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## English Summary

### **Lau Laursen: Værtshuskultur og alkoholdebat i det tyske socialdemokrati omkring 1900 (Public house traditions and the debate on alcohol in German Social Democracy around 1900)**

The subject of the article is public house traditions and the alcohol debate in German Social Democracy, the SPD, around 1900. The aim is to contribute to the analysis of the link between drinking traditions and lifestyle. It is a subject that can well be treated historically, as in this article, in which German workers during the final phase of the first industrial revolution are taken as an empirical example. Against this background alcohol policies formulated by various groups within the Social Democrat labour movement are examined. The article has the idea that experiences from these discussions may inspire present day alcohol debate. Alcohol debate within the SPD is first discernible at the beginning of the 1890s. A small group, mainly consisting of academics, provoked debate with their demand for total abstinence as a prerequisite for political struggle and cultural development. The SPD leadership was not unanimous on this. Such a ruling would deprive the labour movement of its most important and only political and organizational forum: the working man's pub. Though party leadership was itself agreed on the struggle against alcoholism, they promptly retorted to the temperance people. In 1890-91 a series of articles was published by the prominent Social Democrat, Karl Kautsky. These articles formed the foundation of the Party's alcohol policy for many years to come.

In the years before and after 1900 the working man's pub was a prominent 'time-off' institution for both organized and non-organized labour. It was an important base for forming an independent workers' culture and its whole character could offer physical and mental relaxation in the form of rest and amusement, social interac-

tion in companionship and conversation, and cultural and political identity in organized activities. In this sense the public house was a constructive reality.

After publication of Kautsky's series of articles, the majority of SPDs consistently declined to include alcohol questions on the agenda at annual congresses. The temperance people realized that their only means of escaping party isolation was to get organized in a separate union. The *Deutsche Arbeiter-Abstinenten Bund* was established in 1903 and, through influence in SPD cultural and educational work, managed to get the alcohol question debated at the 1907 Party Congress. A compromise was reached, resulting in a more peaceful front on this question within the labour movement.

Finally, the article endeavours to outline the two alcohol platforms within the SPD. On the one hand, the idea of total abstinence was never generally accepted in the SPD. The link between German national traditions, which have been described by an expert on German cultural history as a "beer-drinking brotherhood", and the proletarian 'pub' culture which played an important part in the lives of the workers, is considered the main reason why a teetotaling crusade never really went home to the German workers. The temperance movements' propaganda was too unrealistic and was out of touch with workers' traditions and lifestyles. On the other hand, the alcohol policy the party was obliged to adopt did not yield many results. The majority of the party had a more realistic understanding of the roots of alcoholism and were better able to perceive how it should be combatted. It was, however, a tactical alcohol policy that could be legitimated by being fitted into the general political strategy, which aimed first and foremost at introducing social and economic reforms which would improve the material living conditions of the working classes.