The metal workers and wood workers of Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Duisburg welcomed Kötschke's aid and agitated for Westdeutsches Volksblatt, as did the leftist organ of the Christian tile workers, Gut Brand. Established forces within the Gesamtverband, however, soon took steps to halt the spread of Wieber's revolt. Brust blocked distribution of the pamphlet among Gewerkverein functionaries, and Giesberts swung over to the offensive with articles against the Commercial Treaty Association in the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung. A special session of the Gesamtverband central committee on 16 November further undermined the Progressives' campaign against tariffs. Wieber was given six weeks to apologize for maligning Christian labor leaders in October, the Westdeutsches Volksblatt was condemned, and individual unions forbidden to discuss the tariff, which, as a controversial party-political issue, lay outside the sphere of labor politics permitted by the program of the Christian trade unions. As individuals, members could take any stance to the bill they desired.²³

22. Bergknappe, No. 46, 16 November 1901.

23. Ibid., Nos. 46 and 50 for 16 November and 14 December 1901, and No. 12, 22 March 1902; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 43-44 for 26 October and 2 November 1901; Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 17, 25 November 1901.

The decision conformed with the practical interpretation of the Mainzer Leitsätze formulated in August. But, as the Socialist Deutsche Metallarbeiter-Zeitung observed, there was more to it than this.

The resolution places the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung in an especially privileged position. Although it is designated as the union organ by a number of Christian trade unions, the paper is not formally a union organ, rather that of the Catholic Arbeitervereine; but as such it can continue to make propaganda for the raising of grain duties...while the opponents of tariffs in the Christian trade union camp are, at least in the press, muzzled (mundtot gemacht) by the resolution.²⁴

With no outlet to express their views other than the union newspaper, most Christian unionists had indeed been silenced. Wieber and his associates once again refused to cooperate. Caucusing on 20 November 1901 in Duisburg, the executive board of the metal-workers' union gave Wieber a complete vote of confidence and refused to countenance any apology.²⁵ One of the board members, Peter Schlack of Mülheim a. Rh., summarized the views of his colleagues two days before the board met.

The protest movement against higher tariffs will not be halted. Are we to believe that a duty on groceries, a matter that concerns all trade unions, is not a trade union question? Is there anything which cuts deeper into the existence of the worker than tariffs? I can't understand how trade union leaders who have risen from the midst of the workers and have come to know the misery of working class circles can speak out for higher tariffs--what good is it if wages rise 10 percent, but food prices rise 20 percent? I'm a Center man, but I must say that great pressure is being exerted by the party on the unions so that they will serve Center Party Needs.²⁶

The last charge, which may have referred to the fact that Wieber had been expelled from the executive committee of the Duisburg Center Party,²⁷ was pounced on by the leftist press, especially Korrespondenz des Handelsvertragsvereins.

24. Deutsche Metallarbeiterzeitung, No. 49, 7 December 1901.

25. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 49, 7 December 1901.

26. Quoted in Deutsche Metallarbeiterzeitung, No. 49, 7 December 1901.

27. Report of the police commissioner of Düsseldorf, 1 October 1902, as cited above in note 26.

The opposition of Catholic workers to the Center's position in the tariff debate has already been expressed in numerous public rallies. Because the Center pays no heed, the workers have mobilized their union against it. The Christian metalworkers continue to work calmly and energetically against the threatening rise in the cost of living. Yes, the movement against tariffs is growing. The Christian tile workers union has written and spoken against tariffs with a fiery zeal. There is also a stir in the Christian woodworkers union. If the Center still does not hear, the formation of an independent Christian Labor Party is inevitable.²⁸

Having failed to capture the Gesamtverband, the left-liberals appeared to have another ambitious plan.

Faced with this threat, Christian leaders felt compelled to take much more drastic action. The Munich Congress of the Christian Trade Unions (June 1902) expelled the rebellious metalworkers and founded a new metal workers union. The vote to eject the Duisburg faction was a good indication, however, that Wieber's cause was not dead among the rank and file. Twenty-six delegates had voted yes, 9 no, and 18 had abstained.²⁹

Gambling on Wieber's grass roots strength, the Handelsvertragsverein decided to forge ahead with the creation of a new party. Köttschke was once again asked for assistance. His mission was to intensify opposition to tariffs among Catholic workers, artisans, grocery store owners, and small businessmen of the West. He should then nominate lower-class Catholics for election to the Reichstag in every district where incumbent Centrists refused to sign statements opposing the tariff bill. Such pressure would hopefully force the Center to lift voting discipline in the Fraktion or encourage a revolt from the voting authority of parliamentary leaders.³⁰ Realizing that many Catholics had been reluctant to follow him in the fall for fear of betraying the Center to the allegedly Jewish

28. The article is quoted in Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 19, 23 December 1901.

29. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des IV. Congresses...zu München, pp 72-73, 75.

30. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung., No. 46, 15 November 1902.

Handelsvertragsverein, Köttschke remained in the background this time and let a disaffected Catholic journalist from Düsseldorf, Albert Minjon, initiate the campaign. Inspired by Leo XIII's Encyclical on Christian Democracy (Graves De Communi; January 1901), Minjon was only too willing to engage in charitable Christian action for the people, as the document had prescribed. By fall 1902, a well-financed "Christian Democratic People's Party" was threatening Center deputies in the West with electoral defeat should they support Bülow during the second reading of the tariff bill scheduled to begin in October.³¹

The scheme failed. The sensitive urban deputies in the Center had required that two basic conditions be met before supporting the bill. First, that the new revenues be used for 'a social purpose such as a widows' and orphans' insurance, and second, that the overwhelming majority of Reichstag oppose the S.P.D. and left-liberals. In this way Centrists from urban or proletarian constituencies could argue that the party had acted in a socially responsible manner, and that the leftists represented only a radical, unpatriotic, obstructionist fringe.³²

The course of events in the fall of 1902 was greatly relieving to this wing of the party. The Volksverein managed to convince Center leaders that the widows' and orphans' insurance was necessary for election purposes, and the government, mindful of the Center's parliamentary strength, went along. The pro-tariff majority was also quite large, thereby satisfying

31. Police commissioner of Düsseldorf to the Regierungspräsident, 1 September 1903, Reg. D. 9054, H.S.A. Düsseldorf; Hubert Jedin (ed), Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte (Freiburg: Herder Verlag KG, 1973), Vol 6, Part 2, p 251; Report of the police department of Rheydt, 3 November 1902, Reg. D 9054, H.S.A. Düsseldorf.

32. Carl Bachem to Dr. Urfry, of the Crefeld Center Party, 2 July 1901, Bachem Papers 340, H.A. Köln; Carl Bachem to Heinrich Otto of the Niederheinische Volkszeitung, 12 November 1901, Carl Bachem to Franz Bachem, 14 November 1901, and Carl Bachem to Hitze, 23 November 1901, Bachem Papers 172, H.A. Köln; Carl Bachem to Catholic factory owner Hoeveler, 31 January 1902, Bachem Papers 174, H.A. Köln.

another prerequisite of left-wing Centrists. Under pressure from the government and, it would seem, the Church, Center Party agrarians abandoned the struggle for a much higher tariff rate and supported the government's proposals. So too did most Conservatives and Free Conservatives. The National Liberals and the moderate Progressive People's Party also backed the bill. Both parties were under tremendous psychological pressure to join the respectable, "bourgeois" (bürgerlich) majority and fight the excessive obstructionist tactics of the left. The right-liberals were also impressed by the willingness of the agrarians to compromise. In the final vote on 14 December 1902, two-thirds of the Reichstag (202 to 100) backed the government.³³

Easing the pressure on left-wing Centrists even more was the fact that Wieber did not join forces with Minjon and Kötschke that fall. Wieber's refusal to do so resulted largely from the fact that the fight against tariffs looked hopeless. Wieber took a large delegation of metalworkers to Cologne to sway the Katholikentag in August 1902 to his anti-tariff views, but the assembly was unmoved. For all these reasons, Wieber decided that it was foolish to perpetuate the feud. Thus in September 1902, he dropped the tariff issue and sued for peace with Giesberts and Brust. All of Minjon's advances were rejected and the Christian Democratic People's Party publicly denounced. A grateful Gesamtverband invited Wieber and his followers back to the fold in mid-1903.³⁴

For the Christian trade unions, however, the tariff controversy had not ended. As the months drew on to the Reichstag elections of June 1903,

33. Archbishop Kopp to Bülow, 25 February 1902, and Bülow's reply, 1 March 1902, Deutschland 125 nr. 1 secr., A.A. Bonn; Carl Bachem to Heinrich Otto, 25 November 1902, Bachem Papers 345, H.A. Köln; Elm, Zwischen Fortschritt und Reaktion, p 93; Bachem, Zentrums-partei, Vol 6, pp 156-61.

34. For this paragraph, see the "Biographische Sammlung Franz Wieber", Standarchiv Duisburg; report of the police commissioner of Düsseldorf, 1 September 1903, as cited above in Note 35; Verhandlungen der 49. Generalversammlung der Katholiken Deutschlands in Mannheim vom 24. bis 28. August 1902 (Mannheim: Druck und Verlag von Jean Gremm, 1902), pp 447-456; Westdeutsche Arbeiterzeitung, Nos. 12, 13, and 17 for 21 March, 28 March, and 25 April 1903.

the Gesamtverband was attacked furiously by the free trade unions and left-liberals for its alleged partisan, pro-Center Party orientation. The accusations were particularly embarrassing, for not only was the organization's political neutrality called into question but also its stature as a labor organization. For, despite the fact that tariffs would certainly protect the jobs of German workers, most laborers focused on the apparently more controversial issue of higher prices for food and consumer goods. Support for Bulow's tariffs was easily portrayed as a betrayal of the working class.

The Christian federation, of course, had not openly advocated tariff increases or pressured the Reichstag parties to do so. The central committee sessions of August and November 1901 had made this abundantly clear. But to many workers, including a large percentage of Christian unionists, the central committee's insistence on neutrality was nothing but a shrewd maneuver to defeat Wieber and protect the Center. Nor did it seem fair or impartial for the central committee to condemn the Westdeutsches Volksblatt, but say nothing about the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung which had run articles by Giesberts against Minjon, Kötschke, and the Commercial Treaty Association. And who could deny that Giesberts and Brust had intensified their attacks against the free unions and S.P.D. during the fall of 1901, just as the tariff bill was laid before parliament? To be sure, the executive council, central committee, general assembly, congress, and press of the Gesamtverband were entirely independent of the Center. But in the midst of a volatile controversy like that over tariffs, the seeming unity of purpose between the Center and the Christian trade unions was all the proof needed by most workers to conclude that the Gesamtverband was a Center Party organization. Many, of course, had made up their minds on this issue years earlier and needed no additional proof whatsoever.

Adding credence to the charge of "Center Party unions" was the growing dependence of the Christian trade unions on a variety of services provided by the party. It was no secret, for instance, that the emerging cadre of Gesamtverband secretaries was trained systematically by the Volksverein at an impressive array of courses, seminars, and workshops

offered in Mönchen-Gladbach every year.³⁵ It was also widely known that Adam Stegerwald had established a close working relationship with the Kölnische Volkszeitung after he took over the Gesamtverband's general secretariat at Cologne in January 1903.³⁶ After Hitze's defense of the Christian trade unions in the Reichstag in January 1901, moreover, the Center Fraktion was probably regarded by the public as the protector of the workers against the conservative bishops.³⁷ This is not to say that the unions enjoyed a cooperative relationship with all elements of the party, for a significant number of Center deputies from the Saar, the Mosel, and Silesia continued to oppose the movement.³⁸ Nor did all Catholic employers in western Germany follow the lead of Franz Brandts. Yet, when differences over the party's stance to the Christian trade unions emerged from party caucuses, the pro-union position of the Center leadership, and the political expediency of this stance, became clear.

In October 1902, for example, the Catholic entrepreneurs of Coesfeld locked out all employees in an attempt to break Carl Schiffer's textile union. The Landrat in Coesfeld, the local Center Party press, the organ of the Christian Peasants' Association and a few Catholic Arbeiterverein priests of the area supported the move. With the help of Hitze, Trimborn, Julius and Carl Bachem, Volksverein chairman Franz Brandts, and the leader of the Westphalian Center Party, Karl Herold, Schiffer was eventually able to bring the dispute to arbitration. Angered over the Center's

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- 35. For the dependence of the unions on the educational facilities at Mönchen-Gladbach, see August Pieper to Vicar General Kreutzwald at Cologne, 5 November 1901, Generalia 23.2, Vol 3, Erzb. Registratur Köln. See also Brust's remarks in the socialist Bergarbeiter-Zeitung, 3 December 1904 (clipping in Reg. D. 9055, H.S.A Düsseldorf).
 - 36. See the socialist Arbeiter-Zeitung, 21 August 1906 (clipping in Reg. D. 9058, H.S.A. Düsseldorf).
 - 37. Irate clerics in Trier certainly felt this way. See the Trierische Landeszeitung, 23 January 1901 (clipping in the Hohn Papers, Ergänzungsband 2, St. A. MG).
 - 38. Carl Bachem to Julius Bachem, 17 November 1905, Bachem Papers 229, H.A. Köln.

acceptance of trade unionism, a few of the most influential Coesfeld owners withdrew their support from the official Center candidate during the elections of 1903, but without the workers' votes, the employers' bid was unsuccessful.³⁹

Trimborn's reorganization of the Rhenish Center Party that winter was another indication of the growing importance of Christian labor within the party. The progressive-minded lawyer created a hierarchy of local and district secretariats controlled by a central commission in Cologne, giving Catholic laborers numerous seats.⁴⁰ But it was the district nomination committee, heretofore the autonomous decision-making body in selecting Reichstag candidates, which Trimborn wanted most to reform.

The social and political articulation of the electoral body (Wahlkörper) should find the fullest possible expression in the district committee. One important consideration is the representation of the working class in the committee, as for example, the Crefeld nominating committee has already done. Present leaders and their close associates frequently raise the objection that the local apparatus will become top-heavy and hard to handle, that one has to avoid [class] friction, that the interests of the workers and the small man have been sufficiently cared for by the committees as are, etc. There may be much truth in this--but the signs of the times cannot be ignored. Our people are not satisfied when something is done for them; rather, it must be done with them. They want to participate, not merely say thanks. The circumstances which can follow from the expansion of the electoral committee are a much smaller evil than the anger which will follow from the exclusion [of the workers]. The electoral committees must be lubricated with a large drop of democratic oil, namely, before the upcoming election campaign, which [will bring] a shrewd stirring-up of dissatisfaction and particular interests [by the S.P.D.].⁴¹

Trimborn was clearly trying to stave off disaster at the polls.

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39. Schiffer to Carl Bachem, 25 October 1902, Carl Bachem to Schiffer, 27 October 1902, Carl Bachem to Franz Brandts, 30 October 1902, Carl Bachem to Schiffer, 30 October 1902, Carl Bachem to Schiffer, 30 October 1902, Bachem Papers 169, H.A. Köln; Augustinusblatt, No. 11, November 1902, St. Bib. MG; Lipphaus to Herald, 8 June 1903, Stocht to Herald, 10 June 1903, Herald Papers 1, B.A. Koblenz.
40. The statutes of the Rhenish Center are located in the Bachem Papers 190, H.A. Köln.
41. Karl Trimborn, "An uns selbst", undated clipping (November 1902) from the Niederrheinische Volkszeitung, in ibid.

The effects of his appeal were negligible in the Rhineland. Local committees supported Richard Breidebach, leader of the Christian miners of Siegen, in Wetzlar-Altenkirchen, while the Duisburg party nominated Franz Wieber's colleague Christian Kloft. Hard-pressed committees in Westphalia were somewhat more accommodating. Joining an aging Gerhard Stötzel in Essen as Center candidates were Schiffer in Alten-Iserlohn and Brust's colleague, Theodor Berse, in Bochum-Gelsenkirchen. Some progress was also registered in Bavaria, seat of the second largest concentration of Christian unionists in Germany, where a significant number of labor delegates were nominated to the annual convention of the Bavarian Center in January 1903.⁴²

In return, Schirmer and his followers issued a statement praising the work of the Reich and Bavarian Center Fraktionen, but urging continued progress in the area of labor representation.⁴³ The Center was also repaid handsomely for its consideration of the unions in Western Germany. In addition to the four Christian unionists running for the Reichstag, Giesberts, Brust, and union secretaries from every "local" of the Gesamtverband campaigned energetically for the Center. As a result of these efforts, the Center was able to reduce the effect of S.P.D.'s anti-tariff propaganda among Catholic workers. Catholic Arbeiterverein members and the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung campaigned for the Center too, but, as Pieper explained to parish priests in western Germany after the elections, no one should doubt who had performed the real yeoman's service:

During the recent Reichstag elections the Catholic members of the Christian trade unions were the most vigorous and sacrificing agitators for the Center Party, even if, naturally, outside of the unions as such... All political work for the Center will be without effect, therefore, if we don't provide for a powerful development of the Christian trade unions... The Center Party, in those areas where its mandates depend on labor votes, will lose these seats in every case in the near future if the Christian trade unions do not keep the Catholic workers away from the Social Democrats.

42. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 91, 29 January 1903.

43. Ibid.

The threat from the S.P.D., Pieper concluded correctly, was "the Achilles heel of the Center Party".⁴⁴

The growing importance of the Christian trade unions to the Center also caused a noticeable shift in the party's stance to social reform. The Center's record in this area had been quite sporadic since the 1870's. Not until 1877 did Windthorst and Reichensperger yield to the Christian-socialists and introduce the ill-fated Galen bill. Proccupation with the Kulturkampf and the continued opposition of Catholic employers had delayed the action for seven years. Paradoxically, the government's initiatives in the 1880's encouraged the Center to return to its oppositionist stance. The centralized nature of Bismarck's reforms caused fears of enhanced Prussian, or as many Centrists saw it, anti-Catholic tendencies in Germany. The 1890's witnessed little improvement. In 1895 the Center very nearly supported the Kaiser's anti-labor "Umsturzvorlage" in return for religious concessions, and in 1899 the party once again came close to accepting William's Prison Bill. Only the protests of the Bavarian deputies, who faced a tough electoral battle against the S.P.D. that summer, prevented the party from accepting one of the most reactionary pieces of legislation ever presented to the Reichstag.⁴⁵ However, with the rise of an organized Christian proletariat in the early 1900's, and the continued growth of the Center's great rival on the left, the workers could no longer be taken so lightly. Thus the Center's national executive committee was careful to consult the Christian trade unions in preparing the party's election proclamation (Wahlaufruf) in 1903, and most of the workers' demands were incorporated in the document.⁴⁶

44. Präsides-Korrespondenz, Nos. 9-10, October-November 1903, pp 266-68, St. Bib. MG.

45. Count Lerchenfeld, Bavarian Envoy in Berlin, to Minister-President Crailsheim, 8 August 1899, bes. Berlin, Pol. Schriftwechsel 1070, G. St. A München.

46. August Pieper to Adolf Gröber, 30 March 1903, Bachem Papers 193, H.A. Köln; Bachem, Zentrumsparthei, Vol 7, pp 457-60.

As will be seen in the next chapter, the Center was also quick to follow through with a social legislative initiative in the fall of the same year.

By the elections of 1903, therefore, the Christian trade unions had gained an influential political ally in the Center Party. But in the process rival organizations were supplied with even more "proof" of the Gesamtverband's affiliation with the Center. The effect on membership was devastating. The old nemesis of confessional hatred kept thousands of Protestant workers from joining, while many others were alienated by the unions' association with higher tariffs. The Gesamtverband's loss, of course, was the General Commission's gain. From mid-1902 to mid-1904, a period of economic upswing dominated by the tariff debate and numerous state and national elections, the Christian national federation grew slowly from 86,400 to about 100,000. The free trade unions, on the other hand, rose meteorically from 681,100 to slightly over 1,000,000. The Gewerkverein, recognized by friend and foe alike as the backbone of the Christian labor movement, was unable to make further headway in the Ruhr, stagnating at a membership of about 34,000 from 1901 to mid-1904. The Alter Verband rose from about 15,000 in 1901 to a level even with the Gewerkverein in the Ruhr by mid-1903. A year later the Socialist organization boasted over 48,000 members.⁴⁷

The jolting experience of the merger controversy, the bitter in-fighting over tariffs, and the mixed blessing of the Reichstag campaign of 1903

47. For the statistics cited above, see Landratsamt Duisburg-Mühlheim 481-82, HSA Düsseldorf; police commissioner of Essen to the Regierungspräsident, 7 September 1903 and 29 August 1904, Reg. D. 9054-55, HSA Düsseldorf; Protokoll der Verhandlungen des V. Kongresses der christlichen Gewerkschaften Deutschlands (Cologne, 1904), p 34; Varain, Freie Gewerkschaften, p 36. For the political and confessional reasons behind Christian membership stagnation, see police commissioner of Düsseldorf to the Regierungspräsident, 1 September 1904, police commissioner of Essen to the Regierungspräsident, 7 September 1903, 29 August 1904, and 21 September 1904, in Reg. D. 9054-55, and the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf to the Minister of the Interior, 15 November 1904, Reg. D. 9041, HSA Düsseldorf.

have changed the complexion of the Christian labor movement. From dreams of dominating the trade union world and forging a strong new political coalition, the unions now found themselves far behind their rivals, bobbing rather dubiously in the wake of the Center. Despite the fact that Center committees had nominated a few Christian unionists, moreover, not one had been elected. The situation, vowed Gesamtverband leaders, would be different in 1908. Indeed the instrument for revitalizing the political and economic position of Christian labor had already been formed by the fall of 1903. These efforts will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 7

THE FRANKFURT WORKERS CONGRESS OF 1903

The non-socialist workers' congress which had been under discussion since 1900/1901 was finally held at Frankfurt a. M. in late October 1903. By demonstrating their loyalty to the Kaiser and dissociating themselves from the S.P.D., the 620,000 laborers represented there hoped to facilitate reform of Germany's rigid laws of assembly and association, obtain legal, corporate status for trade unions, and promote establishment of management-labor chambers. The Christian trade unions had taken part in most of the preparations for the congress and were undoubtedly the most prestigious organization in attendance. The Gesamtverband, however, was not responsible for initiating the mass demonstration. Hard-pressed by serious internal and external difficulties, Christian leaders had postponed their socio-political plans indefinitely by 1902.¹ The prime mover behind the Frankfurt Congress, in fact, was Adolf Stöcker's Christian-Social Party.

As explained earlier, the Christian-Socials turned increasingly to the workers for political support after the early 1890's. By the turn of the century, these efforts were beginning to bear fruit. The Kölnische Volkszeitung spoke for all progressive Catholic circles when it welcomed the pro-labor position of Stöcker's Evangelical faction in June 1900,² and in a few overwhelmingly Protestant areas like Detmold, Siegen, and

1. Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 19, 21 September 1903.

2. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 512, 5 June 1900.

Dillenburg, this friendly relationship resulted in close ties between union locals and Christian-Social Party cells (Ortsgruppen).³ Nowhere were these links closer than in Berlin, heart of Protestant Germany and home of Stöcker's original movement. The Freie Kirchlich-soziale Konferenz, a Christian-Social version of the Volksverein, established its first Volksbüro there in October 1899, recruiting Franz Behrens, an Evangelical unionist and Stöcker devotee, as bureau chief. The new agency was instrumental in forming the Berlin Cartel of Christian Trade Unions in July 1900, and actually performed the administrative functions of that body for the first few months.⁴ In November 1901, moreover, Behrens and Konferenz General Secretary Lic. Reinhardt Mumm united the Berlin Cartel, the Protestant and Catholic Arbeitervereine, the local branches of the Hamburg-based Association of Patriotic Retail Clerks, and a few lesser worker groups in a political organization designed to exert influence on city councils and elect Christian workers to industrial courts, health insurance committees (Krankenkassenvorstände), and other social institutions. The Committee for Labor Elections and Social Affairs, as the Christian-Socials' new group was called, expanded its activities to the national level in October 1902 by establishing a secretariat in Berlin to represent the views of Christian workers before the Reich Insurance Office.⁵

3. Dietrich von Oertzen, Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben (Berlin: Verlag von Edwin Runge, 1915) pp 129-33; Protokoll des 7. christlich-sozialen Parteitages in Mülheim a.d. Ruhr am 23. Sept. 1903, p 5, St. Bib MG (Hereafter cited as: CS Protocol 1903).

4. Dietrich von Oertzen and Franz Behrens, Patriarchalische Verhältnisse und modernes Arbeitsrecht. Mit dem Geschäftsbericht des Generalsekretariats und einem Überblick über die 10. Hauptversammlung der kirchlich-sozialen Konferenz (Berlin: Verlag der vaterländischen Verlags- und Kunstanstalt, 1905), pp 9, 11, (Hereafter cited as: kirchlich-soziale Konferenz: Geschäftsbericht 1905); Franz Behrens, "Franz Behrens", in 25 Jahre christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 155-57.

5. For the Committee for Labor Elections and Social Affairs, see Franz Behrens, "Franz Behrens", p 158; and Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 16, 11 August 1902, and Nos. 24-25 for 31 November and 14 December 1903.

As Stöcker observed in 1903, however, the party had much more work ahead of it. The Christian-Socials would never achieve dramatic success at the polls until they established a much closer relationship with the Christian trade unions in western Germany and promoted a program of "energetic, organized, sustained social action"⁶ throughout the Reich.

The decision to push ahead with the German Workers Congress must be viewed as part of this overall effort. The idea originated with Mumm and Behrens, and was quickly seconded by Francke and Berlepsch of the Society for Social Reform.⁷ As Mumm explained later, however, only workers were to play an overt role during the proceedings.

The genuine proletarian nature of the rally was to be represented plainly for all those who spoke so readily of [the Christian workers as] 'a gang of puppets' (Gängelband). Also, if rights were to be demanded for the workers, it seemed morally correct that the workers themselves offer public proof of their readiness to attain these new rights.⁸

Preparations for the Congress were therefore placed solely in the hands of Behrens, who took up the matter with the executive board of the Committee for Labor Elections and Social Affairs on 14 January 1903.⁹

The board accepted Behrens' proposals and agreed that he should approach Max Hirsch, leader of the Hirsch-Duncker unions, and Ludwig Weber, chairman of the National Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine.

The Berlin representatives of the Patriotic Retail Clerks and Catholic Arbeitervereine would speak with their respective leaders, Wilhelm Schack and Lic. Fournelle, while Ernst Francke, who was also present at the meeting, was chosen to formulate a public proclamation (Aufruf) and draw

6. CS Protocol 1903, p 4.

7. Francke to Berlepsch, 15 January 1903, Berlepsch Papers 36, Z St. A Merseburg. See also the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 1012, 30 December 1903, for Francke's denial that the Society for Social Reform was the prime mover behind the Congress.

8. Reinhard Mumm, "Ausbildungskurse", Die Arbeit, No. 34, 20 August 1910.

9. Francke to Berlepsch, 15 January 1903, Berlepsch Papers 36, Z St. A Merseburg.

up a tentative agenda. The National Social Christian Tischendöffer had already taken the liberty of informing Giesberts about the Congress. To heighten the impact of the Congress, it was scheduled for late May or early June 1903, shortly before the Reichstag elections.¹⁰

But the Congress was to be much more than a one-time electoral demonstration. In keeping, no doubt, with earlier talks between Catholic and Protestant labor leaders, Mumm and Behrens hoped that permanent ties could be established once non-socialist laborers had assembled in the same hall. Just as Protestants, Catholics, trade unionists, and Arbeitervereinler had come together in Berlin, so should the national organizations cooperate to attain common political goals.¹¹ At the helm of the Congress, exhorting the non-socialist proletariat to push for goals that for years had eluded the Society for Social Reform, would be the Christian-Socials' own Franz Behrens. Here was 'energetic, organized, sustained social action' par excellence.

The decision of the Christian trade unions to join the other organizations at Frankfurt can probably be attributed to the forcefulness and new-found influence of the Gesamtverband's General Secretary, Adam Stegerwald. The enthusiasm of the former cabinet-maker's apprentice for the Christian-Social initiative stemmed from a deep-seated hatred of the free trade unions, whose backers had always insulted him, as well as from a strong-felt aversion to the S.P.D., which he felt would lead the working class to ruin by provoking the wrath of the Kaiser.¹² Stegerwald was also pleased with the thoroughly secular nature of the demonstration. "When Leo XIII let Christian democracy fall in 1901", he recalled years later, "I spoke no more of the church's social teachings as a creative system of thought... Rather, I promoted all-German social politics, hoping that

10. Ibid.

11. See Behren's remarks at Frankfurt, Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Deutschen Arbeiterkongresses (Hagen: Verlag von Otto Rippel, 1903), pp 71-72.

12. Adam Stegerwald, "Adam Stegerwald", in 25 Jahre christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung, pp 134-35, 137.

here creative energies could be found and developed."¹³ The idea of a German Workers Congress, furthermore, was in keeping with the General Secretary's dislike for the narrow, provincial "Kirchturmspolitik" of many Catholic and Evangelical labor leaders.¹⁴ It was not surprising, therefore, that Stegerwald defended Behrens' plan and soon established a close working relationship with the Stöcker advocate. The politics of interconfessionalism had found two determined champions.

After the positive response from western Germany, Behrens arranged a caucus between representatives of the Hirsch-Duncker unions (110,000), the Gesamtverband (93,000), the Evangelical Arbeitervereine (71,000), and the Catholic Arbeitervereine of southern (66,000), western (63,000), and eastern Germany (45,000). The Christian organizations had united beforehand on an agenda for the Congress proposed by Francke and Berlepsch, and were hopeful that the liberal unions would follow suit. The liberal spokesman, Hirsch's second-in-command, Carl Goldschmidt, had no objections to an agenda that included coalition and assembly rights, recognition of the corporate status of trade unions, and management-labor chambers. He therefore announced that his organization would also participate. A

13. Stegerwald to Thomas Esser, 5 June 1940, Kl. Erw. 471-72, BA Koblenz. The Encyclical Graves de communi, issued on 18 January 1901, was interpreted by many, Stegerwald included, as a reversal of the support for social reform announced by the Pope in Rerum Novarum. This was not the case, but Leo's warning that "Christian democracy" was incompatible with the concept of a Volksstaat where all citizens possessed equal social and political rights was well-suited to disillusion social reformers like Stegerwald. The fact that Stegerwald was auditing Lujo Brentano's courses in economics and political science at the University of Munich that winter must have further influenced the young unionist to think solely in terms of a secular approach to politics. See Adam Stegerwald, "Adam Stegerwald", p 135. For Graves de communi, see Hubert Jedin (ed.), Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte, Vol 6, Part 2, pp 243, 250-52.

14. Der deutsche Holzarbeiter, No. 10, 1900, cited in Gasteiger, Christliche Gewerkschaften in Süddeutschland, p 277.

provisional committee led by Behrens and Stegerwald was formed to finalize arrangements.¹⁵

Unfortunately for the Christian organizations, Goldschmidt was not the real power in the Hirsch-Duncker organization. Until his death in 1905 Max Hirsch was the only decisive voice on the central committee (Zentralrat), and the aging founder of the liberal unions had nothing but contempt for those who had dragged Christianity into the labor movement. Hirsch had no desire to send a representative to the caucus in Berlin in March 1903 and did so only because he could not avoid the meeting. Representatives of the various labor groups were already in the capital for the general commission session of the Society for Social Reform.¹⁶ Nor did Hirsch feel afterwards, unlike Goldschmidt, that all barriers to participation at Frankfurt had been removed. The union patriarch saw no reason why he should cooperate with labor organizations "that are not really neutral and neglect or even fight against other goals which are highly important to the workers"¹⁷--a thinly veiled reference to the tariff issue. He also considered management-labor chambers a "dubious"¹⁸ institution which could easily be turned against trade unions. Despite repeated entreaties by Berlepsch,¹⁹ therefore, Hirsch refused to join the

15. Zentralblatt der christlichen Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, No. 22, 4 November 1907, (Hereafter cited as: Zentralblatt); Paul Umbreit, Die Gegnerischen Gewerkschaften in Deutschland (Berlin: Verlag der Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, 1907), p 125; Bericht über die Verhandlungen des zweiten Deutschen Arbeiter-Congresses (Cologne: christlicher Gewerkschaftsverlag (Adam Stegerwald), 1907), p 66.

16. Zentralblatt, No. 22, 4 November 1907; Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 6, 23 March 1903.

17. Hirsch's explanation is printed in the Zentralblatt, No. 22, 4 November 1907.

18. Ibid.

19. Francke to Berlepsch, 20 and 30 September 1903, Berlepsch Papers 36, Z St. A Merseburg.

other organizations. The Hirsch-Duncker steering committee seconded him at a session in late spring 1903.²⁰

The members of the provisional committee were greatly shaken by the Zentralrat's refusal and momentarily considered canceling their plans. Without the Hirsch-Duncker unions, the largest single organization in the bourgeois labor movement, the demonstrative effect of the Congress would be greatly reduced. In mid-June, however, it was decided to proceed without the liberals in the fall. Emotion played a great role in the decision. The initial feeling of depression soon turned to anger at the Hirsch-Duncker Zentralrat, stiffening Christian leaders in their resolve to go it alone. Confidence increased during the summer as more and more enthusiasm for the venture was evidenced in other sectors of the non-socialist labor world. The Provisional Committee received positive replies to its inquiries from the Catholic Gesellenvereine (60,000), Schack's white collar employees (47,000), the Trier Railwaymen (54,000), Württembergian and Bavarian transport workers (30,000), and a vast array of independent Arbeitervereine and factory clubs totalling about 75,000. With this additional support, the Provisional Committee could feel confident that the Congress would have a significant impact on public, and hopefully, official opinion. A show of non-socialist labor strength seemed particularly crucial, moreover, after the Socialist electoral victories that June. With rumors circulating that social reforms would be discontinued and universal suffrage abrogated to punish the "ungrateful" workers, it seemed hightime to advertise the fact that hundreds of thousands of German proletarians, though upset by the lack of certain social reforms, were nevertheless loyal to Kaiser and Reich.²¹

Tact was indeed the best policy in the summer of 1903. For, significantly enough, the Reich Chancellor had begun to take a greater interest in social reform than heretofore. Bülow's change of heart, as so many of

20. No rationale for the refusal was given to the provisional committee of the congress at this time. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Deutschen Arbeiterkongresses, p 13.

21. Ibid., pp 5-10, 13-14; Zentralblatt, No. 22, 4 November 1907.

his decisions, was based largely on opportunistic considerations. To survive politically, Bülow had to achieve success on those issues most important to the Kaiser. These, in 1902/03, were the Midland Canal, passage of tariff and commercial treaty bills, and, most important of all, completion of the fleet. William was not satisfied with the level of naval construction in 1903 and was already demanding a third naval bill financed from increased taxation of tobacco, beer, and brandy. Bülow knew full well that passage of tariff, naval, and tax bills in the Reichstag would require a series of quid pro quo agreements with the various parties, especially the Center, which occupied the pivotal position in parliament. Center demands for repeal of the anti-Jesuit laws, payment of Reichstag deputies, and new social legislation, however, would meet considerable opposition in the Bundesrat. Flirtation with the Catholics would also infuriate the reactionary clique of courtiers surrounding the Kaiser. Bülow had never been popular in these circles and was greatly concerned that their intrigues would someday spell disaster for him.²²

With powerful adversaries in government and the Kaiser's entourage, Bülow had no recourse but to convince William of the need for parliamentary concessions. If it were clear that the Emperor favored passage of certain bills, reactionaries at court would be foiled and opposition in the Bundesrat mollified. The chancellor took every opportunity in the winter of 1902/03, therefore, to persuade the Kaiser to support repeal of the anti-Jesuit Laws. And, to bolster the monarch's sagging confidence in the efficacy of social reform, Bülow arranged a number of audiences for Dr. Adolf Harnack, Stöcker's activist counterpart among the liberal theologians. It was surely no coincidence, moreover, that Georg Hinzpeter

22. This paragraph is based on the diary entries of the reactionary Count Alfred von Waldersee for 11 January, 19 January, 8 December, and 13 December 1903. Heinrich Otto Meisner (ed.), Denkwürdigkeiten des General-Feldmarschalls Alfred Grafen von Waldersee (Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1923), Vol 3, pp 200-02, 222-23.

began to correspond with William again on a regular basis.²³ In a system which bred intrigue, Bülow could play with the best.

These efforts were not without effect. In early 1903 the chancellor expressed confidence that the Kaiser's antipathy toward the Jesuits was yielding to the dictates of political reason.²⁴ Bülow also won imperial approval for payment of Reichstag deputies.²⁵ Furthermore, there were positive signs concerning social reform. At the traditional reception of the Oberpräsidenten in Berlin on New Year's Day 1903, William advocated some form of state-recognized vocational representation for the workers²⁶ and predicted that they could be won away from the S.P.D. if treated "in a benevolent fashion".²⁷ During the Reichstag speech on 20 January 1903, Bülow informed the startled deputies that the Kaiser was firm in his belief that German laborers should have equal rights. Significantly enough, these rights "would find their expression in the law".²⁸ So confident was William that the workers would not desert the monarchy, in fact, that he treated the election results of June very nonchalantly. Bülow's archrival, Field Marshal Alfred Waldersee, noted shortly before the run-off elections (Stichwahlen) that William placed too much store in the hurrahs of the masses and "believes he has the recipe to win the workers."²⁹ The Kaiser seemed to have revived the Volksmonarchie which had given rise to such great hopes at the outset of his reign.

23. See Waldersee's entries for 11 January, 19 January, 2 February, and 8 February 1903, in ibid., Vol 3, pp 200-02, 205, 207.

24. Waldersee entry for 19 January 1903, in ibid., p 201.

25. Waldersee entry for 4 February 1903, in ibid., p 206.

26. See the remarks of Reich Secretary of the Interior Posadowsky before the Prussian Ministry of State on 26 January 1904, Reichskanzlei, Nr. 532, Bl. 38-45, Z St A Potsdam. The Kaiser promised the workers "eine geordnete Vertretung ihrer Fachinteressen", which was a clear reference to management-labor chambers.

27. Waldersee entry for 11 January 1903, in Meissner (ed.), Alfred Grafen von Waldersee, Vol 3, p 200.

28. Reichstag Debates, Period 10, Session 2 (20 January 1903), p 7430.

29. Waldersee entry for 21 June 1903, in Meissner (ed.), Alfred Grafen von Waldersee, Vol 3, p 217.

By mid-summer, however, this positive state of mind had begun to yield to the pessimistic, gloomy arguments of those in court, military, and Conservative Party circles.³⁰ During a cruise in the North Sea in early August, the recitation of a recent article concerning the political events of 1848 sent William into a fit of "pathological violence"³¹ over the coming revolution and the need to suppress it brutally. Far from deserving equal rights, the masses were now described as "beasts that can only be controlled and directed by very definite orders".³² The Kaiser soon returned to a more optimistic point of view, but, as Bülow learned from the courtier, Count Eulenburg, a relapse was not unlikely. "You will--with a certain amount of justice--answer the question, 'How is H. M.?' with 'Going strong! The trip has done him good!... But when you are in bed at night...you will probably torment yourself and wonder how much longer you will be able to say that.'³³

Bülow must have had doubts of his own that year concerning the firmness of William's conviction to the cause of social reform, for the Chancellor made no legislative initiative along these lines in the session of 1902/03. To the inquiries of subordinates concerning Trimborn's demand for management-labor chambers in March, Reich Secretary of the Interior Posadowsky replied that action would have to be postponed "indefinitely" (bis auf weiteres).³⁴ A Reichstag resolution that same month concerning introduction of a bill in the 1903/04 session guaranteeing trade unions

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30. The mood at court is described well by Count Robert Zedlitz-Trützschler, Twelve Years at the Imperial German Court (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1924), pp 50-53.
 31. Bernhard von Bülow, Memoirs of Prince von Bülow (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1931), Vol 1, p 707.
 32. Ibid., p 707.
 33. Eulenburg to Bülow, 9 August 1903, reprinted in Johannes Haller, Philip Eulenburg: The Kaiser's Friend (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), pp 160-61.
 34. Posadowsky's directive of March 1903 was cited by Regierungsrat Spielhagen in a report of 15 November 1903, in Reichsministerium des Innern, Nr. 6765, Bl. 239, Z St A Potsdam.

corporate status met with the same negative results.³⁵ The government's disposition began to change, however, with the news on 7 September that a congress of non-socialist workers would be held in late October.³⁶ As Francke learned from an informant in the Reich Chancellery, the Aufruf bolstered Bülow's confidence at a critical moment. By pointing to hundreds of thousands of loyal workers, he would reduce the influence of reactionary anti-labor elements at court.³⁷ The news about the Congress coincided with other related developments that increased the pressure on Bülow to act. Although the evidence is not conclusive, it seems that Center leader Peter Spahn told Bülow during their talk at Norderhey in early September that the Center would introduce a resolution reflecting the Congress' demands in December.³⁸ Not to be outdone by the Christians, moreover, Hirsch-Duncker leaders decided to submit a separate petition at the opening of the fall session of the Reichstag.³⁹ Sufficiently impressed, Bülow informed Posadowsky in mid-October 1903 that he could begin preliminary work on a bill granting trade unions corporate status.⁴⁰

The chancellor also received Francke for a confidential discussion a few days before the delegates assembled at Frankfurt.⁴¹ The chancellor sympathized with most of the workers' demands and had no objections to receiving a delegation after the completion of the proceedings. Bülow asked only

35. Klaus Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung im Kaiserreich (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann Universitätsverlag, 1974), p 37.

36. See Posadowsky's circular to the Prussian Ministry of State, 29 October 1906, Reichskanzlei, Nr. 533, Bl. 71, Z St A Potsdam.

37. Francke to Berlepsch, 30 September 1903, Berlepsch Papers 36, Z St A Merseburg.

38. For evidence on Spahn's annual meetings with Bülow, see Dr. Martin Spahn, "Das Jahr 1906", in Das deutsche Volk, No. 29, 15 July 1928 (clipping in: Bachem Papers 923, HA Köln). The main purpose of these talks was to inform the chancellor of party plans for the upcoming session. It seems highly likely, therefore, that the Center's resolution of December 1903 was discussed.

39. Kölnische Zeitung, No. 983, 21 October 1903. The meeting of the Hirsch-Duncker Zentralrat took place on 1 October 1903.

40. Francke to Berlepsch, 21 October 1903, Berlepsch Papers 36, Z St A Potsdam.

41. Francke describes the conversation in ibid.

that Francke inform him what the workers would say so that he could discuss his reply beforehand with the Kaiser. Largely as a result of Bülow's change of course and the success of intrigues at court, the German Workers' Congress had achieved a certain measure of success before it ever convened.

The debates at Frankfurt did nothing to detract from this auspicious beginning. A telegram was sent to the Kaiser proclaiming the patriotism of the participating organizations, and William, always moved by such testaments of loyalty, returned an encouraging reply. The proceedings were also evidence enough that the workers were "ready" to take on new rights and responsibilities. The three addresses by Giesberts (Management-Labor Chambers), Schiffer (Rights of assembly and association), and Schack (Corporate Status of Trade Unions) were well-reasoned pleas for reform. And, under the able management of Behrens and Stegerwald, all resolutions passed without the friction and dissent one might have expected from such a wide assortment of organizations. Equally impressive was the fact that Behrens found adequate backing for his proposal of permanent political cooperation between the various groups present. The Provisional Committee was transformed into a permanent executive board which would strive for the execution of the Congress' resolutions. The delegates would gather again before fall 1906.⁴²

The response of parties and press reflected the fact that a political force of considerable importance had emerged. Socialist papers continued to speak of "puppets" and "well-behaved children,"⁴³ but the free unions were less anxious to attack the Congress, fearing no doubt that such attacks might backfire.⁴⁴ Much to the dismay of the Hirsch-Duncker unions,

42. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Deutschen Arbeiterkongresses, pp 16, 71-82.

43. Quoted in the Neue Preussische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), No. 503, 27 October 1903.

44. For the free trade union response, see Bergknappe, No. 49, 5 December 1903; and Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 21, 19 October 1903.

Progressive organs were also less critical than heretofore. The Frankfurter Zeitung regarded the independence shown by the Christian workers as a great step forward,⁴⁵ while the Berliner Tageblatt, though pessimistic concerning chances for legislative success, was nevertheless full of praise for the effort.⁴⁶ This positive reaction carried over into National Liberal circles as well. Most party papers echoed the supportive stance of Bassermann and the majority of the Reichstag Fraktion, while the normally conservative Kölnische Zeitung, not wishing to swim against the current of liberalism's "frank approval"⁴⁷ (rundes Einverständnis) of the Congress, expressed a cautious acceptance, too. Center and Christian-Social journalists added their plaudits to those of the Liberals, as did academic and government-oriented papers like Soziale Praxis, Preussische Jahrbücher and the Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung. Reichsbote, an organ representing Stöcker's sympathizers within the Conservative Party,⁴⁸ was equally complimentary.

Generally speaking, however, the German Right regarded the new phalanx of non-socialist proletarians as a highly dubious phenomenon. Iron and steel magnates in the Ruhr and Saar were alarmed by the "radical" nature of the Frankfurt resolutions, as was Henry A. Bueck, Chairman of the Central Association of German Industrialists. The nationalist workers

45. Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 298, 27 October 1903.

46. Berliner Tageblatt, No. 551, 29 October 1903.

47. Kölnische Zeitung, No. 1013, 29 October 1903.

48. For the response of these papers and others. see Kölnische Volkszeitung, Nos. 908, 918, and 927 for 29 October, 1 November, and 4 November 1903.

might think they were opposing the socialists, but if unlimited coalition rights were obtained, the class struggle would only be intensified. Then both owners and loyal workers would be overpowered by the S.P.D.⁴⁹ The Conservatives came to much the same conclusion. Too much emphasis had been placed on rights and not enough on duties at Frankfurt. Freer coalition laws would strengthen the Socialists in the cities and, what was worse, spread their cause to the country. The concept of codetermination embodied in management-labor chambers was also objectionable to Conservatives. The working class, they assumed, was too alienated to work harmoniously with employers.⁵⁰ Like the industrialists, the agrarians had accepted Marx's basic premise: the inevitability of the class struggle. From this vantagepoint it was only logical to conclude that a more liberal political course would not only hasten the coming clash, but also weaken the state's capability to defend itself.

Bülow could not afford to indulge in such views.⁵¹ By late 1903, in fact, pressure on him to introduce social reforms became even greater. A tax reform bill had been presented to the Reichstag in December 1903 which,

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49. Deutsche Industrie-Zeitung, Nos. 44-45, 30 October and 6 November 1903. For the negative response of other business-oriented papers such as Post, the Rheinisch-Westfälische Tageblatt, and the Anti-sozialdemokratische Korrespondenz, see Bergknappe, No. 47, 21 November 1903.
 50. Neue Preussische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), Nos. 503 and 513, 27 October and 1 November 1903. For the negative response of other Conservative papers such as the Deutsche Tageszeitung and Konservative Korrespondenz, see Bergknappe, No. 47, 21 November 1903 and the Kölnische Zeitung, No. 1013, 29 October 1903.
 51. On 27 December 1903 the Conservative Deputy Stolberg urged Bülow to strike against the socialists. (Bülow Papers 107, BA Koblenz). Bülow replied on 7 January 1904 that such an initiative would set the bourgeois parties against one another, ruining his efforts at creating a solid majority for his programs. (Reichskanzlei Nr. 1391-5, Bl. 41, Z St A Potsdam).

for passage, would require careful consideration of Center Party demands.⁵² Too, the obstinate behavior of the Bund der Landwirte had worsened the prospects of Conservative support for the chancellor's commercial treaties.⁵³ Thus Center backing in this area had also become more crucial. With the Kaiser still hesitant on the Jesuit issue, moreover, social reform was the only concession which Bülow could offer Catholics in parliament.⁵⁴ National Liberals and Progressives, it was hoped, would also be beholden. Posadowsky was therefore instructed to urge the various ministries of state within the empire to consider an obliging response to the Frankfurt Congress.

Posadowsky's remarks before the Bundesrat and Prussian Ministry of State in January 1904 were well-suited for the conservative noblemen and patri-cians on these bodies. The day had passed, began the Secretary, when the S.P.D. could be treated with force. Such policies had only helped the party along the way to its present strength. The only recourse was to promote the embourgeoisement of the radical Socialist movement, and the program of the Frankfurt Workers' Congress offered the best chance of doing so. By recognizing trade unions and creating a freer environment for their activities, the government could win the masses from the S.P.D. and force it to adopt moderate views. The price, moreover, would be minimal, for the authorities would maintain adequate controls over the labor movement and could more easily justify action to halt radical activity that violated the workers' new rights and responsibilities. Should Reichstag demand elimination of too many controls, the Federal Council would stand firm.⁵⁵

52. For Bülow's attempts to moderate Center demands, see Bülow to Count Ballestrem, 7 April 1904, Bülow Papers 107, BA Koblenz; and Bülow to Archbishop Kopp, 13 March 1904, Bachem Papers 218, HA Köln.

53. Posadowsky before the Prussian Ministry of State, 26 January 1904, Reichskanzlei, Nr. 532, Bl. 38-45, Z St A Potsdam. Posadowsky was speaking, it must be noted, under authorization (im Auftrag) of Bülow.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

Not everyone agreed. Convinced that the Bundesrat did not have the backbone to resist parliamentary pressure for extensive revisions, Saxony refused to consider any reforms and urged Posadowsky to make a blunt reply to the Center's petition.⁵⁶ But, with the promise of certain anti-Socialist safeguards (Kautelen), Prussian, Bavarian, Badenese, and Hessian ministers joined the other states and bowed to Reich needs.⁵⁷ Trade unions would no longer be required to submit information to the police every three months concerning members and use of funds but the authorities would still have the right to obtain this information on demand--clearly an attempt to intervene against Socialist or any radical activity. The granting of legal personality to trade unions would facilitate the accumulation of greater financial resources, but the state reserved the right to sue unions in the event of illegal activity during strikes. And finally, all state laws requiring the presence of police at trade union rallies and demonstrations would remain in effect, as would restrictive practices against state employees and rural laborers.⁵⁸ On the basis of this tentative agreement, Posadowsky was instructed to draft a Reichstag statement.

Simultaneously, Posadowsky's staff moved past preliminary work and began in earnest to draft a bill on the corporate rights of trade unions (Rechtsfähigkeit der Berufsvereine). Once this bill was enacted, another on management-labor chambers would follow.⁵⁹ The federal states had

56. Report of the Württembergian Bundesrat plenipotentiary Schicker to the Minister-President, 21 January 1904, reprinted in Peter Rassow and Karl Erich Born, Akten zur staatlichen Sozialpolitik in Deutschland (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1959), p 177.

57. Ibid., p 178; minutes of the Prussian Ministry of State, 26 January 1904, Reichskanzlei Nr. 532, Z St. A Potsdam.

58. Posadowsky before the Prussian Ministry of State, 26 January 1904, Reichskanzlei Nr. 532, Bl. 38-45, Z St. A Potsdam.

59. See the report of Regierungsrat Spielhagen, one of Posadowsky's staff members, on 15 February 1904, Reichsministerium des Innern Nr. 6766, Bl. 42, Z St A Potsdam. Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, pp 36-42, 49, errs in concluding that Posadowsky was only concerned with the corporate status of trade unions.

completely reversed their previous (1901) position on this issue in their January session with Posadowsky, undoubtedly because the Kaiser had expressed so clearly his support for some institution joining capital and labor the year before. Considerable opposition was expected from entrepreneurial circles, however, and the Secretary did not want to endanger his Rechtsfähigkeit bill by introducing it simultaneously with management-labor chambers.⁶⁰ No imperial law governing rights of assembly (Reichvereinsgesetz) was possible after the promises made to the federal states, but Posadowsky hoped to incorporate a few minor improvements in his trade union bill.⁶¹ By the spring 1904, the third period of social reform in the history of the Second Reich had begun. The reactionary Waldersee reflected the change of course in his last diary entry on 5 March: "I pray to God that I don't have to live through that which I see coming".⁶²

The Christian workers responsible for these developments were not as well informed about the social-legislative changes underway in Berlin. Corresponding to Bülow's wishes, Francke had mailed the chancellor a copy of the address Behrens would deliver during the reception of the Frankfurt delegation at the Reich Chancellory in December.⁶³ Francke took the opportunity to urge Bülow to strengthen his Reichstag statement of January 1903 by promising that the demands of the Congress would receive "the most serious appreciation in decision-making circles".⁶⁴ Otherwise, "great masses of monarchical laborers"⁶⁵ would be disappointed and the attempt to create a patriotic labor movement would fail. Bülow followed this advice during his meeting with Christian labor leaders on 13 December 1903. The chancellor showed himself surprisingly well-informed

60. Ibid.

61. See the draft of the bill sent to Bülow on 24 June 1904, Reichskanzlei Nr. 532, Bl. 100-162, and the accompanying guidelines (Gründzüge), Bl. 90-99. These documents further underscore the fact that Posadowsky planned a more obliging response to the Congress than Saul believes to have been the case.

62. Waldersee entry for 5 March 1904, in Meissner (ed.), Alfred Grafen von Waldersee, Vol 3, p 232.

63. Francke to Bülow, 3 November 1903, Reichskanzlei Nr. 532, Bl. 13, Z St A Potsdam.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

on matters of social legislation and informed his guests that he "appreciated"⁶⁶ the Frankfurt demands and would consider them carefully.

Not wishing to commit the federal states before they had been consulted, however, Bülow made no further promises.⁶⁷ Posadowsky's Reichstag statement on 30 January 1904 was also rather uninformative.⁶⁸ All that was important was that the Center know its demands were being acted on. Once the legislation were presented to parliament, Bülow was fairly confident that the Reichstag support could be purchased "cheaply".⁶⁹ He had clearly given the Frankfurt delegation a false impression of his intentions.

Christian labor leaders were somewhat suspicious after their reception in Berlin,⁷⁰ but became even more so when Posadowsky, not Bülow, replied to the Center interpellation in January. Was this an indication of Bülow's appreciation for the demands of Christian workers? Posadowsky's unwillingness to commit himself was all the more reason for skepticism concerning the future of social reform.⁷¹ The work of the German Workers' Congress, it appeared, was much farther from completion than the participating organizations had been led to believe.⁷² Even more extra-parliamentary pressure had to be maintained on the bourgeois parties,

66. Bülow's response is quoted in Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 26, 28 December 1903.

67. Ibid.

68. Reichstag Debates, Period 11, Session 1 (30 January 1904), p 610.

69. Posadowsky before the Prussian Ministry of State, 26 January 1904, Reichskanzlei Nr. 532, B1 38-45, Z St A Potsdam.

70. Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 26, 28 December 1903.

71. Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 4, 22 February 1904.

72. The Kaiser's telegram in October, for instance, had given rise to "the best of hopes". See Bergknappe, No. 46, 14 November 1903. For the less optimistic mood after Posadowsky's speech, see the Congress Executive Committee Declaration of 26 February 1904, Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Arbeiter-Kongresses, pp 33-35.

and through them, on the government.⁷³ To acquire a greater measure of direct influence on party decisions, moreover, Christian workers planned to obtain as many Reichstag seats as possible during the next elections. With a united parliamentary front behind the Frankfurt program, the government would be more inclined to make concessions. Future congresses could then continue the work begun in 1903. As Giesberts put it, the Christian-national proletariat had "to keep the iron hot for striking".⁷⁴

73. The remainder of this paragraph is based on Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, Nos. 25-26 for 14 and 28 December 1903.

74. Mitteilungen des Gesamtverbandes, No. 25, 14 December 1903.

CHAPTER 8

CHRISTIAN-NATIONAL "BLOCKPOLITIK"

From 1903 to late 1906, Christian labor leaders attempted to forge a "bloc" in parliament which would be responsive to the social and electoral demands of the movement. Unlike the mood of optimism which reigned in Christian circles at the turn of the century, one detects during these years a definite sense of desperation. The free trade unions offered the worker much more at the union level: a larger strike fund, a greater staff, and the numerical strength to force demands upon employers. To regain the momentum and make the Christian trade unions attractive to the working masses, Christian leaders bargained for a dramatic political success that would bring quick, visible benefits to the skeptical workers. The goal of winning the masses primarily through political, not economic, programs was the major motivating factor for all the efforts discussed in this chapter.

The quest for parliamentary representation was more difficult for Protestants within the Christian labor movement than for their Catholic counterparts. Organized Catholic workers were some 350,000 strong by 1903¹ and could concentrate these forces on one political party. Catholic proletarians also possessed valuable allies at Rhenish Center headquarters in Cologne who could bring pressure to bear on local electoral committees. In contrast, the National Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine was a weak organization sorely divided between quarreling Hirsch-Duncker and

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1. This figure includes Catholic Arbeiterverein members, Catholic Gesellenverein members, and Catholic members of the Christian trade unions.

Christian factions. These divisions, and the persistent confessional prejudices, contributed to the unimportance of the Protestant wing of the Christian trade unions,² and lessened its chance of acquiring political representation. Schack's white collar union boasted a larger following, but was hampered in its search for Reichstag seats by the extreme anti-Semitic views of its chairman. Complicating matters further, the Evangelicals had far fewer qualified labor leaders than the Catholics and lacked a well-developed facility such as the Volksverein to train more. No bourgeois party could be expected to nominate a worker who had never spoken publicly or held office at least at the local level.

Worse still, in order to achieve victory in critical industrial areas like Saxony, the Ruhr and the Saar, this relatively small, untrained force had to unite the conservative, unsympathetic parties of the Right around a lower-class candidate, or else seek Catholic support. The Center, however, had rejected all electoral alliances for the primary elections (Hauptwahl) in 1903 and had only agreed to run-off (Stichwahl) cooperation under intense pressure from Posadowsky.³ The party seemed content to rely on its own strength for parliamentary seats. Evangelical Schwarzseher could be forgiven for seeing only black.

Driven by Stocker's unbounded optimism, Christian-Social leaders were confident that the Evangelical labor movement could overcome these barriers. Party plans were announced at the Christian-Social convention in late September 1903.⁴ The elections three months earlier had witnessed a

2. Of the 95-100,000 unionists in the Gesamtverband in early 1904, about 20,000 were Protestant. August Pieper to Franz Brandts, 23 February 1904, Bachem Papers 215, HA Köln.

3. See Carl Bachem's notation of 19 June 1903, Bachem Papers 198, HA Köln.

4. For this paragraph, see CS Protocol 1903, St Bib MG.

significant political realignment in the western industrial districts. The S.P.D. had defended its seat in Elberfeld-Barmen and siezed Solingen, Lennep-Mettmann, Bochum, and Dortmund from the National Liberals and Progressives. In other districts such as Duisburg and Essen the non-socialist margin of victory had been greatly reduced. The only bourgeois party that actually gained ground were the Christian-Socials. The party won two seats in the Siegerland and garnered nearly 24,000 new votes in the Ruhr--only 3,000 short of the left-liberal Freisinnige Volkspartei.

With continued growth in party membership Christian-Social leaders were sure their voters would represent the margin of victory in many western districts during the next Reichstag elections. From this position of strength, the party could bargain more successfully with the other bourgeois parties. Christian-Social backing for National Liberal, Center, or Conservative candidates in one district would be traded for support from these parties in other areas. Once these alliances had been formed, Stöcker and his followers planned to nominate numerous Evangelical trade unionists. "Not until the Christian-Social Party marches hand in hand with the Christian trade unions", Stöcker proclaimed, "will many labor votes be cast for [us]."⁵ The Christian-Socials were also ready to prevail upon the other Protestant parties to run Evangelical unionists. In areas such as the Ruhr, Sieg, and Saar rivers this goal could be accomplished by threatening to run independently unless "suitable, social-oriented candidates"⁶ were nominated by other parties.

Before the Christian-Socials could run Protestant trade unionists, however, promising workers had to be found, educated, and indoctrinated to the party's views. The problem had first become apparent during the preparations for the German Workers' Congress. Aside from Behrens, only Wilhelm Schack of the related German-Socials was ready to play a major

5. Ibid., p 4.

6. Ibid., p 6.

role at Frankfurt. In order to right this situation, Ludwig Weber solicited a number of charitable organizations for aid in establishing a new agency to begin the task of "educating" Evangelical laborers. These efforts were not without success, but it soon became apparent that the bulk of the operating costs would have to come from other sources. Thus Weber turned to the Prussian Evangelical Church. A petition signed by the Evangelical Arbeitervereine, the Christian-Social Konferenz, and the other social and religious groups Weber had contacted was submitted to the General Synod in mid-October 1903. The Evangelical Arbeiterverein at the Frankfurt Workers Congress sent a petition of their own a week later.⁷

In what was apparently a coordinated effort, Stöcker also approached the General Synod. Together with a group of socially conscious noblemen, the 68-year old evangelist requested Church funding for a variety of new programs designed to halt the exodus of workers from the Church into the S.P.D. Stöcker and his associates also encouraged the synod to lend moral support to all Evangelical social groups that were trying to create "a Christian-national-monarchical countermovement against the Socialists."⁸ The underlying political motivations for the proposal need little comment. As he had for decades, Stöcker assumed that his party would be the sole political beneficiary of any major church effort by Protestants to solve the social problem.

The petition was not wholly successful. Reflecting William II's more generous attitude toward the workers, the Oberkirchenrat and the executive committee of the General Synod pledged 220,000 marks annually for lecture

7. Reinhard Mumm, "Ausbildungskurse," Die Arbeit, No. 34, 20 August 1910; Verhandlungen der fünften ordentlichen Generalsynode der evangelischen Landeskirche Preussens (15 October - 4 November 1903), EKU Archiv Berlin, pp 860-61. (Hereafter cited as: Generalsynode 1903) Reichsbote article of late October 1903, reprinted in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 918, 1 November 1903.

8. Generalsynode 1903, pp 136-37, EKU Archiv Berlin.

tours in industrial areas, social awareness programs for seminary students, more urban missions (Stadtmissionen) and increased spiritual efforts directed at proletarians. However, the church flatly refused to promote the Christian labor movement so as not to become involved in matters of a purely economic or political nature outside the sphere of church responsibility.⁹ It was for reasons such as this that Stöcker and Weber had fought since the 1870's to free the Evangelical Church from the domination of the Prussian Ministry of State.

Weber's efforts to aid Evangelical laborers met with even less success. The Synod's social commission decided not to debate his controversial proposals, opting instead to pass them on to government officials in Berlin for consideration. The commission's spokesman made it quite clear, however, that neither Synod nor Oberkirchenrat were in favor of a special educational agency outside their control. In defiance of these wishes, Weber circulated a declaration among the Synod delegates calling for public contributions. The document was signed by the overwhelming majority of the churchmen and printed in over 100 newspapers.¹⁰ Much to the dismay of the Christian-Socials, the appeal netted less than 4,000 marks, not enough to fund operations for one year. As Mumm observed, the good intentions of the Synod delegates could not hide the fact that "social lethargy"¹¹ was still widespread in Evangelical Church circles. Only after Ernst Francke promised a subsidy from the Society for Social Reform could the Soziale Geschäftsstelle for Evangelical Germany begin work.¹²

During its first year in operation,¹³ the Geschäftsstelle established a library, a legal aid service, a publishing facility, and sponsored

9. Ibid., pp 855-56, 875-76.

10. Ibid., pp 865, 867; Kirchlich-soziale Konferenz: Geschäftsbericht 1905, p 16.

11. Ibid., p 16.

12. Mumm, "Ausbildungskurse".

13. For this paragraph, see Kirchlich-soziale Konferenz: Geschäftsbericht 1905, pp 4-17.

numerous "agitation tours" for Behrens, Mumm, and others. The new agency also took over the Reich insurance secretariat established by the Christian-Social Konferenz in 1902. The most significant contribution to the elevation of the Evangelical proletariat, however, was the six-week training course (Ausbildungskurs) held in Berlin during the summer of 1904. After intense schooling in public speaking, church history, labor relations, the intricacies of Germany's social insurance system, and other subjects, the most capable participants were given charge of newly established Christian-Social Volksbüros in Hagen, Mülheim-Ruhr, Kassel, Bromberg, Berlin, and Breslau. Ten others obtained positions as trade union, co-op, Arbeiterverein or Stadtmission secretaries. With two additional training courses planned for 1905, Christian-Social leaders felt that a cadre of reliable Christian-Social laborites would be ready for campaigning in 1908.

Despite feverish promotional efforts on the part of party, Konferenz, and Geschäftsstelle, however, Stöcker and his associates still lacked the necessary mass backing in 1904 to execute their new political strategy. They were, as the Socialists observed derisively, generals without an army. This situation began to change in early 1905 as a result of developments within the Christian miners' Gewerkverein. Aware that Brust's rough character, overbearing personality, and pro-Center political views had alienated thousands of potential members in Protestant circles, especially after he ran for the Prussian Landtag as a Center candidate in November 1903, the executive committee of the union proclaimed suddenly in late fall of 1904 that he would have to step down. Brust threatened to fight his colleagues at the upcoming session of the Gewerkverein general assembly, but was dissuaded from doing so by Heinrich Brauns and the Gesamtverband executive committee, who knew the Christian labor movement could ill-afford such an embarrassing squabble. A Protestant miner took over the chairmanship, and, in a widely publicized move, Franz Behrens was offered the new post of secretary general. As

leaders of the largest Christian trade union, both were also given seats on the executive committee of the Gesamtverband.¹⁴

Almost overnight the Protestant wing of the movement became a force of respectable magnitude. In mid-March 1905 the Rhenish-Westphalian Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine (30,000) abandoned its ten-year old policy of neutrality toward trade unions and encouraged all non-organized association members to join Christian trade unions. This decision, and the general excitement in western mining districts following the great miners strike of January 1905, explain the fact that 30-40,000 Protestants had joined the Gewerkverein by June. Exact statistics are lacking, but it seems safe to assume that thousands more flocked to other Christian unions in the following months. From the summer of 1905 to the fall of 1906, for instance, the Evangelical associations of Brandenburg, Saxony, Thuringia, Hanover, and Bochum urged their members (25,000) to join unions affiliated with the Gesamtverband. In mid-1906 the federation claimed 245,000 members, 75,000 of whom were probably Evangelical.¹⁵

All that remained for Stöcker, Mumm, and Behrens to do was to recruit this emerging force for the Christian-Social Party. The prospects of success were good. Veteran observers of the labor scene in the Ruhr and northern Sauerland pointed out that the miners' strike had generated so much distrust among Evangelical miners and non-miners alike that National

14. Zentralblatt, No. 2, 29 January 1906; police commissioner of Düsseldorf to the Regierungspräsident, 1 September 1904, police commissioner of Essen to the Regierungspräsident, 21 and 27 September 1904, and 5 November 1904, Reg. D. 9055, HSA Düsseldorf; police commissioner of Bochum to the Regierungspräsident, 1 November 1904 and 16 February 1905, Arnsberg I 82, St A Münster.

15. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 471, 8 June 1905; Regierungspräsident of Arnsberg to the Minister of the Interior, 22 December 1905, Reg. D. 9041, HSA Düsseldorf; Westdeutsche Arbeiterzeitung, No. 29, 22 July 1906 (clipping in: Reg. Arnsberg I 106, St A Münster); Die Arbeit, No. 15, 14 April 1907; J. Windolph, Der deutsche Protestantismus und die christlichen Gewerkschaften (Berlin: Kommissionsverlag des 'Arbeiter,' 1909), pp 18-19.

Liberal labor voters were threatening to vote Christian-Social unless their party ran labor candidates at the next election.¹⁶ Anxious to exploit this angry mood, Stöcker's followers announced in early 1906 that the party would run independently in Mülheim-Duisburg, Essen, Bochum-Gelsenkirchen, Dortmund-Hörde, Hattingen-Witten, and Hamm-Soest.¹⁷ To the south in Altenkirchen-Wetzlar, a coalition of Evangelical and Catholic workers, anti-Semites (German-Socials), and Conservative Party pastors had agreed to support Behrens against the National Liberals in 1908.¹⁸ Victory there would give the Christian-Socials possession of three adjacent Reichstag districts in the Sieg and Lahn valleys. Favorable developments were underway in the Saar too. The region's Chamber of Commerce informed the Regierungspräsident in the fall of 1905 that "the Christian trade unions"¹⁹ had urged the Evangelical Arbeitervereine to join them in backing a Christian-Social candidate in Saarbrücken or Ottweiler-St. Wendel. The idea was categorically rejected by Arbeiterverein chairman Father Nold, who was convinced that the Christian trade unions would merely "deliver the whole region to the Center."²¹ Like other districts in western Germany, nevertheless, the two National-Liberal bastions of the Saar were under seige. A confrontation of major proportions was in the making.

16. See Julius Bachem's comments before the Augustinusverein, 21 February 1905, in the Augustinusblatt, No. 2, (February 1905), St Bib MG; and a letter from National Liberal labor circles printed in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 670, 5 August 1906.

17. Kölnische Volkszeitung, Nos. 38, 171, and 673 for 15 January, 28 February, and 6 August 1906.

18. Landrat of Altenkirchen to the Regierungspräsident, 14 September 1905, 403/8448, LHA Koblenz; Landrat of Wetzlar to the Regierungspräsident, 441/25553, LHA Koblenz.

19. Quoted in No. 5819 (15 January 1906) of the Gewerkschaftliche Nachrichten, a confidential information sheet sent by Saar Chamber of Commerce circles to the Regierungspräsident in Trier, 442/3792, LHA Koblenz.

20. Ibid.

21. Carl Bachem refers to Stegerwald's letter of mid-1904 in a letter to Julius Bachem, 31 December 1904, Bachem Papers 349, HA Köln.

While the Christian-Socials mobilized Evangelical labor for the elections of 1908, Catholic unionists waged an intense struggle to democratize the Center. Thus General Secretary Stegerwald complained bitterly to Julius Bachem that, after years of waiting for nominations to safe Reichstag seats, the Christian trade unions were beginning "to doubt the honorable intentions of leading Centrists."²² There is ample evidence that Catholic unionists were also quite impressed with the rise of the Christian-Socials and wanted the Center to accommodate the emerging party by forming the type of electoral pacts described at the Christian-Social convention of 1903.²³ Bachem and Trimborn, who also looked favorably upon the advancing "Christian-Social colors,"²⁴ and were themselves in favor of a stronger labor wing in the Center,²⁵ had little trouble convincing Stegerwald and other union leaders that their political future lay with the Center.²⁶ But rank and file laborers were harder to reach. By early 1906, in fact, there was already talk among some Christian trade union

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22. As mentioned above (see notes 21 and 22), Christian unionists in the Saar and Siegerland had warmed to the idea of Christian-Social labor candidacies. Also see Stegerwald's letters of 15 and 20 August 1906, in Nos. 701 and 717 (16 and 21 August 1906) of the Kölnische Volkszeitung. Behrens stated on two occasions (Die Arbeit, No. 48, 28 November 1907 and No. 12, 21 March 1908), moreover, that the politics of interconfessionalism had sprung from the workers. The same claim, significantly enough, was made by the Kölnische Volkszeitung (No. 669, 5 August 1906).
 23. Trimborn made the statement to Dietrich von Oertzen, manager of the Christian-Social Geschäftsstelle, in 1904 or 1905. Oertzen to Mumm, 3 June 1916, Mumm Papers 1056, Bl. 84, Z St A Potsdam.
 24. Julius Bachem to Carl Bachem, undated (but before 1 July 1904), Bachem Papers 349, HA Köln.
 25. At the general assembly of Arbeiterwohl on 10 January 1906, for example, Julius Bachem opposed the patriarchal views of Catholic employers and backed the demands of Stegerwald, Giesberts, and Schiffer for the social, economic, and political emancipation of labor. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 27, 11 January 1906; Zentralblatt, No. 4, 26 February 1906.
 26. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des VI. Congresses der christlichen Gewerkschaften Deutschlands (22-24 Juli 1906) (Köln: Verlag des Generalsekretariats, 1906), p 103.

secretaries in western Germany of emulating the British example and forming an interconfessional, non-socialist labor party.²⁷

That Christian trade union national leaders were unwilling to countenance such an independent political stance was not due entirely to Bachem's persuasive, accommodating nature,²⁸ nor was it solely the product of Catholic labor's loyalty to the Center. Equally important was the deepening involvement of Center and Gesamtverband in the so-called "trade union controversy" (Gewerkschaftsstreit). Indeed, since the German Workers' congress of 1903, the fragile, superficial unity between the Christian trade unions and the Catholic countermovement of eastern Germany had rapidly deteriorated. Directly related to Christian labor politics after 1906, these developments deserve more attention at this point in the analysis.

As one of the leaders of the Berlin countermovement stated years later, the controversy between unions and confessional trade sections revolved around "the question of adherence to Thomistic Natural Law."²⁹ To Fachabteilung patrons, the idea of a struggle for power (Machtkampf) between workers and employers stood in direct contradiction to the natural, divine order of things postulated by St. Thomas Aquinas, for the end result of this struggle would be "either the complete subjection of the economically weak to the domination of international capitalism, or else the forcible toppling of all existing cultural relationships."³⁰ The employers' freedom of contract, on the one hand, and the workers' right

27. For Bachem's soothing influence on Stegerwald and other union leaders, see Martin Spahn, "Julius Bachem," Hochland, (April 1918), pp 17-21.

28. See Dr. Heinz Brauweiler's notes of a conversation with Dr. Paul Fleischer, former Reichstag deputy and associate of Franz von Savigny, 13 July 1942, Brauweiler Papers 24, St. A MG.

29. The remainder of this paragraph is based on an undated, unsigned (probably Lic. Fournelle) position paper sent by the Berliners' to church officials in Breslau, Gen. 23. 61., Vol 1, Erzb. Registratur K81n.

30. Ibid.

to strike, on the other, "must therefore remain within the confines of those rights and obligations which, independent of all contracts, are founded on natural law and divine commandments."³¹ Despite the fact that Christian trade union leaders had abandoned "neutrality" and joined other bourgeois labor groups in an anti-Socialist front, therefore, theological differences continued to separate the two Christian organizations. By advocating the strike and denying the "obvious" connection between economic, moral, and religious issues, the Gesamtverband had violated natural law and undermined the stability of state and society. The task of creating an orderly and secure relationship between the various limbs of the social body was primarily the duty of the state, but the church could do its part, argued the Berliners, by instilling in the working class a greater spirit of cooperation and conciliation. This goal would be realized more quickly "if not just individuals, but also free economic organizations let themselves be guided by a religious and moral consciousness based on clear, viable, Catholic principles."³² As Kopp had stated at Fulda in 1900, Catholic labor should become 'the greatest social power in Germany.'

Such confessional chauvinism left little room for compromise. Thus in August 1903, not long after the sections had agreed to participate at Frankfurt, Savigny, Fournelle, and Herman Fleischer, a former school teacher who had become involved with the Catholic Arbeitervereine of Berlin, sent the south German bishops a lengthy memorandum denouncing the Christian trade unions. The bishops were urged to instruct the South German Association of Catholic Arbeitervereine to patronize only craft sections. The memorandum was passed on to Vereine leaders but no specific recommendations were made.³³ This setback, however, did not deter the Berliners. Not long after the

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Bergknappe, Nos. 37 and 43 for 12 September and 26 October 1903.

attempted coup de main in southern Germany, an offensive against the unions was begun in the diocese of Trier. Two large "social-political courses" were held by church officials at Saarbrücken and Koblenz in late October to instruct labor priests and lay leaders in the proper interpretation of Rerum novarum. Savigny, Fournelle, and Fleischer were the main speakers.³⁴ Defenseless against these machinations, union leaders turned to middle and upper-class patrons for support. Stegerwald recruited Heinrich Brauns for the purpose of "openly confronting"³⁵ Fournelle and Fleischer during the social-political course at Koblenz in October, and in November, Karl Trimborn responded to similar pleas from the Christian trade union cartel of Cologne.³⁶ The services of the party, however, were by no means exhausted. Karl Bachem explained in a letter to Hitze.

When...Schiffer, Giesberts, and Stegerwald were here recently for their audience with Bülow concerning the Christian Labor Congress at Frankfurt a.M., I also had a conversation with them about Savigny's intrigues. During this talk I began to wonder if it would be feasible to bring these machinations to an end once and for all by asking Rome to reach a decision over the question: Does Rerum novarum forbid Catholic workers to join Protestants in trade unions and pursue material, class goals?³⁷

Ideally, Bachem continued, a German bishop should assume the responsibility for this effort. "But, as things stand, there is little hope of settling the matter in this way."³⁸ Would it not be possible, therefore, for the Center executive board to champion the unions' cause in Rome? Bachem, Spahn, Gröber, and Trimborn were ready to follow Hitze's lead. Despite

34. Ibid., No. 46, 13 November 1903.

35. Ritter, "Die Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach," Part 6, pp 5-6, Ritter Papers ER/D-16, KfZG Bonn.

36. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 932, 6 November 1903.

37. Bachem to Hitze, 22 December 1903, Bachem Papers 217, HA Köln; also quoted in Rudolf Brack, "Die Bemühungen Karl Bachems und Führender Zentrumspolitiker um eine Beilegung des Gewerkschaftsstreites im Jahre 1904," Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein, Vol 177, (1975), pp 219-20.

38. Bachem to Hitze, 20 December 1903, as cited in No. 43. Bachem was referring to the lamentable divisions within the Fulda Conference over the trade union question. If the new Archbishop of Cologne, Antonius Fischer, spoke up for the unions in Rome, this would only have resulted in counterpetitions from Korum, or perhaps Kopp.

his fears that the scheme could backfire, Hitze eventually agreed. The rest of the Center leadership, though hesitant about taking such a bold move, was also won over by Bachem's pleas of political expediency. A petition was finalized in February 1904 for presentation at the Vatican.³⁹

Savigny had similar ideas. Hoping to elicit a statement of support from the new Pope, Pius X, the conservative nobleman planned to take a few of his most loyal followers on a pilgrimage to Rome. Sensing that Savigny would attempt to exploit the trip, Bachem criticized Savigny's views in the executive committee's petition.⁴⁰ Georg Hertling, who happened to be present in Rome, was also encouraged to do whatever he could to counteract Savigny.⁴¹

Cardinal Kopp was recruited for these efforts, too. Informed of the Center's plans by Hitze in late January 1904, Kopp promised to keep Savigny from making further attacks on the Christian trade unions. Obviously concerned for the political unity of Catholics, the Archbishop was also ready to exert his influence in Rome to forestall any action against the unions. This he did in February. Working through the Austrian ambassador at the Vatican, Johannes Montel von Treuenfels, Kopp advised the Pope to avoid any remarks which would encourage Savigny's one-sided tendencies. Rather, Pius should urge Fachabteilung and trade union to make peace with each other. The Center's petition could be answered in a similar fashion.⁴² According to two reliable sources, the Pope acted on Kopp's recommendations.⁴³

39. Brack, "Die Bemühungen Karl Bachems," pp 221-23.

40. Ibid., p 223.

41. Hertling to Hermann Cardauns of the Kölnische Volkszeitung, 14 March 1904, Kl. Erw. 478-2, No. 5, BA Koblenz; Hertling to Carl Bachem, 24 May 1904, Bachem Papers 215, HA Köln.

42. Carl Bachem's notations of 25 and 26 January 1904, Bachem Papers 217, HA Köln; Brack, "Die Bemühungen Karl Bachems," p 222; Prussian Ambassador at the Vatican Rotenhan to Bülow, 8 March 1904, Deutschland Nr 123, 1, AA Bonn.

43. Ibid. (Rotenhan dispatch); Hertling to Cardauns, 12 May 1904, Hertling Papers 35, BA Koblenz.

The Center's efforts had thus been highly effective. One of Savigny's major patrons had persuaded the Pope, in essence, to guarantee the Christian trade unions the right to exist. Small wonder, then, that Gesamtverband leaders refused to engage in anti-Center activities. This would have been outright folly.

It was a measure of the burning nature of the trade union controversy, however, that both sides to the dispute were quarreling bitterly again before the summer of 1904. The Pope's remarks, ironically enough, only added fuel to the flames. At one point in his address Pius apparently wished the Catholic Arbeitervereine of eastern Germany success in their endeavors, "especially because your association follows religious precepts and works in close contact with the Church and its Bishops."⁴⁴ Though probably taken out of context, the Berliners seized upon this passage as proof that the Pope opposed the Christian trade unions. After consulting officials at the Vatican in May, Hertling informed the Center and Christian trade union press that Pius had only intended to thank the pilgrims for paying homage to him.⁴⁵ Savigny felt he knew otherwise and the polemics continued.

The next half year witnessed no improvement. Preoccupied with other matters, or just poorly informed about the situation in Germany, Pius made no attempt to clarify his views. Thus the German Episcopate was saddled with the responsibility of seeking an end to the feud. The Fulda Bishops' Conference of August 1904 responded to the challenge by passing a resolution which called upon both organizations to cease all attacks.⁴⁶ On at least one occasion that fall, however, Cardinal Archbishop Fischer undermined these efforts with pro-union statements that were then picked up

44. Quoted in Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, pp 77-78.

45. Hertling to Cardauns, 12 May 1904, Hertling Papers 35, BA Koblenz.

46. Kopp to Silesian Center Chief Felix Porsch, 19 August 1904, Bachem Papers 217, HA Köln. For more details of the bishops' conference of 1904, See Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, pp 83-93.

by the Christian trade union press and used against Berlin. "If the Cardinal absolutely had to say something," Kopp complained in December 1904, "then he should have said the whole truth and not just that part which pleases his audiences: the episcopate wishes well to both trade union and trade section... His words, however, have only confused matters."⁴⁷ These developments quickly eroded Kopp's willingness to constrain his subordinates in Berlin. The Christian trade unions, not the Fachabteilungen, were now seen as the most fanatical party.

When, in late January 1906, the Vatican finally reiterated its desire for a termination of all polemics,⁴⁸ the Christian trade unions had lost yet another chance to win broad support among the masses. Stegerwald estimated that the trade union controversy had cost the Gesamtverband at least 100,000 members in the Saar alone. A recruitment drive in Silesia in 1904 was a complete failure. In Berlin 30-35,000 Catholic workers remained aloof, while in Dortmund, Fachabteilungen kept Christian trade union membership at the low level of 3,000. Further losses were registered in the Siegerland, the Eichsfeld, and surrounding cities of Hanover, Hildesheim, and Magdeburg. Indeed, during the 27 months of industrial boom which preceded the Pope's warning (October 1903-January 1906), only 105,000 workers, many of whom were Protestant, had joined the Christian national federation.⁴⁹ As Stegerwald and other union secretaries were quick to

47. Kopp to Korum, 26 December 1904, Korum Papers 378, Bis A Trier.

48. Brack, Deutscher Episcopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, pp 106-12. Each bishop was to decide which organization was best suited for conditions in his diocese.

49. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des VII. Kongresses der christlichen Gewerkschaften Deutschlands (18-21 July 1909) (Cologne: Christlicher Gewerkschafts-Verlag, 1902), p 22; Petition of the Catholic labor association "St.Martin" to Kopp, September 1905, Archiv der katholischen Arbeitnehmerbewegung, Vol 5, KfZG Bonn; August Pieper to Canon Kemper of Warburg, 16 May 1906, Archiv der Katholischen Arbeitnehmerbewegung, Vol 5, KfZG Bonn; Brack Deutscher Episcopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, pp 100-05; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 49, 18 January 1906; Mayor of Gebhardsheim to the Landrat of Altenkirchen, 20 September 1906, and Landrat of Altenkirchen to the Regierungspräsident, 3 June 1907, 441/25554, LHA Koblenz.

point out, the political potential of Catholic labor suffered as a result.⁵⁰

The trade union controversy, in fact, had given rise to worries in union and Center circles that went well beyond the concern described in the preceding paragraph. The Christian trade union Zentralblatt hinted at the nature of the problem in late February 1906:

The trade union question is pressing more and more to a definite decision, not so much for us in the Christian trade unions as for Catholic workers and Catholics in general. The controversy is drawing interest in wider Catholic circles than was at first the case. Socially and politically progressive Catholics are just as uncomfortable with the Berliners' narrow-minded politics of isolationism (Ausschliessungs politik) as the workers and likewise see these developments as dangerous. For in the last analysis, this narrow-minded confessionalism, even if it stays within the bounds of the moral laws of Christianity, means the abrogation of civil, political, and socio-political freedom of action... This has to lead to a confrontation, even a split in the Catholic camp. To forestall such an eventuality, responsible Catholic circles will finally have to intervene with all decisiveness.⁵¹

August Pieper shed more light on the dangers perceived by union patrons in Mönchen-Gladbach and Cologne:

I can attest to the fact that our work in the economic and socio-political area was the first to lead to untroubled, friendly cooperation with serious non-Catholics and arouse in these quarters an unqualified trust... With regard to the Gewerkschaftsstreit I've always emphasized that the maintenance of the non-denominational character of the Christian trade unions... was important mainly because the consequence was the maintenance of the political, non-denominational character of the Center Party... If Catholic workers are forbidden to cooperate with Protestant workers, that means that joint political ventures with non-Catholics also cannot be permitted.⁵²

50. Stegerwald before the Augustinusverein on 13 May 1905, Augustinusblatt, No. 5, May 1905, St Bib MG; also see the remarks of union secretary Inkermann at Dortmund on 20 October 1905, Report of Dortmund Police Department, 20 October 1905, Bestand 3, Stadarchiv Dortmund.

51. Zentralblatt, No. 4, 26 February 1906.

52. Pieper to Carl Bachem, 8 November 1932, Pieper Papers 36, St A Münster.

Indeed by early 1906 the Berliners had already begun to draw the logical political conclusion from their views on the labor question. In Hanover, for instance, Fachabteilung sympathizers were threatening to withdraw electoral support from Protestant Guelphs and form an independent "Catholic Peoples' Party."⁵³ Trends such as this did not augur well for successful electoral cooperation with the Christian-Socials in Rhineland-Westphalia, threatened to undercut the overall political strategy of the German Workers' Congress, and, as Pieper hinted, endangered far-reaching socio-political efforts such as those of Hans von Berlepsch's Society for Social Reform.

Even more discomfoting was the fact that the Berliners' isolationist tendencies played right into the hands of anti-Catholic demagogues whose campaign against the Center had gained in ferocity since Chancellor Bülow had succeeded in effecting a partial repeal of the Jesuit Laws in spring 1904. The dangers of Abschliessungspolitik, many Centrists argued, could be seen in Baden, where National Liberals, Progressives, and Socialists had cooperated to defeat all Center candidates in the state run-off elections of late October 1905. Too, when the Center Reichstag Fraktion entered its usual bill demanding religious tolerance in January 1906, Protestant criticism was angrier and more passionate than ever before. If in the midst of this growing wave of bigotry and religious prejudice even a small number of Centrists succumbed to the Berliners' brand of fervent Catholicism, confessional relations would deteriorate further, Bülow and other leading statesmen would not be able to resist the advice of the demagogic Evangelical League, and a Badenese-like coalition in Berlin, or perhaps even a new Kulturkampf, might result. All Catholics would suffer if things came to this.⁵⁴

53. Carl Bachem to Father Joseph Dahlmann, 1 June 1906, Bachem Papers 254b, HA Köln.

54. Heckart, From Bassermann to Bebel, pp 91ff; Carl Bachem to Joseph Dahlmann, 1 June 1906, Bachem Papers 254b, HA Köln; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 567, 2 July 1906; Julius Bachem to Felix Porsch, 2 December 1910, Bachem Papers 308, HA Köln.

It was in this atmosphere of rising confessional tension outside the Zentrumsturm, and crescendoing class tension within, that Julius Bachem published his controversial article, "We must get out of the Tower" (Wir müssen aus dem Turme heraus!)⁵⁵ The Center's leading strategist did not intend to transform the Center into a broad-based, interconfessional party of the center-right, as one historian has claimed.⁵⁶ The idea was appealing to Bachem, but he considered it beyond the realm of possibility.⁵⁷ In 1906 his major concern was to avert the danger to the party stemming from the trade union controversy by presenting to Protestant Germany the image of a purely political, nondenominational party concerned more with solving the social question than pursuing narrow, religious goals.⁵⁸ One of the best ways to demonstrate the party's real nature and overcome the deep-seated, seemingly insurmountable prejudice of German Protestants would be a series of generous electoral pacts during the Reichstag and Landtag elections of 1908. Local committees were urged to lend primary election support to suitable candidates from Protestant parties, even in districts where the Cener stood a chance to win on its own.

It would be truly impossible to underestimate the advantage [to Catholics] if in this way the various parties of the Reichstag gained more men who were experienced in socio-political affairs, and tolerant, far-sighted, and without prejudice with regard to religion. One thinks about men like Professor Adolf Wagner, Evangelical leaders of the Christian trade unions like Behrens, of the artisans' movement like Jakobskötter... and practitioners of the cooperative movement

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55. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 193, 8 March 1906. The article was originally published in the March number of the Historisch-politische Blätter.
56. Karl Buchheim, Die Geschichte der christlichen Parteien in Deutschland (Münich: Kösel-Verlag, 1953), p 135.
57. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 1060, 18 December 1903, No. 1057, 20 December 1905, and No. 627, 22 July 1906.
58. See the sources cited above in note 54 for evidence that the article was directed at the "confessionalists" within the Center. That his concerns had grown out of the Gewerkschaftsstreit, see the Zentralblatt, No. 20, 2 October 1905, and No. 4, 26 February 1906.

like Geheimrat Kaas, among others. As the last name illustrates, we don't want to exclude liberal candidates as a matter of principle.⁵⁹

Clearly, Bachem's electoral strategy was not unlike that announced by the Christian-Socials at Mülheim in 1903.⁶⁰ In fact, in response to a public challenge from Behrens that the Center should back Evangelical laborers in 1908 if it were serious about the "Turm" article,⁶¹ Bachem asserted that the party would not only nominate labor candidates itself in suitable districts, "but will also gladly support labor nominees of other parties put up against the S.P.D. in areas where the Center, as a minority party, cannot prevail."⁶² The party was especially willing to lend aid to Evangelical unionists "because they have learned to appreciate the advantage of peaceful cooperation between confessions in the Christian trade unions."⁶³ It seems clear, then, that the idea of numerous labor candidacies was an integral part of Bachem's new strategy. The loyalty of the Christian trade unions would be assured and the danger posed by angry rank and file secessionists averted. And in the long run, Bachem's strategy of compromise would also shield the church and Center from another period of discrimination and persecution.

59. This quote is taken from a follow-up article in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 669, 5 August 1906.

60. The conclusion reached by Ronald J. Ross, Beleaguered Tower: The Dilemma of Political Catholicism in Wilhelmine Germany (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1976), p 38, that Bachem, though concerned primarily with tactical objectives, had "as a symbolic gesture" advocated "the large-scale influx of Protestants into the Centrum's ranks," is inaccurate. The Turm article itself called merely for electoral aid for tolerant Protestants, while the April sequel, "Nochmals: Wir müssen aus dem Turme heraus!" went no farther. After election, the Protestants supported by the Center would cooperate closely with Catholics, but "the external form of this relationship" was not seen as "decisive." Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 280, 3 April 1906.

61. Kölnische Zeitung, No. 840, 7 August 1906.

62. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 693, 13 August 1906.

63. Ibid.

Bachem's article was soon the topic of heated debate within the Center Party. Fraktion leaders in Berlin were sharply divided. A majority around Carl Bachem was eager to employ the new strategy, especially in Hanover, but Georg Hertling, Silesian party chief Felix Porsch, and others were afraid the new emphasis on nondenominationalism would not only anger the Pope, but might also weaken religious bonds between Catholics to the point where the party would disintegrate into socio-economic and national (Polish) splinter groups.⁶⁴ The Center press was also split over the issue. So much so, in fact, that the executive board of the Augustinus-Verein felt it wise to postpone indefinitely any discussion of the Turm article.⁶⁵ Nor were local electoral committees in confessionally mixed areas like the Ruhr of one opinion concerning the need to leave the Zentrumsturm. Lambert Lensing, editor of Tremonia in Dortmund, for instance, argued that a sacrifice of Center votes was "absolutely imperative"⁶⁶ for tactical reasons, while Wilhelm Hankamer of the Essener Volkszeitung stubbornly refused to see the logic of abandoning the struggle for domination of the industrial districts.⁶⁷

The idea that potential seats should be sacrificed encountered even greater resistance in Silesia, the Saar, and other strongholds of the Catholic craft section movement. Along with tactical concerns such as the need to rally Polish Catholics, labor priests and politically active clergymen in these areas pointed out first of all that Bachem's strategy would never work. Far from aiding the Catholic cause, electoral agreements with Protestants would only jeopardize the church's position, for Lutherans would never willingly abandon their crusade against ultra-montanism. Rather, the Center should strive to increase its strength, thereby enhancing the bargaining position of church officials in negotiations with the Kaiser

64. Carl Bachem to Joseph Dahlmann, 1 June 1906, Bachem Papers 254b, HA Köln; Georg Hertling to Julius Bachem, 6 April and 10 April 1906, Hertling Papers 56, BA Koblenz; John K. Zeender, "German Catholics and the Concept of an Interconfessional Party 1900-1922," Journal of Central European Affairs, (January 1964), p 428

65. Augustinusblatt, No. 8, August 1906, St Bib MG.

66. Lensing to Herold, Herold Papers 2, 22 November 1906, BA Koblenz.

67. Augustinusblatt, No. 7, July 1906, St Bib MG.

and Reich Chancellor.⁶⁸ These considerations, however, do not explain the extremely bitter response to Bachem's views in the "confessionalist" camp. The determining factor behind this highly negative reaction was the fact that Wir Müssen aus dem Turme heraus was seen as the logical outcome of Bachem's association with and fervent support for the non-denominational labor movement.⁶⁹ In addition to the accusation that Christian trade union leaders propagated dangerous, "unnatural" economic philosophies, the Berliners could now add the charge of religious indifference. Preoccupied with selfish interest group politics, the Christians had forgotten their church. Thus the trade union controversy and the so-called Center controversy (Zentrumsstreit) which began with Bachem's article should not be seen as parallel or related issues. The latter was merely a deeper, more complicated phase of the former.⁷⁰

The ire of craft section supporters increased during 1906 as the Gesamtverband unleashed its own interconfessional political campaign.

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68. Transcript of a conversation between Kopp and Count Oppersdorf, 16 January 1914, Benigni Materials 4, in the Brauweiler Papers 15/13/40, St A MG; Trierische Landeszeitung, 27 May 1909 (clipping in: Hohn Papers 15/2, St A MG); Germania, No. 272, 27 November 1909; Ross, Beleagured Tower.
 69. Herman Cardauns, Julius Bachem, p 11, undated pamphlet in the Ritter Papers 14-3, KfZG Bonn; Athanasius (Adolf ten Hompel), Das Cölner Osterdienstags-Protokoll (Bonn: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei und Verlag, 1909), p 6.
 70. Zeender, "Interconfessional Party," pp 424-39, Rudolf Morsey, Die Deutsche Zentrumspartei 1917-1923 (Dusseldorf: Droste-Verlag, 1966), pp 36-42, and Ross, Beleagured Tower, pp 33-79, overlooked the fact that the Gewerkschaftstreit and the politics of Christian labor after 1903 led directly to the Zentrumsstreit after 1906.

After an open discussion of political tactics that winter and spring,⁷¹ union plans for 1908 were announced by Giesberts at the organization's sixth Congress at Breslau in July. The idea of an interconfessional labor party had to be rejected, he noted, because this approach would alienate the bourgeois parties and put stones in the path of social reform. It would be foolish, moreover, for angry unionists to cast votes for the S.P.D. merely because bourgeois candidates seemed unsuitable. Christian labor influence could be enhanced only by obtaining seats in the bourgeois parties. To accomplish this:

The cooperation (Zusammengehen) of the bourgeois parties will be absolutely necessary in certain areas. Our task is to facilitate this [cooperation] and exert influence such that agreements are reached, above all by the selection of [common] candidates.⁷²

Once elected, Christian trade unionists sitting in different Fraktionen would cooperate closely to insure that party caucuses were presented with uniform social demands. Success with these reforms would discredit the Marxists, fill the sails of the Christian labor movement, and speed it past the free trade unions.

But political influence, especially within three or four different parties, could not be achieved without a mass following. The only way

71. In early November 1905, the executive committee of the German Workers' Congress called upon all member organizations to increase pressure on the bourgeois parties for political representation, Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Arbeiter-Kongresses, pp 38-39. During the first months of 1906, then, the Gesamtverband drew up plans to debate the matter at its upcoming congress. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 346, 25 April 1906. A preliminary discussion of political stratagems was conducted in the Zentralblatt that spring; see Nos. 6-7 and 9 for 26 March, 9 April, and 7 May 1906. These developments, the Zentralblatt statement of February 1906 (quoted above, p 255), and the pro-Christian-Social orientation of Catholic unionists in the Gesamtverband, seem to support the speculation of Ernst Deverlein, CDU/CSU 1945-47 (Cologne: Verlag J. P. Bachem, 1957), pp 28-29, that Bachem wrote the Turm article at the behest of Stegerwald and the General Secretariat.

72. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des VI. Kongresses der christlichen Gewerkschaften, p 104.

around this dilemma, noted Stegerwald in his annual report of June 1906, was to affect "a closing of the ranks"⁷³ (engerer Zusammenschluss) within the German Workers' Congress. In accordance with these needs, an ambitious effort was announced in early October.⁷⁴ The Gesamtverband urged its members to join confessional labor associations if they had not already done so, while the National Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine of western and southern Germany urged their members, likewise, to join Christian trade unions. The proclamation was highly significant, for it was the first time that national leaders of the Evangelical Arbeitervereine had come out in favor of Christian trade unionism. The goal of all these measures was to elevate Gesamtverband membership from the mid-1906 level of 245,000 to a total nearer the Congress' backing of 900,000.

While the new membership drive got underway, Christian unionists pressed the bourgeois parties for a commitment to "Christian-national Blockpolitik," as friends and foes alike dubbed it. Stegerwald, Giesberts, Schiffer, and other labor leaders on the central committee of the Rhenish Center Party had no trouble recruiting that body for the Breslau program in August. Nominating committees throughout the Rhineland were urged to comply with the committee's recommendations. "Where that has not happened," stated Giesberts in early September, "the local leadership is responsible."⁷⁵ The Westphalian party organization was also amenable to the unions' demands for electoral agreements with other parties, but resistance at the local level persisted in this province too. Hankamer of Essen, for instance, was highly critical of the Christian trade unions, referring to them as "outsiders"⁷⁶ who knew relatively little about the exigencies of politics

73. Quoted in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 590, 10 July 1906.

74. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 41, 13 October 1906.

75. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 821, 3 September 1906.

76. Hankamer's remarks are quoted in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 717, 21 August 1906.

in the Ruhr. As it had since 1850's, the Essen organization would "count its votes"⁷⁷ in the primary election of 1908.

Hankamer's remarks elicited a rather interesting reply from Stegerwald. The Gesamtverband's general secretary pointed out angrily that Hankamer's "Kirchturmspolitik"⁷⁸ was not in keeping with the times and would only benefit the Socialists. The unions were also familiar with the Ruhr and would "know how to treat the situation there at the next elections."⁷⁹ Stegerwald challenged Center circles in Essen to another exchange of views on election tactics, but asked that the whole Reich, not just the Ruhr, be considered. "Then the 'outsider' will show that perhaps he knows more about affairs in the German Fatherland, and also in the Center Party, than those in Essen seem willing to admit."⁸⁰ Stegerwald's zeal was apparently too great for Julius Bachem and chief editor of the Kölnische Volkszeitung, Hermann Cardauns. Already anxious to avoid polemics in the Augustinusverein, the two had no desire to unleash the fiery general secretary on the Essen Center Party. They knew it would take years, not months, before Centrists would leave their "tower" and take up a position before the walls, as Bachem's metaphor ran. Thus the differences between Hankamer and the unions were quietly buried toward the end of August and Stegerwald's proposed debate did not take place. That it did not was the first sign that a rift was developing between the Rhenish party and the unions over the pace of advance.

The Evangelical wing of the Christian labor movement was also pushing for realization of the demands raised at Breslau. With Behrens at the helm,

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

of course, this effort was largely indistinguishable from regular Christian-Social politics. The party's plans for the Ruhr, described above, were given final expression in late October 1906. Local committees in the eight largest Reichstag districts of the area were united into a Central nominating association under Behrens' chairmanship in Essen. Evangelical laborers would be run in these districts if the National Liberals, Conservatives, and Center did not nominate suitable candidates of their own. Final preparations were also being made for an extension of this strategy to other parts of Germany. A "Committee for the Election of Patriotic Workers" (Nationalarbeiterwahlausschuss) had been formed that August, once again, under Behrens' leadership. Besides electing Evangelical trade unionists to parliament, the new committee planned to reconcile differences between bourgeois parties and fuse these organizations into an effective anti-Socialist coalition (Zusammenfassung der bürgerlichen Parteien). With the aid of Stöcker, who had approached wealthy friends for financial contributions, the Committee began agitation in Saarbrücken, Frankfurt a.M., Eisenach, Erfurt, Dresden, and Berlin in November. Efforts in other cities were to follow shortly.⁸¹

By early December the Committee had already registered a few victories. Behrens' election in Altenkirchen-Wetzlar seemed assured when the Center promised to cast its votes for him on the first ballot. In Hagen-Schwelm, Reinhard Mumm was able to unite Center, Conservative, National Liberal, and Progressive voters around the candidacy of Ernst Francke. The German Socials, the German Reform Party, and the Bund der Landwirte, organizations which possessed thirteen seats in central and eastern Germany, also approached Behrens with promises of support for Evangelical-social candidacies.⁸² The most impressive success came in

81. Kölnische Zeitung, No. 1152, 29 October 1906; Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung, No. 755, 6 August 1906; Kölnische Volkszeitung, Nos. 693 and 950 for 13 August and 6 November 1906.

82. Regierungspräsident of Arnsberg to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, 10 December 1906, Reg. D. 9041, HSA Düsseldorf; Professor Otto Kraus to Francke, 11 December 1906, Francke Papers 4, BA Koblenz; Report of Regierungspräsident of Arnsberg, 10 December 1906, as cited in note 104.

the "red kingdom" of Saxony. Desperate for electoral aid after the Socialist onslaught of 1903,⁸³ the Conservative Landesverein incorporated the Dresden branch of the Committee for the Election of Patriotic Workers into the party structure. Implicit in the action was a commitment to run Evangelical unionists for Reichstag and Landtag seats, although no specific arrangements to do so had been made by early November.⁸⁴

The widely observed move of the Saxon Conservatives climaxed a debate raging in the Conservative camp over the merits of Christian-national Blockpolitik.⁸⁵ Conservative leaders had no trouble appreciating the necessity of an anti-Socialist coalition.⁸⁶ That the bourgeois parties should rally around Christian trade union candidates, however, was a completely different matter. The prospects of workers in the Conservative Fraktion was viewed by party leaders as an unworkable situation. If a laborer tried to further the political goals of his union, he would be a source of constant friction within a truly conservative party. But if the unionist agreed to compromise and cooperate with other members of the Fraktion, he would be hounded mercilessly by angry comrades.⁸⁷ Despite the fact, therefore, that numerous speakers at the party's national convention in late November praised the expediency of the Saxon experiment, the spokesman for the party's autocratic steering board gave the following

83. The S.P.D. had seized 22 of the 23 Saxon Reichstag seats.

84. Neue Preussische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), No. 475, 10 October 1906; Zentralblatt, No. 22, 5 November 1906.

85. Conservative Correspondenz, 23 April, 10 May, and 25 June 1906 (clippings in: 61 Re 1 Reichslandbund (Pressearchiv), Z St A Potsdam; Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 350, 29 July 1906; Neue Preussische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), No. 350, 29 July 1906.

86. Neue Preussische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), No. 486, 17 October 1906.

87. Neue Preussische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), No. 350, 29 July 1906.

die-hard response.

We have to convince the workers that promises like those made by a Herr Trimborn are unknown to us. We can't fulfill them and therefore the workers can't vote for us. I would have no objections if Christian workers came into the Reichstag. But you'll have to ask yourselves will such a deputy illustrate objectivity and independence toward the Social Democrats, then staunchly cooperate with the Conservatives? Does he really give us a guarantee that he'll mount the rostrum as a Conservative Reichstag Deputy? Otherwise, not much is gained with such people, even if we have 70 or 80 Conservatives in the Reichstag. I'd rather have 20 that can document their conservatism with their speeches and actions.⁸⁸

With no sympathy from Conservative leaders, the Christian trade unions could not hope to sway local committees that were equally unmoved by the political logic of the Saxons.

Developments within the National Liberal Party were even less promising. Though largely supportive of the political program of the German Workers' Congress, the Liberals were never warm to the idea of a political alliance with the Christian trade unions. The Gesamtverband was regarded as far too Catholic and anti-capitalist for a Protestant, business-oriented party. Behrens and his anti-Semitic associates were viewed with an even greater degree of skepticism. It was not too surprising, therefore, that Bassermann made no effort to contact the Committee for the Election of Patriotic Workers, whose letter he left unanswered. This is not to say, however, that the prospect of Hirsch-Duncker or Evangelical Arbeiterverein deputies was looked upon more favorably. Like other bourgeois politicians, Bassermann and the National Liberals feared the consequences of one-sided interest group representation from workers of all political shades.⁸⁹

88. Neue Preussische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), No. 580, Beilage 2, 12 December 1906.

89. Kölnische Zeitung, No. 805, 28 July 1906; Die Arbeit, organ of the Committee for the Election of Patriotic Workers, No. 16, 21 April 1907; Bassermann to Stresemann, 31 August 1908, Stresemann Papers 137, H126510, BA Koblenz; Bassermann to Stresemann, 7 September 1908, Schiffer Papers 9, BA Koblenz.

Only in the Ruhr was there cause for optimism. Under heavy pressure from working-class voters, National Liberal committees in Duisburg, Recklinghausen, Bochum, and Dortmund had promised to nominate laborers in 1908. Worried by the rise of the S.P.D., Ruhr Liberals were also responsive to the demands of Christian unionists for interconfessional alliances during the primary elections. Thus an "old National Liberal politician"--probably Hermann Francken of Bochum--proposed in a newspaper article that pacts be made in Duisburg, Essen, Bochum, Dortmund, Elberfeld, Saarbrücken, and Ottweiler. The Bochum delegation to the National Liberal national convention at Goslar in October 1906 went one step farther and actually urged the party to debate the idea of Hauptwahl agreements with Catholics.⁹⁰

Weeks before Goslar, however, the Bochum initiative had been undermined in the left-liberal press. Fearful that such alliances would isolate Progressive candidates, the Frankfurter Zeitung ran a number of articles which were designed to break up the emerging coalition. The Center had reached the limits of its growth in western Germany, the reports claimed, and was therefore using the Christian trade unions as a lever to obtain the aid of Liberal voters. The paper expressed incredulity at the naiveté of the National Liberals for falling into the ultra-montane trap. Assuming that electoral deals had already been made, outraged Liberals from other parts of the empire complained bitterly that a "national" party had no business cooperating with Reichsfeinde like the Center. The storm of protest was so great that party leaders like Bassermann, who sympathized with the tactic proposed by the Westphalians, felt compelled to table all debate over the issue at the national convention. The party's official newsletter, Nationalalliberale Correspondenz, categorically rejected the idea of Hauptwahl pacts with Catholics a few days later.

90. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 703, 16 August 1906; Neue Preussische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), No. 486, 17 October 1906, Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 305, 4 November 1906.

These were ominous signs for the future of interconfessional politics in Germany.⁹¹

The vision of a bourgeois block working harmoniously in and out of parliament to defeat radical socialism and further the cause of evolutionary social reform was thus a long way from realization. It must be emphasized, however, that great strides had been taken since the Frankfurt Workers' Congress of 1903. The idea of collusion during primary elections appealed to Conservatives, Centrists, Christian-Socials, and other right-wing politicians, while Bassermann and the Westphalian liberals, though unable to force their party into such pacts, were nevertheless valuable allies. By late 1906, moreover, Christian laborers had been promised numerous Reichstag candidacies from the Center and other parties. Gesamtverband leaders felt sure that the membership drive begun that fall would force other nominating committees to pay attention to the electoral demands of Christian workers.⁹²

Political developments in Berlin gave Christian labor leaders all the more reason for optimism. After numerous delays, Posadowsky was finally given permission to enter his trade union bill in late October 1906. Gesamtverband agitators attempted to exploit the situation by holding mass rallies in Berlin and Bochum on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the government's first social law (21 November 1906). The new piece of legislation was presented as not entirely adequate at these rallies, but only as proof that Reich leaders intended to ignore the "disloyalty" of Socialist workers and proceed with the task of establishing equal

91. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 127, 14 February 1906; Bassermann to Francke, 22 December 1906, Francke Papers 4, BA Koblenz; Neue Preussische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), No. 486, 17 October 1906; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 995, 21 December 1906.

92. For the political motivation behind the membership drive, see the Zentralblatt, No. 23, 19 November 1906, and No. 4, 25 February 1907; and Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 43 and 46 for 27 October and 17 November 1906.

rights for all classes. To accelerate this process, Christian leaders announced in late November that a second Workers' Congress would be held at Berlin in late January 1907. The demonstration would enhance efforts to "close ranks" within the Congress, create pressure in parliament to remove objectionable provisions of the trade union bill, and encourage Bülow to exert pressure on the Bundsrat to accept Reichstag amendments. The likelihood that these ambitious goals would be achieved was increased in early December 1906 when the Hirsch-Duncker unions, no longer under the control of Max Hirsch, informed Hans von Berlepsch of the Society for Social Reform that they would join the other non-socialist labor groups at Berlin.⁹³ The demands of over a million patriotic workers, assumed Congress leaders, would be difficult to ignore.

93. See the minutes of the Prussian Ministry of State, 30 October 1906, Reichskanzlei Nr. 533, Bl. 59, Z St A Potsdam; Tremonia, No. 373 (2), 23 November 1906; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 989, 19 November 1906; Zentralblatt, No. 23, 19 November 1906; Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Zweiten Deutschen Arbeiter-Kongresses, p 67.

CHAPTER 9

THE BÜLOW BLOC AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE FRANKFURT INITIATIVE

On 12 December 1906 Bülow convened special sessions of the Bundesrat and Prussian Staatsministerium. In the Reichstag budget committee two days earlier the Center Party had criticized the 29.2 million Marks requested by the government for suppression of the Hottentots in Southwest Africa. The party felt that 20.2 million would suffice if regular troops who were not fighting the natives were replaced by less expensive police units. Charging that the Center had encroached on the jurisdiction of the army, Bülow informed the Prussian and federal councilors that he intended to dissolve the Reichstag. His arguments were opposed by the Prussian Minister of Finance (Rheinbaben) and the Reich Secretaries of the Navy (Tirpitz), Finance (Stengel), and Interior (Posadowsky), who wanted to avoid a conflict with the Center to insure parliamentary support for the needs of their departments. Armed with the written authorization of the Kaiser, however, Bülow prevailed. When a majority of Catholics and Socialists rejected the government's bill on its second plenary reading the next day, the Chancellor announced to the applause of Conservatives, National Liberals, and Progressives that new elections would be held.¹

As will be seen below, the premature dissolution of the Reichstag, the "Hottentot Elections" of January 1907, and the subsequent period of the "Bülow Bloc" were disastrous for Christian labor. Not only was the political strength of Christian labor groups tested before the inter-confessional initiatives of 1906 could gain momentum, but the atmosphere

1. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 6, pp 330-371; Theodor Eschenburg, Das Kaiserreich am Scheideweg (Berlin: Verlag für Kulturpolitik, 1929), pp 39-44.

of exacerbated denominational suspicion and hatred engendered by the elections led to extremely counterproductive bickering within the ranks of non-socialist labor itself. A brief analysis of Bülow's break with the Center, therefore, is of particular significance to this study. The relatively backward governmental system of Imperial Germany had worked to the advantage of Christian labor in 1903. Now, in the most capricious fashion, the tables were turned.

Bülow's policy of cooperating with the Center became increasingly unpopular with Protestants after the partial repeal of anti-Jesuit legislation in March 1904. How was it possible, wondered many, that the Catholic Church could exert so much pressure on the head of government of the strongest Protestant state in Europe? The devout could only conclude that Bülow would have to go. To the normal intrigues against the Chancellor, therefore, were added those of court pastors, the Kaiserin, and north German leaders like King Albert of Saxony and Prince Frederick Charles of Meiningen, who were outraged that Saxony, the cradle of the Reformation, should have to tolerate a Catholic society whose members vowed obedience to the Pope alone. Religious indignation in central Germany was compounded by an intense opposition to the social reforms demanded by the Center in the name of the German Workers Congress. As the nervous rulers of "red Saxony" saw it, the party's social programs were merely paving the way for socialist domination of the Reich. Thus Albert and his fellow rulers in the Thuringian principalities took every opportunity to urge William II to strengthen the position of the Bundesrat and terminate the dangerous practice of making concession after concession to the Center.²

2. Count Lerchenfeld to Bavarian Minister-President Podewils, 31 December 1906, MA 76140, and 9 March 1907, Ges. Berlin, Pol. Schiftwechsel 1079, G St A München; Report of the Württembergian Bundesrat plenipotentiary Schicker to the Minister-President, 21 January 1904, reprinted in Rassow and Born, Akten, p 177; Bülow, Memoirs, Vol. 2, pp 12-13; Zedlitz-Trutzschler, Twelve Years, p 90.

The Kaiser had no use for "Schwarzseher," and does not seem to have harbored a great deal of animosity toward Catholics in general.³ The Center Party, on the other hand, was a different matter. Convinced as he was that the party took orders from the Pope, William was highly suspicious of its every move, referring to the party usually as "a gang" or "pack of dogs."⁴ For the same reason Jesuits were railed against in marginal comments as "the devil's brood" or "sons of hell."⁵ In return for even the smallest concessions to the Center on the Jesuit issue, therefore, the Kaiser expected outright passivity from Centrists on other matters.

This was something which Bülow could not deliver. Eager to maintain an image of national reliability, the Center was usually prepared to accommodate most of the government's needs. But with Bavarian peasants, Swabian artisans and Rhenish trade unionists demanding relief from mounting tax burdens, party leaders could hardly vote credits or revenues for every extra cruiser or cavalry regiment requested by the military. Complicating matters further, Centrists were anxious to defend the budget rights of the Reichstag against encroachment from the federal states, especially Prussia. Most Catholics took this cause very seriously, for the Reichstag was seen as the only effective bulwark against "the wrath of East Elbian Protestantism" (Furor Protestantismus Ostelbianus), as Karl Bachem usually described it. Thus, despite Bülow's warnings to Center leaders that such manifestations of parliamentarism were undermining his position at court,⁶ the party continued to use its pivotal position throughout 1904 and 1905 to insure at least a modicum of frugality.

3. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 6, pp 262-69.

4. Quoted in Bülow's private manuscript over the Daily Telegraph Affair, pp 315-16, Bülow Papers 34, BA Koblenz.

5. Bülow, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p 12.

6. Bülow to Count Ballestrem, 7 April 1904, Bülow Papers 107, BA Koblenz; Bülow to Kopp, 13 March 1904, Bachem Papers 218, HA Köln.

The situation became acute in 1906. The revelations of former Christian unionist Matthias Erzberger that spring concerning the mismanagement and corruption of Germany's colonial administration, though accurate, were nevertheless handled in a clumsy, tactless manner that angered the Kaiser. When the Center refused to vote funds for the construction of a railway in Southwest Africa in June, William flew into a rage at both the Center and Bülow. It was probably at this time that the ailing Chancellor was ordered "to settle his accounts with the Center and break with it,"⁷ as the Controller of the Imperial Household, Count Zedlitz-Trützschler, recalled later. Bülow urged an intermediary at court to explain to William that the Center's intransigence was far less problematic than Conservative opposition had been to the Midland Canal, and that "one must never let oneself be influenced by ignorant and irresponsible prattlers."⁸ If it were given at all, however, such advice had little effect on the angry monarch. In July he wired Bülow that there had to be a way "to protect our civil servants and officers from that slanderer, calumniator and professional (gewerbsmässig), back-stairs skulker Erzberger."⁹

All available evidence leads to the conclusion that by fall 1906 Bülow was prepared to call for new elections should the Center again place him in an embarrassing situation. Through such a maneuver Bülow hoped to reduce the Center's Reichstag strength and force the party to abandon all pretense to parliamentary power. Erzberger would be discredited, the air at court cleared, and the Chancellor's eroded prestige with the Kaiser restored. Shortly after a Center speaker criticized the new colonial direction on 3 December, therefore, Bülow requested and received William's

7. Zedlitz-Trützschler, Twelve Years, p 215.

8. Bülow to Count Tschirschky, n.d. (early June 1906), printed in Bülow, Memoirs, Vol. 2, p 283.

9. Quoted in Bülow's manuscript, cited above in note 4, pp 315-16.

consent to dissolve parliament. Rather than risk political ruin through "lack of energy," the Chancellor hurled the country into one of the most bitter, hard-fought election campaigns in the nation's history.¹⁰

The well-laid political plans of the Christian trade unions crumbled overnight. In Saxony, for instance, Conservative Party leaders ostracized the Committee for the Election of Patriotic Workers and nominated a slate composed exclusively of upper and middle-class candidates. Although solid evidence is lacking, it seems that the Conservatives did so in order to exploit fully the colonial vote of 13 December. The pro-Center leanings of Behrens and his followers would in any event inhibit the type of tub-thumping campaign the Conservatives had in mind.¹¹ Left in the lurch, christian workers ran independently. Georg Hartmann, leader of the 'patriotic workers' in Saxony, campaigned in Schneeberg-Aue, and a colleague ran in Zwickau-Crimmitschau.¹² Both candidacies collapsed, however, when neither the Conservatives nor the National Liberals offered assistance. The bourgeois Right was content to beat the nationalist drum, and for good reasons: the technique unseated fifteen of twenty-two incumbent Socialists in Saxony that year.

Developments in the Saar were no less problematic for the Christian trade unions. Unable to unite Christian workers around labor candidates in 1905, Evangelical and Catholic unionists were suddenly thrust into the midst of an intense Center-National Liberal struggle for control of the area. The example of Saar brücken will suffice. The Center nominated Franz Wernerus,

10. For Bülow's motivation, see the Lerchenfeld reports cited in note 2; Bülow to General von Liebert, 31 January 1906, printed in the Nord-deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, No. 2, 3 January 1907; Bülow, Memoirs, Vol. 2, pp 287-88; Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 6, pp 378, 391-92.

11. For the campaign strategy of the Conservatives and National Liberals in Saxony, see the report of the Bavarian envoy Count Montgelas, 16 January 1907, MA 1936 Deutsches Reich 95484, G St A München.

12. Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 6, 6 January 1907.

a Christian metalworker who promised to draw Evangelical laborers away from the National Liberals. The unionist was unacceptable to local "Berlinist" clergymen, however, and by early January 1907 they had managed to rally enough support for another candidate. The coup presented Catholic members of the Gesamtverband with a difficult choice. Out of a sense of party loyalty, Wernerus and the majority of Catholic workers backed the new Centrist, but a minority of Catholic unionists were so incensed by Wernerus' fate that they voted National Liberal. When Protestant Gewerkverein leader Wilhelm Gutsche joined their campaign against the Center, relations within the union deteriorated to the lowest point in years.¹³

Christian laborers experienced further setbacks in the industrial northwest. One positive development during the fall of 1906, it will be recalled, was the willingness of Westphalian National Liberals to consider Hauptwahl agreements with the Center. With Centrists branded as enemies of the state, however, the idea of interconfessional cooperation was quickly cast aside. In retaliation, Rhenish Center leaders also insisted that new strategies be adopted. Speaking at the general assembly of the Augustinusverein on 29 December, Julius Bachem, Hermann Cardauns, and Carl Trimborn refused to consider either primary or run-off support for the National Liberals--the party that stood most solidly behind Bülow's disciplinary action against the Center. So suspicious were Centrists of the National Liberals, in fact, that most lent credence to far-fetched rumors that the Reichstag suffrage was in danger. How better to deal a blow to Catholic strength?¹⁴

Stegerwald, who had not experienced the Kulturkampf and had relatively little interest in religio-political affairs, protested that the anti-liberal strategem advanced by Bachem et al. might easily allow the S.P.D. to seize every industrial district in western Germany. But Bachem was

13. Regierungspräsident of Trier to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, 9 January 1907, 403/8464, LHA Koblenz; Berknappe, No. 7, 16 February 1907.

14. Augustinusblatt, No. 1, January 1907, St Bib MG.

unmoved. Only if the liberals were so crippled in the Hauptwahl that they could clearly not usurp the Center's pivotal Reichstag position should Centrists back a National Liberal in a run-off. The sight of his political mentor strongly hinting at Center support for the S.P.D. must have dumbfounded Stegerwald, for he did not reply.¹⁵

The Christian-Socials encountered similar problems in the Ruhr. Because Behrens' plan to form one nominating committee for the area had not been implemented by 13 December, each district decided on its own candidate for the elections in January. Swayed by the jingoism and demagoguery of the campaign, many committees forgot the "party line" and refused to run independently against the National Liberals and Conservatives. So strong was the pull of nationalism and Protestantism, in fact, that Evangelical workers in Duisburg, Bochum, and Dortmund turned their backs on Behrens and released National Liberal leaders from pledges made earlier to nominate workers. Bourgeois candidates, it was argued, would facilitate the cooperation of all "national" parties. The few Christian-Social committees that remained loyal to Behrens attempted to regain lost momentum by nominating Evangelical unionists as planned, but this backfired when National Liberal leaders threatened to run a Protestant worker in Siegen against Stöcker unless Christian-Social pressure in the Ruhr was terminated. Rather than jeopardize the seat of their leader, all committees complied.¹⁶

15. Ibid.

16. Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 352, 21 December 1906, No. 356, 25 December 1906, No. 358, 28 December 1906, No. 9, 9 January 1907, No. 11, 11 January 1907, No. 26, 26 January 1907; Tremonia, No. 397, 18 December 1906, No. 401, 22 December 1906, No. 407, 30 December 1906, No. 2, 2 January 1907, No. 7, 7 January 1907, No. 14, 14 January 1907; Kölnische Zeitung, No. 1345, 17 December 1906, No. 1361, 20 December 1906, No. 1371, 23 December 1906, No. 1, 1 January 1907, No. 4, 2 January 1907, No. 36, 11 January 1907, No. 51, 15 January 1907, No. 54, 16 January 1907, No. 70, 20 January 1907, No. 292, 18 March 1907, No. 647, 20 June 1907.

Further problems arose for Christian labor during the Stichwahlen. In the area stretching from Cologne to Osnabrück, 12 Socialists faced certain victory in run-offs if the Center, National Liberals, and Progressives could not patch over their differences. Worried that a Socialist sweep would give added impetus to the free trade unions in these districts, Stegerwald repeated his warnings to Center leaders in Cologne throughout January. Gewerkverein leaders in Essen were also placing a great deal of pressure on Westphalian party boss Karl Herold. The miners were particularly interested in defeating Alter Verband chief Otto Hue, who faced a National-Liberal candidate in Bochum-Gelsenkirchen. This campaign culminated with a mass rally of Catholic unionists in Düsseldorf on 28 January 1907. The workers "recommended" that the Center back National Liberal candidates if the liberals reciprocated in Essen, Düsseldorf, and Cologne.¹⁷

Fortunately for the Gesamtverband, Karl Herold was also disturbed by the scenario of Socialist victory, free trade union advance, and collapse of the Center in the Ruhr. Therefore, at the first session of a new central committee which had been created to coordinate Center voting in the run-offs¹⁸, Herold argued for a pro-National Liberal Stichwahl policy. This would enable him to form the series of pacts desired by the Christian trade unions and "give a great uplift to their movement by completely defeating the S.P.D."¹⁹ Most of those present were unmoved. Backing for the "capitalistic, Kulturkampfpartei" would be "suicide," they reasoned, while support for the "subversive Revolutionspartei,"²⁰ though also highly dubious and bound to demoralize the Christian trade unions, was probably

17. Karl Bachem notation of 29 January 1907, Bachem Papers 259, HA Köln; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 93, 31 January 1907.

18. The official minutes of this session of 29 January 1907 are in the Herold Papers 2, BA Koblenz. What follows below is based primarily on Karl Bachem's more detailed notes, Bachem Papers 259, HA Köln.

19. Ibid. (Bachem notes).

20. Ibid.

the better of the two evils. With the majority leaning away from Herold and the Christian trade unions, Karl Bachem suggested a more flexible, face-saving set of run-off guidelines. Any candidate willing to defend the Reichstag suffrage, existing coalition rights, and political freedoms as well as promote social reform and religious tolerance would qualify for Center support. According to Bachem's record of the meeting, the guidelines were acceptable to all, "even though it is clear that most National Liberals will reject them, while the Social Democrats will not."²¹ Local committees in the Ruhr had at least some leeway for compromise with the National Liberals and "appearances are thoroughly preserved, which is necessary out of consideration for the Christian trade unions."²²

Two days later the unions' hopes for a broad, anti-Socialist coalition in the northwest were brought closer to realization. Having bent somewhat to the demands of Christian labor on the 29th, Center leaders were now subjected to pressure from the Catholic Oberpräsident of the Rhineland and Archbishop Fischer of Cologne, both of whom considered the S.P.D. a far greater threat to church and state than the National Liberals. On 31 January, therefore, Trimborn offered to back the liberals, but insisted on mutual support in Essen, Düsseldorf, and Cologne. Prussian officials passed the offer on to National Liberal leaders in Cologne later that day.²³

The National Liberals flatly refused. From far envisioning an authoritative turn to the Right under Bülow, as Center leaders feared, National Liberals in Cologne sensed a great opportunity to fulfill long-frustrated liberal demands like secular education, progressive tax laws, and the appointment of liberals to ministerial posts. Rhenish party

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Oberpräsident Schorlemer-Lieser to Archbishop Fischer, 26 January 1907, Regierungspräsident Düsseldorf to Schorlemer-Lieser, 29 January 1907, 403/8465, LHA Koblenz; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 205, 8 March 1907.

leaders were thus thoroughly against any Stichwahl policy that would preserve a "clerical-conservative majority." Not surprisingly, Trimborn announced in early February 1907 that Centrists should abstain in any district where Socialists and National Liberals faced one another. The deal was off. During the run-offs on 5 February, not surprisingly, the S.P.D. won five seats in the industrial West and remained just as strong as it had been in 1903.²⁴

The German Workers Congress did not retire empty-handed from the elections of 1907. Thirteen representatives of affiliated organizations took their seats in a Reichstag whose Socialist delegation had been cut from eighty-one to forty-three. The political losses to non-socialist labor, however, greatly outweighed the numerical gains. Far from driving the bourgeois parties together, Christian labor leaders had watched helplessly as these parties were driven apart. The ambitious campaign to "close ranks" within the Congress, moreover, was completely undermined. Angered by the presence of Catholic unionists at Center Party rallies, pro-Center articles run by union newspapers, and other alleged violations of political neutrality, many Evangelical Arbeitervereine reversed decisions made in 1905/06 and urged members to get out of Christian trade unions. The latter had their own list of grievances, pointing to the fact, for instance, that the Rhenish-Westphalian Association of Evangelical Arbeitervereine had urged all members to vote "national." The Hirsch-Duncker unions, which also succumbed to the nationalist hysteria of the campaign, were singled out for particular criticism by Catholic unionists. The attacks of the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, the Zentralblatt, and Behrens' newspaper, Die Arbeit, were so severe, in fact, that Hans Berlepsch, the founder of the Society for Social Reform, was unable to achieve a reconciliation

24. Schorlemer-Lieser to the Prussian Minister of the Interior, 6 February 1907, 403/8465, LHA Koblenz; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 205, 8 March 1907; Regierungspräsident Düsseldorf to Schorlemer-Lieser, 3 February 1907, 403/8465, LHA Koblenz; Die Arbeit, Nos. 16 and 25, 21 April and 23 June 1907; Kölnische Zeitung, Nos. 109 and 125, 30 January and 4 February 1907.

moreover, that Posadowsky had attempted to dissuade Bülow from breaking with the Center and chafed at the thought of working with the new cartel for any length of time. In short, Posadowsky's presence was increasingly embarrassing to Bülow, and this the Chancellor could not permit. He had risked too much for appearances already.³¹

Matters came to a head over the new Vereinsgesetz in the spring of 1907. Posadowsky advocated a progressive bill that would enhance the prestige of the German Workers Congress, allowing its members to catch and overtake the Socialists. But Bülow, mindful of the need to maintain some degree of harmony in his polarized coalition, was more interested in a plan suggested by the Prussian Minister of the Interior, Bethmann Hollweg, whereby an "exceptional law" banning the use of foreign languages at public assemblies would be welded onto the Vereinsgesetz. The language clauses would appease Prussian Conservatives worried by the growing national Polish movement in the eastern provinces of the empire, while the Progressives and National Liberals, it was hoped, would accept the bill as an improvement over the existing legislation. Posadowsky's concern for the Christian and Hirsch-Duncker unions, both of which were competing for Polish workers in Silesia and the Ruhr, had simply been ignored. Aware that Bethmann's proposals would only add impetus to Socialist and radical Polish agitation, the affronted Reich secretary attempted to impose his views on the Chancellor. But to no avail. The pull of the Prussian Conservatives from the Right was too great. When it became clear that other conservative clauses would be added to the Vereinsgesetz, and that Bülow wanted to decrease the tempo of social reform in general,

31. Born, Sozialpolitik, p 208, notes that Posadowsky's Reichstag speech of 19 February 1907, which had omitted the prescribed attacks against the Center, caused high government circles to conclude that the Secretary's continued tenure in office was out of the question. In July, Die Arbeit (No. 28, 14 July 1907) printed a report emanating from Westphalian industrial sources that William and Bülow had decided in February that Posadowsky was not the right man for the job given his opposition to the Bloc.

Germany's most influential advocate of Christian-social reform felt compelled to tender his resignation.³² In accepting it, Bülow made clear to all what inside observers had known for years--the Chancellor had never had more than an opportunistic, tactical interest in labor legislation. As the Zentrablatt of the Christian trade unions commented quite accurately, Posadowsky had been "sacrificed to the new political constellation."³³ So too, the paper feared, had the cause of social reform.

The reconvening of the German Workers Congress seemed imperative. Not long after Posadowsky's resignation, therefore, the decision was made to hold a second demonstration at Berlin in late October 1907. Hoping to maximize the effect of the Congress in parliamentary and governmental circles, the executive committee extended invitations to numerous politicians and ministers and once again requested an audience with the Imperial Chancellor.³⁴

Bülow was very reluctant to accede to this wish. Any association passing "the very far-reaching [social] resolutions"³⁵ which officials in the Reich Chancellery expected of the Congress might alienate the Conservatives and right-wing National Liberals. Too, the issue of Prussian suffrage reform had been discussed widely that summer in the left-liberal and Socialist

32. See Varnbüler's report, cited above in note 30; Bethmann-Hollweg to the Prussian Ministry of State (with Bülow's marginal comments), 19 March 1907, Reichskanzlei Nr. 2241, Bl. 5-9, Z St A Potsdam; Count Lerchenfeld to Bavarian Minister-President Podiwils, 1 July 1907, Ges. Berlin, Pol. Schriftwechsel 1079, G St A München; see also Die Arbeit, No. 27, 6 July 1907, which reprints a report from the Berlin correspondent of the Viennese Neue Freie Presse, who claimed to have confidential information from a close friend of Posadowsky.

33. Zentralblatt, No. 13, 30 June 1907.

34. The announcement of the Congress is printed in Die Arbeit, No. 33, 11 August 1907.

35. Undersecretary of State in the Reich Chancellery Wahnschaffe to Bülow, 29 August 1907, Reichskanzlei Nr. 533, Bl. 188 Z St A Potsdam. Bülow penciled his approval to Wahnschaffe's suggestions.

press. Should Christian workers add this demand to an already ambitious social program--and there was some reason to think that they might³⁶--Bülow would create even more tension within the Bloc by receiving them.

Refusal to meet with the workers, on the other hand, could be equally embarrassing after the much publicized reception in 1903.³⁷ The Socialists would have a field day criticizing the government's treatment of "loyal" workers, while the majority of National Liberals and Progressives, who wanted to maintain cordial relations with the Congress,³⁸ would be greatly irritated. In the end Bülow decided to receive the delegation before the Congress convened, thereby avoiding any association with specific resolutions. The executive committee was notified of this arrangement in September 1907.³⁹

Responding through Ludwig Weber, the leader of the Evangelical Arbeitervereine, Christian labor leaders rejected Bulow's suggestion. Such a reception, they argued, would play into the hands of Socialist agitators by creating the impression of a government-controlled organization. Catholic members of the executive committee were particularly opposed to the pre-Congress reception because they would appear to be deserting the Center and joining forces with the anti-Catholic Bloc. The predictable response of bourgeois Catholics would create problems in the Christian trade unions at a time when the bitterness of the elections had almost been forgotten.⁴⁰ Bülow accepted these arguments, but insisted that copies of all addresses and resolutions be forwarded to him before the

36. On 11 August 1907, Die Arbeit (No. 33), organ of Behren's Committee for the Election of Patriotic Workers, advocated the Reichstag suffrage for Prussia. The announcement for the German Workers Congress appeared in the same issue.

37. See Wahnschaffe's letter to Bülow of 29 August 1907, cited above in note 35.

38. See the letter of Hirsch-Duncker unionist Anton Erkelenz to the "parliamentary committee" of the Hirsch-Dunckers, n.d. (fall 1907), Erkelenz Papers 2, BA Koblenz.

39. Geheimrat Martins to von Loebell, head of the Reich Chancellery, 4 October 1907, Reichkanzlei Nr. 533, Bl. 192, Z St A Potsdam. Bülow's marginal comments are on the document.

40. Ibid.

Congress met. If the proceedings were "calm and businesslike,"⁴¹ and Bülow were presented with no "surprises,"⁴² a reception afterwards was acceptable.

Stegerwald and Behrens, the "chiefs" (führende Köpfe) of the German Workers Congress, had no desire to add new social demands like unemployment insurance and the 8-hour day to the Frankfurt program. Nor were they interested from a tactical viewpoint in abolishing the Prussian three-class suffrage in 1907.⁴³ With the original demands of 1903 in jeopardy, it would have been unwise to raise more far-reaching, seemingly unattainable demands. Such an approach would only alarm Bülow and force him into the open arms of the Conservatives. Stegerwald and Behrens were thus more than willing to inform Bülow of their limited plans for Berlin.⁴⁴ By committing themselves beforehand, however, the Congress leaders had sacrificed the flexibility needed in any parliamentary situation. This would prove a costly decision.

Convening in Berlin from 20-22 October 1907, the second Congress was in many ways more impressive than the first. The choice of Berlin made it easy for government and parliamentary leaders to be on hand in impressive numbers, while also providing more publicity and national attention to the debates. Even without the Hirsch-Duncker unions, moreover, member organizations claimed nearly a million workers. The slightly expanded list of

41. Ibid.

42. Wahnschaffe to Ludwig Weber, 14 October 1907, Reichskanzlei Nr. 533, Bl. 194, Z St A Potsdam.

43. The Committee for the Election of Patriotic Workers met on 23 October and accepted Behrens' resolution to work for secret elections in Prussia (Die Arbeit, No. 44, 31 October 1907). The day before Stegerwald and Behrens had pigeon-holed a resolution from the floor of the Congress demanding a positive stance toward universal, direct, equal, secret voting laws in Prussia.

44. Weber to Wahnschaffe, 16 October 1907, Reichskanzlei Nr. 533, Bl. 195, Z St A Potsdam. Copies of Franz Wieber's and Adam Stegerwald's speeches, and the address to be made before Bülow, followed the next day (Bl. 197, 200, 219).

social demands was thus backed by a much larger phalanx of supporters. And, much like the first Congress, speakers were frank, yet undemagogic in presenting their arguments for social reform.

Marring the whole affair from the purview of the average German worker was the question of Prussian electoral reform. Stegerwald had no illusions concerning the unpopularity of this plutocratic suffrage, even among Christian workers, and took pains, therefore, to criticize the system in his address.⁴⁵ Unfortunately for Stegerwald and the executive committee, a clear majority of the delegates responded enthusiastically to the resolution of Johann Fischer, a Württembergian Evangelical Arbeiterverein leader and former National Social, who urged the Congress to go on record as an advocate of universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage in Prussia. Unwilling to sever the last ties to Bülow, Congress leaders were forced to cut off the debate over Fischer's resolution in a rather dictatorial fashion, arguing unconvincingly that as a party-political, not a social question, the Congress could not handle the matter.⁴⁶ Christian leaders appeared even more "anti-labor" now than they had in the great tariff debates of 1901/02.

In addition to the embarrassment this caused Congress leaders, the unwillingness to push for political reform in Prussia also widened the gap between Christian and left-liberal labor. Despite his inability to soothe Gesamtverband and Hirsch-Duncker leaders in the spring of 1907, Hans von Berlepsch continued to work for a reconciliation. The former Prussian minister was especially hopeful that the influential "Düsseldorf faction" around the young Hirsch-Duncker metal worker Anton Erkelenz would be able to sway the union leadership to a pro-Congress standpoint.⁴⁷ Ashamed of

45. Bericht über die Verhandlungen des zweiten Deutschen Arbeiter-Kongress, pp 50-51.

46. Ibid., pp 89-93, 227-30.

47. Berlepsch to Erkelenz, 7 June 1907, 15 June 1907, 10 July 1907, Erkelenz Papers 2, BA Koblenz.

the slow growth of the Hirsch-Duncker unions in recent years, Erkelenz wanted to boost the political influence of his "humble, peripheral organization"⁴⁸ by joining the other non-socialist labor groups at Berlin.

Confident that he would succeed in this mission in July, Erkelenz watched in frustration that summer as the heavy-handed tactics of Christian leaders, who were still angry over the elections, undermined his position with the affronted Hirsch-Duncker executive committee. It was not until the Prussian suffrage motion was squelched at Berlin, however, that the Düsseldorf faction also abandoned the idea of political cooperation with the Christians. A sharp attack in the Frankfurter Zeitung, written most probably by Erkelenz,⁴⁹ was followed in the winter of 1907/08 by an attempt to found a separate "liberal workers congress." High on the list of reform priorities, not surprisingly, was the liberalization of Prussia.⁵⁰

Behrens, in the meantime, had led his Workers Congress associates to the Reich Chancellery for the appointed session with Bülow. Bethmann Hollweg had already informed the Congress that an Imperial Vereinsgesetz and a management-labor chambers bill were in the making, but it must have been encouraging to hear from the Chancellor himself that these reforms were at last nearing completion.⁵¹ After four years of waiting, Christian

48. Anton Erkelenz, Biographische Niederschrift, n.d. (post-WWI), p 220, in the Erkelenz Papers 103, BA Koblenz. Erkelenz refers specifically to the summer of 1907.

49. Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 307, 5 November 1907; Otto Thomas to Erkelenz, 17 November 1907, Erkelenz Papers 2, BA Koblenz.

50. Erkelenz to the Hirsch-Duncker "parliamentary committee," n.d. (fall 1907), Erkelenz Papers 2, BA Koblenz; Police Commissioner of Essen to the Regierungspräsident, 30 September 1908, Reg. D. 42810, HSA Düsseldorf.

51. Bericht über die Verhandlungen des zweiten Deutschen Arbeiter-Kongresses, pp 19-22. The addresses to Bülow, and his reply, appear on pages 231-33.

labor groups would finally have an opportunity to argue before skeptical audiences that the German Workers Congress, not the free trade unions or S.P.D., had promoted working class interests. With the experience of an inadequate trade union bill and Posadowsky's resignation fresh in their minds, Christian workers had no doubts that a tough parliamentary struggle for revisions lay ahead. Should the confessional unity of the Bloc prove weaker than the centripetal pull of individual party programs, however, a situation conducive to the success of Congress lobbying efforts might arise.

The publication of Bethmann's Vereinsgesetz in late November 1907 confirmed the suspicions of Christian laborers concerning his social conservatism. "Private rights" (privatrechtliche) such as legal personality for trade unions had been omitted from the new law, leaving only the area of "public rights." These provisions were an improvement over the rigid laws of Prussia and Saxony, but there were some crucial defects and retrogressions. Rural laborers, state employees, and domestic servants, for instance, were excluded from the bill. There was also no attempt to reform Germany's authoritarian strike laws (Koalitionsrecht). Moreover, the language paragraphs worsened the legal position of Germany's Polish, Danish, and French minorities, while also undermining trade union efforts to recruit members from these communities. Unable to attract foreign workers into the unions, organized labor felt it could be easily undercut by owners with access to cheap, unorganized workers from abroad.⁵²

The first reading of the bill on 9-10 December was equally disappointing for non-socialist labor. A week earlier the Bloc had almost broken apart over the issue of tax reform, but Bülow, threatening that he and Bethmann would resign unless the liberals halted attacks on the government, had managed to restore order to his coalition. The Progressives and National

52. Die Arbeit, No. 48, 28 November 1907; Zentralblatt, No. 25, 16 December 1907.

Liberals were therefore unwilling to engage in anything but very reserved criticism of the Vereinsgesetz. The spectre of Bülow or a more reactionary successor working with the Center again was simply too threatening. The bill went to the committee in early January 1908 with little likelihood of drastic alteration by the Bloc.⁵³

The bill that emerged from the second committee reading on 18 March remained unacceptable to Christian labor leaders. There had only been a few changes. Anxious to complete the Vereinsgesetz before the Prussian elections that summer, Bethmann gave in to Progressive demands that rural laborers be included. He also accepted a milder version of the language paragraphs. But the Conservatives were duly compensated. A clause was added banning youths under 18 from membership in "political" organizations. All Center, Christian trade union, and S.P.D. amendments, including one which exempted trade unions from the language paragraphs, were defeated.⁵⁴

With the final plenary reading approaching in early April 1908, Behrens made a final, daring attempt to revise the Vereinsgesetz in labor's favor. The Evangelical labor leader obtained an audience with Bethmann-Hollweg and urged him to state in parliament that trade unions would be uninhibited in their agitation by the language paragraphs. Such a statement would set an example for local police officials, Landräte, and Regierungspräsidenten subordinate to the Minister of the Interior. Behrens probably hinted that, as chairman of the German Workers Congress, he could create trouble for the government on the final reading. Well aware that the voting would be close, Bethmann reversed the position he had taken in committee on a similar amendment and agreed to the proposal. In return, however, he insisted that Behrens vote for the language paragraphs. Both men carried out their

53. Count Lerchenfeld to Bavarian Minister-President Podewils, 4 December and 4 December 1907 (separate reports), Ges. Berlin, Pol. Schriftwechsel 1079, G St A München.

54. For the major developments in committee, see Rassow and Born, Akten, pp 307-343.

ends of the deal on 4 April and the controversial clauses were accepted by a slim 19-vote margin.⁵⁵

For his last minute handiwork Behrens should have won the acclaim of all Christian workers. In the highly charged atmosphere of the Bloc period, however, such a pragmatic assessment was impossible. Like all Catholics, Giesberts and the Center's labor wing had great hopes that Bülow's coalition would collapse as a result of the Vereinsgesetz--the first major piece of legislation it had confronted. When, instead, the Bloc survived, great anger and frustration were felt. Center laborers had extra reason to feel this way, for the Gesamtverband had also experienced a great degree of Bloc-engendered frustration since December 1906. That Behrens, a Christian trade unionist, should help preserve the Protestant cartel by accepting the controversial language paragraphs seemed an act of betrayal to the Christian unions and the substantial number of Catholics who had voted for him.

"The Behrens Case" (Der Fall Behrens) led very quickly to a crisis within the Christian labor movement. The Westdeutsche-Arbeiter-Zeitung found it hard to believe that an experienced unionist could place so much trust in Bethmann's oral interpretation of the law, while the Catholic editor of Bergknappe, not content to criticize, called for Behrens' resignation as general secretary of the Gewerkverein. The Center press of the Ruhr, especially Wilhelm Hankamer's Essener Volkszeitung, followed suit. Die Arbeit, organ of the Committee for the Election of Patriotic Workers, was quick to defend Behrens against these attacks, but the Christian-Social and Evangelical Arbeiterverein press swung over to the offensive, stating in no uncertain terms that further persecution of Behrens would bring an end to existing interconfessional ties. Evangelical miners in the Saar lent credence to these articles by threatening to bolt from the union if Behrens were ousted.⁵⁶

55. Die Arbeit, Nos. 15-16, 11 and 18 April 1908; Zentralblatt, Nos. 7 and 9, 20 April and 4 May 1908.

56. Police Commissioner of Bochum to the Regierungspräsident, 30 April 1908, Reg. Arnsberg I 83, St A Münster; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 18, 2 May 1908; Zentralblatt, No. 9, 4 May 1908; Die Arbeit, No. 16, 18 April 1908.

Hankamer and other Centrists in the Ruhr were unimpressed by these warnings. Since the Gesamtverband's political initiatives of 1906, these circles, like the "Berliners," had begun to regard the interconfessionalism of the Christian trade unions as a liability for the Center. The pro-National Liberal stance of the unions during the elections, Behrens' stewardship of a largely Catholic delegation to the Reich Chancellery a few months later, and his "betrayal" of the Center on the Vereinsgesetz vote strengthened the impression that Christian labor had deserted the Catholic cause. To avoid further problems of this sort, Hankamer and his followers decided to drive a wedge between the Catholic and Evangelical wings of the non-socialist labor movement. Embarrassing details of the feuding within the Gewerkverein were sent anonymously to the Frankfurter Zeitung which quickly printed them in the hopes that the Hirsch-Dunckers could lure Evangelical unionists away from the Gesamtverband. Centrists in the Ruhr also encouraged Heinrich Imbusch, Hermann Vogelsang, and other Catholic workers in control of Bergknappe to take steps against Behrens. The "Bergknappe-clique" proved amenable to this plan after Imbusch was promised a Reichstag or Landtag nomination, and on 21 April 1908, the miners initiated proceedings against Behrens before the central committee of the Gesamtverband.⁵⁷

The plot failed. Stegerwald and the national leadership refused to sabotage the Gesamtverband and the German Workers Congress by making a martyr out of Behrens. The matter was settled with a resolution that urged Christian trade unionists to maintain closer contacts in parliament and put union interests ahead of party ties. A renewed attack on Behrens during the Gewerkverein's executive committee meeting of 24 April was also repulsed when Johann Effert, the highly popular leader of the miners' "Siebener-kommission," came to the Protestant's defense.⁵⁸ Thus ended the greatest

57. The intrigues of Hankamer et al. were described in great detail to the Regierungspräsident of Arnsberg in August 1908 by the Christian miner Johann Effert. The memorandum is located in Reg. Arnsberg I 83, St A Münster.

58. Ibid.; Zentralblatt, No. 7, 20 April 1908.

threat to the unity of non-socialist labor since the secession of the Berliners in mid-1902.

There was little cause for rejoicing, however, for Christian laborers had registered nothing but losses since the fall. Far from boosting the cause of non-socialist labor with a dramatic political success, the German Workers Congress had suffered ridicule over the Prussian suffrage issue, alienated the Hirsch-Duncker unions, and narrowly averted collapse in the wake of Bethmann's conservative Vereinsgesetz. No less demoralizing was the fact that Posadowsky's trade union bill (Rechtsfähigkeit der Berufsvereine) had been dropped in the meantime. The tempo of social reform was indeed slowing down.

In fact, of the original Frankfurt demands, only the management-labor chambers bill remained undecided in mid-1908. The draft which Posadowsky passed on to Bethmann the year before was revised in the fall of 1907 and published in tentative form for public scrutiny and debate in February 1908.⁵⁹ This unprecedented step--explained no doubt by the government's desire to appear impartial to the demands of both capital and labor--was followed by more debate in the Bundesrat that summer and fall. When, in January 1909, a management-labor chambers bill was finally laid before parliament,⁶⁰ five long years had elapsed since Posadowsky's staff had begun preliminary work.

59. See Prussian Minister of the Interior Bethmann Hollweg to Bülow, 2 November 1907, Bethmann Hollweg to the Prussian Ministry of State, 28 November 1907, Reichskanzlei Nr. 533, Bl. 227, 233, and the finished proposal of 1 February 1908, Reichskanzlei Nr. 534, Bl. 10, Z St A Potsdam.

60. See Reichstag Anlagen, Period 12, Session 1, No. 1418, Vol. 255, pp 79ff.

The reform was an extremely cautious one.⁶¹ The chambers would not encompass every branch of industry in a given city or district (territoriale Gliederung), as Posadowsky had planned, rather there would be separate chambers for individual industries (fachliche Gliederung). Bethmann was convinced that territorial chambers would turn into "political debating clubs"⁶² for members of opposing classes, unlike the trade-oriented chambers, which seemed better equipped to promote a harmonious economic partnership. Trade union leaders were barred from election to the chambers for much the same reason. Fearing that union secretaries would easily dominate and radicalize the proceedings, the government required that labor candidates have no record of arrest and be able to offer proof of employment in a factory or mine during the year preceeding the election--qualifications few union functionaries could match. In order to minimize further the "terroristic disruption of the populace"⁶³ that government officials expected from the free trade unions and S.P.D. during the chamber elections, Bethmann certified the owner-employee accident compensation committees as nominating bodies. Unlike their health insurance counterparts, these committees had remained free of trade union and socialist influence and were quite popular with employers as a result.

The role of Bethmann's management-labor chamber would also be very limited. Not all industries, for instance, would have chambers, for each state was given the right to decide which branches of the state economy actually needed such institutions. Nor would the new bodies exert much influence during a strike. They were to function mainly as courts of appeal to the

61. The following discussion of Bethmann's views is based primarily on his memorandum to the Prussian Ministers of 6 July 1908, Reichskanzlei Nr 534, Bl. 20, Z St A Potsdam, and to a lesser extent his memorandum to the federal states of 14 July 1908, reprinted in Rassow and Born, Akten, pp 395-97.

62. Bethmann to the Prussian Ministers, 6 July 1908, as cited in ibid.

63. Ibid.

industrial tribunals established in 1890's and were excluded, therefore, from all cases solved or simply not heard by the lower courts. Aside from these duties, chambers would also submit position papers to the state concerning pending industrial legislation. In this way the government would be able to base its proposals, should it so choose, on the resolutions of the legally recognized spokesmen of the business and laboring communities. This semi-political role made it even more imperative for the government to exclude trade union secretaries, because "otherwise," wrote Bethmann, "organized labor would be elevated to the level of an organ of state."⁶⁴

Despite the obvious drawbacks to his bill, Bethmann was hopeful that non-socialist workers (as opposed to non-socialist union leaders) would accept the chambers and actively support the struggle against revolutionary socialism.

One may look upon the national reliability of the Christian labor movement, the Hirsch-Duncker associations, the yellow trade unions, etc., as yet untested. But it's a fact that these movements drive a wedge into the S.P.D.'s terroristic Bloc and, with any tact by employers in the management-labor chambers, will be able to be used against the Socialists.⁶⁵

With moderate concessions to show for their efforts, perhaps these non-socialist groups could teach socialist workers to appreciate the benefits of cooperation. A complete reconciliation between capital and labor would probably never occur, but if only a few agreements could be hammered out, then a slow process of reciprocity and compromise would begin. In the long run, noted Bethmann, "the S.P.D.'s dogmatic, intolerant rule of force"⁶⁶ would be broken.

The composition of the 28-man Reichstag committee which began deliberation of the bill on 26 January 1909 was a good indication that Bethmann's

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.

proposals would run into trouble. Present were Legien, Bömelburg, and Brandys of the free trade unions, Giesberts, Schirmer, Wiedeberg and Behrens of the Christian trade unions, Fleischer of the Catholic Fachabteilungen,⁶⁷ Schack of the Patriotic Retail Clerks, as well as Hitze, Trimborn, Naumann, and other supporters of organized labor. Not surprisingly, the committee draft of April 1909⁶⁸ called for a much more influential and prestigious institution. The Bundesrat, not the individual states, was given the right to decide where chambers were needed, thereby assuring that a somewhat larger number would be created. The jurisdiction of the new bodies was also expanded. Should striking workers appeal first to the chambers for arbitration, not the local industrial tribunals, the legal competence of the latter would be preempted. Along with the semi-political duties included in the government's bill, moreover, the committee wanted management-labor chambers to establish labor exchanges, investigate commercial and industrial relations, and bring quarrelling parties together for collective bargaining sessions. The committee also insisted that the functionaries of both trade union and employer associations be eligible for chamber elections. Unlike the government's bill, the committee draft would have greatly strengthened the position of labor vis-à-vis capital and, for all intents and purposes, would have recognized trade unions as the legal representatives of the entire working class.

With the battle lines drawn between Bundesrat and Reichstag, the executive committee of the German Workers Congress called a special session in Berlin on 21 April 1909. Stegerwald, Behrens, Schack, and the others gave a strong

67. Like all the Berliners, Fleischer opposed strikes. As he admitted years later, however, "the aversion to liberal capitalism was there from the beginning." Notation by Dr. Heinz Brauweiler, editor of the Düsseldorfer Tageblatt, concerning a talk with Fleischer on 13 July 1942, Brauweiler Papers 24, St A MG.

68. Reichstag Anlagen, Period 12, Session 1, No. 1418, Vol. 255, pp 79ff.

vote of confidence to the work of the Reichstag committee and urged parliament to stand firm. Congress leaders also warned the government that management-labor chambers without trade union secretaries would never be accepted by the German worker.⁶⁹ The session had been preceded, interestingly enough, by 18 mass rallies throughout Germany which passed similar resolutions. Politicians from all parties had been selected as guest speakers in a shrewd move to win broad support. At Bamberg, for instance, Kommerzienrat Manz of the National Liberals "spoke in complete agreement with the position of Christian labor."⁷⁰ The Congress seemed to have revived from the debacle of the previous year.

In Wilhelmian Germany, however, the resolutions of mass rallies, worker lobbies, and Reichstag committees were seldom effective in high places. Unwilling to compromise on the eligibility of union secretaries, the Bundesrat withdrew the management-labor chambers bill that spring. Bethmann reentered it in much the same form in February 1910, but, when a Reichstag committee packed with trade unionists of every stripe insisted on far-reaching improvements in May and was backed by an overwhelming majority of the full house in December 1910, the government stalled for a year, then allowed the bill to fall automatically with the dissolution of parliament in December 1911. Assuming that the Reichstag majority would not compromise on the issue of trade union secretaries, the government made no attempt to reintroduce it after the elections of January 1912. So ended the last attempt by the leaders of pre-war Germany to improve the socio-economic rights of labor.⁷¹

This outcome was embarrassing for those who gambled on the willingness of Reich leaders to reform the nation's labor laws. After the setbacks

69. Zentralblatt, No. 9, 3 May 1909.

70. Ibid.

71. Reichstag Anlagen, Period 12, Session 2, No. 523, Vol. 276, pp 2669ff.

over neutrality and tariffs at the turn of the century, Christian laborers had concluded in desperation that only a rapid, dramatic introduction of Christian-social reforms could slow down the advance of the free trade unions. The quarrel with Berlin from 1903 to early 1906, followed by the collapse of Christian Blockpolitik and the slower tempo of reform under the Bülow Bloc, ended this desperate bid for recruits. By late 1908 the Gesamtverband claimed 260,767 members, about 24,000 less than at the peak of mid-1907. The free trade unions, which stood at 1,797,000 in late 1908, had gained nearly 500,000 members since the elections and possessed such a commanding lead that no one was likely to overtake them. The police department in Düsseldorf confirmed this in a report to the Regierungspräsident in September 1908:

One stone after another is crumbling away from the Christian trade union movement. The awareness is spreading that the employers are united and do not organize according to their religious and political convictions. And, those [Christian trade unionists] who grow doubtful lean naturally to that side where they see growth and success, and that, despite scattered setbacks, tactical mistakes or local decline, is the free trade unions, who, with their great numbers, impress the workers.⁷²

In a very definite sense, German proletarians had opted for the economic success of the frees in the absence of any comparable political success on the part of the Christians. The stream of workers to the free trade unions would continue unabated until the fall of 1912, when the General Commission boasted 2,559,781 members.

The free trade unions reacted as one might expect. After failing to stop the growth of Christian splinter unions in the 1890's, the frees were presented with an impressive challenger in the Gesamtverband and other unaffiliated Christian trade unions in the years 1899-1901. The Gewerkschaftsstreit and the feud within the Christian camp over tariffs was cause for considerable Socialist rejoicing in 1902 and 1903, but the emergence

72. Police Department of Düsseldorf to the Regierungspräsident, 1 September 1908, Reg. D. 42810, HSA Düsseldorf.

of the German Workers Congress in the years thereafter led to renewed doubts and concerns. In May 1905, for instance, Karl Legien, Chairman of the General Commission sought to calm the delegates at the free's fifth congress by pointing out that Christian trade unionism was mainly a West German phenomenon. "If we had an area of agitation where our strength was as concentrated as that of the Christians in Rhineland-Westphalia, no other organization would be able to make headway against us either. The Christians will not trample us, they will disappear very soon."⁷³ By 1911, however, Legien's confidence was supported by the fact that his organization had recruited 10 workers to every one signed by the Gesamtverband over the past six years.

The development of our unions has shown that we are winning influence with the workers...As soon as the working class catches on completely to organizational thinking, then, no matter how Christian they may be, the workers will come to us all by themselves...Today we number more than 2-1/4 million members, while the Christians can't develop past a certain point, even in those districts where the church still has decisive influence...In the long run even the strongest Christianity can't make headway against us.⁷⁴

This time the delegates believed him.

Although the battle for dominance in the labor world was seemingly lost by 1908/09, Christian leaders refused to concede defeat. In the years that remained before the Reichstag election of 1912, Christian laborers tried desperately to overtake the free trade unions in anticipation of S.P.D. defeats and the introduction of social reforms. Christian labor's embarrassing stance on the question of financial reform, the reemergence of the trade union controversy between Mönchen-Gladbach and Berlin, and other factors discussed in the next two chapters prevented the realization of these goals.

73. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des fünften Kongresses der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands (Berlin: Verlag der Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, 1905), p 130.

74. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des achten Kongresses der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands (Berlin: Verlag der Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, 1911), p 156.

CHAPTER 10

FINANCIAL REFORM, ELECTORAL POLITICS AND THE PROMOTION OF BOURGEOIS SOLIDARITY

Since the tax reform debate of 1906, Christian laborers had criticized the federal states for refusing to share direct tax powers (income, wealth, etc.) with the Reich. Giesberts, Behrens, and others argued that by relying on beer, wine, tobacco, and other indirect revenues to fund imperial military programs, the worker, the peasant, and the small trader, whose incomes were minimal, were forced to pay a disproportionately large share of the costs.¹ In June 1909, however, Christian trade union deputies joined the Center and Right in voting against Reich inheritance taxes. In the years thereafter the move put the Center and the Christian trade unions at the mercy of S.P.D. and free trade union agitators who exploited the rejection of the highly popular property tax in preparation for the Reichstag elections of January 1912. Before proceeding to an analysis of Christian electoral politics, therefore, the financial reform of 1909 should first be discussed. As will become evident, the motives for Christian labor's stand in that crucial year underscored the weaknesses of a movement that all too often was forced to assign priority to issues of a religio-cultural nature.

By mid-February 1909 Treasury Secretary Sydow's tax package, which combined 400 million marks of consumer levies with 100 million marks of estate duties (Nachlasssteuer) and other inheritance taxes, had run aground in the Reichstag budget committee. Complicating the situation

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1. Carl Bachem to Peter Spahn, 17 November 1905, Richard Müller (Fulda) to Julius Bachem, 19 November 1905, Bachem Papers 239, HA Köln; Die Arbeit, No. 4, 23 January 1908; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 42, 17 October 1908.

was the position of the Conservatives, who had decided the previous fall to block any Reich taxation of income, wealth, or landed inheritances, and to prevent parliament from imposing any specific tax programs on the federal states. The Conservatives knew that Bülow's inheritance taxes were not likely to please the Liberals and Progressives without promises of electoral reforms in Prussia. And this could not be tolerated, for Prussia was the party's base of political power. Conservative uneasiness mounted in mid-March 1909 when Bülow seemed to have affected a reconciliation with Kaiser William, who had snubbed his first minister since the Daily Telegraph Affair in November. If William were won over by the master-intriguer into making political concessions, all was lost for the cause of conservatism in Germany.² Thus on 24 March Conservative leader Oskar von Normann announced that his party would complete the reform with all parties willing to approve 400 million marks of indirect taxes, 100 million marks of state contributions (Matrikularbeiträge) levied as the states saw fit, and oppose any Reich tax on inheritances, income, or wealth. As Normann told Center leader Georg Hertling, the Right was "fed up with bloc politics" and desirous of pursuing a course "more in keeping with [its] own principles."³

The announcement was an invitation to the Center to join in felling Bülow. There was good reason, of course, to expect the Catholics to comply, for the Chancellor's policies since 1907 were interpreted by most in the Zentrumsturm as a prelude to another period of discriminatory legislation against the church. For a month, nevertheless, Hertling refused to commit his party to the Conservatives' anti-Bloc stratagem. Bülow's inheritance

2. Karl Speck, "Die Reichsfinanzreform in der Commission," Allgemeine Rundschau, 6 March 1909 (clipping in: Bachem Papers 282a, HA Köln); Peter-Christian Witt, Die Finanzpolitik des Deutschen Reiches von 1903 bis 1913 (Lübeck and Hamburg; Matthiesen Verlag, 1970), pp 243-72; Lerchenfeld to Podewils, 12 March and 17 March 1909, Ges. Berlin, Pol. Schrifwechsel 1081, G St A München.

3. Carl Bachem notation of 21 March 1909, Bachem Papers 283, HA Köln.

taxes were quite popular with the Center rank and file, especially in the industrial regions of the Rhineland where the workers were reported in an angry mood over the prospect of new consumer taxes. Too, it was uncertain whether the Conservatives would really bolt the Bloc. In late April, however, Normann informed Hertling that the Conservatives were determined to form a new majority, and importantly, had decided to work for 100 million marks of direct and indirect imperial taxes on personal wealth. Eager to embarrass Bülow, and pleased with the anti-liberal, anti-business nature of the new tax proposals, the Center executive committee decided to follow the Right's lead on 22 April 1909.⁴

Four days later Hertling convened a Fraktion caucus to unite the party behind the decision of its leaders. As Hertling well knew, the task would be a difficult one. The party could expect intense opposition from Bavarian and Württembergian deputies and, more important for our purposes here, an equally tough fight from Christian labor. With the exception of the Christian trade union's Zentralblatt, which had limited itself to a criticism of the proposed tobacco tax,⁵ the Christian labor press had waged an intensive campaign since February in favor of Bülow's inheritance taxes. Wiedeberg's Die Baugewerkschaft noted with great displeasure, for instance, that in rejecting the proposed inheritance tax the upper classes "were ready to speak of the plight of widows and orphans, but were in a moment ready to impose hundreds of millions of new taxes on the broad masses of the poor population without even batting an eye--people who earn less than 900 marks a year. They are ready to do this in order to avoid any further burden on themselves."⁶ Behrens increased pressure on the

4. Karl Zamieden to Lambert Lensing of Tremonia, 7 April 1909, Herold Papers 3, BA Koblenz; "Dürener Anzeiger," 8 March 1909 (clipping in: 403/8458, LHA Koblenz); Julius Bachem, "Was Werden wird," Tag., No. 83, 8 April 1909; Hertling to his wife Anna, 23 April 1909, Hertling Papers 19, BA Koblenz.

5. Zentralblatt, Nos. 3, 4, and 7, 8 February, 22 February, and 5 April 1909.

6. Cited in the Reichstag Debates, Period 12, Session 1 (7 July 1909), Vol. 237, p 9188.

parties in April by calling for both inheritance taxes and anti-business taxes on mobile wealth. His claim to speak for all non-socialist workers became more credible in late April when the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung adopted the same stance.⁷ It is highly doubtful, therefore, that the Fraktion caucus on the 26th went smoothly, nor is it likely that succeeding weeks brought any improvement. For, with the probable backing of August Pieper, the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung kept up constant pressure on the party until early June.⁸

At this point, however, intrigues at court intervened once again to reduce the effectiveness of Christian labor politics. Since the Daily Telegraph Affair of 1908 a clique led by Count Max von Fürstenberg and Eugen Röder, the Emperor's Master of Ceremonies, had suspected Bülow of pursuing "socialistic" policies which could only be averted by the Chancellor's removal.⁹ In early June, then, Count Praschma, a Silesian Catholic and leading Centrist in league with the two above-named, sent a series of startling messages to Center and Conservative leaders.

I would have written sooner [he wrote Hertling on 5 June] but I was promised further news after Fürstenberg's visit with the Kaiser...what I learned was as follows: The relationship between Kaiser and Chancellor is still the same unfriendly one. Just as before the Kaiser wants to let him go...It was already being said at that time, however, that the Chancellor would cleverly exploit the opposition of stock exchange and industrial circles to the property taxes planned by the Center and Conservatives...Just now I received a telegram which states that important decisions from His Highness, perhaps dissolution, are in the offing as a result of machinations by the Chancellor. I'm coming through Berlin tonight and have a 1-1/2-hour layover in which I hope to find out more.¹⁰

7. Tag, No. 91, 20 April 1909; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 19, 8 May 1909.

8. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 22-24, 29 May, 5 June, 12 June 1909.

9. Bülow, Memoirs, Vol. 2, pp 535-38, 553-54.

10. Praschma to Hertling, 5 June 1909, Hertling Papers 37, BA Koblenz.

Praschma's conversations in Berlin led to the following message which was sent to Herold, Spahn, Gröber, and the Conservative leader Heydebrand:

Have spoken with said gentlemen and learned that since the day before yesterday the Chancellor has definitely decided to initiate a struggle with all means [at his disposal] and dissolve parliament and wage new elections with the utmost governmental pressure at the head of the united liberals. He's hoping for the approval of the Kaiser and the federal states. Liberal leaders and the press are informed, the most far-reaching promises concerning electoral reform in Prussia have been made. The Kaiser can't be counted on. After he said a few days ago that he'd gladly be rid of [Bülow, he reversed himself] the day before yesterday at breakfast, addressing him as 'dear Bernhard' for the first time [since November].¹¹

It is difficult on the basis of available evidence to determine the accuracy of these reports. That National Liberal leader Ernst Bassermann, shipping magnate Albert Ballin, and other leading industrialists and bankers wanted Bülow and William to take such action, there can be no doubt.¹² That Bülow, but much less the Kaiser, had already agreed to this course seems less probable. The key fact remains, however, that nervous Catholics in Berlin believed the rumors and acted accordingly. Thus Baron Savigny, of Westphalia, urged his fellow Centrists to caucus at the earliest possible moment. "The position of our party, and with it, the fate of all German Catholics, especially those in Prussia, hangs in the balance."¹³

Opposition to Bülow's tax proposals was now elevated to the level of a desperate struggle between the liberal-progressive and the conservative-religious Weltanschauung (separation of church and state, elimination of confessional schools, etc.). As a result of the new situation, the attacks of Catholic labor ceased immediately. The Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, which had criticized the Center as late as 12 June, supported the party and warned of the dangers of liberalism in its next article of 19 June.¹⁴

11. Praschma to Herold, 6 June 1909, Herold Papers 3, BA Koblenz.

12. Eschenburg, Kaiserreich am Scheidewege, pp 207-08, 223-36, 235.

13. Savigny to Herold, 9 June 1909, Herold Papers 3, BA Koblenz.

14. "Aus dem Reichstag (19 June)," Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 26, 26 June 1909.

Within the Fraktion, Giesberts, Schiffer, and the other Catholic unionists were won over to the leaders' viewpoint by the same religious arguments and, it would seem, by a promise that the party would accept inheritance taxes in the future.¹⁵ An appeal to Catholic loyalties mollified the opposition of the Bavarians and Württembergians too, and on 24 June 1909 the party stood united against Bülow. The volte face of Catholic labor and the South Germans contributed to the Chancellor's undoing, significantly enough, for the inheritance tax was defeated by a scant eight votes.

Stegerwald, who never allowed religious sentiments to interfere with his politics, was greatly disillusioned.¹⁶ It was only a year earlier in the aftermath of the Vereins gesetz debate that the central committee of the Gesamtverband had instructed labor deputies to give trade union interests precedence over party matters. The fact that Behrens supported the inheritance taxes after a lengthy, outspoken speech against indirect taxation was all the more embarrassing for Christian labor, for the central committee resolution of 1908 had also called upon union deputies to maintain closer parliamentary contacts and vote in unison on controversial issues. It is not surprising, therefore, that Stegerwald expressed frustration and weariness with politics in the immediate aftermath of the financial reform of 1909. Giesberts and the other "Christians" had placed a greater priority on their religion than their class, thus lending credence to Social Democrat charges that the church's primary social function was to thwart the development of class-consciousness. To be sure, "Christian" could indeed be connoted with "anti-labor", for the inheritance taxes that were rejected exempted all persons inheriting less than 20,000 marks--in other words, the entire working class. The S.P.D. would obviously have a heyday exploiting the Gesamtverband's alleged "betrayal of labor." If one considers the fact that the threat to the Catholic Church in 1909 was more perceived than real, it becomes clear that the Christian trade union deputies in the Center had made a tremendous tactical error.

15. Die Arbeit, Nos. 30 and 32, 24 July, 7 August 1909; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 33 and 36, 14 August, 4 September 1909.

16. Die Arbeit, No. 24, 17 June 1911.

The best defense against the S.P.D.'s tax agitation, Stegerwald decided, was a bold counterattack. The major objection of Christian labor leaders to socialism, it will be recalled, was the atheistic, anti-religious nature of the movement. Collective ownership had also been attacked as a violation of the "natural" right of private property. It should not be forgotten, moreover, that Stegerwald and other Christian trade unionists were convinced that the S.P.D., by publicly professing a belief in Marxism, despite the drift of the party toward revisionism, had prejudiced the Kaiser's attitudes toward the entire working class, thus hampering the cause of moderate social reform. That Christian labor should continue its attacks against socialism after the financial reform was only consistent, therefore, with the traditional strategy of the movement. In the summer of 1909, however, the Christian trade unions were in a desperate situation. Armed with barbed criticisms of Christian labor's rejection of inheritance taxes, the free trade unions and S.P.D. stood poised to deliver their faltering Christian rivals a coup d' grace. The reviving economy and the much stronger battalion of functionaries employed by the General Commission (2000 vs. 300) enhanced the chances of success in this endeavor.¹⁷ Therefore, if the freies were to be halted and the subsequent floodtide of Socialist electoral victories averted, much more aggressive methods of fighting the Left were needed. Only an "organized folk-movement," as Carl Schiffer put it, could operate effectively against "the well-organized, disciplined army of the Social Democrats."¹⁸ The leaders of all bourgeois parties and social groups had to reeducate (umbilden) the German working classes to see through the propaganda of the S.P.D. It was equally important, however, that the rich be reeducated to appreciate the need for sacrifice and reform. Against the united forces of a society willing to eliminate social injustices, the Socialists could never prevail.¹⁹ Such a 'folk-movement' held out the only

17. See the Volksverein's memorandum of 9 July 1910 to diocesan authorities in Cologne, Gen. 23.61., Vol. 1, Erzb. Registratur Köln. The document was based on "detailed discussions with Christian labor leaders."

18. Tag, No. 109, 10 May 1912.

19. Hertling to his wife Anna, 20 April 1910, Hertling Papers 20, BA Koblenz. Hertling had just spoken with Christian trade union leaders in the Reichstag.

prospect for healthy political developments in Germany, moreover, for if the masses continued to be swayed by the "unpractical doctrines"²⁰ of socialism instead of the Christians' more positive approach to politics, the government would be reluctant to introduce social reforms, the propertied classes would refuse to pay taxes to support such programs, parliamentary life would be ridden with class tension and division, and important national tasks such as tax, tariff, and military legislation would be very difficult to accomplish. Thus Stegerwald and his associates in the General Secretariat urged that more emphasis be placed on agitational efforts outside the Reichstag designed to break the back of the free unions and S.P.D.

The campaign to emancipate the leftward-leaning working classes from the grip of Marxist dogma was in full swing by late 1909. In the Christian labor press, and at scores of mass rallies held during 1910 and 1911, Christian leaders exposed embarrassing disagreements between the free unions and the S.P.D., discussed the views of the "revisionists," and encouraged Socialist and unorganized workers to oppose a movement that had apparently done nothing for the proletariat but encourage reactionary policies in Berlin. Typical of the rhetoric was a speech by Giesberts before 8000 followers in Munster. Protestants and Catholics had to unite, he noted, in the common struggle against "a deadly enemy of bourgeois society that wants to introduce complete equality and freedom, undermine Germany's monarchical constitution, and root out Christianity."²¹ The German Workers Congress joined the campaign too, issuing a declaration in September 1911 that damned the S.P.D.'s "unpatriotic behavior" during the second Morocco crisis.²²

20. Stegerwald before the Gesamtverband central commission on 22 September 1909, cited in the Zentralblatt, No. 21, 18 October 1909. This paragraph is also based on his speech in Aachen on 17 October 1909, printed in Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 43, 23 October 1909, and his annual report of 20 June 1910, in Zentralblatt, No. 13, 27 June 1910.

21. Münsterischer Anzeiger, 19 June 1911 (clipping in: Reg. Münster VIII 47, St A Münster).

22. Bericht über die Verhandlungen des dritten Deutschen Arbeiter-Kongresses (Cologne: Christlicher Gewerkschafts-Verlag, 1914), pp 39-40.

The immediate goal of these efforts was not merely to prevent the frees from cutting into Gesamtverband ranks, but also to capture hundreds of thousands of new recruits from the non-unionized proletariat. For numerous reasons this growth did not occur. As mentioned in the previous chapter, many workers were impressed with the size, strength, and economic potential of the free trade unions. The Christians, on the other hand, were discredited in the eyes of many, understaffed, and plagued by the ongoing quarrel with the Berlinist Fachabteilungen (see below, Chapter 11).

The Gesamtverband also experienced problems with employers in the metal, textile, construction, and small trades sector. Unlike heavy industrialists, small manufacturers in Germany were unable to organize an effective resistance to trade unionism as the years drew on to 1914. Thus the trade union movement was regarded increasingly in these circles as a necessary evil. The Christian trade unions did not benefit from this capitulation, however, for, stating that they did not wish to negotiate with "politically biased, religious" organizations, small Protestant producers turned to the free unions as exclusive bargaining partners. Next to the fratricidal Gewerkschaftsstreit, the Socialist "closed shop" weighed most heavily on the minds of Christian labor leaders during the economic upswing of 1910 and 1911.²³

To offset this trend among light industrialists, Christian trade unionists went to great lengths to encourage more lenient treatment of their organization by heavy industrialists in the National Liberal Party. At the Augustinusverein session of February 1910, for instance, Catholic labor leaders urged Center journalists to discontinue polemics against the Hansabund, the Manufacturers' League, and the Central Association of German Industrialists. In the Saar, Behrens offered to support entrepreneurial candidates at the next election if the liberals discontinued their harassment of the Gewerkverein. The union's general secretary was less willing

23. Heinrich Brauns to Archbishop Fischer, 5 November 1910, Gen. 23.61., Vol. 1, Erzb. Registratur Köln; Adam Stegerwald, Wo Stehen Wir in der Gewerkschaftsbewegung? (Cologne: Verlag Adam Stegerwald, 1910), pp 14-15; also see the Volksverein memorandum of 9 July 1910 cited above in note 17.

to pursue friendlier relations in the Ruhr, but under pressure from Catholic secretaries, Christian-Social agitation against the National Liberals was toned down considerably.²⁴ In the ultimate act of appeasement, the Gewerkverein decided in October 1911 to oppose Socialist, Hirsch-Duncker and Polish strike plans, thereby avoiding action "that could arouse the authorities, the mine owners, and the national-minded workers."²⁵ In return, the Christian trade unions asked to be afforded the degree of respect due a patriotic labor organization. The Gesamtverband was ready to combat the "extremist doctrine of the class struggle,"²⁶ but had the right to expect Big Business to facilitate, not hamper this crusade.

The campaign to recruit heavy industry for the nascent folk-movement was a dismal failure. National Liberal and Reichspartsii entrepreneurs in the Ruhr and Saar simply refused to see any significant difference between the surrender of light industry to the freies and that which Christian workers proposed for the iron and steel industry. In both cases, capital lost "the power struggle" to labor. In their desperate search for partners to oppose the Socialists, meanwhile, Christian laborers had entered into relationships which were easily depicted by the opposition as yet another betrayal of the German working class.²⁷ The Christian trade unions had no intention of

24. Augustinusblatt, No. 2, February 1910, St Bib MG; Bergknappe, No. 33, 14 August 1909; Behrens to Mumm, 20 August 1909, Mumm Papers Nr. 1056, Z St A Potsdam; K. E. Weinbrenner to Franz Wieber, 23 January 1911, Weinbrenner Papers, Bestand 46/3, St A Duisburg.

25. Police Chief of Gelsenkirchen to the Regierungspräsident, 7 October 1911, Reg. Münster VII 46, Bd. 1, St A Münster. For further evidence of Christian labor's policy of atonement with Big Business and the National Liberals, see Ernst Francke to Bethmann Hollweg, 28 September 1910, Reichskanzlei Nr. 2269, Bl. 31, Z St A Potsdam; the Volksverein's memorandum of 9 July 1910, cited above in note 17; and Die Arbeit, No. 45, 6 November 1909, and No. 16, 16 April 1910.

26. Zentralblatt, No. 23, 14 November 1910.

27. Behrens promise to support the candidacies of heavy industrialists in the Saar, for instance, were discovered by the Alter Verband, thus necessitating a defense in Bergknappe (No. 33, 14 August 1909).

abandoning the workers, but it must be said that the gamble on Germany's employers was singularly naive, for there was never the slightest indication that such a strategy would be successful. As most acts of desperation, the possible ramifications of the move were not thoroughly considered beforehand.

Christian laborers ran similar risks by attempting to improve relations with the agrarian Right. Behrens wrote Mumm in August 1909, nevertheless, that it was "politically and morally imperative"²⁸ that the Christian-Social Party abandon its independence and merge with the Conservatives. The present position of the Christian-Socials, limited to a few western districts and forced to dilute the views of the Christian labor movement to suit the needs of the Economic Union in the Reichstag, was intolerable. Union with the Conservatives, on the other hand, would gradually extend the party's social progressivism to the second largest Fraktion in parliament, enable Protestant unionists to obtain more seats, and allow the new party to attract working class votes as the Center had done for years. Behrens insisted, therefore, that the party convention that fall discuss merger. Adolf Stöcker's ideas were "too great that they should live on in so small a fashion."²⁹

The results of Behrens' initiative at the Christian-Social Darmstadt convention of September 1909 are obscured by the lack of documentary evidence, but political developments during the following year indicate that the Christian-Socials reached a compromise. In numerous articles appearing in Die Arbeit and Reich,³⁰ organ of the Christian-Social Konferenz, the Conservatives were urged to refrain from running their own candidates in the Rhineland and certain areas of eastern Germany possessing large concentrations of proletarian and petty bourgeois voters. The Conservatives, it

28. Behrens to Mumm, 20 August 1909, Mumm Papers Nr. 1056, Z St A Potsdam.

29. Ibid.

30. Die Arbeit, No. 13, 18, 24, 32, 34, 39, and 49 for 26 March, 30 April, 11 June, 6 August, 20 August, 29 September, and 3 December 1910; the Reich articles are discussed in the Neue Preussische (Kreuz-) Zeitung, No. 272, 14 June 1910.

was argued, relied too heavily on the agitation of the Bund der Landwirte to prevail in western Germany and were even perceived by artisans and small farmers in the East as a lobby serving only large landholders. The party should therefore abandon these areas and throw its votes to the Christian-Social "wing" of the German conservative movement. A close reading of the above-mentioned articles leads to the conclusion that most Christian-Socials realized that merger with the Conservatives would mean a complete sacrifice of the smaller party's labor program, not the greater influence which Behrens envisioned. The Christian-Social proposals in 1910 indicate, however, that Behrens prevailed with his plan of broadening the party's social and geographical base.

The Conservatives, interestingly enough, reached much the same conclusion concerning relations between the two parties. In Baden, Württemberg, and certain districts of Rhineland-Westphalia, Saxony, and eastern Germany, local party and Bund der Landwirte leaders recognized that the party either had to nominate Christian laborers or support the Christian-Socials if the conservative movement as a whole were to survive.³¹ Not a few Conservatives, moreover, agreed with party journalist Dietrich von Oertzen, who proposed in September 1910 that the executive committees of both parties meet to formulate a formal electoral alliance.³² When Reichsbote, a Conservative organ, and a few individual Conservatives advocated merger, however, the idea was quickly laid to rest by Heydebrand. His Herford speech of 23 November 1910 illustrates well the barriers on the Right that stood in the way of a solid, popularly based folk-movement.

Whether we've come to the point where a complete merger of the two parties should be implemented, is to me somewhat doubtful. I can't help saying that I have the feeling that the Christian-Social Party, in representing the interests of the workers, places the workers' point of view too much in the foreground, that not enough consideration is taken of the fact that there

31. Die Arbeit, No. 40, 3 October 1907, No. 24 and 46, 6 August and 12 November 1910; Neue Preussische (Kreuz-) Zeitung, No. 272, 14 June 1910.

32. Die Arbeit, No. 46, 12 November 1910; Westfälische Politische Nachrichten (clipping in: Reichministerium des Innern Nr. 1137, Bl. 46, 2 St A Potsdam).

are also employers, that employers must have authority, that employers must be, so to speak, masters of their house. I want to warn the Christian-Social Party to pay more attention to the employer than they do, something which is also in the interests of the worker. In this respect I often have the feeling that the Christian-Social Party, and perhaps we too, have yet to learn this. I think, however, that it is more correct for the two directions, Conservative and Christian-Social, to continue to exist separately.³³

The crescendoing electoral agitation of the Left had clearly brought the Conservatives and Christian-Socials closer than at any time since their parting of the ways in 1896. This would be proven in 1912 and in the years immediately preceding the war. But demands for fuller coalition rights, codetermination, and social insurance were simply not included in Heydebrand's or the party's definition of true conservatism.

The relationship between Christian labor and the Center Party also underwent significant changes before the elections of 1912. Despite Trimborn's organizational reforms in the Rhineland in 1902 and 1903, the election of six labor deputies to the Reichstag in 1907, and five to the Prussian Landtag in 1908, demands for a greater voice within the party persisted. Given the interconfessional nature of the Christian trade unions, Catholic workers in western Germany looked upon the confessional Arbeitervereine as the logical instrument to express their views.³⁴ Arbeiterverein chiefs August Pieper and Otto Müller resisted the idea, however, because under the new Vereinsgesetz the state was empowered to oversee the activities of political associations--and state interference with important pastoral functions of the church was intolerable to most Catholics, especially while Bülow, whom they distrusted, was in power.³⁵

A compromise solution was reached in September 1908 with the creation of a special "Workers Political Committee" for the Archdiocese of Cologne.

33. Kölnische Zeitung, No. 585, 24 May 1911.

34. See the protocol of a meeting of the Diocesan Committee of Arbeiterverein Chairmen for the Archdiocese of Cologne, 13 January 1908, Archiv der katholischen Arbeiterbewegung, Vol. 5, K F Z G Bonn.

35. Diocesan Committee meeting of 26 May 1908, protocol in ibid.

Among other things, the committee would present the views of Catholic labor to party officials at the local, regional, and national level. The new body was organizationally independent of the Arbeitervereine and would respect "the imperatives of [Center] Party discipline."³⁶ Plans were drawn up to found similar institutions outside Cologne during the winter of 1908/09, but, as Müller recalled later, "the plans were not implemented."³⁷ Church officials in the other dioceses of the empire apparently felt that greater political independence for Catholic labor would be too risky for the Center and could also undermine the educational programs of the Arbeitervereine.

The matter was not resolved, however, for the unpopular financial reform of 1909 brought even greater proletarian pressure for a more formal representation within the structure of the party. At the forefront of the movement stood Stegerwald, who felt Catholic labor should exert greater influence on the Center's tariff and tax policies, thereby preventing further embarrassing situations for the Gesamtverband. Furthermore, the General Secretary wanted to incorporate the Catholic Arbeitervereine into his anti-Socialist folk-movement, and to do this, a greater political role was imperative. After Pieper and Müller proved amenable to these suggestions at a conference held in Duisburg on 21 December 1909, the diocesan Political Committee of Cologne was expanded in February 1910 to the dioceses of Münster and Paderborn. It was also stipulated that Arbeiterverein secretaries from the other dioceses as well as Catholic labor deputies, Gesamtverband secretaries, and other pro-Center members of the Christian labor movement could join. Reflecting the role he had played in expanding the committee, Stegerwald was selected vice-chairman of the executive board next to Wilhelm Weyer, leading labor secretary of the Association of Catholic Arbeitervereine of Western Germany.³⁸

36. See Otto Müller's discussion of the origins of the new workers' committee before the Diocesan Committee, 25 March 1918, in ibid.

37. Müller Manuscript, p 30, KAB Haus Köln.

38. See Stegerwald's speech before the Gesamtverband central commission on 22 September 1909, printed in Zentralblatt, No. 21, 18 October 1909; Müller Manuscript, p 30 KAB Haus Köln; and Müller before the Diocesan Committee, 25 March 1918, as cited above in note 36.

While Behrens sought to expand the popular base of the Conservative Party, Stegerwald and the political committee pursued the same goal with the Center. In recently industrialized areas of Westphalia, for instance, efforts were made to reform the outmoded, often non-existent party organization. Karl Herold, the head of the Westphalia organization, was also urged as early as April 1910 to initiate electoral agitation against the Socialists in the above-mentioned areas and coordinate these actions with those of Arbeiterverein and Gewerkverein secretariates. Catholic labor leaders were also quite active in organizing the new middle class of clerks, technicians, and white-collar workers--groups thought to be imbued with progressive, anti-clerical ideas and hence a threat to the Center. But organizational work did not exhaust the program of the new committee. In private discussions at the annual convention of the western Arbeitervereine in May 1910, Catholic political leaders learned of union plans to obtain 20 Reichstag seats for Protestant laborers within the National Liberal, Conservative, Christian-Social, and other rightist parties. More detailed evidence of the talks is not available, but it seems certain that the Center was urged to support these hoped-for candidacies by withdrawing from the Hauptwahl in the districts involved. Pieper, Müller, and other church labor leaders were also pressured into forming a national association of Catholic Arbeitervereine including eastern Germany, expand the activities of the Political Committee to this level, and sponsor periodic national Arbeiterverein rallies that would call on all parties to pay more heed to the electoral and programmatic demands of the Christian labor movement. Along with gaining more influence in the Center, therefore, the Political Committee was also determined to support the National Liberal and Conservative

Party orientation of Christian labor described above. The Committee was the advocate par excellence of political interconfessionalism.³⁹

Stegerwald, Giesberts, Weyer, and the others had every reason to be pleased with the responsiveness of the Center during the primary elections of 12 January 1912. Not only were a dozen Catholic unionists nominated for the Reichstag, six of whom were elected, but Stegerwald's recommendations concerning the need for far-reaching electoral sacrifices in the interests of anti-Socialist Sammlung were followed more frequently than in 1907. Not as worried about the imminent danger to the Church as they had been during the previous election, Centrists engaged in Hauptwahl support of the Conservatives in 40, the Reichspartei in 10, the Christian-Socials, Bund der Landwirte, and other rightist splinter-groups in 43, and the National Liberals in 6 Reichstag districts. In response to the grant of about 225,000 votes in 109 of Germany's 397 electoral departments, the conservative parties threw approximately 40,000 votes in 33 districts to the Catholics. Embittered over the collapse of the Bülow Bloc, the National Liberals did not reciprocate in the primary elections, but Christian labor took some consolation in the fact that a united front of bourgeois parties including the National Liberals backed Count Posadowsky, one of the most avid supporters of the Christian-national labor movement, in Bielefeld. The National Liberals were also wary of run-off cooperation with the "clericals," except in the hotly tested Ruhr, where Karl Herold, the only advocate of

39. See the protocol of the Political Committees' meeting in Düsseldorf on 20 October 1910, appended to Wilhelm Weyer to Karl Herold, 11 November 1910, Herold Papers 3, BA Koblenz; Johann Effert to Karl Herold, 20 April 1910, Herold Papers 3, BA Koblenz; Johann Effert to the Regierungspräsident of Arnsberg, 20 August 1908, Reg. Arnsberg I 83, St A Münster; August Pieper, "Das Zentrum und die wachsende gewerbtätige Bevölkerung," Präsides Korrespondenz, Nos. 3-4, March-April 1912, pp 71-74, St Bib MG; Wilhelm Ziebach Diary, Vol. 1, entry for 19 July 1910, Archiv der katholischen Arbeiterbewegung, K f Z G Bonn; Präsides Korrespondenz, Nos. 6-7, June-July 1910, pp 217-18, St Bib MG; Mitteilungen an die Präsides der katholischen Arbeitervereine der Erzdiözese Köln, No. 37, 15 September 1910, pp 413-19; Adam Stegerwald, "Neue Aufgaben der katholischen Arbeiter- und Jugendvereine," Soziale Revue, 1911 (III. Quartalsheft), pp 346-57.

the unions' pro-National Liberal strategy in 1907, had agreed on a Stichwahl alliance with National Liberal leaders as early as December 1910.⁴⁰

It would be an exaggeration, of course, to attribute the Center's generous electoral policies solely to pressure from Catholic labor. So convinced were Julius Bachem and the editorial staff of the Kölnische Volkszeitung of the need for bourgeois unity, in fact, that it is often difficult to determine whether Bachem and his cousins or Stegerwald and the General Secretariat led the way. One need only review the election campaign of 1906/07, however, to arrive at the conclusion that the workers, who were engaged in a desperate struggle with the Socialist unions, possessed the deeper, less compromising commitment to anti-Socialist cooperation. Much the same can be said of Karl Trimborn and the secretariat of the Rhenish Center Party. Included on the committee to determine the Center's run-off strategy in western Germany, for example, were Trimborn and his staff, leading Centrists from the districts involved, plus Julius Bachem, August Pieper, and Adam Stegerwald.⁴¹ Trimborn's public appeal for support of the Westphalian National Liberals in January 1912 indicated, nevertheless, which faction was the driving force behind the pro-liberal strategy:

I call upon...all followers of the Center Party...to vote for the right-wing National Liberals in the run-off and assure under all circumstances their victory over the S.P.D. The interests of the Fatherland, which must make progress everywhere, demand it of you, and particularly consideration for the Christian-national labor movement...whose healthy development must lie close to the hearts of all clear-sighted friends of the Fatherland.⁴²

40. Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 10, 11 January 1912; Jürgen Bertram, Die Wahlen zum Deutschen Reichstag vom Jahre 1912 (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1964), pp 46-47; Tag, No. 260, 4 November 1911; Center leader Rheinländer of Hagen to Herold, 26 January 1911, Herold Papers 4, BA Koblenz.

41. Jörg to Herold, 9 January 1912, Herold Papers 5, BA Koblenz.

42. Kölnische Zeitung, No. 83, 24 January 1912.

Mönchen-Gladbach also believed in the politics of interconfessionalism, as Pieper's talk at the Windhorst League in July 1910 and Heinrich Brauns' presentation before the Augustinusverein in December 1910 make quite clear.⁴³ But once again it is hard to escape the feeling that Brauns, Müller, Pieper, et al. were driven on many occasions by their followers. The history of the Political Committee provides many examples in support of this view, as does Stegerwald's remark to Franz Bachem in October 1908 that Mönchen-Gladbach's policies were often dictated by a "sly opportunism."⁴⁴ It should also be mentioned that Peter Spahn, son of Center leader Peter Spahn, wrote that political cooperation between bourgeois parties in 1912 was to a great extent attributable to the "growing influence"⁴⁵ of the Christian trade unions. Thus, although the point needs qualification, the primary and run-off agreements formed in the fall and winter of 1911/12 should be seen as one of the crowning accomplishments of the politics of Christian labor.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, the Center's sacrifices did little to enhance the presence of Christian labor in the Reichstag, for, with some notable exceptions, the Protestant parties did not nominate Christian trade unionists. The Conservatives and Free Conservatives established an important precedent by running Hermann Dunkel, co-founder of the Committee for the Election of Patriotic Workers, in Frankfurt, a.d. O., Paul Krug, head of the Gesamtverband's Württembergian secretariat, in Reutlingen, and seven non-unionized workers, artisans, and clerks in eastern and northern Germany.

43. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 29, 16 July 1910; Augustinus-Blatt, No. 12, December 1910, St Bib MG.

44. Stegerwald to Franz Bachem, 17 October 1908, printed in Germania, No. 290, 19 December 1911.

45. Tag, No. 240, 12 October 1912.

46. The labor origins of Center electoral strategy in 1912, like the origins of Bachem's 1906 article "We Must Get Out of the Tower!," have been overlooked by other historians who concentrate solely on Bachem himself. See Ross, Beleaguered Tower, pp 34-39; Bertram, Wahlen, pp 22-28, 34-35; Ralph René Menderhausen, "German Political Catholicism 1912-1919," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1973, pp 104-12.

This represented a mere fraction of the 224 candidates run by both parties, however, and none of the proletarians were elected. The Economic Union sponsored Christian trade unionists in Lübeck, Berlin, Herford, and Frankfurt a. M., but, with the exception of Herford, where Conservatives briefly considered voting for Behrens' colleague Hermann Wallbaum, these candidates were hopeless from the start. Christian-Social laborers found consolation in the fact that Conservative, Bund der Landwirte, and Center votes had helped elect Reinhard Mumm in Siegen and Franz Behrens in Wetzlar. There was also some satisfaction derived from the more flexible behavior of the National Liberals, who nominated and elected a Christian miner in Bochum (Heckmann), the chairman of a Christian union unaffiliated with the Gesamtverband in Göttingen (Ickler), and another non-socialist labor leader in Eisenach (Marquart).⁴⁷ Three seats for Evangelical laborers was a far cry, nevertheless, from the 20 hoped for in 1910.

Equally discouraging, Christian labor and its bourgeois allies were unable to prevent a leftist landslide in 1912. The S.P.D. amassed 4,250,401 votes and 110 seats, thereby surpassing the Center as the largest Fraktion in parliament and robbing the "Blue-Black" coalition of its majority. The causes are not hard to find. As a result of indirect tax increases in 1902, 1906, and 1909, the share of Imperial income from these sources had risen from 43 to 57 percent.⁴⁸ For the average worker earning only two or three marks a day, such increases were often impossible to tolerate. Added to long-felt resentments over the plutocratic suffrage system in Prussia, Germany's authoritarian laws of assembly and association, and other inequities and injustices of Wilhelmian society, the growing tax burden on the masses was all that was needed to produce a drastic shift to the left in 1912.⁴⁹

47. Neue Preussische (Kreuz-) Zeitung, No. 608, 29 December 1911, and No. 21, 13 January 1912; Bertram, Wahlen, pp 156-57; Frankfurter Zeitung, No. 324, 22 November 1911; also see the extra-edition of the Kölnische Volkszeitung, March 1912, in the Bachem Papers 317, HA Köln.

48. Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich, 1901-1912.

49. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 7, pp 74-75.

In the face of these setbacks, Christian laborers intensified efforts to draw the bourgeois parties together. The Zentralblatt initiated the campaign with a clever propaganda piece aimed at the highly imperialistic National Liberals in early February 1912.⁵⁰ Germany was the most rapidly developing country in the civilized world, the article began. Her population increased by about 900,000 annually and vast quantities of raw materials were imported every year to meet the requirements of the nation's burgeoning industries. To sustain this growth, the nation had to export vast quantities of finished goods, but in China, Persia, and the Balkans an almost countless number of jealous countries stood in the way. The most recent attempt to block Germany's export trade in Morocco had increased international tension and brought Europe to the brink of war. What Germany needed most, therefore, was the greatest possible degree of internal solidarity, and yet the German people had devoured one another in an electoral struggle that sent to the Reichstag 110 Socialists bent on hindering the government's efforts to protect the country's worldwide economic interests. Had the National Liberals stood united with the Center and Right, as the Christian trade unions had urged, scores of Social Democrats would not have advanced to the run-off elections and those that did could have been easily defeated. The S.P.D.'s victory would soon sober up the bourgeois parties to the point of accepting these facts, but before this occurred, sound political development in Germany was out of the question and the nation would continue to stand divided before a hostile world.

At the time this article appeared, Catholic labor's Political Committee and the Volksverein were preparing their most determined attempt thus far to effect an easing of tensions between the Center and National Liberals. Such a rapprochement was imperative if the "Great Bloc from Bassermann to Bebel" were to be foiled. The necessary steps were enumerated by Pieper before Augustinusverein on 26 February 1912.⁵¹ First, all polemics with the National Liberals should be avoided, even if liberal attacks continued.

50. Zentralblatt, No. 3, 5 February 1912.

51. Augustinus-Blatt, No. 3, March 1912, St Bib MG.

Second, given the anti-clerical feelings of the liberals, the Center should place much less emphasis on efforts to free the church from the remnants of Kulturkampf legislation. Third, the party should advocate the interests of commercial, light, and heavy industrial circles more so than in the past. Fourth, the congenial relationship established between local Center and National Liberal nominating committees in certain districts of western Germany had to be maintained and similar run-off and primary election pacts formed in other districts. And finally, the Center should devote most of its time to "national, economic, civic [staatsbürgerlich], and social issues, particularly because sharp disagreements between the National Liberals and the Right do not exist here."⁵² Giesberts, Stegerwald, and Johann Becker, the unions' social insurance expert, seconded Pieper, adding that the party should not forget the need for direct Reich taxation. Becker hinted that income and wealth taxes should be furthered instead of inheritance taxes because the former stood at least a marginal chance of acceptance by the Conservatives. This solution would also "conciliate the liberals."⁵³

The initiative was only partially successful. Reflecting the Center's reluctance to accept new taxes of any kind, the laborers' tax demands were skipped over entirely in the resolutions passed by the assembly. The need to improve relations with the National Liberals was included in the association's recommendations to the Catholic press, but, because no agreement was reached over the means to this end, Pieper's specific proposals were also left unmentioned. The ruffled feathers of Christian labor were smoothed somewhat, however, when the executive committees of the Reich and Prussian Center Fraktionen approved the journalists' diluted resolution three weeks later in Berlin. With Catholics and Conservatives already on extremely good terms, observers of the Center-Right focused their attention on the National Liberals to see which way the party would turn.⁵⁴

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid.; Augustinus-Blatt, No. 4, April 1912, St Bib MG.

The crisis within the National Liberal camp during the spring of 1912 has been discussed by other historians and need only be briefly summarized here.⁵⁵ Pressed by the Young Liberal Clubs toward the left, and the Central Association of German Industrialists toward the right, Bassermann steered a moderate political course designed to prevent the disintegration of his party. The idea of a Great Bloc of the Left was politically unrealistic, he wrote in early April 1912, but so too was all talk of anti-socialist Sammlungspolitik. "If the National Liberal Party sails in the wake of Heydebrand and Erzberger, it has lost its significance and future."⁵⁶ The liberalization of the Reich and Prussia could be best assured by cooperating primarily with the Progressives. Other than a renewed commitment to social reform, something which Bassermann and the National Liberals had advocated since the late 1890's, there was nothing here to please Mönchen-Gladbach and the Christian trade unions.

Christian circles were greatly relieved, therefore, when the Progressives, Center, and Conservatives agreed to a National Liberal proposal in the Reichstag budget committee on 18 May 1912. To cover the cost of recently announced military increases, the four parties asked the government to introduce a bill before 1 April 1913 that would tax some kind of property.⁵⁷ No specific tax was mentioned, reported the Bavarian envoy in Berlin, "because otherwise the compromise would fall apart."⁵⁸ The Progressives favored Reich inheritance taxes as revenge for 1909, the National Liberals were prepared to accept either Reich inheritance or wealth taxes, the Center advocated Reich wealth taxes or state contributions based on property taxes, while the Conservatives wanted a Reich stock exchange tax, or else

55. Heckart, From Bassermann to Bebel, pp 211-29; Dirk Stegmann, Die Erben Bismarcks (Cologne and Berlin: Verlag Kiepenheuer v. Witsch, 1970), pp 305-15.

56. Bassermann to Bülow, 3 April 1912, Bülow Papers 107, BA Koblenz.

57. To smooth relations with the National Liberals, Mönchen-Gladbach and the unions had advocated a Reich wealth tax since the beginning of the year. Martin Spahn saw the tax compromise of May 1912, therefore, as the first positive result of Christian labor's attempt to drive the bourgeois parties together. Martin Spahn "Das Zentrum als berufsständische organisierte Partei," Tag, No. 164, 16 July 1912; Idem, Deutsche Lebensfragen (Kempten: Kösel Verlag, 1913), pp 91-92.

58. Lerchenfeld to Hertling, 18 May 1912, MAI 955, G St A München.

increased matricular contributions from the states. Assuming that the only possible solution was a National Liberal-Center-Conservative-backed wealth tax that would require sacrifices from industry as well as agriculture, Mönchen-Gladbach and the workers' Political Committee began agitation for the tax during the late summer and fall of 1912.⁵⁹ The hope was that parliamentary cooperation in the area of financial reform would act as a stimulus to rightist bourgeois unity on other matters. Christian labor would be one step closer to the coalition that was considered necessary for stable political development in Germany.

Christian laborers had even more cause for optimism that year over developments within the Conservative camp. The Gewerkverein's refusal to participate in the Ruhr miners strike of March 1912--a move which had been planned for months as a demonstration of Christian labor's patriotism and national reliability--was roundly acclaimed by Conservatives in and out of parliament.⁶⁰ The Deutsche Tageszeitung, organ of the Bund der Landwirte, was particularly impressed, praising the "emphatic veto" which the Christians had given to the "treasonous behavior of the Social Democrats."⁶¹ The unions were pleasantly surprised, moreover, when the paper continued this policy in April and May after other Conservative and National Liberal organs resumed their traditionally hostile stance to the Gesamtverband. A letter from Count Rantzau of the Prussian Conservative Party, calling for support of the Christian labor movement, was featured, as was another, interestingly enough, from a Christian unionist who spoke out against "yellow" trade unions.⁶²

59. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 35, 31 August 1912; Augustinus-Blatt, No. 10, October 1912, St Bib MG; Otto Müller before the Diocesan Committee of Arbeiterverein Chairman for the Archdiocese of Cologne, 25 March 1918, as cited above in note 43; Mitteilungen an die Präses der katholischen Arbeitervereine der Erzdiözese Köln, No. 46, September 1912, pp 554-55, 563-66, 571-73.

60. Police Chief Gelsenkirchen to the Regierungspräsident, 7 October 1911, Reg. Münster VII 46, Bd. 1, St A Münster; also see Heinrich Imbusch, Bergarbeiterstreik im Ruhrgebiet im Frühjahr 1912 (Cologne: christl. Gewerkschaftsverlag, 1912), pp 46-75.

61. Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 145, 20 March 1912.

62. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 12, 23 March 1912; Die Arbeit, No. 19, 11 May 1912.

The agrarians appeared to have reconsidered their opposition to Christian trade unionism.

Anxious to test the seemingly more positive mood in conservative circles, Carl Schiffer, now chairman of the Gesamtverband's central committee, submitted a lengthy article against yellow unionism to the neutral daily, Der Tag.⁶³ Right-wing politicians should not place their hopes in the so-called Labor Associations of the Fatherland (vaterländische Arbeitervereine), he argued, for the Socialists could never be defeated with organizations that made no attempt to solve those critical problems that had led to the growth of socialism in the first place. Low wages, poor working conditions, legal discrimination, and political inequality had fueled the fires of the Social Democrats, and these flames would not be extinguished by organizations created to undermine the basic coalition freedoms of trade unions. S.P.D. agitation was aided further by the growing religious indifference of the masses, Schiffer continued, but the masses would continue to exit the church until the upper classes adopted less hypocritical views concerning Christianity. The workers were tired of sermons about the need for Christians to fight the Socialists when rich landlords and capitalists ignored their own Christian duty to help the poor and downtrodden.

Another factor working in favor of the Socialists, the article pointed out, was the low level of political schooling. Yellow trade unions, however, were in no position to combat demagoguery and reeducate the workers to the necessity of fulfilling important national tasks, for in the yellow union only the workers were asked to sacrifice. The Christian trade unions stood a much better chance of counteracting radical socialism, Schiffer argued, because they were the only movement that fought simultaneously for the workers, the church, the bourgeois parties, and the Fatherland. Schiffer concluded by calling on bourgeois society to help in this endeavor. "The best and most influential leaders from all parties and walks of life must

63. Tag, No. 109, 10 May 1912.

suppress their differences, step to fore, and work together harmoniously. A just and sound emancipation of the folk on a grand scale--not just at election time--has to start."⁶⁴

The article struck a responsive cord in Bund der Landwirte circles, as the following letter from Gustav Rösicke, co-chairman of the Bund's steering committee, to co-chairman Conrad von Wangenheim, indicates.

The enclosed paper was sent to me. The first article in it impressed me very much. If the Christian trade unions truly possess the spirit expressed in this article, this would mean, in my opinion, a highly encouraging beginning for the healing of the disposition of our industrial masses. Indeed as I see it, one must resign himself to the viewpoint that the workers will not be won over or held back [from the S.P.D.] no matter what disposition one is able to instill in them unless they're convinced that their interests will also be firmly guaranteed. When I compare today's labor relations with those of the 1870's, it's clear that at that time a great exploitation of the workers took place without any consideration of the just claims and interests of labor. Competition brought this in its wake. The liberal legislation created a ruthless exploitation of the given situation and the assertion of individual rights, with no consideration of the other or the general welfare. Since that time relations have changed considerably, and one has to admit--at least this is my opinion--that these changes were justified to a very great extent. That egotistical and individualistic tendencies exist [among industrialists] and will continue to exist is, of course, obvious. I'm writing this to you because I feel that we in the Bund will have to concern ourselves more and more with the [social] question. Perhaps even in the next sitting of the steering committee a discussion over these matters can be arranged.⁶⁵

The minutes to this meeting, unfortunately, are not extant. Other evidence leads to the conclusion, however, that Rösicke's new-found interest in trade unions was shared by other members of the Bund. Their support, however, was not unqualified: the agrarians would promote both yellow and Christian trade unions so long as the latter eschewed the strike, fought the socialists, moderated their socio-political demands, and supported tariffs for

64. Ibid.

65. Roesicke to Wangenheim, 5 July 1912, printed in Tippelskirch Manuscript, Kl. Erw. 230-3/4, BA Koblenz.

agriculture.⁶⁶ "A change has taken place in the Conservative Party in the direction of Christian-Social thinking," observed Reichsbote, a pro-labor Conservative organ, but much more work was required "to strengthen the Conservatives' social consciousness."⁶⁷ Acting on this advice, Behrens opened negotiations with the agrarians "over the question of labor organizations" in November.⁶⁸ At the top of the agenda, no doubt, stood questions such as yellow trade unionism and legal protection of strike breakers (Arbeitswilligenschutz).

The Bund der Landwirte was also amenable to greater electoral cooperation with Christian labor. The debate over this issue, which had lain dormant since Heydebrand's speech in 1910, was reopened by Behrens in late July 1912. The Gewerkverein General Secretary charged that the Conservatives had largely ignored the Christian-Socials' appeal for an electoral division of labor between the two parties in January, thereby disrupting the politics of compromise agreed on by the Center and its allies in the Economic Union. Printing an article from "an old politician"--probably Rösicke or Wangenheim--the Deutsche Tageszeitung admitted the mistake, adding that in preparation for the next elections the Conservatives and Christian-Socials should avoid counterproductive divisions. The editor of the paper

66. Korrespondenz des Bundes der Landwirte, No. 59, 27 November 1912; Deutsche Tageszeitung, Nos. 511 and 602, 8 October and 27 November 1912; Die Arbeit, Nos. 36 and 42, 7 September and 19 October 1912; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 29, 20 July 1912; Germania, 12 April 1914 (clipping in: Rom Vatikan 311-199/30, AA Bonn); Both the Korrespondenz des Bundes der Landwirte (No. 45, 21 August 1912) and the Deutsche Tageszeitung (quoted in Die Arbeit, No. 42, 19 October 1912), furthermore, expressed their warm approval of the German Evangelical Volksbund, another Christian-Social attempt to emulate the Volksverein. The new organization was pledged to work with "devout Catholics" for the solution of "Christian, national, and social problems." (Die Arbeit, No. 43, 26 October 1912).

67. Quoted in Die Arbeit, No. 37, 14 September 1912.

68. Behrens to Stegerwald, 16 November 1912, Stegerwald Papers, Stegerwald Stiftung Köln.

and leading functionary of the Bund, Georg Oertel, went even farther during a speech in Cologne and predicted that the next Reichstag would see Conservatives, Christian-Socials, and other right-wing parties united in a parliamentary federation or cartel. When Behrens suggested that the electoral campaign of 1918 should also witness Conservative-Christian-Social agreements during Hauptwahlen, the agrarians agreed, suggesting that Conservative voters support Christian-Social candidates in all districts where Christian-Social voters outnumbered Conservatives, and vice versa. The concession was highly significant, for only with the combined help of Center and Conservatives would Evangelical unionists obtain increased representation in parliament.⁶⁹

The rapprochement between the Bund der Landwirte and Christian labor must not be viewed in isolation. In fact, this development was merely part of a larger effort designed to place the Bund in the forefront of the movement for bourgeois Sammlung. In May 1912, for instance, the Conservative Party introduced a bill in the Reichstag demanding police protection for strike breakers. The resolution was seen in agrarian circles as a means to improve relations with heavy industry, enhance Conservative prospects among petty bourgeois voters, and hopefully drive a wedge between the National Liberals and Progressives in the Reichstag.⁷⁰ In July, moreover, the League entered into

69. Die Arbeit, No. 30, 27 July 1912, No. 36, 7 September 1912, and No. 45, 9 November 1912; Neue Preussische (Kreuz-) Zeitung, No. 416, 5 September 1912, and Nos. 460 and 470, for 1 and 6 October 1912.

70. See Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, pp 340-41. The tactical reason behind promoting the issue of strike-breaker protection probably went deeper than Saul thinks. After the Ruhr strike, the question of Arbeitswillingenschutz was also felt to be acceptable to Christian labor. Support for the bill from industry and national labor would weld both into the agrarian's emerging coalition. Industry, however, would also have to make compromises. In a pamphlet a few months earlier, for instance, the Bund had proclaimed that the parties of the right "will not draw back from the further development of social legislation." (Rüstzeug zur Reichstagwahl! Eine Aufklärungsschrift für die kommenden Wahlen (Berlin: Druckerei und Verlag Aktiengesellschaft der 'deutschen Tageszeitung,' 1911 (Dec.), pp 90-91).

negotiations with the Central Association of German Industrialists concerning a joint grant of 30,000 marks to the German Union of the Middle Class (Reichsdeutscher Mittelstandsverband). "It is a very great sum," Wangenheim told an associate, "but at stake is the question of whether we can effectively unite the productive classes, and in so doing, present our opponents with a concentrated force during future elections."⁷¹

Another conference was planned for September 1912 to arrange permanent cooperation between the three organizations. For reasons which cannot be precisely determined, however, no agreement was reached that fall or winter. Other historians have emphasized the suspicions of heavy industrialists concerning the radical, anti-capitalistic views of many artisans,⁷² but a resolution passed by the general assembly of the Bund der Landwirte in February 1913 leads to the conjecture that tariff, tax, and perhaps even social questions created equally troublesome relations between industry and agriculture.

We exhort the whole agricultural community, the bourgeois middle classes (bürgerliche Mittelstände), and the nationally-minded labor force to form a common defense against socialism in politics and public life. The goal of such cooperation, however, must be: the continuation of patriotic economic policies that protect all German work, just social policies that protect and improve the living conditions of the old middle class just as those of the workers (genauso wie die der Arbeiterschaft), and equitable tax policies that draw on the resources of Big Business (Grosskapital) corresponding to its privileges in government today.⁷³

If it is remembered that the agrarians were in the process of smoothing relations with Christian labor in the months before this resolution, the conclusion seems justified that Conservative leaders were holding out for a

71. Wangenheim to Endell, 3 August 1912, printed in Hans-Jürgen Puhle, Agrarische Interessenpolitik und preussischer Konservatismus im Wilhelminischen Reich (1893-1914) (Hanover: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen, 1966), p 323.

72. Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, p 538.

73. Quoted in Puhle, Agrarische Interessenpolitik, p 317.

coalition of "national" forces that would include broad elements of the non-socialist working class. With industrialists, non-socialist unions, and agrarians all in disagreement over social issues, however, the time for such a coalition was not ripe.

The agrarians were therefore pursuing a strategy tangential to that of Christian labor. The main point of contact was a determination to isolate and destroy the Social Democrats as witnessed by the debate over electoral alliances. Other areas of cooperation were being negotiated. That the Bund der Landwirte had taken the initiative in this respect, moreover, and not the Conservative Party per se, is not surprising. For, as Hans-Jürgen Puhle points out, the Bund der Landwirte was not only closer to the masses, having agitated among them for nearly 20 years, but was also highly dependent on parliament for fulfillment of agrarian demands.⁷⁴ The Bund was therefore more appreciative of the need to cooperate with other groups to form successful coalitions. When, after the elections, contacts with economic groups of all sorts appeared to provide the only key to parliamentary success, the agrarians did not hesitate to take this step.

A year which began on a pessimistic note had thus produced many positive developments for Christian labor. Far-reaching bourgeois cooperation against the S.P.D. and free trade unions as well as positive work to pass social reforms, tax legislation, etc., finally seemed within grasp. But if the Christian labor movement were to forge a socially progressive, anti-Socialist folk movement, or prevail within any grouping created by the Bund der Landwirte, greater membership was needed, especially among the Evangelical workers of eastern Germany where the Bund was strong. With this goal in mind, the Christian trade unions convened their eighth Congress in Dresden in October 1912. A new union of agricultural laborers had been founded two months earlier for the same purpose.⁷⁵ The fall of 1912 also witnessed

74. Ibid., pp 274-78.

75. For the Christians' rural laborers' union, see the organization's Geschäftsbericht für 1913 (Cologne: Christlicher Gewerkschafts-Verlag, 1914), pp 5-7, 39-41.

a dramatic attempt to terminate the Gewerkschaftsstreit within the Catholic camp which had cost the unions so many thousands of members. The quarrel, which had raged completely out of control since 1908, was eventually settled in the unions' favor, laying the groundwork even more solidly, it seemed, for a rapid influx of new recruits. A solution to the trade union controversy was only reached, however, after weeks of crisis in November 1912 that nearly destroyed the Christian labor movement. The reemergence and eventual resolution of these problems will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 11

RIFTS IN THE TOWER: THE CONFLICT OVER MODERNISM IN THE CENTER, VOLKSVEREIN AND CHRISTIAN TRADE UNIONS

The disputes unleashed in the Catholic camp by Julius Bachem's "Tower" article were quieted by the Bloc elections of January 1907 and remained so throughout much of that year. During the winter of 1907/08, however, the fragile unity within the Center began to crumble. Thus in November Bachem scolded the Bopparder Volkszeitung for printing a pro-Center statement submitted by six Catholic priests. "Aren't you thereby offending the feelings of Catholics entrusted to you who don't swear allegiance to the Center?"¹ The Oberschlesische Volkszeitung was similarly criticized for describing the Center as an exclusively Catholic party. "Just once," noted Bachem, "we would like to see a paper that is also for non-Catholic people."² These articles, and others that winter and spring, were written primarily for the tactical purpose of facilitating electoral and parliamentary cooperation with "well-intentioned, fair-minded Protestants,"³ a stance that might also have helped the Christian unions. But to the zealous "confessionalists" within the party and Episcopate,⁴ chastisings such as these were additional proof that Bachem and his allies in Mönchengladbach and the Gesamtverband were naive strategists, and worse,

1. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 1274, 1907 (clipping in: Bachem Papers 277, HA Köln.

2. Ibid.

3. Carl Bachem to Bertram, 18 July 1908, Bachem Papers 277, HA Köln.

4. For this faction, see above, Chapters 5 and 8.

indifferent Catholics. Protestant suspicions of Catholics would never decrease to the point where mutual sacrifices were made at the polls. Thus Catholics should concentrate on maximizing Center strength and in this way protect the interests of the church.

The denominational faction behind Kopp and Korum had an additional grievance by 1908. Together with their objection to the strike and their concern for the interconfessional political drift of Christian trade unionism, zealots in the Catholic community included the charge of "modernism." The term was a catch-all for the views of those theologians and lay persons in Europe who desired liberal reforms within the church. Some advocated abandonment of celibacy for priests, others talked of redefining the centuries-old definition of the church as the only legitimate spiritual link between man and God, while still others wanted less episcopal control and supervision of lay organizations. The supporters of the Christian trade unions, who insisted on independence from the church and close political and economic cooperation with Protestants, were thus vulnerable to the charge of "modernism." For it seemed to conservative Catholics that Bachem, Stegerwald, and the others were defying the authority of the bishops and drifting in the direction of a new "Christian" religion. The sensitivity of orthodox prelates to the weakening of church authority grew as modernist writings began to proliferate in Europe around the turn of the century. The secularization of the French school system in 1905 added to the atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. After Pope Pius X condemned modernism in his encyclical Pascendi in September 1907, more pressure was exerted on secular organizations like the Gesamtverband and the Volksverein to give up their "heretical" ways.⁵ In Germany, not surprisingly, the supporters of Bishops Kopp and Korum were most eager to put a stop to the heresy emanating from Cologne and Mönchen-Gladbach. The controversy surrounding modernism explains the exceptionally bitter nature of the disputes discussed in this chapter.

5. Hubert Jedin (ed.), Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte, Vol. 6, part 2, pp 435-500.

Fachabteilung patrons reopened their feud with Mönchen-Gladbach in the spring of 1908. In May the Volksverein had published an "Index of Social Literature" which avoided all mention of works with theological content or confessional bias, especially those recommending specifically Catholic associations for youth, women, retail clerks, and workers. In omitting works that put forth the views of the church and the bishops, declared Korum's Trierische Landeszeitung, "the Volksverein has turned down a non-denominational path that will lead in the end to the...corruption (Verderben) of German Catholics."⁶ The Christian trade unions had also incurred the wrath of confessionalists. Thus in April the "Behrens Case"⁷ was cited by the organ of the eastern Catholic labor associations, Der Arbeiter, as an eye-opening lesson in the dubious consequences of interconfessional unionism. The National Liberal candidacy of Evangelical unionist Franz Pfordt in Ottweiler elicited much the same response. When Pfordt's Prussian Landtag campaign was backed by the Saar Post, a paper which claimed to speak for both the Center and Christian trade unions, church Canon Hansen of Illingen charged that the organ had been duped by the liberals, who were merely trying to win over the proletariat for their campaign against the confessional school. Hansen went on to deliver one of the most scathing indictments of the Christian trade unions heard thus far in the Gewerkschaftsstreit.⁸

Craft section tempers flared even higher in May 1908 when the Volksverein and the Christian trade unions attempted to open the Association of Catholic Retail Employees to Protestants. Brauns, Giesberts, Stegerwald, and other Christian leaders hoped that the association would be able to attract

6. Trierische Landeszeitung, 10 July 1908 (clipping in: Hohn Papers 15/2, 1908, St A MG).

7. See below, Chapter 9.

8. Saar Post, 31 July 1908, and Neunkirchener Zeitung, 8 August 1908 (clippings in: 442-3790, LHA Koblenz).

thousands of new members and join the Christian trade unions in a common economic and political front against Big Business. The plan was rejected emphatically by Cardinal Kopp who not only regarded it as socialistic, but also considered it a slap in the face to the many priests active in the organization. Consequently, Kopp exerted his influence among the clerical delegates at the retail clerks' annual assembly in Trier to defeat the unions' motion.⁹

By mid-summer 1908, therefore, a crisis was developing in the Catholic camp over the allegedly "modernistic" activities of the Kölnische Volkszeitung, the Volksverein, and the Christian trade unions. Not surprisingly, both sides to the dispute sought to rally support for their cause from the Episcopate. In a letter to Bishop Bertram of Hildesheim, for instance, Carl Bachem made a strong case for the numerous articles written by his cousin. As "a born minority party,"¹⁰ he began, the Center could only protect religious and church interests by cooperating with tolerant Protestants. The demagoguery of the Evangelical League had reduced the number of Lutherans willing to do this to the small faction around Stöcker, but even the Christian-Socials would be unable to resist anti-Catholic agitation if the Center were stamped as a denominational, Catholic party. Catholics would then be entirely isolated, for an alliance with the S.P.D. would only further harm the cause. The new Kulturkampf, he concluded quite logically, could only be warded off with Protestant help.

The Volksverein was also quick to respond to the changes leveled against it. In mid-July 1908 Brandts protested to Archbishop Fischer that the association's interconfessional campaign was merely designed "to help [our] people

9. Kopp to Pieper, 9 September 1910, Bachem Papers 294, HA Köln; Trierische Landeszeitung, 10 July 1908 (clipping in: Hohn Papers 15/2, 1908, St A MG); also see Karl Schirmer's remarks in Zentralblatt, No. 18, 7 September 1908.

10. Carl Bachem to Bertram, 18 July 1908, Bachem Papers 277, HA Köln.

endure the social and religious struggles of the day and gain more influence in all areas of public life."¹¹ The chairman trusted that "after so much proof of benevolent goodwill toward the Volkverein," the Episcopate would vindicate the organization "against such unfair charges, all the more because this type of attack can lead to consequences that are disadvantageous to the necessary peace between Catholics."¹² A few weeks later, however, Pieper hurried to Fischer with the even more alarming news that Korum and the bishops sympathetic to his cause were demanding that the Episcopate have a representative on the Volkverein's executive committee¹³--a move designed, among other things, to undercut the organization's support for the Christian trade unions.¹⁴ Despite his own desire for a closer supervision of Volkverein activities, the Archbishop was not prepared to disgrace the association and undermine its economic and political effectiveness. "You can place full trust in me," he assured Pieper. "And when I stand up for you, I won't stand alone."¹⁵ The upcoming bishops conference, it appeared, would be a divisive one.

The Christian trade unions were very alarmed by the offensive directed against them too. The criticisms and outbursts mentioned above, especially that of Hansen, gave the unionists good reason to feel this way, but more trouble signs appeared in late July. Through informants in church circles, Christian labor leaders learned that Franz von Savigny was

11. Brandts to Fischer, n.d. (July 1908), Hohn Papers 15/2, 1908, St A MG.

12. Ibid.

13. Pieper to Hohn, 6 August 1908, Hohn Papers 15/2, 1908, St A MG.

14. Korum had hoped to gain control of the unions through the Volkverein for years. (See Korum to the chairman of the Catholic Arbeitervereine of the Diocese of Trier, 28 October 1902, Gen. 23-61, Vol. 1, Erzb. Registratur Köln). Aside from the Volkverein's political and agitational support for the unions, a major bone of contention was the alleged financial support of München-Gladbach for the Gesamtverband. No direct subsidies were made, but Volkverein spokesmen admitted that 2 of 3 association agents in western Germany, where the bulk of Volkverein members lay, were Catholic members of the Christian trade unions. (Heinrich Brauns to Kopp, 6 November 1909, Gen. 23.61., Vol. 1, Erzb. Registratur Köln).

15. Pieper to Hohn, 6 August 1908, Hohn Papers 15/2, 1908, St A MG.

"actively at work"¹⁶ again promoting his trade sections, having visited a number of bishops in western Germany. Assuming that the Berliners would not be content with attacking the Volksverein at Fulda, the Catholic members of the Gesamtverband executive committee decided to inform the hierarchy "calmly, but firmly"¹⁷ that no alteration of the basic guidelines established for the federation at Mainz in 1899 was necessary. Opening at Zurich in early August, the first International Congress of Christian Trade Unions offered the unionists a timely opportunity and an appropriate forum to express their views.

The main address at Zurich by Giesberts was a tactful defense of the inter-confessional nature and moderate political goals of the Christian trade unions of Germany.¹⁸ As such, it more than adequately accomplished the purpose mentioned above. Problems began, however, during the debate that followed his presentation. Never one to shy away from a fight, Stegerwald barked that as long as the Catholic religion was not endangered, "no Pope or bishop can unilaterally forbid the workers to organize [along interconfessional lines] for economic purposes."¹⁹ Franz Wieber seconded Stegerwald, asserting that church control of the union activities would be harmful for both the workers and the bishops. Schiffer was equally blunt.

There are many Catholics in this hall--I'm also a Catholic--but with all due respect and veneration to our spiritual overlords, namely our bishops, we must still say: This far and no farther! They have the right and the duty to show us the way in religious and unsecular matters, but when it comes to vocational questions, that is, more or less economic matters, a bishop should not want to claim the right to speak authoritatively. We're independent in this area and must be so.²⁰

16. Johann Effert to the Regierungspräsident of Arnsberg, 20 August 1908, Reg. Arnsberg I 83, St A Münster.

17. Ibid.

18. Bericht über die Verhandlungen der ersten internationalen Konferenz christlicher Gewerkschaftsführer (Cologne: Christlicher Gewerkschafts-Verlag, 1908), pp 24-40, ZSg. 1-63/5, BA Koblenz.

19. Ibid., p 48.

20. Ibid., p 42.

The protocols record that Schiffer's statement was interrupted twice by cheers and loud applause. Clearly the German representatives and the majority of foreign delegates were in a much more belligerent mood than Giesberts.

The Congress at Zurich played into the hands of the confessionalists by rekindling the same fear of labor independence which had led the hierarchy to speak out at Fulda eight years earlier. Because of the modernist trends in Europe since 1900, however, these fears had greatly increased. An emphatic supporter of the Christian trade unions before 1908, Bishop Benzler of Metz was surely not alone when he remarked that the Zurich affair had destroyed his sympathy for the movement.²¹ Fischer was not as deeply shaken as many of his colleagues, but was nevertheless greatly disturbed. In a conversation with Pieper shortly before departing for Fulda, he described the unionists' remarks as "crude"²² and regretted the fact that Berlin would now have more ammunition to use against the unions and their protectors in the Volksverein. The bishops at Fulda were not prepared to move as far in the direction of condemning the nondenominational Gesamtverband as Kopp and Korum, who disputed the right of the predominantly Catholic organization to make decisions independent of the bishops. It was agreed, however, that in certain areas the bishops could indeed 'speak authoritatively,' and that Fischer should make a public statement to this effect.²³ As a Catholic association, the Volksverein was not let off so easily. The

21. Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, p 124.

22. Pieper to Hohn, 6 August 1908, Hohn Papers 15/2, 1908, St A MG.

23. Johann Effert to the Regierungspräsident, 20 August 1908, as cited above in note 19.

organization which had done so much to promote Christian trade unionism since 1898 was asked to grant the Episcopate an executive council seat.²⁴

Fischer's statement over Zurich was delivered on 16 August 1908 before a group of Catholic Arbeiterverein secretaries who had gathered in Düsseldorf for the opening of the Katholikentag.

In a recent assembly that also handled labor concerns a few hard words were spoken with regard to the bishops that have troubled my heart, a heart which beats warmly for the working people. I want to assume that these remarks were not meant in this way, but I know, and I have experienced it again today, that the real working people, the Catholic working people, is true to the bishops and true to the priests that the bishops sent to you.²⁵

The Archbishop's tolerance for the Christian trade unions had obviously worn very thin. His closing remarks four days later were a veiled warning to the same effect. "The bishops will never interfere with matters that do not fall under their authority, but as true shepards of the church they will always stand up for the Catholic principles which are valid for private as well as public life in all its various forms."²⁶

24. Korum's faction had been pressing the Volksverein for years. Finally in June 1908 Brandts and Pieper consented to present an annual statement of finances to the Fulda Conference. Still not satisfied, the conservative bishops around Korum decided in July to demand an executive council seat. (Herbert Gottwald, "Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland," in Dieter Fricke (ed.), Bürgerliche Parteien, Vol. 2, p 817; Pieper to Hohn, 6 August 1908, Hohn Papers 15/2, 1908, St A MG). The protocols to the Fulda Conference of 1908, which are located in the Bertram Papers, IA-25b-15 pt. 2, A. A. Wroclawie, do not record that the issue was formally discussed. That a decision was made, however, is certain. See the Pieper Manuscript, part 3, pp 781-82, St A MG; Edmund Schopen, 'Köln' eine innere Gefahr für den Katholizismus (Berlin: Hermann Walther Verlagsbuchhandlung, GmbH, 1910), p 84; ten Hompel, Osterdienstags-Protokoll, p 7.

25, Verhandlungen der 55. Generalversammlung der Katholiken Deutschlands Düsseldorf vom 16. bis 20. August 1908 (Düsseldorf: Verlag und Druck vom Düsseldorfer Tageblatt, GmbH, 1908), pp 148-49.

26. Ibid., pp 469-70.

In August 1908, Christian trade union leaders caucussed in Düsseldorf to assess the situation and map out further strategy.²⁷ Convinced that Fischer and the majority of bishops had not deserted them, the unionists concluded that the real danger lay, as before, in Trier and Breslau. Should the Episcopate demand full retractions from the unionists who had spoken at Zurich, however, all were agreed that no concessions could be made on the crucial issues at stake. Church control of the unions was unacceptable and all attempts to sever the Protestants from the movement had to be resisted. If "forced into the ring,"²⁸ the unions would not hesitate to defend themselves.

These tough words belied the vulnerable situation in which the Christian trade unions found themselves. The organization had experienced tremendous internal difficulties as a result of the Reichstag elections and the Behrens incident. Membership growth was stymied and the free trade union lead appeared almost insurmountable. If the Gesamtverband were to grant supervisory rights to the bishops, or establish closer ties with the confessional trade sections, Protestant unionists would surely secede. If, on the other hand, the church declared Christian trade unions a danger to the faith and unfit for good Catholics, tens of thousands of Catholic workers would desert the movement as an act of religious conscience. Despite the bold talk at Zurich and Düsseldorf, therefore, the unions were clearly in no position to defy a united Episcopate. If the Gesamtverband were to maintain its independence, its growth potential, and both confessional wings, it was imperative that Archbishop Fischer preserve his majority on the bishops' conference, thereby obviating the need for defiance.

Thus in late August 1908, as attacks from Der Arbeiter (Berlin) mounted in intensity, Giesberts and Stegerwald requested an audience with Fischer to

27. For the meeting, see Effert to the Regierungspräsident, 20 August 1908, as cited above in note 19.

28. Ibid.

explain their position. Still angered over the workers' brusque treatment of the bishops at Zurich, the Archbishop refused them admittance²⁹ and began to consider means to revitalize "the defective Catholic spirit of social organizations"³⁰ in his diocese. The rejection startled the two Catholic functionaries, for they had assumed that Fischer's all-important support was incontrovertible. Unwilling to risk a fate similar to that which had already befallen the Volksverein, immediate efforts were made through intermediaries in Mönchen-Gladbach to assuage the prelate.³¹

By late October 1908 the dispute had been settled "in a manner thoroughly satisfactory to him,"³² as Stegerwald et al. explained four years later. One of the concessions made was a public apology by Schiffer and Wieber at Munich. Without conceding the crucial issue of labor independence, the two explained that no insult to the Episcopate or injury to the church had been intended by the blunt remarks in Zurich. Schiffer, whose statement had also angered the Dutch bishops, traveled to Utrecht to make further amends. Stegerwald stated publicly in Frankfurt, moreover, that the apologies had been made in accordance with the conscience and religious conviction of the unionists involved.³³ Fischer may not have demanded more, but other steps were taken to insure his friendship. In October the Gewerkverein severed its three-year tie to the Siebenerkommission, and in

29. Police Commissioner of Essen to the Regierungspräsident, 30 September 1908, Reg. D. 42810, HSA Düsseldorf.

30. ten Hompel, Osterdiestags-Protokoll, p 11.

31. Police Commissioner of Essen to the Regierungspräsident, 30 September 1908, Reg. D. 42810, HSA Düsseldorf.

32. See the "explanation," drafted for unknown purposes in 1912 by Stegerwald, Giesberts, Schiffer, and Wieber, in Stegerwald Papers, Stiftung Köln.

33. Ibid.; Zentralblatt, No. 20, 5 October 1908; Brugmann, Sozialer Katholizismus, p 396; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 942, 2 November 1908.

December the union decided to boycott a miners' congress convened by the Alter Verband "in order to prove to the public, and also the Episcopate, that the Christian trade unions do not go through thick and thin with the Social Democrats."³⁴

As in years past, the price of continued toleration by the church was high, for Socialist and Hirsch-Duncker papers quickly exploited the Christians' dilemma. The Bergarbeiter-Zeitung greeted the Munich apologies in September with cynical articles describing the alleged "march to the right" and "inglorious retreat"³⁵ of Christian trade union leaders. The paper also ran damaging reports on the escalating polemics between Berlin and Mönchengladbach. This latter theme was picked up later in the month by the Hirsch-Duncker press, which had originally refrained from comment. Seizing on reports that priests in the Saar had refused to enter confessional booths with Christian trade unionists, Der Gewerkverein asked if there were "any better proof of how totally absurd it is to pack religious matters into an economic labor movement."³⁶

Supplied with such embarrassing information, free and liberal trade union agitators had no trouble recruiting Protestant workers who might otherwise have joined Christian unions. A letter sent by the liberal unionist Anton Erkelenz to a friend in Sweden was typical of the reaction uncommitted workers must have had to Zurich, for Erkelenz had himself toyed with the idea of crossing over to the Gesamtverband.

I don't know if you have followed the debate in Germany over the Zurich Congress. If so, then you must have noticed that the leaders of Germany's Christian trade unions repentantly abandoned everything that they announced in Zurich. It's a fact, therefore,

34. Police Commissioner of Essen to the Regierungspräsident, 27 September 1909, Reg. D. 9041, HSA Düsseldorf. The Commissioner refers to a meeting of the Gewerkverein executive committee with Gesamtverband representatives present.

35. Bergarbeiter-Zeitung, Nos. 36 and 38, for 5 and 19 September 1908.

36. Der Gewerkverein, No. 74, 23 September 1908.

that in future cooperation at such affairs as Zurich, the foreign organizations that took part are indirectly dependent on the frowning German Catholic bishops.³⁷

If a seasoned observer like Erkelenz had overlooked the fact that Christian leaders had not really compromised on the issue of union independence, the non-unionized masses must have drawn the same conclusion.

With Fischer's faction still tolerant of the Gesamtverband, nevertheless, the Christian trade unions were able to resist the increasing pressure placed on them by Bishop Korum. Determined to bend the unions to his will, Korum met with Giesberts and Stegerwald in Trier for nearly four hours on 16 October 1908. The primary objective of the negotiations, the bishop noted later, was "to bring about a union of the two parties."³⁸ Korum's terms for peace between union and Fachabteilung included a private declaration recognizing the right of a bishop to supervise the activities of social and economic organizations in his diocese. This, assumed Korum, would allow the unions to save public face. Stegerwald and Giesberts were dumbfounded, for any such declaration would have produced an immediate exodus of Behrens and the entire Evangelical wing of the movement. And a purely Catholic labor organization, they explained, would be totally ineffective in Germany. But Korum would not listen. Nor would the unionists yield. With no middle ground on the issue of church control, relations soon deteriorated to their former state.³⁹

Only the Pope, it seemed, would be able to dislodge the Christian trade unions from their independent position. But there were no encouraging signs from this quarter either during the fall and winter of 1908/09. Hardpressed by Fachabteilung headquarters in Berlin to withdraw his protection of the

37. Erkelenz to Dahborg, n.d. (fall 1908), Erkelenz Papers 3, BA Koblenz.

38. Korum before the Fulda Bishops' Conference in December 1910, B III 15.9, Vol. 2, Bis A Trier.

39. Ibid.; Stegerwald to Franz Bachem, 17 October 1908, printed in Germania, No. 290, 19 December 1911; Hartrath to Hohn, 10 February 1911, Hohn Papers 15/2, 1913, St A MG.

Christian trade unions in the Archdiocese of Cologne, Fischer inquired of Pius on 20 October 1908 if the Vatican intended to adhere to its neutrality declaration of January 1906. The Pope restated his view that each bishop should decide which organization was best suited for his diocese, and confirmed this position in a letter to Fischer seven weeks later. August Pieper and Peter Spahn, who had been commissioned by the executive committee of the Center Reichstag Fraktion to explain the political significance of the unions to Vatican circles, received the same response from Cardinal Secretary of State Merry del Val on 27 December 1908. The Pope's position was unaltered, furthermore, when Father Otto Müller, Johannes Giesberts, and Franz Wieber paid homage in Rome in early April 1909.⁴⁰ The disgruntled Berliners had nowhere to turn.

The defiant behavior of the Volksverein was also quite infuriating to conservative Catholics. Undaunted by the news from Fulda, the organization forged ahead with plans for the "interconfessionalization of the social and economic sector."⁴¹ What was regarded as a major step in this direction was taken at the Düsseldorf Katholikentag in mid-August 1908. August Pieper, Heinrich Brauns, and 45 Gesamtverband functionaries were on hand for the proceedings of the social commission to support a controversial motion introduced by the Interconfessional Union of Düsseldorf Artisans. The Katholikentag was asked to approve the idea of a "great Mittelstandsorganization"⁴² comprising journeymen, artisans, clerks, and other white-collar employees. Unlike the Association of Catholic Retail Employees, whose main function was educational, the new association would cooperate closely with the labor movement to mollify the opposition of employers and exact concessions from

40. Prussian envoy at the Vatican Mühlberg to Bethmann Hollweg, 4 December 1909, Pöpstlicher Stuhl 26 secre. 1, AA Bonn' Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, pp 128-30; Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 7, p 213; Müller Manuscript, p 61, KAB Haus Köln.

41. Effert to the Regierungspräsident, 20 August 1908, as cited in note 16.

42. Ibid.

the State. Brauns and the workers envisioned an organization 500,000 strong with members for all political parties except the S.P.D. The motion was passed over the vehement objections of the Berliners, who warned that such a union would undermine Catholic beliefs and bring an end to the Center Party.

The Volksverein illustrated the same confidence with regard to the Episcopate's demand for a codetermining voice on the Volksverein executive council. In negotiations which dragged on throughout the late fall and winter, Brandts and Pieper repeatedly refused to accede to the wish of the bishops. Three arguments were offered in defense of this stand. First, the Volksverein had always kept the Archbishop of Cologne informed about its activities and had even offered to present the bishops with a special annual report about the entire operation of the organization. München-Gladbach also pointed out that the influence it had been able to exert on interconfessional economic organizations would be reduced if the Volksverein were viewed in these circles as a church organization. Finally, it was argued that the hierarchy would be dragged into controversial economic and political struggles which would expose it to attacks by enemies of the church. Kopp and Korum rejected these arguments with the wave of a hand, of course, for neither bishop intended to condone strikes, or tolerate the independence of the Christian trade unions. Unable to make headway in these negotiations, the Volksverein called upon the papal nuncio in Munich, Dr. Andreas Frühwirth, for help. Greatly elated, Brandts returned from a visit to München in May 1909 with the news that it was not necessary to assign the bishops an executive council seat. Permanent contact with the Archbishop of Cologne would be sufficient.⁴³

43. Edmund Schopen, Köln eine innere Gefahr, p 84; Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 7, pp 208-09; Gottwald, "Volksverein," in Fricke (ed.), Bürgerliche Parteien, Vol. 2, p 818-19; Ritter, Die Männer aus München-Gladbach, part 2, p 25, Ritter Papers ER-016, K f Z G Bonn.

That Rome had refused to intervene against the Christian trade unions, the Volksverein, and the Kölnische Volkszeitung did not mean, however, that Vatican circles were convinced of the righteousness of the western position. In fact, just the opposite was the case. While in Munich, Brandts noted with surprise that Frühwirth considered the strike a violation of moral law. The nuncio, like the Pope himself, was also deeply disturbed by the idea that the church had nothing to say in economic matters. "Time and time again," wrote Brandts, "the prelate came back to the International Congress...at Zurich because of Schiffer's thoughtless statement that 'the bishops have to be told: This far and no farther.'"⁴⁴ Rome was no less opposed to the secularism of the Center and Volksverein. Pius stated this privately to the Vatican historian Ludwig Pastor in 1907 and had also taken action to this effect in Italy. In a series of decrees issued since July 1904, the Pope brought the social and political organizations of lay Catholics under episcopal control and excommunicated those who had had the audacity to question these rulings.⁴⁵ Pius' reluctance to apply the same "anti-modernistic" principles to Germany was merely an act of expediency, therefore, not one of principle. He realized that Cologne and Mönchen-Gladbach were backed by thousands of German Catholics and did not want to risk weakening the Center at a time when Catholic unity was vital to church interests.⁴⁶

Others in Rome had less concern for these reasonings of state. The powerful Undersecretary of State at the Vatican, Umberto Benigni, was the foremost advocate of stringent measures against Christian-social organizations north of the Alps. Like the Berliners, Benigni adhered to a strict interpretation of Rerum Novarum which denied to Catholic workers the right to participate in independent, nondenominational trade unions. He was also an

44. Ibid., (Ritter).

45. Wilhelm Wühr (ed.), Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor 1854-1928. Tagebücher-Briefe-Erinnerungen (Heidelberg: F. H. Kerle Verlag, 1950), pp 477-82; Prussian Minister of Culture Trott zu Solz to William, 21 September 1910, Rom-Vatikan 199-309, 1, AA Bonn.

46. Jedin (ed.), Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte, Vol. 6, part 2, p 498.

active political conservative, having ties to the ultrareactionary Action Francaise in France. In the fall of 1907, furthermore, Benigni created a secret, European-wide vigilante organization known as Sodalitium Pianum, whose purpose it was to collect information on suspect individuals and organizations and relay these reports to Rome. Through official and semi-official press organs at the Vatican, personal contact with Merry del Val, and private audiences with the Pope himself, Benigni hoped to convince his superiors that extra-episcopal associations such as the Christian trade unions, the Volksverein, or the "Sillon" in France, represented "modernism in practice" and were therefore a greater danger to the church than any consequence which might follow from their condemnation. As he saw it, cooperation with Protestants in independent organizations was the first step toward a break from the church similar to that which had occurred in the sixteenth century.⁴⁷ By 1909, the Undersecretary had registered no success with these intrigues. But the orthodox, devout Pius, as is often the case with monarchs, was a very malleable individual. "The Holy Father is too good," observed Kopp after a visit to Rome in 1904. "His good heart leads him astray too easily into all kinds of promises and assurances."⁴⁸ Thus the Pope was liable at any time to give way to his deeply felt antipathy for the struggling Christian-social movement of Imperial Germany.

Incensed by the events of the fall and winter of 1908/09, meanwhile, conservatives in Germany were plotting action of their own. How, they asked, could the Christian trade unions continue to operate freely and independently after they had insulted the bishops and refused on two occasions to deal with Bishop Korum? Had the Volksverein grown so powerful that it could go over the head of the Fulda Conference to the Pope's representative in Munich? These developments convinced conservatives that the Christian trade unions, the Volksverein, and a large body of Centrists influenced by Bachem were trying to "free...German Catholics from the influence of the Episcopate... and weld Catholics and Protestants together in a great

47. Ibid., pp 487-93; Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 7, pp 286-328.

48. Kopp to Korum, 26 December 1904, Korum Papers 378, Bis A Trier.

Christian-social bloc [which would be active] in all areas of public life and religious practice."⁴⁹ Like Benigni, they feared a "Protestantization"⁵⁰ of German Catholics that would complete the Reformation. To forestall such an eventuality, influential clerics, intellectuals, journalists, agrarians, and parliamentarians, at least one of which belonged to Sodalitium Pianum, began to establish closer ties during the fall and winter, and on Easter Tuesday (13 April) 1909, they met secretly in Cologne to debate a three-point program: Opposition to all attempts to alter the confessional nature of the Center, closer organizational ties between the Volksverein and the Episcopate, and unification of the Fachabteilungen and the Christian trade unions in cartel form. Because experience had shown that practically nothing could be done directly against the Gesamtverband, the conferees dropped the third point. A close reading of the conference protocol makes it clear, however, that the participants were confident that points one and two of the program would suffice to avoid the dubious consequences"⁵¹ (declining respect for the bishops, religious indifference, interconfessionalization of the Center, arrogant interest group politics, etc.) which had resulted from the growth of Christian trade unions in Germany. A petition was sent to the bishops a few weeks later.

The Osterdienstag initiative led rather quickly to a resolution of the crisis which had been developing in the Catholic camp over the alleged interconfessionalization of the Center. The opposing factions jockeyed for position in party circles during the summer and fall of 1909, hopeful that their opponents would be silenced by Center leaders in Berlin.⁵² The result, Hertling wrote his wife on 29 November, was "a compromise wholly satisfactory to no one, but less pleasing to the 'Kölner Richtung' than to its

49. ten Hompel, Osterdienstags-Protokoll, p 7.

50. Ibid., p 12.

51. Ibid., p 6.

52. Julius Bachem to Hertling, 24 July 1909, Hertling Papers 37, BA Koblenz; also see Giesberts' remarks at the General Assembly of the Augustinusverein on 18 August 1909, Augustinus-Blatt, No. 8, August 1909, St Bib MG.

antagonist [from Berlin]."53 At a conference of Reich and Prussian Centrists the day before, a declaration was formulated over the nature of the party.⁵⁴ The Center was not fundamentally a denominational party, the statement began, for it required its deputies to represent the interests of all Germans in a given district. Nor was it necessary that members adhere to the Catholic faith or, if Protestant, vote in a way that contradicted their religious convictions. What was given to Bachem, Trimborn, and Hitze with one hand, however, was taken away with the other. "This fundamental character is in no way inconsistent with the fact that throughout the years of the Kulturkampf the Center Party had to regard the defense of legislative and administrative measures directed against Catholics as its first and most pressing task, or that today one of [the Center's] chief duties is still to guarantee the legal and political rights (staatsbürgerliche Gleichberechtigung) of the Catholic minority."⁵⁵ It was just such a statement that the Christian-social leaders of the party wanted to avoid, because as they saw it this passage would merely play into the hands of National Liberal, and to a lesser extent, Conservative supporters of the Evangelical League, thereby hampering far-reaching electoral and parliamentary cooperation with these parties. Only after years of interconfessional work to solve social, economic, and national problems would the Center really be able to achieve equality for Catholics, for the Protestant majority would never grant such rights until it had overcome its prejudicial view of Catholics as ultramontane "Reichsfeinde."⁵⁶ Confirming the mild setback experienced by Cologne and Mönchengladbach, the Center entered a bill in early December demanding repeal of the remaining anti-Jesuit laws. Accompanied by the predictable anti-Catholic outbursts, the motion was defeated in February 1910.⁵⁷

53. Hertling to his wife Anna, 29 November 1909, Hertling Papers 19, BA Koblenz.

54. The declaration is printed in Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 7, pp 236-37.

55. Ibid.

56. Pieper to Undersecretary of State in the Reich Chancellery Wahnschaffe, 13 April 1913, Reichskanzlei Nr. 2270, Bl. 114 Z St A Potsdam.

57. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, Vol. 7, pp 110-14. Bachem exaggerates the "victory" of Cologne in 1909.

The Easter Tuesday coalition was also moderately successful in its quest to bring the Volksverein under closer episcopal supervision. Not long after receiving the Osterdienstag protocol, Kopp informed Silesian Center circles that he would initiate another discussion of the Volksverein's independence at the upcoming bishops' conference in Cologne (6 August 1909).⁵⁸ The resolution which resulted from this debate was clearly aimed at inhibiting Mönchen-Gladbach's agitation and alleged financial support for the Christian trade unions. The bishops expected the Volksverein to conform exactly to the principles set down in its by-laws, inform the Archbishop of Cologne concerning all expenditures, and instruct association representatives (Vertauensmänner) in every diocese to reach an understanding with the responsible bishop before undertaking any important action.⁵⁹ Unwilling to test the tolerance of the bishops further, and somewhat relieved that no executive council representation had been requested, the Volksverein succumbed to these demands immediately. At a conference in Frankfurt on 19 November, association functionaries were instructed to maintain the closest possible contact with the bishops, informing them of assemblies, rallies, private caucuses, and the status of the organization.⁶⁰ Fischer was supplied with a financial report for the fiscal year 1909/1910, and in an apparent attempt to abide by its statutory obligation to promote Catholic interests, the Volksverein completely withdrew from all polemics in the trade union controversy.⁶¹

The anti-trade union nature of the campaign to shackle Mönchen-Gladbach is well illustrated by events in the Archdiocese of Breslau during the fall

58. Ritter, Die Männer aus Mönchen-Gladbach, part 2, p 25, Ritter Papers ER-016, K f Z G Bonn.

59. The resolution is printed in the conference protocols, Bertram Papers IA-25b-16(4), A. A. Wrocławie.

60. Gottwald, "Volksverein," in Fricke (ed.), Bürgerliche Parteien, Vol. 2, p 819.

61. See the minutes to Volksverein executive council sessions of 23 August 1910, 5 July 1911, 2 October 1911, and 11 July 1912, in the Hartrath Papers 2, St A MG.

and winter of 1909/10. At the Breslau Katholikentag (29 August-2 September) Kopp extended an olive branch to the Volksverein by inviting the association to intensify agitation in his diocese. The nature of the terms offered to Franz Brandts later that fall were similar to those which Korum had offered Giesberts and Stegerwald in 1908. Mönchen-Gladbach was to promote unions and trade sections equally, refrain from all polemics, and bar the most outspoken pro-union functionaries from the Archdiocese of Breslau. The Volksverein chairman answered that his association could not support an organization that opposed trade unionism, but was willing to exclude anti-Berlinist material from Volksverein literature. Moreover, instead of veteran labor organizers like Heinrich Brauns, Pieper and executive council member Dr. Carl Sonnenschein would manage Silesian operations. Kopp's counter-offer indicates well the conservative drift of his thinking. Pieper and Sonnenschein were unacceptable; rather, the Volksverein's eastern section should be run by church canon Frank and other clergymen from the Archdiocese, while two-thirds of all dues collected would remain behind in Breslau for use as Frank saw fit.⁶² As Pieper reported a year later, the negotiations faltered over this point, for Kopp's proposal "envisioned an independent Volksverein organization in the Diocese of Breslau...the consequence of which would have been a dissolution of the entire association."⁶³ The Archbishop felt equally justified in his stance: "What was I suppose to say to Silesians who answered [my] recommendation of the Volksverein with: 'we don't want our dues sent to Mönchen-Gladbach so that Christian trade union secretaries receive salaries'?"⁶⁴

62. Pieper Manuscript, part 3, pp 572-73, St A MG; Wilhelm Ziebach Diary, entry of 4 December 1910, Archiv der katholischen Arbeiterbewegung, K f Z G Bonn; Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, p 152-55.

63. Minutes to Volksverein executive council session of 19 December 1910, in the Hartrath Papers 2, St A MG.

64. Quoted in Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, p 154.

Kopp's waning tolerance for the "modernistic" Christian-social faction in the Catholic camp was pushed to the limit by two more controversial incidents that winter. On 28 December 1909 the representatives of the Socialist, Christian, Hirsch-Duncker, and Polish miners unions met in Essen to protest the black-listing practices of employers in the Ruhr. A few days later Kopp noticed a newspaper interview which the Christian leader Johann Effert had granted to liberal reporters. As soon as a favorable opportunity presented itself, noted Effert, the unions were prepared to initiate a strike that would paralyze the entire industry and lead to the nationalization of the mines. At about the same time, the Archbishop received an angry protest resolution from Emilie Hopmann, President of the Catholic Women's League, which criticized Kopp's confessional League of Girl and Women Workers, and called for more trust in the Volksverein. The Archbishop reacted with a bitter note to Amalie Schalscha von Ehrenfeld, chairwoman of his own women's organization, then in March 1910, announced in the diocesan gazette that the founding of new branches of the Volksverein must be brought to his attention.⁶⁵ "In every single case," he wrote Korum, "I will [then] prevent the founding."⁶⁶ Events had come full circle since the Breslau Katholikentag the previous summer.

These trends did not augur well for the membership drive inaugurated by the Christian trade unions in the wake of the financial reform of 1909. Added to the embarrassment over inheritance taxes and the aloofness of the ever-suspicious Evangelical proletariat, Christian organizers had to contend with the increasingly troublesome fact that a significant percentage of the

65. Mülheimer Volkszeitung, 3 January 1910, (clipping in: Landratsamt Mulheim-Duisburg 842, H S A Dusseldorf); Wilhelm Zieback Diary, entry of 4 December 1910, Archiv der katholischen Arbeiterbewegung, K f Z G Bonn; Kopp to Schalsche von Ehrenfeld, 12 January 1910, Bachem Papers 294, HA Köln.

66. Quoted in Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, p 157.

Catholic working class questioned the moral credentials of the Gesamtverband. In order to eliminate the source of this problem, the unions took a number of potentially embarrassing steps. In February 1910, the Zentralblatt dissociated the movement from Effert's threat of a strike, declaring that it expressed a purely personal view and did not reflect the anti-Socialist, moderately pro-business strategy of the Christian trade unions. Such a disclaimer could hardly have appealed to the miners of the Ruhr. Mönchen-Gladbach and the Gesamtverband also attempted to elicit declarations of confidence from the Center Fraktionen, the Katholikentag, and Augustinusverein. Had these efforts succeeded, the political neutrality of the unions would once again have been called into question. The point is academic, however, for at every turn Christian leaders ran headlong into the uncompromising opposition of Kopp, who foiled these plans by issuing threats of church censure to the leaders of the above-mentioned Catholic organizations. After the Fulda Conference (23-25 August), moreover, Christian trade unionists learned that Kopp and Korum had once again raised the issue of the Volksverein, demanding the dismemberment of the association into diocesan units headed by bishops. All efforts at appeasement seemed destined to fail.⁶⁷

In late summer 1910, the frustration felt in Christian labor circles was compounded by alarming news from Rome. On 25 August the Vatican announced its condemnation of the Sillon association in France. The association's leader, Marc Sangnier, was instructed to disband his organization and form another in cooperation with the French bishops. By propagating the idea that all men deserve an equal lot, that present differences between classes were unfair, and that Catholics and Protestants should work together for improvement of this situation, Sillon had strayed down a democratic, even communistic path that was undermining the authority of the church.⁶⁸

67. Ibid., pp 158-59; Zentralblatt, No. 3, 7 February 1910; Gottwald, "Volksverein" in Fricke (ed.), Bürgerliche Parteien, Vol. 2, p 818; Pieper to Frohberger, 20 September 1910, Bachem Papers 294, HA Köln.

68. Trott zu Solz to William, 21 September 1910, Rom Vatikan 199-309, 1, A A Bonn.

Benigni, it appeared, had finally prodded the Pope into action. The question uppermost in the minds of Christian labor leaders in Germany, of course, was whether a similar condemnation was forthcoming for their organizations. Because the exaggerated arguments used against Sangnier could also be applied to the reformist efforts of Pieper, Stegerwald, and others, the worst had to be expected.

As Pieper learned indirectly "from reliable persons in Rome,"⁶⁹ the Vatican had indeed planned to move against the Volksverein. The Christian trade unions, it was hoped, would collapse in turn from lack of moral and financial support. And yet the much feared action was never taken. This can be explained by three separate countermoves made that fall. Shortly after Pius' pastoral letter over Sillon, Kopp wrote to Rome that the labor question in Germany was not yet fully ripe for a papal decision, and furthermore, that an initiative à la Sillon would not be well-suited to German conditions. The rationale for this letter is not difficult to determine. As the chairman of the Fulda Conference, Kopp considered disciplinary action against Mönchen-Gladbach an affair of the Prussian bishops. After the Episcopate had reached a decision, Rome could second the resolution. The fact that Fischer and Kopp were scheduled to discuss the dismemberment of the Volksverein in September must have strengthened the latter's proprietary feelings. The Silesian prelate also was well aware of the sensitivity of the government toward papal intervention in German affairs. A condemnation of Catholic cooperation with Protestants might easily be interpreted as an affront to Lutheranism and lead to retaliation against Catholics. These criticisms surely made an impression on the vacillatory Pius.⁷⁰

The démarche of the Prussian government further increased Vatican reluctance to proceed against Mönchen-Gladbach and the Gesamtverband. In early

69. Pieper to Frhberger, 20 September 1910, Bachem Papers 294, HA Köln.

70. Undersecretary of State Wahnschaffe to an unnamed person in the Reich Chancellery, 12 October 1910, Reichskanzlei Nr. 2269, Bl. 42, Z St A Potsdam; Kopp to Korum, 23 September 1910, Korum Papers 341, Bis A Trier.

September 1910 Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg received a worried Franz Behrens. The Evangelical unionist had been commissioned by the Protestant members of the Gesamtverband to solicit the aid of Prussian leaders in shielding the movement from papal condemnation. Behrens was able to convince Bethmann that Christian union efforts to rally the bourgeois parties would reduce S.P.D. voting strength in 1912, whereupon the Chancellor promised to instruct the Prussian emissary at the Vatican, Otto von Mühlberg, to take the necessary steps.⁷¹ Mühlberg's action probably took the form of a private warning to Benigni that any interference with the national tasks of Christian labor could result in a severance of diplomatic relations between the Curia and Berlin.⁷² Aware that the Pope could not afford to lose contact with the rulers of so many Catholics, Benigni postponed his plans.

Reinforcing the initiatives of Kopp and Mühlberg, Archbishop Fischer traveled to Rome in November 1910 to plead for the Volksverein and Christian trade unions. He was accompanied by Pieper and Spahn, who repeated their political arguments of 1908. Pius responded that neither organization was in any danger, but there was a consensus among informed observers at the Vatican that papal toleration of the status quo in the German Catholic camp would not last. A final solution of the controversy over Center, Volksverein, and unions would await the aftermath of the Reichstag elections of 1912. In the meantime, the matter was left in the hands of the Prussian bishops, as Kopp, and presumably the Prussian government, desired.⁷³

71. Felix Porsch to Wilhelm Marx, 25 September 1910; Marx Papers 221, HA Köln; Julius Bachem to Carl Bachem, 9 October 1910, and Carl Bachem notation of 12 October 1910, Bachem Papers 295-96, HA Köln.

72. Mühlberg adopted this approach in June 1912. See the report of Bavarian Ambassador at the Vatican Ritter to Minister-^oresident Hertling, 14 June 1912, M. Arb. 383, A St A München.

73. Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, pp 180-92; Mühlberg to Bethmann-Hollweg, 17 November 1910, Pöpstlicher Stuhl 6 sechr. 1, A A Bonn; Frohberger to Carl Bachem, 19 December 1910, Bachem Papers 307, HA Köln; Apologetische Rundschau, December 1910, (clipping in: Bachem Papers 308, HA Köln). The last article here was written by Karl Maria Kaufmann, a "confessionalist," who had spoken with both Pius and Merry del Val in November 1910.

The special bishops conference which convened at Fulda in mid-December 1910 was thus highly significant. The last and undoubtedly most significant item on the agenda was a discussion over labor organizations, the Volksverein, and the Catholic press. It is interesting to note, however, that the bishops moved quickly to a discussion of the crucial issue in all three categories: the pros and cons of Christian trade unionism.⁷⁴ The result was a set of guidelines for the participation of Catholics in trade unions which, though unsatisfactory to Kopp and Korum, nevertheless leaned in their direction. Catholic unionists were expected to limit union activity to the economic sphere, prevent any weakening of the church's spiritual influence in the Catholic community, and join a confessional Arbeiterverein if they had not already done so. "In all matters touching on the moral and religious aspects of private, public, and economic life," furthermore, Catholic members had to avoid words or deeds "which diocesan authorities consider irreconcilable with the religious and moral duties of a Catholic Christian."⁷⁵ The decision as to whether trade union actions corresponded to religious principles, the guidelines made quite clear, "is left to the offices of the church."⁷⁶ The bishops of Hildesheim (Bertram), Paderborn (Schulte), and Dresden (Schäfer) were elected to a commission to determine whether Berlin and the Christian trade unions were in compliance with these guidelines. The feuding parties were instructed to terminate all hostilities at once and submit memoranda within three months, outlining the religious and philosophical principles governing their economic actions. Disciplinary measures, if any, would be decided upon at the regular bishops conference in August 1911. The commission would also determine whether further measures against the Volksverein were in order.

74. See the official protocols in the Bertram Papers IA-25b-19, A. A. Wrocławie, and Korum's own notes in BIII 15.9., Bd. 2, pp 197-202, Bis A Trier.

75. Quoted from the official protocol of the conference, Bertram Papers IA-25b-19, A. A. Wrocławie.

76. Ibid.

Bertram, Schulte, and Schafer were unable to fulfill their mission. Eschewing all formal contact with the bishops--a move designed to appeal to Protestants in the movement--the executive committee of the Gesamtverband allowed Heinrich Brauns to reply in its stead. The labor priest did so, but his memorandum was primarily statistical in nature and delved into none of the controversial issues (the strike, the authority of the church, etc.) of interest to the bishops. Berlin replied directly and at great length to these questions. Unfortunately, the 143-page position paper did not reach the commission until late August, only two days before Fulda. Most problematic, however, was the fact that Kopp and the commission were soon at loggerheads. Fearing that direct supervision of Mönchen-Gladbach and the unions would undercut the crusade against socialism and turn thousands of Catholics against the Episcopate, the commission felt the controversy could be resolved if the Gesamtverband and its bourgeois allies declared themselves willing to regulate their own activity in accordance with church teachings. When Kopp rejected this solution in July 1911, Bertram deferred to the Archbishop and postponed a report over the commission's findings until 1912. The delay would also give him time to exact a statement from the Christian trade unions which, it was hoped, would placate Kopp.⁷⁷

Nor did it prove possible to quiet the polemics. Determined to recruit as many organizations as possible for the cause of Christian unionism, Catholic labor leaders in the West approached the Catholic Youth Leagues and Journeymen's Associations concerning support for the Gesamtverband. The success of these negotiations led to angry protests from Berlin. Even more disturbing to the confessionalists, Mönchen-Gladbach completed preparations during the winter of 1910/11 for the centralization of the Catholic Arbeitervereine. An article by Stegerwald in July indicated that the politicization of these associations (i.e., incorporation into the 'folk-movement') was the underlying motivation for the move. In apparent

77. See the Commission's findings in Gen. 23.61., Vol. 1, Erzb. Registratur Köln, and Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, pp 204-25.

retaliation, the Berliners and their allies in the Center increased pressure on Kopp to intervene in Rome, and when he refused, Fachabteilung patrons engaged in an unsuccessful attempt of their own to prod the Vatican to action. During the summer and fall of 1911, the bitterness resulting from the incidents mentioned above erupted into a press war of major dimensions.⁷⁸

By late 1911, therefore, German Catholics had been struggling almost without interruption for three and a half years. The seemingly interminable feud had resulted in no clear victory for either side, but it must be emphasized before proceeding that the conflict had placed far greater barriers in front of the interconfessionalists than has often been assumed. The attempt to tear down the Center's denominational facade and maneuver the party into a more friendly relationship with other bourgeois parties had not been completely unsuccessful, as the upcoming Reichstag elections would prove. The "compromise" resolution of November 1909, however, was no doubt partially responsible for the heavily one-sided nature of the sacrifices made during the campaign. A harassed Volksverein, moreover, had made a number of important concessions to the bishops and was no longer entirely free to make decisions. The Christian trade unions had thus far conceded nothing, but the cost of maintaining their independence had been high. Even the pro-union bishops were not entirely satisfied that the movement was safe for Catholic workers.⁷⁹

Unable to make definite recommendations at Fulda in August, Bertram pressed forward with his attempt to elicit a binding declaration from the executive committee of the Gesamtverband. Some progress was made in late October 1911 when the unionists replied through Pieper that the Christian

78. Frohberger to Carl Bachem, 17 July 1911, and other letters and clippings in the Bachem Papers 910, HA Köln; Kopp to Korum, 4 March 1911, Korum Papers 378, Bis A Trier; Soziale Revue, 1911 (III. Quartalscheft), pp 346-57; Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, pp 215, 221-22.

79. Both Ross, Beleaguered Tower, pp 128-31, and Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, chapters 12-13, Passim, underestimate the extent to which "Cologne" had been constrained by "Berlin."

trade unions intended to comply with the moral law of the Catholic and Evangelical churches. Still not satisfied, Bertram requested that the statement be formulated more precisely, and in public. In late winter 1912, then, with rumors circulating that the Vatican was preparing an encyclical which would condemn the Christian trade unions, Stegerwald acceded to the bishop's wish.⁸⁰ The General Secretary stated in Cologne on 2 March that Christian labor unions had been founded "in order that devout Catholic and Evangelical workers would have an organization...in which individual members would not be expected to associate themselves with views or actions in private or public life, especially in the economic sector, which are irreconcilable with the moral and religious teachings of the Catholic or Evangelical Church, according to the manner in which these teachings are formulated by the responsible church authorities."⁸¹ Stegerwald had not brought his organization into compliance with the Fulda guidelines of 1910, it must be noted, for these had stated explicitly that diocesan authorities, not the individual unionists, should decide when the unions had stepped out of line. Aware that Stegerwald could concede no more and still claim to head an independent movement, Bertram and the bishops' commission expressed their satisfaction with the General Secretary's "good faith" declaration.⁸²

The Vatican proved harder to please. Spurred on by Benigni that spring⁸³ it seems almost certain that Pius intended to lend the authority of

80. Bertram to Porsch, 5 March 1912, and Carl Bachem notation of 11 March 1912, Bachem Papers 320b, HA Köln; Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, pp 226-29, 239-41.

81. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 195, 4 March 1912.

82. See Stegerwald's remarks in Essen on 26 November 1912, Protokoll der Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Kongresses der christlichen Gewerkschaften Deutschlands (Cologne: Christlicher Gewerkschaftsverlag, 1912) p 11.

83. Mülberg to Bethmann Hollweg, 19 March 1912, Päpstlicher Stuhl 26 secre. 1, A. A. Bonn; Benigni to Jonckx (in Belgium), 2 March 1912, Benigni Papers 4, in Brauweiler Papers 15/13/42, St A MG.

canonical law to the Osterdienstag demand for separate Catholic and Protestant unions united in cartel form. This solution was apparently seen as one which would permit the Christian proletariat to oppose the Socialists, avoid problems with the Prussian government, and satisfy the Vatican's own demands for supervision and guarantees of religious purity. An interesting series of events in late spring 1912 altered Rome's course. Alarmed by the formation of a cartel which united the Catholic Arbeitervereine of western and southern Germany--a move designed, among other things, to promote the economic and political program of the Christian trade unions--the Vatican sent a telegram to delegates attending the cartel's first congress in Frankfurt a. M., warning them not to violate the dictates set down in Rerum Novarum. Addressed to Giesberts, the note was generally accepted as a sign that the Pope would take action against the unions in the near future. The great outcry which went up in western Catholic circles complicated these plans, for, greatly startled, Pius decided to ask the Prussian bishops their opinion of the yet unpublished encyclical. The moderately pro-union response of the Episcopate, and the renewed warning from Mühlberg that Christian labor should be left alone, led, then, to revisions in the text that summer. The Vatican pointed out, however, that the dangers represented by the Gesamtverband were too great to be completely ignored by the new ruling.⁸⁴

84. It is generally assumed that the Encyclical was not begun until after the Frankfurt Congress of May 1912. (See, for instance, Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, chapter 14, Passim). In December 1913, however, Archbishop Fischer's General Vicar, Peter Kreuzwald, testified that Fischer was too ill to travel to Rome at Easter 1912 "and could therefore exert no influence over the drafting of the Encyclical" (Der Kölner Gewerkschaftsprozess (Cologne: Christlicher Gewerkschaftsverlag, 1913), p 68). In addition, Bishop Rosentreter of Kulm told Carl Bachem in August 1913 that the Berliners had sought to influence the writing of the document "for months" before the Frankfurt Congress, while the Prussian bishops were not asked until afterwards (Bachem notation of 7 August 1913, Bachem Papers 328, HA Köln). Father Rathscheck, a close associate of Bishop Schulte of Paderborn, told Bachem in February 1913, furthermore, that a special passage had been added to the document after Frankfurt (Bachem notation of 8 February 1913, Bachem Papers 328, HA Köln). And finally, Franz Heiner, a German prelate in Rome who worked closely with Pius and Merry del Val, wrote that the Christian trade unions had been in the "greatest danger" before the Congress (Heiner to an unnamed friend, 10 June 1912, Bachem Papers 320a, HA Köln). For the Vatican's desire to curb 'the dangers represented by the Gesamtverband' that summer, see Ritter to Hertling, 19 July 1912, M. Arb. 383, A St A München).

Dated 24 September 1912, the encyclical Singulari quadam⁸⁵ was outspoken in its theoretical opposition to the Christian trade unions. The Gewerkschaftsstreit demanded the Vatican's attention, the document began, because a danger existed that German Catholics would "gradually, unwittingly content themselves with a blurred, undefined sort of Christian religion which is customarily referred to as interconfessionalism."⁸⁶ The non-denominational labor movement had also violated the instructions for social action established by Leo XIII.

Namely, whatever the Christian does, also in the realm of earthly things, he is not free to disregard the supernatural domains, much more, according to the rules of a prudent Christian way of life, he must as the final goal subordinate everything to the greatest good. All his actions, however, insofar as they are good or evil in a moral sense, that is, insofar as they comply or deviate from the natural laws of God, are subjected to the judgment and the offices of the church. All who boast of the Christian name, as individuals or in associations, may not, if they want to do their duty, stir up hostility and feud between the estates of bourgeois society, rather must promote peace and mutual understanding. The social question and the related controversial questions concerning the character and nature of work, wages, and strikes are not of a purely economic nature and thus not to be counted among those questions that can be solved in the absence of church authority. On the contrary, the social question is beyond a doubt a moral and religious issue and therefore must be solved according to moral law from the religious standpoint.⁸⁷

This reasoning led Pius to the conclusion that Catholic denominational associations were to be preferred above all others. In Catholic areas, "and also in other areas where it can be assumed that these [confessional unions] can adequately meet the various needs of the members,"⁸⁸ purely Catholic associations should be founded and promoted. The Vatican could never look favorably upon the founding of interconfessional organizations in the above-mentioned regions, the document continued, for such associations presented

85. Printed in Der Kölner Gewerkschaftsprozess, pp 35-39.

86. Ibid., pp 35-36.

87. Ibid., pp 36-37.

88. Ibid., p 37.

a grave threat to the purity of the faith and the authority of the Catholic church. This did not mean that Rome frowned on all socio-economic cooperation between Catholics and Protestants. Rather, "we prefer that Catholic and non-Catholic organizations form ties with one another by way of the new, up-to-date institution called the cartel."⁸⁹

Having made it abundantly clear what he preferred, Pius yielded at this point to the bishops and the Prussian government. In return for papal "toleration" of the Christian trade unions in the areas where they presently existed, however, the Pope insisted that certain prerequisites be met. First, Catholic unionists had to join an Arbeiterverein so that the clergy could teach them the moral and religious principles pertinent to trade union activity. Second, the Pope forbade the unions per se to engage in any action which contradicted these teachings. Third, the bishops were instructed "to observe and oversee the behavior of the unions [to see] that no harm comes to Catholics who participated in them."⁹⁰ Fourth, all disputes among German Catholics over labor matters should be referred directly to Rome for final arbitration. If these conditions were met, papal toleration of the Gesamtverband would continue. In short, the Christian trade unions had been placed on probation.

The Prussian bishops convened at Fulda in early November 1912 to accept the dictates of the Holy Father, translate the encyclical from Latin to German, and send it on to the press. Before publication on 10 November, Vicar General Kreutzwald of the Archdiocese of Cologne was instructed by Kopp to meet with Christian labor leaders and inform them of the contents of the document.⁹¹ The Archbishop was concerned lest the unionists "give way to first impressions."⁹² When Kreutzwald met with Brauns, Giesberts, and Stegerwald on 8 November, however, the three had already read an

89. Ibid., p 38.

90. Ibid., p 38.

91. See the protocols of the Fulda Conference on 5 November 1912, Bertram Papers IA-25b-24 (11), A. A. Wrocławie.

92. Kopp to Porsch, 10 November 1912, Bachem Papers 329, HA Köln.

official version printed in the Kölnische Zeitung and were understandably shaken by the news. Most upset was the unions' General Secretary, who insisted that his organization might have to speak out publicly against the encyclical.⁹³ Pressed by the ever-cautious Giesberts, however, Stegerwald agreed to suppress his pessimism and "look at the bright side."⁹⁴

A letter two days later to Joseph Joos, editor of the Westdeutsche Arbeiterzeitung, indicates that Stegerwald was unable to keep this promise. In order to preserve the independence of the Gesamtverband, wrote Stegerwald, a special congress should be convened, the word "Christian" stricken from the statutes, and the Catholic Arbeitervereine informed that relations would be terminated as soon as difficulties arose over implementation of the Pope's ruling.⁹⁵ As for the encyclical itself, Stegerwald intended to protest the unwarranted interference of Rome in matters that did not fall under its authority. The resolution would be phrased forcefully, but would not overstep "the limits of the permissible."⁹⁶

I am quite conscious of the consequences, the responsibility, and the struggles of salvation that will begin [he wrote to Joos]. Nevertheless, read the sentences of the Encyclical that I've marked and ask yourself: 1) whether Protestant members can still belong to our movement under such ignoble conditions, and 2) whether trade union activity as we think of it is still possible within this barbed-wire fence. A positive answer for either question is impossible. Furthermore, our movement sits on a permanent volcano since this Encyclical was issued. No trade union group can follow these ideas and develop powerfully in the face of the strong Social Democratic movement. We must now discuss how our movement is to avoid stagnation and slow death. To remain dumb to all this would be the most dangerous and unmanly thing that we could do.⁹⁷

93. Ibid.; Der Kölner Gewerkschaftsprozess, p 40.

94. Der Kölner Gewerkschaftsprozess, p 80.

95. Stegerwald to Joos, 10 November 1912, Stegerwald Papers 1, Stegerwald Stiftung Köln.

96. Der Kölner Gewerkschaftsprozess, p 42. Also see Carl Bachem's notation of 18 November 1912, Bachem Papers 328, HA Köln.

97. Stegerwald to Joos, 10 November 1912, Stegerwald Papers 1, Stegerwald Stiftung Köln.

Stegerwald's suggestions were accepted by the union's executive committee on 13 November, and on the 15th, Behrens spoke with Bethmann concerning the most effective means of governmental support for the upcoming action. Unlike on previous occasions, the Chancellor was encouraged to refrain from applying pressure in Rome. The unionists were afraid that Pius had been pushed far enough and would counterattack if the union protest were combined with another humiliating démarche. Naively perhaps, Christian labor leaders felt they could avoid condemnation or excommunication, while still saving face before the skeptical masses.⁹⁸

Stegerwald's plans, meanwhile, had caused great consternation in Center and Volksverein circles. Though greatly angered by the encyclical, Brauns wrote Bishop Schulte on the 14th that the special congress had been prepared by the unions alone, not Mönchen-Gladbach. The veteran labor organizer obviously wanted to shield the Volksverein from any church retaliation that might follow against the Christian trade unions. In Berlin, Hitze, Trimborn, and Porsch tried to convince Giesberts that the congress should be cancelled. The three party leaders knew that the 'limits of the permissible' were narrow and could be easily exceeded by the worked-up unionists. The Pope's wrath would then be vented on the politically important unions, and maybe on the Center itself, for by this point, Pius' dislike for the 'Kölner Richtung' was an open secret.⁹⁹ These efforts bore some fruit on the 17th when, after a three-hour session, the editorial staff of the Kölnische Volkszeitung got Stegerwald to agree "at least to think over the matter."¹⁰⁰

98. Behrens to Stegerwald, 16 November 1912, Stegerwald to Giesberts, 18 November 1912, Stegerwald Papers 1, Stegerwald Stiftung Köln; Bachem notation of 12 December 1912, Bachem Papers 329, HA Köln.

99. Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, p 305; Giesberts to Stegerwald, 18 November 1912, Porsch to Giesberts, 22 November 1912, Stegerwald Papers 1, Stegerwald Stiftung Köln; Bachem notation of 18 November 1912, Bachem Papers 328, HA Köln.

100. Frohberger to Carl Bachem, 19 November 1912, Bachem Papers 328, HA Köln.

Bishop Schulte, the most emphatic supporter of the Christian trade unions in the Episcopate, was also striving to prevent a collision between church and Gesamtverband. Warned separately by Franz Brandts and Center Deputy Karl Kuckhoff that Christian labor leaders were in an excitable state, Schulte arranged a meeting with Stegerwald on the 15th.¹⁰¹ The General Secretary opened the meeting by producing a bundle of newspaper articles which claimed that the Christian trade unions had finally been shackled by the church. Stegerwald was also worried about rumors from Berlin concerning S.P.D. and Conservative Party interpellations against the Pope's interference in the affairs of German labor. Both developments demanded that a special congress be held, for the unions had to show the public that they were perfectly capable of protecting their own interests.

Schulte responded that adverse criticism or no, the Pope's decrees could not be treated with disrespect. The bishop coupled this warning, however, with the rather startling observation that the Socialist and Conservative interpretations of the encyclical were entirely false. Neither the Pope nor the Episcopate wanted to supervise or control the unions' economic activity. All that was intended was a closer scrutiny to insure that no religious or moral dangers arose from membership in the organization. Nor did the encyclical mean that the bishops were forbidden to promote Christian trade unions in Catholic as well as largely non-Catholic areas. These comments were included in the "theoretical part" of the document and did not apply to Germany. Schulte proceeded to tell Stegerwald that a written statement summarizing this "interpretation" would be placed at the unions' disposal for public use. At Stegerwald's request, the bishop promised to ask Kopp for similar assurances.¹⁰²

101. For the meeting, see Westfälisches Volksblatt, No. 25, 27 January 1914; and Der Kölner Gewerkschaftsprozess, pp 41-42, 60-61.

102. Ibid.

That Stegerwald placed even the slightest hope in Kopp was the result of a letter which the Archbishop had sent to Porsch on 10 November. The note--which had come into Stegerwald's hands via Pieper--was drafted after Kopp had learned from Kreutzwald that the unionists were worried about the encyclical. For Kopp, who had expected a much harsher ruling from Rome, this concern was groundless. The Pope had not condemned the Gesamtverband, he noted, "and the bishops, most of whom stand behind the Christian trade unions, will not claim supervisory rights...Everything remains as before...the [union] leaders can therefore forget all this mistrust and pessimism."¹⁰³

Thus Kopp and Schulte, who stood poles apart on the trade union question, had reached the same conclusion concerning Singulari quadam. The Archbishop's judgment was probably blurred by the disappointment he felt in the aftermath of the encyclical, but he was also determined to keep the peace among the bishops and, perhaps most important of all, prevent the unionists from taking steps that would be disastrous for the German Catholic community. As far as Schulte's lenient interpretation of the papal document is concerned, the wish seems to have been father of the thought. For even a cursory reading of the encyclical leads, as the unionists had realized, to an altogether different conclusion.

It is quite likely, therefore, that Stegerwald left the conference with Schulte somewhat skeptical concerning the likelihood that the entire Episcopate, much less Rome, would allow the unions to pursue an independent course. Such a conjecture would explain Stegerwald's grudging behavior during the meeting with Julius Bachem et al two days later, as well as a letter which he sent Giesberts on the 18th. At the congress later that month, noted Stegerwald, the unions should not let things come to a conflict with Rome.

But on the other hand, we want to remain a movement with self-consciousness and backbone. Without these properties no labor movement in Germany can prevail against the Social Democratic

103. Kopp to Porsch, 10 November 1912, Bachem Papers 329, HA Köln.

giant. Furthermore, we may not choose all too diplomatic phrases in the resolution, because we must cater to the psyche of the masses. The Vatican's Encyclical with all its crass passages is read in thousands of assemblies by our opponents and held before our people in tens of thousands of factories. Faced with this situation, our people also need something in their hands to sap the strength from the reproaches of the others. Finally, the present [harsh] form has been chosen for the resolution to show Rome, church authorities in Germany, as well as broad circles of the clergy, that the eternal guardianship of the working class has its limits.¹⁰⁴

Such an approach was perfectly suited to precipitate the crisis which Stegerwald said he wanted to avoid.

A catastrophe was averted at the last minute by the continued efforts of Schulte and Kopp. The former wired a written version of his interpretation to Stegerwald on the 20th and followed this up on the 22nd with the news that Kopp had granted permission to distribute copies of his letter to Porsch among the delegates at the unions congress--now scheduled for the 26th in Essen. On both occasions Schulte implored the labor leader not to lay too much emphasis on the independence of the movement, rather to speak cautiously, and respect the Pope's wish for peace in the Gewerkschaftsstreit. Aware by this time that Schulte was in the process of extricating the movement from the entire crisis, Stegerwald assured the bishop that no injurious remarks would be made, but, still not completely satisfied, pressed Schulte for a declaration from Kopp that his name be linked publicly to the lenient interpretation of the encyclical. When Schulte replied on the 23rd that Kopp wanted the entire Episcopate to be associated with the interpretation, and had taken the appropriate steps, Stegerwald swung into line and, with editorial help from Schulte, drafted a much milder resolution. The General Secretary also exerted his influence

104. Stegerwald to Giesberts, 18 November 1912, Stegerwald Papers 1, Stegerwald Stiftung Köln.

on keynote speaker Karl Schiffer, who proceeded to eliminate two-thirds of the address that he had already prepared.¹⁰⁵

The Essen Congress of 26 November 1912 was thus a very restrained affair, nothing like the protest assembly which had originally been planned. In fact, the initiative was transformed into an impressive piece of propaganda against the free trade unions, the Hirsch-Dunckers, the Evangelical Bund, and others who had proclaimed the end of the Christian trade unions. The congress was also a major setback for the Fachabteilungen in Berlin, for Stegerwald was able to declare that the Fulda Conference recognized the right of trade unions to make decisions independently and would not prevent the Gesamtverband from expanding into exclusively Catholic areas (i.e., Silesia). Highlighting the day's activity was a telegram from the head of Emperor William's Privy Council relaying the Kaiser's approval of "the patriotic demonstration of the representatives of Christian-National labor."¹⁰⁶ It was not the first time in the history of the movement that a crisis of major proportions had been narrowly averted.

Neither was it the first time that the church, in this case the Vatican, had failed to assert its authority. For the so-called "Essen Interpretation," however tactfully phrased, was completely unacceptable to Rome. Pius had not intended to allow the unions to strike at will, nor were the bishops to permit expansion of the movement into new areas. The very idea, moreover, that subordinate members of the hierarchy had deemed it necessary to interpret a definitive ruling by the Vatican was highly offensive, especially after the Curia had already deferred to the bishops' wish that the unions not be confessionalized. For reasons which cannot be exactly

105. Schulte to Stegerwald, 20, 22, 23, 24, and 25 November 1912, Stegerwald to Schulte, 25 November 1912 (2 letters), Schiffer to Stegerwald, 23 November 1912, Stegerwald Papers 1, Stegerwald Stiftung Köln; Schulte to Kopp, 23 November 1912, Stegerwald to Schulte, 23 November 1912, quoted in Brack, Deutscher Episkopat und Gewerkschaftsstreit, p 312.

106. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Kongresses der christlichen Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, p 64.

determined, nevertheless, the Pope did not retaliate. Action against the unions was highly risky after so many threats from Mühlberg, but an open censuring of Schulte and Kopp was well within the realm of safe options. Kopp claimed in February 1914, in fact, that Rome was ready to proceed against him for his part in the interpretation, but was dissuaded from doing so by two cardinals who argued that the Archbishop should not be treated this way. Merry del Val's emphatic denial of the charge notwithstanding, there may be more than a kernel of truth in the story, for in the immediate aftermath of the Essen Congress Pius issued a stern reprimand to Kopp for approving, not merely tolerating, the Christian trade unions.¹⁰⁷

The warning, which was clearly a more appropriate disciplinary measure than public denunciation, was apparently not without effect. In a letter to Schulte on 1 December 1912, Kopp reversed himself and withdrew his all-important approval of the Essen interpretation.¹⁰⁸ The inconsistent, illogical reasons which Kopp gave to Schulte for this volte face lead to the conclusion that the Archbishop was responding to pressure from Rome. The trade union controversy, it appeared, had still not been laid to rest.

In Cologne a weary Stegerwald was aware of none of these ominous developments. Speaking before a gathering of Christian trade unionists on 4 December 1912, the General Secretary found little consolation in his

107. Bachem notation of 17 February 1914, Bachem Papers 981, HA Köln; Vatican circular to the Prussian bishops, 8 January 1914, Korum Papers 358, Bis A Trier; Ritter to Hertling, 2 February 1914, Ges. Päpstl. Stuhl 905, G St A München; Kopp to Trott zu Solz, 1 February 1914, Päpstl. Stuhl 26 secre. 2, A. A. Bonn; Mühlberg to Langwerth, 26 February 1914, Päpstl. Stuhl 26 secre. 3, A. A. Bonn; Wühr (ed.), Pastor Tagebücher, p 572.

108. Kopp to Schulte, 1 December 1912, printed in Klarheit und Wahrheit, No. 4, 25 January 1914.

apparent victory. The movement had been able to protect itself from all attacks, but in the process, he lamented, membership growth had been stymied. "If through the years the Christian trade unions had been able to develop in accordance with principles agreed on by all, three-quarters of a million members would belong today. Think how different this constellation would be in opposition to the Social Democrats!"¹⁰⁹ Stegerwald believed, however, that now the path to impressive growth, and importantly, greater political effectiveness, was finally clear.

109. Augsburger Postzeitung, 5 December 1912, (clipping in: Ges. Pp. St. A München).

CHAPTER 12

CHRISTIAN LABOR AND GERMAN DOMESTIC POLITICS ON THE EVE

In the year and a half that remained before the outbreak of World War One, Christian laborers forged ahead with their campaign to create a broad-based, progressive alliance of non-socialist parties and social reform groups. The financial bill drafted by the government during the winter of 192/13, it was hoped, would add further momentum to the progress made with these efforts in the aftermath of the S.P.D. landslide of 1912. Instead, the tax reform drove a wedge between the bourgeois parties and precipitated an internal crisis in Germany over the question of social reform which showed no signs of dissipating until the assassination at Sarejevo brought other concerns to the fore. Complicating the situation, the Gewerkschaftsstreit erupted once again in January 1914. Embittered by the lack of concern for their cause shown by the government, the church, and broad elements of bourgeois society, Christian workers were drifting slowly to the left on the eve of the war, despite the best efforts of Stegerwald, Behrens, and others to prevent this.

Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg was a worried man in the late fall of 1912. The past few months had not only witnessed the crippling of Turkey during the early stages of the First Balkan War, but also the strengthening of France and Russia as a result of impressive military increases. These developments convinced Bethmann of the need for an expansion of Germany's armed forces.¹ New ships and army divisions,

1. Bethmann to Hertling, 23 December 1912, MAI 955 p 129, G St A München.

however, would require new Reich taxes. But what kind of tax? The National Liberal-Center-Conservative compromise of May 1912 had called for a "property tax" without specifying any one in particular. All that was certain was that it would not be an inheritance tax, for powerful agrarian lobbies in the Center and Conservative Parties opposed it. And yet this was the only tax for which Saxony, Bavaria, and other South German states in the Bundesrat had shown any enthusiasm. Hoping to unite these disparate interests, Bethmann proposed a rather complicated compromise resolution. 110 million Marks of the required 186 million would be covered by Reich levies on fire insurance policies, legal documents incorporating new firms, and other less controversial taxes. For the remaining sum, each state would raise new income (Einkommen-), wealth (Vermögen-), or inheritance taxes (Erbschaftssteuern), then forward these revenues to Berlin. If by December 1914 the states had not acted, they would be required to institute the wealth gains tax at the state level. This compromise won the halting approval of the Bundesrat and was published in late March 1919.²

The decision, which the Christian trade unions had no chance to influence, was disappointing to Christian labor. Assuming that the Reich wealth tax would be the only property tax acceptable to a center-right bourgeois majority, the Political Committee of the Catholic Arbeitervereine of western Germany had held numerous rallies since the fall of 1912 to promote the tax in Center circles. These efforts were not without success, as witnessed by Karl Herold's advocacy of the Vermögenssteuer before the Augustinusverein in February. The workers' hope that the Conservatives would agree to the tax was also not entirely misplaced. Thus on two occasions in February Conservative agrarians spoke out for a direct tax that would increase the burden on Big Business. In late March, furthermore, party leader Count Westarp told Treasury Secretary Kühn, threateningly, that the Fraktion would throw

2. Witt, Finanzpolitik des deutschen Reiches, pp 358-65; Rauh, Parlamentarisierung des deutschen Reiches pp 254-71.

itself behind wealth taxes if the government insisted on dictating which taxes should be raised by the federal states. The National Liberals were also in favor of the imperial wealth tax, though admittedly not as a one-sided levy on capitalists. The Christian labor movement therefore adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward Bethmann's tax package. If property taxes raised by the states were acceptable to the bourgeois majority, the nonSocialist workers would support this approach. If the Reichstag pressed for the wealth tax, however, Christian workers made it clear they would back this effort too.³

Indeed in early April 1913 it looked as if the Center-Right might opt for the tax favored by Christian labor. Center leaders Gröber and Spahn were the first to suggest this. Meeting with Westarp, Count Kanitz, and a few other Conservative deputies on 11 April 1913, the Centrists argued for a straight wealth tax levied by the Reich. The National Liberals would have their direct tax and be severed from the Progressives and Socialists, who were pushing for the objectionable inheritance taxes. The Center, Conservatives, and National Liberals could then use this new cooperative relationship as the foundation for quid pro quo compromises on the upcoming tariff debates, and other matters such as social reform.⁴ What was not mentioned to the Conservatives was the soothing

3. Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 35, 31 August 1912 and No. 16, 19 April 1913; also see Otto Müller's remarks before the executive committee of the Cartel Association of Catholic Arbeitervereine of Germany, 25 March 1918, Archiv der katholischen Arbeiterbewegung, vol. 5, k f Z G Bonn; Augustinusblatt, No. 2, February 1913, St Bib MG; Witt, Finanzpolitik des deutschen Reiches, p 363; Puhle, Agrarische Interessenpolitik, p 317; Westarp to Heydebrand, 22 March 1913, reprinted in Kuno Graf von Westarp, Konservative Politik im letzten Jahrzehnt des Kaiserreiches (Berlin: Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1935), vol. 2, pp 276-77; Undersecretary of State in the Reich Chancellery Wahnschaffe to Bethmann Hollweg, 16 March 1913, Reichskanzlei Nr. 2270, Bl. 98, Z St A Potsdam; Die Arbeit, No. 11, 15 March 1913.

4. Westarp to Heydebrand, 13 April 1913, reprinted in Westarp, Konservative Politik, vol. 2, pp 278-80.

influence such developments would have on Christian labor. The unions had been pressing for bourgeois Sammlung for years and regarded the wealth tax as a first step in this direction.⁵

Kanitz was excited about the plan, but Westarp and the others balked. For one thing, the government's proposals could always be amended to give complete freedom of decision to the states as to which taxes should be raised. Secondly, there was no guarantee that the Progressives and Socialists would not suddenly champion the wealth tax, thereby raising the dubious spectre of democrats and Marxists dictating tax policy to the government, the states, and the upper classes.⁶ Early the next day, however, Westarp informed Bethmann's aid Wahnschaffe that the party was not categorically opposed to the Center's idea.

5. For the pro-union orientation of the Center's financial policies in 1913, see Martin Spahn, Deutsche Lebensfragen (Kempten: Kösel Verlag, 1913), pp 91-92; and Ernst Bassermann, "Die politische Bedeutung der Deckung der Heeresvorlage," undated clipping (probably fall 1913) from the Nationalliberale Blätter in the Stresemann Papers 135, H126179, B A Koblenz, Witt, Finanzpolitik des deutschen Reiches, p 369, asserts that the center had tactical reasons for proposing the wealth tax, but does not mention what these reasons were. Rauh, Parlamentarisierung des deutschen Reiches, pp 273-74, claims that the party's proposal was only to serve as an "alibi," and that in reality Gröber and Erzberger wanted to unite the parties around a capital gains tax. This was probably true (see Martin Spahn's testimony after the war, Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruches in Jahre 1918. Das Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses der Verfassungsgebenden Deutschen Nationalversammlung und des Deutschen Reichstages 1919-1928, vol. 7, part 1, p 236), but Rauh, as Witt, does not explain that the Center needed this alibi to calm the workers who were pushing for the wealth tax. Menderhausen, "German Political Catholicism 1912-1919," Ph. D. Dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1972, pp 118-28, correctly focuses his discussion on lower-class pressure within the Center, but is not very specific.

6. Westarp to Heydebrand, 13 April 1913, reprinted in Westarp, Konservative Politik, vol. 2, pp 278-80.

There is talk of the wealth tax in the air. We don't want this, but there are two motives that could perhaps move us to cooperate [with the Center and National Liberals]. The tax is more bearable for us than the inheritance tax, and furthermore, I don't want to see us in a situation where we'll have to chase the train if the Bundesrat finally decides to unite with the other parties behind the wealth tax. For the degree of decisiveness that I'll show for the government's proposals, therefore...there's a double prerequisite: the amount of conviction we gain that the Bundesrat will remain firm against the wealth tax, further, that Chancellor and Bundesrat are decidedly opposed to covering the military bill with the inheritance taxes desired by the leftist majority.⁷

When Wahnschaffe made no firm assurances to Westarp on these two points, the Conservative leader was unable to come to any decision concerning his party's stance.

The movement to force the government to accept a wealth tax was quickly undermined by the Kaiser. The King of Saxony, infuriated at the prospect of parliament bullying the Federal Council, drafted an angry letter of protest to William in early April. The malleable emperor quickly instructed Bethmann to put an end to all talk of wealth taxes by stating boldly in the Reichstag that the Federal Council would never accept them.⁸ After another stern warning in May, Gröber and Erzberger completely abandoned the idea of wealth taxes and contacted the National Liberals concerning support for a capital gains tax which, among other things, would tax landed inheritances. Bethmann, who was favorably disposed to the plan, exerted pressure on the recalcitrant states in the Bundesrat, and by late June 1913, both houses had accepted the reform.

The bill was widely heralded in liberal circles as a major step in the direction of progressivism, and Christian labor, too, could find some

7. Ibid. Both Witt, Finanzpolitik des deutschen Reiches, p 369, and Rauh, Parlamentarisierung des deutschen Reichstages, p 273, exaggerate the unwillingness of the Conservatives to accept the wealth tax.

8. Hertling to his wife Anna, 22 April 1913, Hertling Papers 22, B A Koblenz.

satisfaction in the fact that the Center had responded to the demand of the workers for a more equal distribution of the tax burden. The reform could not be seen, however, as a victory for the Christian labor movement, for its primary goal of uniting the bourgeois parties against the Socialists had not been achieved. The unions' agitation for the Reich wealth tax had been foiled by the Bundesrat in March and again by Bethmann's warnings in April and May. Thus the only direct tax which the Conservatives might have supported was cast aside. As had occurred so often in the past, a situation unfavorable to Christian laborers had been imposed on them by the arbitrary decisions of a few powerful individuals. This dilemma was compounded by the unions' decision to back the capital gains tax in June. The Conservatives were vehemently opposed to the idea of inheritance taxes in any form, and were appalled at the mere suggestion of bowing to the demands of a "leftist" Reichstag majority. By refusing to support the tax, even after certain concessions were made in the area of landed inheritances, the Conservatives had dealt a blow to the cause of anti-Socialist solidarity from which this cause would never recover.⁹

The indignation of Centrist and Conservative agrarians found quick expression that summer. On 6 July 1913 at Paderborn, representatives of the Bund der Landwirte and the National Federation of Christian Farmers' Associations met with officials of the Central Association of German Industrialists and the Reich Union of the Old Middle Class to discuss closer economic and political cooperation. Further negotiations followed in the weeks that followed, and on 24 August the above organizations gathered in Leipzig to announce the formation of a "Cartel of the Producing Classes."¹⁰ The new coalition advocated "the

9. Witt, Finanzpolitik des deutschen Reiches, p 370-71; Bassermann to Jacob Riesser, 18 July 1913, Stresemann Papers 429, H126142-44, B A Koblenz; Ernst Bassermann, "Die politische Bedeutung der Deckung der Herresvorlage," as cited above in note 5; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No 28, 12 July 1913.

10. Stegmann, Die Erben Bismarcks, pp 355-56; Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, pp 339-40.

protection of national production," establishment of reasonable prices, maintenance of authority in all economic enterprises, protection of strike breakers, and would oppose "excrescences in the system of our economic life."¹¹ and combat the Social Democrats and false socialist doctrines. To implement this program, the member organizations hoped to place enough pressure on the Center and National Liberals--the two parties that had played into the hands of "the Left" during the financial reform--so that radical elements in these parties would be suppressed and dragged along to the Right. Simultaneously, pressure would be exerted on Reich and Prussian leaders to support the Cartel's program.¹²

It must be emphasized, however, that the members of the Cartel held differing views over the term "Right." They were all determined to halt the trend toward "socialistic" property taxation and generally dedicated to the struggle against free trade unions, S.P.D., and bourgeois radicalism. But here agreement ended. The agrarian wing of the Cartel was primarily interested in securing a Reichstag majority for agricultural tariffs, while neither the Central Association nor the Reich Union warmed to the idea. Heavy industry and the small producer, on the other hand, wanted to crush the entire trade union movement and halt further social legislation, but these goals did not appeal to all Christian and Conservative farmers. Of the six organizations in the Christian Federation, for instance, only the Rhenish and Silesian were emphatically anti-union,

11. For the proceedings at Leipzig, see the Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 428, 25 August 1913.

12. Stegmann, Die Erben Bismarcks, pp 415-21; Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, pp 340-41.

and neither favored a rollback of social insurance legislation. The Westphalian association was even prepared to expand the Cartel to include the Christian trade unions.¹³

Much the same can be said for the Bund der Landwirte. The league was prepared to accept new social insurance legislation, albeit at a slower pace than the labor movement desired. Bund leaders were also in favor of incorporating the Christian and "national" labor associations (yellow) into the emerging coalition. Before this could happen, however, Conservative agrarians wanted the unions to accept a slower social reform tempo and compromise on certain key legal issues such as the right to strike. Like Marx, ironically enough, they assumed that most workers could never get along with employers and that authoritarian institutions had to be maintained to keep this class conflict in manageable bounds. Once this dilemma was solved, League activists like Conrad von Wangenheim wanted to transform the cartel into a great right-wing Volkspartei encompassing agriculture, industry, handicraft, non-socialist labor, and

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13. For the views of the Central Association, see the speeches of heavy industrialists Ferdinand Schweighofer and Julius Vorster, printed, respectively, in Deutsche Tagezeitung, No. 470, 16 September 1913, and Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 5, 31 January 1914; for the Imperial Union, see the report of its annual congress for 1931 printed in the Zentralblatt der christlichen Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, No. 22, 27 October 1913; for the views of Christian farmers, see the observations of Karl Herold, Augustinusblatt, No. 10, October 1913, Baron von Le, printed in Zentralblatt, No. 23, 10 November 1913, and Silesian agrarians, discussed in the Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 492, 28 September 1913; for an excellent discussion of the Christian farmer's view of society and other social groups, see David W. Hendon, "The Center Party and the Agrarian Interest in Germany 1890-1914," Ph.D. Dissertation, Emory University, 1976; Timothy Nugent, "The Bourgeoisie Awakes: Socio-Economic Interest Groups in Germany 1909-1914," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1975, pp 260-62, 287, exaggerates the anti-social views of Christian farmers by concentrating solely on Baron Le's Rhenish organization.

other associations such as the Pan-German League.¹⁴ In the long run, the 'egotistical tendencies' of heavy industry could be curbed by compromises within the party.¹⁵

Only League leaders were enthusiastic about these designs, significantly enough, for the Conservative Party was too attached to the past to warm to the idea of a radical party-political transformation. Most Conservatives were also wary of attenuating the property rights of industrialists for fear the same principles would be applied with equal force to landowners. The history of the Cartel thus provides added evidence in support of the thesis that the Bund der Landwirte was more attuned to the need for organization, somewhat more willing to make concessions, and hence more "modern" than the upper strata of the Conservative Party itself.¹⁶ These developments also lend credence to the view that some right-wing politicians, by employing democratic techniques in pursuit of anti-democratic goals, were precursors of the fascists.¹⁷ The Bund's emphasis on militant nationalism, anti-Semitism, new party formations, its criticism of the weakness of Kaiser and Chancellor, and its desire to shackle both capital and labor, place it squarely in this category.

14. Stegmann, Die Erben Bismarcks, pp 356, 361, 379-90, 403-04, has uncovered the ambitious plans of Wangenheim et al., but does not mention Christian labor as part of the design. That the unions were eventually to be included will be shown below.

15. See Rösicke's letter to Wangenheim of July 1912, cited in Chapter 10 of this study. Puhle, Agrarische Interessenpolitik, pp 159-64, stresses the fact that the Bund wanted to dominate the Cartel, and also the anti-Semitism took on definite anti-business tones, but does not link these facts to a desire to eliminate the social abuses of modern industry.

16. For Puhle's views, see his Agrarische Interessenpolitik, pp 274-78. That the Bund was willing to pursue social reforms, however, is not mentioned by Puhle.

17. Puhle, ibid., pp 278-89, advances this view, as does Stegmann, Die Erben Bismarcks, pp 449-522.

To describe the Leipzig Cartel as purely reactionary, therefore, would be inaccurate. Its agrarian wing showed definite signs of right-wing revolutionism.

Public response to the new coalition, meanwhile, was not at all what Cartel leaders had hoped. National Liberal Reichstag leaders and the overwhelming majority of the party's press denounced Leipzig as a sell-out to Junkers and Free Conservative industrialists.¹⁸ The party's actions that fall, however, illustrate that the formation of the Cartel was not entirely without effect on the liberals. The National Liberal convention at Wiesbaden in early October not only professed the party's reliability with regard to tariffs, but also established a special commission to investigate the question of protection for strike breakers.¹⁹ The move was interpreted by right-wing National Liberals as a sign that the party was prepared to abandon its opposition to the demands of the Conservative Party and heavy industry, but this was not exactly true, as the moderate Gustav Stresemann noted in a letter to Bassermann in late October.

I'm not demanding a special piece of legislation [against unions] nor even a banning of pickets. I do feel that it's urgently necessary, on the other hand, that the National Liberal Fraktion advocate a law within the framework of present legislation that facilitates a quicker prosecution of strike excesses, introduces corporate status for trade unions, makes them responsible for damages, and further, [that we ask] state authorities to issue strike instructions which specify that more energetic use will be made of existing legal means... I feel these proposals hold out a way which the National Liberal Fraktion can go without damaging its status with labor organizations.²⁰

Stresemann reinforced his bid to influence the Wiesbaden Commission in

18. See Stegmann, Die Erben Bismarcks, p 399.

19. Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, p 357.

20. Stresemann to Bassermann, 31 October 1913, Stresemann Papers 135, H126169, B A Koblenz.

early November by obtaining the sanction of the Hansabund's Industrial Council for the position outlined above.³⁶

Bassermann's protege fell between two stools. In numerous assemblies and petitions, the right-wing of the party demanded entirely new legislation to crush the strike and warned of "weighty consequences"²¹ should the Wiesbaden Commission fail in this mission. The howls of protest from the left were equally frightening. The white-collar employees associated with the Hansabund threatened to bolt unless the organization disavowed Stresemann's resolution. The executive committee obliged the clerks in late November by denouncing the Leipzig Cartel as one-sided and reactionary,²² then buried the Industrial Council's resolution in a committee which never met. The Young Liberal Clubs and numerous district party organizations joined this protest, insisting that the newly established commission abandon the anti-union cause. Adding to the pressure from the left wing of the party, Christian trade union and Hirsch-Duncker leaders warned National Liberal officials not to back the demands of heavy industry.²³

The general threat of losing mass support soon forced party leaders to hedge on the question of strike breakers. In late October Karl Heckmann and George Ickler, two non-socialist labor leaders elected in 1912, were co-opted into the Wiesbaden Commission. The move was clearly designed to lessen the chances of anti-labor findings once the commission began its work. In mid-November a number of other topics were added to the commission's agenda in the obvious hope of postponing the proceedings indefinitely.²⁴ That Bassermann and the party leadership felt compelled

36. Quoted in the Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 610, 2 December 1913.

21. Nugent, "The Bourgeoisie Awakes," p 289.

22. Quoted in Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, p 357. The warning may have referred to the agrarians' plan of forming a new right-wing party.

23. Nugent, "The Bourgeoisie Awakes," pp 290-91.

24. Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, pp 357-60.

to adopt expedients such as these was a good illustration of the fragile nature of National Liberal Party unity on the eve of the war. The left wing was much more pleased with the move than the right, however, which was good indication that the Cartel had lost the first round with the Liberals.²⁵

The initial reaction in Center circles was much more positive. Christian agrarian and artisan groups were naturally in favor, as were the Fachabteilungen in Berlin, whose theological objections to the strike fit well into the Cartel's program. Matthias Erzberger, who sympathized with the Berliners, also pronounced a positive judgement in Tag. Much more surprising was the cautious, but by no means negative response of Julius Bachem and the Kölnische Volkszeitung. The Center's leading journal in western Germany greeted the idea of bourgeois Sammlung and held out hope that the Cartel could develop in a more progressive direction. The Essener Volkszeitung, Niederrheinischer Volkszeitung, and Schlesischer Volkszeitung expressed similar views.²⁶

The only outright negative reaction in the Catholic camp came from the Christian trade unions and the western Arbeitervereine.²⁷ Throughout the fall of 1913 Christian labor leaders kept up a constant barrage of criticism, claiming that the Cartel would reduce the workers standard of living by pushing for tariff increases on grain, and more importantly,

25. Ibid., pp 357-58.

26. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 804, 16 September 1903; Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 610, 2 December 1913; Stegmann, Die Erben Bismarcks, p 398; Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, pp 342-43; Essener Volkszeitung, No. 254, 16 September 1913; Niederrheinischer Volkszeitung, No. 915, 20 September 1913.

27. See Giesberts' notes for a speech before Catholic artisans on 29 September 1913, Giesberts Papers 120, Bl. 1-9. Z St A Potsdam; Zentralblatt, No. 20, 29 September 1913; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 39, 27 September 1913; and Giesberts speech of 9 November before his constituents in Essen, printed in the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 970, 10 November 1913.

that the allied organizations intended to stamp out trade unionism. The presence of Central Association representatives at Leipzig offered some proof of this latter charge, but the unions could also point to a resolution passed by the Imperial Union in August 1913 which, if implemented, would have effectively excluded trade unions from negotiation of wage contracts. The most alarming, and surprising, aspect of these developments to Christian labor, however, was the wholehearted support German agrarians seemed to give to the anti-social demands of heavy industry and the old middle class. Stegerwald, Giesberts, and other Catholic laborers saw no reason why Christian and Conservative farmers had to join such a coalition to protect agriculture, for, with the exception of the Progressives, all bourgeois parties were willing to accept reasonable tariff increases. The only conclusion to be reached, therefore, was that farmers had joined the cartel to oppose organized labor. If they did this, warned the Christian trade union Zentralblatt, they would arouse a "monstrous opposition" in labor circles. In order to oppose the anticipated demands of the Cartel for a rollback of social legislation and the shackling of unionism, Christian labor leaders decided to hold a third German Workers Congress when the Reichstag convened in November.²⁸

The unions' reaction, which was delayed for unknown reasons until late September,²⁹ gave rise to a long series of requests from Center and Cartel circles that Christian labor reconsider its stance. The Deutsche Tageszeitung was the first to speak out. The Agrarian League organ

28. Zentralblatt, No. 20, 29 September 1913.

29. Christian labor leaders probably wanted to observe Center Party reaction before speaking out. A negative response to the Cartel in Catholic circles might have obviated the need for a dramatic rejection by the unions.

found the Zentralblatt's article inexplicably harsh and based on a thoroughly false understanding of the Cartel. "It can only be hoped that the Christian trade unions quickly come to a calmer and more accurate interpretation of the goals discussed at Leipzig."³⁰ The Kölnische Volkszeitung was also quick to comment, advising the unions to wait and see what course the Cartel pursued. Not all member organizations, the paper pointed out, were opposed to social reform.³¹ When the influential Schlesische Volkszeitung also challenged the union's viewpoint concerning the threat to social reform, the Deutsche Tageszeitung reprinted the article in its press review.³²

The eagerness of the Bund der Landwirte to smooth relations with Christian labor spread to other Cartel members that fall. In mid-October the Rhenish Artisans League, one of the more progressive members of the Reich Union, defended the idea of broadening the Cartel to include Christian labor.³³ Karl Herold seconded the idea at the Westphalian Center Party's convention in Münster a month later. The Christian-national workers had to be included, he argued, "in order to arrive at common action of all the great occupational estates which recognize the existing societal order."³⁴ Perhaps the most significant statement came from Dr. Hugo Böttger, one of the spokesmen for heavy industry in the National Liberal Reichstag Fraktion, who admitted during a speech in Duisburg that it had been a mistake not to invite the Christian trade unions to Leipzig.³⁵

30. Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 492, 28 September 1913.

31. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 842, 28 September 1913.

32. Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 495, 30 September 1913.

33. For the views of the Rhenish Artisans League, see the Zentralblatt, No. 23, 10 November 1913; and the Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 912, 21 October 1913.

34. Quoted in Bericht Über die Verhandlungen des dritten Deutschen-Arbeiter-Kongresses (Cologne: Christlicher Gewerkschafts-Verlag, 1914), p 65.

35. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 1071, 11 December 1913.

Baron von Le, of the arch-conservative Rhenish Farmers League, joined the chorus in late November.

The Christian trade unions called the meeting of the Cartel [in August] a storm-warning signal for the bourgeois labor movement. Nothing is more false than that. We have no intention of marching in double battle formation. We are content to move the battle line forwards. With this front we'll also acquire terrain for the [non-socialist] working class.³⁶

Le's appeal for non-socialist solidarity was printed in the morning edition of the Deutsche Tageszeitung on 2 December. That evening the Bund der Landwirte daily praised the remarks of the Catholic nobleman and extended its own olive branch to Christian labor.³⁷ The paper's editor, Georg Oertel, was even more explicit in the Reichstag ten days later. If German agriculture was to remain strong, he noted, "unity is needed--unity in the Reichstag and among the producing classes including the workers."³⁸ These pleas had no effect whatsoever. The answer of the German Workers Congress was a defiant rejection of those elements in the Cartel that had urged the unions to moderate their demands and join the coalition. The Frankfurt program of 1903 was not diluted, rather expanded to include unemployment compensation, housing legislation, public works, the 8-hour day in certain industries, a resolution against higher tariffs, and a host of minor additions to Germany's social insurance laws. The offers of the fall concerning participation in the Cartel were also turned down on the grounds that no union could take part in a venture aimed primarily at eliminating the strike and collective bargaining.³⁹ Having drifted as far to the right as any bona fide labor organization could be expected to over the

36. Quoted in the Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 610, 2 December 1913.

37. Deutsche Tageszeitung, No. 611, 2 December 1913.

38. Reichstag Debates, Period 13, Session 1 (11 December 1913), vol. 291, p 6388.

39. Bericht ber die Verhandlungen des dritten Deutschen Arbeiter-Kongresses, pp 18-22, 291-317.

last ten years, Christian labor was announcing that the time for concessions on its part was past. If the Leipzig Cartel was the only basis for bourgeois Sammlung, the movement for non-socialist solidarity was bankrupt.

The presence of 28 Center deputies at the Congress was a good indication that the union's tough stand had not been in vain. Indeed in mid-December the Kölnische Volkszeitung admitted that many in Center circles had reconsidered their stance to the Cartel in the light of unionist arguments and revelations.⁴⁰ The political expediency of this turnaround was not mentioned by the paper, but there is no reason to doubt that fear of vote loss was the major motivating factor. Despite the fact that other elements in the Center still favored a closer relationship with the Cartel, it was clear that the Leipzig forces had lost another round.

However, as has been emphasized so often in this study, the Reichstag was not the real locus of power in Imperial Germany, even on the eve of the war. For this reason Cartel forces had divided their efforts from the beginning between parliament and high-placed individuals in state and Reich government. This pressure, together with the sympathy that most top civil servants felt for the conservative cause, resulted in an unmistakable shift to the right in these circles during the year before Serajevo. Thus, in early July 1913 Bethmann Hollweg told Count Lerchenfeld that he supported Bavaria's desire to halt the movement toward direct Reich taxes.⁴¹ With Saxony and Württemberg already on record as opponents of direct imperial taxation, further reform of Germany's outmoded financial system seemed highly unlikely. In January 1914, moreover, Reich Secretary of the Interior Delbrück announced that

40. Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 1071, 11 December 1913.

41. Lerchenfeld to Hertling, 7 July 1913, MAI 955, G St A München.

the imperial government would block all efforts to undermine the country's tariff system, and if need be, would even strive for "improvements"⁴² in this system. The stance of the German Workers Congress against tariffs had clearly been without effect. The rightward drift of German officialdom became even more evident in May 1914 when Prussian Minister of the Interior von Loebell categorically rejected the idea of a democratization of the three-class suffrage.⁴³

Nor was there much hope in the area of social reform. In mid-December 1913 Bethmann responded to Conservative demands for protection of strike-breakers by declaring that this question would be handled in the upcoming reform of Germany's criminal code. Not content to wait, the Prussian and Saxon police were already in the process of issuing tough new regulations against the activity of workers on strike.⁴⁴ Four weeks later, moreover, the hard-pressed Chancellor spoke out against the workers' demand for unemployment compensation,⁴⁵ and on 20 January 1914, Delbrück announced that the nation had reached "a definite standstill"⁴⁶ in social insurance legislation. The prospect for bills guaranteeing collective bargaining and other legal rights of labor organizations looked just as bleak. "Gentlemen, after the experiences we've had in this house with deliberations over the question, it seems doubtful to me if this goal will be reached in the foreseeable future."⁴⁷ It had been

42. Reichstag Debates, Period 13, Session 1 (20 January 1914), vol. 292, p 6647.

43. Bachem, Zentrumspartei, vol. 7, p 123.

44. Reichstag Debates, Period 13, Session 1 (10 December 1913), vol. 291, pp 6341-43; Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, pp 381, 392-93.

45. Saul, Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung, p 382.

46. Reichstag Debates, Period 13, Session 1 (20 January 1914), vol. 292, p 6637.

47. Ibid., p 6640.

a black day for the cause of social emancipation in Germany. Unable to influence Germany's bureaucratic elite as effectively as heavy industry and agriculture, Christian labor derived little satisfaction from blocking the Cartel's first Reichstag initiative.

Five days after Delbrück spoke, the Christian labor world was rocked by reports that the Prussian Episcopate no longer stood behind the Essen interpretation of the Encyclical Singulari quadam. The news stemmed from a letter Cardinal Kopp had printed in the "Berlinist" organ Klarheit und Wahrheit on 25 January 1914.⁴⁸ Kopp noted that he had formulated the Essen interpretation jointly with Bishop Schulte of Paderborn, and further, that the bishops' conference had never formally debated the matter. The Archbishop then disclosed the contents of his letter to Schulte of 1 December 1912 in which he had dissociated himself from the interpretation. With this letter, he asserted, the approval of the entire Episcopate had been withdrawn. Kopp's claims were fraught with procedural errors, as Schulte pointed out in a lengthy article series in late January 1914,⁴⁹ but the unions took little consolation in this. As Gesamtverband leaders saw it, they were now faced with an even greater challenge from the entrenched forces of conservatism.

Kopp's letter had been a long time in coming. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Pope's displeasure with Kopp had probably promoted the Archbishop's letter to Schulte of December 1912, but Kopp had chosen to keep his views under wraps to avoid further controversy. The aging prelate was pushed closer to the point of open opposition by a report in November that the unions planned "to work with the utmost pressure and speed in order to carry through the inter-confessionalization of

48. Kopp to Count Hans Oppersdorf, 21 January 1914, printed in Klarheit und Wahrheit, No. 4, 25 January 1914.

49. Westfälischer Volksblatt, 27, 29, 30, 31 January 1914, (clippings in: Brauweiler Papers 14, St A MG).

Catholic Germany over the head of all resistance."⁵⁰ Further stimuli to action came in December when the Gesamtverband sued a number of "confessionalist" editors and the new Arch bishop of Cologne violated the spirit of Singulari quardam by urging all Catholic workers to join Christian trade unions. Pressure from the Berliners and a subtle hint from Vatican Secretary of State Merry del Val in January settled the matter in Kopp's mind.⁵¹ He could keep silent no longer.

Coming at a time when the state and the German Right were tightening their grip on trade union freedoms, the spectre of church control of the labor movement contained in Kopp's letter⁵² aroused suspicion among Christian labor leaders of a broad conspiracy. The mood was captured well by the Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten, which printed a letter from leading Christian trade union circles in early February 1914.

The Essen Congress [of 1912] wrung attention from many sides for the Christian trade unions. We had refused to allow church authorities to interfere in our affairs. The reputation and influence of the Christian trade unions rose. This was not just a boon for us, but also for the progress of social-mindedness, for without a doubt the idea of social reform finds the best support today in the Christian-national labor movement... Now Kardinal Kopp's political sympathies do not lie with those circles who are pressing for the energetic continuation of social legislation. More than that, as a member of the Free Conservative faction of the [Prussian] House of Lords, he stands close to the very circles for which more vigorous social policies as well as a greater participation in political events

50. Archbishop Hartmann of Cologne to Kopp, 10 November 1913, B III 15.9, Bd. 1, pp 50-53, Bis A Trier.

51. Kopp to Oppersdorf, as cited above in note 71; Ritter to Hertling, 28 February 1914, Ges. Pöpstl. Stuhl 905, G St A München; Klarheit und Wahrheit, No. 2, 11 January 1914; "Romanus," Kölnische Volkszeitung correspondent at the Vatican to Julius Bachem, 13 March 1914, Bachem Papers 981, H A Köln.

52. This was, in fact, exactly what Kopp had in mind. In late 1913 he had proposed that Christian trade union headquarters be moved from Cologne to Berlin--a City under his jurisdiction. (Mühlberg to von Langwerth, 26 February 1914, Pöpstl. Stuhl secre. 3, A A Bonn). Some months earlier, Kopp had rallied the Prussian bishops for another offensive against the Volksverein. (Archbishop Hartmann to Pieper, 25 September 1913, Hohn Papers 15/2, St A MG).

on the part of the laboring masses in an abomination. Kardinal Kopp was the bridge over which the aversion to an independent labor movement in political circles was shifted to the side of the church. The most recent attacks made by Kardinal Kopp against the Christian trade unions must be viewed in this connection. His attacks are nothing more than a projection of all the reactionary socio-political measures observed of late. If the Reaktion succeeded in knocking out the best troops among the socially conscious patriotic workers, then it would have a much easier time implementing its plans.⁵³

As explained above, the immediate motivation for Kopp's letter lay elsewhere. In a broader sense, however, the authors of the above letter were close to the truth. For both church and state regarded strike action on the part of independent, sometimes militant trade unions as a serious threat to the existing order of things that they were both pledged to uphold. The forces of change and resistance to change in Germany were coalescing, consciously and unconsciously, into two opposing fronts on the eve of World War One. The unionists had sensed this.⁵⁴

Without an appreciation for these feelings, the unusually vehement protest of Christian labor during the month of February cannot be fully understood. On the 3rd the Political Committee of the Catholic Arbeitervereine held a mass rally at Bochum which led to "deplorable"⁵⁵ outbursts against the church. On the 10th Archbishop Hartmann of Cologne tried in vain to halt a meeting of labor priests who sympathized with the workers' feelings. The Arbeiterverein leaders added insult to injury

53. Reprinted in Badischer Beobachter, 5 February 1914 (clipping in: Brauweiler Papers 14, St A MG).

54. The idea of conspiracy, though unfounded with regard to Kopp, did nevertheless have some basis in fact. Count Hoensbroech, a Catholic agrarian who stood behind the Cartel and for years had backed the demands of the Osterdienstag conference, planned to lobby against the Christian trade unions in Rome in April 1914. (Zimmermann to Mühlberg, 7 April 1914, Pästl. Stuhl 26 secr. 3, A A Bonn).

55. Hartmann to Otto Müller, 14 February 1914, Archiv der Katholischen-Arbeitnehmerbewegung, vol. 5, K f Z G Bonn.

by submitting a nine-page protest resolution to Hartmann, then asking him to forward it to Rome! Despite the Archbishop's efforts to halt another protest rally of workers at Essen on the 15th, this meeting, too, went ahead as planned. Pieper, Müller, and Giesberts finally responded to Hartmann's pleas in late February by urging Catholic workers to calm down. The rift between masses and hierarchy, however, was already too wide to close. 800,000 Catholic workers belonged to free trade unions by this time and many of those who remained loyal to the Christian labor movement were too radical for even the most sympathetic clergymen⁵⁶. Bishop Faulhaber of Speyer, for instance, complained that "the trade union leaders speak in such an irreverent and impermissible way, that without an express order from Rome one can't work with them anymore."⁵⁷ But this was just the point: Christian workers wanted their independence.

The process of polarization described here was not limited to the church: it could also be seen in the bourgeois parties of the Reichstag. Dissatisfied with the political inactivity of the Hirsch-Duncker unions and the lack of labor representation in the Progressive Reichstag Fraktion, Anton Erkelenz had formed his own political organization during the summer of 1912. The Reich Association of Liberal Workers and Clerks, as the new group was called, was virtually a party within a party.⁵⁸

56. Hartmann to Müller, 10 February 1914, Müller to Hartmann, 12 February 1914, Archiv der katholischen Arbeiterbewegung, vol. 5, K f Z G Bonn; Hartmann to Wilhelm Marx, 11 February 1914, Marx Papers 219, H A Köln; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 10, 7 March 1914; Kölnische Volkszeitung, No. 1099, 19 December 1913.

57. Faulhaber to Ritter, 24 February 1914, Ges. Pöpstl. Stuhl 905, G St A München.

58. Protokoll der Reichskonferenz liberaler Arbeiter und Angestellten (10-11 August 1912), Erkelenz Papers 117, B A Koblenz.

Labor and anti-labor factions could also be observed in the National Liberal Party, as witnessed by the debate over protection of strike-breakers. Had it not been for the strong bond of imperialism and militant nationalism in fact, the Fraktion would probably have split, with more than half going over to the Progressives, the others to the Conservatives.⁵⁹

The Conservatives had avoided such problems over the years by refusing to admit workers to the party, but this was beginning to change in the two years before the war. The Bund der Landwirte had supported a number of Christian laborers during the elections of 1912 and was eager to develop closer ties with Christian labor during the following two years. As a result of these efforts, the Christian-Social metalworker Herman Wahlbaum was nominated by the Conservatives and elected to the Prussian Landtag in July 1913. When Archduke Franz Ferdinand was shot a year later, the Conservatives and Christian-Socials were about to sign a merger agreement.⁶⁰ The Bund's views on more effective political organization had begun to prevail, for the move was designed to win influence in western Germany and find "access to the working class."⁶¹ That tensions lay ahead for the new party, however, goes almost without saying.

The Center was no exception. Questions such as freedom for the Jesuits, direct Reich taxes, the Leipzig Cartel, and the protection of strike breakers were just a few of the issues contributing to the brittleness

59. Stegmann, Die Erben Bismarcks, pp 315-16.

60. Dieter Fricke, "Christlich-soziale Partei," in Dieter Fricke (ed.), Die Bürgerlichen Parteien in Deutschland, Vol 1, p 253. Fricke quotes the memoirs of Christian-Social Party Chairman Wilhelm Philipps.

61. Westarp, Konservative Politik, Vol 1, p 403.

of intra-Center relations before the war. Thus in February 1914 the Prussian Center joined the National Liberals in a declaration for higher tariffs. Less dependent on labor votes, the Landtag Fraktion felt it could afford to ignore Christian labor on this issue. Even more bitterness was generated over the suffrage question. Despite a campaign against the three-class system that winter by the Political Committee of the Catholic Arbeitervereine, Herold announced in May that his party colleagues in Prussia had no intention of introducing a reform bill. Worried that an influx of Socialists and Progressives into the Landtag would mean an end to the confessional school in Prussia, Herold and others had little sympathy for the workers' demand for a voice in the government of Germany's largest and most powerful state.⁶² Problems of a religio-political nature also separated Christian labor from the small but outspoken clique of "Berliners." Christian laborers singled out the trade union controversy, in fact, as one of the major reasons why they had been unable to weld the Center and the other bourgeois parties into a more progressive, non-denominational Bloc.

Without the Gewerkschaftsstreit the Christian-national trade union movement of Germany would today number at least 700,000. The forces within the labor movement would be distributed quite differently and the Social Democrats would not have 4-1/2 million votes and 111 mandates. The Catholic and Evangelical parts of the populace, especially the workers, would long ago have united behind the Christian labor movement, which would have boasted several hundred thousand Evangelical workers as members. Catholic and Evangelical laborers would represent the major conciliatory element within the [feuding] bourgeois parties. Erzberger and the South German word-democrats would not be able to play their present role in the Center Party. If the Center is to become a real political party that develops real statesmen, and not [a party] with hyper-particularistic, purely religious, narrow-minded currents that burden German political life, then the only way is to strengthen the Christian-national labor movement which is independent of party leaders and others. This could not help but bring a healing of the German party system.⁶³

62. Bassermann notation of 25 February 1914, Kl. Erw. 303-17, B A Koblenz; Müller Manuscript, p 31, K A B Haus Köln; Reichstag Debates, Period 13, Session 1 (19 May 1914), Vol 295, p 9085.

63. Behrens to Wahnschaffe, 6 February 1914, Papstl. Stuhl 26 secr. 2, A A Bonn. Behrens letter is significant because he summarizes the feelings of the Gesamtverband executive committee, which had met the night before.

As this letter indicates, the overwhelming majority of Centrists was preoccupied with the question of religious tolerance and had no more than a tactical interest, if any, in the cause of social and political reform. Very little had changed since the 1870's.

The pressures resulting from these differences of opinion were beginning to undermine Center unity. In the early fall of 1913 the noblemen who had abstained during the financial reform in June formed a "committee of the 22." Their goal was to prepare for the "hot struggles"⁶⁴ anticipated with Catholic labor over the tariff issue. The workers were sharpening their swords too. Thus August Brust, former leader of the Gewerkverein, blurted in November that "the workers can't be caught anymore by waving the bloody shirt and crying that the church is in danger. We can easily bring about a leftist majority [in the Reichstag], and we can vote 'no' just like the Center agrarians did over the capital gains tax."⁶⁵

In late September 1913, moreover, Stegerwald and Wilhelm Weyer, co-chairmen of the Political Committee of the Catholic Arbeitervereine, invited Volksverein and Christian labor leaders to a meeting in Cologne to discuss "the upcoming struggles in the area of tariff and commercial policies," creation of a political journal for the entire Christian-national labor movement, and the need "to make the parliamentary activity of Christian-national labor deputies more effective."⁶⁶ It is not clear what the Political Committee had in mind, for the minutes to the meeting itself are not extant. The strategy must have been similar, however, to one which emerged a few years later: all Christian labor deputies would form an inter-party committee to pressure the various Fraktionen.⁶⁷

64. Count Galen to Herold, 19 October 1913, Herold Papers 6, B A Koblenz.

65. See Chaplain Heinrich Wiedemann to Herold, 28 May 1914, and accompanying documents, Herold Papers 7, B A Koblenz.

66. See Stegerwald's and Weyer's invitation to the meeting, in Archiv der katholischen Arbeiterbewegung, Vol 1, KfZG Bonn.

67. See Stegerwald's outline for a presentation in July 1916 entitled "Fundamental Principles and Demands of the Christian-national Movement of Workers and Clerks," in the Bachem Papers 960, H A Köln.

The fact that Christian laborers were talking that winter about prodding the Center into the mainstream of political life, and inter-confessionalizing Catholic Germany 'over the head of all resistance,' lends credence to the idea that such a committee was being planned. Giesberts, Schiffer, et al. would become, for all intents and purposes, representatives of the German Workers Congress, not the Center.

The same process of polarization was also in evidence at the interest-group level. That the Right was drawing together has already been established, but the German working class was also putting past differences aside. Much of the credit for this belongs to Hans von Berlepsch and Ernst Francke of the Society for Social Reform. As explained in earlier chapters, the two had tried for years to unite the Christian, Hirsch-Duncker, and Socialist unions within the framework of the Society. The frees had refused from the beginning on the grounds that bourgeois reform ideas would only compromise a true labor organization. The Christians and Hirsch-Dunckers had joined the Society, but their cooperation ended. Political and religious differences kept the liberal unions away from the German Workers Congress in 1903 and 1907, and, despite a truce in May 1911 that was supposed to pave the way for Hirsch-Duncker membership, the Third Congress in November 1913 also saw a divided non-socialist labor movement. The liberal miners were still infuriated with the Gewerkverein for refusing to strike in 1912, and the large Hirsch-Duncker machinists' union had severed relations with Franz Wieber's Christians only months before the Congress over another strike-related argument. The Christians had insisted, moreover, that participants to the Congress pledge their adherence to the Christian Weltanschauung. This the liberals felt had nothing to do with trade union affairs.⁶⁸

68. Franz Schmidt, leader of the Hirsch-Duncker miners, to Erkelenz, 22 January 1913, Erkelenz Papers 8, B A Koblenz; Flugschrift Nr. 57 des Gewerkvereins der Deutschen Maschinenbau-und Metallarbeiter, Ein Zweifelhafter Bundesgenosse (Berlin: Goedecke und Gallinek, 1913), pp 4-5; Der Gewerkverein, No. 91, 12 November 1913; Die Wacht, No. 47, 22 November 1913.

The ominous socio-political signs of the winter of 1913/14 facilitated the Society's mission. Following the German Workers Congress, Anton Erklenz had wanted to unite all liberal workers and clerks in another great congress, but the idea never came to fruition. There is excellent reason to believe that Francke convinced Erkelenz to cancel the congress and work for the unity of labor, not promote further divisions.⁶⁹ The free workers were also warming to the idea of cooperating with their rivals. At an executive council session of the General Commission in mid-January 1914, the various union chairmen expressed interest in an active role within the Society for Social Reform.⁷⁰ The Leipzig Cartel was not mentioned, but the threat of a social reform rollback was the only explanation for this sudden interest in Berlepsch's creation. This trend became more obvious in late April when free, Hirsch-Duncker, Christian, and other labor leaders joined Ernst Francke in Berlin to make a public stand for trade union rights. The General Commission's Correspondenzblatt felt compelled to point out the importance of this unique occasion.

Of great significance was the fact that representatives of the free, Hirsch-Duncker, and Christian trade unions, as well as clerks and technical employees, stood as one behind the viewpoint: decisive struggle against the measures now threatening to limit coalition rights and ban the posting of pickets. All these measures are a barrier to the labor movement, whose healthy growth is absolutely necessary. All the above representatives spoke out against the yellow movement and expressed the desire to have nothing to do with these employer foundations. The pleasant result to be observed from all this is that, even if many other differences of viewpoint between the above organizations still exist, all are thoroughly united in the fight for the basic economic rights of the workers and white-collar employees.⁷¹

The paper's observations were confirmed three weeks later at a mass rally in Berlin convened by the Society. Berlepsch, Posadowsky, Hitze, Stegerwald,

69. Dr. Ludwig Heyde of Soziale Praxis to Erkelenz, 8 November, 29 November, 1 December, and 10 December 1913, Erkelenz Papers 8, B A Koblenz.

70. Protokoll der Konferenz von Vertretern der Zentralverbandes-Vorstände, 13-14 January 1914, D G B Haus Düsseldorf.

71. Correspondenzblatt der Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, No. 18, 2 May 1914.

and spokesmen for the frees, Hirsch-Dunckers, and white-collar unions were on hand to demand rapid introduction of far-reaching social reforms.⁷²

This was probably the first time Stegerwald had appeared on a speakers' platform next to a Socialist to argue the same point. But the prospect was obviously displeasing to him. Speaking at Aschaffenburg in early May 1914, for instance, the General Secretary declared that "the hour has come for us to swing over to the attack against the S.P.D. and the Socialist trade unions."⁷³ Like Behrens, he considered the need for a Volk movement of bourgeois forces more urgent than ever before. This strategy, however, was rapidly losing adherents in the Christian camp. In June 1911 Franz Wieber, leader of the Christian metal workers, admitted that it was almost impossible for small unions such as his to continue the struggle against the frees. "The miners can keep up this fight because they're the same strength--but what about us? What can we possibly do against the half-million [Socialist metal workers]?"⁷⁴ Even the miners gave up by summer 1913. The general assembly in early August elected a new chairman, abandoned the counter-productive struggle against the Socialists, and called for a "community of labor" with the Alter Verband.⁷⁵ The challenge from the Leipzig Cartel in late August merely widened the circle of Christians advocating workers unity. The last mass rally against the S.P.D. was held in late summer 1913 in Eschweiler.⁷⁶ Thereafter rallies were directed against the Cartel or the Catholic Church. Christian labor journalists followed suit. Not one negative word was written against the General Commission in the Zentralblatt, for instance, after August 1913. Similarly, the editor of the Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, Joseph Joos, held out an olive branch to the free trade

72. See the report of the Correspondenzblatt, No. 21, 23 May 1914.

73. Police chief of Bochum to the Regierungspräsident, 19 June 1914, Reg. Arnsberg I 1476, St A Münster.

74. Fritz Kraus of the executive committee of the Christian metalworkers union, to district leader K. E. Weinbrenner, 13 June 1911, St A Duisburg. Kraus quotes Wieber.

75. Königliches Oberbergamt in Dortmund to the Regierungspräsident, 15 October 1913, Reg. Arnsberg I 1476, St A Münster.

76. Regierungspräsident in Aachen to the Oberpräsident, 10 October 1913, 403/9037, L H A Koblenz.

unions at the third German Workers Congress, and in succeeding weeks his paper twice advocated a counter-cartel of the Left.⁷⁷ These facts, together with what has already been said about difficulties within the Church and Center Party, are sufficient proof for the leftward drift of Christian labor on the eve.

That two opposing coalitions were beginning to form in Germany is abundantly clear. On the Right were the most powerful governments and bureaucracies in the empire, the Prussian bishops, the organizations of the Leipzig Cartel, the yellow trade unions, and a grouping of deputies that included many Centrists and National Liberals. On the Left were the frees, the Hirsch-Dunckers, the Christians, the German Workers Congress, the Society for Social Reform, the Reichstag left, and a large number of deputies in other parties who sympathized with the labor movement. Whether these two emerging coalitions would have solidified, creating what some historians have referred to as a bi-polar" political alignment,⁷⁸ will never be known. The trend was sufficiently noticeable, however, to give German statesmen an added incentive to desire a short, victorious war, for such a conflict, it was felt, would purge the nation of dissent, or at least distract the masses from their domestic demands. Herein lies the tragedy of the developments described in this chapter.

77. Bericht über die Verhandlungen des dritten Deutschen Arbeiter-Kongresses, pp 45-70; Westdeutsche Arbeiter-Zeitung, No. 52, 27 December 1913, and No. 4, 24 January 1914.

78. James C. Hunt, "The Bourgeois Middle in German Politics," 1871-1933, Recent Literature," Central European History, Vol 11, No. 1 (March 1978), pp 83-106.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the end of his political career, Bernhard von Bülow learned from Rudolf von Valentini, the Kaiser's chief political aide, that William II doubted that his Chancellor of nine years was a "vigorous monarchist." "Where does he want to get," replied Bülow, "to a state of affairs like that in Russia?" Valentini's response could not have been too surprising to the Chancellor who had known William II so long. "Well, not precisely the same as in Russia, but more or less that sort of thing... Above all, we must bridle the Reichstag."*

Anti-democratic feelings such as this were most pronounced in high circles when parliament raised the question of labor legislation. As long as the Reichstag was willing to accept new military increases, compromises on specific questions of taxation were tolerated by the Chancellor, and sometimes by the Kaiser too. But trade union rights was another matter, for it was assumed that greater freedoms for the labor movement would weaken the state in its fight against the allegedly revolutionary S.P.D.

There were only two periods before 1914, in fact, when the cause of Christian-social reform had the slightest chance of success--in the early 1890's, and in the aftermath of the Frankfurt Workers Congress of 1903. In the former case the Kaiser's willingness to implement Mönchengladbach's programs was undermined by the S.P.D.'s electoral gains in 1893. The "ungrateful" workers did not deserve legal equality. Christian labor leaders managed to revive William's interest in labor reforms after 1903, but when these issues did not suit Bülow's or the Kaiser's political needs after 1907, a 'slower tempo' of social reform was adopted.

* Bülow, Memoirs, Vol. 2, pp 571-73.

By 1914, despite constant pressure from parliament, this tempo had slowed to a standstill. The Reichstag's inability to improve the rights of labor was a good indication that the country was not evolving toward parliamentarism. Valentini's comparison to conditions in Tsarist Russia was more appropriate.

Without the institutions which parliament and Christian labor wanted to create for trade unions, union organizers in Germany were at a tremendous disadvantage. Collective bargaining was not included in the German Commercial Code of 1896 and employers took full advantage of this fact. Throughout the Imperial period entrepreneurs resorted to strike insurance, black lists, company-run labor exchanges, and "yellow" labor associations to discourage employees from joining trade unions. The courts, the police, and the Prussian Army could usually be counted on to back the owners in any tight situation. Faced with these restrictions, most workers, especially married laborers with families to support, refused to risk their jobs and carry a union card. Despite the best efforts of Germany's trade union functionaries, only three million workers had signed up by 1914. In the freer atmosphere of 1919 and 1920, close to nine million flocked to union halls.

The fact remains, however, that within that minority of German workers who had joined unions by 1914, the Christians were no match for the Socialist unions (2,500,000 vs. 360,000). One explanation offered by Christian labor leaders for the inability of the Gesamtverband to overtake the free trade unions in the decade before World War One was the failure of the Frankfurt initiative of 1903. But it is unlikely that labor legislation could have reversed the Socialist lead at that time. In the somewhat freer atmosphere after the Vereinsgesetz of 1908, for instance, free trade union membership exploded from 1.5 to 2.5 million. Moreover, in the early 1920's, a time of complete legal equality for labor, the Christian organization grew to over a million members, while the General Commission rose meteorically to approximately seven million--almost the same seven to one ratio that had existed before the war. The

unlikelihood of Christian trade union claims concerning labor legislation leads to the conclusion that the competition for dominance in the labor world was decided before the turn of the century.

This study has shown that along with the opposition of the state and the German employer, The Catholic Church was a major cause of the slow growth of Christian labor organizations during this early period. In the 1860's and '70's, activists like Ketteler, Cronenberg, and Rosenkranz had to contend with prelates who considered labor independence 'the storm-warning signal of the revolution.' During the 1880's and '90's, Arbeiterwohl and Volksverein leaders like Hitze felt compelled to promote confessional Arbeitervereine and Fachabteilungen rather than outright labor organizations because the majority of priests and bishops still feared the unpredictability and potential radicalism of independent trade unions. Brust experienced the same stiff resistance in the Ruhr and later in the 1890's when trying to spread the Christian labor movement to other parts of the empire. The possibility of a merger or cartel of all unions in 1900--probably the only good chance that some form of labor unity would be attained--was squelched by the bishops because merger was looked upon once again as the first step toward an irreversible radicalization of the Catholic workers. Rather than risk membership loss by defying the bishops, Christian leaders abandoned the plan. In the meantime, the frees had recruited close to half a million members and possessed an irreversible lead.

After the turn of the century, the opposition of the church increased. Opposed to the strike because it set one class against another and contradicted the harmonious relationships which God had envisioned for the "limbs" of the social body, the Fachabteilungen of Berlin and their arch-conservative patrons in Trier and Breslau formed a countermovement to oppose the Christian trade unions. The Berliners embarrassed the Gesamtverband in the eyes of its rivals by insisting that the church have control. Valuable time and energy which could have been used for Christian membership drives was sapped by the constant need to deal with the intrigues of Savigny and his associates. Even the Pope could not be relied on for moral support. Convinced that interconfessionalism and increased

secularism in the Catholic community were the first signs of another Reformation, Pius, too, attempted to shackle the Christian trade unions to the Episcopate. The result was a loss of potential members.

General Secretary Stegerwald estimated this loss at 300-400,000 in late 1912. His figures were probably too high, however, for active church support may well have created an equally burdensome set of problems for the Gesamtverband. It is true that many devout Catholics who had formerly refused to defy their bishops would have joined, but not all Catholics were such certain recruits. Protestant employers who succumbed to union pressure after the turn of the century refused to include "religious" organizations in the collective bargaining process. Most Catholic workers responded by joining the larger and more effective Socialist unions. For every Catholic in the Gesamtverband in 1914, three belonged to the General Commission (800,000 vs. c.275,000). Had the church promoted unionism after 1900 there is little reason to believe this ratio would have changed appreciably, for employers would have had still more reason to eschew Christian organizations. And how, one may ask, would the 75-90,000 Protestant workers in the Gesamtverband have reacted to association with orthodox prelates like Pius X, Kopp, and Korum? Given the wide gap which separated the Christian confessions in Imperial Germany, it is almost certain that charges of "ultramontanism" and an exodus of the Evangelical wing, or at the very least, increased recruiting problems among Lutherans would have resulted. Consideration of the bleak alternatives facing Christian labor after 1900 illustrates the obstacles which German society could place in the path of a "Christian" organization. Recruiting workers was difficult for any union functionary before 1914, but for the Christian trade unionist this task was nearly impossible.

Added to the setbacks experienced by Christian labor at the hands of church, state, and Big Business was the disappointing record of the bourgeois parties. The National Liberals were predominantly an employers party until the late 1890's when the Young Liberals prevailed in the Reichstag Fraktion with their ideas of moderate social reform. But it

was a long time before Christian labor benefited from this trend, for, despite the presence of National Liberal deputies at the German Workers Congresses of 1903 and 1907, the party refused to nominate non-socialist workers lest far-reaching social demands split apart the Fraktion. The pressure to stay abreast of the S.P.D. eventually led to three successful labor candidacies in 1912--victories which paid handsome dividends to Christian labor during the strike-breaker debate of 1913/14. Given the rightward drift in government circles, however, such successes provided little satisfaction.

Christian labor's relationship with the Center Party was much more complex. With the exception of the Westphalian faction, Christian-social demands for an attenuation of private property rights found little support within the party during the 1860's and '70's. The opposition of Catholic employers, the fears of the church, the indifference of middle-class Catholics preoccupied with the Kulturkampf, and the reluctance of persecuted Catholics to provoke the wrath of a laissez-faire-oriented government explain the social inertia of the Center at this time. The end of the Kulturkampf, the social insurance initiatives of Bismarck and William II, the growing influence and prestige of the Volksverein, and the dictates of political expediency gave rise to significant concessions by the Center to Christian labor as the years drew on to 1914. Unionists were nominated to safe seats in the Reichstag and state parliaments, and the demands of the German Workers Congress were adopted as the party's own.

The Center was not, however, the friend to Christian labor that Carl Bachem depicted in his nine-volume history of the party after World War One. The Center remained a party whose primary political role, as perceived by most of its members, was a defense of church interests. Nor was the "Berlinist" opposition to the Christian trade unions without sympathizers in the Catholic camp. An influential coalition of parliamentarians, agrarians, editors, and clergymen fought the Gesamtverband and succeeded in limiting the maneuvering room of the unions, the

Volksverein, and the interconfessionalists in the party. The reaction of the Center to the Leipzig Cartel was a good example of the willingness of many Catholics to ignore the workers, while intra-party disputes over tariff, tax, and suffrage reform on the eve complicated the relationship with Catholic labor still more. Party unity was a thing of the past in 1914.

The quest to win support in the Conservative Party was historically more important than parallel efforts to gain influence with the National Liberals and Center for the Conservatives were the only party whose opinions were seriously considered by the government. Like the government, however, the Right resisted the approaches of Christian labor. Although Conservatives advocated harmonious relationships between the various estates of society, there was little hope in rightist circles that such a development was possible. They assumed that authoritarian institutions had to be maintained to keep class conflicts in manageable bounds. There is good reason to believe that Conservatives, particularly the Bund der Landwirte, were beginning to adopt more positive views concerning the political efficacy of social reform just prior to the outbreak of World War One. But it is doubtful, despite the advanced stage of merger negotiations between the Conservatives and Christian-Socials, whether any middle ground could have been found between non-socialist workers and the agrarian Right. The leftist drift of Christian labor in 1913/14 would have prevented the establishment of any permanent rapprochement.

External forces were not the only factors inhibiting the growth and influence of Christian labor organizations, it must be said, for the leaders of the moment added to their own membership woes with numerous tactical errors that played into Hirsch-Duncker and Socialist hands. The pro-tariff stance in 1901/02 was incomprehensible to most workers and led to bitter, counterproductive quarrels within the Christian camp. The Prussian suffrage issue at the second German Workers Congress in 1907, the debacle over the Vereinsgesetz in 1908, and the retreat from inheritance taxes in 1909 provided the free trade unions, the S.P.D., and the

left-liberals with lethal propaganda material. In a desperate attempt to forge an anti-Socialist movement after 1909, Stegerwald, Behrens, and other Christian leaders made appeals to Big Business and the Conservatives which were easily depicted as betrayals of the working class. These mistakes cost the Gesamtverband dearly and lent credence to the exaggerated charge that it was a suppliant tool in the hands of the class enemy.

The attitudes of church, state, employers, and bourgeois parties, the tactical errors made by Christian leaders, and the lack of alternatives facing the Gesamtverband after 1900 explain the fact that only 360,000 workers were recruited before 1914. One must conclude, however, that the organization did almost as well as could be expected under the circumstances. The rigid, authoritarian nature of church, state, and society in the Imperial Period simply did not allow a much better performance. But it was unfortunate for Christian labor, and for German labor in general, that for two generations no formula had been worked out which would have enabled the competing organizations to set aside their numerous political, religious, and philosophical differences and unite, if only in an ad hoc fashion, on those trade union goals that all had in common. It would be inappropriate to place the blame for this on any one organization, for all contributed to the perpetuation of proletarian division. It is more important to observe that as interest groups, the freies, the Hirsch-Dunckers, and the Christians expended a great deal of energy that could have been turned to more "productive" uses. It was no coincidence, therefore, that the occupation forces in Germany after World War Two insisted on a unified trade union movement. For the divisions in worker ranks described in this study weakened the forces of both social reform and political freedom in the 1920's, facilitating the rise of fascism and the tragedies that came in its wake.

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