

"HE WHO WILL NOT WORK, NEITHER SHALL HE EAT":
GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC ATTITUDES TO LABOR,
1890-1914

by

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ABSTRACT

Two primary insights may be obtained from an investigation of German Social Democratic attitudes to work between 1890 and 1914. Firstly, some light may be cast upon the acceptance by an avowedly radical socialist movement of ethics of personal behavior inculcated by the German ruling classes. Secondly, the impact of that movement on the adaptation of the working class to the demands of industrial labor may be elucidated.

Following a brief review of the status of German industrialization in this epoch, and of the history of the Social Democracy up to 1890, the introductory chapter outlines a model of the party's position in German society. Socialism formed a distinct "subculture" isolated politically and socially from the dominant culture. A revolutionary ideology characterized the movement, but its reformist tactics and the conditions of exclusion from the nation actually entailed the "negative integration" of the socialist subculture into the larger society.

On this foundation the average party member's ideas of labor are then examined through the medium of socialist autobiographies. The work ethic was thoroughly indoctrinated by the institutions of the dominant culture: school, church, family, workshop and newspaper. The nature and ideological context of the conversion to socialism often reinforced these previously inculcated values. This irony was further magnified by the desire of many socialist workers for social "respectability."

The third and fourth chapters deal with conceptions of work in Social Democratic ideology. A militant reaffirmation of the work ethic is visible throughout the writings of both Marxist and Revisionist theorists. To some extent this may be traced to the intellectual assumptions of the ideologues, but above all the reinforcing belief in work in both the subculture and dominant culture must be credited with causing this particular emphasis in German socialist theory.

Finally, the similarity between attitudes to work at both the top and bottom strata of the party is noted. While there was undoubtedly some interchange between high and popular socialist ideology, the universal acceptance of the work ethic was due primarily to the similar influences of the dominant culture on both workers and intellectuals. But regardless of the origin of these conceptions, their impact upon the movement is quite clear. The socialist commitment to labor contributed to the "negative integration" of the Social Democracy by subtly tying the working class into German society, and aided the adaptation of German workers to industrialization by outfitting them with new ideas of work.

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As soon as society has become the owner of all means of production, the duty of work of all able-bodied persons, regardless of sex, becomes a fundamental law of socialized society.

. . . The silly assertion that the socialists wish to abolish work is an absurdity. Lazy persons, shirkers of work, are met with in bourgeois society only. Socialism is agreed with the Bible in asserting that "he who will not work, neither shall he eat." . . . No enjoyment without labor, without labor no enjoyment.

--August Bebel,
Woman Under Socialism

PREFACE

Few labor movements have captured as much scholarly attention as the German Social Democracy under the Wilhelminian Empire. The ideological conflicts, the character of the party leadership, the growth of the party and trade union organizations, the electoral battles, and the parliamentary maneuverings have all been examined to the point of repetition. Yet our knowledge of the movement is remarkably one-dimensional. Academic concern has largely focused on narrowly organizational and political questions, while the roots of the party and unions in the working class remain obscure. The broad range of socialist associations and publications, which formed the backbone of a truly separate Social Democratic subculture, are occasionally mentioned in passing, but rarely treated. The relationship of that subculture to working-class culture as a whole, and to the non-socialist workers, is virtually unknown.

This thesis is a tentative probe into some of these uncharted regions. Since the investigation is inevitably limited to readily-available, printed primary sources (especially theoretical writings and worker autobiographies), it can examine only the attitudes to work of convinced socialists of the leadership and rank-and-file who were articulate enough to publish their views. Nonetheless, much can be learned. The Social Democratic conception of work and the work ethic illuminates the role of the labor movement in the adaptation of German workers to industrialization, and clarifies the linkages between the dominant culture in Germany and the socialist subculture. Insights

into the nature and function of socialist ideology and the formation of the socialist working class may thereby be gained.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

AND THE INDUSTRIALIZING EMPIRE

You hide your powerlessness behind the intransigence of your theoretical formulae with which your excellent comrade Kautsky will provide you until the end of his life.

--Jean Jaurès to
August Bebel at the
1904 Congress of the
Second International¹

The quarter century preceding the First World War saw the maturation of Imperial Germany into a leading industrial power. The highly visible industrial cartels, and the advanced nature of modern capital-intensive heavy industries such as steel, chemicals and electrical machinery, left Germans and non-Germans alike with an impression of great scale and technological supremacy. But concealed beneath the giant undertakings lay a massive substratum of small industry. In 1895, 63.7% of all German workers were employed in enterprises of fifty persons or less,² and the number of individuals employed in agriculture still exceeded the number of those in industry by a small margin.³ The proportion of industrial workers in companies of more than fifty employees had increased to 45.5% by 1907, but Belgium had achieved the level of 59.8% eleven years previously.⁴ The industrial working class was relatively new. "The majority of factory workers were first- or second-generation even in 1914."⁵ Less urbanized than their French or English counterparts, and more accustomed to small units of employment, German laborers still presented numerous obstacles to the demands of large-scale

industry.⁶

Acclimatizing workers from agriculture and non-mechanized craft industries to the regimen of factory labor is an obstruction in the path of every industrializing country. Pre-industrial work habits are characterized by a rush-slack pattern in which energetic bouts of labor are interspersed with extended periods of relaxation. Leisure-time and work-time are not clearly differentiated: the worker, controlling his own tools and work-pace, may mix leisure with labor throughout the day. He is not obliged by the backward state of technology to work continuously within a pre-set period. In contrast, industrial production requires diligence, regularity, punctuality, reliability and obedience to the discipline of the manufacturer and to the dictates of centralized machinery. As production is revolutionized by technological change, the laborer retains less and less control over the work-process. He relinquishes ownership and control of his tools, and his workplace becomes separated from his home. Thus an entirely new conception of work is thrust upon him, entailing a difficult transition to different ideas, habits and customs in his everyday life.⁷ Because of the rapid and unbalanced growth of German industry, artisans and peasants were still making this fundamental adjustment between 1890 and 1914, while the mechanization of the more advanced sectors forced further transformations on factory workers already inducted into the labor-force.⁸ The relatively late and compressed character of German industrialization⁹ created and sustained swift alterations in the size and composition of the working class.

It is perhaps not surprising that this process coincided with the appearance of the largest European labor movement of the pre-1914 era. Socialism was a significant political factor at an earlier stage of industrialization in Germany than in any other Western European nation. Although the predominantly artisanal associations collapsed in the aftermath of the revolutions of 1848-49,¹⁰ the socialist movement revived during the Prussian constitutional crisis of the early 1860's. German liberalism's failure to carry through either national unification or democratization in 1848 and in the sixties, and the accomplishment of the former objective by Bismarck and Prussian arms without a significant amount of the latter, dictated that socialism was to develop in isolation almost from its outset.¹¹ The liberal parties were either co-opted into the authoritarian power structure, or were divided, anemic and unable to attract working-class support. As early as 1863 Ferdinand Lassalle had led a breakaway from the liberal-sponsored workers' educational associations (Arbeiterbildungsvereine) because of the timidity of bourgeois forces in advancing the demand for equal suffrage. The remainder of the associations disagreed with the organizational methods and the political strategy of Lassalle's followers, but they themselves separated from the Saxon and South German democrats to form the Social Democratic Workers' Party at Eisenach in 1869. Once national unification under Prussian hegemony had become a fait accompli in 1871, and state harassment (following the Paris Commune) had been stepped up, the conflicts between the Lassalleans and the so-called Eisenachers became increasingly irrelevant. In 1875 the two movements were joined at Gotha.¹²

Because of their identification with the Communards, their dissent from the praise of Bismarck and the new Reich, and their opposition to religion, the Social Democrats became pariahs in the 1870's.¹³ The "class cleavage" between the working class and the rest of the nation was fundamental, and prevented a rapprochement between socialists and liberals. The banning of the movement during the Socialist Law epoch (1878-1890) capped this process of exclusion. Bismarck hoped that the workers might be wooed to the side of the authoritarian political and social order through the suppression of the party organization on the one hand, and the introduction of social insurance legislation on the other. Complete ineffectiveness dogged his efforts. Immediately following the failure to renew the Law in 1890 came the largest Social Democratic election victory yet: 1.4 million votes and thirty-five Reichstag seats.¹⁴

The experience of repression and illegality also left a considerable legacy in the party. Although the national executive had been formally dissolved, the election of Reichstag deputies had still been permitted. Inevitably, the parliamentarians became the party leadership. At the same time the near-hysterical propaganda against the Social Democracy, which did not distinguish between socialists and anarchists, impelled the movement to emphasize the moderation and respectability of its political actions. Tactical reformism was a necessity.¹⁵

But the struggle against the police, the courts and the state increased the revolutionary temperament at all levels of the party, and aided the victory of Marxism among its intellectuals and leaders. Prior to 1878 electicism was the order of the day: there was little

comprehension of the doctrines Marx and Engels were promulgating from London. Instead a radical-democratic political tradition inherited from the Lassalleans and Eisenachers remained paramount. Various brands of "State Socialism" derived from Lassalle, Eugen Dühring, Karl Rodbertus and other social theorists competed in the field of economic theory.¹⁶

Under the Socialist Law Marxism made gradual advances through the efforts of Eduard Bernstein, editor of the party's newspaper in exile, Der Sozialdemokrat, and Karl Kautsky, who founded the theoretical journal Die Neue Zeit in 1883. They met with considerable resistance from the old guard. During the 1883-1886 period, conflicts between moderates and radicals threatened to tear the organization apart. The introduction of Bismarck's social legislation, the relaxation of state persecution, and increased possibilities for parliamentary action were great temptations for the then dominant reformist wing.¹⁷ But renewed harsh application of the Law from 1886 to 1890 assisted the victory of the Marxists, who were under the protection of one of the movement's founders and foremost leaders, August Bebel. Bebel himself won undisputed supremacy in the party's high councils in 1887,¹⁸ and held it until his death in 1913.

Despite the intellectual and political defeat of opposing ideological currents, which culminated in the acceptance of Marxism as the basis for the new Erfurt Program of 1891, the party elite did not universally agree with the new official ideology. Ignaz Auer, the indispensable secretary of the national executive, expressed contempt for the theorizing of all Social Democrats regardless of intellectual persuasion.¹⁹ The real significance of Marxism was that it was now the

starting point of all theoretical debate. Whether a proposed revision was to the right, as Bernstein and his followers advanced after 1897, or to the left, as Rosa Luxemburg desired from 1905 onwards, the works of Marx and Engels were the central ideological points of reference.

Kautsky, in close consultation with Engels, was largely responsible for drafting the architecture of Social Democratic Marxism. Its keystone was the duality of revolutionary ideology and reformist practice. The collapse of bourgeois society, the victory of the proletariat and the transformation of the means of production into social ownership were posited as inevitable, but the party was to follow only a legal path to power.²⁰ In Kautsky's words, the Social Democracy "is a revolutionary party, but not a maker of revolutions."²¹ Economic determinism replaced direct political action. The German ruling classes, it was claimed, would collapse or concede power of their own accord because of the inherent instability of capitalism. Thus the labor movement's task was the preparation and organization of the working class for that eventuality.²²

Engels' influence was decisive. Kautsky, Bernstein and many other Social Democrats were converted by his Anti-Dühring,²³ the first real attempt to systematize Marxist thought.²⁴ After Marx's death in 1883 Engels' theoretical authority was incontestable. In his hands some of the subtleties of Marx's ideas were obscured, particularly their Hegelian philosophical origins, though Marx himself has to bear some blame for his failure to adequately explain his assumptions. Marxism became a positivistic "science" which claimed to have discovered the

laws of social evolution, as Darwin had discovered the laws of natural evolution.²⁵ The great wave of enthusiasm for the natural sciences and for evolutionary theories in the last decades of the nineteenth century stamped Social Democratic ideology with its distinctive character. Capital was interpreted as the scientific proof that capitalism must inevitably evolve into an historically-necessary socialist society. During the eighties and nineties Bebel and Kautsky expected the Kladderadatsch, or great capitalist collapse, as an imminent natural phenomenon beyond all human control.²⁶ Kautsky avoided the absurdities of absolute determinism only by stressing the role of the intelligentsia in the education and preparation of the proleteriat for its historic task. His theory could thereby credit individuals with some independent influence upon history outside a rigid base-superstructure schema.²⁷

The characteristics of this ideology were realistically suited to the position of the SPD in the aftermath of the Socialist Law. The revolutionary vocabulary clearly articulated the intransigent opposition to the ruling economic and political order which sprang out of the historic isolation of the working class from the respectable body politic. But the lack of a correspondingly revolutionary tactic recognized the overwhelming power of the state, the fear of new exceptional legislation against the party, and the lack of any objectively revolutionary situation in Germany.²⁸ The political powerlessness of the movement was unavoidable. The road to further democratization of Prussia and the Reich was blocked by Junker and bourgeois elites who considered any change in the structure of power unthinkable.²⁹ The

expectation of an inevitable collapse circumvented this problem. Although the conquest of power either by parliamentary or revolutionary means was impossible, victory would come in any case because of the inherent contradictions of capitalism. In the meantime energies could be channeled into the necessary building and extension of the organization.³⁰

The maintenance of this ideological structure until 1914 is a tribute to the accuracy with which it reflected the Social Democracy's dilemma. Attempts by Bernstein and the Revisionists to reconcile theory with reformist practice, or by Luxemburg and the left radicals to accommodate practice to the revolutionary theory, foundered on the movement's position in the nation. The ideological deadlock in the party mirrored the political deadlock in the Reich. Unable to move forward into parliamentary government, or backwards into absolutism, Imperial Germany could neither concede the SPD power, nor annihilate it. The party had no compelling reason to change. At the same time the juggernaut-like growth of German capitalism from year to year, and the Social Democracy from election to election, confirmed to many socialists the predictions of determinist Marxism.³¹

The situation in which the movement found itself has been described by Guenther Roth³² (and following him, by Dieter Groh)³³ as "negative integration." Although socially and politically isolated, an isolation reinforced by the militant rhetoric of socialists and anti-socialists, the very existence of a legalized movement allowed the controlled release of much working-class frustration and resentment. Cut off from the body of the nation, the Social Democrats developed a

"subculture" which gave workers the social recognition and political participation denied them by the dominant culture. Through the opportunities for education, recreation and protest provided by a multitude of socialist clubs, publications and associations, any potential for class struggle and social conflict was greatly attenuated. The Social Democracy thus ironically contributed to the stability of the German Empire.³⁴

Boycotts and counter-boycotts reaffirmed the isolation of the socialist subculture. It was incompatible, for example, to belong to both a veteran's and a socialist association.³⁵ The dominant culture made vigorous attempts to inoculate itself against the Social Democratic virus. As an army order banning soldiers from socialist pubs stated: "It is forbidden for military personnel to go to any place frequented by prostitutes, pimps or Social Democrats."³⁶ While this sort of discrimination was conducive to radicalism in the SPD, the burgeoning organizational complex gave the movement a vested interest in its own legality. So much arduous work had gone into the building of the subculture that a period of renewed repression became unthinkable.

The Free (socialist) unions developed as part of the array of Social Democratic associations, but in the period of economic prosperity which began in 1895 they were soon transformed by massive growth. Their membership increased from 227,023 in 1892 to 2,599,781 in 1912.³⁷ With two and one half times the party membership in the last years before the war, many Free unionists did not attend SPD meetings, or even read a socialist newspaper. As such the unions came to occupy an intermediate

position between the Social Democratic subculture and the dominant culture,³⁸ and therefore lie outside the scope of this investigation. But their importance for the party's course must not be underestimated. The union leaders were thoroughly reformist, and after 1906 were a powerful restraining influence on their party counterparts.³⁹ Since they disdained all "ideology" (even Revisionism), the elite of the Free unions nevertheless contributed little to the bridging of the gap between theory and practice in the SPD.

Though a minority, many thousands of unionized workers did embrace the radical rhetoric of Social Democratic ideology. It gave them a powerful vocabulary to protest their political and social second-class standing, and to express their strong class consciousness. In the 1880's and 1890's, during and after the period of illegality, revolutionary sentiments were particularly widespread in the SPD rank-and-file. There were even millenarian expectations of the imminent arrival of the socialist utopia or Zukunftsstaat, if we can judge by the popularity in the working class of books with utopian descriptions of the future. The two socialist best-sellers of the nineties were Bebel's Woman Under Socialism (Die Frau und der Sozialismus) and a translation of Edward Bellamy's utopian novel Looking Backward 2000-1887.⁴⁰ But the party's emphasis on the day-to-day work of organization-building diverted these radical impulses into channels favourable to the growth of the Social Democratic subculture.

As the popularity of the visionary literature indicates, the party's official Marxism was poorly understood by the ordinary member. Instead a "vulgar Marxism" may have been a major ingredient of popular socialist

ideology.⁴¹ A 1908 article by Otto Bauer, the Austrian Social Democratic leader, listed a number of its disjointed dogmas. These included: "The wealth of the propertied classes derives from the surplus value produced by the workers, from the unpaid labor of the working class," and "Capitalist society tends to increase more and more the misery of the workers."⁴²

Hans-Josef Steinberg has questioned the belief that even this much knowledge of Marxism existed at the popular level. After surveying the scanty data available on loans from Social Democratic and union libraries, he concludes that the works of Marx, Engels and Kautsky were rarely read. As World War I approached the popularity of party literature declined even farther. Novels and literature were an increasingly large proportion of books borrowed.⁴³ Of all non-fiction, Bebel's Woman Under Socialism and various Darwinist and materialist tracts, especially Corvin's Pfaffenspiegel, Haeckel's Die Welträtsel, Aveling's Die Darwinsche Theorie, and Dodel-Port's Moses oder Darwin, were loaned most frequently.⁴⁴ The great wave of enthusiasm for evolution and natural science was apparently as decisive in its impact on popular as on official socialist ideology.⁴⁵

Any discussion of popular ideology must remain tentative because of the scarcity of research into working-class reading habits and political activity, but certain general outlines seem clear. A "scientific" gloss, derived from Marxism, Darwinism or some heterogeneous mixture, was important in the beliefs of many rank-and-file Social Democrats. As the party ideologues themselves stated, socialism was a "science," and

socialist society was an inevitable product of human "development" (Entwicklung). These propositions encouraged as blind Entwicklungsglaube, which guaranteed the arrival of utopia through the inexorable processes of "development."⁴⁶ To the ordinary worker it did not matter much that he could not understand the logic behind this "scientific socialism." The party intellectuals had that task, and the mere fact that they existed was reassuring.

Beneath the pseudoscientific crust lay an ethical core. Whether moderate or radical, the ordinary socialist was motivated by a feeling of injustice springing from work, living conditions, or the perceived inequalities of German society. Second-class citizenship, social exclusion and political powerlessness were prominent inducements to join the movement. Equally fundamental were stress and alienation in factory labor caused by the massive industrial transformations of this era. Poverty and poor housing conditions accentuated the dislike of the dominant social classes. Few of the appeals of socialism were more basic than the charge that those classes lived in luxury and idleness upon the suffering and toil of the workers. As we shall see, the resulting implications for socialist attitudes to work were very great.⁴⁷

Since the movement was struggling to eliminate these injustices, it acquired exalted meaning in the minds of its members. Its task was nothing less than the conquest of universal equality, freedom and happiness. The breadth and inclusiveness of the socialist subculture further heightened its value to its participants. By 1909, for example, there existed magazines and national associations for socialist bicyclists, teetotalers, gymnasts,

librarians, singers and innkeepers.⁴⁸ The opportunities for recreation, education, sociability, solidarity and collective action afforded by the party and its auxiliary organizations frequently made the movement central to its members' lives.⁴⁹ The truly dedicated could spend all of their leisure hours in labor for the cause. A description of the Austrian Social Democratic subculture by an ex-member applies equally well to the German:

. . . For tens of thousands, party work was a self-evident duty, gladly performed. The very annoyance attached to all social activities seemed to tie them to it. Often--in choir singing, at giant rallies of the party, in admiring their leaders, and under the magic spell of the great incantations of their "world struggle for freedom"--they lost their own sense of insignificance. A wonderful self-surrendering mood would seize them and lend them a greater dignity, more self-assurance, more courage, and a stronger socialist faith. Those were the hours of their ultimate bliss--and of the knowledge that all beauty in their lives came from the better sentiments that had brought them to the socialist movement. There, by their unselfish, satisfying endeavours, they were tied up with greater ends--with the harmony the party preached between their daily political activities and a higher destination of man. To lose the party was nothing less to them than to lose home, fatherland and religion.⁵⁰

It was this ability to inspire total involvement and loyalty which lent popular socialist ideology an optimistic, evangelizing tone. Under the circumstances, the ultimate victory of the cause of justice could hardly be doubted.

While exclusion from the nation and adherence to an avowedly revolutionary ideology were inherent features of the Social Democracy, certain beliefs and values were shared with the surrounding social

environment. This was to a certain extent inevitable: as a subculture the Social Democracy was a product of the culture in which it arose. Socialists were often unconscious of the extent to which they still accepted certain assumptions of the dominant culture, a fact which could only render a revolutionary break with German society even more difficult.

The realm of party education reveals most clearly the social Democracy's uncritical acceptance of elements of Imperial German culture. Elevating the cultural and educational level of the masses was a mission the SPD took very seriously. The Arbeiterbildungsvereine, which arose with socialism in 1860's, became the centre of the party's great effort to provide popular reading material, lectures and discussions to satisfy the workers' thirst for education and self-improvement.⁵¹ But the knowledge relayed rarely focused on critiques of the dominant culture. Instead the spread of Kultur was felt to be the goal of the Bildungsvereine, and specific efforts to counteract the militarism, nationalism and obedience to authority inculcated by the church, school and army were neglected in an attempt to teach everything.⁵² Reflecting the spirit of the age, natural science was a popular topic.⁵³ In literature the party leaders strongly adhered to the traditional standards of middle-class idealism and favoured Goethe, Schiller and the other classical authors. Avantgarde literary tastes were usually greeted with hostility.⁵⁴

These links between the dominant culture and the socialist subculture contributed to that surreptitious emasculation of the revolutionary pretensions of the Social Democracy which was the essence of "negative integration." Social Democrats came to accept many of the ethical presuppositions of the ruling classes even while cloaking them in radical

language. The party's educational mission was only one element of this process. Values and ethics of personal behavior were also shared by the subculture and the larger society, and probably made an even larger contribution to binding the Social Democrat into a society to which he was ostensibly hostile. Attitudes to work in particular fall into this category, and it is to that subject that we must now turn.

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- ⁸Stearns, "Adaptation," 306-307; Landes, Unbound Prometheus, 301-307, 313-314, 317-321.
- ⁹Landes notes that because of Germany's late start it was still able to carry out some of the technical innovations of the first phase of industrialization during the so-called "Great Depression" of 1873-1895. It was not greatly affected by that slump except for a few years in the mid-seventies. German industry was able to expand through to the revival of the mid-nineties, which was founded on a new wave of industrial technology in steel, chemicals, machine-building and heavy electrical goods. See Ibid., 236.
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²⁶Steinberg, Sozialismus, 45-46, 48-53, 56, 59-61; Holzheuer, Kautskys Werk, 51.

²⁷Ibid., 79-81.

²⁸Carl E. Schorske, German Social Democracy 1905-1917: The Development of the Great Schism (New York, 1972), 6; Roth, Social Democrats, 165, 167-171.

²⁹Ibid., 59-71. As Dieter Groh points out the government and the Chancellor were also under the pressure of the extra-parliamentary extreme right in the Alldeutsche Verband, Bund der Landwirte, Flottenverein, Reichsverband gegen die Sozialdemokratie, etc. who wished absolutely no relaxation of the campaign against socialism. These groups had their first peak in the first half of the nineties, and their second after the 1911 Morocco crisis, when they formed a "national opposition" for a stronger militarist and imperialist policy. See his Negative Integration und revolutionärer Attentismus: Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie am Vorabend des Ersten Weltkriegs (Frankfurt a.M., 1973), 54-55.

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³²Roth, Social Democrats, 8, 315.

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³⁴Roth, Social Democrats, 8, 231-232, 315.

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³⁸Roth, Social Democrats, 160-161.

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⁴⁰Kautsky, Foreword to Ballod, Produktion, xiii; Steinberg, Sozialismus, 138.

⁴¹Roth, Social Democrats, 199-203.

⁴²Otto Bauer, "Die Geschichte eines Buches," Die Neue Zeit, XXVI, 1 (1908-09), 26 lists the tenets of "vulgar Marxism" (as he himself calls it).

⁴³Steinberg, Sozialismus, 129-142. For very similar results from a Viennese Social Democratic library before 1914 see Robert Danneberg, "Die Erlebnisse sozialdemokratischer Bildungsarbeit," Der Kampf (Vienna), VIII (1915), 276.

⁴⁴Steinberg, Sozialismus, 129-142.

⁴⁵Ibid., 139-141.

⁴⁶Roth, Social Democrats, 199. This Entwicklungsglaube was a crucial feature of Bebel's beliefs, and he spread it widely in his Woman Under Socialism. See Vernon L. Lidtke, "August Bebel and German Social Democracy's Relation to the Christian Churches," Journal of the History of Ideas, XXVII (1966), 260-264.

⁴⁷See Chapter II below, where the ethical appeal of socialism will be dealt with in detail.

⁴⁸Dieter Fricke, Zur Organisation und Tätigkeit der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung (1890-1914): Dokumente und Materialien (Leipzig, 1962), 161-162.

⁴⁹Roth, Social Democrats, 203-211.

⁵⁰Quoted in ibid., 210-211.

⁵¹Paul Göhre in Three Months in a Workshop: A Practical Study (1895; rpt. New York, 1972) states on p. 151: "The impulse towards education lies like an elemental force, deep in the hearts and heads of our factory workmen . . ." See also Julius Braunthal, In Search of the Millenium (London, 1945), 70. The party's educational effort was further expanded with the formation of a national Bildungsausschuss in 1906. See Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands abgehalten zu Mannheim vom 23. bis. 29. September 1906 (Berlin, 1906), 134-137, 323-360, 488. All Parteitag Protokolls hereafter cited as SPD Protokoll (date).

⁵²Adolf Braun, "Bildungsprobleme in der Arbeiterbewegung," Der Kampf, VIII (1915), 242-244; Danneberg, "Erlebnisse," 279-280.

⁵³Braun, "Bildungsprobleme," 242; Steinberg, Sozialismus, 140-141.

⁵⁴Roth, Social Democrats, 223-232. Gerhard A. Ritter also notes the Social Democracy's increasing dependence on bourgeois culture. See his Die Arbeiterbewegung im Wilheminschen Reich (Berlin-Dahlem, 1959), 224.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE WORK ETHIC

My [socialist] activity was not unnoticed--the foremen noticed it and spoke of me. But I strove anxiously to give no just occasion for finding fault with me. Formerly like the others, I had often arrived late; now I accustomed myself to be punctual. I was painfully conscientious in my work; the conviction had instinctively come to me that if one wished to serve a great cause one must also do one's duty in small things.

--Adelheid Popp,
The Autobiography
of a Working Woman¹

The work ethic illumines, perhaps more clearly than any other element of Imperial German culture, the subtle and contradictory nature of the relationship between the Social Democratic subculture and its social environment. The duty of obedience and good work performance was continually reinforced by school, church, army, family and workshop, but situational necessity and socialist ideology did not allow a rejection of labor as a central feature of personal fulfillment and social acceptance. The socialist response was quite the reverse: the work ethic was taken over and turned against the ruling classes as a weapon for the political radicalization of the working class--a process which had its own unforeseen and unconscious effects upon the Social Democratic workers in whom it was fostered. The remarkable number of autobiographies produced by Social Democrats from the rank-and-file, as well as from the leadership, provide lively and insightful means for investigating these problems.²

Childhood socialization was the first and foremost means employed by the dominant culture for inculcating the "correct" attitudes to work, religion, monarchy and nation. The state worked hand-in-hand with the schools and churches, and influenced many young men through the military draft. The press and cheap popular literature also played a significant role. But of particular importance for the formation of attitudes to work was child labor. Youthful factory work, apprenticeship and home labor (Heimarbeit) figure prominently in the socialist autobiographies. The needs of rapidly expanding industrialization, the continued existence of large agrarian estates in Prussia, and the survival of considerable artisanal enterprise meant that an early introduction to physical labor would touch the lives of every member of the lower classes.

Moritz Bromme was the son of a Social Democratic railway worker in a small Thuringian town. The elder Bromme had the security of employment of the state official, or at least he did until he was falsely convicted and jailed when his son was about twelve. At that time Moritz had to take his first after-school jobs, for a beer merchant, then a beer hall, and finally an itinerant book-seller (Kolporteur). Despite these setbacks, he was allowed to complete the full eight years of the Bürgerschule (whose pupils were almost entirely middle-class), a rare privilege for a working-class child.³

Upon graduation in 1887 at the age of fourteen, Moritz wished to become a book publisher's apprentice, displaying a rather common desire among German workers at that time to raise their status by becoming prestigious artisans.⁴ His father encouraged this desire, but precisely

because of their class origin this apprenticeship was blocked to Bromme. Unskilled labor in the button factories of his home town of Schmöln was the disappointing alternative for Moritz, who had a difficult time adjusting to work-discipline. He changed jobs incessantly, briefly tried construction and cigar-making, and spent a few months as a waiter's apprentice in Leipzig, again at his father's instigation. Always forced to return to the factories of Schmöln, his irregular work habits were not lessened by the backward state of industry, the weakness of discipline, and the survival of many traditional customs in labor. The workshops were not highly mechanized, and preserved many traits of semi-artisanal hand work.⁵ At one job he worked only four days a week, a common pattern, since: "At that time the 'blue Monday' (das 'Blaumachen') existed in Schmöln in a bad way. On Mondays the factories were always half empty, but the pubs were full."⁶

With his maturation and marriage (and his simultaneous conversion to socialism), Bromme became more serious and hard-working. He nearly apologizes for his earlier behavior:

The esteemed reader will get a bad impression of me after all this, because I changed my work so frequently at the beginning of my career. But that is so when one has no fixed occupation (ständigen Beruf) and receives only pocket money as a wage. One seeks to better oneself, but often goes from the frying pan into the fire (aus dem Regen in die Traufe). I later worked between 6 and 7 years in one and the same factory.

The key words are "ständigen Beruf." Because Moritz Bromme had been frustrated in his attempt to become a skilled artisan, he at first saw

the factories as only a means of survival. Unskilled labor, lacking the prestige, security and training of a craft, had little value for him. Bromme had not yet absorbed a more modern view of work which emphasized the respectability of diligence in any occupation. As he reveals, his habits later became more regular, and his dislike for idleness is shown at one point when he proclaims his disgust with a fellow worker who shirked work and family responsibilities.⁸

Heimarbeit for pitiful wages was a common formative experience for women. Ottilie Baader (born in Frankfurt am Oder in 1847) began working before she was six, and at thirteen went to Berlin and started sewing in a small shop from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. with only a short midday break. After one factory job she bought her own sewing-machine to work at home, but the necessary work-time was appalling: 7 a.m. to midnight with one hour off. She actually rose two hours earlier to do the housework for herself and her father.⁹

I cannot say that I was ever very happy. Eventually I had hoped for something more from life. Many times I was so fed up--year after year at the sewing-machine, with only collars and cuffs before me, one dozen after another--that life had no value at all. One was only a work-machine and had no future prospects. And of the beauty in the world one saw and heard nothing; from that one was simply excluded.¹⁰

Baader's deeply-felt, if undirected, resentment at spending her childhood and youth as a "work-machine" was instrumental in her political conversion: " . . . my life has been labor from an early age, and all that I will relate here, is built upon this life of work, and can only be correctly

understood on this basis."¹¹ Socialism turned Ottilie Baader's anger into a protest against the conditions and distribution of work under capitalism rather than against work itself--as in the case of the German-Austrian Social Democrat, Adelheid Popp.

Popp's father was a viscious alcoholic who died while she was still a small child. Her family's abysmal poverty forced her at age seven to begin sewing buttons on cards after school. At ten her schooling ended and she began to crochet shawls twelve hours a day--often more, for she had to take work home at night to make extra money. Two years later she was apprenticed to lacework sewing for twelve hours daily, for which there was no fixed wage, her piece-rate being reduced whenever she became more dextrous. She suffered more than one nervous breakdown and was frequently thrown out of work.¹² Her mother reproached her as lazy:

Lazy! At an age when other children play with dolls or go to school, when they are guarded and cherished so that they may not stumble over any obstacle--at this age I had to go out and bear the hard yoke of work. At an age when others are enjoying all the blessedness of childhood, I had already forgotten childhood laughter and was thoroughly imbued with the feeling that work was my destined lot.¹³

Again, resignation to labor was combined with resentment at the loss of one's "golden childhood," a reaction to a contemporary bourgeois myth that appears in many socialist autobiographies, particularly the few written by women.¹⁴ The feeling of personal injustice thus engendered was turned to account by socialism. As we shall see, the hatred of unequal distribution of labor in society was connected to the dignity of work and the laziness of the upper classes--one of the prime

arguments of popular socialist ideology.

Wenzel Holek moved to Germany and joined the SPD around the turn of the century, but grew up under the conditions of early industrialization in the Habsburg Empire. Born in an impoverished region of German North Bohemia in 1864, his education was continually interrupted by his parents' travels for seasonal labor. By age eight he had already held one part-time job and worked at hard physical labor with his family on railroad construction and brick-making. Unskilled manual labor closely connected to the countryside dominated his early life. Holek left school at ten to work in the sugar-beet processing factories, major wintertime employers. During the "campaign" to process the harvest the minimum daily work-time was twelve hours, and a weekend night shift of eighteen hours was frequently added. In 1876 he began to travel to Saxony each summer with his father to labor as a brick-maker. The work was entirely manual and traditional. Together the two of them made bricks in the open from fresh clay and fired them themselves. His father was determined to earn as much money as possible; sixteen hours a day (4 a.m. - 8 p.m.) was normal, and no "blue Mondays" were taken, although it was customary. Most incredible of all was a double shift at the sugar-beet factory in the winter of 1878: Holek started at noon Sunday and finished at 6 p.m. Monday--thirty hours without a break.¹⁵

Despite these conditions he preferred the factory job to begging with his harmonica, something his mother forced him to do during periods of unemployment.

With my place in the factory I was much more satisfied, than when I had to go playing, as in the previous winter. And though my food wasn't as good as what I could get from the country folk, I didn't care very much. At least I was in a warm place and was not exposed to the bad weather. And then I had an occupation, with which I could let myself be seen and didn't have to be scolded as a beggar-musician.¹⁶

Above all Wenzel Holek was happy because working was respectable, while being a "beggar-musician" certainly was not. He was particularly ashamed when he had to go door-to-door, since the peasants berated him for begging instead of working, even though he preferred the reverse.¹⁷ Although his work environment was quite traditional, he had thoroughly absorbed a work ethic which frowned on idleness and an unearned living.

As Peter Stearns has noted, the artisanal tradition was strong in Germany and remained so because of the relative lateness of industrialization. Apprenticeship and Wanderzeit continued, and many craft traditions were adapted to the needs of the new working class.¹⁸ For many socialists apprenticeship in particular was an important formative experience, in which they worked continuously for long hours under strict discipline. August Bebel's wood-turning apprenticeship (1854-1857) involved fourteen hour days, seven days a week, except for Sunday morning church service.¹⁹ Philip Scheidemann, who entered the printing trade some twenty-five years later, worked twelve to thirteen hours, and fifteen to eighteen hours in the winter.²⁰ As a carpenter's apprentice in the 1880's, H.P. Dikreiter began work before 6 a.m. and continued to 7 p.m. or later with occasional breaks. But there was no midday pause. The master opposed this custom because "from it one only becomes lazy."²¹ He was particularly demanding

of constant and diligent labor, and checked up on the apprentices and journeymen regularly. His attitude to labor sounds quite modern; the ultimate sin was wasting time. "The master thought the time lost, in which no work was done . . . "22 Even in the early twentieth century conditions eased little. Fritz Pauk, who began as a tobacco apprentice in 1902, labored from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; and for the first two years had little personal freedom.²³

The role of the family in socialization of attitudes to labor was also considerable, though not as highly visible in the autobiographies. In part this is due to its inseparability from early work experience--children had to work if the family was to survive economically. Parents had no choice but to teach their children to be good laborers. Josef Peukert's father pulled him out of school at age eleven since:

His opinion was that I should learn to work before all things, in order to become a proficient worker. Besides I could--when I was diligent--take private tutoring to widen my school knowledge, but that was it. Together with my father I labored in the summer from four, in the winter from five in the morning, until eight or nine at night . . . "24

Besides necessity an element of traditionalism may be present here: the father wished to raise his son to fill his proper station in society as a worker. Mothers in working-class and artisan families frequently performed this function through religious indoctrination. Women of the lower classes were much more religious as a rule and often exercised greater influence in childhood. Moritz Bromme's mother remained a Lutheran, though her husband was a Social Democrat, and Moritz maintained his religious ties into his late teens largely because of her.²⁵

The churches were certainly among the most powerful instruments of social indoctrination by the dominant culture in Germany, although their direct influence declined steadily with the growth of the urban working class and the Social Democracy. The actual impact that the Catholic and Evangelical (Lutheran) establishments had on attitudes to work among the lower classes is not well known. The theological doctrine of both Churches was ambivalent about labor, the Catholic more so than its counterpart. Both, however, never ceased to preach the necessity of members of the bottom strata of society to work diligently as part of their obedience to God, and to the divinely ordained social system. Obedience was the key word, and one which found endless reiteration in Imperial Germany.

A Roman Catholic worker reveals most strikingly the more traditional view of that Church. Nikolaus Osterroth was fourteen in 1889 when his father became seriously ill, forcing him out of school and into his first job at a highly mechanized brick factory. He found the monotony, heat, dust and physical exertion almost intolerable. Returning one day from the factory, Osterroth met his priest and broke into tears when asked about his work.²⁶

He comforted me and said that work was the curse of a sinful mankind. 'In the sweat of your brow shall you eat your bread,' the dear Father had said. All men must work, some with their heads, others with their hands. Herr W. Tretmühl [the factory owner] perhaps must work harder than any of his workers. But the dear Father had taken the curse of labor upon himself and through that had ennobled it, since he himself had willingly become the son of a carpenter from Nazareth. One must carry the yoke that God lays upon one with Christian patience, then the curse of labor will become a blessing.²⁷

Work is a curse due to original sin: "In the sweat of your brow shall you eat your bread"--a Biblical injunction that turns up in a number of worker autobiographies since it seemed to capture the burden of never-ending labor so succinctly.²⁸ But the curse was taken on by God as the son of a carpenter, and through this action he "ennobled" labor, and those who labor. The worker could feel himself equal with any man before God, provided he carried out his labors with "Christian patience." The curse would then become a blessing in the eyes of the Lord. The innate goodness of work is not stressed, but, if performed dutifully, the worker would be rewarded in the afterlife (in contrast to Calvinist doctrine, which took worldly reward as a sign of predestination). Even more interesting is the manner in which this medieval doctrine is cast by the priest in a modern context. All must work, including the capitalist--possibly a direct response to the recurrent socialist charge of upper class idleness.²⁹

The effect of Catholic teaching can be readily determined in one case, that of Adelheid Popp. In her own words she had already accepted in her childhood the onerous burden of labor as her "destined lot."

With what piety and faith I prayed in the church for work. I sought out the specially celebrated saints. I went from altar to altar, knelt down on the cold stone steps and prayed to the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, the Queen of Heaven, and to other saints who were considered specially powerful and benevolent.³⁰

In spite of mental and physical breakdowns she continued working, or attempting to find a job. "I found work again; I took everything that was offered me in order to show my willingness to work . . . "³¹ More than dire

necessity was behind her extraordinary efforts; a sense of religious duty kept her from complete collapse. Catholic theology was thus no obstacle to hard work in her case, though labor was not given real personal worth until her conversion to socialism.³²

The traditional Lutheran view was nearly as ambivalent. Luther also viewed work as a divine curse ennobled by Christ's labor, and his economics were medieval, but duty in one's calling was for him the first responsibility of a Christian. Hard work was a much better way to love one's neighbor than charity, which encouraged begging.³³ In the words of the foremost Evangelical theologian of the Wilhelmian Empire, Ernst Troeltsch: "This all implies an extraordinary intensification of the idea of the duty of labor . . . "³⁴ The historical evolution of the Church gave Lutheran social teaching a conservative and patriarchal emphasis, which corresponded to the doctrine of absolute obedience to the monarch and state as an essential Lutheran duty.³⁵ Nevertheless, this duty to labor seems to have inspired greater effort. One of the starting points for Max Weber's famous investigation of the "Protestant Ethic" was the then widely accepted fact that there were observable differences in the prosperity and assiduity of Protestants and Catholics in denominationally mixed areas of Germany.³⁶

It is also possible that Lutheran doctrine became more positive about work during the Empire under the impact of the great social changes taking place around it. This may be true at least of the Evangelical-Social movements, which tried unsuccessfully to win the working class to the cause of religion and a patriarchal social order in the 1890's.

Paul Göhre, one of the leaders of these groups, wrote these words after spending three months incognito in a factory in 1890:

Think of the eleven or twelve hours of toil in a noisy stifling factory; it is not so easy to apply here those evangelical ideas about labor which we so often proclaim! How can work like this bring inner peace and contentment to any man? How can it be the means to develop his character, and make him a complete and harmonious human creature, full of happy activity and conscious of his destiny?³⁷

This outburst sounds much more Calvinist than Lutheran in origin, though with a unique stress on "contentment," harmony and so forth. To Göhre, work should ideally be the centerpiece of personal fulfillment in the present life. Joy in labor complements and integrates all aspects of the personality, and at the same time is a redemptive factor in the eyes of God which reminds the Christian of his "destiny": the choice of salvation or damnation. How much this point of view is representative of Lutheran theology in the 1890's is very hard to determine, though it does not appear likely to be the majority opinion.

The increasing failure of the Churches, particularly the Lutheran, to exert any direct influence on the working class does not mean that they did not succeed in implanting the duty of work in the minds of the workers. The key weapons were the elementary schools for the lower classes, the so-called Volksschule. As Wilhelm Liebknecht said: "the church chiefly operates in and through the school."³⁸ Mixed denominational schools were exceedingly rare,³⁹ religious instruction according to the prevailing orthodoxy being standard otherwise. Prussia, as a large and heterogeneous state, had the most varied conditions. In the East Elbian rural areas the

general conditions of education were scandalous; the Junkers considered, correctly, the possession by the laborers of any knowledge beyond the catechism and prayer book a threat to their power.⁴⁰ The Prussian school reform of October 15, 1872, which cut back the amount of religious memorization in favor of a more secular education,⁴¹ was probably more effective in the western provinces. But the role of the churches was by no means a small one: even in 1918 two-thirds of all Prussian school inspectors were clergy.⁴²

The Volksschule were perhaps the most important institutions of social indoctrination, the implications of which extend far beyond their role as a primary instrument for the inculcation of religion. Militarism, nationalism, political propaganda and religion were lumped together into an ideology designed to create a docile labor force of good workers, obedient soldiers, and loyal subjects. Paranoia about the apparently irreversible growth of the Social Democracy held the disparate educational aims of the ruling classes together. The nearly universal exclusion of Social Democrats and the exaggerated rhetoric entailed by "negative integration"⁴³ were coupled with a counter-offensive in the schools and the army after the complete failure of the Socialist Law to stop the spread of Social Democratic ideas.

Kaiser Wilhelm II was largely responsible for this campaign, which stressed nationalist history along with religion as the two primary tools in the struggle. His May 1, 1889 directive stated:

For a long time I have been occupied with the plan to make the school in its individual gradations useful for counter-acting the spread of socialist and communist ideas. In the first place the school will, through the cultivation of the fear of God and the love of the fatherland, lay the basis for a healthy conception of state and social relationships It must strive to provide youth with the conviction that the doctrines of Social Democracy not only contradict divine commandments and Christian moral teachings, but are also impossible in reality, and equally ruinous in their consequences for the individual and for the whole society.⁴⁴

Socialism was to be shown as morally, religiously and socially dangerous, and actually impossible. Blatant political propaganda of this sort was reinforced by the teaching of jingoistic history, which emphasized the benevolence of the Hohenzollerns and the superiority of German arms.⁴⁵

There is no doubt that these efforts had at least a great short-term effect. Philip Scheidemann, August Bebel, Franz Rehbein, Wenzel Holey and Hans Marchwiza (among others) all mention periods of youthful monarchical or military enthusiasm.⁴⁶ According to Marchwiza: "At that time all the enemies of Germany appeared to me as cruel savages and cannibals."⁴⁷ But nationalist, religious and anti-socialist indoctrination had little apparent effect in the long run in preventing the conversion to socialism of the workers examined here.⁴⁸ The actual results were much more subtle, even more so because they were invisible to socialists and non-socialists alike. The First World War was to reveal the considerable loyalties of the majority of Social Democrats to army and nation. The impact of anti-socialist rhetoric was all the more curious and ironic, a theme to which we shall later return. Finally, religion, while it largely failed to maintain even a formal hold over the socialist working class, nevertheless left a lasting impact on its ethical precepts. In the Social Democratic bastion of

Chemnitz, Paul Göhre (then a theology student) observed that: "The moral law of Christianity . . . is still the largest factor in the ethics of the working men with whom I come into contact, and is often quite unconsciously to themselves, firmly planted in their hearts."⁴⁹ The influence of religious education on women was even stronger. Adelheid Popp's deeply ingrained piety and submissiveness made her conversion to open socialist activity a traumatic mental struggle.⁵⁰

Estimating the cumulative effect of education on the work-habits of the working class must remain rather speculative. There seems no doubt that the religious views of work discussed earlier must have been taught in the schools, although there is little mention of it, especially by those raised as Lutherans. In terms of the specific information conveyed by education, a group of young German Marxist scholars have attempted with some success to demonstrate that "Qualifikation der Arbeitskraft" was one of the primary tasks of the Volksschule.⁵¹ One of them, Franz Wenzel, reveals that the motivation behind the introduction of science and natural history to the curriculum in 1872 was to give pupils some acquaintance with the world of machine production in which they would take their place.⁵² The Handfertigkeitsbewegung was a further attempt by the liberal bourgeoisie in this direction. This movement tried to have instruction in manual dexterity and work introduced into the schools, in order to produce more efficient laborers. Although it received some official favor, no serious attempt was made to carry this program through; no more than one percent of Volksschule students received such training at the apex of these groups' efforts in the 1890's.⁵³

More significant was the disciplinary pattern of German schools. The whole cultural universe of the Volksschule centered on the word "obedience": obedience to the state, to the army and to the church. Extreme but not atypical was the experience of Hans Marchwitza (whose systematic ultra-militarist indoctrination was earlier noted). His teacher viewed his responsibilities thusly: "I have the duty to raise you as respectable and obedient men."⁵⁴ This was his task, nothing more. "The diligent will one day be rewarded by life, but an idler and slacker will usually end up as a jail-bird, yes indeed!"⁵⁵ Idleness leads to criminality since to be idle is disobedient, and leads to the ultimate disobedience to society: breaking the law.

Discipline was correspondingly rigid in school. According to one very popular textbook for teachers, this was how the day was to end:

As soon as the school clock proclaims the end of school, the teacher gives the signal to fall in. The last or first row monitor (Bankoberste) calls with a loud voice: 'One!' and goes to the door; noiselessly the pupils of the last or first row follow him, formed up in pairs. Then the next row monitor calls with a loud voice: 'Two!' at which the pupils of his row repeat the action of their predecessors.⁵⁶

Strong discipline was common in nineteenth century European classrooms, but in Germany it was given a militaristic twist: schools prepared the future recruit for the army. Less intentionally, regimentation also prepared the future factory worker. E. P. Thompson gives a similar example of discipline from the Methodist Sunday Schools in his influential examination of the relationship between concepts of time and industrial

work-discipline.⁵⁷ As in England, the obsession of German schools with punctuality, regularity and order could only have profound long-term effects on lower-class work habits in the struggle to create the regular, reliable and time-conscious worker.

For many men the inculcation of obedience, discipline, monarchism, militarism, nationalism and religion did not end with school. The Prussian army had a long tradition as "School of the Nation," and in the age of ever-spreading socialism it saw one of its first tasks as the conversion into loyal imperial subjects of those who passed through compulsory military service.⁵⁸ After 1893 restrictions in the armed forces on free movement and the availability of newspapers and literature were combined with heavy penalties against Social Democratic activities, and attempts at political, religious and historical instruction.⁵⁹ Even this was not seen as enough. Since the officer corps thought the churches and civilians were not doing an adequate job fighting Social Democracy, the army meddled in the police affairs, prosecuted any socialist agitator who had the slightest contact with military personnel, and broke strikes with enthusiasm.⁶⁰

Whether military training contributed (unintentionally) to the regularity of work-habits is very difficult to discover, though one might speculate that the constant reiteration of obedience and duty to the nation must have reinforced the duty to work (which was an essential ingredient of the former), and day-to-day drill accustomed the worker to monotony and punctuality. However, Franz Rehbein found army discipline completely alienating, and speaks of the constant hounding and mistreatment.⁶¹

Viscious behavior by officers was not uncommon and increased as the war approached because of the apparent ineffectiveness of their anti-socialist campaigns.⁶² But even a strong counterreaction on the part of the soldier may not have been able to eliminate the effects of continual discipline.

The army failed to halt the rush of new members to the SPD. But for the significant number of men who looked back on their service with nostalgia rather than hatred, like the socialist workers Paul Göhre met in Chemnitz,⁶³ a lasting dual loyalty was created. General von Caprivi (Imperial Chancellor, 1890-94) acutely recognized the cause of this nostalgia: " . . . they must have instinctively felt that, because they must spend their lives in dusty, unhealthy workshops, this time of service was a period of recreation for them."⁶⁴ Few officers were so perceptive. Only the First World War would elucidate the depth of penetration in the SPD of simultaneous and contradictory loyalties to party and army.

Writing in dismay in 1915, the German socialist Adolf Braun rated the "so-called non-party press" alongside the schools and the army as one of the three most important non-socialist influences on the opinions of the working class.⁶⁵ The SPD press served primarily an intra-party function,⁶⁶ preaching to the converted, so it is not surprising that many workers, organized or not turned to bourgeois newspapers for general news coverage. Many Social Democrats read little more than the press, a fact that is not obvious since autobiographies are inevitably written by the more literate. But Moritz Bromme tantalizingly mentions the reading habits of many younger workers. Typically only detective, girlie or

general magazines were read. A few husbands also purchased the women's household magazines for their wives.⁶⁷ As today, the influence of this sort of popular reading on social and political attitudes must have been pervasive.

Popular (Kolportage) literature was equally important. Two types of cheap books seem to have been widely circulated: escapist romantic novels, and patriotic histories and biographies. The novels are frequently mentioned in the autobiographies,⁶⁸ having especially profound impact on Adelheid Popp. Books like "Rinaldo Rinaldini," "Isabella of Spain," "Mary Stuart" and "Emperor's Son and Barber's Daughter" performed the dual function of escapist fantasy and social indoctrination. Their concentration on the aristocracy, or on poor women marrying princes and rich merchants, confirmed Popp's childhood commitment to the ruling classes and to feminine sex roles.⁶⁹ The nationalist histories promoted political loyalties even more blatantly. Paul Göhre reported after his summer as a factory worker in 1890: "I found in several families . . . patriotic biographies of Frederick III and William I in the cheap well-known penny pamphlet form, although the heads of these families ranged themselves openly with the social-democratic party."⁷⁰ These books could only have contributed to the continuation of dual loyalties to the SPD and to the monarchy and army that Göhre noted. Franz Rehbein attests to their childhood influence: "At home in my village I had been raised in an extraordinarily patriotic and religious manner, and I liked to read religious and patriotic histories."⁷¹

Without a thorough reading of the original popular literature

and press it is quite impossible to estimate their effects on working-class attitudes to work, just as it is difficult to know the contribution to this field made by the Volksschule and the army. After the work of Peter Stearns⁷² it is hard to deny that significant traditional customs remained in the sphere of labor before the First World War. Adaptation to industrialization was a lengthy and complex process, and the institutions of the dominant culture discussed here could not effect instantaneously such a profound cultural transformation, especially when the German ruling elite contained many thoroughly reactionary elements who feared industrialization itself.⁷³ Yet the impact of labor, education, religion, the military and popular reading material on the mentalities of members of the working class is undeniable. The never-ending reiteration of discipline and obedience must have contributed to industrial work-discipline: the duty to work was an essential ingredient of one's duty to the state and society. If such a work culture did not emphasize the dignity or joy of labor, it at the least instilled the unrespectability of idleness and irregularity.

The network of ethics, values and opinions fostered by childhood socialization could not easily be swept away by socialism. The opposition created by the SPD to the omnipresent militarism, ultra-nationalism and authoritarianism of official culture was admirable, but even here, as we have seen, it was not a thorough success. No such break was attempted with the work ethic. The process of socialist conversion and the fabric of socialist ideology reinforced the commitment of the Social Democrat to work, precisely by giving it the dignity and importance it otherwise may

have lacked.

The reality of this irony can be readily seen when one examines the arguments of popular Social Democratic ideology (which formed much of the initial appeal of socialism). Bruno B rger, an ex-socialist worker, neatly summarizes the opinions of many members of the working class:

Work is the source of all wealth and all culture. We who do the greatest part of the work share least in the fruits of labor. We are brothers, by birth equal to one another. The existing cultural differences are due to the unfavourable social conditions of the great masses. Nobody can or should be the master of anyone else. Equal rights, equal duties, equal share in the material and cultural blessings of work!⁷⁴

B rger casts these ideas in moderate terms, but he does not distort their essential features. The first line is the initial sentence of the SPD Gotha program of 1875, and is not a Marxist argument.⁷⁵ Yet "vulgar Marxism" had equivalent concepts. The labor theory of value, regardless of its role in Marx's thought, was taken by many socialists as the scientific proof that the workers performed all the useful labor in society. The "exploitation" of the working class by capitalism for the "surplus value" its labor creates over the amount paid in wages was an idea injected with similar tones of injustice. Capital undeniably demonstrated, these workers believed, that the upper classes lived idly and immorally on the unpaid labor of the proletariat.⁷⁶

Whether the vocabulary was drawn from Marx, or eclectically from Lassalle and many others, the central core of popular ideology was the same. The working class, through its labor, was the foundation of the

whole society, but it received little of the benefit, while the upper classes lived in extravagant idleness on the toil of the workers. Only equal division of all work and its products could remedy this injustice. These ideas had immediate appeal: they verbalized the feeling of mistreatment and exploitation felt on the job, and in German society as a whole; they crystallized resentment of the rich; and they confirmed the worth of each worker's labor through class pride and consciousness of the social contribution of the working class.

The initial attraction of socialism was overwhelmingly ethical, a theme which finds constant reaffirmation in the autobiographies. The middle-class intellectual Karl Kautsky and the agrarian laborer Franz Rehbein typify the intellectual development of the minority in the Social Democratic movement who became ideologically convinced Marxists. Both adhered to socialist thought on ethical grounds, and only rejected an eclectic, emotional brand of socialism for "scientific socialism" after many years of reading and study.⁷⁷ Only a tiny number of university-trained intellectuals could possibly have joined the SPD out of Marxist conviction.

The ability of the movement to appeal to the emotions, and to inspire total involvement and commitment,⁷⁸ made it an excellent replacement for the Church in the lives of many workers. The conversion to socialism was frequently inseparable from the loss of religious faith and the search for a substitute. Anna Altmann had formerly seen the afterlife as the reward for the endless sufferings of the present, but when she discarded this belief her resentment was immediately aroused against the

luxury and idleness of the rich:

I came to the conclusion that it was not just in that case when the great mass of the people exist miserably and go penniless to an early grave, while a few thousand live riotously (in Saus und Braus leben) here on the earth.⁷⁹

"Justice" was the key here as elsewhere. Socialism became a set of moral beliefs which replaced the Christian moral code largely by absorbing it. The hatred of material inequalities drew on the New Testament tradition of Christian egalitarianism.

Wilhelm Reimes gives eloquent testimony of the nature of the transition:

My greatest difficulty in the development beginning now was the truly inner conviction of the religious scruples which lay in myself and which I had absorbed from my environment. For the economic and political goals of socialism, as far as we understood them, I was soon completely enthusiastic. It was no understanding with an historical or other theoretical basis; I saw socialism in this light only in later years. I let myself be led by the natural feeling that it was a duty to struggle against the injustice that I saw, and this feeling was in harmony with the best of the inner religious emotions that lived on in me despite my opposition to the churches.⁸⁰

The substitution of socialist ideology was a gradual but direct process. Reimes at first sought to unite the leaders of the SPD with God and an afterlife,⁸¹ the former apparently taking the place of the clergy as the prophets of God's earthly justice. Religious duty became the socialist duty to battle injustice, and the ideals of socialism resonated with the most deeply socialized religious impulses.⁸²

Ernst Preczang had an equally idealistic conception of the Social Democracy:

In the morning, when I sat, often only half-awake, at the type-case filling the composing stick with letters in uniform arm movements, I asked myself silently: why are you doing this? To live. But do you live then when you are not permitted to utilize your powers after your own inclinations? When your best and strongest creative impulse must be forcibly suppressed and you are not permitted to work with joy? From these lowlands of the spirit I was lifted again and again by faith in socialism. I heard Bebel, the old Liebknecht and the other inspired prophets of the worldly workers' religion, I read the theoretical writings and learned to know the value of practical spadework (Kleinarbeit), and I saw in the political and union movements the slow, laborious but secure advance of the new spirit which would conquer the world. It was for me, it was for us all, too slow. But we saw nevertheless the way and the goal, and felt exaltation and solace.

A purely political or economic appraisal of the labor movement does not suffice to explain its meaning. For tens of thousands, it has also become a new spiritual home; it became for them a lively, joyous meaning for existence I valued chiefly the spiritual influences of the movement and their share in a new intellectual culture which shall arise from the depths of the people. Freedom, equality, justice--they are and were for me not only political, but above all human-ethical (menschlich-ethische) postulates.⁸³

Preczang's intense idealism was driven, according to his own testimony, by the inability to find creative outlets on the job. As with many Social Democratic workers, dislike of his work grew not out of an unwillingness to labor. On the contrary, it was exactly the conception of what work should be in contrast to what it in fact was that provoked dissatisfaction. The movement was the new Church, the "new spiritual home," whose concern for the uplifting and education of the masses proved its moral nature, and whose activities provided meaning and happiness to Preczang's life to fill

the void left by his unsatisfying work. Above all it promised the inevitable victory of freedom, equality and justice in the future, a future presumably, in which one could work with "joy."

This vision of the socialist society, the Zukunftsstaat, filled an important psychological need of many a new recruit. Otto Krille expressly compared it to heaven.⁸⁴ Heinrich Paul Dikreiter claims:

It was the idea of the Zukunftsstaat that ruled the minds of the Social Democratic workers at that time. The glowing picture of a social order, in which there would be no more want or poverty, exerted over me, as it did over thousands upon thousands of others, a deep and lasting impression.⁸⁵

In one of Wenzel Holek's early groups the members would spend their evenings fantasizing about this future if not given strong leadership.⁸⁶

Not all Social Democrats used the movement as a religion-substitute. The complaint of the protagonist in an autobiographical novel by the socialist worker, Alfons Petzold, is revealing. Because of favoritism, bribery and arbitrary dismissal in the factory: "It was impossible for anyone to obtain a better position, and with it a higher pay, through an honest fulfillment of one's duties."⁸⁷ Although workers were "diligent and willing" they were fired because they were unionists or socialists.⁸⁸ Straightforward anger at injustice on the job motivated the writer's adherence to socialism--as it did for many. Again it is noteworthy that this feeling of unjust treatment sprang from an ideal of what work should be. Petzold had thoroughly accepted the duty to work, for the origin of his dissatisfaction was that the "honest fulfillment of one's duties" was

not rewarded by fair treatment.

Moritz Bromme slipped rather easily into socialism at the end of his teens since he had been exposed to it by his father from an early age, and was now an unskilled worker unable to fill his desire to become a skilled craftsman. Socialist and union activity compensated for his unsatisfying work, his nagging and uneducated wife, and the great financial burden of a rapidly growing family.⁸⁹ The day-to-day work of election campaigns, party meetings and union organizing served as an essentially male leisure-time escape from home, and also gave meaning to his life, for each small contribution to the party had moral overtones: it was one more step towards the final goal.

To its members the Social Democracy was above all a moral movement, one that was struggling to achieve the ideals of freedom, equality and justice in the government and in the workshop. The work ethic was an integral part of this Weltanschauung in that it was simultaneously a point of attack on the existing social order and a link to the previously indoctrinated views of the dominant culture. The ironic and contradictory nature of ethics in the socialist sub-culture can be readily seen in the desire of many strong Social Democrats for social "respectability." Historians of the British working class have already employed this concept fruitfully. One of them, Geoffrey Best, has given this definition: "Respectability was a style of living understood to show a proper respect for morals and morality; usually it meant some degree of formal Christianity, but you could be respectable and value your respectability without being a Christian."⁹⁰

Why would a socialist militant want to be respectable? On this question many answers are provided by Adelheid Popp, who rose from the depths of the working class into the leadership of the German-Austrian Social Democratic Party. The excerpt quoted at the beginning of this chapter is particularly informative. When she began active agitation in her factory the need for singular diligence and application in her duties was obvious: they were an absolute necessity if she was to remain employed. Identical circumstances prevailed throughout German industry; socialists and union men were fired for no other reason than their organizational affiliations. Respectability on the job could merely be a role assumed in order to maintain a living. Indeed, one historian of the English working class has contested Best's belief that respectable behavior was a widely accepted norm with the contention that it served primarily as convenient camouflage to enable the workers to live as they wanted to.⁹¹ Undoubtedly this was the case for some German workers, but Popp's attitude indicates that it was not true for many Social Democrats. She states: "I was painfully conscientious in my work; the conviction had instinctively come to me that if one wished to serve a great cause one must always do one's duty in small things."⁹²

She moves quite unconsciously from the situational necessity to the ideological desirability of diligent labor. Her commitment to the work ethic seems quite unforced:

When I . . . was chosen to devote all my time to the organization among working women, and help work at a newspaper for working women, I received a testimonial from my manufacturer that praised my diligence and extraordinary application. He handed it to me with the words: 'I wish you may find as much appreciation in your new sphere of work'.⁹³

Popp's Catholic upbringing and terrible experience with child labor have been noted earlier. Since these factors were more likely to inculcate an ambivalent attitude to work, the cause of her quest for job respectability must be sought in her socialist world-view. Although she became a leader of an "orthodox" Marxist party, the movement to her was a largely moral and ethical one, which (at least unconsciously) replaced the Church in her life. "When I entered the salesroom of the Social Democratic party for the first time, I felt as though I were entering a sanctuary."⁹⁴ And she ends the book with her imprisonment for socialist agitation:

On my bed I fancied I was lying on stones and my limbs ached from the hardness; but no thought of repentance came to me. My confidence was deep-rooted that the saying of George Herwegh's, which so often adorns the walls at workmen's festivals, would be realised by the victorious power of the proletarian struggle for freedom:--

'What do we desire of the
distant future?
That we may be provided with
bread and work;
That our children may learn
in the schools;
And that our old people may
not go begging.'

Who really desires to help make Herwegh's words reality must shrink from no difficulty. The goal is wonderfully beautiful; it is so promising that strength can be found to conquer any difficulty in the way. If I have succeeded in helping this end in my modest work, then I have achieved my aim.⁹⁵

Popp's self-image is modeled on the Christian martyr, with socialism instead of heaven as the transcendent goal. Again the crucial psychological

significance of one's own contribution, however small, to the achievement of justice, equality and freedom is evident.

To dedicated Social Democrats their work for the party or unions was for a morally superior movement, and they had both the right to consider themselves, and the duty to be moral and respectable persons. Small deeds became infused with a high moral significance.⁹⁶ Each was a brick in the construction of the edifice of socialism. The daily, essentially reformist efforts of the party or union official received powerful impetus because they were contributions, however indefinite, to the ultimate aim. This exacerbated the dangers of bureaucratization and the division (basic to the whole party) between revolutionary ideology and reformist practise. Once elevated to such a position of importance, the Kleinarbeit of the official tended to obscure the goal for which it was being performed. Equally, the morality of each action contributed to the need and desire for respectability. For socialists did not exist in a vacuum--they had to struggle in a hostile environment, in a society which classed them as beyond the pale. To affirm their own worth and to prove to the rest of the social body that they were serving a great cause required moral and respectable behavior, the performance of one's "duty," as Popp says. Idleness or a bohemian manner would only confirm the opinions of the middle and upper classes. But moral excellence--the zealous execution of social obligations--would help to demonstrate socialism's superiority. Social Democrats could thereby look askance at the behavior of the upper classes, as in the popular view of work, which condemned them for idleness and praised the working class as the

foundation of society. The SPD taught its adherents to accept the label "worker" with pride, a status Otto Krille and Adelheid Popp had earlier found shameful.⁹⁷ Class consciousness had a dual-edged effect: it created new members for a socially subversive movement (in the eyes of both sides) while reinforcing many aspects of the moral code so energetically inculcated by the dominant culture. In this light Popp's devotion to work and desire for respectability are much more comprehensible.

The important cultural and educational aspect of the Social Democracy further bolstered the self-images of the movement and its members. The Arbeiterbildungsvereine and the other clubs and associations of the subculture provided a broad range of activities, discussions and lectures which fostered the "ethic of self-improvement" in the working class. Trygve Tholfsen's article on respectability in mid-Victorian Britain pinpoints that ethic, as adopted by radical workmen, as essential to the victory of the cultural presuppositions of the propertied classes.⁹⁸ Education and self-improvement contributed to the morality of each action by confirming its worth, and strengthened the doctrine of self help and moral improvement preached by the middle classes, even while employing it for working-class ends.⁹⁹ The German workers' associations operated in the context of much greater class hostility, but contained the same contradiction. The enlightenment of the working class was directed very much at general education, and radical political aims (the attack on monarchism, authoritarianism and militarism) were neglected in the attempt to teach everything.¹⁰⁰ More

crucially, the educative function of the Social Democracy reinforced the structure of respectability at every point: it reaffirmed in the minds of its members the moral nature and superiority of the movement; it bolstered the self-image of the socialist as a respectable person; and it confirmed, through its uncritical teaching of Kultur, some of the ethical presuppositions of the culture of the ruling classes.

The reaction of Social Democrats may be understood even more clearly if the vituperation directed against them is examined. If they often set out to prove they were good workers it was almost certainly because of the characterization of party members as dissipated idlers or bomb-throwing anarchists by uneducated public opinion. A typical early view appeared in the Schleswig Government Amtsblatt for July 1872:

Everyone should know what to think of party emissaries who do not hesitate to glorify the bloody crimes perpetrated by the Commune in March of 1871--robbery, plundering, extortion, murder, gluttony, arson. Their aim is to overthrow everything that is venerable, sacred and dear to us--fatherland, throne, altar, custom and law--and to replace the hearth at home with the ale-house-bench, to dissolve property and possessions and to turn labor, which is the nourisher of nations, into a tool of ambitious party leaders But above all, work and making a living are deprecated, the trust between employers and workers is destroyed, dissatisfaction is aroused and kindled through strikes, the inclinations to indulge in slothfulness, to frequent pubs, to join seditious, fruitless associations are furthered . . . 101

The image formed in the seventies continued for several decades. As part of the anti-socialist propaganda regularly dispensed in schools, Moritz Bromme's class received this explanation from their teacher:

There is now a sort of men, who call themselves Social Democrats. They want to destroy marriage and family life, do away with the state and the kings, and abolish all private property, so that the present intelligent property-owner will have to carry manure and cart sand in the place of the servant (Knecht), while this uneducated man takes the owner's place.¹⁰²

The picture presented in both excerpts is similar. Social Democrats oppose every value held by the middle and upper classes: monarchy, church, property, nation, law and work. They are depraved criminals who indulge every excess and wish to smash all the props of civilization. They are subversive of sexual morality and decency, for they wish to dissolve marriage and the family; they threaten all order with their opposition to the king, to private property and the rule of law; and they are lazy, ignorant men who wish to usurp the place of the "intelligent property owner" and force him to perform degrading manual labor. "Knecht" is especially suggestive. The image of a Social Democrat here is very Junker in origin: the stupid, rebellious and slothful farm-hand who would like to make his master cart sand and manure.

Socialism and respectability were irreconcilable to the ruling classes, but that did not prevent Social Democrats from trying to contradict the hysteria of official propaganda. The impulse to work was particularly abetted, for accusations of laziness were normal. In 1896 Otto Buchwitz, then not a socialist, refused to be a strike-breaker, whereupon his employer

. . . prophesied to me that I would come to a bad end if I did not separate myself from the 'work-shy reds' ('arbeitsscheuen Roten') . . . In spite of this I remained with the master and asked him if he could not understand that the strikers were not idlers . . .¹⁰³

The "criminality" of Social Democrats was the second aspect of anti-socialism which had great impact. Fritz Pauk was surprised when he met his first party member about 1903, since the latter was a very good workman, whereas Pauk thought "that all Social Democrats were criminals and vagabonds, as the newspapers and pamphlets said . . . "104 Like the duty to work, respect for law and obedience to authority was unceasingly hammered into the socialist in his youth by the school, church, family and workshop. Now labelled a criminal, he responded by emphasizing his moderation and respectability. Paul Göhre met one socialist worker during his sojourn in Chemnitz who said:

We don't all want to be like the rich and the great. There will always be rich and poor. That doesn't come into our heads. But we want fairer and better regulations in the works and the community, and I speak my mind about it whether it suits or not. But I will never do anything against the law.¹⁰⁵

Another echoed him:

. . . religion may have been all right and useful, even necessary when men weren't so far along, but not now. Now we have laws. Whoever keeps inside the law is a respectable man, whoever doesn't is a rascal.¹⁰⁶

In a certain sense the phenomenon of socialist "respectability" was limited since it took place within the context of a radical ideology. No pretence was made by the party of respecting monarchy and religion, nor the omnipresent ultra-nationalism of Imperial Germany. They were the most highly visible symbols of the ruling order, and Social Democratic opposition was the essential pre-condition for a militant class

consciousness. Against militarism and the Churches the SPD made some of its greatest efforts and most lasting contributions, but did not succeed in completely eliminating the subtle influences of either from the minds of its followers and leaders. But here the tack was ideological resistance. On work and legality the response was quite different. These values were adopted and turned against the propaganda of the ruling classes to strengthen class consciousness further. The morality of the movement was displayed in the moral behavior of its members: the idle and criminal nature of Social Democrats was shown to be laughably false.

The work ethic thus operated in a contradictory and dual-sided manner in the socialist subculture. It was ably employed in the creation of a strong working-class movement, but simultaneously and unconsciously the belief in work and self-improvement tied the socialist more deeply into the social system to which he was hostile. While it was the basis for protest, it also served to reinforce the duty to labor diligently, and the quest for respectability only magnified this element. Great improvements, naturally, were demanded of factory work, but within the context of the industrial system and the ideal of regular, constant and limited labor.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, legality enabled the existence of a radical mass party, but sanctioned the reformist elements of the SPD's political culture, and the legal path to power.

The responses of the socialist subculture to the dominant culture can be divided into two broad categories. The issues of opposition between the two cultures, which functioned as definite demarcations of class lines, corresponded to the negative side of "negative integration"

and to revolutionary ideology; the issues of adaptation, in which the views of the ruling classes were adapted to working-class ends (like the work ethic) corresponded to the integrative aspect and to reformist practice. The former issues were the more visible and served to maintain the class cleavage in German society, but were seemingly less thorough in their penetration of the movement. The latter issues were all the more crucial because they operated largely unconsciously, and did not require so radical a break from the past on the part of the new recruit. To the extent to which this process was effective, it was a contribution to the eventual victory of reformism in the SPD that was difficult to avoid since it emerged naturally from situational necessity. The socialist attitude to labor played a significant role, for there was little that was more important to the worker than his relation to his work. At every point the worth of labor was reemphasized by the socialist's environment, even when he turned to the complexities of official party ideology. To elucidate the latter is our next task.

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¹Adelheid Popp, Autobiography of a Working Woman. (London, 1912), 89-90.

²The autobiographies seem to have been inspired partly by the party's encouragement of worker self-expression, partly as a means of propaganda, and partly through middle-class and academic concern about the effects of industrialization on the psychology of the working classes. The number of them is too great and largely inaccessible to allow a comprehensive survey. Therefore I have chosen approximately ten autobiographies of Social Democrats from a variety of class backgrounds. These were supplemented by Wolfgang Emmerich's edited selection from some ninety working class autobiographies, Proletarische Lebensläufe: Autobiographische Dokumente zur Entstehung der Zweiten Kultur in Deutschland. Band 1: Anfänge bis 1914. (Hamburg, 1974). Hereafter cited as Lebensläufe. Also useful was a perceptive study of working class culture in Chemnitz by an outsider, Paul Göhre, in Three Months in a Workshop. Göhre produced this book after spending the summer of 1890 as an unskilled worker in a machine-building factory. He was, at the time, a theology student and had an extremely interesting career. In the nineties he was associated with various Evangelical-Social movements under Alfred Stoecker and Friedrich Naumann. In 1901 the ineffectiveness of these efforts drove him to join the SPD and he was expelled from the Lutheran church as a result. He joined the revisionist wing and went on to edit many of the most important autobiographies used in this chapter.

³Moritz Th. W. Bromme, Lebensgeschichte eines modernen Fabrikarbeiters, Ed. Paul Göhre (1905; rpt. Frankfurt a.M., 1971), 27, 58, 65-70, 73-78, 84.

⁴Stearns, Lives of Labor, 48, 52-55, 66.

⁵Bromme, Lebensgeschichte, 89-90, 104-105, 108, 112-113, 115-116, 124, 129-130, 134-162.

⁶Ibid., 121.

⁷Ibid., 110.

⁸Ibid., 248.

⁹Ottilie Baader, Ein steiniger Weg: Lebenserinnerungen (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1921), 7, 10-15.

¹⁰Ibid., 16.

¹¹Ibid., 7.

¹²Popp, Autobiography, 15-16, 19, 21-23, 31-33, 35, 46-47.

¹³Ibid., 65.

¹⁴See also Luise Zeitz in Lebensläufe, 181. For a male example see Julius Bruhns in Ibid., 105-106.

¹⁵Wenzel Holek, Lebensgang eines Handarbeiters (Jena, 1930), 11-14, 21-22, 27, 56-57, 62-63, 72, 76-77, 78-79, 97-101, 140-141, 143, 147-149.

¹⁶Ibid., 80.

¹⁷Ibid., 153.

¹⁸Stearns, "Adaptation," 304, 305, 307.

¹⁹Bebel, Aus Meinem Leben, I, 23-24.

²⁰Philip Scheidemann, Memoirs of a Social Democrat (London, 1929), I, 7-8.

²¹Lebensläufe, 190-191.

²²Ibid., 191-192.

²³Ibid., 324.

²⁴Ibid., 104.

²⁵Bromme, Lebensgeschichte, 29, 50-51, 97-99, 168-169. Franz Bergg is another example. See his Ein Proletarierleben, Ed. N. Welter (Frankfurt a.M., 1913), 17-18. Stearns agrees that working-class women were more religious, traditional and deferential. See Lives of Labor, 275.

²⁶Nikolaus Osterroth, Vom Beter zum Kämpfer (Berlin, 1920), 49-53.

²⁷Ibid., 53.

²⁸See H. P. Dikreiter for example in Lebensläufe, 190.

²⁹This aspect of Social Democratic ideology is treated thoroughly in Chapter III.

³⁰Popp, Autobiography, 54-55.

³¹Ibid., 66.

³²On the latter point see the quotation from Ibid. at the beginning of this chapter.

³³William O. Shanahan, German Protestants Face the Social Question: Volume I: The Conservative Phase 1815-1871 (Notre Dame, 1954), 43-44. (No volume II ever appeared.) See also Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, II (New York and Evanston, 1960), 554-557.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Shanahan, German Protestants, 39, 46-48.

³⁶Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York, 1958), 35, 38-39, 188n., 189n.; Reinhard Bendix, "The Protestant Ethic--Revisited," Comparative Studies in Society and History, IX (1966-67), 266, 267. The differences between Catholics and Protestants in the Rhineland were mentioned in the preface by Bluntschi to the German edition of Emile de Laveleye, Protestantism and Catholicism in their Bearing Upon the Liberty and Prosperity of Nations (Toronto, 1876). The latter, a very biased polemic, mentions similar differences in a German Swiss canton. This was only one of a number of pieces Weber cites.

³⁷Göhre, Three Months, 190.

³⁸Wilhelm Liebknecht, "Wissen ist Macht-Macht ist Wissen," Sozialdemokratische Bibliothek, II (1888; rpt. Leipzig, 1971), 25.

³⁹They existed only in Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt and the Prussian district of Wiesbaden (formerly Nassau). See R.H. Samuel and R. Hinton Thomas, Education and Society in Modern Germany (London, 1949), 100.

⁴⁰Franz Wenzel, "Sicherung von Massenloyalität und Qualifikation der Arbeitskraft als Aufgabe der Volksschule," Schule und Staat im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert, Ed. K. Hartmann, et. al. (Frankfurt a.M., 1974), 330-331, 368-372.

⁴¹Ibid., 327, 334.

⁴²Samuel and Hinton Thomas, Education, 99-100.

⁴³See above, Chapter I.

⁴⁴Quoted in Wenzel, "Sicherung," 338.

⁴⁵History was formally introduced as a subject in the Prussian schools with the 1872 school reform, and was from the first very militaristic in content. In connection with the lapse of the Socialist Law and the "New Course" of Wilhelm II its importance was greatly heightened by the

directives of 1889 and 1890. See Ibid., 327, 343 and especially Walter C. Langsam, "Nationalism and History in the Prussian Elementary Schools under William II," in Nationalism and Internationalism: Essays Inscribed to Carlton J. H. Hayes, Ed. E. M. Earle (New York, 1950), 241-260.

⁴⁶Scheidemann, Memoirs, I, 9-11; Bebel, Aus Meinem Leben, I, 17-19; Franz Rehbein, Das Leben eines Landarbeiters (Jena, 1911), 20-22; Holec, Lebensgang, 20; Lebensläufe, 318-319.

⁴⁷Ibid., 318. This is not surprising considering the fervent hatred of other nations, especially France, which was standard fare in the history texts. See Langsam, "Nationalism," 250-259.

⁴⁸Whether this effort prevented others from becoming Social Democrats cannot be examined here, for by definition I concentrate only on socialists.

⁴⁹Göhre, Three Months, 189.

⁵⁰Popp, Autobiography, 91, 93-94, 99-100, 107.

⁵¹See above note 40.

⁵²Wenzel, "Sicherung," 327-328.

⁵³Ibid., 362-365; See also G. Griep, "Überblick über die Knabenhandfertigkeitbewegung in den achtziger und neunziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland," Jahrbuch für Erziehungs- und Schulgeschichte, I (1961), 131-158. The SPD approved of this effort, an irony that will be discussed in Chapter 3.

⁵⁴Lebensläufe, 316.

⁵⁵Ibid., 319-320.

⁵⁶Quoted in Wenzel, "Sicherung," 380.

⁵⁷Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," 85.

⁵⁸Martin Kitchen, The German Officer Corps 1890-1914 (Oxford, 1968), 145.

⁵⁹Ibid., 153-158, 159-162, 168-172, 174-177.

⁶⁰Ibid., 155-156, 161-162.

⁶¹Rehbein, Leben, 177.

⁶²Kitchen, Officer Corps, 181-182.

⁶³Göhre, Three Months, 120-121, 124.

⁶⁴Quoted in Wenzel, "Sicherung," 347.

⁶⁵Braun, "Bildungsprobleme," 241.

⁶⁶Roth, Social Democrats, 245-246.

⁶⁷Bromme, Lebensgeschichte, 286.

⁶⁸Popp, Autobiography, 36-37; Bromme, Lebensgeschichte, 117; Luise Zietz in Lebensläufe, 182; Rehbein, Leben, 8-10. "Rinaldo Rinaldini" turns up three or four times so it must have been very popular. Bromme was given the socialist children's book König Mammon at the age of 5 (1878) and since it was an attack on greed and the rich it would be very important to find a copy of it. See Lebensgeschichte, 31-32.

⁶⁹Popp, Autobiography, 36.

⁷⁰Göhre, Three Months, 127.

⁷¹Rehbein, Leben, 5-6.

⁷²See "Adaptation to Industrialization" and Lives of Labor, passim.

⁷³Particularly interesting is Kenneth D. Barkin's book, The Controversy over German Industrialization 1890-1902 (Chicago, 1970).

⁷⁴Quoted and translated from Bürgel's autobiography in Roth, Social Democrats, 197.

⁷⁵See the Gotha Program in Mommsen, ed., Deutsche Parteiprogramme, 313; and Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program" in Marx and Engels, Selected Works, 315.

⁷⁶On "vulgar Marxism" see Bauer, "Die Geschichte eines Buches," 26; on the emotional appeal of these ideas see Henrik de Man quoted in Roth, Social Democrats, 202.

⁷⁷Karl Kautsky, Erinnerungen und Erörterungen (The Hague, 1960), 182, 184-187, 198-204, 284; Rehbein, Leben, 8-10.

⁷⁸See above, Chapter 1.

⁷⁹Lebensläufe, 129.

⁸⁰Ibid., 284.

⁸¹Ibid., 284-285.

⁸²Another similar case is that of Nikolaus Osterroth, who had been a pious Catholic. He had greater mental struggles though because of his discovery later of the SPD's opposition to all religion--a position

which took considerable time to accept. Even then his socialism was largely based on Christian ideals of brotherly love and selflessness. See Osterroth, Vom Beter zum Kämpfer, 143-151.

⁸³Lebensläufe, 288-289.

⁸⁴Ibid., 363.

⁸⁵Ibid., 286.

⁸⁶Holek, Lebensgang, 210-211. See Chapter IV for a detailed examination of the Zukunftsstaat in Social Democratic ideology.

⁸⁷Lebensläufe, 326-327.

⁸⁸Ibid., 327.

⁸⁹Bromme, Lebensgeschichte, 221-227, 252-253, 291-299, 326-328, 334-336, 351-359.

⁹⁰Geoffrey Best, Mid-Victorian Britain 1851-1875 (London, 1971), 257.

⁹¹Peter C. Bailey, "'Rational Recreation': The Social Control of Leisure and Popular Culture in Victorian England, 1830-1885," Ph.D. Diss. Univ. of British Columbia 1974, 363-366.

⁹²Popp, Autobiography, 89-90.

⁹³Ibid., 120.

⁹⁴Ibid., 90.

⁹⁵Ibid., 135.

⁹⁶I am indebted in this section for general theoretical framework to another, and by far the best, of the studies on British working class "respectability": Trygve R. Tholfsen, "The Intellectual Origins of Mid-Victorian Stability," Political Science Quarterly, LXXXVI, 1. (1971), 57-91.

⁹⁷Lebensläufe, 364; Popp, Autobiography, 67.

⁹⁸Tholfsen, "Origins," 61, 64.

⁹⁹Ibid., 64-69.

¹⁰⁰Braun, "Bildungsprobleme," 242-244.

¹⁰¹Quoted in Roth, Social Democrats, 110-111.

¹⁰²Bromme, Lebensgeschichte, 60.

¹⁰³Lebensläufe, 347.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 325

¹⁰⁵Göhre, Three Months, 116.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 173-174.

¹⁰⁷This will be thoroughly explored in Chapters III and IV.

CHAPTER III

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC IDEOLOGY : WORK IN CAPITALIST SOCIETY

Today the idler rolls in wealth
while the laborer starves . . .

- - Karl Kautsky, ¹
The Class Struggle

Kautsky carped at the statistics I have adduced and replied finally that indeed the idle capitalists increased, as if I had represented the capitalist class as a class of workers.

- - Eduard Bernstein, ²
Evolutionary Socialism

As a weapon in the politicization of the working class, and as a response to anti-socialist propaganda, the SPD's Marxist official ideology could not but partake in the socialist enthusiasm for the work ethic. Since this body of theory was based extensively on Capital, it did not depart significantly from Marx on the revolutionary change in the nature of work brought about by the economic forces of capitalism. The differences between Marx and Social Democratic Marxism on the subject of labor were essentially ones of emphasis, in which the largest factor was the pervasive influence of the German political and social milieu upon the Social Democracy. There was however the subtle and unconscious alteration of the philosophical foundation of Marxist thought earlier noted,³ that transformed it into a deterministic and positivistic doctrine. This change produced equally subtle shifts in the way that

German socialist theoreticians treated work motivation, factory discipline, and the nature of man.

Labor played a uniquely central role in Marx's thought. Purposeful activity performed according to a preconceived plan was for him the one characteristic that distinguishes human beings from animals:

Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, regulates and controls the material reactions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting upon the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature. He develops his slumbering powers and compels them to act in obedience to his sway We presuppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects in reality

Man's primary attribute is an active (and not merely reflective) consciousness with the power of objectification, the creation of objects through labor already conceived in the mind. Work defines man and man defines himself through work. There is a dialectical unity between consciousness and objective reality in which the material world limits and determines man's actions, but his creative ability alters that reality, in turn altering his own mind. Marx was thus enabled to see man as determined yet determining, with labor as the mediating process.⁵ If there is an essential continuity between the "early" and "late" Marx, despite the great shift in terminology, it lies in these assumptions of the nature of man.⁶

Labor, according to Engels, "is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself."⁷ In this uncompleted essay, "The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man," work was pictured solely as the outgrowth of evolutionary development, that is, of objective conditions. Engels and the Social Democratic theorists did not grasp Marx's central assumptions, because of the latter's prior death and because of the universal ignorance of his early writings at the time. They took their lead instead from Darwinian theory, which was of much greater influence on Engels, Kautsky, Bernstein and Bebel than on Marx.⁸ Labor was specifically human, and objectively absolutely necessary, but lacked for them much of the human naturalness the elder theorist accredited to it. It was a product of the struggle for existence, but was not the essence of man as such. The Social Democratic theorists seemingly had less faith in man's innate disposition for work, since their preoccupation with work-discipline in capitalist and socialist society was greater than Marx's. This concern was further amplified by the social environment of Germany, which forced continual reaffirmations of the work ethic and therefore heightened the emphasis on discipline and the duty to work. But sufficient grounds were found within the Marxist theory of capitalist development to justify these views.

The classic Social Democratic formulation of this theory was the theoretical section of the 1891 Erfurt Program, written by Kautsky, and approved by Engels. It begins:

The economic development of bourgeois society leads with natural necessity (Naturnotwendigkeit) to the decline of the small enterprise, whose basis is founded on the private property of the worker in the means of production. It separates the worker from his means of production and transforms him into a propertyless proletarian, whilst the means of production become the monopoly of a relatively small number of capitalists and great land-owners.⁹

The increasing concentration and monopolization of industrial agricultural production advance as inexorably as natural laws. With this process "goes the suppression of the splintered small workshops through the colossal great factories, the evolution of the tool into the machine, and a gigantic growth in the productivity of human labor."¹⁰

This technological revolution, impelled by ever-quickenening capitalist competition and growth (as Kautsky, following Capital, explained elsewhere), increasingly abolished the importance of muscle-power and divided labor into more and more minute tasks. The destruction of skilled trades through the introduction of greater numbers of unskilled laborers, including women and children, followed in the train of these changes in the technical basis of production.¹¹

But all the advantages of this transformation are monopolized by the capitalists and the great land-owners. For the proletariat and the sinking middle classes--petty bourgeois and peasants--it means an ever-growing increase in the insecurity of existence and of poverty, pressure, subordination, debasement and exploitation.¹²

The expropriation of the small producer and the smashing of the privileges of the skilled craftsman contribute to the creation of an "industrial reserve army" of the unemployed. Together with incessant economic crises, this greatly magnifies the instability of employment.¹³

The gulf between propertied and propertyless is further widened by crises, which are grounded in the nature of capitalist production, and which become ever more extensive and catastrophic, raising universal insecurity to a normal condition of society.¹⁴

Kautsky placed special weight on the psychological effects of capitalism. Absolute impoverishment of the working class was not, to his mind, a necessary result. The gap between bourgeoisie and proletariat would widen only relatively, with an actual increase in working-class wages, but "universal insecurity" would ensure the alienation of the workers from the capitalist system.¹⁵

But the psychological effects of capitalist production are not only negative. As Marx pointed out, the continual variation of work enforced by unstable employment lessens the disadvantages of mechanized detail labor by limiting the time spent at each job. Versatility is thus encouraged.¹⁶ Further, the production process of the large factory organizes and schools the working class by concentrating it, disciplining it, and teaching it the advantages of large-scale co-operation. Kautsky states in The Social Revolution:

No one will claim that in my investigation I have presupposed mankind of an angelic character. The problem that we have to solve presupposes intelligence, discipline and talent for organization. These are the psychological foundations of a socialist society. Those are just the ones that capitalist society has created. It is the historical task of capital to discipline and organize the laborers, and to widen their intellectual horizons beyond the boundaries of the workshop and the church door.

For socialism to rise on the basis of handwork or agricultural industry is impossible, not simply on economic grounds because of the low productivity of industry, but also for

psychological reasons. I have already shown how small [sic] bourgeois psychology inclines towards anarchy and opposes the discipline of . . . social industry. It is one of the greatest difficulties that capital meets in the beginnings of capitalist production, in that it must take its first laborers directly from hand work or from agriculture.¹⁷

Though great suffering and injustice are attendant upon the adaptation of the working class to industrialization, it must be regarded as progressive. The discipline of the capitalist, which is directed towards the creation of the regular, co-operative, intelligent and hard-working laborer, therefore must also be so: an interesting counterpoint to the frequent claim of Social Democratic propaganda that the only thing keeping the worker laboring under capitalism was the "hunger-whip"--the threat of starvation.¹⁸

The crucial importance of work-discipline within Kautsky's thought is further emphasized by the part played by working-class organizations, especially the unions, in the psychological preparation of the proletariat.

But not alone the pressure of capital in the exploitation of great bodies of labor, but the struggle of the proletarian against this exploitation develops the psychological conditions for socialist production; it develops discipline in every way, as we have already seen, of a wholly different character . . . this struggle develops also a talent for organization, for it is only through the unanimous co-operation of the great body of mankind that the proletariat can assert itself against capital and the capitalist state.¹⁹

Concentration and industrialization of production cause an ever greater growth of the organized element of the working class. The farther industry develops under capitalism, the stronger will be the "democratic discipline" and intelligence of the workers, and therefore the easier will

be the transition to socialist production.²⁰

The Social Democratic reaction to the industrial adaptation of the proletariat was necessarily ambivalent. The denunciation of the mindless, enslaving and brutalising character of capitalist wage-labor played a crucial role in political propaganda and the awakening of class consciousness. But the indispensability of industrialization and work-discipline for socialist production was unavoidable. This argument in turn provided theoretical backing for the omnipresent concern with the work ethic within Social Democratic ideology.

The issues of female and child labor give clear illustrations of these themes. Both were endlessly denounced for their exploitative nature in such emotional terms that one would think that their total abolition was demanded.²¹ This was in fact the case in the 1860's and 1870's before the official adoption of Marxism by the party,²² but as Marx stated in Capital:

However terrible and disgusting the dissolution, under the capitalist system, of the old family ties may appear, nevertheless, modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production, outside the domestic sphere, to women, to young persons and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of relations between the sexes.²³

Moreover, no turning back is possible. Impelled by the competitive struggle, the continual cheapening of production accelerates the induction of women and children into the labor force, and the technological revolution which permits this to take place. The spreading of the father's wage over all members of the family allows a further cut in costs and a raise

in the rate of exploitation.²⁴

Despite its impoverished form, the financial independence this engenders is the core of all women's liberation, the Social Democrats claimed. By breaking the monopoly of husbands on wage-earning, female labor converts women into equal workers, able to take their places in the proletarian struggle.²⁵ Bourgeois women, according to Clara Zetkin, are turned into "mere parasites" by the development of capitalist society, but:

In the proletariat, the woman cannot, thanks to her class situation, live as a parasite after being relieved of the burden of labor of the old house economy. The family does not sink therefore into a mere community of pleasure, but remains more than ever a community of labor. The woman must perform the work, the productive socially-necessary work, in the social market as a career, that she is no longer able to carry out in the surroundings of the family.²⁶

Evident here are the moralizing tone, the depth of the commitment to the work ethic, and the sense of superiority so important to popular socialist ideology. Labor not only liberates the woman, but also confirms her essential social worth, and brings her into the ranks of those who maintain society, rather than living off it. Capitalist society, through female labor, thus prepares the ground for the truly egalitarian socialist community in which the equal right and duty of everyone to work will be the central principle.

On the labor of young people (presumably meaning teenagers who have left school), Zetkin applied the same argument of financial independence. Only the ability of older children to earn their own wage will allow the creation of the new family, in which submission and dependence

will not predominate.²⁷ But the Erfurt Program did demand the prohibition of child labor under the age of fourteen, that is, for those children still liable to attend classes. That did not mean that children were not to be introduced to work, in the Social Democratic ideal--only that it was to be done through the schools. The education of all to labor was a crucial feature of the image of the Zukunftsstaat.²⁸ Discussions of this topic, particularly the speeches of Heinrich Schulz and Clara Zetkin at the 1906 Party Congress, were virtual paeans to the educational and moral importance of work.²⁹ The Social Democratic leaders were so convinced of the social necessity of work instruction (Arbeitsunterricht) they supported, with some reservations, the efforts of the bourgeois Handfertigkeitsbewegung to have it introduced into the schools immediately,³⁰ and passed a resolution at that Congress including it among the present educational demands of the party.³¹

Zetkin's speech in 1906, and a similar one by Käthe Duncker at the 1908 SPD Women's Conference, dealt with the raising of children by socialist parents in capitalist society. Duncker stated:

What we struggle against is the exploitation of children through capitalist wage-labor, which in its intensity and one-sidedness damages the mind and body of the child. (Right!) But our children should learn to work, and they should perceive in work the duty and honor of human beings. As long as the schools still have not introduced obligatory manual dexterity training (Handfertigkeitsunterricht), the family is the one place where young people can be made conscious of work as a social duty.³²

Zetkin spoke of educating children to a "social and socialist appreciation of work and to joy in it."³³ Here again the strong work ethic of the

socialist subculture gave Social Democratic Marxist theory a unique twist. The work-centered child rearing advocated by SPD theorists, and the approval of the plans of liberal pedagogues for Arbeitsunterricht, were, ironically, active interventions by the party in the inculcation of the duty to work and the adaptation of the working class to industrialization. These implications were not necessarily perceived by the party leaders. In their minds, implanting socialist attitudes to labor had two purposes: class consciousness would be encouraged by contrasting the social importance of the proletariat with the "idleness" of the ruling classes, and the workers would be prepared for the social responsibilities of socialist society.

That the latter aim had integrating implications under capitalism seems not to have occurred to them. The creation of an industrially-adapted labor-force was seen as one of the products of the inexorable laws of capitalist economic development, though the theorists (especially Kautsky) were cautious enough not to expect its absolute completion by the time of the socialist victory.³⁴ At the conscious level of policy the movement was not attempting to foster work-discipline in capitalist industry, despite its necessity and desirability for socialist society. That discipline would be created by the process of industrialization itself. The present task of the Social Democracy was the protection of the working class, as far as it was possible, from capitalism's worst excesses.

But the party's official ideology contributed, nevertheless, to the integration of German workers into the industrial system. The

Marxist theory of capitalist development, by linking the infusion of industrial work-discipline with the emergence of a class-conscious proletariat, gave theoretical justification for the party's omnipresent concern with labor. The work ethic of the socialist subculture in turn helped impart a specific character to Social Democratic Marxism by reinforcing the importance of work and work-discipline within the theory. This was further subtly heightened by the absence of Marx's view of the naturalness of labor to man.³⁵ To the limited extent to which official ideology affected ordinary workers, the place of the work ethic within it contributed to the interlocking processes of childhood indoctrination, class consciousness and "respectability" examined previously, and thus bolstered the desire of socialist workers to perform well in their jobs.

The commitment of the theorists themselves to the ideal of the regular, diligent and intelligent laborer is confirmed by one final issue. In 1880 Paul Lafargue (Marx's son-in-law) published in France The Right to be Lazy,³⁶ an attack on certain French socialist groups who advanced the slogan "the right to work."³⁷

A strange delusion possesses the working classes of the Nations where capitalist civilization holds its sway . . . This delusion is the love of work, the furious passion for work, pushed even to the exhaustion of the vital force of the individual and his progeny . . . the proletariat, betraying its instincts, despising its historic mission, has let itself be perverted by the dogma of work.³⁸

This essay was circulated in Germany by the Social Democrats.³⁹ Yet as far as can be determined an 1884 Kautsky article was the only case in which "the right to be lazy" (das Recht auf Faulheit) was actually

repeated. The manner in which he did so is revealing. As a part of Bismarck's campaign to woo the workers away from socialism, the Chancellor had proclaimed "the right to work" in the Reichstag. Kautsky and the Marxists rejected this latter "right" as nonsense in capitalist society: the laws of economics would not permit the legislative abolition of unemployment. So Kautsky adopted Lafargue's slogan, but in his hands it became the right to the eight-hour work-day, that is, the right to have leisure time to oneself after the completion of work. Although he said that "man works to live, and not lives to work," Lafargue's militant tone and sentimentality for pre-industrial times were entirely missing.⁴⁰

The demand for the eight-hour day was inscribed on the banner of every workers' movement of the Second International, and was energetically advanced by the SPD.⁴¹ Considering the work conditions of the time it was an entirely just and logical goal, as well as being politically useful for gaining the allegiance of uncommitted workers. And for socialist society, as Marx said, the shortening of the working-day is the "basic prerequisite" for the development of true freedom.⁴² While agreeing with all of these propositions, the Social Democrats felt the need to add another. Bebel said:

The shortening of work-time to eight hours or even less is certainly no remedy for the social evils that are basic to bourgeois society, as every socialist knows. But it makes the worker as a worker more productive, because it makes him stronger and more intelligent, and also as a man more human, that is, freer, more ambitious, more capable of and courageous in struggle, and more self-conscious.⁴³

The shorter work-day would have advantages for the employer too: "The

worker labors more willingly, diligently and intensively, therefore, less supervision and less compulsion are necessary."⁴⁴ His adaptation to the ideal of industrial labor (regularity, application and limited but intensive effort) would be aided by the eight-hour day. Increased leisure was justified not only for its own sake, but also because it was the perfect complement to good work.

Eduard Bernstein shared virtually all of these attitudes to labor, demonstrating their universality in Social Democratic ideology. Beginning in 1897, with the publication of the series of articles Probleme des Sozialismus, Bernstein rapidly moved towards the rejection of the "scientific" basis of socialism, the sharpening of the class struggle, the disappearance of middle classes, the increasing severity of crises, insecurity and poverty, and the sudden collapse of capitalist society. In their place he put a peaceful growth into socialism which was ethically desirable but not objectively necessary. Class tensions were to moderate, and the unions, consumer co-operatives and state and municipal ownership of enterprises were to be the nuclei (Keime) around which socialist society would form.⁴⁵ The political implications of this doctrine were enormous. Between 1898 and 1903 the party was convulsed by the debate. But the theory of work remained largely unchanged, and the enthusiasm for the work ethic was, if anything, more explicit in Bernstein.

The Revisionists expended considerable energy struggling with Kautsky and his followers over the alleged decline of the small enterprise, since they were much less confident of the steamroller-like

growth of the giant factories and cartels which was to create an easily expropriated industrial base. Nevertheless, they were eager to agree with Marx and the Marxists that capitalism was laying the foundation for socialist society in large-scale productive industry.⁴⁶ Bernstein argued that it was precisely because of the strength of the unions and the working-class movement that two of the routes to a higher rate of exploitation--longer hours and lower wages--were increasingly blocked to the capitalist, forcing him to revolutionize the productivity of labor and increase the mechanization of production.⁴⁷ He was as much a devotee of industrialization as any of the "orthodox Marxists."

Consequently, Bernstein was equally convinced of the desirability and necessity of industrial work-discipline and its extension over the whole of the populace. He praised enthusiastically the feeling of solidarity, interdependence and social duty to work that can be created by factory labor, and believed that it would grow with the expansion of the large enterprises and the advance of socialism.⁴⁸ His main concern was that this emotion might be too weak. In the last article of the Probleme des Sozialismus series, he was worried that Social Democratic criticism of the character of work in capitalist society would bring the workers to expect a slack life under socialism. Accordingly, he assigned to the unions and to the co-operatives the task of promoting a "social feeling of duty" and self-responsibility.⁴⁹ Bernstein shared with other Social Democrats a dislike for the voluntarily idle. Evolutionary Socialism contained a statement against unemployment insurance he and Kautsky had made in 1891:

To demand simply the maintenance of all those without employment out of the state money means to commit to the trough of the state not only everyone who cannot find work but everyone who will not find work . . . ⁵⁰

His commitment to the work ethic was quite open, and his position on the inculcation of industrial work-habits was more activist than that of the Marxist. Because the chief theorist of Revisionism believed in a gradual transition to socialism, in which the labor movement would intervene actively, and not merely prepare for the inevitable working-out of the laws of economics, he was ready to use the party, the unions and the co-operatives to foster the appropriate attitudes to work and duty. Doubts Bernstein shared with the other Revisionists about the disappearance of the small enterprises, and the ease of the transition to a new social order, further underpinned his position.

It should be briefly noted that the Revisionists also supported most of the tenets of the theory of female and child labor. There were exceptions. Edmund Fischer's controversial 1906 article "Jugenderziehung" in Sozialistische Monatshefte argued that women's place was in the home raising children, but he was attacked in the next issue by Ida Häny-Lux for these essentially reactionary views.⁵¹ One of the most extensive treatments of women's liberation in German socialism, Die Frauenfrage (1901), was written by another of the moderates, Lily Braun.⁵² She called female labor the most "revolutionizing" aspect of capitalism,⁵³ and her treatment agreed closely with orthodox party ideology.⁵⁴ As for child labor, an 1897 Bernstein article in Die Neue Zeit enthusiastically advocated work instruction for children under fourteen and regular

employment for those not continuing their education beyond that age.⁵⁵ He retreated only slightly in Wirtschaftswesen und Wirtschaftswerden, when he declared that children should be introduced early to purposeful activity, but to work itself rather more gradually.⁵⁶

The incessant charge of middle- and upper-class idleness draws out clearly the similarity of the views of Bernstein and the orthodox theorists. It was one with a long socialist tradition. The "Communist Manifesto" states:

It has been objected that upon the abolition of private property all work will cease, and universal laziness will overtake us.

According to this bourgeois society ought long ago to have gone to the dogs through sheer idleness; for those of its members who work, acquire nothing, and those who acquire anything, do not work.⁵⁷

The propagandistic value of such a claim was inestimable. The socialist autobiographies show the influential role that it played in the awakening and maintenance of class consciousness, a fact with which the theorists must have been cognizant. Kautsky's belief in the crucial place of the party's leadership and bourgeois intelligentsia in educating and propagandizing the working class⁵⁸ gave him the perfect rationale for employing the charge of idleness. Indeed, his two most significant popularizations, The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx, and The Class Struggle (in German, Das Erfurter Program) dismissed the labor of capitalists, and labelled them as more useless than feudal lords.⁵⁹

With the inevitability of socialist society completely eliminated,

and an ethical socialism put in its place, the importance of propaganda among the workers was even higher in Bernstein's thought. This may be the main reason why his proposal for a redrafted theoretical section for the party program mentions the idle and parasitical nature of the bourgeoisie no less than five times.⁶⁰ But there is no reason to doubt his sincerity, nor that of the other theorists. Bernstein considered the ruling classes' lack of function and excessive consumption of luxury goods to be one of the greatest indictments of bourgeois society.⁶¹ Living in an environment in which exaggerated rhetoric, class hostility and charges of idleness and immorality were the normal content of political life, neither he nor the "orthodox Marxists" could avoid absorbing and expressing these views.

The tone of moral outrage is most evident in Bebel's Woman Under Socialism, which was one of the few Social Democratic books read widely in the working class.⁶² The party leader denounced capitalism for (among other things) selling pornography, adulterating food, corrupting youth, and, of course, hypocritical idleness.

A "lazy" fellow society only calls him who has been thrown out of work, is compelled to lead a vagabond's life and finally does become a vagabond, or who, grown up under improper training, sinks into vice. But to style "lazy fellow" the man who kills the day with idleness or debauchery would be an insult: he is a "good and worthy man."⁶³

The petty bourgeois traders and middlemen fare little better in Bebel's hands:

Although this class toils arduously and works under the load of heavy cares, the majority are parasites, they are

unproductively active, and they live upon the labors of others, just the same as the capitalist class.⁶⁴

As a significant contribution to popular socialist ideology, the book aided the formation of class consciousness with these sentiments. But a reading of it leaves no doubt that the author's contempt for the middle and upper classes and his personal commitment to the work ethic were completely sincere.

The militant and rather simplistic character of earlier Social Democratic writings was increasingly complicated, even confounded, by the rise of the "new middle class" of white-collar workers, and the growing recognition accorded to industrial management by the party theorists. There is a noticeable shift of emphasis in Kautsky. His work in the 1880's completely dismissed the capitalists as superfluous, but The Social Revolution of 1902 is willing to concede them a place in the leadership of socialized industry.⁶⁵ Under the Weimar Republic he quite openly proclaimed the necessity of using their expertise.⁶⁶

The increasing prominence of bureaucratic, clerical and technical workers in German industry was more readily accepted by Bernstein, who (much too optimistically) hoped that they would discern their affinity to the working-class movement. His perception of upper-class idleness focused on stock-holders,⁶⁷ for the tendency of advanced capitalism to separate ownership from control through joint-stock companies was just becoming important. A struggle ensued over whether this trend confirmed or undermined the Marxist viewpoint, but Kautsky's greater and greater willingness to concede management a place indicates that his views

paralleled Bernstein's. Contempt was reserved for the "coupon-cutters" and rentiers. Directors, bureaucrats and technicians were excused on the grounds of their indispensability, or their supposed semi-proletarian nature. As early as 1887 Paul Lafargue advanced the theory in Die Neue Zeit that technical personnel were gradually forming a "proletariat of intellectual labor," which would be subjected to the same conditions of insecurity and low wages as the "proletariat of manual labor."⁶⁸ Events did not bear him out, and Kautsky in particular was left with some tricky problems concerning management and authority in socialist production.

Our attention must now turn to the vision of socialist society itself, since it is here that the major features of the theory of work in German Social Democratic ideology stand out in greatest relief. In fashioning a picture of the Zukunftsstaat the theorists had to reconcile the needs of propaganda for the working class with the constraints of reality and theory. In doing so, they laid bare their philosophical preconceptions and environmental influences.

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²⁰Ibid., 126.

²¹Bebel, Woman, 105, 167-177, 180; Clara Zetkin, Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften (Berlin, 1957), I, 202-205; Kautsky, Class Struggle, 28.

²²Mommsen, ed., Deutsche Parteiprogramme, 312, 314 for the Eisenach and Gotha programs. For a short and rather thin history of the Social Democratic attitude to women's liberation see Werner Thönnessen, The Emancipation of Women: The Rise and Decline of the Women's Movement in the German Social Democracy 1863-1933 (London, 1973).

²³Marx, Capital, I, 460.

²⁴Zetkin, Reden und Schriften, I, 3-8; Zetkin in SPD Protokoll 1906, 349; Bebel, Woman, 104; Marx, Capital, I, 372-373, 380.

²⁵Zetkin, Reden und Schriften, I, 3-11; Bebel, Woman, 89-90.

²⁶SPD Protokoll 1906, 349.

²⁷SPD Protokoll 1908, 523.

²⁸This will be extensively examined in Chapter IV.

²⁹SPD Protokoll 1906, 340-343, 348, 353; Käte Duncker in SPD Protokoll 1908, 510-511, 516; Zetkin, Reden und Schriften, I, 264-265.

³⁰SPD Protokoll 1906, 341; Duncker, "Schulreform," 703. On the bourgeois movement see Chapter II, and G. Griep, "Überblick," passim.

³¹SPD Protokoll 1906, 135, 341, 488. Marx was among the first socialists, following Owen, to emphasize youthful labor as socially important. See Capital, I, 453-454, 458, and "Critique of the Gotha Program" in Marx and Engels, Selected Works, 330. This was further developed in Robert Seidel, Der Arbeitsunterricht: Eine soziale und pädagogische Nothwendigkeit (Zurich, 1885). See review of same by Heinrich Braun in Die Neue Zeit, IV (1886), 184-187. An English translation of Seidel's book exists. See Industrial Instruction, Tr. M. K. Smith (Boston, 1887).

³²SPD Protokoll 1908, 516.

³³SPD Protokoll 1906, 353.

³⁴Kautsky, Social Revolution, 124-126. For further details see Chapter IV.

³⁵The real effects of this are not visible until the Zukunftsstaat is examined. See Chapter IV.

³⁶Paul Lafargue, The Right to be Lazy and Other Studies, (Chicago, 1907).

³⁷Ibid., 3-5.

³⁸Ibid., 9, 13.

³⁹It was circulated as a pamphlet in the Sozialdemokratische Bibliothek series, which was also published in three bound volumes in Zurich in 1888. See Paul Lafargue, "Das Recht auf Faulheit," ibid., (rpt. Leipzig, 1971), vol. II. Adelheid Popp mentions reading this essay and being pleased by it. This is ironic, for her autobiography shows her to have the strongest commitment to the work ethic of any of those examined. Popp, Autobiography, 97.

⁴⁰Karl Kautsky, "Das Recht auf Arbeit," Die Neue Zeit, II (1884), 299-303. This article was probably also a veiled attack on Louis Viereck, a prominent member of the party's right wing who hailed Bismark's speech and started a paper called Das Recht auf Arbeit. Conflict within the party was quite prominent between 1884 and 1886. See Lidtke, Outlawed Party, 147. On the "right to work" see also Eduard Bernstein, "Einige Literatur über das Recht auf Arbeit und die Frage der Arbeitslosen," ibid., XII, 2 (1894-95), 459-60 and Evolutionary Socialism, 153 in which he agrees that a "right to work" is impossible under capitalism. He did however advance the idea of a "democratic right to work" under socialism in ibid., and in "Probleme des Sozialismus," Die Neue Zeit, XV, 2 (1896-97), 140-141.

⁴¹The energy of the party did decline towards the First World War. Rosa Luxemburg attacked the party leadership in 1914 for backsliding on the eight-hour day. See "Die Alte Programmforderung" in Gesammelte Werke (Berlin, 1973), III, 380-384. Luxemburg wrote almost nothing relevant to work theory, and as an outsider does not seem to have imbibed the enthusiasm for the work ethic of those born in Germany and native to German socialism. Other prominent future Communist women, such as Clara Zetkin and Käthe Duncker, were among the most militant propagandists for work.

⁴²Marx, Capital, III, 820.

⁴³August Bebel, "Der Achtstunden-Arbeitstag," Die Neue Zeit, XV, 2 (1896-97), 424-425.

⁴⁴Ibid., 425.

⁴⁵Eduard Bernstein, Wirtschaftswesen und Wirtschaftswerden: Drei gemeinverständliche Abhandlungen (Berlin, 1920), 36-39 (these lectures were given in 1903-04); Evolutionary Socialism, 139, 187-188; "Der Revisionismus," 34-38; Peter Gay, The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx (New York, 1970), 170-173, 185-188, 192-195, 221, 229-230.

⁴⁶Ibid., 169-170; Bernstein, Wirtschaftswesen, 63, 70-71.

⁴⁷Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 21.

⁴⁸Bernstein, Wirtschaftswesen, 70-71.

⁴⁹Bernstein, "Probleme des Sozialismus," pt. 5, 138-142.

⁵⁰Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 168-169; the original is in Kautsky and Bernstein, "Entwurf," 824. Bernstein repeats this view in "Probleme des Sozialismus," pt. 5, 138.

⁵¹Edmund Fischer, "Jugenderziehung," Sozialistische Monatshefte, (1906), 761; Ida Häny-Lux, "Beruf und Ehe," ibid., 870-876.

⁵²Lily Braun, Die Frauenfrage: ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung und wirtschaftliche Seite (Leipzig, 1901).

⁵³Ibid., 287.

⁵⁴Ibid., 209-244, 287, 325, 431, 448-450, 482, 554-557.

⁵⁵Eduard Bernstein, "Der Sozialismus und die gewerbliche Arbeit der Jugend," Die Neue Zeit, XVI, 1 (1897-98), 37-44.

⁵⁶Bernstein, Wirtschaftswesen, 60.

⁵⁷Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," Selected Works, 49.

⁵⁸Holzheuer, Kautskys Werk, 79-83.

⁵⁹Kautsky, Economic Doctrines, 124, 128-129; Kautsky, Class Struggle, 86.

⁶⁰Bernstein, "Leitsätze für den theoretischen Teil eines sozial-demokratischen Parteiprogramms," Appendix to "Der Revisionismus," 44-48.

⁶¹Bernstein, Wirtschaftswesen, 96-98.

⁶²Roth, Social Democrats, 235-236; Steinberg, Sozialismus, 129-142.

⁶³Bebel, Woman, 294.

⁶⁴Ibid., 263.

⁶⁵Kautsky, Economic Doctrines, 124, 128-129; Social Revolution, 112.

⁶⁶Karl Kautsky, The Labour Revolution (London, 1925), 179.

⁶⁷Bernstein, "Der Revisionismus," 29, 32-34, and "Leitsätze," 46; Bernstein, Wirtschaftswesen, 101-102.

⁶⁸Paul Lafargue, "Das Proletariat der Handarbeit und Kopfarbeit," Die Neue Zeit, V, (1887), 452, 455-461; VI (1888), 133-135.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC IDEOLOGY: WORK IN SOCIALIST SOCIETY

[In socialist society] the obligation lies upon all, capable of work, to furnish a certain measure of labour to society, necessary for the satisfaction of social wants, in exchange whereof society guarantees to each and all the means requisite for the development of his faculties and for the enjoyment of life.

- - August Bebel,
Woman Under Socialism¹

The duty of all to work, except in cases of pressing necessity and such tasks for the community which each member of society will alternately have to perform, can only be based on the upholding of the rule, that he who will not work, neither shall he eat, that is, on the maintenance of the already valued principle of self-responsibility.

- - Eduard Bernstein,
Probleme des Sozialismus²

Despite innumerable proscriptions against speculation about the future,³ the Zukunftsstaat was the subject of many popular and even theoretical writings. There was no doubt as to the enthusiasm for the topic in the working class. As noted previously, Woman under Socialism and Bellamy's Looking Backward 2000-1887 were the best-selling socialist works of the 1890's.⁴ The latter book was by no means Marxist, but the demand for it was so great that it was widely serialized in Social Democratic newspapers;⁵ and although Bebel's book was ostensibly about feminism, its real selling point was its discussion of socialist society.

The hopes generated in the minds of many workers were almost millenarian: the vision an approaching socialist utopia displaced heaven when the Social Democracy displaced the Church.

Kautsky perceived the Zukunftsstaat's attraction. To him, the inspiration of the final goal (Endziel) of socialism was one of the means of propaganda which could be legitimately used by the intelligentsia to engender class consciousness.⁶ Some of the virulence of Kautsky's reaction to Bernstein's famous, if unhappily phrased, dictum about the final aim meaning nothing and the movement everything,⁷ can be attributed to the political importance the defender of orthodoxy placed on that aim. Even the Revisionists could not avoid the subject entirely. They, like the "orthodox Marxists," had to base their ideas on the development of capitalism partly on the elements and preconditions of socialism that arise within it, and thus were compelled to contemplate at least the outlines of socialist society.

Nationalization of all industry was a central assumption. Kautsky and Bernstein differed in this respect only on the rapidity of the transition. While the latter saw a slow growth into total social ownership taking some decades and occurring both before and after the political victory of the SPD, Kautsky believed in a more direct change only after the conquest of power. But his essay in The Social Revolution, "On the Day After the Social Revolution"⁸ (perhaps the single most important Social Democratic theoretical contribution to the Zukunftsstaat literature), did not picture an immediate and total confiscation of property. Compensation would be paid to the owners in most cases, with a high progressive income tax to

take much of it back. Some enterprises would be sold to workers' cooperatives, others to the municipalities and the state. Centralized national ownership would prevail only in the long run.⁹

The fundamental problem of socialist society, as Kautsky and the other theorists realized, was the maintenance and expansion of production once the compulsive aspects of capitalist wage-labor were removed. The training and adaptation of the working class carried out by the capitalist labor-process was naturally the basis for all socialist work-discipline.

In this connection the great power of custom must not be forgotten. Capital has accustomed the modern laborer to work day in and day out and he will not long remain wholly without labor. There are people who are so much accustomed to their work that they do not know what to do with their free time and that feel themselves unhappy when they are not working, and there will be few people who feel themselves happy for any length of time without any work. I am convinced that when once labor loses the repulsive character of over-work and when the hours of labor are reduced in a reasonable degree, custom alone will suffice to hold the great majority of workers in regular work in the factories and the mines.¹⁰

But Kautsky immediately adds a fascinating qualification: ". . . it is self-evident that we cannot trust to this motive alone as it is the weakest."¹¹ This contradictory statement unconsciously displays a lack of faith in both the effectiveness of the capitalist transformation of the worker and the naturalness of work to man. The latter nuance highlights the subtle difference between Marx's philosophy of labor and that of the "orthodox Marxists." As a result, discipline, authority and the duty of all to work carried greater weight in Kautsky's vision of socialist industry.

The other facet of the discipline induced by wage-labor in bourgeois society, that is, the organization and schooling of the working class by the unions, thus comes to the fore. Kautsky continues:

Another much stronger motive force is the discipline of the proletariat. We know that when the union declares a strike the discipline of organized labor is sufficiently strong to make the laborers freely take upon themselves all the dangers and horrors of unemployment and to remain hungry for months in order to secure a victorious conclusion to the common cause. Now I believe that when it is possible to hold them out of the factories it will also be possible to hold them in by the same force. If the union once recognizes the necessity of the unbroken regular progress of labor we may be sure that the interest of the whole will be so great that scarcely a single member will leave his post.¹²

The workers are to be rationally convinced of the social duty of labor. Their submission would be voluntary because they would be under a "democratic discipline" over which they would have some control.¹³ Underlying some of his confidence in the tractability of the organized working class was his position that the Free (socialist) unions must always be subordinate to the party.¹⁴

Bernstein's ideas were similar. Since the unions were of even greater importance in his ideology, he allotted them part of the task, as earlier noted, of fostering economic self-responsibility, solidarity, acceptance of social duty and democracy.¹⁵ The socialist transition being a gradual one, this role would continue after the political victory of the labor movement in order to ensure the maintenance of production. He thus agreed with Kautsky that a major component of socialist work-discipline would come from the unions. But as a Revisionist, Bernstein was formulating a theory of the integration of the working class into German

society, and therefore could permit a direct encouragement of the work ethic along with discipline in industry both before and after the socialist takeover. Kautsky, as the theorist of working-class isolation, saw union discipline purely as a product of class struggle and resistance in the capitalist factories, which could be turned to account for the purposes of production only by a socialist government.

Workers' control, sometimes through the union structure, was to be the major form of authority in industry. Where direct cooperative management was not possible, as in the railroads, the bureaucracy was to be supervised by a workers' "parliament." At least this is Kautsky's proposal.¹⁶ His Revisionist opponent was more skeptical of worker management, despite an enthusiasm for cooperatives.

Let any one only for once look at the thing in the concrete and examine any large industrial undertaking, a great establishment for building machines, a large electricity works, a great chemical factory or a modern publishing business. All these and similar large industrial undertakings can certainly be quite well carried on by cooperative associations, to which all the employees may belong, but they are absolutely unfit for the associated management of the employees themselves.¹⁷

The manager, Bernstein claimed, cannot be dependent upon the whims of his employees when he has to make day-to-day decisions which may generate friction.¹⁸ Democratic control must exercise only supervision and ownership, and must not intervene directly.

Kautsky's increasing willingness to concede the importance of factory management, and to excuse managers from the body of ruling-class

idlers,¹⁹ reveals a similar distinction emerging in his thought. The separation of ownership and control, the growth of technology, and the advance of bureaucratization in German large-scale industry at that time favored the unfolding of concepts of the nature of industrial authority already formulated by Engels. The Marxism shaped by Marx's lifelong friend and bequeathed to the Social Democrats portrayed the socialist transition largely as the removal of obstacles to the natural and inevitable upward evolution of the human race. Marx's vision of a "unique historical breakthrough" that liberates man and transforms all his institutions was not entirely eliminated,²⁰ but it was given second place to the "full expansion of the productive forces that lie latent in society."²¹ Socialism became a social technology which would free production from the anarchy and waste of capitalism through scientific and rational planning.²²

In contrast to Marx, technology was an "objective, external force" independent of all social organization in this technocratic brand of Marxism.²³ The resulting implications were spelled out by Engels in an 1872 essay against the Anarchists titled "On Authority." That work cited the example of a cotton mill which, if it is to run at all, requires workers to begin at the same moment, work the same hours, and so forth. This situation would require investing someone with authority, because:

The automatic machinery of a factory is much more despotic than the small capitalists who employ workers ever have been. At least with regard to hours of work one may write upon the portals of these factories: fasciate ogni autonomia, voi che entrate! (Leave, ye that enter, all autonomy behind!) If man, by dint of his knowledge and

inventive genius, has subdued the forces of nature, the latter avenge themselves upon him by subjecting him . . . to a veritable despotism independent of all social organization. Wanting to abolish authority in large-scale industry is tantamount to wanting to abolish industry itself . . . ²⁴

A work-discipline controlled from above is an inevitable product of technology itself, and therefore cannot be avoided by socialist society. Marx, on the other hand, stated in the third volume of Capital:

That nothing is lost or wasted and the means of production are consumed only in the manner required by production itself, depends partly on the skill and intelligence of the laborers and partly on the discipline enforced by the capitalist for the combined labor. This discipline will become superfluous under a social system in which the laborers work for their own account, as it has already become practically superfluous in piece-work. ²⁵

Since man defines himself through work, and all forms of social organization are dependent upon the "relations of production" (that is, the nature of ownership of the means of production), everyone under socialism will perform their labor willingly and without external compulsion.

Kautsky, lacking these basic assumptions, not surprisingly followed Engels:

Whatever may be the form of social organization, this cooperation on a large scale and the employment of common labor instruments, especially machinery, will always involve a regulation of the labor process which makes it independent of the caprice of the individual participant. If we are not to renounce the advantages of machinery, the introduction of a discipline to which all have to submit is essential. ²⁶

Technology and authority transcendent all social structure; the logic of industrialization imposes itself upon the Zukunftsstaat. Thus, despite his enthusiasm for workers' control at all levels, Kautsky was willing in The Social Revolution to leave many capitalists as directors of their factories after the transfer of ownership.²⁷ Observant of the vast changes in the technical structure of German industry, Kautsky increasingly conceded a place under socialism to technocratic management, which would inevitably circumscribe the real power of that democratic control.

In contrast, Bebel's Woman Under Socialism paid much less attention to authority as a necessary product of industrial production. His socialist society was dependent upon the spirit of solidarity there created. Administrative positions in the various branches of production would be filled by election from among the workers, with the eventual hope that everyone, regardless of sex, would alternately perform these tasks.

A system of labor, organized upon a plan of such absolute liberty and democratic equality, where each stands for all, and all stand for each, and where the sense of solidarity reigns supreme, - such a system would generate a spirit of industry and of emulation nowhere to be found in the modern economic system. Nor could such a spirit of industry fail to react upon the productivity of labor and the quality of labor's product.²⁸

The complete transformation of man is a vision which runs throughout Bebel's book. His conception of socialist work-discipline consequently appears closer to Marx's than to Kautsky's or Bernstein's ideas, though his knowledge of Marx was certainly no better than that of the other Social Democratic theorists. Women Under Socialism, with its picture of

a community virtually without crime, insanity or conflict, in which everyone works only two hours a day,²⁹ had more affinity with the utopian socialist tradition. Bebel's complete lack of interest in the technical details of giant capitalist production, or the transitional period after the revolution further contributed to his sublime confidence in the dispensability of industrial authority.

These views were one of the main points of attack in virtually the only Social Democratic critique of the book.³⁰ As the author, Simon Katzenstein, expressed it: "Either the anarchist cooperatives without the duty of obedience and without authority--or the democratically organized state, district and community with the right of decree and with the duty of obedience of individuals."³¹ The latter conditions would extend to the socially-owned productive process. Bebel's reply heatedly rejected Katzenstein's criticism. With the withering away of the state and of class contradictions, all interests would harmonize. Administration by the people could not be equated with the compulsion of the class state.³² Bebel paid greater attention to the Marxist doctrine of the state than either Kautsky or Bernstein. The latter not surprisingly repudiated it when he became a Revisionist,³³ while the former ignored it in The Social Revolution, and rejected it entirely in the 1920's as semantic quibbling over whether the socialist administration was a "state" or not.³⁴

While advancing his optimistic view of the total harmonization of interests, Bebel inconsistently and repeatedly asserted the absolute duty of all to work. The contradiction is strikingly revealed when he declares that, in the imposition of a minimum daily quota of manual labor, society's "will is law," but only four sentences later speaks of the absolute freedom

of each individual to work when and where he likes for the time he wishes.³⁵ He gives no indication that there would be any conflict between necessary social labor and personal liberty. What about those who do not wish to work? In theory they would starve: "He who will not work, neither shall he eat."³⁶ Yet the militance with which the party leader proclaimed the duty of all to work casts doubt on whether even that much idleness would be allowed.

Some of Bebel's virulence and inconsistency can be traced to the effects of anti-socialist propaganda. His Woman Under Socialism had to respond both to the rather crude accusations of idleness and criminality noted earlier, and to the more sophisticated polemics of men like Eugen Richter, the Progressive Party leader. Richter's Sozialdemokratische Zukunftsbilder, which parodied Bebel's Zukunftsstaat, sold 251,000 copies between 1891 and 1893, and was serialized in over forty newspapers.³⁷ Despite the duty of all to work in this future Germany, every incentive to be assiduous is destroyed by the reign of absolute equality: "Diligence and zeal are looked upon as stupidity and perversity. And indeed why should one be industrious? The most diligent comes off no better than the laziest."³⁸ The yoke of socialism is eventually thrown off by the workers themselves because of the complete deterioration of conditions. To counteract these charges Bebel emphasized the socialist order's freedom from arbitrary authority and the commitment of socialism to hard work. The potential discrepancy here was only magnified by the strong work ethic he imbibed from his own life experiences and from the socialist subculture.

The attractive power of labor under socialism was naturally also stressed by the Social Democrats. A large cut in hours and a raise in wages were a necessary part of encouraging motivation to work. Combined with an improvement in health conditions and some degree of democratic control, joy in work was regarded as a real possibility.³⁹ But neither was this view adhered to consistently. In The Class Struggle Kautsky said:

It is not freedom of labor, but the freedom from labor, which in a socialist society machinery makes increasingly possible, that will bring to mankind freedom of life, freedom for artistic and intellectual activity, freedom for the noblest enjoyment.⁴⁰

His vacillation on this topic mirrored a socialist ideological dilemma: a strong desire to believe in the totally self-determining and fully developed individual was mixed with a certain skepticism about the naturalness of work to man, and the likelihood of ever rendering physical labor really pleasurable.

A simultaneous raise in wages, reduction of hours and upgrading of conditions would be no trivial accomplishment. The Social Revolution claimed that it could be done thusly:

These are the two methods for increasing the productive powers of the laboring class: The abolition of parasitic industry and the concentration of industries in the most perfect plants. By the application of these two means a proletarian regime can raise production at once to so high a level that it would be possible to considerably increase wages and simultaneously reduce the hours of labor. Every increase in wages and reduction of hours must again increase the attractiveness of labor and draw new laborers to production who were formerly parasitic, such for example, as servants, small merchants, etc. The higher the wages the more the laborers. But in a socialist society one can transform this saying into "the more the workers the fewer the illdoers in society, the more produced and the greater the wages."⁴¹

The basic tool would be a vast increase in the concentration of industry which would further industrialization and decrease the numbers of the unproductive and idle. As an example of how it might be done, Kautsky proposed that production levels in the German textile industry could be maintained if all plants with less than fifty employees were eliminated and the labor force concentrated in two eight-hour shifts in the remaining factories. Alternately, all with under two hundred workers could be closed, and three five-hours shifts instituted.⁴²

A special investigation of these problems, Produktion und Konsum im Sozialstaat, was published by Dr. Karl Ballod under the pseudonym Atlanticus in 1898.⁴³ His conclusions were even more optimistic. By eliminating small enterprises, waste and planlessness, German industrial and agricultural production could be doubled or even tripled with a halving of work-time.⁴⁴ Whether or not these ideas were feasible, they would have engendered as many problems as they solved. Kautsky's proposals for the textile industry were criticized in Die Neue Zeit on the grounds that the incredible centralization of employment in a small number of plants would entail vast housing and transportation difficulties.⁴⁵ Completely begging the question, the theorist replied that most of that consolidation would place under capitalism anyway.⁴⁶ But greater obstacles would have been in store for the industrialization Ballod and Kautsky wished to set in motion. For this to be feasible, an accelerated rationalization of production, involving assembly lines, tighter coordination and work-discipline, and minuter detail labor, would be necessary to prevent "logistical strangulation" on the factory floor.⁴⁷ At the technological level

of the early twentieth century, these changes could only result in increased worker alienation and dissatisfaction,⁴⁸ although they might be counterbalanced by improvements in wages, hours and factory management.

An even more drastic reduction in hours of work was advanced by Bebel in Woman Under Socialism and by H. Lux in Sozialpolitisches Handbuch, an 1891 reference work for party editors and agitators. Both cited the work of an Austrian utopian socialist, Hertzka, who had calculated that the needs of every Austrian could be met with less than two hours daily labor if all production occurred in factories and farms of large size and great efficiency.⁴⁹ At least in the 1880's and 1890's these ideas were taken rather seriously in the Social Democracy. Bernstein expressly repudiated them:

Of a general reduction of hours of labor to five, four or even three or two hours, such as was formerly accepted, there can be no hope at any time within sight, unless the general standard of life is much reduced. Even under a collective organization of work, labour must begin very young and only cease at a rather advanced age, if it is to be reduced considerably below an eight-hours' day.⁵⁰

With the radical shortening of work-time the Revisionists rejected a large part of the Social Democratic Marxist ideal of labor in socialist society. The fusion of mental and manual work, which the reduction of hours was to allow, was especially regarded as utopian.⁵¹ It was only in these areas that they departed greatly from the theory of work in "orthodox Marxism."

The union of mental and manual labor was a central ideal in the Marxist literature. It was to be accomplished through the mandatory duty of all healthy adults, regardless of sex, to perform a few hours of industrial or agricultural labor a day; variation in occupation throughout each day and each individual's life; and universal work instruction

(Arbeitsunterricht) in school. The abolition of the division of labor was not in question. Marx, Engels and the Social Democrats distinguished between the artificial capitalist division of labor by classes and sexes, and the natural social division of labor that differences in age, sex and individual capabilities entail.⁵² Like the theory of work under capitalism, the union of the two types of labor was directly derived from Marx. It is the nuances which reveal much about Social Democratic attitudes to work.

The essential preconditions for erasing the lines between mental and manual labor were the achievement of a minimal daily work-time, and the duty of all to do physical work. The latter had a long socialist tradition. It was included in the Communist Manifesto and the SPD Gotha Program of 1875,⁵³ and was incessantly restated by Bebel and other Social Democrats.⁵⁴ The writings of the young Kautsky show equal enthusiasm. An 1875 article advocated compelling intellectuals to do manual labor if they refused to volunteer.⁵⁵ The Social Revolution was more cautious, since he was afraid that if intellectual workers are forced too rapidly to accept this burden, their creativity would decline. Nevertheless, equal duties for all was definitely his goal.⁵⁶ Even Bernstein, who rejected the union of head and hand labor as utopian, was in agreement with this principle.⁵⁷

Once the two forms of labor are fused, each individual would perform a few hours of daily physical work, and would then have free time to pursue scientific, academic and artistic activities. In the ideal society of Bebel and Kautsky everyone would be as talented as a classical Greek aristocrat.⁵⁸ According to Marx the capitalist system itself

prepared the ground for this:

Modern Industry, indeed, compels society under penalty of death, to replace the detail-worker of today, crippled by the life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man, by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers.⁵⁹

Thus the continual insecurity of capitalist wage labor becomes the freedom and ability to vary work under socialism.⁶⁰ Occupations will alternate not only throughout the day, but throughout the life of each individual. Bernstein accepted the last point himself. Not believing in the daily union of different types of work, he considered variation of careers throughout life as very important, and something which capitalism did make possible.⁶¹ A "democratic right to work" would be assured by socialist society. The unions and the administration would enable each individual to find jobs without the fear of unemployment or of the violation of social duties.⁶²

If socialist men and women were to be prepared for their opportunities and responsibilities in labor they would have to be introduced to them at an early age. Kautsky was afraid that if everyone was given considerable academic training, something he took for granted, then all manual labor would cease.⁶³

If we are to make the higher intellectual culture a common good without endangering the existence of society, then not simply pedagogical, but economic necessity demands that this should be done in such a manner that the growing generation will be made familiar in schools not only with intellectual but also with physical labor and that the habit of uniting intellectual and material production will be firmly rooted.⁶⁴

Ideally every person was to have a knowledge of the entire production process in its practical and technical aspects.⁶⁵ Education would be based upon the triad of academic study, work and physical education, in obedience to the dictum of Marx:

From the Factory system budded, as Robert Owen has shown us in detail, the germ of the education of the future, an education that will, in the case of every child over a certain age, combine productive labor with instruction and gymnastics, not only as one of the methods of adding to the efficiency of production, but as the only method of producing fully developed human beings.⁶⁶

From this system was to issue individuals capable of a wide variety of tasks, willing and eager to work productively, and healthy in mind and body.⁶⁷

Though the theory was grounded in Marx, it received an enthusiastic injection of the work ethic by the Social Democratic theorists which was altogether typical. Heinrich Schulz, head of the SPD's newly created Bildungsausschuss, said at the 1906 Party Congress:

'Work is the Savior of the new age,' exclaimed Dietzgen, and with it struck down all the impudent slanderers who insinuate the Social Democracy's love of idleness. We also wish to labor in the future, for work belongs to man as much as his daily bread. There is for an imprisoned criminal no more agonizing punishment, than when one educates him with labor. Work has made mankind what it is today, it stands at the beginning of all cultural development, and has led civilization to its present heights.⁶⁸

But if socialist labor is to be liberating instead of enslaving the child must be trained by his parents and by the schools to recognize in work "the duty and honor of human beings,"⁶⁹ as Käthe Duncker said, and acquire and develop his talents in as many different kinds of labor as possible. As the producer of energetic, creative and duty-conscious citizens, work

and work instruction would therefore also be the basis for socialist morality.⁷⁰ In Duncker's opinion:

The social order, for which we strive, presupposes joy in work, a feeling of duty and a sense of honor in the individual. It is the task of socialist upbringing to arouse these feelings in children. (Applause.)⁷¹

Schulz went so far as to see work not merely as a major part of socialist education, but as the foundation for the entire curriculum. Theory would issue from practice. From agricultural labor, for example, would come a knowledge of plants, animals, geology, geometry, chemistry and physical laws.⁷² In fact:

it is not a question of work instruction as an assigned special subject, but rather as a new foundation for all classroom school-work, in the reorientation to the measures that work offers as the basic principle of teaching and teaching methods.⁷³

In the vision of Heinrich Schulz work became completely central to socialist society. It was the basis of all life and human liberation, a position only slightly more extreme than that of the party theorists as a whole. Marx, who accepted labor as the definition of man, did not display such a near-obsession with duty and education as tools for bringing every person into the production process.

The first key to the theory of work in German Social Democratic thought lies in this subtlety of emphasis. On the revolution carried out by capitalism in the labor-process, on the necessity and desirability of industrialization and the adaptation of the working class to it, on the elements of socialist society which appear, often in oppressive and unjust forms, within bourgeois society, and on the union of mental and manual labor in socialism, the Social Democrats drew soundly on Marx's

Capital. Bernstein displayed many similar opinions. His rejection of much of the substance of Marxist ideology did not obscure the intellectual environment out of which his Revisionist theory grew.

Where the Social Democrats departed from Marx was in his basic philosophical assumption of the nature of man, which if it was not entirely missing from their view of work, was fragmentary and inconsistent. Bebel particularly believed in the naturalness of human creativity and activity, but did not necessarily apply this concept to physical labor. There was a notable hesitation in many of the theorists to expect free compliance to the duty of work. Kautsky, for example, spoke of "the great power of custom," and then immediately proclaimed this motive the "weakest." Management and authority, union discipline, youthful Arbeitsunterricht, and the training of the working class by capitalism were accordingly given greater weight in the creation and inculcation of socialist work-discipline.

The structure and content of work theory provided an intellectual basis for the strong work ethic of the Social Democratic subculture. The political and social environment of Imperial Germany in turn moulded and amplified elements of the theory. Each theorist was, firstly, subject to all of the influences that every Social Democrat encountered in their daily lives. He or she was raised with the duty to work hammered home, was converted to socialism for largely ethical reasons, and reacted to the never-ending charges of socialist idleness with a heightened class consciousness. A personal commitment to the work ethic was almost unavoidable. Secondly, the ideology was forged with the conscious aim of

counterattacking bourgeois propaganda, promoting working-class consciousness, and, occasionally, fostering the very attitudes to labor which they, as intellectual leaders of the party, considered desirable for socialist society. Thus the very nature and place of ideology in the movement, when combined with the impact of the environment on the individuals who verbalized that ideology, produced a militant tone in the Social Democratic theory of work largely absent in Marx. The upper and middle classes are a pack of idlers and parasites, work is the foundation of all civilization, "he who will not work, neither shall he eat," and so on. The frequency and extravagance of these expressions is often astounding.

The similarity of this enthusiasm for the work ethic to that of popular socialist ideology is quite striking, despite great differences in the level of argumentation. Lastly then, the causes of this consistent approach must be explored. On that basis it will then be easier to understand how socialist ideas of work affected the labor movement and the working class as a whole.

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- ²Bernstein, "Probleme des Sozialismus," pt. 5, 140-141.
- ³Kautsky and Bernstein, "Entwurf," 724, 758; Karl Ballod (pseud. Atlanticus), Der Zukunftsstaat: Produktion und Konsum im Sozialstaat, 2nd ed., (Stuttgart, 1919), 1-2.
- ⁴See above Chapter I. See also Kautsky's Foreword to Ballod, Produktion, xiii.
- ⁵Steinberg, Sozialismus, 138; see also Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward 2000-1887 (1888; rpt. Cleveland and New York, 1945). Bellamy's novel was popular enough to provoke at least one anti-socialist pamphlet: Heinrich Fränkel, Gegen Bellamy! Eine Widerlegung des sozialistischen Romans 'Ein Rückblick aus dem Jahre 2000' und des sozialistischen Zukunftsstaates überhaupt, 2nd ed., (Würzburg, 1891).
- ⁶Kautsky's Foreword to Ballod, Produktion, v-xii; Holzheuer, Kautskys Werk, 79-83, 90-91, 104.
- ⁷Gay, Dilemma, 74-75; Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, xxii, xxix, 163; Bernstein, "Der Revisionismus," 16. But not all Revisionists rejected speculation on the Zukunftsstaat. See Wolfgang Heine, "Wie ist wissenschaftlicher Sozialismus möglich?" Sozialistische Monatshefte, (1901), 667-668.
- ⁸Kautsky, Social Revolution, 103-189.
- ⁹Ibid., 113-117, 121-123, 180.
- ¹⁰Ibid., 125.
- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²Ibid., 125-126.
- ¹³Ibid., 126-127.
- ¹⁴Karl Kautsky, "Partei und Gewerkschaft," Die Neue Zeit, XXIV, 2 (1905-06), 749-750, 754.
- ¹⁵Bernstein, "Probleme des Sozialismus," pt. 5, 141-142. See also Chapter III, above.

- ¹⁶Kautsky, Social Revolution, 127.
- ¹⁷Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 120.
- ¹⁸Ibid., 119-120.
- ¹⁹See above, Chapter III.
- ²⁰Lichtheim, Marxism, 60, 237; Walton and Gamble, Alienation, 63-64; Kautsky, Social Revolution, 188-189.
- ²¹Kautsky, Class Struggle, 145. See also Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific" in Marx and Engels, Selected Works, 424-428; Lichtheim, Marxism, 60, 237; Walton and Gamble, Alienation, 64.
- ²²Ibid.
- ²³Avineri, Social and Political Thought, 235-236.
- ²⁴Friedrich Engels, "On Authority" in Marx and Engels, Selected Works (2 vol. edition; Moscow, 1958), I, 637. All other references to the Selected Works are from the one volume edition.
- ²⁵Marx, Capital, III, 83.
- ²⁶Kautsky, Economic Doctrines, 161.
- ²⁷Kautsky, Social Revolution, 112. This attitude was even more explicit after the war when he stated: ". . . there must be the greatest possible freedom of management, no hesitation about paying extraordinary remuneration to secure the services of capable organizers." Labour Revolution, 179.
- ²⁸Bebel, Woman, 278-279.
- ²⁹Ibid., 272-342.
- ³⁰Simon Katzenstein, "Kritische Bemerkungen zu Bebels Buch: 'Die Frau und der Sozialismus,'" Die Neue Zeit, XV, 1 (1896-97), 293-303.
- ³¹Ibid., 296.
- ³²August Bebel, "Kritische Bemerkungen zu Katzensteins Kritischen Bemerkungen über 'Die Frau und der Sozialismus,'" Die Neue Zeit, XV, 1(1896-97), 328-329.
- ³³Gay, Dilemma, 249.

- ³⁴Kautsky, Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung, II, 607, 612.
- ³⁵Bebel, Woman, 292-293.
- ³⁶Ibid., 275.
- ³⁷Roth, Social Democrats, 236.
- ³⁸Eugen Richter, Pictures of the Socialistic Future (London, 1907), 56-57.
- ³⁹Kautsky, Social Revolution, 128; Bebel, Woman, 275, 284, 318; Eduard Bernstein, "Vorfragen einer sozialistischen Theorie der Gewerkschaftsbewegung," Sozialistische Monatshefte, (1906), 845.
- ⁴⁰Kautsky, Class Struggle, 158.
- ⁴¹Kautsky, Social Revolution, 147.
- ⁴²Ibid., 141-142.
- ⁴³Ballod, Produktion, passim. See also the author's summary in "Produktion und Konsum im Sozialstaat," Die Neue Zeit, XVI, 2 (1897-98), 661-666.
- ⁴⁴Ballod, Produktion, 93.
- ⁴⁵Michael Lusnia, "Unbewaffnete Revolution?" Die Neue Zeit, XXII, 1 (1903-04), 562.
- ⁴⁶Karl Kautsky, "Allerhand Revolutionäres," ibid., 594-595.
- ⁴⁷Landes, Unbound Prometheus, 301-302, 307, 313-315.
- ⁴⁸Ibid.; Blauner, Alienation and Freedom, 8-9, 182.
- ⁴⁹Bebel, Woman, 280-282; Lux, Sozialpolitisches Handbuch, 8, 10. Hertzka published two utopian books, Gesetze der sozialen Entwicklung (Leipzig, 1886) and Freiland (Leipzig, 1890), neither of which were available to me. See also Ballod, Produktion, 11, where he rejects Hertzka's views on work-time.
- ⁵⁰Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, 220.
- ⁵¹SPD Protokoll 1906, 137.

⁵²Walton and Gamble, Alienation, 10-13; Marx, Capital, III, 820; Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," 320-321; Engels, Anti-Dühring, 307-309; Kautsky, Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung, II, 32-33.

⁵³Marx and Engels, "Communist Manifesto," 53; Mommsen, ed., Deutsche Parteiprogramme, 313.

⁵⁴Bebel, Woman, 181-182, 275; Bebel, "Kritische Bemerkungen," 333; Bebel, "Akademiker und Sozialismus" in August Bebel: Sein Leben in Dokumenten, Reden und Schriften, Ed. H. Hirsch (Cologne/Berlin, 1968), 102-103; H. Schulz and C. Zetkin in SPD Protokoll 1906, 342-343, 348, 352-353; K. Duncker in SPD Protokoll 1908, 516.

⁵⁵Karl Kautsky, "Die soziale Frage vom Standpunkte eines Kopfarbeiters aus betrachtet," Der Volkstaat, No. 113 (1 Oct. 1875), 2. See also Kautsky, Erinnerungen und Erörterungen, 203-204.

⁵⁶Kautsky, Social Revolution, 175-176.

⁵⁷Bernstein, Wirtschaftswesen, 70-72; Bernstein, "Probleme des Sozialismus," pt. 5, 140-141.

⁵⁸Kautsky, Class Struggle, 158; Kautsky, Social Revolution, 187-189; Bebel, Woman, 289-291.

⁵⁹Marx, Capital, I, 458.

⁶⁰Bebel, Woman, 288-289; SPD Protokoll 1906, 339-340.

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⁶³Kautsky, Social Revolution, 175.

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⁶⁵Bebel, Woman, 325; SPD Protokoll 1906, 134-135, 340-343; Duncker, "Schulreform," 698, 703.

⁶⁶Marx, Capital, I, 454.

⁶⁷SPD Protokoll 1906, 134-135, 341-343, 348, 354-355; Zetkin, Reden und Schriften, I, 264-265; SPD Protokoll 1908, 516; Braun, rev. of Arbeitsunterricht, 185-187; Duncker, "Schulreform," 703.

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⁷¹SPD Protokoll 1908, 516.

⁷²Summarized in Duncker, "Schulreform," 703. This is an enthusiastic book review of H. Schulz's Die Schulreform der Sozialdemokratie (Dresden, 1911), which was not available to me.

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CONCLUSIONS

A militant belief in the work ethic was an integral and apparently universal feature of the German Social Democratic subculture. Not only Marxist and Revisionist theorists were united by this assumption: the socialist autobiographies show the depth to which it penetrated into the party rank-and-file. While the chasm between the intelligentsia and the average member was very great, certain concerns and ideas were shared. Above all, the common refrain of ruling-class idleness sounded over the din of differing ideological positions.

Disparaging the middle and upper classes for their laziness was part of the wall of rhetorical radicalism thrown up by the Social Democracy in response to its exclusion from the nation. Continually subjected to accusations of idleness and criminality, Social Democrats answered in kind. Knowing that this indictment of the ruling-classes had great appeal to both old members and new recruits, the ideologues consciously employed it to encourage and sustain class consciousness among the workers. But the strength of the intellectuals own convictions cannot be questioned. In Kautsky's early writings, for example, denunciations of the idleness of the rich were extreme and heart-felt.¹ A subtle interchange was occurring: the overwhelming impact of the dominant culture upon the intellectuals was reinforced by the enthusiasm for the work ethic in popular socialist ideology. High ideology in turn made some contribution to conceptions of work and ruling-class idleness at the popular level.

The complicated rationale offered by the Marxist and Revisionists in the realm of work theory was not, however, understood by the vast majority of party members. The writings of the socialist intelligentsia were largely symbolic. Through the "scientific" justification they provided, a certain legitimacy was imparted to Social Democratic views of work. The two Marxist concepts of "surplus value" and "exploitation," for example, were used to support the idea that the upper and middle classes lived unjustly upon the unpaid labor of the proletariat. But even this much knowledge of Marxism was not common, if Steinberg's research into union and socialist libraries is accepted.² It is thus likely that the theorists were only a minor factor in shaping the ideas held by the ordinary socialist worker. Whatever influence they exerted was largely indirect, with the Social Democratic press and popular publications as the media of transmission. An exploration of the ideological content of the local SPD newspapers and the widely-circulating magazines like the weekly Die Neue Welt and the humor magazine Der Wahre Jacob³ might give some insight into this problem. Further research into working-class reading habits would be a necessary complement and corrective to any such investigation. So far, however, virtually nothing has been done in this area.

The influence of popular attitudes to work upon those of the party elite was probably greater than the latter's effect upon the conceptions of the rank-and-file. Indeed, in the case of Bebel's Woman Under Socialism, Marxism was only a thin veneer over a vulgar materialist and utopian socialist tract containing some of the most extravagant

exclamations of the work ethic. Bebel merely articulated within a Marxist and Darwinist vocabulary many of the ideas of the average worker. But for the leading theorists, like Kautsky, who grew up in a wholly middle-class environment, the impact of popular ideology was much smaller. They undoubtedly absorbed some of the masses' pride in the labor of the working class, and some of the hatred of the "idleness" of the ruling classes. Nevertheless, their contact with the workers was mostly second-hand. Much of the similarity of attitudes at the top and bottom of the party must be attributed instead to the pressures exerted on both intellectuals and workers by the dominant culture.

These pressures were twofold. Regardless of class origin, future socialists were inculcated by school, church and family with the belief that diligent labor was necessary for social respectability and personal fulfillment. Secondly, all were subjected to the charges of socialist laziness mentioned earlier. These ran the gamut from the employer's scorn of "work-shy reds" to the sophisticated satires of Eugen Richter. Caught between their own socialization and the propaganda of the ruling classes, socialists reacted by reaffirming the commitment to the work ethic of the movement and its members. The average socialist worker attempted to demonstrate in his work that personal respectability and radical politics were not incompatible. The Social Democratic intellectual injected into his writings and polemics an enthusiasm for work. A dual reinforcement of previously indoctrinated attitudes was the inevitable result.

In its appeal to new members, this situation had fundamental advantages for the party. Unlike the issues of militarism, nationalism

and religion, the Social Democracy did not have to contradict years of indoctrination to alter working-class ideas of labor. A radicalizing emphasis was all that had to be added. The work ethic became a tool for sustaining class consciousness, for indicting the ruling classes and the social structure of German society, and for registering a protest against the conditions of labor under capitalism.

Yet the implications for the social integration of the labor movement were manifold. As is most clearly revealed by the phenomenon of working-class "respectability," Social Democratic views of labor tended to reinforce the internalization of work-discipline and the acceptance of patterns of behavior of the dominant culture. Indeed, by telling workers that their labor was the real foundation of civilization, socialism may have added positive overtones otherwise missing from the previously inculcated duty to work. The placement of socialist ideas of work within a militant class-conscious context only furthered their conservative effect. In the pattern of "negative integration," revolutionary sentiments articulated in an isolated but legal and reformist socialist subculture contributed to the containment of the working-class threat to the stability of Imperial Germany. A vigorous protest was expressed but not translated into radical political action. Instead the socialist working class was subtly tied into the social system to which it was apparently so hostile.

The integration of German workers into industry is necessarily implied by their social integration. At the beginning of this thesis the coincidence of the massive growth of the German labor movement and the rapid creation of a new industrial labor-force was noted. It is apparent

now that the SPD played a significant role in adaptation to industrialization. Firstly, the opportunities for education, recreation and protest provided by the socialist subculture compensated workers for the dissatisfactions of their labor. In fact the tremendous increase in the membership of the party and Free unions was probably due in part to a crisis of adaptation to industrial work-routines within the working class. Secondly, by imbuing those new recruits with a revitalized work ethic, the Social Democracy speeded their adjustment to the demands of factory work. This did not contradict a simultaneous and vigorous attack upon the conditions of labor as they existed. But the industrial system itself was not questioned.

There was, however, a certain potential in the socialist protest against capitalist working conditions to inspire action by maladjusted workers against the nature of industrial labor itself. In such cases the Social Democracy's denunciation of capitalism could be used to legitimize strikes with backward-looking aims: the preservation of artisanal privileges or resistance to new technology, for example. But these possibilities were effectively thwarted by the need for caution and respectability in the factory, and by the socialist ideological commitment to the work ethic. Protest was channelled into support for the party and union organizations, into the raising of class consciousness, and into strikes which did not question the principle of industrial work.

Evidence for this limitation or channelling of worker dissatisfaction does exist. At least for the quarter century proceeding the First World War, Peter Stearns claims to have discovered an ⁱⁿability of Western European

labor movements to translate into protest the real grievances of laborers about their work.⁴ Unions and union leaders focused their attention on winning improvements in wages and hours. Problems of work-organization, discipline, pace and the impact of technological change, which most directly affected the poorly-adapted worker, were rarely targets for effective action. In part this can be attributed to the resistance of employers to relinquishing control over what were felt to be basic managerial prerogatives. Wage and hour demands were easier to win, and thus less likely to endanger the stability of union organizations with unsuccessful strikes. The divisions between workers themselves, stemming from differing work-experiences and degrees of adjustment to the factory, were another threat to the unions. Their leaders attempted to dissolve these differences in the common solvent of reductions in the work-day and raises in pay.⁵

These restrictions on strike goals were also a product of the belief in progress, industrialization and the work ethic. In Germany, this factor was undoubtedly strong, and it is therefore easy to understand why protest against industrial labor itself was not effectively expressed. Both workers and leaders in the Free unions imbibed some of the views of the Social Democracy on work, and limited the aims of their protest accordingly. If they were enthusiastic socialists, they directed their attention to the political conquest of, rather than anachronistic resistance to, the industrial system. But while their adaptation to industrial labor proceeded apace, "negative integration" entailed the eventual victory of reformism over the revolutionary goals of official ideology. Ironically and tragically, the German Social

Democracy may thus have contributed much more to the growth of industrial capitalism, than it did to the achievement of a socialist economy.

A much more thorough understanding of the impact of German socialism upon the working class can only be achieved, however, if the lives of ordinary workers are extensively examined. What did they read? What were their concepts of socialism? How did they cope with mechanization and work-discipline? What artisanal and craft traditions were absorbed into the labor movement? Which occupational groups were the most susceptible to socialism? None of these questions has been adequately answered, largely because of the relative backwardness of German historiography. The problem of reading habits, for example, has hardly been touched. Although fraught with difficulties, it is an accessible topic. Steinberg has pointed to the extremely wide circulation of popular almanacs, many of them published by socialist presses. A large number are extant.⁶ The content and circulation of the local non-party press and the Kolportage novels would bear investigation, as would the popular Social Democratic publications mentioned earlier. Finally, the current work on working-class libraries could be extended if actual records can be found. Unfortunately, these appear to have been destroyed in most cases.⁷

The inner life of the socialist subculture would be fleshed out greatly if the activities of the educational associations, the numerous sporting and recreational clubs and even local party meetings could be revealed for inspection.⁸ If the material is available, a detailed study of the subculture in one locale, and its relations with working-class culture as a whole, would be especially valuable. Archival research could

be combined with research in the local press and the national magazines of socialist clubs. Written (and even oral) autobiographical material would add a further dimension.

Illumination of the massive base of the German Social Democracy is crucial to a better understanding of the movement's failures and successes. The examination of attitudes to work has given some insight into the intricate problems of popular and official socialist ideology, and the place of socialism in German industrialization. But the overwhelmingly organizational and political focus of German labor history has inevitably placed strict limitations on the depth and scope of this investigation. Opening the field to new conceptual tools and lines of inquiry is the next pressing task.

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²See Chapter I.

³Der Wahre Jacob had 366,000 subscribers in 1914; Die Neue Welt 650,000. See Fricke, Zur Organisation, 160. The Neue Welt was sometimes issued as a Sunday supplement to Social Democratic newspapers.

⁴Stearns, Lives of Labor, 300, 327.

⁵Ibid., 307-309, 323-325.

⁶Steinberg, Sozialismus, 141.

⁷Ibid., 129.

⁸Vernon L. Lidtke has made some as yet unpublished research into Social Democratic singing clubs in Imperial Germany. See the Newsletter: European Labor and Working Class History, 7 (May, 1975), 8. He has published a related article entitled "Songs and Politics: An Exploratory Essay on Arbeiterlieder in the Weimar Republic" in Archiv für Sozialgeschichte, XIV (1974), 253-273.

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