

HERAUS AUS DER KIRCHE:
GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY'S POLICIES TOWARDS THE CHURCHES,
1865 - 1918.

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates social democratic policies towards the churches from 1865 to 1918.

Chapter one examines party political considerations which led to the atheistic campaigns of the mid 1870's. It investigates simultaneous attempts by some of the party's leaders to supplant traditional Christian beliefs with a specifically socialistic Weltanschauung. The chapter ends with the passing of the Socialist Law of 1878, by which church and government hoped to break up the Social Democratic party.

The Anti-Socialist Law, which remained in effect for twelve years (1878-1890), gave the Christian churches the opportunity to develop and enact their particular social programs. Chapter two outlines the churches' endeavours to come to grips with the social question and to find solutions to the pressing needs of Germany's industrial proletariat. It points out the fundamental shortcoming of all these programs, the churches' denial of the workers' right of political and social self-determination and above all the way in which the church allied with the Imperial Government.

Finally, the thesis studies the effects the Socialist Law had on the party political development, from 1890 to 1918. As a result of it, the socialist movement split into two factions, the moderates and the radicals. The moderates opted for a policy of restraint to forestall further repressive legislation. To counteract these forces of moderation, the party's radicals launched in 1908 an antichurch campaign in the attempt to incite the party's rank and file to

revolutionary action. However, widespread indifference towards the religious question caused the failure of this endeavour and 1918 witnessed the end of radical church policies.

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Introduction

The relationship between the German Social Democratic party and traditional Christianity is a topic largely ignored by historical scholarship. Many historians have assumed that these two confronted each other as bitter and irreconcilable foes. There is some truth in this widespread assumption, but such an evaluation does tend to oversimplify the relationship.¹

From the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, two major phases in the relationship between Social Democracy and Christianity can be discerned. The first phase, from about 1865 to 1890, witnessed the firm establishment of socialism in Germany and the failure of the Christian churches to retain the loyalty of the working class. The dechristianization of the working class was well advanced before the churches were fully aware of the seriousness of the situation. Contemporary clergymen often concluded that socialist propaganda was the cause of dechristianization, while in fact the situation was much more complex. There were indeed militant atheists among the Socialists who viewed Christianity as a major deterrent to the future growth of the party. They were only too pleased to take the credit for this dechristianization. At the same time, there were others in the party who recognized the need for a certain religious mode of thought and offered an Ersatzreligion. Hailing labour as the true messiah of the industrial age, they depicted socialism as reverting back to the original social mission of the early Christians. This kind of socialism was not totally antithetical to Christianity; for this popular conception

incorporated psychological and intellectual links to the beliefs of earlier Utopians. These Social Democrats continued a tradition, inaugurated by Wilhelm Weitling in the early 1840's, of attempting to establish a Kingdom of Man, rather than a Kingdom of God, on earth.² Thus there were conjunctive as well as disjunctive elements in the drift from Christianity to socialism. Socialism was a synthesis of numerous elements, some of which were drawn from religious thought and sentiment.

After 1890, social democratic policies towards the churches underwent a tactical change. On the basis of their experiences during the previous twenty years the more moderate Social Democrats believed that the ideological battle against religion was useless and tactically harmful. They now focussed their attack against the church as an institution because it so obviously was a principal prop for the reactionary policies of the Imperial Government. However, at the same time the radical socialists intensified this effort and -- portraying the church as a tool of oppression in the hands of Germany's ruling elite -- worked towards the dismemberment of the church.

With a perspective of a hundred years, one can see that each phase was designed by the socialist leaders to provide an ideological and political framework for party members. The workers could only achieve full class consciousness if they had reached political and ideological independence, part of which was the disavowal of traditional Christianity. As long as the restrictive structures of Imperial Germany remained, the socialist leaders sought to make it appear that the workers' rejection of established Christianity was an endorsement of their own policies towards the churches.

In fact, however, the workers' alienation and estrangement from the Christian church had little to do with socialist ideology. In 1848 the leaders of

the churches, particularly the Protestant church, had been quick to condemn the Revolution as wicked, un-Godly and un-German.³ Unable to perceive the destructive nature of industrialization on the traditional guild system and on the workers' social and moral life, the churches still propagated the vision of an agricultural and seigneurial society. Thus, partly by choice, partly by circumstance the churches never attempted to help the urban worker in his struggle for survival. It was clear that he could expect little, if any help from a church bound to a pre-industrial past. In the ensuing Existenzkampf he became increasingly skeptical and distrustful of belated attempts by the church to bring him back into the fold. He had little inclination to become the manipulated foot soldier of the official church, which publicly endorsed national conservatism. The awakening working class quite naturally found the alliance of throne and altar repugnant. Utter indifference vis a vis the church took hold among the working class.⁴

The Protestant church in particular did not realize what had happened and was happening. It singled out socialist propaganda as the root cause of the workers' "atheism". Given this excuse for its teachings it did not need to adjust to a changed social environment, whose needs it could not meet without drastic changes in its own policies and social priorities. While tenaciously clinging on to its claim of being a "people's church", it had in fact become a church for the privileged.

The propaganda war between church and Social Democracy thus becomes self-perpetuating. In their zeal and fanaticism, the rivalry over the potentially valuable bodies and souls of the workers bore little correlation with the workers' disinterest. In particular, the radical socialists' attack on the church as the weakest member of the established order failed to rouse them into

supportive action. Despite radical socialist rhetoric that the church was a stumbling block to Germany's free cultural and social development, the workers' alienation and indifference was such that they looked upon the church issue as dead.

The greatest obstacle to dealing with the topic of social democratic church policies during the period indicated is the locating of suitable materials. This is particularly true for anyone entirely dependent on English sources which are virtually nonexistent. Some insight is to be gained, however, from the study of the monographs by Guenther Roth, Walter Struve and Vernon L. Lidtke, who, although writing about other aspects of German Social Democracy, do touch in varying degrees upon the topic of church relations.⁵ More helpful than these is the study by W.O. Shanahan on German Protestantism, 1815 - 1871. Although concentrating on the church's point of view, Shanahan's book does contain a chapter on the relation between church and socialism.

In comparison, the material in German is abundant. Much of it is polemical, however, and thus repetitive. The all-important periodicals and official party congress transcripts for the 1865 - 1890 period are readily available. The periodicals Zukunft, Volksstaat and Neue Zeit -- which carried much of the debate about social democratic church policies -- have either been reprinted in recent years or are available in microform. Contemporary monographs by party leaders such as Bebel, Kautsky, Bernstein and Dietzgen are also indispensable sources for this subject.

Much of the primary source material for the period 1890 - 1918 had to be collected by personal visits to archives and libraries in Europe. The entire secession movement in Germany, from its feeble beginnings in 1908 to its climax in 1914, seems to have largely escaped English-speaking scholars' attention.

This is, probably, due to the fact that none of the primary sources have yet been translated. An extensive collection of secession documents are to be found in the Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf, Zweigarchiv Schloss Kalkum. It contains reports from police officials, clergymen, provincial ministers and concerned citizens on the activities of the Social Democrats and the various free-thinking groups. Dissident periodicals, such as the Atheist, Freidenker, Das freie Wort, are scattered among several libraries, the Zeitungsinstitut in Dusseldorf, the university libraries of Erlangen and Göttingen and the Institute for Social History in Amsterdam. Important pamphlets by Hoffman and Lehmann-Russblüdt are housed in the Zentralarchiv Merseburg, East Germany, which also has numerous leaflets and other socialist propaganda material. Some material can also be found in the party archives of the German Social Democratic party in Hannover, although most of these pertain to the political aspect of party history.

This thesis then, in a small way, hopes to fill an existing gap by presenting for the first time in English portions of some of these primary documents. Unless otherwise noted, all translations appearing below are the author's own.

Introduction - Footnotes

1. Adolf Keller and Georg Stewart, Protestant Europe: Its Crisis and Outlook (New York: Doran, 1927), p. 124.
2. See "Vater unser eines Kommunisten," Die junge Generation 2 (1843): 63-64. Weitling was editor of this journal.
3. This was particularly true of the Lutheran church, while the Catholic church as well as some of the Protestant sects, expressed some sympathy and understanding for the workers' plight. See Jacques Droz, "Die religiösen Sekten und die Revolution von 1848," Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 3 (1963): 109-18; Carl Scholl, Die freien religiösen Gemeinden und die Social-Demokratie: Ein Wort zum Frieden (Heidelberg: Selbstverlag, 1877).
4. See Annette Kuhn, Die Kirche im Ringen mit dem Sozialismus, 1803-1848 (München: Pustet, 1965), pp. 37-41.
5. See Bibliography at the end of this thesis for complete citation.

Chapter 1

Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of Man:The Rival Weltanschauungs, 1869 - 1890.

The second half of the nineteenth century is often referred to as the bürgerliche Zeitalter. The bourgeoisie set the trends in fashion, morals, and politics. Their convictions shaped an entire era.¹ Therefore it is not surprising that bourgeois political thought infiltrated the proletarian movement as well despite proletarian rhetoric denouncing bourgeois policies and ideology. This situation arose from recognizing -- as Bernhard Becker did -- that the fate of the working class was closely tied to that of the bourgeoisie. Also, the leaders of the Social Democratic party received their initial political training in bourgeois circles and absorbed -- knowingly or unknowingly -- much of the bourgeois thinking.² A case in point, forming the focal point of this paper, is the adoption by the leaders of the working class movement of the bourgeois concern with the relation of church and state. Ignoring the workers' lack of interest in this issue, the party leaders were bent on making political capital out of it by injecting it into the philosophical and political structure of the party. That their attempts failed in the last analysis, was not so much because of counter measures undertaken by the churches, but rather because the church - state question remained a dead issue with the working population at large.

The workers' attitude toward church and religion during the 1850's and

1860's was one of apathetic indifference. Indeed, even during the Revolution of 1848 the topic of relations with the church stirred little, if any, excitement.³ Once German Protestantism had openly identified itself with the monarchy and aristocracy, giving its blessing to the monied, propertied, and educated classes, it had little left to offer the German artisans.⁴ Only among the bourgeois liberals were there long and, sometimes, emotional debates on the church question. Many liberal and radical democrats in the Frankfurt Parliament demanded a complete separation of church and state. Not only this, but they further demanded the secularization of education, then still under the tutelage of the church.⁵ Karl Biedermann's words in the Frankfurt Parliament express the sentiments shared by himself and many others towards the church-state-education question. Biedermann justified his demand for separation of church and state by saying that "only when separated from the state can religious life be rejuvenated, and find its way back to its true and pure mission," and "that the schools were secular institutions and therefore had to be protected against alien influences, particularly those of the clergy, and placed directly under the jurisdiction of the state."⁶

None of the '48 Socialists backed these demands or voiced similar ones on their own. Even the Communist Manifesto, then the most advanced and radical of all socialist programs, did not make any specific mention of demands vis à vis the church; in fact, it treated the subject of church and religion in a rather casual fashion.⁷ Marx and Engels were atheists, but neither thought that a special campaign against church or religion was either necessary or desirable. As Marx wrote in his Kapital: "The religious reflex of the real world can, in any case, only then vanish, when the practical relations of everyday life offer to man none but perfectly intelligible and reasonable

relations with regard to his fellowmen and to nature."⁸ The correct attitude for a Marxian Socialist was to treat religion as a purely secondary matter because, as the transformation from capitalism took place, the root cause of religious belief would vanish and so make both Christianity and atheism irrelevant. Religion would simply wither away.⁹

After 1848, many bourgeois liberals continued to advocate their favourite topics, separation of church and state and secularization of education. These demands reappeared, rather prominently, in the programs of at least three liberal parties, the Fortschrittspartei, the Sächsische Volkspartei, and the Deutsche Volkspartei.¹⁰

Since both Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel were at one time members of the Sächsische Volkspartei, it seems likely that both absorbed the bourgeois liberals' preoccupation with church matters through their many extensive contacts with liberal circles. As early as 1869, when Liebknecht and Bebel founded the Eisenach party, there appeared under section 3, paragraph 5, of the Eisenach program the demand for "separation of church and state, and separation of school and church."¹¹ Once this "left-over" of liberalism found its way into social democratic programming, it remained there in one form or other until the outbreak of World War I, while its final apotheosis was to be found in the early legislation of the Weimar Republic.

The leaders of what was to become the German Social Democratic party spent most of their energies and attention during the sixties on political and organizational work. The religious question moved for the time being into the background. The seventies changed all that.

In direct response to the hysterical nationalism which swept Germany upon her unification, the socialist leaders adopted a policy of militant

atheism. While the Protestant clergy everywhere paid tribute to this accomplishment, gloating, as one chaplain did, that the combination of "throne, bayonet, and catechism" had proven itself, the socialist's opposition to the Protestant state which had come into being grew. It strengthened Bebel's and Liebknecht's conviction that it was not enough to demand separation of church and state, but that the prevailing Protestant Weltanschauung had to be done away with. They were bent on making atheism an integral part of socialist propaganda during the 1870's.¹²

Liebknecht's and Bebel's feeling corresponded to the beliefs and practices of most active socialists, although the party's Gotha program declared religion a "private matter."¹³ They were intent upon disseminating atheism and waged their attack on Christianity with such bitterness that at least one Social Democrat protested in writing that it violated the party program.¹⁴ The leaders of social democracy, particularly Bebel, were now convinced that only if they were victorious in the war against Christianity could socialism find deep roots in the convictions of the working men. One Weltanschauung had to replace another.

The militant period was ushered in with reports from the Commune in Paris, in March 1871. All the Commune's activities received widespread attention and were reported on at great length in the Volksstaat. Its dealings in matters of church and religion was very favourably commented upon. The reports convey a certain satisfaction with the way the Communards dealt with matters ecclesiastical, leaving little doubt that German Social Democracy was given here a shining example.¹⁵

Already on 5 May 1871, the Social Democrats of Saxony passed a resolution at their convention, calling upon "party members to secede, along with

their families, from the church." Justifying the resolution, they declared that every religious communion is in itself reactionary, since any religion is necessarily

based on faith. But faith has no place [in the movement] which is entirely based on knowledge and the sciences. We have [already] broken with all traditional social and political views; religion has to come next. At all times, it has served as a means to keep the masses ignorant, to enable a few to exploit unhurriedly the many by cultivating the notion of a hereafter, the metaphysical. 16

A few weeks later, in June 1871, the Social Democrats of Dresden proposed a new and more political plan, which advanced political rather than ideological reasons for an attack on the church and church membership. No attempt was made to assail religion itself, rather the corruption of the church and its highly questionable practices were the target. Indeed, by implication the positiveness of the uncorrupted Christian principles was acknowledged.

In view of the fact that our entire social order is based upon principles which contravene all morals, logic, and justice; principles that do not recognize the responsibility of the individual to the people, principles that only cater to the monarchical will and ignore the will of the people; [in view of these facts], we demand:

In view of the fact that the church whose obligation ought to be to guard, assert and acknowledge the basic Christian principles of equality and brotherhood [the church] which, for the love of truth and justice should impartially and actively involve herself in the fight of the people for freedom from the yoke of tyranny and oppression, that the church ought to participate actively in the formation of a free, just society;

In view of the fact that the church does not fulfill her obligation and disregards the rights and freedoms of the people; in view of the fact that she has become a willing tool of the secular forces, the most powerful pillar of this repressive society, we, the Social Democrats of Dresden, table the following motion:

On the basis of these facts, the congress is being asked to endorse agitation for secession with all available means such as distribution of leaflets and mass rallies, to effect

the separation of church and state as demanded in our party program, to bring to an end the alliance of our enemies, and thus to incapacitate the most powerful ally of the present political regime. 17

The Dresden plan, however, anticipated a thinking which did not develop among wider party circles before 1906. At this point in time, the motion did not find any echo among party members, in fact, it did not even reach the convention floor for debate. More pressing items required the party's full attention. Since November 1870, the party's leaders, Liebknecht, Bebel and Hepner, were constantly in and out of prison on trumped up charges for high treason. Not until Liebknecht's and Bebel's release in 1874 was effective party leadership restored.¹⁸ Their return to party activities marked the intensification of the party's struggle against church and religion. One Weltanschauung had to replace another. The workers had to be tied to the movement more than ever through ideological indoctrination.

August Bebel, Albert Dulk, Johann Most and Josef Dietzgen were the main principals in the subsequent attack on church and Christianity. "Religion," wrote Dulk, "is the most powerful enemy of socialism. It is the main bastion of antisocialism, of reaction and the breeding ground of all social evil. Whoever views this struggle [against the church] as peripheral and warns against it, has no conception of the true battleground of socialism. This struggle is even more necessary and decisive than the political [struggle]," opening the battle for Weltanschauungen.¹⁹

Criticism of Christianity also formed a vital part of August Bebel's popular book, Die Frau und der Sozialismus (1873). Bebel (1840-1913) was the son of a Prussian noncommissioned officer and the stepson of a prison warden. Early orphaned, he was apprenticed to a wood carver and after the

usual Wanderjahre found a job in Leipzig in 1860. Soon he was lured into political activity with the workers' associations that were under the aegis of the Progressive party. The political virus proved irresistible and under Liebknecht's influence he adopted many Marxian ideas, some of which resurfaced in his book.

The heart of Bebel's argument was that Christianity had contributed significantly to the subjugation of women in society. The Ten Commandments, he observed, make woman a man's property, placed in the same category as his servants, his ox, and his ass. From St. Paul's teachings early Christians learned that celibacy was more desirable than marriage, and were taught to look upon woman as "impure," as "the seducer who brought sin into the world and wrought man's destruction." The Christian idealization of celibacy, Bebel charged, rather than making a contribution to civilization, had retarded it. The priests had tarnished the ideal as, unable to adhere to their vow, they degraded the women around them into common concubinage. "Religion," Bebel summarized his thesis,

is the transcendental reflection of the social condition of every age. In the measure in which human development progresses and society is transformed likewise. "Religion," says Marx, "is the striving of the people for an imaginary happiness; it springs from a state of society that requires an illusion, but disappears when the recognition of true happiness and the possibility of its realization penetrates the masses." It is to the interest of the ruling classes to prevent this recognition, and so they seek to uphold religion as a means for preserving their rule.... This business of preserving religion for the people becomes an important official function in a society founded on class-rule.

The ruling class, seeing its existence threatened, clings to religion, the support of all authority, as every ruling class has done. The bourgeoisie itself does not believe, and by its entire development and by modern science that sprang from its lap, it has destroyed the faith in religion

and in all authority. Their belief is hypocrisy, but the Church accepts the support of this false friend, because it is sorely in need of aid itself. 20

Directed to working men and women, Bebel's critical onslaught made its greatest impact in its denunciation of the reactionary social role played by the Christian churches, not in its theoretical analysis of the weakness of theology and doctrine.

In the same vein were the remarks of Josef Dietzgen. Dietzgen (1828-1888), a tanner by trade, won recognition for his philosophical knowledge and for his series of articles in the Volksstaat in the early seventies on the topic, "Die Religion der Sozialdemokratie."

Although the [bourgeois liberals] themselves have cast off their faith, they still dish out sayings like "You should be obedient to your masters (Obrigkeit), pray and work, and bear your cross with all humility and submission," because a people subject to religious discipline is a mighty support to their rule. 21

In the use of violent invectives none outdid Johann Most. Most (1846-1906), so his biographers agree, was a very hostile person, the misanthrope par excellence. Misshapen from birth and thus often a creature of ridicule, he used his impressive oratorical gifts to antagonize his opponents, real or imagined.²² During a stay in Neuchâtel, Switzerland (1867), where a branch of the First International had recently been formed, he came into contact with socialist philosophies. According to his own testimony, it was a case of instant conversion:

I soon realized that, I too, was a socialist, and had been one for a long time without being aware of it. From that time I began to really feel that I was a human being; there was an aim before me, which went beyond the bare struggle for existence and the satisfaction of momentary individual wants; I began to live in the realm of ideals. The cause of humanity became my cause, and each step in advance that could be recorded filled me with the greatest joy. 23

Upon his return to Germany in 1871, he joined the Eisenach Socialists. His outstanding performances as a speaker as well as a pamphleteer, earned him widespread respect and following from among the party members.

Unlike Bebel, Dulk, or Dietzgen, Most was not satisfied with the written word alone, but wanted to see some definite action against the baleful influence of the churches. To this end he sponsored a secessionist movement (Kirchenaustrittsbewegung) among the working class in 1878.

The underlying impetus to Most's campaign was the activity of Adolf Stoecker (1835-1909), court chaplain at Berlin. In the course of his work at the Berlin city mission, Stoecker came into frequent and intimate contact with the workers and gained a first-hand insight into the influence of social democracy on them. For him, as a staunch monarchist, the question was how the influence of the church might be restored and a revival of monarchism kindled among the workers. He was convinced that the mission activities of the Protestant church were insufficient to improve the social position of the workers and give them greater political responsibility. He foresaw the necessity of pursuing a social policy which would counteract the agitation of the Social Democrats. His endeavors were directed toward the formation of a Christian socialist workers' party which would be in harmony with state, church, and monarchy.

The founding of this party -- the Christlich-soziale Arbeiterpartei -- was planned to take place on 3 January 1878 in Berlin. Long before the event the workers were informed by billboard, and they filled the assembly room on the founding day. Stoecker, in his address to the assembly, outlined his party's program, and launched an attack on the Social Democrats as being unpatriotic and antireligious. Only a patriotic, Christian working class

could have a future and, therefore, the workers must come to terms with the church and the monarchy.

Why should you want to hate Christianity, which is so rich in solace and [such a source] of strength? Is it not the strife for freedom, equality and brotherhood that you are committed to? If you examine these three concepts in their proper context, freedom of conscience, equality before God and brotherly love between man, then [you will discover] that they all stem from Christ's Gospel. It is unworthy of a party to hate Christianity and Fatherland. If you really aspire for greatness than you should not attempt to kill man's most noble notion: his love for God and Fatherland. 24

The economic future of the workers lay in the formation of workers' co-operatives, but these were not to be independent as they were in England, but rather under governmental supervision. These co-operatives, so he hoped, would enable the workers to better their living conditions without putting too great a strain on the government's coffers.²⁵ Stoecker's appeal combined a pathos and a paternalism characteristic of the pre- '48 era. In many ways it was the very embodiment of the spirit which had estranged the workers from the church to begin with.

Johann Most was quick to sense this. Following Stoecker as a speaker for the Social Democrats, he had little difficulty in taking Stoecker's speech apart, making him the laughing-stock of the assembly. "Here he stands before you, the shepherd of God, stretching out his hand in the best Christian tradition, ready to gather his flock around him," Most told a howling crowd. The Protestant church has openly shunned Germany's working population for centuries, he continued, and now it is willing to receive the workers back into its fold. Truly a touching and Christian gesture!

The church purports to be concerned about your spiritual and social welfare; there is a lot of talk about the here-after, the universal brotherhood of man and the Christian

conscience. But let me make it clear that this is a lot of bull. (Versaudummung). It is not the hereafter they are fretting about, but the here and now. They have come to realize that the German working class has developed into a power to be reckoned with; you are a potential threat to their security, to their fleshpots of Egypt inasmuch as you have the power to upset the class structure....Beware, this shepherd is out to skin you alive in the name of the Holy Trinity; his forgiving hands are the very same which will choke your freedom....Remember, that these very hands operated the guns of 1871, which blew to pieces our brothers of the Commune and now these hands are ready to bless you. 26

Not content with attacking Stoecker, he persuaded his audience to listen to his appeal for an organized secessionist movement from the Protestant church. "Heraus aus der Landeskirche," was his cry.²⁷

The rally ended with the adoption of a resolution by Paul Dentler (? - 1878), radical Social Democrat and publisher of the socialist paper, the Berliner Freie Presse.

The people called together here in the great hall of the Eiskeller for the purpose of forming a Christian - social workers' party, declare:

Considering, that in course of its almost 1900 years history, Christianity has been unable to alleviate the misery and need of the majority of mankind, not to mention Christianity's inability to end those conditions; also, that today's clergy obviously does not intend to change its attitude or policy in this respect; and finally, in view of the fact that any economic achievement, big or small, is in itself completely meaningless unless accompanied by political freedom [we see] nothing in the program of the Christian - social party which would bring us closer to the latter aim; indeed, the program only reinforces the old ideals and discredited values.

The assembly therefore decrees that the complete elimination of all prevailing political and economical discrimination can only be achieved by the Social Democratic party. It is this assembly's duty to do everything within its power to support and fight for the teachings of the Socialist party. 28

With the battle lines now drawn, the fight between the Christian Socialists and the Social Democrats was clear. It was not merely a contest for

potential voters, but a battle for the workers' "souls." Christian ideology and pro-establishment on the one hand, combatted socialist ideology and anti-establishment on the other; the former trying to bring back the workers into the fold of the existing socio-political system, the latter proposing a break with that system and offering instead a specific, independent proletarian Weltanschauung.

By the end of 1878, the Christian Socialists had a membership of some 3,000 in Berlin, while, in the same year, some 2,711 dissidents had officially left the church. Most's appeal "Heraus aus der Kirche!" despite its populist demagoguery did not achieve the resonance among the workers as he had hoped for.²⁹

The fact that German socialists launched their onslaught against Christianity in the seventies corresponded closely to the general feeling of that time. The battle between liberalism and Catholicism which had been prominent in the preceding years reached a highpoint in the Syllabus of Errors issued by Pope Pius IX in 1864. The Vatican Council climaxed the efforts of Pius IX to strengthen the forces of orthodoxy in the struggle against modernism and the Syllabus marked the beginning of more than a decade of fierce conflict throughout western Europe between the Catholic church and the forces of secularism, liberalism, and state power. In Germany the conflict erupted in the Kulturkampf of Bismarck and the liberals against the Catholic church. To this extent, the social democratic involvement was reflecting the greater religious struggle in Europe and their attempt, to influence the reshaping of German cultural patterns.³⁰

The Social Democratic leaders' preoccupation with the religious issue in the seventies must be viewed not only in the context of their militant

atheism, but also as part of their attempts to create a Ersatzreligion, a specifically socialist religion, a pseudo-religion based on their political ideas and ideals.

This approach to religion was neither novel nor without precedent. Religion was either denied and condemned as the root cause of all evils, as in the case of Robert Owen, Blanqui and the Encyclopaedists; or a new religion, usually purified Christianity, was postulated as a condition of social regeneration, as was the case with Rousseau, Robespierre, Buonarrotti, and Saint-Simon; or, finally, the totality of History was presented in pantheistic terms as a Divinity unfolding itself towards salvation, which happened to Pierre Leroux, Moses Hess, Mazzini, and of course Hegel.

The prophets of this particular brand of political, messianic Arbeiter-philosophie, were the same people who were noted for their militant atheism. Therefore Dietzgen maintained that every form of government claims an external source from which it derives its authority and socialism was no exception.³¹ Proposing, further, that the struggle for freedom is the modus operandi of all human action, he continued,

Social democracy is the true religion, the all-embracing church, insofar as it strives for this freedom not in an idealistic way, not with tears, hopes and prayers, but in a realistic, practical way: Labour is the messiah of the new era.

This new messiah is not the product of an immaculate conception, but rather the product of human pains, agonies, and sorrows.

Social democracy is the true religion, the all-embracing church, insofar as it strives for this freedom in a very real way, through the restructuring of society and through labour. 32

"Labour," so Dietzgen argues, "is the messiah of the industrial age and man's lever to freedom: material betterment will come through labour. If one

defines religion as believing in something external to oneself, in some Being without physical substance, god or spirit, than Social Democracy has no religion." But such a definition is primarily used by the ruling class to protect their vested interests. As far as the ruling elite is concerned "religion must be maintained in its present form; not so much out of consideration for the populace at large, but for the elitist's own sake." "Pulpit and Christianity have been subjected to so much misuse, that it must repel any honest-thinking man to be associated with either one." Dietzgen concludes that Christianity must be totally discredited to stop the churches' misrepresentation. "The churches proclaim an upside-down truth. Since D.F. Strauss, Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach have proven beyond doubt that divinity was nothing but the projection of man's mind then man's salvation and freedom lies with himself, not with some god as the churches want us to believe."³³

The other prophet of the social democratic mission was August Bebel. Although viewing Christianity and socialism as uncompromising enemies, he also perceived certain parallels between them. In his analysis, the early Christians had had much the same moral and social role in the first centuries after Christ as the Social Democrats had in the nineteenth century. Bebel insisted that early Christianity -- although ostensibly a religious movement -- had flourished because in reality it had been a reform movement, calling broadly for equality, universal brotherhood, and charity. Although social democracy was a political philosophy, it was, in essence, a social movement aiming at similar goals as early Christianity.³⁴

Illustrating this parallelism between socialism and Christianity, Bebel studied the Peasant War of 1525. Expressing great enthusiasm for the peasants

as social rebels fighting for an ideal society, he sought to establish a parallel between the sixteenth century peasant and the nineteenth century social democrats. In so doing, Bebel argued that the peasants had been direct precursors of the "scientific socialists" of the nineteenth century.

The dark religious mysticism of the sixteenth century which was necessarily fanatical to achieve universal brotherhood and the "Kingdom of God" on earth, developed in the nineteenth century into scientific-materialism which consciously gives up heaven, but determinedly clings to the earth, in order to achieve an actual earthly paradise in place of the heavenly paradise existing only in the imagination. 35

Social democracy by taking up the legacy left by the peasants of 1525 renewed the fight against a corrupt church.

The destruction of Christianity was a necessity from the point of view of the continuing progress of mankind. "No religion has caused more blood and tears than the Christian; no religion has been the cause of more atrocious crimes. As for war and mass murder, spokesmen for the Christian denominations are more than willing to give their blessings to such undertakings to this very day." Christianity has become a force opposed to freedom and free cultural development. It has kept mankind enchained and suppressed, and has served as a tool of social and political exploitation. Religion has served only as a means to the end of extending and deepening control over the masses. On the other hand, socialism reverts back to the original social mission of the early Christians.³⁶

Labour was seen as the means of man's self-realization and was acknowledged as the sole basis for property ownership. Property, or, rather, the just distribution thereof, was to be the manifestation of freedom, as well as its condition, instrument and extension. This view was an attempt to emancipate man from the dead weight of the hope of freedom only beyond the

grave. This, in short, was seen as the messianic mission of social democracy.³⁷

According to the socialist prophets, religion was the result of certain social conditions. To do away with religion, its causes would have to be revealed and the circumstances of man would have to be changed. Religion, or the religious vision, although a creation of man himself reflected a distorted vision of a lowly, sinful, cringing creature who might not deserve his lot but is unable to improve it. It seemed as if the church condoned social evils -- in effect, consecrated them -- because these evils eventually lead to compensatory joys in the world above. Miserable and inadequate, powerless and forlorn, man had to project an image of perfection and omnipotence, of consolation and redemption, into the heavenly sphere. Thus the poorer the state on earth the more magnificent in comparison became the vision of heaven; the more sublime the joys above, the more abject and hopeless seemed the reality below.³⁸ The Socialists were out to change all this if they were given, or if they could create, the opportunity.

While the party leaders indulged themselves in their particular philosophical flight of fancy, the occasional party member confessed difficulties in correlating these views with the remnants of his old beliefs. Writing about his experiences as a young man, Wilhelm Reimes, a weaver, had this to say:

I was all for the political and economic aims of Social Democracy -- as far as I understood them. My difficulties lay with the acceptance of their [philosophical] doctrines. The major obstacles to accepting them lay within myself and the religious considerations which were raised in my community regarding membership in the party. I could not, in those years, achieve harmony between my religious upbringing and social democratic theories. 39

An outright Doubting Thomas, not only in his party's self-chosen messianic mission, but also in the way the party's acknowledged atheists went about to spread the socialist gospel, was Max Kayser, a young social democratic

moderate from Breslau. "German Social Democracy," Kayser wrote, "declares religion a private matter. If one observes however, the actual conduct of the party in religious matters, one cannot help but notice the direct contradiction between party theory and actual practice; a contradiction, which cries out, which leads one unwittingly to the conclusion, that the declaration of religion being a private matter, that the concept of religious tolerance, is only a scrap of paper. It deems necessary to us, to bring to an end this unhealthy dualism." The party preached that religion was a private matter, but it practiced the contrary for it allowed some of its members to preach atheism in the name of the party, and to mock at, and to slander Christianity and the churches. Kayser argued that this should not be tolerated. In their private lives, party individuals might think about Christianity as they pleased, but when they spoke in the name of the party, they must conform to the party program. "It is not becoming to a party which declares religion a private matter, to go out and agitate or allow the organization of campaigns in its name, with the aim of forming a secessionist movement." If a party implicitly or explicitly fosters, or even condones such attacks on Christianity, then it should have the courage to profess atheism openly in its party program. "On the basis of its program, [the party] should either suppress any agitation for atheism and against the churches, or it should change its program to promote such agitation."

Kayser continued his argument by pointing out that antireligious propaganda would not recruit new members since many would be repulsed by such tactics. Among the educated classes, particularly, this kind of unscientific, polemical blundering would create a negative impression. As a percentage of the total membership, the numbers recruited during the recent secessionist

campaign was ridiculously low. Indeed, thanks to the Most campaign, there was now a Christian socialism to be taken into consideration and to be opposed. Although such a Christian interpretation of socialism might have its advantages in that the workers' plight would be, perhaps, carried into circles hitherto indifferent, but, on the other hand, it might also endanger the position of the Social Democratic party as a rallying point for all socialists, Christians and atheists alike. He warned that social democracy could degenerate into a sect because of its indecision towards the execution of its declared program. Such sectarianism would be a waste of strength. Therefore the party must choose either to honour the party program and suppress attacks on Christianity in any form, or to include atheism and the fight against religion as principal points in the party program despite the attendant risk of sectarianism. No compromise was possible between these alternatives.

The church and its theologians, Kayser argued, are indestructable because theology is a necessary science. Beneath the religious development of mankind lie special laws which the theologians must investigate. Even the future state -- the socialist state -- will have its churches and theologians. But those clergy who presently use religion as a tool to enslave the intellect and who turn churches into institutions of suppression will not survive. The present churches may be included in the future state only if they become democratic. Only under these circumstances would the socialist state make funds available to the churches to satisfy the religious need of its people.

Kayser interpreted the Gotha program as necessitating complete neutrality in religious matters on the part of the party. The party should not

demand a uniform religious attitude from its members, but should be the rallying point of all socialists, Christians and atheists alike. In combatting obsolete and damaging ideological concepts, social democracy must not scare off potential voters by demanding a uniform Weltanschauung, but must maintain neutrality.⁴⁰

Kayser's article in Die Zukunft was answered by an article by Most, published in the same journal. Most denied that social democracy had ever promoted or propagandized the cause of atheism.⁴¹ Individual campaigns against church and religion were not authorized by the party, nor undertaken in its name. Friends and enemies alike, however, frequently identified socialist speakers as representing the Social Democratic party, not as representing their own private views.

When a known social democratic speaker or writer attends an antireligious rally -- a right, which nobody can deny him -- the [assembled] public does not ask: does he partake in his capacity as a Social Democrat [or not] ? Unless he is a leading authority in the field of technology or the sciences, a foremost artist or poet, one is not recognized as such. The public has the tendency to see in every more or less wellknown Socialist just that, a Socialist, as soon as he steps into the public limelight. He [immediately] becomes identified with the party and his actions are interpreted as being actions of that party.

His own campaign for secession, Most defended on grounds that it is not wrong to call upon those who had already broken with the church spiritually, to do so in actuality ("es war gewiss kein sittlicher Fehler, diejenigen, welche den christlichen Glauben nicht mehr teilen, aufzufordern, auch die äussere Zugehörigkeit zu dieser Kirche abzuwerfen."), since otherwise they would leave themselves open to charges of hypocrisy.

Most then proceeded to say that in the future state the opportunity to satisfy any religious need must be accorded if it was so desired. However,

those who had no religious needs must be given the freedom to counteract the influence of religion on others. With the spread of a scientific Weltanschauung and a decrease in social suffering, the need for religion would disappear. "When that point is reached, who would need the churches, the theologians? Then philosophy will have been completely substituted for religion."⁴²

The passing of the Socialist Law in October 1878, interrupted this exchange. Bismarck's weapons of suppression were shifted from the Catholics to the socialists, and the religious issue ceased to hold the centre of the German political arena. The Social Democrats had to concentrate on their own self-preservation, making it less important for them to engage in ideological combat with Christianity.⁴³

The debates in the Reichstag on the antisocialist legislation made it obvious to the Social Democrats -- if they were not already aware of it -- that their invectives against the churches generated much of the hostility they encountered in German society. The conservative leaders, Hans Hugo von Kleist-Retzow and Wilhelm von Kardoff, based a considerable part of their argument for the repression measures on the need to preserve a Christian faith among German workingmen.⁴⁴ Many of the Centre party deputies, while critical of much of the repressive legislation, wanted measures that would promote the rights of the churches and the cause of Christian beliefs.⁴⁵ The response of the Social Democrats in the Reichstag reveals unmistakably their awareness that they needed to calm the troubled waters of religious controversy. Bebel freely admitted that he and many of his colleagues were atheists, but he insisted adamantly that the party allowed complete freedom of thought among its members on this issue.⁴⁶ The Reichstag deputies however, were in no mood to forget or forgive Most's bitter campaign

against church membership.⁴⁷ The tendency of the Social Democrats to moderate their militant atheism had nonetheless begun.

The Socialist Law contributed to social democratic moderation on the religious issue in another way. Under its provisions the authorities were empowered to expel persons deemed to be a threat to peace and order. Faced with this kind of harassment, and the real threat of arrest and imprisonment, some of the intransigent Social Democrats preferred to abandon Germany entirely. Thus, Johann Most fled Germany in the fall of 1878 after serving one prison sentence in order to avoid almost certain re-imprisonment. Within two years Most won renown as an anarchist, first in London, and then in the United States.⁴⁸ In leaving Germany and Social Democracy, he took his flamboyant atheism with him, and so far as the German scene was concerned his anarchist followers were much more bitter foes of Christianity than the socialists. During the twelve years of the Socialist Law the Social Democrats consistently divorced themselves from the anarchists, in order not to be held responsible for either their ideas or their deeds.⁴⁹ Although the Social Democrats continued their criticism of Christianity, their tone was noticeably milder than that of Most. In some measure the departure of Most symbolizes the Social Democratic turn from an intransigent frontal attack on Christianity to a more calculated and cautious flanking operation.

The primary reason for the shift from unlimited attacks on Christianity was therefore tactical and not one of underlying principles. The socialists had come to recognize, as an unidentified party member wrote in Der Sozialdemokrat, that "the unlimited slandering of Christianity, which has been good form among the German Social Democrats for some time, has already frightened many away from socialism." He advised that the most effective socialist

tactic would be to demonstrate to the people that existing Christian institutions had falsified "Christian teachings."⁵⁰ Likewise, the tactical disadvantages of militant atheism had been noticed in the elections and, consequently, there were pressures from within the party to drop the virulent anti-Christian propaganda.

Besides these tactical considerations there also were some significant ideological aspects, stemming from the increased influence of Marxism. From the early eighties, the German socialists had a number of young intellectuals, notably Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein, who devoted themselves more seriously than the older generation to the study of Marxism.

The son of a Czech nationalist father and a German mother, Kautsky (1854-1938) had been attracted to socialism in his student days at Vienna. At the age of twenty-five, he cast his lot with German Social Democracy. Four years later, in 1883, Kautsky founded the Neue Zeit, the first German organ of theoretical Marxism since 1848. He quickly became the party's quasi-official intellectual leader, a position for which his cautious, deliberative temperament admirably suited him. Of similar temperament was Eduard Bernstein (1850-1932), a self-made scholar. Falling under the influence of the English Fabians during his years of exile in London, Bernstein came to the conclusion that orthodox Marxism to which he had adhered was no longer adequate to the facts of contemporary history. During the 1890's he subjected Marxist theory to a series of criticisms out of which his own "revisionist" theory emerged, which contributed greatly to the schism within the Social Democratic party after the turn of the century. Bernstein held that the collapse of the capitalist system was not imminent, and that the Socialists must change their tactics, if not their goals. Their logical course must be

to exploit all the opportunities they could find for gradual reform in the interest of the working classes, even if this meant departing from the aloof, non-cooperative attitude they had hitherto maintained toward the bourgeois political parties. They must rescue socialism from the barricades and make it a practical philosophy of social regeneration by democratic rather than revolutionary means.⁵¹

Kautsky's and Bernstein's studies of Marxism were based primarily on the concise summary of Marxist theory contained in Engels' book Herr Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaften, published late in 1878. Engels made it abundantly clear that religion would not vanish until changes in the material conditions of society had erased the need for it. In capitalism, he observed,

the actual basis of the reflective activity that gives rise to religion therefore continues to exist, and with it the religious reflection itself. And although bourgeois political economy has given a certain insight into the causal connection of this alien domination, this makes no essential difference....It is still true that man proposes and God (that is, the alien domination of the capitalist mode of production) disposes. Mere knowledge, even if it went much further and deeper than that of bourgeois economic science, is not enough to bring social forces under the domination of society. What is above all necessary for this is a social act. And when this act has been accomplished, when society, by taking possession of all means of production and using them on a planned basis, has freed itself and all its members from the bondage in which they are now held by these means of production which they themselves have produced but which confront them as an irresistible alien force; when therefore man no longer merely proposes, but also disposes -- only then will the last alien force which is still reflected in religion vanish; and with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason that then there will be nothing to reflect. 52

The evidence from the eighties shows that this Marxist attitude toward religion made some impression, although not always formulated with the precision of Marx and Engels. At the secret party congress of 1883 in Copen-

hagen, the delegates concluded that their propaganda against religion should cease. A police report from the files of the Berlin Police Presidium summarizes their discussion by observing that the delegates advocated

a complete abandonment of the attacks on religion; when a person becomes thoroughly schooled in economics and politics he will drop religion of his own accord; the hitherto harsh attacks by the socialists, even though justified and important in principle, had harmed the movement among the farmers and farm labourers; one must first preach economic and political freedom to these and, then, with time, they, themselves, will throw religion overboard. 53

Although the delegates still emphasized the tactical disadvantages of anti-religious propaganda, they were equally aware that economic and political knowledge would be more fruitful for their cause than militant atheism.

The influence of Marxism became even more evident in the rebuttals to a suggestion by one socialist in 1886 that the party program should be sharpened on the issue of religion by calling for a struggle against "superstition in every form."⁵⁴ The editor of the paper, Eduard Bernstein, answered that it would be impossible to free people from religious influences as long as individual man is subject to powers of nature and economics over which he has no control.⁵⁵ Another party member, whose identity is unknown, observed that for those in "miserable economic circumstances" religion was a crutch which they would cast off themselves when their situation improved; "religious enlightenment" would come itself once "healthy social conditions" had been created by destroying capitalism through socialized production.⁵⁶ All of this reflected a growing understanding of Marxism, offering a convincing reason for discarding militant atheism. Appeals for a sharper stand against religion did not appear in the remaining years of the eighties. Liebknecht spoke the epilogue to the era of Weltanschauungs battle, when he said in the Reichstag, on 11 January 1887

While I was young, I belonged to those who believed that one could get easily rid of the church by means of aggressive methods. But then I learned from the history of the French Revolution [that that is not so]. From the moment the revolutionary government began to meddle with Catholicism, to hurt the religious sentiment of the people, opposition to the Revolution grew. The Vendée came into existence despite great efforts by the Republic to prevent it and despite the fact that the Republic adhered to modern, progressive ideas. The Republic was unable to master the Catholic church, to control Roman Catholicism. 57

There was now a suitable harmony between the tactical benefits and the theoretical reasons for dropping militant atheism and treating the religious issue as strictly secondary to the goals of economic and political emancipation. Therefore, when the Erfurt program of 1891 was written, no special efforts were made to include a criticism of Christianity, and the old formula treating religion as a "private matter" was retained.

Chapter 1 - Footnotes

1. Johanna Fürstauer, Neue illustrierte Sittengeschichte des bürgerlichen Zeitalters (Stuttgart: Günther, 1967); Hypolite Taine, The Origins of Contemporary France (New York: American Book Company, 1911).
2. Bernhard Becker, one-time president of Germany's first workmen's association, the Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiter Verein, which was founded in 1863 by Ferdinand Lassalle, made clear that a common understanding between the workers and the bourgeoisie was necessary for the ultimate survival of the working-class movement. He even suggested that the workers would be well advised to learn from the way the bourgeois class threw off their chains of political domination and to copy their tactics. "The idea of equality had its origin in bourgeois liberal circles. The idea of mass education also stems from these circles, dating back to their fight to loose the ties of feudalism, [the power of] the absolute state. In one word, the bourgeoisie is much closer to the working class than is the aristocracy. Should the latter stage a return to absolutist power, all the liberal, democratic advances of the bourgeoisie would be undone and nobody would care anymore about the future integration of the working class into society. Socialism's fate is thus closely tied to that of the bourgeoisie." Bernhard Becker, Geschichte der Arbeiter-Agitation Ferdinand Lassalle's (Braunschweig: Bracke, 1874), p. 222.
3. R. Broda and J. Deutsch, Das moderne Proletariat: Eine sozialpsychologische Studie (Berlin: Reimer, 1910), p. 23.
4. William O. Shanahan, German Protestants Face the Social Question: The Conservative Phase, 1815-1870 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1954), pp. 154-55, 182, 193. This was however less true of German Catholicism which perceived the dangers of industrialization for the Christian faith much earlier and acted accordingly. See August Erdmann, Die Christliche Arbeiterbewegung in Deutschland (Stuttgart: Dietz, 1909).
5. Richard Lempp states that the Frankfurt Assembly discussed the question of church-state relationship for a period of nearly three weeks while a subcommittee spent some six months on deliberation of the same topic. All during these debates, the liberals with their demand for separation of church and state constituted by far the majority. Richard Lempp, Die Frage der Trennung von Kirche und Staat im Frankfurter Parlament (Tübingen: Mohr, 1913), pp. 115-76. See also Werner Bröker, Politische Motive naturwissenschaftlicher Argumentation gegen Religion und Kirche im 19. Jahrhundert (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1972).
6. Stenographischer Bericht über die Verhandlungen der deutschen constituierenden Nationalversammlung zu Frankfurt am Main, ed. Franz Wigard, 9 vols. (Frankfurt/M.: 1848-49), 3: 1643, 1644.
7. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, ed. Joseph Katz

(New York: Washington Square Press, 1964), pp. 91-92.

8. Karl Marx, Capital, ed. Samuel Moore and E. Aveling, (London: Glaisher, 1912), p. 51.
9. Nicholas Lobkowitz, "Karl Marx's Attitude Toward Religion," Review of Politics 26 (1964): 319-52. Lobkowitz in an interesting analysis, notes that Marx believed that a direct attack on religion would never succeed, that the militant atheists on the Hegelian Left erred by treating religion as if it were an "independent being" without secular, i.e. material roots, that religion was "true" for Marx in the sense that it "adequately reflects a world which itself is wrong," and that in his later years Marx made few references to religion because it was so peripheral to the main goals of socialism. Lobkowitz's comment is that "seldom if ever has Christianity been so radically taken unseriously as in Marx. What could be more humiliating to a Christian than to be told that he is an enemy not worth fighting, since he is done for anyway?" Ibid., pp. 320, 321, 322-23.
10. The program of the Sächsische Volkspartei and the Fortschrittspartei are reprinted in Wilhelm Mommsen, ed., Deutsche Parteiprogramme (München: Isar, 1960), pp. 307-08, 137. The program of the Deutsche Volkspartei can be found in Felix Salomon, ed., Die deutschen Parteiprogramme, 3 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1912) 1: 131-33.
11. Mommsen, Deutsche Parteiprogramme, pp. 311-12.
12. See Theobald Ziegler, Die geistigen und sozialen Strömungen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts (Berlin: Bondi, 1911), pp. 500-16; Reinhard Wittram, Nationalismus und Säkularisation: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Problematik des Nationalgeistes (Lüneburg: Heliand, 1949), pp. 59-62.
13. Mommsen, Deutsche Parteiprogramme, pp. 313-14.
14. An article in the Zukunft expressed the view that the Social Democrats should approach Christianity with more objectivity and understanding. Eduard Bernstein, My Years in Exile (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1921), pp. 46-47, 59-60.
15. See Volksstaat, 19 April 1871.
16. "Das sächsische Dissidentengesetz," Ibid., 5 May 1871. The article is signed "B" (for Bebel?).
17. "Zum Kongress: Anträge," Ibid., 17 June, 1871.
18. See Der Hochverratsprozess wider Liebknecht, Bebel, Hepner vor dem Schwurgericht zu Leipzig vom 11. bis 26. März 1872 (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1911), pp. 12-21.
19. Albert Dulk, "Religion," Vorwärts, 19 May 1878.

20. August Bebel, Women and Socialism (New York: Socialist Literature Company, 1910), pp. 60, 71, 438-39.
21. Josef Dietzgen, "Die Religion der Sozial-Demokratie," Volksstaat, 2 August 1871.
22. Besides the biography by Rudolf Rocker, Johann Most: Das Leben eines Rebellen (Berlin: Kater, 1924), see also Emma Goldmann, "Johann Most," American Mercury 8 (1926): 158-66; Andrew R. Carlson, Anarchism in Germany: The Early Movement (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1972), pp. 173-97.
23. Carlson, Anarchism in Germany, p. 176.
24. Dietrich von Oertzen, Adolf Stoecker: Lebensbild und Zeitgeschichte, 2 vols., (Berlin: Vaterländische Verlags-und Kunstanstalt, 1910) 1: 142-43.
25. On Stoecker's objectives and the program of his Christlich-soziale Partei, see Walter Frank, Hofprediger Adolf Stoecker und die christlich-soziale Bewegung (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1935), pp. 45-50. The actual founding of the party had to be postponed to a later date after the fiasco of 3 January 1878.
26. Walter Wendland, "Beiträge zu den kirchenpolitischen Kämpfen um Adolf Stoecker," Jahrbuch für Brandenburgische Kirchengeschichte 31 (1936): 144, 146.
27. An account of Most's part in the breakup of the first meeting of Stoecker's party, as well as Most's subsequent campaign is given in Rocker, Johann Most, pp. 49-55.
Karl Kautsky noted some fifty years later, that the Most campaign was one of the shadiest episodes in the early history of the party. According to Kautsky the party's executives' policy of nonintervention was precipitated by two major considerations. First, although the executive did not applaud Most's methods, he did however, express its sentiments. Second, the executive was aware of Most's popularity within the party and did not want to chance an internal split by interference. Karl Kautsky, "Johann Most," Gesellschaft 1 (1924): 547, 550-51, 554.
28. Oertzen, Adolf Stoecker, 1: 145.
29. Rocker, Johann Most, p. 236, n. 50.
30. In France the religious hostilities against Catholicism flared up in the campaign of radical republicans to break clerical control of education, and in Italy it found expression in the continued struggle between the Papacy and the new state. H.J. Blackham, Religion in a Modern Society (London: Constable, 1966), pp. 43-81.
31. Josef Dietzgen, "Die Grenzen der Erkenntnis," Sämtliche Schriften, ed. Eugen Dietzgen, 3 vols. Stuttgart: Dietz, 1922) I: 206.

32. Josef Dietzgen, "Die Religion der Sozial-Demokratie: Eine Kanzelrede," Volksstaat 13 August 1870.
33. Josef Dietzgen, "Die Religion der Sozial-Demokratie: Ein Cyklus," Ibid., 2 August 1871.
34. Stenographische Berichte des deutschen Reichstages, 7th Legislaturperiode, 2nd Session (1887-88), 2: 956-57.
35. August Bebel, Der deutsche Bauernkrieg (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1922), pp. 229-30.
36. August Bebel, Hie Sozialismus, hie Christentum (Nürnberg: Bracke, 1874), pp. 12-13.
37. August Bebel, Glossen zu Yves Guyots und Sigismond Lacroix' Schrift: Die wahre Gestalt des Christentums (Leipzig: Karlsson, 1878), pp. 27-29.
38. As Karl Marx wrote in one of his Frühschriften (1843): "For Germany the criticism of religion has been essentially completed, and criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism. The profane existence of error is compromised when its heavenly oratio pro aris et focis has been refuted. Man, who has found only the reflection of himself in the fantastic reality of heaven where he sought a supernatural being, will no longer be inclined to find the semblance of himself, only the non-human being, where he seeks and must seek his true reality.
Religious suffering is the expression of real suffering and at the same time the protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the opium of the people.
The abolition of religion as people's illusory happiness is the demand for their real happiness. The demand to abandon illusions about their condition is a demand to abandon a condition which requires illusions. The criticism of religion is thus in embryo a criticism of the vale of tears whose halo is religion." Karl Marx, "Towards the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction," Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society, ed. Loyd D. Easton and K.H. Guddat (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 249-50.
39. Wilhelm Reimes, "Sozialismus und Christentum," in Proletarische Lebensläufe: Autobiographische Dokumente zur Entstehung der Zweiten Kultur in Deutschland, Anfänge bis 1914. (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1974), p. 284.
40. Max Kayser, "Die Kirche im Zukunftsstaat," Zukunft 1 (1878): 549-50, 559.
41. In an earlier statement however, Most asserts that Social Democracy is prepared and determined to fight "theology" wherever and whenever it can: "A lot of things are presently labeled as a science because of tradition and past practices. Theology and its associated fields, are an example. Social Democracy does not hesitate to admit that it is not only unable to take an interest in these so-called "sciences" but that it also

is determined to fight them on all fronts because they are only barriers to the unhampered cultural development." Johann Most, "Die Stellung der Gelehrten zur Social Demokratie," Ibid., p. 98.

42. Johann Most, "Die Kirche im Zukunftsstaat: Eine Entgegnung," Ibid., pp. 681, 683.
43. In 1878 two assassination attempts were made on Wilhelm I. The first attempt was made by the plumber's assistant, Hodel, on 11 May, the second one by Dr. Nobiling, in course of which the Kaiser received severe injuries. Bismarck, quite wrongly, linked both attempts to a conspiracy by the Social Democrats. After the first assassination attempt he seized the opportunity to introduce antisocialist legislation, but was turned down in the Reichstag. After the second attempt, Bismarck introduced a revised version of his antisocialist bill which was accepted by a Reichstag majority. For the motives which led Bismarck to introduce his controversial bill, see Wolfgang Pack, Das parlamentarische Ringen um das Sozialistengesetz Bismarcks, 1878-1890 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1961). For the complete text of the law see Reichs-Gesetzblatt 34 (1878): 351-58; an English translation of the same is to be found in Vernon L. Lidtke, The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany, 1878-1890 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 339-45. The difficulties of the proper execution of the Socialist Law and the reasons for its ultimate failure, are described in Reinhard Höhn, Die vaterlandslosen Gesellen: Die Sozialdemokratie im Licht der Geheimberichte der preussischen Polizei, 1878-1914 (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1964), pp. xli-xlvi.
44. Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Deutschen Reichstages, 51 (1878): 72, 74, 84-85.
45. Pack, Das parlamentarische Ringen, p. 84.
46. Stenographische Berichte 51 (1878): 48, 89-90.
47. Ibid., p. 215.
48. Goldmann, "Johann Most," p. 160.
49. For the rejection of anarchism, see Liebknecht's speech at the secret party congress in 1887, Verhandlungen des Parteitages der deutschen Sozialdemokratie in St. Gallen, Abgehalten vom 2. bis 6 Oktober 1887 (Hottingen, Zürich: 1888), pp. 39-45.
50. "Sozialismus und Christentum," Sozialdemokrat, 28 November 1886.
51. In offering an alternative to the Marxian system, a second social philosophy through which the party members and the leaders could evaluate their position and determine their role, Bernstein made a major contribution to the development of the schism, that eventually was to develop within the Social Democratic party.

Bernstein launched his attack against the most fundamental of Marx's propositions concerning capitalist development: that the incompatibility of the system of production and the forms of exchange produced growing anarchy in the capitalist economy. Where Marx saw growing anarchy Bernstein saw growing order. Extrapolating from the absence of any world economic crisis for the two decades since 1873, Bernstein advanced the theory that capitalism had developed a capacity for adjustment which would rule out major economic crises in the future. New credit mechanisms, rational market controls through cartels, and intensive exploitation of the world market were the principal factors making for a more or less indefinite expansion of the capitalist economy. At the same time, Bernstein observed a trend toward the more equitable distribution of wealth.

Having substituted an optimistic for a "breakdown" theory of capitalist development, Bernstein was impelled to draw the philosophic consequence; namely, the renunciation of dialectical materialism. Believing Marx's "abstractions" to be disproved by subsequent economic development, he could no longer regard socialism as resulting of necessity from capitalist development. Socialism could only come about as the result of a free, rational decision.

Socialism, seen by Marx as fostered by a negative proletarian reaction to capitalist development, was viewed by Bernstein as its idealistic offshoot. Progress toward socialism was brought into a positive dependency on capitalist prosperity. The enemy of the working class was then not capitalism itself, not the capitalist state, but the small group of private interests which stubbornly refused to see the light of reason and social justice. The institutional weapon to break the power of this little band of willful men was political democracy, through which men of good will of all classes could arrange the social order in the majority interest. In this conceptual framework, revolution was unnecessary. Eduard Bernstein, Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie (Stuttgart: Dietz, 1906), pp. 66-81, 46-66, 10.

52. Friedrich Engels, Anti-Dühring. Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Moscow: Foreign Press, 1962), pp. 434-35.
53. Karl-Alexander Hellfaier, Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie während des Sozialistengesetzes, 1878-1890 (Berlin: Dietz, 1958), p. 199.
54. E.A. Hass, "Ein Vorschlag zur Abänderung unseres Programms," Der Sozialdemokrat, 15 January 1886.
55. "Unser Program und die Frage der Religion," Der Sozialdemokrat, 28 January 1886.
56. "Zur Frage der Religion," Der Sozialdemokrat, 18 March 1886.
- 57- So Liebknecht during an address to the Reichstag, 11 January 1887. See Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags 99 (1887-88): 403. In 1941, Hitler was to express himself in a similar vein when he talked about the religious problem. Stating that the state must remain the absolute master and that the organised lie (religion) must be smashed

he continued: "When I was young I considered the use of force as the only means. Only later on I realized that one cannot burst out everything like that. It [religion] must rot off like a gangrenous part of the body." Henry Picker, ed., Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier, 1941-42 (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1965), p. 154.

Chapter 2

The Churches Face the Social Question, 1860's - 1914.

The continuing growth of social democracy despite the introduction of the Socialist Law soon became a source of anxiety to the Protestant and Catholic churches. Of the two, however, predominantly Roman Catholic areas were less prone to socialist infiltration than were comparable Protestant areas. Indeed, the number of social democratic voters in Protestant areas was substantially higher than the number of industrial workers in those same areas.¹ This disparity between the Protestant and Catholic socialist vote was partially due to the tighter organization of the Catholics in Germany, but it was also true that the Catholic church, much earlier than the Protestant church, realized the needs of the working class and embarked on a positive social program to meet those needs.

Two names in particular are closely linked with the launching of Catholic social programs in Germany, Adolph Kolping and Wilhelm E. von Ketteler. Kolping (1813-65) was born of poor parents and became a shoemaker. In those days, German craftsmen and tradesmen had to undergo the traditional training as apprentices and journeymen, before they could qualify as master-workmen. As journeymen they travelled from one town to another, finding work in each place and learning different skills that were employed in different localities. Kolping, who had himself experienced the young journeymen's lot as a travelling

shoemaker, determined to do something to provide them with a counterpart to family life with the support of the church. It was with this aim he sought to become a priest. But he had much difficulty in acquiring the necessary qualifications for ordination, and it was not until 1845, when he was thirty-two years of age, that he could embark on his life's work. He set himself to establish a network of Gesellenvereine, or journeymen's societies, which would serve the moral, religious, technical, and cultural interests of young journeymen. His headquarters were at Köln where he was an assistant priest at the cathedral, but with apostolic zeal he travelled all over Germany forming, wherever possible, branches of his society with hostels. When Kolping died in 1865, there were 400 branches and the movement continued to grow.² Bebel who visited a number of these societies remembered the theological debates with obvious pleasure.³

Unlike Kolping, Ketteler (1811-77) came of an old aristocratic family with feudal traditions, from which he derived a keen sense of the responsibility of the strong for the weak. He was not educated for the ministry of the church, nor as a young man was he notably devout. He entered the Prussian civil service, but soon reacted violently against its despotic methods. He resigned from the civil service and identified himself thereafter with the interests of the common people. He accused the aristocracy of being a caricature of itself and of being attached to its titles while it had deserted its social functions and duties. He subsequently decided to devote himself to the service of the church as a priest. After studying theology at München, he entered the seminary at Münster at the age of thirty-two, and in due course became a parish priest.

Ketteler soon became noted for his critical social commentaries and when

he received the bishopric of Mainz in 1850, he was more than ever in a position to keep the social question in the forefront of Catholic concern.

No one [Ketteler said on one occasion] can say anything about our era or comprehend its shape without referring again and again to the prevailing social conditions and, above all, to the division between the propertied and the property-less classes, to the plight of our destitute brethren, to the means of giving them help. You may accord as much weight as you please to the political questions, to the shaping of state and government - and yet, the real difficulties we face do not lie there....Paradoxically, the closer we carry our political problems toward bearable solutions the clearer it becomes, though many will not see it even now, that this was only the lesser part of the task before us and that now the social question looms larger than ever, demanding solutions more harshly than ever. 4

Ketteler began preaching a regeneration of society through the consecration of individual lives to the service of the community, but came to realize more and more the need to establish structures that would be favourable to a Christian order. In 1864 he developed his ideas in a book on Die Arbeiterfrage und das Christentum, relating them to the two principal programs for social reform that were being advocated in Germany at the time -- liberalism and socialism.

He first exposed the intolerable position of the workers under laissez-faire capitalism which, he said, reduced them to wage slavery. Then he examined the proposed remedies of the liberal and socialist reformers. Both proposed the creation of co-operative production associations as the means of rescuing working men from dependence on the wage system. Liberal reform plans envisaged that co-operative associations were to be formed voluntarily with capital contributed from the savings of the members. This proposal, Ketteler said, was wholly inadequate. Only the most prosperous artisans were in a position to act upon it. The wage-earners in the larger industries had no prospect of accumulating sufficient capital to launch co-operative

societies.

He equally rejected the socialists' plan for the state to provide the capital for co-operative societies of production. Ketteler allowed that the socialists undoubtedly had the merit of having depicted the deplorable situation of the working classes, and he accepted on the whole their criticism of the existing system. He could not, however, accept their proposals. After his experience in the Prussian civil service, he was very mistrustful of government and of bureaucratic centralization, and therefore of state socialism. Moreover, at this time he held that the government had no moral right to take the wealth of some citizens and to lend it to others. He feared that the state would thus dominate over the rich by its fiscal exactions and over the poor by its gratuitous favours. His own proposal was that co-operative societies should be financed by the voluntary contributions of Christians.⁵

By 1869 Ketteler's own social views became more radical and more precise. In that year he plainly told the workers that their demands for higher wages, for shorter hours, for holidays, for the prohibition of child labour and of the industrial employment of women, were sanctioned by justice and by Christianity, and could be satisfactorily met if they were harnessed to the precepts of religion and morality. Otherwise, he contended, workers would be corrupted by the unbridled materialism which was the cause of their present hardship.

In the same year he also prepared a report for the meeting of the German bishops at Fulda in which he said that the social question was more acute and more serious than any other. He gave a powerful exposition of what the problem was and what the church ought to do and urged the training of priests

and laymen for the actual field work.

The Church must stimulate the interest of the clergy in the fate of the working classes. They have mostly little interest in these matters because they are ignorant of the existence and the impact of the dangers which lurk in these threatening social conditions, because they have failed to size up the character and breadth of the social question, finally, because they have no conception of possible remedies. The labour problem must therefore no longer be neglected in the education of the clergy... It would be desirable if selected clerics were directed toward the study of economics and given travelling stipends so that they might become acquainted through their own observation with the needs of labour on the one hand, and with the existing welfare services on the other.

Although he remained convinced that Christianity rather than the state must take the lead in promoting the reorganization of industry, Ketteler had come to realize the necessity of labour legislation by the government. In 1873 he drew up a program for the German Catholics, which became the basis of the social policies of the Catholic Centre party, the chief medium of Catholic social and political pressure.⁶ But Ketteler's views were only cautiously advanced and never in open disagreement with the Pope's much more conservative policies.

Catholic political interests were the concern of the Catholic Centre party which had come out of the Kulturkampf period stronger and more united than before. The Kulturkampf had re-emphasized religion as the common bond which largely effaced all other differences between members such as their varying social backgrounds. Nonetheless, because of the constraints of being such an all embracing party, variants were not entirely nullified and the Catholic Centre could not pursue a single social policy as could the Social Democrats who recruited their membership primarily from one social class. Also, the Kulturkampf experience impressed upon the Catholics the need to bring their social and political views in greater alignment with

prevailing government policies, particularly as far as the Socialists were concerned.

It is therefore of little surprise, that, with the upsurge of social democratic votes, the Catholic's rejection of socialism became more severe in tone. The Catholic Professor Franz Xaver Heiner (1849-1919) suggested co-operation between church and state to combat the Social Democratic party in his pamphlet Christentum und Kirche im Kampfe mit der Sozialdemokratie (1903). Heiner, long time adviser to the Centre party in social and social-economic questions, advocated that the state should raise the standard of living of the workers, and end social discrimination against them through appropriate legislation. The church, on the other hand, should give religious instruction to the workers both on and off the job. Such co-operation between church and state would keep "religiosity alive among the people, while strengthening at the same time the loyalty to secular institutions, such as the monarchy."

Heiner branded social democracy as being antichurch and antiestablishment; a revolutionary party out for destruction. "Complete freedom of action to the churches, co-operation between church and state, peace among the different denominations and social reforms by the state: these are the necessary preconditions for a successful crusade against the Socialists, and they are the only way to save church and fatherland, altar and throne, from the spectre of socialism."⁷

The Centre party founded the Volksverein für das katholische Deutschland in direct response to the Socialists' great electoral success of 1890. The main aims of this association were to attack the doctrines of socialism and to sponsor social reforms on a Christian basis. It established publishing

houses, organized lecture series, distributed leaflets and pamphlets, and encouraged the formation of local clubs to expound upon, and to offset, the evils of socialism. Heiner, with some justification, called the Volksverein "the most widespread and effective defence organization which Germany has [at a time] when her political and ecclesiastical institutions are challenged from within," with obvious reference to the social democratic party.⁸

In response to Pope Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum Novarum, the Catholics eventually founded their own trade unions. "When the police proved to be ineffective in their efforts to contain the social democratic movement, the only other way was for the church herself to become actively involved in a social economic reform program to save the Catholic workers from the fangs of socialism."⁹ Inherent ambiguities and consequent difficulties became apparent as the Catholic Trade Unions, committed to state and monarchy, were less prepared to use the strike as a bargaining weapon than were the Free Trade Unions, committed to social democracy. Situations arose in which the Free Trade Union members went on strike and the Catholics stayed on the job in the same factory. Bad feelings were created on both sides and caused increased agitation in the socialist camp.¹⁰

The charters of the Catholic unions declared their membership open to Protestants and Catholics alike, strongly reiterating the Christian principles on which the union was based. This, many workers contended, resulted in Social Democrats being refused membership in practice although the charter expressly stated the union's political neutrality. More realistic on this point was the charter of the Catholic Miners' Union (1894) which bluntly said that "with membership in the Miners' Union [the member] professes himself to be an opponent of social democratic principles and politics."¹¹

The increased activities of the Catholic church among the workers sometimes tended to be divisive, rather than a healing, factor. Clemens Bauer has argued that if Catholics had followed a policy of greater compromise toward the Social Democrats, many Catholic workers would have been spared the choice between religious tradition and the more effective labour policies of the Free Trade Unions. As it was, Catholic social policies resulted in dismemberment of Catholic ranks particularly in denominationally mixed areas.¹²

While the Roman church, well and expediently organized, formed one solid line of defence against social democracy, the Protestant church, lacking the same organization both in kind and degree, lacked also the same solidarity. Protestant church officials did, indeed, unanimously condemn the Socialists and counteracted their influence wherever possible, but there were many among their ranks who were willing to try at least a more reasoned approach toward socialism and to be more lenient in their judgements. Protestantism did not constitute, as did Catholicism, such a total, inward-looking, and contained Weltanschauung that it was able to influence its followers to the same extent. Protestantism also lacked a specifically Protestant representation in the Reichstag such as Catholicism possessed in the Centre party; nor could it command a highly organized press service. For these reasons, Protestantism was a less effective barrier to socialism. Equally important was the fact, that ever since the Revolution of 1848 anyway, German Protestantism had lost the common man's allegiance. At a decisive moment, namely during the Revolution, German Protestantism had cast its lot with the authoritarian tradition, openly scorning the urban, industrialized, and liberal world that was coming into being.¹³ The Revolutionaries, the liberal bourgeoisie, had,

as the church saw it, sinned against God and His social order and had, furthermore, misled and incited the lower classes to frivolous actions and demands.¹⁴

Many Protestant clerics thought that pre-1848 Germany had been knowingly and intentionally destroyed by evil men; building on this, they came to believe in a conspiratorial theory of history and society. Chief among their targets were men of liberal or radical ideas and these were blamed for the recent, undesirable changes in the life of the individual and of society.¹⁵ The Protestant clergy sensed that liberalism was both the spiritual and political basis of modernity and sought to equate it with Manchesterism, with disregard of man's spiritual aspirations, acceptance of economic selfishness, and embourgeoisment of life and morals. But what the church loosely called liberalism was, in fact, the culmination of the secular and moral tradition of western Europe.¹⁶ German Protestantism clung obstinately to an outmoded and discredited political system and to an intellectual outlook that denied the growing expectations of the masses. Their allegiance was still pledged to the monarchy of their fathers, and they had little respect for the halting concessions to constitutionalism made to the 1848 Revolutionaries. They not only followed, but they also revered, those monarchical and authoritarian institutions most inimical to mass movements or democratic processes.¹⁷ Despite the loss of the common man's allegiance resulting from their attitudes, the Protestant clergy, seemingly perversely, committed their church to the monarchical authority.¹⁸

Historical conditions had long forced the Protestant churches of Germany to be evasive or cautious about attempting to deal with temporal problems. Owing largely to the protection originally afforded by the territorial princes

Protestantism grew in the shadow of the state and the division of social responsibility between church and state was decided chiefly in the latter's interest. Consequently, the nineteenth century social question came to assume only secondary importance, not because of the church's callous indifference to the lot of the workingman, but because in the long run it expected government and the triumph of reason to dispense their own social largess. What formal social theories did develop among the Protestant church hierarchy bore a marked corporative character; individual well-being became subordinated to the concern for the well-being of the estates or the nation.

A case in point was the short-lived decision of the Prussian General Synod in November 1878, that the clergy should become involved in the socio-political problems of their parishes. With the Social Democrats banished from the scene for the foreseeable future, the church hoped to capitalize on their absence and to take the opportunity to intensify the efforts of the clergy among the workers. This resolve was negated both in spirit and in fact when the Evangelical High Consistory in its directive of 20 February 1879 cautioned that no rash partiality favouring the demands of any one class over those of another was to be shown.

It is the duty of the clergy, by virtue of their office, to bring the message of peace to all people, without distinction. Consequently, they have to use restraint when participating in the heated political and social debates of the day and use their civic rights with caution; a caution, which is in keeping with their obligation to prepare the world for God's Kingdom, to admonish [the people] to reconciliation. Nothing has harmed the influence of the state church more -- not only in the higher social circles -- than the recent attempts by some, to use the church and its organizations, with all what they stand for, as a spring-board for party political purposes.

However, [that does not mean] that the church can stand by indifferently or submissively watching the Socialist's undermining work, their perversion of all moral truths,

their desertion of the living God, their denunciation of the promises held by the eternal life and their overvaluation of sensual pleasures and material goods. True understanding and Christian love with the suffering [must prevail] while the danger of a fratricidal war calls upon us, to act decisively and energetically. 19

Under these circumstances most Protestant clergymen remained preoccupied with ecclesiastical and pastoral affairs, and content with a perfunctory and discursive notice of industrial labour and its problems. That the social question was not left entirely to Catholic endeavors alone, was primarily to the credit of individual Protestants, who set out on an independent course to tackle the social issues of their times.

A case in point were the tireless struggles and frustrations of Johann Hinrich Wichern (1808-1881) to get official church sanction for his project, the Inner Mission, a federated system of charities and social work activities. Wichern, whose father worked as an office clerk in Hamburg, was sufficiently imbued by the Awakening that swept Germany in the early decades of the nineteenth century, to follow the call and prepare for a pastoral career at the universities of Göttingen and Berlin.²⁰

Upon his ordination, he returned to Hamburg where he soon could observe first hand the cause and effect relationship of the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. He came to understand that caritas could not solve the social question, nor restore the confidence of the common man in the church. Practical measures were necessary to relieve the distress of the urban poor, and to cope with such social evils as drunkenness, prostitution, and crime.

He observed that the trend of modern thought had jeopardized the church as the formal embodiment of Christianity. To overcome the intellectual subversion which made for revolution and apostasy, Wichern proposed to save the church by enlisting the Inner Mission against its enemy. He sought to safe-

guard popular faith by appealing to Christians to love one another, to make each parish a living community. There, rich and poor would meet with one another as God had intended, and their faith would be made real by Christian acts. Something stronger than pietist charity was intended: a Christian social action transcending the narrow, personal, and introspective character of Pietism would tighten the bonds between rich and poor, between landowner and peasant, between master and apprentice. All the faithful would serve this community according to the obligation laid upon them by the Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.²¹

Wichern turned his theories into practice when he founded the Rauhe Haus, which became the spiritual and practical centre of the Inner Mission. The Rauhe Haus started off as an orphanage, run and maintained privately by Wichern. Soon it was expanded to include unemployed workers who were not only trained as lay brothers to carry Wichern's social message among the workers, but also learned new trades to sustain their material needs. During these formative years of the Inner Mission, Wichern crusaded throughout Germany on its behalf, raising monies and organizing the opening of similar centres elsewhere.

His great moment came when he was invited to attend a Kirchentag, a voluntary assembly of the Protestant clergy and laity, to meet in Wittenberg, 21 to 23 September, 1848. Here he made a strong plea for a Volkskirche, a religious edifice enjoying the fullest popular confidence, in which an active Christian faith would overcome doctrinal and confessional pride and prepare man for God's Kingdom. Here the Inner Mission would provide the means which had heretofore been lacking in the Protestant churches. "It would unite rich and poor, those in anguish and those content, in a higher bond than doctrinal

allegiance alone could attain." Through the Inner Mission's balm, "the Volkskirche would be sustained and the people, united once more with God, would reject the revolution as the work of Satan. The turning point of world history in which we find ourselves must also become a turning point in the history of the Christian and specifically, the German-Evangelical church, inasmuch as it must embrace a new relation to the people."

Wichern put the blame for the 1848 Revolution upon the Communists, rather than upon the bourgeois liberals. Feuerbach's philosophy in oversimplified form, he said, was spreading atheism among the workers. Their receptivity to it had been enhanced by fearful conditions in the cities. Had the church acted with respect to the ethical meaning of their social and evangelical mission, Wichern insisted, the calamity of revolution would not have befallen Germany. He pointed toward England, to a Protestant nation fulfilling its social and charitable task, and suggested that the German Protestants must also be inspired to go among the people, to establish city missions and to send preachers into the streets. For this work, so evangelical in method and purpose, private charities alone were inadequate. To deal with the social question properly required the assistance of the church; and since poverty and want were moral issues, he asked that his Inner Mission be entrusted with responsibility for them.²²

The Wittenberg Kirchentag could, however, not agree. Many complications, both theological and political, beset the cause of church unity. Wichern's focus on the working class was too close for comfort, in that it bore the possibility of creating resentment among the ruling class. Also, his concept of lay brother training was flatly rejected in orthodox circles. Any recognition of the Inner Mission was thus coupled with the demand for the creation

of a central steering committee of twelve church representatives, in which the orthodox wing eventually gained the upper hand and caused the re-orientation of Wichern's Inner Mission policies.

Under the orthodox influence, the Mission's focus shifted from the more practical aspect of Christian social work to a Christian-ethical evaluation of social needs. This re-orientation had much to do with the gradual weakening of the social impulse of the Inner Mission.²³

Despite the fate that befell the Inner Mission under the steering committee Wichern himself continued to fight at the frontline of social discontent, the working class districts of Hamburg. He succeeded in transplanting some of his own ideas of Christian social work into a select number of assistants, among them Friedrich Naumann (1860-1919). Not even the decadence of the Inner Mission, which increasingly emphasized simple charity, could obscure from Naumann the import of Wichern's message that constructive measures, conceived and administered in a Christian spirit, were the only means of solving social problems. From this source came Naumann's deep sense of the collective responsibility of men for their less fortunate brethren, a responsibility which had to find its meaning in terms suitable to a modern urban and industrial environment.²⁴

Until his retirement in 1894 from a post as an Inner Mission chaplain in Frankfurt/Main, Naumann had worked ceaselessly to give this obligation a specific meaning. He believed that the Inner Mission, if it were to remain true to Wichern's ideals, should be the bearer of Christian social responsibility. But all his energies were spent in vain; the Inner Mission had become a vested interest, dominated by clerical careerists entirely subservient to the state churches of Germany. Christian socialism was repugnant to them

and only a small corps of progressive pastors and theological students responded to Naumann's appeal.

Failure to arouse the Inner Mission from its lethargy had important consequences for Naumann. It led him away from the ministry toward secular interests and eventually into a new career as a politician and publicist. The transition went remarkably smoothly. He joined Stoecker's Christian-Socialist party which seemed to provide an excellent opportunity as an adequate forum from which he could disperse his social ideas and test the viabilities of his socio-political views. But Naumann's liberal political views and his pro-working class stand made the eventual breach between him and the conservative, agrarian orientated Stoecker only a matter of time.²⁵

At the Congress of the Inner Mission in 1890, Naumann identified the surge of proletarian socialism in Germany with the phenomenal electoral success of the Social Democratic party as a tendency which the Protestant church had eventually to recognize, and to embrace. He looked upon socialism as a valid aspect of German national life. He even went so far, to the astonishment of conservative Germans, as to characterize the Social Democratic party as the first great heresy of the Evangelical church.²⁶ This statement marked the short period in Naumann's life where he openly sympathized with the Socialists which earned him the nickname "the Red." The "apparent lack" of national pride among socialists led him to reconsider, however. Under the tutelage of the eminent sociologist Max Weber and, to lesser extent, of pastor Paul Göhre, Naumann's political and social views underwent further changes. He met both men in 1890 during one of the early meetings of the Evangelical Social Congress, an organization created by Stoecker to unite the several Protestant movements having an interest in social questions.

Weber succeeded in implanting an almost fanatical nationalism into Naumann, one which asserted Germany's autocratic political system, her fight for "a place in the sun," and favoured industrial interests.²⁷ "In present-day Germany," Naumann wrote in 1900,

there is no stronger force than the Kaiser. The very complaints of the anti-Kaiser democrats about the growth of personal absolutism are the best proof of this fact, for these complaints are not pure invention but are based on the repeated observation that all policy, foreign and internal, stems from the will and word of the Kaiser. No monarch of absolutist times ever had so much real power as the Kaiser has today. He does not achieve everything he wants, but it is still more than anybody would have believed in the middle of the last century. 28

Ringling along in this exaltation of Kaiser-power was a certain denial of the political aspirations of the working class which only could be realized under a more democratic system.

Naumann's social views underwent similar changes and became strongly coloured by his nationalism. Thus he welcomed the general development of large-scale capitalism while remaining somewhat critical toward the social policies of heavy industry. But more important, Naumann's position on capitalism postponed the emergence of a socialistic society to the distant future.

In the growing concentration of capital in fewer hands we find a severe economic abuse. The abuse is not that a few people direct large enterprises, for direction by many people has proven completely impracticable in many areas. The superordination and subordination of men resulting from the division of labour cannot be abolished. The problem is merely to eliminate as far as possible the dangers of the abuse of this superordination and subordination vis a vis the nondirectors. Insofar as big industry is promoted by the progress of technology we recognize it as a necessity. 29

With the state becoming the end-all, it was only one small step for Naumann

to realize that Christianity had no clear social message for the modern world: Wichern's concept of practical social Christianity was dead.

There is some evidence that the often lengthy debates among Protestants about social issues and socialism introduced them to social democratic philosophy and ideals to a degree that would not have been otherwise possible. The result was that some Protestant theologians became Social Democrats because of their convictions.

The most famous case was the conversion to socialism of the Protestant pastor, Paul Göhre, whose parish was in the industrial town of Frankfurt/Oder. Göhre (1864-1928), son of a court clerk, showed from an early date interest and understanding for the problems facing the German workers. Consequently, he never fully accepted the "throne and altar" doctrines fed to him during his study of theology. His association -- as already mentioned -- with Weber and Naumann sharpened his social awareness, as did his position as secretary of the Evangelical-Social Congress. The Social Congress took an academic interest in the social question and kept liberal Protestant thought alive among its participants which, however, was not enough for Göhre. While he still held the position as secretary, he worked for three months in a factory in Leipzig -- unheard of in his days. Göhre talked about his observations and experiences in the factory in a little account which culminated in the remark that the Social Democratic party

has as its goal and is at the same time successful in transforming the conventional education, the religious convictions and the moral character of the German workers. That is because the Social Democratic party of today is not only a new political party or a new economic system or both, but is at the same time a new Welt - und Lebensanschauung, the Weltanschauung of consistent materialism. 30

Göhre's experiences kept him aloof from Naumann's fervent nationalism and

increasingly he had to wrestle with a growing feeling of alienation from the church. In 1900 he took the plunge: Göhre resigned from his clerical positions and joined the Social Democrats.

His conversion made him a cause célèbre and he wrote about the reasons for his defection in a series of articles published in Die Zukunft. Christian love and concern, he wrote, were his main reasons for conversion to social democracy. To him, the movement showed a genuine interest in the well-being of all people, regardless of their social standing. Charity, so he felt, was the heart of German Social Democracy, whereas the Protestant church only paid lip service to it.

It is indisputable, that my religious convictions drove me into the socialist camp. One can enjoy the most pleasant living conditions, but only when shared with the others. You may enjoy them only, when you are trying to win [similar favourable] circumstances for the others, [since] you are, after all, only a small part of society and can only exist because of society. That is, in short, Jesus' concept of charity. In one word, it is the equality of all. That means, however, to put all one's power, strength, education, social influence and means of existence on the line without reservation, to fight need and insufficiency in all its forms, to enable all people to share in [our] fortune, to enable them to become happy and harmonious individuals. This is the aim of today's Social Democracy, not the churches'. Numerous party members have already found hope, strength and relief [under the party's program]. It is the driving power of the movement and its pride. Jesus' equality celebrates its modern resurrection in Social Democracy. 31

Whatever measures of relief for the workers were undertaken by the Protestants -- even the Inner Missions -- were the efforts of individuals alone. Such efforts reached neither the extent nor the depth of comparable Catholic programs, nor did they constitute an effective barrier against the socialist movement. Whatever was done by the Protestant church to regain the workers' souls was too late, and too haphazard. Anything not in agreement

with the prevailing views of the orthodox church hierarchy was either suppressed or brought into line to fit that hierarchy's political and social outlook.

The few independent spirits among the Protestants who followed their own course, such as Naumann and Göhre, were sufficiently frustrated and alienated by the church's governing body, to pursue careers outside of the field of ministry. The Protestant church was, in many instances, its own worst enemy. It adhered to a benevolent paternalism which was totally unsuitable for the industrial era.

Chapter 2 - Footnotes

11. Robert Michels, "Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie," Archiv für Sozialwissenschaften und Sozialpolitik 23 (1906): 471-556.
2. Edgar Alexander, "Church and Society in Germany," in Church and Society: Catholic Social and Political Thought and Movements, 1789-1950, ed. J.N. Moody (New York: Arts, 1953), pp. 325-583.
3. August Bebel, Aus meinem Leben, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Dietz, 1911), 1: 28-29, 38-39. In Salzburg, where he worked for nearly a year in 1859-60, Bebel regularly attended the society's meetings and built a cordial relationship with the director, Dr. Schopf, a Jesuit who taught at the local seminary.
4. Alexander, "Church and Society in Germany," ibid., p. 408.
5. Wilhelm E. Ketteler, Die Arbeiterfrage und das Christentum (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1864), pp. 62-65.
6. Alexander, "Church and Society in Germany," ibid., p. 416. Catholicism in nineteenth century Germany has been most carefully analysed in all its aspects in Gustave Goyau, L'Allemagne religieuse: Le Catholicisme, 1800-1870, 4 vols. (Paris: Perrin, 1909).
7. Franz Heiner, Christentum und Kirche im Kampfe mit der Sozialdemokratie: Ein offenes Wort (Freiburg/Brsg.: Geschäftsstelle des Charitasverbandes für das katholische Deutschland, 1903), pp. 33, 137.
8. Ibid., p. 105.
9. Otto Müller, Die christliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung Deutschlands: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bergarbeiter - und Textilarbeiter Organisationen (Karlsruhe: G. Braun'sche Hofbuchdruckerei, 1905), p. 17.
10. Helga Grebing, Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1970), p. 127.
11. Ibid., p. 128.
12. Clemens Bauer, "Wandlungen der sozialpolitischen Ideenwelt im deutschen Katholizismus," in Die soziale Frage und der Katholizismus: Festschrift zum 40 jährigen Jubiläum der Enzyklika "Rerum Novarum," Veröffentlichung der Sektion für Sozial- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften der Görres Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaften im katholischen Deutschland (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1931), pp. 45-73.
13. Exceptions were found among some Protestant sects, such as the Illuminati, which sided with the workers in their demand for greater say in political

and social decision making. Jacques Droz, "Die religiösen Sekten und die Revolution von 1848," Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 3 (1963): 109-18.

14. Ernst Schubert, Die evangelische Predigt im Revolutionsjahr 1848 (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1913), pp. 5-45.
15. A case in point is Pastor Rudolf Palmie, who said: "Wir haben fremde Mächte in unser Herz einziehen lassen: nicht den heiligen Geist, sondern einen fremden Geist, der heisst: Liberalismus; er führt den Namen eines fremden Geistes, ist aber einem Wesen nach ein böser Geist der Vernichtung, ein Feldteufel." Cited in Schubert, Evangelische Predigt, p. 78.
16. Richard Lempp, Die Frage der Trennung von Kirche und Staat im Frankfurter Parlament (Tübingen: Mohr, 1913), pp. 1-14; Werner Conze, "Staat und Gesellschaft in der frührevolutionären Epoche Deutschlands," Historische Zeitschrift 186 (1958): 31-32; Heinrich Scholler, ed., Die Grundrechtsdiskussion in der Paulskirche (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1973), pp. 23-26; Dekan Holdermann, "Die Trennung von Staat und Kirche vom Standpunkt der deutschen evangelisch-kirchlichen Interessen," Protestantische Monatshefte 11 (1907): 273-92.
17. Julius Stahl, the chief architect of the Protestant conservative philosophy, believed that solid Protestant regimes were those governed by rulers such as the Prussian soldier-kings who recognized the fear of God as the cornerstone of statecraft. Their faith joined to that of those they governed, had made Prussia a sanctified state. Unqualified respect and obedience was owed a Protestant monarch by his subjects and civil liberties in no way implied the right to revolt against God's lawful authority invested in the ruler. True Protestant freedom bound all men to this interpretation of God's law in the political and social context. Reiner Strunk, Politische Ekklesiologie im Zeitalter der Revolution (München: Kaiser and Grünewald, 1971), pp. 183-89.
18. The full extent of the erosion of the Protestant church's status in German society was well illustrated by an opinion poll conducted in 1906 by Theodor Kappstein, a former student of theology. The question asked "Is there still a need for a [Protestant] clergy," was, in itself, a direct attack on the clergy that a decade before would have been unthinkable and can be taken as a measure of the extent and depth of the secularization of German society in the 1900's. The questionnaire was sent to "a number of scholars and artists, as well as several other outstanding ladies and gentlemen of the ruling elite in Germany." Kappstein asked: "Does the Protestant clergy still occupy a meaningful place in society? In the past, the clergy were the only educated persons in town and countryside, who would instruct people at regular intervals. These times are definitely gone. The clergy and the modern, educated man quite often face each other mutually unappreciate, like members of two different worlds with no common ground between them. Is there still room in this culture of ours, based as it is on the sciences, is there still enough room for the clergy and its particular activity?" The majority of those asked -- displaying an indifference that argued their disinterest in the

subject as a still viable issue -- did not respond and Kappstein received only fifty replies. Most of these answers suggested that there was still a need for the clergy but in vague, trite terms amounting to little more than platitudes. But even more striking than the answers themselves was the fact that such an opinion poll was possible, that the ambiguity of society toward the clergy was sufficiently evident and widespread as to be recognized and questioned. Theodor Kappstein, Bedürfen wir des Pfarrers noch? Ergebnis einer Rundfrage (Berlin: Hüpeden & Merzyn, 1906), pp. 1, 2-3, 28-29, 151-54.

19. "Ansprache an die Geistlichen und Gemeinderäte der evangelischen Landeskirche, betreffend ihre Aufgabe gegenüber den aus der sozialistischen Bewegung entstandenen Gefahren," Kirchliches Gesetz-und Verordnungsblatt, 20 February 1879.
20. The influence of contemporary theological and ecclesiastical currents upon Wichern is treated in Erich Thier, Die Kirche und die soziale Frage: Von Wichern bis Friedrich Naumann. Eine Untersuchung über die Beziehungen zwischen politischen Vorgängen und kirchlichen Reformen (Gütersloh: Gertelsmann, 1950), pp. 19-25.
21. Friedrich Oldenberg, Johann Hinrich Wichern: Sein Leben und Wirken, 2 vols., (Hamburg: Agentur des Rauhen Hauses, 1884-87), I: 515-37.
22. Die Verhandlungen der Wittenberger Versammlung für Gründung eines deutschen evangelischen Kirchenbundes in September 1848. Nach Beschluss auf Antrag derselben veröffentlicht durch ihren Schriftführer Kling (Berlin: Hertz, 1848), pp. 18-33, 68-78.
23. Martin Gerhardt, "Innere Mission und christlich-soziale Bewegung," Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 51 (1932): 281-304.
24. Thier, Kirche und soziale Frage, pp. 70-79. Thier stresses Naumann's debt to Wichern while developing some basic differences.
25. Walter Frank, Hofprediger Adolf Stoecker und die christlichsoziale Bewegung (Berlin: Hobböing, 1928), pp. 342-48.
26. Theodor Heuss, Friedrich Naumann: Der Mann, das Werk, die Zeit (Stuttgart: Wunderlich, 1949), p. 68. The author, the former President of the German Federal Republic, was one of Naumann's political disciples.
27. Marianne Weber, Max Weber: Ein Lebensbild (Tübingen: Mohr, 1926), pp. 141-45. See also Paul Honigsheim, "Max Weber: His Religious and Ethical Background and Development," Church History 19 (1950): 222.
28. Friedrich Naumann, Demokratie und Kaisertum: Ein Handbuch für innere Politik (Berlin: Hilfe, 1904), pp. 167-68.
29. Friedrich Naumann, "Gedanken zum christlich-sozialen Programm," in Der Weg zum Volksstaat (Berlin: Fortschritt, 1917), p. 35.

30. Paul Göhre, Drei Monate als Fabrikarbeiter und Handwerksbursche: Eine praktische Studie (Leipzig: Grunow, 1891), p. 106. See also his essay "Ein Arbeiterschicksal," Zukunft 5 (1897): 148-52.
31. Paul Göhre, Wie ein Pfarrer Sozialdemokrat wurde (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1900), pp. 2-3.

Chapter 3

Heraus aus der Kirche:The Struggle Against the Political Church, 1890 - 1914.

The period following the repeal of the Socialist Law up to the outbreak of World War I was characterized by a growing split within the Social Democratic party. This split manifested itself in different approaches to the religious question as well. The party moderates, displaying more and more bourgeois leanings, took the lesson of 1878 to heart. There was now a cautious approach to all questions of church and religion. With one eye constantly turned to the electorate, their steps were more guided by popularist appeal than by the appeal of atheistic anarchism. The other faction, the radicals, took exactly the opposite stand. Shifting the attack from one against Christianity to one against the political oppressive church, they tried to exploit the issue as a lever to power. Campaigning for secession, they hoped to set the scene for class confrontation.

Although the party withstood the government's intent to destroy it, the enactment of the Socialist Law brought a hitherto hidden conflict within the party into the open. The prohibition and persecution of the party by the government for twelve years inevitably strengthened its revolutionary wing. The Law starkly revealed that the state was an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class.¹ The seed of hatred for the state and

the ruling class which they themselves had planted grew in the minds of many workers. The party's reply to the Socialist Law was the Erfurt program of 1891 -- a program of revolutionary socialism in the international spirit of Marxism, in sharp contrast to the national brand of socialism represented by Lassalle and expressed in the Gotha program of 1875.² The party's regard for Lassalle was by no means extinguished but in the Erfurt program it rejected his axiom that the workers must identify themselves with the national state.

The revisionist group centered around Eduard Bernstein and Georg von Vollmar, two of the party's most respected figures, disagreed and argued instead that the state and bourgeois society could be transformed by gradual evolution and it was the party's duty to assist this process. It should win the peasants as allies and co-operate with the progressive liberal wing of the bourgeoisie to effect social and political reforms. The revocation of the Socialist Law proved to Vollmar's satisfaction that the middle class was far from being a solid reactionary mass. In order to increase its influence in the Reichstag, provincial governments, and local councils, the party should be prepared to make electoral alliances with bourgeois parties. This Bernsteinian concept of evolutionary rather than revolutionary socialism, the theory that capitalist society would grow into socialism, was also expounded by French, Italian and British Socialists.³

The radicals who constituted a sizable bloc within the German Socialist party, argued that the situation in Germany could not be compared to that in France or England. Bismarck had given the German state a constitution which entrenched the political supremacy of the king of Prussia and the position of the aristocratic landowners and the executive power was in the

hands, not of a government responsible to the Reichstag, but of an emperor who was steeped in feudal, absolutist, God-given concepts of government. He regarded the Reichstag as an abomination, and he was even considering, as were also the landed aristocracy and the army, a coup d'etat to abolish elections to the Reichstag. In view of the fact that the German government would resist any transition to parliamentary democracy it was difficult for the party's radicals to see what the movement would gain if it renounced and abandoned Marx's theories. Indeed if the faith in its great historical mission which Marx had bequeathed to the working class were to be abandoned then the enthusiasm which was the source of so much vitality in the social democratic movement, would surely wither away. Moreover, such a loss of faith would undoubtedly destroy the unity of the party and weaken the working class disastrously.⁴

The role of mediator fell to those Social Democrats around Karl Kautsky. Kautsky constantly sought to find an acceptable medium between the radicals and moderates. Consequently, he soon became identified as being an opportunist particularly when he threw in his lot with the moderates following the breakup of the Social Democratic party in 1916.

A long and sometimes bitter debate ensued among the German Social Democrats bringing them close to splitting along moderate and radical lines. The moderates proposed toning down the revolutionary Marxist aspects of the movement and advocated the use of parliamentary tactics; the radicals suggested revolution and mass action to further the Marxist cause. In the midst of these inner dissensions, the Social Democrats pursued an ambiguous course in the Reichstag; ambiguous because they were participating in a political institution in which they could not believe but must regard, ideologically,

as an instrument intended to serve the interests of their enemies. Forced by circumstances to become ambivalent parliamentarians, they also became ambivalent revolutionaries. Success in elections and the hope of influencing legislation made it unnecessary for them to think in terms of direct revolutionary action yet the principles of Marxism, reiterated in the Erfurt program, obligated them to think precisely in those terms.

Factionalism did not enter the debate on church and religion. On this point, both radicals and moderates came to a tacit understanding that the old formula, which declared religion a "private matter" should be retained.⁵ The radicals who were more Marxist oriented did not believe it necessary to battle the Christian Weltanschauung, while the moderates, recalling the negative response militant atheism had generated during the 1870's, wished to avoid a similar tactical error.

This temporary display of party unit in matters ecclesiastical did not prevent a few diehard militant atheists from pushing for more aggressive policies. Most notable among these was Adolph Hoffmann (1858-1930). Hoffmann, another firebrand of the calibre of Johann Most, social democratic member of the Prussian Diet and disciple of the party's radical faction, wanted to see his party committed to the destruction of church and religion. Unwaveringly, he stuck with this goal, party policies notwithstanding. In 1892, during the party's congress in Berlin, he proposed to replace the clause "religion is a private matter" with

religion and its teachers are to be attacked everywhere, where they hinder the free development of the sciences. They are to be opposed everywhere, where they are in the way of the people fighting for their political and economic freedom. ⁶

Wilhelm Liebknecht, addressing himself to those incurable hotheads who

wished to see the battle against religion made one of the party's main objectives maintained that the masses alone could not hope to suppress religion. This could only be done in accord with the state and society as a whole. Today's churches, both Protestant and Catholic, were not only the product of the class state but also its allies and its tools. Therefore, a battle of state and society against religion could not be materialized at this point. The main battle was against the class structure and those who turned primarily against religion only wasted their strength.

I often had to campaign in areas where Catholicism still represents a formidable barrier, but where socialism is slowly being accepted as well. I was able to reach the people by explaining to them the proper meaning of our religious paragraph and converted several of them to our cause. These people still vote Social Democratic. Now, if I would have attacked religion, however, I would have alienated them, driven them away.

Social democracy, so Liebknecht emphasized, had to avoid the mistake made by Bismarck -- a battle against religion would only strengthen the same. Brute force would not change personal convictions; the best antidote for religion was the spread of knowledge.

Our party is a party with a scientific basis. The sciences, although diametrically opposed to religion, cannot and will not stamp out religion. But science (Wissenschaft) does ensure proper education, while education in turn is the best weapon against religion. Schools have to be mobilized against the church, teachers against the clergy. Proper education does away with religion. 7

Whatever the party program stated it was generally understood that even principles must not be exalted above the requirement of vote-getting. Therefore it is not surprising that frequent attempts were made by free-thinking socialists to involve the party in an all-out campaign against church and religion to further their own particular interests. However, the party majority resisted these attempts to make the movement forsake its political

aspirations in order to accomodate a few fanatics.

Rejection of these attempts was strongest in social democratic circles closely associated with the trade unions which saw some danger to the union's cause should the party pursue an antireligious policy. Since a union's strength rested entirely on the numerical strength of its membership, as Otto Huè (1868-1922) argued, the appeal had to be to all workers regardless of their Weltanschauung. Since he himself had been a miner in the Ruhr district and was intimately acquainted with the situation, Huè recommended that the unions should try to keep all controversies of this nature out of their organizations, as such issues tended to threaten the unity and neutrality of the unions.

The Christian unions, ever since their inauguration, are beset with troubles. These troubles stem primarily from the difficulties to align the justified demands of the workers for improved working conditions and higher pay with the churches' aim to avoid any confrontation between employers and management, to create an atmosphere of Christian harmony and love between them.

From this the Free Unions should learn that the question of a common Weltanschauung tends to be a more divisive, rather than a healing factor. The Free Unions would best be served not to get involved in the religious question, to steer clear from it. Only a union, which concerns itself exclusively with the betterment of the workers' plight, can survive and be strong. 8

Max Hirsch, another union expert, warned that any antireligious propaganda would harm the party's and the union's position among the coal miners. Miners, he said, could not differentiate between religiosity on the one hand, and church membership on the other. To them, religiosity and church membership were inseparable; any propaganda against church or religion would only confuse them and undermine their loyalty to party and union.⁹

Karl Zielke underlined the central issue when he said that the Erfurt program emphasized, as one of its principles, freedom of conscience, thus

guaranteeing the individual's freedom of choice in all questions of Weltanschauung. It was up to each member to decide for himself to what extent the church satisfied his religious needs and to reject all attempts by it to interfere in other spheres of his life. The party could uncover and counteract the church's influence in politics but could not demand that its membership take a common stand against the church.

It is the duty of the individual to search himself, to find out, whether or not the church still satisfies his religious needs -- should he still have any. It is also the duty of the individual to ensure that the church does not concern herself with matters that should not concern her. It is the party's duty to point out to its members, that membership in the church strengthens the reactionaries' cause. But it is not the party's business to demand secession from its members. 10

During the party's congress at München (1902), another long debate on the religious question ensued arising from a motion by Georg Welker, Social Democratic deputy from Wiesbaden. Since Reichstag elections were imminent, he advocated a more radical position towards religion since it was the main stumbling block to man's struggle for liberation. Welker suggested the use of leaflets and rallies among factory workers as a method to enlighten the masses. Georg von Vollmar immediately lashed out against Welker, arguing for greater discretion on the part of the socialists in all questions of church and religion. If antireligious forces within the party had the right to voice their own personal convictions then, by the same token, party members who still harboured religious sentiments had the right to voice theirs. While none might speak officially in the name of the party or use it to implement his personal convictions, each had the right to follow his own persuasion.

Bebel, who followed Vollmar as a speaker, demanded the publication of a pamphlet expounding the official party interpretation of Paragraph 6.

He then reiterated Vollmar's position saying that "everybody can believe what he wants; he can be a Social Democrat of Catholic persuasion, a materialist, or an atheist, that's none of the party's business."

Only if he agitates for whatever he believes in, in the name of the party, only then does he violate our program and we would have to stop him....We are opposing the mixture of secular with ecclesiastical power; we demand the separation of these two entities. We look upon the state as a secular power, while religious associations are private societies. We oppose any move by the state -- directly or indirectly -- to enforce membership in any one of these religious societies, or state subsidies made available to them. 11

Kautsky, in a remark made many years later, probably described the situation best when he said that "social democracy had to avoid, indeed to fight, anything which would have resulted in an useless provocation of the ruling classes; anything which would have given its officials an excuse to force the bourgeoisie and its friends into a socialist witch hunt (sozialistenfresserische Tollhäuserei)."¹²

The party's restraint in questions of church and religion, however, was only shortlived. It was the issue of elementary school education, specifically the Prussian School Maintenance Act of 1906, that brought the issue once more to the fore.¹³ The organizer of the modern Prussian elementary school system was Dr. Falk, Prussian minister of education. In 1872 he spelled out in no uncertain terms the government's expectations of the school system:

The object of the Prussian elementary school has always been to educate the growing generation to become pious, patriotic men and women who are able by means of the general education and training they receive to fill an honourable position in society. In whatever way the relations of church and state have been conceived, and whatever theological tendency was paramount at any period, the religious and moral education of youth has at all times been considered the foremost purpose of the schools, and never have the administrative authorities of the state wavered in pursuing the high ideal of sowing the seeds of patriotic, religious, and

moral sentiment in the children, so that they will become citizens whose inner worth can secure the welfare and preservation of the state.

But side by side with this exalted ideal, the requirements of practical life have not been left out of sight. Children must learn in school how to perform duties, they are to be trained to work, to take pleasure in their work, so as to become efficient workers. This has been the aim of popular education in Prussia since the earliest times, and to this day it is plainly understood by all administrative officers and teachers, and by the majority of parents, that it is the business of the elementary school not merely to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, but to teach the citizens cheerfully to serve their God, their native country and themselves.

Bismarck and the Kaiser soon came to realize that the government had in the elementary schools a tool which would not only teach the children how to serve their God cheerfully, but, also how to serve the Kaiser's interest. In Bismarck's words,

The mighty influence which the schools exercise in the education of the nation consists in this, that the German child, when handed over to the teacher, is like a blank sheet of paper, and all that is written upon it during the course of elementary education is written with indelible ink, and will last through life. The soul of a child is like wax. Therefore he who directs the school directs the country's future.

To dispel any misconception as to where German's future lay, Wilhelm II elaborated in a speech, 1 May 1889:

I have for a long time been occupied with the thought of making use of the schools in their various grades for combatting the spread of socialistic and communist ideas. The school must endeavor to create in the young the conviction that the teachings of Social Democracy not only contravene Divine command and Christian morals, but are moreover impracticable. 14

The news of the Russian Revolution of 1905 which grew out of the tragedy of the "Bloody Sunday," reinforced Wilhelm's convictions. To this end, the School Maintenance Act of 1906 was designed to tighten control over Prussia's school system, to prevent the influx of radical elements and ideas.

The important task of instilling the pupils with cheerful piety and humble obedience -- to educate them in the spirit of the guidelines noted above -- was left in the capable hands of Germany's two official religions, Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Other denominations were not recognized and their particular religious views were not taught in the schools, nor considered as possible substitutes. However, education came under provincial rather than federal jurisdiction and so the situation varied from province to province. Prussia, the Mecklenburgs, Bremen, and Lübeck made the attendance at religious instruction mandatory for all elementary pupils, but in Bayern, Württemberg, and Baden attendance was not obligatory. A compromise of sorts was worked out in Sachsen, Anhalt, and most of the Thuringen states, where the private instruction of minority children was recognized as sufficient substitute for the school instruction given by either of the two official denominations.

The confinement of school instruction to the doctrines of the two official churches always constituted a particular hardship for the various Protestant sects, the Methodists, Baptists, Adventists, the Apostelgemeinde and the many other exotic denominations which had large memberships and would have preferred that their children receive no religious instruction in school rather than the sort to which they were subjected. But feelings ran even higher among the Monists and the Freireligiösen Gemeinden who held religious instruction of any kind worse than useless. Certain chapters of the latter association did secure permission to keep their children out of the religious classes and to give them ethical instruction privately. But the more general practice was to make such children attend religious instruction classes, where the teachers sought to counteract the effect of any private heretical teaching by ridiculing them in front of their school-

mates.¹⁵

The Maintenance Act strengthened the churches' stranglehold on education. It reiterated the confessional, or sectarian, basis of the schools. The only concession made to religious minorities was the stipulation that if the number of students of any one minority faith amounted to a minimum of 60 at rural schools or 120 at urban schools, such students were to receive special instruction. But if they numbered less, they were to attend the compulsory religious instruction given the majority whether Protestant or Catholic. In practice these minima were seldom met as they were set so high. The hours of religious instruction were specified as 1302 hours per school year for urban elementary schools and 1722 hours for the single-class rural school.¹⁶ Church attendance was made compulsory for the teaching staff and compliance was enforced by special directives from the school boards.¹⁷ Paragraphs 44 to 61 of the Act put the administration of school affairs entirely into the hands of the clergy in rural one-school areas, and guaranteed the proper representation of church officials on school boards in larger, urban school districts. It also provided that the church officials assume the role of school inspectors, to keep a close eye both on the curriculum and the teaching staff. Furthermore, church officials did not require governmental approval prior to appointment to school boards, as did members of the laity. This measure was seen as the best preventive against possible infiltration of the school boards by politically undesirable persons.¹⁸

The resulting public furor over the Act clearly indicated that the legislation touched upon a nerve which largely negated any differences in political affiliation. Teacher and parent associations throughout Prussia came out strong against this kind of "shotgun Christianity." Most vocal

in its opposition was the teacher's association of Bremen, which, in a nationally distributed questionnaire asked people from all walks of life to comment on the continued insistence on religious instruction in the school curriculum. "More than ever," so read the introductory letter to the questionnaire, "does the state side with the churches, which -- with their outmoded and often childish ideas -- have come to dominate the school curriculum more and more. Teachers and students alike are forced to partake, thus not only causing irreparable damage to our religious heritage but also to the entire school system. Religion cannot be taught, it has to assert itself in everyday life."¹⁹

The Social Democrats, long time opponents of religious instruction, made themselves champions of the disenchanted. Already in 1904, during the party's annual congress, Clara Zetkin (1857-1933), herself a school teacher and an uncompromising Marxist, came out strongly against it, while making a basic policy statement on her party's educational platforms.

One of our basic demands is the secularization of education. No religious instruction in the schools. Religion has no place here, not for ethical, pedagogical or other reasons. Religious instruction carries the mark of brainwashing: it is not designed to cater to a religious need, but designed to re-inforce the economic and social bondage of the working class. Religious instruction does not serve religiosity, but satisfies itself with the mindless regurgitation of religious formulae, which are in total contradiction to the sciences and reality. Therefore, religious instruction is immoral, poisonous. 20

Although the widespread unpopularity of the Act held great promise of political ammunition for Social Democracy, it displayed considerable restraint not to attack religion as such, but rather the unworthy and unhealthy mixture of religious with secular matters. With increasing clarity, the socialists' attack shifted from one of Weltanschauung to one against the oppressive

church. "Let us be honest," wrote August Erdmann in 1905 in the Sozial-
istischen Monatsheften,

we shall not force anybody to give up his religious convictions or prevent him from joining our ranks because of it. But it is our duty to break the power of the church, the old and mighty adversary of freedom. [We also shall] banish all the religious confusion in the minds of the masses, which constitutes a barrier to progress. In this sense religion cannot be a private matter and we should no longer cling to it.

I am of the opinion therefore, that religious instruction should be banned from the school curriculum. I am almost tempted to say: Hinaus mit jeder Religion aus der Kirche. 21

For years to come, the church's control over school education was to be a staple in the repertoire of socialist antichurch propaganda.

The public controversy over the Prussian School Maintenance Act had hardly cooled, when, two years later, the churches once again occupied public interest. As a result of a sluggish German economy in 1908, the Prussian finance minister proposed higher taxes to meet inflationary expenses. The Protestant church felt equally justified in raising the church taxes and achieving a wider tax base by lowering the exemption rate.²²

It also requested additional funds to the amount of 12.5 million marks from the Prussian government. Both tax increases were met by a public outcry, particularly the church tax, as the public entertained exaggerated ideas of clerical salaries.²³

Obviously, this protest benefitted the Social Democrats but there was considerable reluctance to act. This time, unlike in the Maintenance Act controversy where the principal protestors, the parents and teachers, belonged to the very social circles they were trying to reach, the most vocal protests came from minority groups, free-thinkers, Monists, atheists, and the like who were to be considered suspect, if not radical, by conventional bourgeois standards. This presented a certain dilemma to the party's moderates.

Any collusion with these minority groups necessarily meant the abandonment of the hope of a less radical public image which would involve them in a scheme which could backfire again. In facing this predicament the party's executive chose not to commit itself or the party officially either pro or con leaving all action to individuals following their own convictions.

The underlying root cause for this split was the latent, but always present, division among the Social Democrats themselves since the repeal of the Socialist Law. Whatever interparty dissention existed prior to the repeal had not surfaced as the outlawed status of the party demanded a united front against the common enemy. With the repeal of the law, however, two factions evolved adhering to diametrically opposed political theories: one advocating a radical course of action and the other, orderly parliamentarism. Repeated attempts to win over party delegates to either theory created some instability and made the party as a whole rather vulnerable to outside pressures.

The latter was amply demonstrated when the news broke of the reputed success of the general strike in Russia which had wrung from the Tsar the ambiguous constitution of 1905.²⁴ Throughout western Europe there was a new impatience with parliamentary delays while in Germany the impotence of the social democratic members of the Reichstag, in spite of the three million votes behind them seemed intolerable.²⁵ Although the radical Social Democrats pressed for direct action as opposed to orderly parliamentary tactics, the question essentially was whether the German workers could destroy by either legal means or revolutionary tactics the supremacy of the Junkers. This supremacy had been maintained over many centuries by the use of the political pillars of Prussia -- her monarchs, armies, church, bureaucracy and law courts. The centre of Junker power lay in the methods on which the

entire regime in Germany rested. As long as the Junkers maintained this central power, there were strict limits to the development of German democracy and the working-class power. Until the Prussian Landtag came to be elected by universal suffrage, Junker supremacy would remain untouched. Until then, neither speeches, press campaigns, public meetings nor street demonstrations had had the slightest effect. The problem for the party was whether the political general strike would serve as an effective weapon for democracy in Prussia.

As to the political implications of such a general strike, the majority of Social Democrats held the view that if the general strike was used by the dominant party in Germany against the strongest government and most closely-knit ruling class in the world, this would unquestionably precipitate a decisive struggle for power.²⁶

The fact -- that a general strike would inevitably become a struggle for survival of the socialist movement itself -- created deep uneasiness in the party. After all, in the course of its fifty years' history the German socialist movement had risen from the most humble beginnings to a most powerful bureaucratic machinery, almost a state within a state. Its assets ran into the millions, and it controlled a huge number of subsidiary organizations.²⁷ Such an apparatus, originally created to serve the needs of the movement, produced its own vested interests and its own conservatism. The movement had originally created this organization to bring about social revolution, to undermine and eventually destroy the existing class society. But with the growth in strength and influence of its organizational apparatus, the movement had lost its revolutionary dynamic. The stronger its vested interest, the more the party stood to lose in a decisive struggle for state power. Everything that the working class had created through decades of

of considerable sacrifice could be lost in a few days or weeks of revolutionary conflict. On the other hand, the stronger the party became, the greater was its popular following and the more impressive its electoral successes; and the larger its parliamentary representation, the smaller seemed the danger of the ruling class provoking a conflict. The party leadership, and above all the union leadership, was greatly concerned not to be provocative.²⁸

German social democracy had obviously reached a philosophical cross-road where it had to decide whether it was to live up to its revolutionary Marxian principles as laid down in the Erfurt program, or to follow the path of least resistance and stick with its parliamentary tactics. It is against this background that one has to judge the respective actions by either faction in the renewed battle against the church.

As a backlash from the events in Russia in 1905, the social democratic radicals staged their first open challenge to the party's prevailing policies of moderation at the annual congress in Jena (1905). The task of clarifying the relationship between the reformist tactic and the revolutionary goal of the party fell to a newcomer to German Social Democracy: Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919). She combined one of the most penetrating analytical minds of her age with an imaginative warmth which make her writings unique in Marxist literature. From her Polish homeland, she carried into German Social Democracy a passionate and activist revolutionary spirit not common to Germany. When the radical faction began to form, Luxemburg was its guiding spirit, giving it theoretical structure and tactical leadership, and spurring it on with her eloquence.

The radicals' attack on the party's prevailing policies of moderation at Jena was their first open challenge. Rosa Luxemburg, foremost in the

radicals' attack on parliamentary tactics, rightly pointed to the movement's political stagnation and its loss of initiative. Only direct action could bring about the realization of the party's goal: political control over Germany. The majority of the assembled delegates turned her down but the margin of the vote was far from decisive.

The party's moderates were arguing at the same time that German Social Democracy has developed beyond merely representing the proletarian class but segments of the liberal sector of the bourgeoisie as well. Consequently, Social Democratic policies should be adjusted accordingly.²⁹ That is why there was little hesitation even among the moderates to involve themselves in the controversy over the School Maintenance Act, since its principal protestors, the teachers and parents, were exactly the social circles whose support the moderates wooed.

The momentary unity of action of the moderates and the radicals led the latter to believe in the dawn of a new era. In that year's party congress at Mannheim, the radicals once again pressed for the adoption of a more radical pace in the pursuit of the ultimate goal. By a small majority this attempt was rebuffed.

When the moderate Eduard David stated after the Mannheim Congress, that the "brief May flowering of the new revolutionism is happily over," and that "the party will again devote itself with undivided heart to the positive exploitation and expansion of its parliamentary power," he was only partially correct.³⁰ With regard to the party's tactics, David's assumption was right, since the movement was entering a three-year period in which not even the most militant revolutionary could discover a concrete opportunity for radical action. As to the attitudes and ideas of the radicals, however, David was

wrong. The experience of 1905-06, both in the broad arena of politics and in the narrower confines of party life, left an unforgettable impression on the radical wing.

The next step in the division of the Social Democratic party was the fateful election of 1907 which was acknowledged by the party to be decisive.³¹ Again the government invoked the red demon of revolutionary and traitorous socialism; again Conservatives and National Liberals rallied in defence of family, morality, country, Kaiser, and God, and, incidentally, of a very harsh and vigorous foreign policy. When the votes were counted it was discovered that the Social Democrats had suffered a signal defeat.

The election result had a most sobering and moderating effect on the Social Democrats. The party which for all practical purposes had repudiated the general strike, now found the realization of its one remaining hope -- majority control of the Reichstag -- more remote than at any time since 1890. The radicals henceforth demanded direct action and a sharper attack on bourgeois values since it was the partial acceptance of this that had been the party's undoing at the polls. The moderates interpreted the results quite differently. To them it was a sign that their parliamentary tactics should be reinforced. To this end the party should not alienate well-organized trade unionists or enlightened middle-class sympathizers. Accordingly, the cataclysmic and disquieting prophecies of Marxism should be de-emphasized. The party, in pursuit of all important votes, should emphasize practical and immediate requirements.³²

Since each faction drew its own conclusion from the result of the 1907 election, their subsequent action necessarily differed as well. The 1908 controversy over church taxation provided a welcome opportunity for the radicals to take the initiative again and to support the free-thinkers,

Monists and other dissident groups in their fight against the church.

The opening shot was fired by Adolph Hoffmann. In a speech delivered before the Prussian Diet on 30 October 1908, he demanded -- in keeping with Point 6 of the Erfurt program -- the abolition of all public funding of religious institutions. He was eventually stopped by the Speaker after he had ignored three calls to order. Not easily discouraged, Hoffmann delivered his full, unexpurgated speech to a huge crowd at the Feenpalast in Berlin instead and copies of the text were both sold and freely distributed by the thousands to the workers of Berlin. Hoffmann's polemic was simple, easy to grasp, and effective.

The state does not pay for nothing. It favours a religious public, rather than a thinking one and it pays the church and the clergy to keep the people from thinking for themselves. For the same reason, the state has surrendered education to the churches. It is, of course, understandable that the ruling class has an active interest in keeping the suffering masses ignorant, to feed them with hopes for a better life after death, while they themselves enjoy all the comforts of life here and now.

The clergy, however, is allowed to teach and preach only what is acceptable to the ruling class. That makes them dependent on the state for which they are compensated with financial security.

[The nonsocialist] members of the [Prussian] Diet do not dream of withholding the newly requested amount of 12 1/2 million marks from the church, but the people will draw their own conclusion. Above the imposed three-class Parliament [in Prussia], there is another one, a mightier one, the Parliament of the people. It can act immediately by leaving the church en masse: Los von der Kirche! 33

Hoffmann and his confreres found the various dissenting groups ready to co-operate with them in their bid to overthrow the church - state entente. It was the Berlin writer Otto Lehmann-Russblüdt who came up with the common denominator on which the many varied opponents of that entente could build a common effort. It was an argument which transcended all weltanschauliche differences and was understood by all.

Lehmann-Russblüdt (1873-1952), who also founded the Liga für Menschenrechte (German Civil Rights Movement), aimed at establishing a nation-wide organization by welding together the dissident groups in Germany into one and, by this combined and concentrated effort, sought to weaken the church's dominant place in German society. He had a deep-seated hatred for any religion for he regarded all religions as totally incompatible with modern civilization. He labeled as hypocritical the efforts by the government to protect or support the position of the church in Wilhelmine Germany; as an attempt to profit from any religious sentiment that still lingered among the people.³⁴

He advocated the formation of a committee which would co-ordinate the dissident groups in a joint effort to renew the secession movement among the educated classes and the civil service. Well aware of the discriminatory government policies against dissenters, particularly in rural areas, he conceived a plan whereby petitions for secession would be presented "in the thousands" to the courts on a set day. The resulting loss of church taxes, so Lehmann-Russblüdt argued, would force the church to increase the levy on those remaining within its jurisdiction and, in doing so, it would add fuel to the fire. This way an effective blow would be dealt to the forces of reaction, which -- according to popular belief -- found their main support in the church. He called upon all modern thinking people to break with the church.³⁵

The committee was formed in 1910, in Berlin, and named, rather aptly, Komitee Konfessionslos ("Undenominational Committee"). To attract the educated classes and civil servants, it had as chairmen, Lehmann-Russblüdt; Trautgott von Koppelow, a former naval lieutenant; Kurt von Tepper-Laski,

a former cavalry captain; and Ernst Haeckel, a well-known university lecturer. The committee demanded the equal treatment of Dissenters and non-Dissenters and the suspension of mandatory religious school instruction but pledged itself to neutrality in all political controversies.³⁶

The secession process was a rather tedious one. The Dissenter had to file an application for secession with the court of competent jurisdiction, or with his parish priest. During the following deliberation period of a maximum of six weeks, both the church or the court, or their respective representatives could try to influence the applicant to reconsider. Before the expiration of the six weeks deadline, the Dissident had to appear before the local judge and declare once again his intent to secede. Only then was his church membership officially terminated and the applicant freed from the payment of the church tax. Minors could not secede before reaching age fifteen. ~~Until~~ that age they were required to partake in religious school instruction as prescribed by law. After reaching the age of fifteen, they only could secede with the permission of the male parent or -- in his absence -- with permission of the legal guardian.³⁷

The secession procedures left the applicant open to various governmental pressures, particularly during the so-called "deliberation period." Members of the police and the military attempted to subvert known Dissenters, while the clergy threatened to blacklist them with their employers.³⁸ The Prussian government regarded the Komitee Konfessionslos as anarchistic and kept the organization under close surveillance.³⁹ Everything possible was done to counteract its activism. Inn keepers who aided the committee's cause by making applications available to their customers, lost the patronage of soldiers, faced great difficulties to rent their available rooms for official

banquets and both health and building inspectors harassed them constantly.⁴⁰ Once again conservative press circles suggested that the Social Democrats were the real manipulators behind these renewed attempts to discredit the church and to deny the people their religious heritage.⁴¹

Stating, accurately enough, that the Social Democratic party was in no way involved in the activities of the committee, the radical Socialist Karl Liebknecht (1871-1919), mercurial son of Wilhelm Liebknecht, condemned on principle such governmental interference regardless whether it was advantageous or detrimental to the church. He acknowledged the secession movement as a valid expression of the people's mistrust of the church, the tool, as he saw it, of the ruling elite. He praised the efforts of Lehmann-Russblüdt and Adolph Hoffmann, and recommended the latter's treatise on the Decalogue to the conservative members of the Prussian Diet. In conjunction with several bourgeois liberals he objected to the treatment of Secessionists by the district attorney's office and to the legal discrimination towards Dissenters and especially, dissenting minors.⁴²

Despite government intervention at various levels, the committee flourished. In anticipation of mass secessionist drives, its agitators, many of them radical Social Democrats, were sent through out the Reich to enlist new members. As the dates designated D-day -- 28 October, 4 and 20 November 1912 -- approached, it was recognized that this event was to be the committee's first show of strength. In figures subsequently released, the committee claimed that by the end of October some 1,543 secession applications had been collected in Berlin alone, 747 in München, 535 in Nürnberg, and for the cities of Dresden, Hamburg, and Jena a combined total of over 2000.⁴³ The committee's claim that, 10,000 persons had seceded by the end of 1912 was

denied as an exaggeration by the Protestant church. At the same time, it admitted the secession of some 4,215 in Berlin could be attributed to the committee's endeavors. Whether 10,000 or 4,000, the figure was manifestly high enough to warrant an appeal to the government for appropriate counter measures.⁴⁴

In the spring of 1913, the committee announced that it would test the Protestant church's claim that contemporary society was a Christian society. A head count of church attendance by enumerators appointed by the committee would be taken on the Sunday after Whitsunday, 18 May, in thirty-nine churches in Berlin. Located in the workers' districts of Moabit as well as in the more fashionable districts of downtown Berlin, the churches involved represented a fair cross-section of that city's society. The results were startling. Out of the total number of 1,258,025 (1910) registered parishioners only 5,715 or 0.45 percent answered the call of the bells on that Sunday. Despite this apparent display of indifference however, only 8,532 parishioners or 0.67 percent, seceded from the church in 1913.⁴⁵ Thus, while the committee could effectively challenge the expenditure of 30,906,787 marks of public funds to the Protestant church in Prussia in 1913 alone, it also was aware that it had to step up its campaign for secession. It had to generate enough momentum to overcome whatever barriers prevented the people from undertaking the final step, secession.

The validity of the 18 May count was doubted in many quarters. The committee was not above suspicion to have the figures meet its propagandistic purposes. The committee therefore agreed to co-operate in another count on 22 February 1914 with both Dissenters and Christians taking attendance at sixty-four Berlin churches. The conclusion of this poll, 3.5 percent,

showed little improvement over that of the first and did not invalidate the committee's charge that public monies were in effect wasted.⁴⁶ Indeed, the latter count strengthened the committee's charge and its determination to bring down the church by having its funds stopped.

The statistics of the 18 May count also meant added fuel for the radical Socialists. Once again they approached the party delegates at the Jena congress in 1913, to attempt to shift party policies to a more aggressive course. The waste of public monies could easily be exploited to this end. Their attempt failed, however, and the congress was saved from becoming only a repetition of earlier, fruitless discussions on tactics by a momentous suggestion from Heinrich Peuss (1862- ?). Peuss, a former student of theology, proposed a general strike against the church as an appropriate, less risky alternative to a political general strike. "Let us organize a general strike against the church, at least among those who have already severed all other ties with the church." He went on to say that a mass move against the political church would be preferable to an overt political move as being less offensive to both the party and the trade unions. "It is absolutely necessary that we employ a tactic which the party, the trade unions, and the co-operatives, do not find offensive."⁴⁷ In making this suggestion Peuss had, perhaps without realization of its full implication, hit upon a modus vivendi which was quickly taken up by the radicals.

The opportunity to agitate for a mass strike against the church presented itself during the summer of 1913 when once again church finances were the centre of public attention. The occasion was the opening ceremony of the fourth Protestant church built that year in the working class district of Neukölln with a fifth one yet to come. Public anger in face of such waste

of public monies was at a fever pitch. The committee, in collaboration with the radical Socialists, organized several protest rallies under the slogan: Heraus aus der Kirche!⁴⁸

On 28 October 1913 four major rallies were held in greater Berlin simultaneously, in Hasenheide, Friedrichshain, Moabit and Wilmersdorf. The rally in Hasenheide was addressed by Privy Councillor and speaker for the Komitee Konfessionslos, Professor Wilhelm Ostwald and Karl Liebknecht. Liebknecht stressed at this occasion

that he appeared as a representative of the Social Democratic party and as a politician who was not interested in the question of Weltanschauung. Secession was not only a matter of honesty, but was, truly, a decisive question for the church in Prussia was not a religious institution but rather an instrument of suppression in the hands of the ruling class....All those who still have a need for religion should protect it. But they, too, should get out of the Prussian state church since it makes no attempt to fulfill that need. Those who have already broken spiritually with the church, should also secede unless they wish to be hypocritical. Finally, those who want to fight for economic and political freedom on the principle that all human beings are equal, are bound by duty to secede from the church which, as an instrument of the ruling classes of the Prussian Junker state, aims at solidifying their power.

A boycott of the state church, pursued energetically and with the widest possible exposure, might prove to be the easiest way to weaken the state and the ruling classes in their resistance to free the people. Heraus aus der Landeskirche!

At the end of the rally, which was attended by some 3,000 to 4,000 people, 582 secession applications were collected.

The rally at Friedrichshain was attended by some 3,000 people. Heinrich Peuss for the Social Democrats and Professor Gustav Tschirn for the free-thinkers were the principal speakers. Peuss' address followed more or less along the same lines as Liebknecht's. "We are not gathered here," he said, "for a little chit-chat, but to demand direct action. Everyone, who has

broken with the church spiritually, should have the courage of conviction to say so openly and secede from the church. Let us not wait for the day when the separation of church and state finally becomes law; let us press for it now by seceding from the church." Again the church was depicted as a tool in the hands of the ruling class, interested more in oppression than in actual ministerial work. "But," so Peuss continued,

if we want revolution, then we have to do today everything within our power to free ourselves as much as possible and not to wait for the day on which the revolution actually does take place.

Another speaker, a certain ex-pastor Wangermann, related to the crowd how he went among the workers and tried to help them to his best ability to ease their burden. Because of his activities however, he was called before the church's Disciplinary Board and severely reprimanded. That was seven years ago, he said, and seven years ago he left the church. He thus welcomed the awakening of the masses and their attempt to rid themselves of the church's High Consistory. The Friedrichshain rally ended with the collection of 350 secession applications.

The Moabit rally was also addressed by a clergyman, a pastor Gaulke. He told a story of corruption of the church, a church primarily interested in instilling obedience in the masses. Reform attempts within the church were half-hearted and useless. Effective change would only occur if and when the people on account of their own decision, leave the church en masse.

Gaulke was followed by Adolf Hoffmann, who brought the rally to a boiling point.

Free the state, free the school from the influence of the church. The ruling class has embraced the church because it is in dire need for her support. In return, the church acts in accordance with the ruling elite's expectations.

The political, as well as economical battle against the system is difficult to wage and only with great sacrifice. The same battle waged against the church, however, could be conducted with minimal risks.

350 persons handed over their secession application.

The rally in Wilmersdorf presented Ewald Vogtherr and Lilli Jannasch, both members of the Social Democratic party as speakers. They centered their attack primarily on educational matters, attacking the obligatory religious instruction classes. Forty-six secession applications were collected at the Wilmersdorf meeting, bringing the day's total of all four rallies to 1,328. Considering that during the entire year of 1911 2,602 persons seceded from the church, the collection of 1,328 secession applications in one day was an impressive feat.⁴⁹

Even more gratifying for the radical Socialists was the reaction to an article by Liebknecht, which was carried in October 1913 in Vorwärts. Here Liebknecht once again hammered home the church tax theme and justified his group's involvement by stating that the church was so much a part of the governmental machinery that it had come to consider the preservation of the social and political status quo as its main objective. A church so preoccupied did not and could not fulfill its appointed task of serving the religious needs of the community. Therefore both the believer and the non-believer, each to his own profit, would gain by secession. Seen from this point of view, a renewed involvement of Social Democrats with a secessionist movement did not constitute a violation of the Erfurt program for it is directing its enmity against a politically oppressive church, not against religion. The fight against political oppression in any form had always been the main objective of social democracy.

Our battle against the church is not a battle against

religion, just the opposite. Admittedly this battle could also be conducted against religion, as a battle of Weltanschauung, but that is not social democracy's way, that is the way of the free-believing and free-thinking groups. Our battle against the church is entirely politically motivated, the easier battle of the two. We will not touch upon the question of belief and will address ourselves only to the political character of the churches -- a characteristic visible to all.

An organized secession movement of the church-tax paying public which the government would be powerless to prevent, so Liebknecht argued, would render the church too heavy a financial liability to the state and this situation, as it worsened, would force reform.⁵⁰ He, Liebknecht, regarded membership in the "Prussian police-church" as a betrayal of the proletariat fighting for political emancipation.⁵¹

In the weeks following the publication of Liebknecht's article, the number of secessionists skyrocketed. A breakdown of the individual monthly figures of 1913 signifies a remarkable correlation between the stepped-up campaign efforts by the Socialists and the number of secessionists in Berlin:

January	659	July	188	
February	329	August	165	
March	213	September	235	
April	174	October	345	
May	210	November	950	
June	157	December	9,106	52

If the statistical reports from the various parishes in Berlin are any indication, the majority of these dissenters stemmed from parishes located in the traditional working class districts.⁵³

With the growing numbers of secessionists, their "newsworthiness" grew proportionally. Any news item directly or indirectly related to the secession campaign received full attention and was reported on in highly sensational terms in the boulevard press. Such was the case with the news

item that the Kaiserin was entering into the affair. Playing up to the emotions of its readers, the press reported that an increase in the processing fees for secession was imminent. The fees, which were 50 pfennigs per applicant in May 1873, had been raised to 3 marks in June 1895. Newspapers now alledged that the Kaiserin, following a report by the Prussian minister for religious affairs, had urged a further increase to 100 marks. Charges of unlawful interferences were leveled against the Kaiserin for attempting to stop secession by raising the price of honesty (*Verteuerung der Ehrlichkeit*). The committee and the associated Socialists immediately seized the opportunity to call for an all-out attack on church and government.⁵⁴

Berlin was in the grip of a secession hysteria. Some fifty depots for theycollection of secession declarations were set up in various pubs and shops throughout the city, and in the district courts of Berlin the number of judges -- to whom the dissenters had to declare their intention of secession -- was expanded by twelve to handle all the applicants.

Eventually the Protestant church got caught up in this hysteria as well. In Berlin city the church lost an estimated thirty-four thousand marks in 1913 in church taxes alone, while the daily reports on secessionists made it appear as though Armageddon finally was at hand. In face of such an exodus, the church tried -- rather heavy handedly -- various counter measures to stem the rising tide of secession. One is inclined, however, to suppose that these counter measures only added fuel to an emotionally loaded situation. Not only did the church arrange for the cost-free reinstatement of conscience-stricken secessionists, but also threatened the hardened cases with blacklisting them with their employers.⁵⁵ The church's

High Consistory also declared forfeit the secessionist's right to church weddings, funerals, and baptisms and their exclusion from the church's welfare programs.⁵⁶ It was also suggested to the local parish priest to send a circular to secessionists during the "deliberation period," pointing out the dangers of such a step.

Where the authority of God and the benediction of faith are eliminated, one can only expect disaster to follow. The fruits of such a step can easily be observed in France, where education has been completely secularized. The number of illiterates rose in 1870 to 1910 from 14 percent to 30 percent; the number of army deserters in 1880 to 1910 from 4,000 to 16,000. Divorces shot up from 124 in 1884 to 12,575 in 1906; the suicide rate increased from 5,000 to 9,000, while the number of mentally retarded has grown from 11,500 to 85,000 during the same period. 57

These counter measures were the brainchild of the conservative Protestants, while the liberal Protestant clergy suggested the church's disentanglement from state and politics as more appropriate.

With all the clamor going on on both sides, some of the more sober voices which assessed the situation with greater detachment went unheard and remained virtually unnoticed. One investigation into the reasons for secession of forty-four factory workers, fifty trades people, and seventeen members of other occupations reported, that the motives for secession were quite dissimilar to those propagated by either the Komitee Konfessionslos or the radical Social Democrats. The study was incomplete as the investigator, a cleric, was met in places with open hostility and, often, received no answer. In eighteen cases, atheism and hate of the church were cited as reasons, twenty-one offered political reasons for their decision, while forty-seven stated that financial considerations -- sickness in the family, the high cost of food, or unemployment -- motivated them in order to save the church tax. Since only individuals with an annual income of 1,500 marks or more were subject to church tax, one might question the validity of this

last category as the income of the workers seldom reached 1,500 marks.

Indeed, as many as seventy percent of the secessionists were not even on the church's tax lists to begin with.⁵⁸

When questioned directly, motives for secession read like a catalogue of different woes and grudges for which the church -- for one reason or another -- was held responsible. Maybe it was a disgruntled father whose child had not passed a grade and who now blamed the clerical school supervisor for the failure.⁵⁹ Or the church was made the scapegoat for unsuccessful strikes, or, even more far-fetched, for the increase of the indirect tax on matches. In Berlin, the focal point of dissention, secession was used to protest against the City Mission which, it was claimed, only helped after its officials satisfied themselves of the political soundness of the needy.⁶⁰

Although incomplete and often superficial, these scattered reports on the motivation of secession do make one point clear: the workers were far more interested in their own practical problems, the bread and butter issues concerning them directly, than in the veiled Weltanschauungs battle of the radical Socialists against the political church. The majority of workers could not be persuaded actively to participate in church affairs, while the radical Socialists could not persuade them to actively fight the church. The Socialists failed to convince them that the church question was an important enough issue to warrant immediate action, one, which would affect their life in any direct way. Church and religion was and did remain a dead issue with the great majority of workers. Consequently, even at its height, the 1913-14 secession movement was a minority movement. With Berlin counting 1,689,118 Protestants in 1910, even the latest upsurge bringing the total for 1913 to 8,131 secessionists, remained almost negligible. The momentum

generated during the last quarter of 1913 carried on into 1914, when the movement's last quivers occurred: the secession campaign of 1913-14 had come to an end.⁶¹

Elsewhere in the Reich the secession movement underwent the same cycle as in Berlin, only on a much more reduced scale.⁶² During 1913, the events in Berlin spilled outwards and, throughout Germany, the secession movement showed signs of increasing aggressiveness. Propaganda material from the committee and the Social Democrats was widely distributed; the first proclaiming secession as a necessity for all truth-loving persons; the second, proclaiming it as a political necessity to democratize the political system. Artisans followed their masters in joining secession, and those living under the same roof took the step together. In some places the shops owned by antisecessionists were boycotted and churches became the object of wanton destruction and clergyment of physical abuse.⁶³ Incidents were reported of employees giving secession additional weight by forcing undecided fellow workers to declare their break with the church.⁶⁴

The impact of the secession movement followed denominational lines: hardest hit were predominantly Protestant areas in the northwest, east and southeast of Germany. The Catholic areas in the south showed a much higher resistance.⁶⁵ Both churches were equally affected however, in the mixed denominational, highly industrialized centres of Germany, such as the Düsseldorf district.⁶⁶ But here again holds true of what has already been said of Berlin: compared to the total number of "registered Christians" the number of Dissidents remained dismally small. One almost can say that the further away one gets from Berlin, their numbers almost disappear. The 1890 census counted 111,100 Protestants and 287,648 Catholics residing in the Düsseldorf district, while only 2,862 persons of both denominations

seceded in 1913. Perhaps in time the Socialists and the committee would have succeeded in attracting the masses to their cause, but time was running out.

When in August 1914 the lamps went out in Europe, the parties in the Reichstag established a political truce known as the Burgfrieden. All traditional party differences were set aside for the duration of the war, and united support was given to the government to prosecute the war. Secession was no longer pursued for political ends. What small numbers of Dissidents did secede during the war years, did so on their own accord.

The subsequent events of the war are well known and need not to be repeated here again. In 1918 Germany surrendered, the Kaiser abdicated and fled to Holland. An official church organ, the Hamburgische Kirchenblatt delivered the eulogy for the Kaiser era and expressed fear and pessimism for the future:

The parliamentary system is here. It represents a victory of democracy, of the Entente....The Berliner Tageblatt and the Frankfurter Zeitung are all smiles, while the old Prussia is in mourning. Germany does not have anymore a politically unique system; now she is only one nation among many.

We believe in God. If He wants to test us with the most unjust of all election systems, the mindless, general, equal and direct election system, we will not only accept that because we have to, but also because we believe that He will lead our nation on to new heights. 67

It was a self-fulfilling prophecy. Once the Emperor and the High Command of the army had bowed themselves out of the picture, leaving it to others to face defeat and humiliation, the men in charge of affairs were now the supposed atheists, the Social Democrats. Composed of a coalition between the moderate Majority Socialists and the radical Independent Socialists the new government now had to decide on the future structure and constitution of the new German Republic and also come to terms with the question of the

future relation between church and state. As an indication of what little priority this was given, the post of Prussian minister for cultural and religious affairs was given to none other than the already wellknown radical, Adolph Hoffmann. Undeterred by possible political repercussions or the serious social dislocations caused by the end of the war, Hoffmann, with hotheadedness, zest and zeal, immediately began to put his radical theories into practice.

Taking office on 9 November 1918, his first decree was issued within a week. On 15 November compulsory participation in religious instruction was ended. On the following day, 16 November, Hoffmann announced the formation of a committee to draft legislation for the separation of church and state. On 17 November the public was informed that government funding of the church would be halted by 1 April, 1919. On 27 November, clerical supervision of schools was abruptly terminated. On 29 November Hoffmann decreed the end of morning prayers in schools. On 13 December, in a final act, Hoffmann ordered the cost-free handling of secession applications, removed the age limits for dissenting minors and established their right of self-determination without parental approval. This directive also eliminated the "deliberation period" and ruled that simple notification of the nearest court was enough to effect secession.⁶⁸

Such sweeping radicalism caused loud and widespread protests from churchmen of all kinds, who were aghast at the further demolition of their world. It became clear that Hoffmann was too great a liability to the young Republic, weakening its already fragile power base even further. Consequently, after only seven weeks in office, Hoffmann was replaced by the moderate Socialist Konrad Haenisch whose first official act was the revocation of the

"Hoffmann decrees." It had become obvious at this point, that the separation of church and state, or secession for that matter, could not simply be legislated. In the absence of overwhelming support from among the working class, radical socialist church policies faltered and had to make room for the political realities of the day.

In the Weimar Republic a new working relationship was worked out between social democracy and the church. The former's failures and the simultaneous disappearance of the traditional alliance of throne and altar altered their position radically. Together they were to become the victims of Nazi totalitarianism and re-emerged as partners in the rebuilding of German democracy after 1945.

Footnotes - Chapter 3

1. During the twelve years in which the Socialist Law was in force, 332 labour organizations were dissolved, 1,300 newspapers and periodicals suppressed, about 900 activists driven from their homes, and 1,500 Social Democrats sentenced to a total of 1,000 years imprisonment. The growth of the party in face of such severe repression was all the more impressive. In 1881, in the election for the Reichstag which followed the passing of the Law, the party received 310,000 votes. Three years later the figure was 550,000, and by 1887 it had grown to 763,000. At the election of 1890, after the repeal of the Socialist Law, the party almost doubled its previous vote, with a total of 1,427,000, about one fifth of the total vote. See Franz Mehring, Die Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Dietz, 1921) 2: 535.

2. An English translation of the Erfurt program can be found in Vernon L. Lidtke, The Outlawed Party: Social Democracy in Germany, 1878-1890 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 335-38.
 The first part of the Erfurt program offered a brief exposition of Marxist economic and historical theory and gave, in popular form, the scientific analysis of capitalism. It asserted the doctrine of irreconcilable antagonism between the working class and the existing state machine; stressed in uncompromising terms the international nature of the proletarian class struggle; and reiterated the prophecy of an imminent revolution which would sweep away the capitalistic state and the bourgeois social order. In its second part, the program listed the immediate goals of the movement which were, in essence, almost the same as those that had appeared in the Gotha program. These goals were seen as realizable within the framework of the existing monarchical, parliamentary structure in Germany.

3. The French Socialist Jean Jaurés for example stated, that "the working class will come to power not through a sudden upsurge resulting from political agitation, but by making use of the general right to vote. Our society will gradually develop toward Communism, not through the collapse of Capitalism, but by a gradual and inexorable growth of power of the workers." Jean Jaurés, Theorie und Praxis (Berlin: Verlag der sozialistischen Monatshefte, 1902), p. 61.

4. The radicals echoed the position taken earlier by Engels, who wrote: "One can envisage that the old society could peacefully grow into the new one in countries where one can do, constitutionally, whatever one pleases, so long as the majority of the people give their support -- in democratic republics such as France and America, or in monarchies like England where the dynasty is powerless against the will of people. But in Germany, where the government is almost omnipotent and the Reichstag and other representative bodies, for all practical purposes, powerless, to proclaim anything like this in Germany would be to remove the figleaf from absolutism and use it to conceal one's own nakedness." Friedrich

Engels, "Zur Kritik des Sozialdemokratischen Programmentwurfes 1891," Neue Zeit 20 (1901-02): 258.

5. The religious paragraph, or, as it also was called, Paragraph 6, of the Erfurt program read: "Declaration that religion is a private matter. Abolition of all contributions from public funds to ecclesiastical and religious objects. Ecclesiastical and religious groups are to be treated as private associations, which manage their own affairs." Lidtke, Outlawed Party, p. 337.
6. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, abgehalten zu Berlin, 1892 (Berlin, 1892), p. 183.
7. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, abgehalten zu Halle, 1890 (Berlin, 1890), pp. 158, 177.
8. Otto Huè, "Klerikalismus und Gewerkschaftsbewegung," Sozialistische Monatshefte 6 (1902): 925-37. Similar to Huè, Bruno Poersch, "Politik und Religion in den gewerkschaftlichen Organisationen der Arbeiter," Neue Zeit 17 (1899): 403; Theodor Leipart, "Politik und Religion in den gewerkschaftlichen Organisationen der Arbeiter," ibid., pp. 499-501.
9. Max Hirsch, "Die Religiosität der Bergknappen," Neue Zeit 25 (1907): 369-71.
10. Karl Zielke, "Der Punkt 6 des Parteiprogramms," ibid., 24 (1906): 705-08.
11. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, abgehalten zu München, 1902 (Berlin, 1902), pp. 237-39, 240-43.
12. Karl Kautsky, Der Weg zur Macht: Politische Betrachtungen über das Hineinwachsen in die Revolution (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1920), p. 59.
13. Johannes Tews, Die Preussische Schulvorlage: Eine Abwehr (Berlin: Wahlverein der Liberalen, 1906), contains and comments on the entire act. The act is also partially reprinted in Gerhardt Giese, ed., Quellen zur deutschen Schulgeschichte (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1961), pp. 179-81.
14. J. Ellis Barker, "Education and Mis-education in Germany," Contemporary Review 90 (1906): 519-21.
15. Roy Temple House, "Problems of State Religious Instruction in Germany," South Atlantic Quarterly 10 (1911): 323-27.
16. Thomas Alexander, The Prussian Elementary Schools (New York: MacMillan, 1919), chapter 15 and tables, pp. 235-56.
17. Lilli Jannasch, "Der heutige Stand der konfessionellen Schule in Preussen,"

Das freie Wort 13 (1913-14): 858.

18. For a report on the removal of a Social Democrat from a school board, see Kirchliches Handbuch für das katholische Deutschland 4 (1912-13): 74.
19. Fritz Gansberg, ed., Religionsunterricht? Achtzig Gutachten. Ergebnis einer von der Vereinigung für Schulreform in Bremen veranstalteten allgemeinen deutschen Umfrage (Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1906), p. v.
20. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, abgehalten zu Bremen, 1904 Berlin, 1904), p. 305.
21. Sozialistische Monatshefte 9 (1905): 516.
22. The church tax (Kirchensteuer) was computed on basis of individual income tax paid. An individual paying 1000 marks in 1881, was assessed 3.5 percent of that amount for church tax, or an additional 35 marks. By 1907 the church tax rose to 15.5 percent. This tax was separate and in addition to the income tax and only those Secessionists whose application for secession had already been processed were exempt. Johann von Bonin, "Der Begriff 'Kirche' im Sinne der preussischen Austrittsgesetze," Juristische Wochenschrift 60 (1913): 641-42.
23. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, "Austritte aus der Landeskirche," Evangelisch-Sozial 19 (1910): 156-61.
24. Richard W. Reichard, "The German Working Class and the Russian Revolution of 1905," Journal of Central European Affairs 13 (1953): 136-55.
25. The French Socialist, Jean Jaurès, remarked on the apparent political impotence of the German Socialists. He asked, rhetorically, why the German working class was so incapable of influencing its social and political environment despite the great election successes of the party. He answered that neither the working-class tradition nor the mechanics of the German constitution permitted the party to transform its tremendous voting power into political action. The German workers were lacking in revolutionary tradition. Their history showed many instances of devotion and self-sacrifice, but not a single example of successful revolutionary activity. In Germany, universal suffrage had not been won on the barricades; it had been granted as a privilege from those above. While it was unthinkable to rescind the democratic rights of those who had won them by their own efforts (and could easily win them back again) it was only too easy for those in power to abrogate what they had granted only through grace and favour. Sixième Congrès Socialiste International: Tenu à Amsterdam du 14 au 20 Août 1904 (Bruxelles, 1904), pp. 67-82.
26. Rudolf Hilferding, one subscriber to this view declared, that "In Germany, a general strike, however it starts, must be prepared to meet the most powerful resistance." In whatever way the party might present the issue --

as arising, for example, out of the campaign for electoral reform in Prussia -- "the ruling class will inevitably treat it as a question of survival." The general strike in Germany would be, therefore, a phase in a struggle which would have to be fought to a finish, or end in disaster for the working class, "because the enemy would interpret any general strike, however peaceful and legal, as a challenge to its supremacy and as an indication that its own existence was now at stake. It would therefore meet it with every means at its disposal." Cited in Karl Kautsky, Der politische Massenstreik (Berlin: Vorwärts, 1914), pp. 161, 123.

27. The party had 62 printing shops, and 90 daily papers with a total circulation of 1,465,212; 10,320 people worked in its publishing houses alone. See Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, abgehalten zu Jena, 1913 (Berlin, 1913), pp. 28-9. The Free Trade Unions alone had a combined annual income of 70 million marks, with assets, in 1914, totalling 80 million marks. Friedrich Stempfer, Die vierzehn Jahre der ersten deutschen Republik (Offenburg: Vollwerk, 1947), p. 12.

28. In May, 1905, the trade unions passed a resolution rejecting the mass strike as an appropriate political weapon. The resolution stated among others: "The general strike, advocated by anarchists and people without any knowledge of the economic implications of such a step, is unacceptable. Union members are therefore advised not to take notice of any propaganda for the general strike, but instead to continue to work to strengthen the union movement." Protokoll der Verhandlungen des fünften Kongresses der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands (Berlin: Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands, 1905), p. 229. See also Karl Kautsky, "Der Kongress von Köln," Neue Zeit 23 (1905): 309-16; Kautsky, Der politische Massenstreik, pp. 115-15. Wolfgang Hirsch-Weber, a West German authority on the workers' movement, has argued that at this point the trade unions had already become so strong that the centre of gravity in the labour movement no longer lay with the Social Democratic party. Wolfgang Hirsch-Weber, Gewerkschaften in der Politik: Von der Massenstreikdebatte zum Kampf um das Mitbestimmungsrecht (Köln: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1959), p. 8.

29. See Eduard Bernstein, "Was folgt aus dem Ergebnis der Reichstageswahlen?," Sozialistische Monatshefte 9 (1905): 478-86; Wolfgang Heine, "Der 16. Juni," ibid., pp. 475-78; Johannes Timm, "Sozialdemokratie, Politik und Wissenschaft," ibid., pp. 572-77.

30. Eduard Davis, "Der sozialdemokratische Parteitag in Mannheim," Sozialistische Monatshefte 12 (1906): 907-14.

31. The decisive nature of the 1907 elections was clearly stated in an electoral address which was signed by seventy-eight social democratic Reichstag's deputies and was published in Vorwärts, 16 December 1906: "You have to choose new deputies at the polls, in accordance with your opinions, not merely upon the position in Southwest Africa, but upon

our entire policy at home and abroad. The situation is serious. After thirty-five years of existence the German Empire finds itself in almost complete isolation. For the last fifteen years there has been no lack of speeches and trips made in many potentates' countries, no lack of presents made to the most diverse nations. But the result of all these unsought assurances of love and affection is that today German policy is regarded with distrust by almost every foreigner, and Germany instead of friends has scarcely any but covert or overt enemies. Consequently, the world situation is such that despite all the peace-loving assurances which ruling sovereigns give on occasion after occasion, armaments by land and sea are continually mounting up, and a feeling of anxiety, as at the advent of an immense catastrophe, continually strengthens its hold on the civilized peoples and forbids them the peaceful enjoyment of the fruits of their labour. Instead of arbitration and disarmament we see the ruling classes and their solution, "If you want peace, you must be armed for war." with which they carry on their policy of embittering nations in order to maintain their own class rule in domestic affairs. The military and naval armaments serve to enrich them. Besides, they cherish the thought on the sly that nations kept in constant anxiety about a grasping and warlike neighbour do not apply themselves to improving their social conditions as they otherwise could and would. This policy of international ruin in which Germany today sets the pace, we have hitherto most decidedly opposed, and we shall continue to oppose it."

For an interpretation of the elections from the point of view of one of the party's leading moderates, see Eduard Bernstein, "The German Elections and the Social Democrats," Contemporary Review 91 (1907): 479-92.

32. The entire question of moderate versus radical tactics is reviewed in Wilhelm Kolb, Die Sozialdemokratie am Scheidewege (Karlsruhe: Geck, 1915). A more recent study is that by Carl E. Schorske, German Social Democracy 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955).
33. Adolph Hoffmann, Über 13½ Million jährliche Gehaltszulage für die Herren Pfarrer! Schöne Worte und Vertröstungen für das arme Volk! Los von der Kirche! Eine durch drei Ordnungsrufe und Wortentziehungen unterbrochene, aber im Feen-Palast zu Berlin vollendete Landtagsrede von Adolph Hoffmann mit Einfügung der durch den Präsidenten Herr von Körcher verhinderten Ergänzungen. (Berlin: Hoffmann, 1908), pp. 5, 6, 7, 41.
34. Otto Lehmann-Russblüdt, Das Christentum: Zur Wintersonnenwende 1911 (Berlin: Komitee Knofessionslos, 1911).
35. Otto Lehmann-Russblüdt, Der geistige Befreiungskrieg durch Kirchenaustritt (Frankfurt/M: Neuer Frankfurter Verlag, 1914), pp. 14, 15-16.
36. Berliner Neueste Nachrichten, 29 December 1910.
37. Richard Lipinski, Heraus aus der Kirche: Ein Beitrag zum Kirchenaustritt (Leipzig: Verlag der Leipziger Buchdruckerei, 1919), p. 5.

38. "Berichte des Polizeipräsidenten an den Minister der geistlichen Angelegenheiten vom 16. April 1912, 8. März und 25. November 1913," Archiv der Kirchenkanzlei der Evangelischen Kirche der Union, Berlin: Acta betreffend die Austrittsbewegung aus der Landeskirche, Generalia 12, Abteilung 124, vol. 3 (January 1911 - December 1913).
39. "Neuigkeiten aus der Kirchengaustrittsbewegung," Das monistische Jahrhundert 3 (1914): 62.
40. "Bericht des Polizeipräsidenten an den Minister der geistlichen Angelegenheiten vom 25. November 1913," Archiv der Kirchenkanzlei.
41. Klaus Saul, "Der Staat und die 'Machte des Umsturzes'," Archiv für Sozialgeschichte 12 (1972): 316.
42. Ewald Vogtherr, "Die religiöse Freiheit der Soldaten," Der Freidenker 21 (1913): 137-39; Kreuz-Zeitung, 15 October 1908, 12 August 1911.
43. Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Preussischen Hauses der Abgeordneten, 21 Legislaturperiode, 4 Session, 3 (1911): 3608-19.
44. Otto Lehmann-Russblüdt, "Der erste Waffengang des Komitee Konfessionslos," Das monistische Jahrhundert 1 (1912-13): 572-74; Otto Lehmann-Russblüdt, "Bericht vom Komitee Konfessionslos," ibid., 2 (1913-14): 485-87.
45. "Bericht des Polizeipräsidenten an den Minister der geistlichen Angelegenheiten," Archiv der Kirchenkanzlei.
46. See Otto Lehmann-Russblüdt, "Eine Kirchenbesuchs-Statistik," Der Dissident 7 (1913-14): 41-48. See also Appendix A. this thesis.
47. Kirchliches Jahrbuch 41 (1914): 109.
48. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, abgehalten zu Jena, 1913 (Berlin, 1913), pp. 192-93, 300. At the same congress the party's executive refused to allow several motions to reach the convention floor, which suggested participation of the entire party in the secessionist drive of the radicals. Ibid., p. 83.
49. Das monistische Jahrhundert 2 (1913-14): 816-18.
50. "Massenstreik gegen die Staatskirche," Vorwärts, 30 October 1913.
51. Liebknecht's article is reprinted in Karl Liebknecht, Gesammelte Reden und Schriften, 8 vols., (Berlin: Dietz, 1964), 6: 399-401. A translation of the entire article has been provided in Appendix C, this thesis.
52. Kirchliches Jahrbuch 41 (1914): 95.
53. "Bericht des geschäftsführenden Ausschusses der Berliner Stadtsynode über

die Kirchengaustrittsbewegung im Bezirk des Berliner Stadtsynodalverbandes," Archiv der Kirchenkanzlei.

54. See Appendix B this thesis for a map of Berlin indicating the location of the churches mentioned in Appendix A. Since Appendix A lists for 1913 the number of secessionists in each parish, the location of the parishes give some important clue to the social background of the secessionists.
55. Ewald Vogtherr, "Preussische Hundertmarkchritsen," Das freie Wort 13 (1913-14): 474-78. One such report read as follows: "Members of the Prussian High Consistory got together with the Empress to discuss steps by which to preserve religion for the people. They came up with a real humdinger: they increased the processing fees for secession. Everything in the name of religion!
Actually the Komitee Konfessionslos and the Prussian High Consistory deserve each other. Both are actively involved -- each in his own special way -- to kill off any religious sentiments in order to win the statistical battle. One preaches a "Happiness-on-earth" philosophy, dedicated to progress, while the other is working on the increase of the processing fees for godlessness in order to serve God." Fridolin, "Gebührentarif für Gottlosigkeit," März 17 (1913): 788-89.
56. Richard Nordhausen, "Die Austritte aus der Landeskirche," Der Tag, 12 November 1909.
57. This sample letter appeared in the Tägliche Rundschau, 11 December, 1913.
58. August Blau, "Der Austritt aus der Landeskirche," Evangelisch-kirchlicher Anzeiger von Berlin und der Mark Brandenburg 57 (1906): 993.
59. Bittlinger, "Vom Kirchengaustritt in Berlin," pp. 290-95, 325-27.
60. Kirchliches Jahrbuch 38 (1911): 342; August Breithaupt, "Die Austritte aus der Landeskirche," Konservative Monatsschrift 68 (1911): 993.
61. Vossische Zeitung, 7 June 1906.
62. See Appendix A, this thesis.
63. See graph, Appendix D, this thesis.
64. Kirchliches Jahrbuch 41 (1914): 95-101.
65. Paul Gohre, Die neueste Kirchengaustrittsbewegung aus den Landeskirchen Deutschlands (Jena: Diederichs, 1909), p. 33; Franz Meffert, Sozialdemokratie und Religion: Eine Untersuchung der sozialdemokratischen Praxis und Theorie (Monchen-Gladbach: Volksvereins Verlag; 1912), p. 21; Ernst Bittlinger, "Vom Kirchengaustritt in Berlin: Tatsachen und Folgerungen," Evangelisch-Sozial 22 (1913): 300.

66. See graph, Appendix D, this thesis.
67. See Appendix E, this thesis as well as Appendix D, entry for Rheinprovinz.
68. "Das alte Preussen trauert," Hamburgisches Kirchenblatt 15 (1919): 303.
69. Lipinski, Heraus aus der Kirche, pp. 5-8; Rudolf Seeberg, "Die bevorstehende Trennung von Staat und Kirche," Konservative Monatsschrift 76 (1919): 209-22, 278-96; Martin Schian, "Was ist jetzt zu tun?," Preussische Kirchenzeitung 14 (1918): 388-89.

Conclusion

With the necessary hindsight one can say now, some fifty years later, that the pre-World War I Kirchenaustrittsbewegung failed completely. It did not succeed in providing an alternative ideological foundation within the ranks of the Social Democratic party, nor did the Kirchenaustrittsbewegung strike a revolutionary spark.

The leaders of the newly formed socialist workers' party in Germany in 1869 were faced with the task of formulating an acceptable party program. They were forced to take a stand on a variety of issues, one of them being party policies towards church and religion. Although a common social background did act as a strong bond among party members, it did not altogether prevent disagreements on particular issues, such as the religious question.

There were four dominant lines of thought. There were radical, atheistic Socialists who wished to uproot church and religion entirely and hoped to use the existing party machinery to this end. At the opposite end of the scale were those Socialists who still harboured some religious sentiment and opposed any subversive action against the church on moral grounds. The bulk of party members was of either Marxist or moderate persuasion. The former believed that no special policies against church and religion were warranted. Religion, they held, was purely a survival of pre-industrialism and would wither away in the light of sapient scientific socialism anyway. The party's moderates, although for different reasons, agreed on the undesirability of special policies toward

the churches. They simply believed that radical church policies would serve no particular purpose but would rather prove politically harmful.

The expectation, therefore, that party members could be mobilized by the use of the Kirchenaustrittsbewegung as a political weapon was erroneous. Put forward by a handful of party radicals, the secession movement never enjoyed majority support. Divided on the wisdom of Most's onslaught, a divergence of opinions surfaced in 1878. Thus, Kayser demanded that religion be treated as a private affair and warned against the political use of the church question. Kayser's warning reflected the more moderate line of thought and his warning was amply confirmed. While the results of the 1878 election to the Reichstag indicated that there were at least 437,158 Socialists or socialist sympathizers in Germany, Most's campaign in the same year netted only 2,711 Secessionists. The result was disappointing, quite disproportionate to the time and energy invested.

After 1878 an increasingly conciliatory mood made itself felt among the party's rank and file. The hostile reaction to the Most campaign clearly demonstrated the tactical disadvantages of such a policy, scaring off potential supporters and risking the danger of inviting repressive legislation. Only the radical wing of the party continued to be a driving force behind efforts to employ the religious question as a political gambit. But their efforts were thwarted by the acceptance of evolutionary socialism by the majority of party members. Therefore, despite radical efforts to the contrary, the Erfurt program of 1891 retained the clause declaring religion a private matter.

The root and branch extremists became increasingly isolated but, led by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Adolf Hoffmann, they did not cease in their efforts to radicalize party policies. In 1913-14 they mounted the

Kirchenaustrittsbewegung, which was hardly more successful than the earlier one, as can best be seen in the very limited regional response to the campaign. Outside of Berlin and Prussia, the radicals' call for a show of strength went almost completely unheeded. Their considerable efforts to make similar inroads into other areas of Germany failed.

Most significant in the long run was the effect of the Kirchenaustrittsbewegung on the main body of German churchmen. It only confirmed their suspicion of the industrial proletariat and their party; prejudices, which were both cause and effect of their inability to build bridges to the working class. The Kirchenaustrittsbewegung seemed to confirm the correctness of their social policies and programs, their support for the church-state entente against the atheistic materialism of the workers. Adamant in their refusal to admit the claims of a pluralistic, industrial society, they viewed the workers' party as a spearhead of unwanted modernism. All Socialists, they believed, were inimical to the interests of their church and thereby to German society as a whole. In view of the renewed antichurch activities of the Socialists after the turn of the century, the reactionary church leadership was determined to uphold the time-honoured ties to Germany's royal house. The defence of Germany's political and social status quo thus became their foremost concern inasmuch as their own well-being depended on it. Efforts by individual clergymen, such as Ketteler, Naumann and Gohre, to liberalize church policies and to create a climate among the clergy more in keeping with the times, were doomed from the start. The conservative outlook of the church leaders forced them to choose between conformity or resignation from their pastoral office.

The freak appointment of Adolf Hoffmann as Kultusminister and the rapid implementation of his antichurch decrees in 1918 only hardened the suspicions

and assured the distant relationship between the majority of the clergy and the Socialists throughout the Weimar period. Another catastrophe had to engulf Germany, in which Socialists and Christians alike were victims of Nazi tyranny, before the road was open to reconciliation and growth of mutual understanding.

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APPENDIX A

Church Attendance and Secession in the City of Berlin

Diocese I

Name of Church	Registered Parishoners (1910)	Attendance on 18 May 1913	Number of Secessionists				
			1911	1912	1913	1914	1918
Advent	34,005	77	60		266		
St. Andreas	42,800	100	82		241		
Auferstehung	40,156	171	75		299		
St. Bartholomäus	37,247	222	44		175		
Galiaa	30,774	87	32		212		
St. Georgen	18,269	118	14		47		
Immanuel	48,816	110	91		180		
Lazarus	59,078	306	186		565		
St. Marien	2,700	288	1		3		
St. Markus	29,499	188	36		124		
Pfingst	36,060	148	89		315		
St. Nikolai	5,082	83	7		15		
Zwingli	17,428	42	51		137		
TOTAL	401,984	1,940	768	1688	2579	2942	697

Diocese II

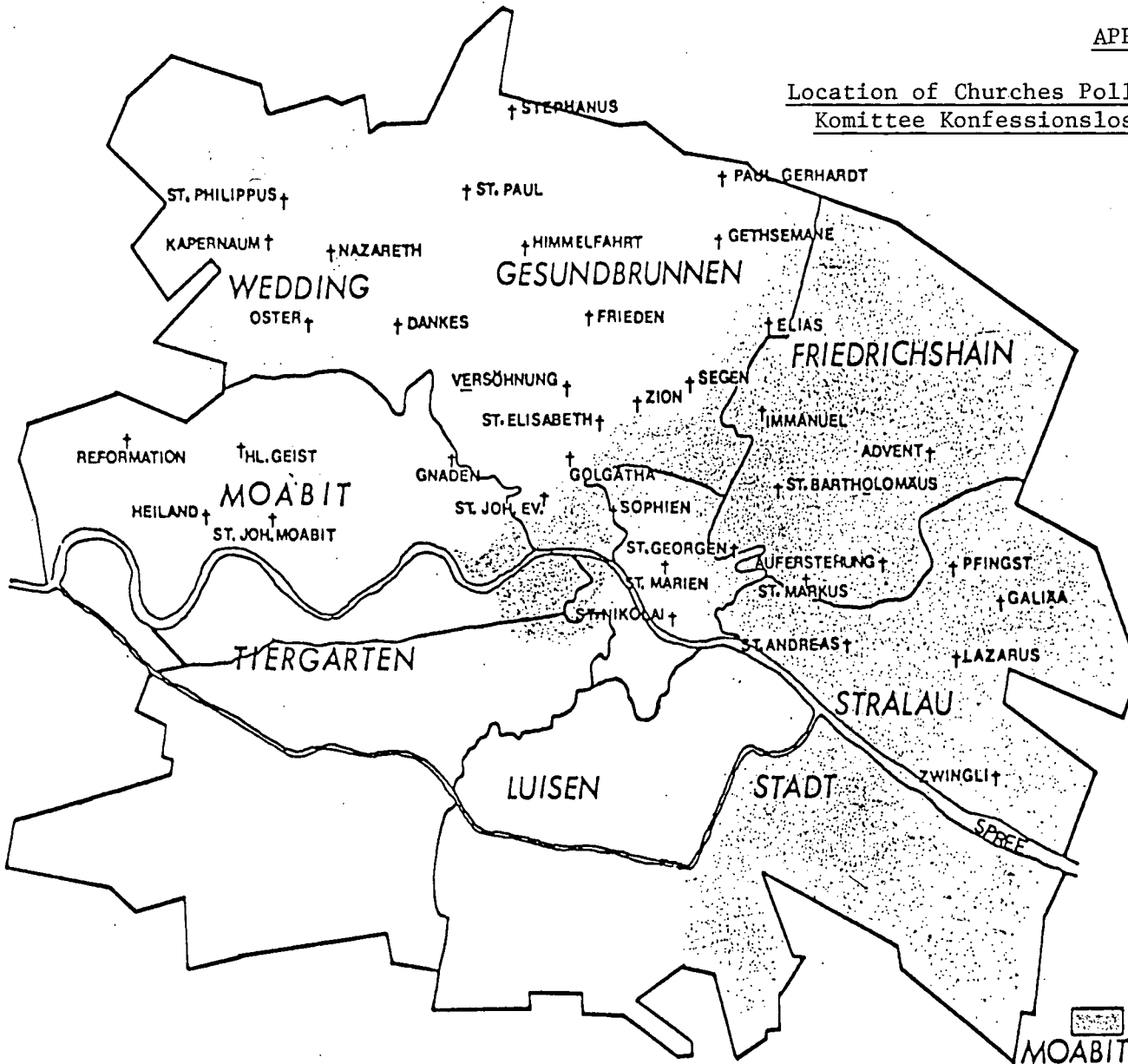
Name of Church	Registered Parishoners (1910)	Attendance on 18 May 1913	Number of Secessionists				
			1911	1912	1913	1914	1918
Dankes	32,126	137	55		259		
Gnaden	21,784	132	12		82		
St. Golgatha	25,765	104	20		65		
Heiland		373	64		237		
Heilige Geist	25,264	271	13		103		
St. Johannis Moabit	38,893	163	20		113		
St. Johannis Ev.	11,963	31	5		26		
Kapernaum	33,560	207	138		506		
Nazareth	52,275	191	202		501		
Oster	28,235	91	103		322		
St. Philippus	10,341		5		37		
Reformation	34,482	160	62		389		
TOTAL	314,688	1,860	699	913	2640	2110	417

Diocese III

Name of Church	Registered Parishoners (1910)	Attendance on 18 May 1913	Number of Secessionists				
			1911	1912	1913	1914	1918
Elias	32,903	6	66		280		
St. Elisabeth	16,715	117	19		50		
Frieden	32,315	169	78		268		
Gethsemane	40,552	95	84		341		
Himmelfahrt	27,375	97	89		192		
Paul Gerhardt	42,898	213	196		556		
St. Paul	48,409	109	178		524		
Segen	27,266	97	46		113		
Sophien	19,388	201	27		64		
Stephanus	25,890	118	69		222		
Versöhnung	20,411	163	20		95		
Zion	43,548	109	70		207		
TOTAL	377,670	1,494	942	1189	2912	3086	486

APPENDIX B

Location of Churches Polled on 18 May 1913 by
Komitee Konfessionslos



APPENDIX CPolitical Boycott of the Church

Religion and church are two different things. Not only do they differ, but, also, they are often quite contrary. This applies in particular to Christianity and the Christian churches.

The Christian churches in Germany, as elsewhere today, are first and foremost political institutions. Church and state are closely enmeshed and intertwined. Both regard it as their main duty to preserve the political and social status quo.

Because of this situation -- familiar to every Social Democrat -- our battle against the church is not a battle against religion, but just the opposite. Admittedly this battle could also be conducted against religion, as a battle of Weltanschauungen, but that is not social democracy's way, that is the way of the free-believing and free-thinking groups. Our battle against the church is entirely politically motivated, the easier battle of the two. We will not touch upon the question of belief, and will address ourselves only to the political character of the churches, a characteristic visible to all.

We advocate boycott of the state church by boycott of the church's institutions: secession from the church. We can propagate secession without contravening the party program without infringing on religious beliefs, or worse, hurting anybody's religious feelings. The party can propagate secession among those of you who have already internally broken with church and religion, and ask you to break with it externally as well. Continued membership -- even from the church or religious viewpoint -- would be hypocritical and senseless

under these circumstances. Even those who still believe, but who are opposed to a church which is a political instrument in the hands of the ruling classes, can be asked to secede. To this category belong all those of you are being exploited and oppressed by capitalism and strangled by those tools of capitalism, the church and state. Potentially, the majority of the population can be geared to follow a church secession movement.

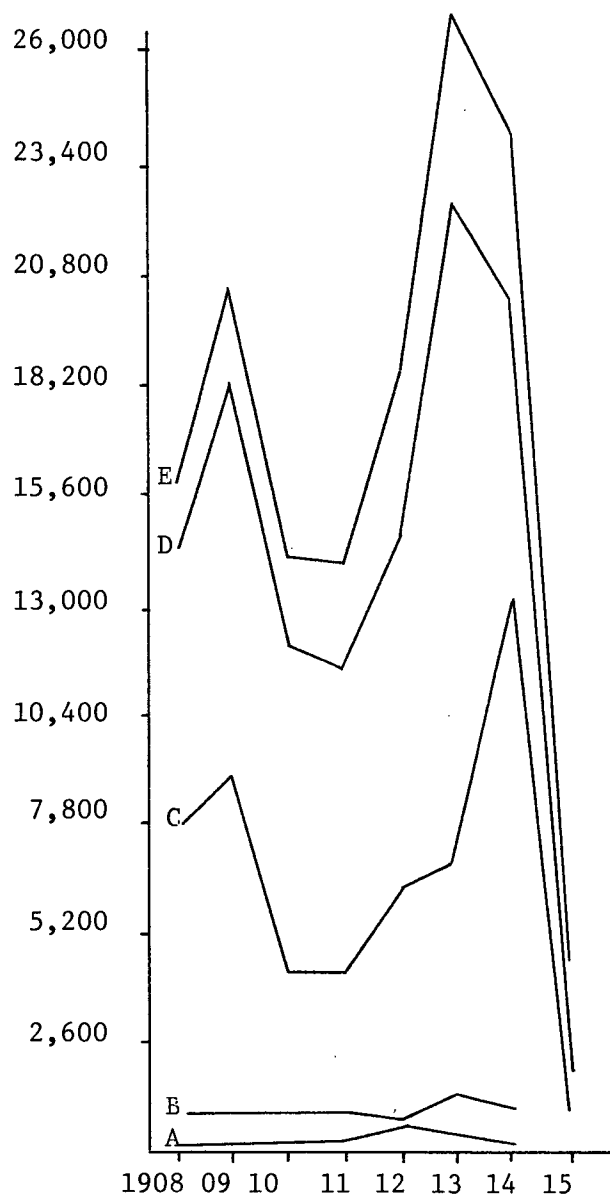
Secession from the church means exemption from the church tax -- a most easily obtained exemption. Weakening the church is synonymous with weakening the state and the ruling elite.

There is no easier lever to power for the fighting proletariat than boycott of the church through secession. This approach has not yet been fully realized, although the reasons justifying secession mentioned above should be known to every Social Democrat by heart, especially as the same arguments have been used over and over again, day in day out, in the press and in assembly. A systematic secession movement can prove fatal to the existing regime. One should not belittle present attempts to carry the secession issue into the fight against the Prussian three-class election system. There would be no need for the Social Democratic party to get involved -- although it can do so without violating its program -- if action committees were formed to further the cause of a political boycott. Meetings should be called under the slogan "Boycott the church in the political battle for election reform!" or "General strike against the state church!" Explanatory leaflets coinciding with the meetings would certainly not fail in having an effect as the past has shown. Freethinkers and similar organizations may feel free to make propaganda along their own lines. My intent does not coincide with their Weltanschauungs

battle, for, to me, this is a political movement with a purely political aim.

Dr. Karl Liebknecht, Berlin-Lichterfelde
October 1913

Karl Liebknecht, Gesammelte Reden und Schriften, 8 vols., (Berlin: Dietz, 1964), 6: 399-401.



APPENDIX D

The Secessionist Movement in Germany, 1908-1915.

- A. Bayern
- B. Rheinprovinz
- C. Berlin City
- D. Preussen (incl. Rheinprovinz and Berlin City)
- E. Deutsches Reich

"Statistische Beilage Nr.4," Amtsblatt der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands, 15 August 1952, pp. 4-11.

APPENDIX E

Secessionist Applications Filed and Processed in the
Provincial Court of Düsseldorf, 1913.

District	Quarter				Protes- tant	Catho- lic	Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th			
Eleve	-	-	-	1	1	-	1
Emmerich	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Geldern	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Goch	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moers	24	3	18	41	51	35	86
Rheinberg	1	-	2	7	4	6	10
Xanten	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Krefeld	12	12	13	36	16	57	73
Kempfen	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lobberich	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uerdingen	4	3	1	4	6	6	12
Düsseldorf	51	54	80	874	519	540	1059
D. Gerresheim	2	22	-	83	44	63	107
Neuss	-	1	2	20	11	12	23
Opladen	8	10	7	25	17	33	50
Ratingen	-	2	12	8	8	14	22
Duisburg	15	11	9	92	71	56	127
Dinslaken	6	2	5	7	13	7	20
D. Ruhrort	34	55	53	94	151	85	236
Mülheim	2	30	29	13	44	30	74
Oberhausen	30	13	55	9	43	14	57
Rees	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Wesel	1	1	1	2	1	4	5
Elberfeld	26	36	244	117	156	47	203
Barmen	6	10	17	91	100	24	124
Langenberg	2	-	-	-	2	-	2
Lennepe	2	3	3	-	4	4	8
Mettmann	7	1	-	10	8	10	18
Ohligs	4	1	4	46	33	22	55
Remscheid	4	23	17	71	85	30	115
Ronsdorf	-	1	2	5	7	1	8
Solingen	7	22	64	177	184	86	270
Velbert	3	9	-	29	24	17	41
Wermelskirchen	3	-	1	14	12	6	18
Dülken	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
M. Gladbach	2	7	-	12	8	13	21
Grevenbroich	2	-	-	-	-	2	2
Odenkirchen	1	-	-	-	1	-	1

District	Quarter				Protestant	Catholic	Total
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th			
Rheydt	-	1	-	4	2	3	5
Viersen	4	-	-	2	3	3	6
Essen	45	57	61	135			298
Borbeck	2	5	4	-			11
Gelsenkirchen							
Steele							
Werden	10	4	3	8			25

"Zusammenstellung des Regierungspräsidenten in Düsseldorf für den Minister der geistlichen Angelegenheiten vom 6.2.1914," Archiv der Kirchenkanzlei der Evangelischen Kirche der Union, Berlin. Acta. betreffend die Austrittsbewegung aus der Landeskirche. Generalia. XII. Abteilung, Nr. 124, Vol. IV (January - December 1914).