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Raymond Chien Sun. *Before the Enemy Is within Our Walls: Catholic Workers in Cologne, 1885-1912, A Social, Cultural and Political History.* Boston: Humanities Press, 1999. xii + 339 pp. \$70.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-391-04096-0.

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Traditional forces in Germany, such as the Catholic Church, were deeply disturbed by processes of industrialization and modernization that changed the nineteenth-century German economy, society, and culture with unprecedented power. During this process the rise of the new working class was the central object of the Church's concern: the clergy perceived workers living in the fast growing urban accumulations not only to be exposed to all kind of moral hazards, but also to be a potentially revolutionary force. As a reaction to Social Democracy's electoral successes in the 1880s, the German Catholic Church decided in 1885 to extend the organizational spectrum by founding a nationwide network of "Catholic workers' clubs" (*Katholische Arbeitervereine*).

In his Cologne case study, Raymond Chien Sun examines the motives, methods, successes, and failures of the clerical strategy to immunize the working class against Social Democratic ideas. The author recurs on the theoretical background of the Gramscian theory of cultural hegemony, which proves to be a "powerful analytical tool" (p. 13). Indeed, unlike many other historical dissertations that put theory only into the foreword and conclusion to enliven the text, Sun sticks to it persistently throughout. While reading the book it becomes obvious that the Catholic clergy had a very clear idea about creating a socio-cultural environment as an "institutional setting" in which workers should acquire the clergy's world-view (p. 14). This world-view included not only faith or certain religious practices, but a clear definition of desirable personal behavior and political preferences as well. The clergy wanted workers to integrate themselves into the existing political and economic order, and of course to act the way the Church demanded. Catholic workers' clubs were the instrument of education and indoctrina-

tion for male workers, and this was their only purpose. The study ends in 1912, when Social Democracy finally won the Cologne Reichstag seat from the Catholic Centre party, and the clergy's quest for cultural hegemony was ultimately lost. From the perspective of its failure, Sun pursues the question why the Catholic Church, with all its intellectual, financial, and ideological resources, did not succeed.

The answer that the author finds lies in a complex combination of several reasons. First, the clubs suffered from severe organisational weaknesses. They were not organized democratically, but headed by non-elected priests, called *praesides*. The authoritarian structure, which gave even the local notables a greater influence than ordinary members, proved to be unattractive for workers. Second, the *praesides*, who led the workers' clubs in addition to their full-time pastoral duties, were often overworked and uninformed, and held little interest in social and economic questions. Third, the clubs were not meant to enable workers to discuss actual political or religious questions critically and to form their own opinions. Pastors generally preferred to hold forth about the evils of socialism or the necessity of faith and obedience to pope, clergy, and employers. Even cultural events and leisure activities, which were welcomed by the masses, were organized reluctantly and sporadically because they were considered to be a moral hazard. The fourth and decisive reason for failure lies, as the author describes it, in the ignorance of the clergy with regard to workers' material interests. *Praesides* objected to any attempt by the workers to improve working conditions or wages. Consequently, the Catholic workers' clubs kept a very critical distance even from the Christian unions, which emerged around the turn of the century. In the 1912 Re-

ichstag election this strategy ended in disaster. The Social Democratic Party made the new protective tariffs on agrarian products a central issue of its election campaign, claiming the tariffs would raise the cost of living for the working class. The Centre party supported the Reich's tariff policy, and so did the church. Despite massive efforts to mobilise voters, the Centre lost the Cologne Reichstag seat to the Social Democrats. Speaking credibly for the interest of the workers, they "had broken through the protective institutional walls of the Catholic workers' social cultural milieu" (p. 274).

Due to its theoretical framework, the book goes beyond the narrow history of the Catholic workers' clubs. Sun shows that organizational and propagandistic efforts are not sufficient to establish cultural hegemony. All such efforts must remain unsuccessful if the would-be hegemonic power does not pay attention to the economic and social realities of its objects. Every internal critic of this strategy was silenced; every effort for reform only aimed at greater efficiency without intending to alter the basic concept. Thus the book spreads a wider light on the policy of the Catholic Church in Imperial Germany which was "anything but modernizing or emancipatory" (p. 284).

The hegemonic conception of the Catholic workers' clubs was based on the assumption the clergy could control and steer the workers' behavior in a segregated Catholic socio-cultural milieu. The author thoroughly analyses growth, social composition, age of members, and regional distribution of the workers' clubs, relating these factors to social changes in the electorate and election results. Together with carefully interpreted internal sources of the clubs, Sun comes to the conclusion these milieus were never as separated as assumed. Industrialization, growth of population, and immigration tended to dissolve the milieu increasingly in favor of Social Democracy. This underlying socio-economic process enabled workers to free themselves from clergy tutelage by articulating their own interest.

An important outcome of Sun's study is that he draws a vivid picture of the political culture of Cologne before World War I. The opponents pursued two different strategies to win over the working class. Cologne Social Democracy on the one hand systematically downplayed religious issues and emphasized economic interest, thus giving workers the chance to remain Catholic and to vote for Social Democrats at the same time. Catholic workers' clubs, on the other hand, used increasingly militant language and form; Sun even talks of a "spiritual cultural

warfare" (p. 117). By that, the reviewer perceives the vehement political arguments of the Weimar Republic foreshadowed.

The focus on the Catholic workers' clubs is this book's strength and its weakness. The strength lays in its stringent and theory-driven but not overloaded argument, whose conclusions can be reached by the limitation to one organization. The workers' clubs are indeed shown to have been a vital part of Catholic life in Cologne. Thus the book offers a deep look into the attitude of a Catholic organisation and the clergy toward workers, society, and democracy. There is a good chance to transfer the results of this local study to other Catholic cities as well, even though Cologne, capital of German Catholicism or the "German Rome" as it was called, did constitute a very special environment.

The limitation, on the other hand, results from the neglect of some aspects of Catholic worker culture in Cologne. For example, women were not allowed into the clubs. Consequently women are mentioned only insofar as they played a role in the calculations of the clubs' leaders (since women were the more faithful followers and more obedient to the clergy than men). The reader learns very little about female life and culture. Other Catholic or Christian organisations, especially Christian Trade Unions which became an important force, are similarly neglected unless they play a role of antagonism. In its core, the author's social and cultural history remains centered on political issues. Even though some data is given, readers should not expect excessive information on the living and working conditions or daily life of male and female workers in Cologne. This was not the author's intention and it may have been the publisher's decision to choose such a general title.

These few critical points should not detract from the fact that Raymond Chien Sun has written a book that is valuable in many respects. He presents a detailed picture of the Catholic workers' clubs in Cologne, which is based upon extensive archival and published resources. The material is enriched by a great number of tables in the text and in a huge appendix (in which the reader can even find some song lyrics in the *Koelsch* dialect). The book stimulates the reader to rethink some aspects of the history of Catholicism in Germany. First, it shows how valuable a modern empirical study on Catholic working class can be when informed by theory, especially if it does not start from a partisan standpoint that is typical for these issues, be it Marxist or, more often, Catholic. Second, the book asks us to rethink and question the often

asserted homogeneity of the Catholic, Socialist, and later Communist socio-cultural working class milieus. From this book we can conclude that these groupings seemed much more flexible, fluid, and of minor importance in daily life. Third, the book shows, at least in the reviewer's opinion, that some conflicts that haunted church hierarchy and confessional federations from the Weimar Republic until the post-World War II era have their roots or predecessors in the *Kaiserreich*. In particular, the attitude of the church toward democracy, the degree of its ability to compromise with groups from outside, and the control and influence the clergy exercised or at least tried to, along with other issues, were already foreshadowed, well before World War I.

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