always available, so conflict never arose over whom should be hired; housing, although never satisfactory, did not present an acute problem. In sum, the slow yet steady pace of change appears to have made it possible to avoid the polarization and social conflict that characterized other industrializing villages closer to Paris, such as Argenteuil, Bezons, or Saint-Denis.

The session commentator raised the intriguing question of whether the price of social peace in Bonnières was the ostracism of the Bretons and, later, the Belgians.

The third paper I attended was "The Political Origins of French Revolutionary Syndicalism" by Bernard Moss (University of Southern California), during a session devoted to *The Political Consequences of French Social Problems in the 19th Century.* Moss argued that the workers' disposition toward revolutionary syndicalism was *not* influenced by the theories of intellectuals, but can best be studied through looking at its organization, which was federalist. As a political tendency, it was reinforced in the 80's and 90's by the opposition of its partisans, led by Allemane, to the "possibilist" tendency represented by Brousse. This opposition was exemplified by the attempt, in the early 1890's, by the Allemanists to capture control of the *bourses de travail*, and later by their role in founding the *Confédération générale du travail.*

Other papers of interest, most of which dealt with earlier periods, included: James Friguglietti (Case Western Reserve), "The People and the Terror: History Seen From Below;" Cissie Fairchilds (University of California, San Diego), "The Condition of the Poor during the Revolution: A Debate;" and Emily Coleman, (University of Pittsburgh), "Peasant Society and Social Change in the 9th Century."

The *Proceedings* of this meeting will be published later in the year. Those interested in obtaining a personal copy or in ordering one for their institution's library should write to Professor Brison Gooch, Dept. of History, Texas A & M University, College Station, Texas 77843.

Karen M. Offen

BEBEL AND SOCIALISM

This session at last fall's Southern Historical Association meeting in Dallas examined the formative years of August Bebel, the ideological influences that helped shape his thinking, and his responses to concrete political issues, in an attempt to understand his role in the development of the German Socialist Party and German socialism. The viewpoints expressed in the papers and those of the commentator were in conflict regarding several issues.

Professor Neitzel in "The Evolution of August Bebel's Social-Political Philosophy, 1864-1871" described Bebel's early understanding of Marxism as relatively unsophisticated and partially derived from unusual sources such as St. Ambrose. Early critics attacked his brand of "socialism" for being

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little more than parliamentary democracy. During the 1860s he demonstrated little or no interest in government control of the means of production and by 1869 it appears that he still had not read *Das Kapital* or the basic works of Hegel. Ironically, it was Liebknecht, an object of Marx's scorn, who was the principal influence in Bebel's development toward Marxism. Later, Bebel's socialist ideology was shaped by pragmatic considerations related to the desire for practical gains on behalf of the workers. He decided that the *Volksstaat* was out of the immediate reach of the working class and therefore the prime duty of the SPAD was education preparatory to a later ascendancy. Bebel supported the Commune, but again pragmatic considerations and perhaps a shallow ideological commitment caused him to refuse to initiate contemporary agitation in Germany. Bebel was a self-described Marxist with an incomplete understanding of Marxism.

Professor Maehl in "August Bebel's Role in the Development of a German Socialist Foreign Policy, 1878-1896" analyzed Bebel in the context of what he saw as contradictions between the German government's foreign policy, German working class nationalism, and the Marxist doctrine of class struggle. Bebel anticipated the destruction of German capitalism in a coming war with Russia. He described that country as "half barbaric ... the greatest threat to the peace of Europe." Yet his sense of nationalism continued to grow. Early in his career Bebel was opposed to military appropriation bills; later, he supported a proposed alliance with England and became an annexationist. During the 1890s, the period in which he began to express his most extreme nationalistic sentiments, he had also become a mature Marxist. The contradiction between the Marxian concept of universal class struggle and pragmatic nationalism saw the former submerged in the rise of his patriotic fervor.

Professor Lidtke in his comments discussed the difficulties involved in the historical analysis of an individual's thinking. He pointed out that Professor Neitzel had not adequately defined Marxism before challenging Bebel's credentials. As an example of the problem, Lidtke suggested that Bebel had not taken St. Ambrose seriously, but used quotes from that Christian saint only to disarm his pious bourgeois opponents. Regarding Professor Maehl's paper, Lidtke observed that Bebel had frequent contact with Engels on a multiplicity of issues including foreign policy. Bebel had Engels full support. If the position of Engels with regard to foreign policy was not Marxist then we again have the problem of defining Marxism. More importantly, foreign policy was not the area of greatest interest to German Socialists. As the party of the labor movement, the SPD gave a definite emphasis to domestic programs. Therefore, Lidtke suggested, a more useful measurement of Bebel and German socialism can be obtained through an examination of the social and economic reform proposals.

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The current issue of the *New German Critique* includes articles on "The Crisis of Marxism" (Karl Korsch), "The Brecht-Lukacs Debate" (Eugene Lunn), and "Marxist Theories of Fascism and National Socialism" (Anson G. Rabinbach.) Please address enquiries to the Department of German, P. O. Box 413, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201.

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