

For example, when the Menshevik Aleksandra Kollontai sought to reach working class women in 1905 she found neither sympathy nor support; when she fled Russia in 1909, efforts on behalf of women languished. The opportunity to work for women came as a result of factional struggles between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. In the hope of capitalizing on the new social unrest of 1912 in which women figured prominently, each group took up the women's question. The Russian case study, too, was designed to offer proof of the general hypothesis: Bolsheviks were the most successful in making the revolution yet most mistrustful of separatism generally; their party was most committed to unity and subordination and the least willing to recognize the need for female activism. These sentiments would later block the efforts of Kollontai and others to liberate Russian women and form a truly new society after 1917.

The polarization of Social Democracy into basically radicals and reformists prior to World War I, as Bridenthal noted, carried with it different positions on the women's question. Recognizing great individual variations, radicals tended to stress unity while reformists, less emancipated from tradition, were often blatantly sexist. But the net result was similar: hostility within the European socialist camp toward a degree of self-determination for the female sex. On balance, ideological assumptions and organizational needs and choices combined to undercut the employment of feminist tactics within Social Democracy and thus produced further imbalance in the uneasy alliance of socialism and feminism.

Jean H. Quataert
North Harris County College, Houston

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE WORKING CLASS IN IMPERIAL AND WEIMAR GERMANY

This session was part of the American Catholic Historical Association's Annual Meeting held at Boston College on April 4–5, 1975. Three papers were read at the session: "Catholics Face the Social Question: the Case of Essen, 1867-1877" by J. D. Hunley (Allegheny College), "The Religious Factor in Weimar Labor Politics" by Robert Wheeler (University of Southern California) and "The Voting Patterns of Catholic Workers in the Weimar Republic" by Brian Peterson (Florida International University). Commenting on the papers were Werner Braatz (University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh), Harold Poor (Rutgers University) and Andrew Lees (Rutgers University – Camden). All three papers were concerned with Catholic workers' support for the institutions of political and social Catholicism, the German Center Party and the Catholic labor movement. It was also observed by one of the discussants that as many questions were raised on this issue as answers were given.

In his paper, J. D. Hunley focused on Catholic workers in Essen, and the organization of early Christian-Social Associations. As a heavily Catholic region, and one which underwent extraordinarily rapid industrialization beginning in the 1860's, Essen provides a good case study of the

political behavior of Catholic workers and the attitudes of Catholic leaders to the “social question.” While Essen might have appeared a promising field for the socialists, they in fact had little luck in attracting workers by the late 1860’s. The reasons for this, Hunley suggested, were twofold. The outbreak of the *Kulturkampf* and the cry, “the church in danger,” led Catholic workers to rally to the newly organized Center Party. A second and perhaps more important reason was the organization of Christian-Social Associations devoted both to the material betterment of workers as well as to the task of keeping Catholics away from socialist contamination. The two reasons were interrelated, for by the 1870’s Christian-Social Associations were being used primarily to support the Center. What made Essen (as well as Aachen) unique was the high level of worker dissatisfaction and the greater independence of the local Christian-Social movement. The Essen Christian-Socials were successful in getting Gerhard Stötzel, a Krupp metal worker, elected to the Reichstag in 1877 over the bitter opposition of Center Party authorities. Stötzel continued to be reelected to the Reichstag, with one exception (in 1893), until his death in 1905. He also remained the only workers’ representative in the Center *Fraktion* until after the turn of the century. Despite this, and despite the decline of the Christian-Social Associations in the late 1870’s, Hunley felt that the case of Stötzel and the Christian-Social movement in Essen were important manifestations of a “new spirit” in Catholicism. Beginning in the 1860’s, German Catholics attempted to meet the critical problems posed by rapid industrialization and the question of improving the workers’ position in a more realistic and practical fashion.

Like Hunley, Robert Wheeler began by stressing Catholicism’s greater concern for and success among workers, compared to German Protestantism. At both the theoretical and the practical or organizational levels, Catholicism displayed an awareness of the “social question” that was almost totally missing in the established state Protestant church. The result was a rather impressive labor organization by the time of World War I, particularly the Catholic Workers’ Associations and the nominally interconfessional Christian Trade Unions. Despite pre-war growth, Catholic labor organizations could scarcely compete with the socialist labor movement. And although on everyday questions, “at the level of the shop floor,” there was little difference between Christian and Free trade unions, the former maintained their distance from the latter by stressing their nationalism and anti-socialism. Just as the Center became the party to defend Catholic interests, the Catholic labor movement claimed to protect the material interests of Catholic workers and to defend their religious interests against the “atheism” of the SPD and the Free unions. Wheeler claimed the *raison d’être* for most of this disappeared after 1918. The continued existence of Catholic labor organizations (and Catholic workers’ support for the Center) was the result of pre-war attitudes, organizational inertia and the increasingly right-wing orientation of some Catholic trade unionists, notably Adam Stegerwald, head of the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions. Yet the same right-wing shift, according to Wheeler, was also responsible for the decline of workers’ support for the Center and the Catholic labor movement in the closing years of the Weimar Republic. At the conclusion of his paper, Wheeler raised two related questions. The first has to do with those workers who continued to support the Catholic labor movement and the Center down to 1933. Some reasons for this phenomenon were the numbers of white collar workers in the Christian unions, and the strength of the Catholic labor movement in smaller and medium

sized urban areas. The second question has to do with the impact of a worker's religious background once that worker left church or church-affiliated organization. The evidence suggests a preference for Communism among Catholic workers as opposed to Social Democracy. The reasons for this, Wheeler suggested, were only partly religious, e.g., Catholic working class protest votes would more likely have gone to a party which rejected the Weimar system (the Communists) than to a party which, like the Center, supported it (the Social Democrats).

Brian Peterson also stressed the importance of Catholic social programs in retaining the loyalty of Catholic workers. In addition, Peterson felt, Catholicism in both its theological message and its more theatrical liturgy had more appeal to workers and peasants than the somewhat austere moralizing of German Protestantism, which always had more appeal among the middle classes. More than Hunley and Wheeler, however, Peterson emphasized political sociology as the key to an understanding of Catholic workers' attitudes. Working class support for the Center and the Catholic labor movement was likely to come mainly from small and middle-sized industries, from smaller towns and cities and from women. At the same time, Peterson recognized that the continuing strength of the Catholic labor movement in large industries in densely populated areas – most notably the mining and steel industries in the Ruhr – had to be explained. The reason for this, he suggested, was mainly the success of Catholic labor organizations before 1914. The Christian Trade Unions and related groups such as the *Volksverein* had been successful in keeping a significant number of Catholic workers out of the socialist camp and in so doing created a kind of Catholic parallel to Social Democracy: a basically reformist labor organization. After 1918, there was no particular reason for Catholic workers to shift their support to the SPD; if they rejected the entire system, the logical choice would be the Communist party. In this respect, Peterson essentially agreed with the conclusion of Wheeler.

Thomas A. Knapp
Loyola University of Chicago

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY TRADE UNION WOMAN: VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

“Few fields have greater scholarly gaps than the history of the non-professional American working woman,” according to Joyce L. Kornbluh, director of the Program on Women and Work at the Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations (ILIR), a joint organ of the University of Michigan and Wayne State University. “Despite the rising interest in blue-collar ‘middle Americans’,” she continued, “the literature on women’s issues focuses mainly on those in professional, academic or executive job roles. Consequently there is both a lack of teaching material related to women’s studies and labor studies, and a lack of practical information on women who are currently involved in trade union leadership.”

To fill these gaps, the Rockefeller Foundation has funded the year-long oral history project, “The Twentieth Century Trade Union Woman: Vehicle for Social Change.” The heart of the study