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Katholische Arbeiter im Mutterland der Reformation

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Between 1871 and 1914, hundreds of thousands of Catholic workers migrated from Bohemia, Bavaria, and other majority Catholic regions to the overwhelmingly Protestant Kingdom of Saxony. This study examines the religious and social changes that were caused by that labor migration, focusing on the relations between state and church, the process of forming Catholic communities, and everyday denominational life.

The reactions of the Saxon state to Catholic labor migration were shaped by competition between policymakers in different fields, particularly church policy but also nationalities and labor market policies. Until the year 1918, the Catholic Church in Saxony was rigorously supervised by the *Kultusministerium* (Ministry for Education and Religious Affairs), which steered the flows of migration, restricted the expansion of the Church, and moderated any resulting denominational conflicts that arose within the Saxon population. The national or ethnic identity of Catholic migrants played an increasingly important role in church policy decisions. This was especially true in regard to authorization procedures for foreign-language church services and in matters of marital law. The issue of church financing also contained potential for conflict, in view of the growing Catholic population. The state of Saxony showed little preparedness to raise the subsidies for the Catholic Church in proportion to its growth while simultaneously reducing tax advantages of the (Protestant) majority denomination.

Whereas the state was interested in confessional affiliation primarily in a nominal sense, the Catholic parishes emphasized committed church membership. The core congregations, usually organized within Catholic associations, consciously acted to approach the ideal type of an ›upright‹ Catholic while setting out normative requirements that were oriented on the prototype of ultramontane Catholicism. Being a religious minority, however, necessitated numerous compromises, particularly in regard to ›Catholic‹ marriages and child-raising, but also in the organization of labor and political interests. Time and again, the frequent everyday contact with ›natives‹ and a high proportion of denominationally mixed marriages undermined the goal of a self-contained Catholic community.

Members of Saxony's Protestant majority also viewed the growing Catholic migration with concern. The Landesverein des Evangelischen Bundes (Saxony's chapter of the Protestant League) opposed the immigration of foreign Catholics; in close collaboration with nationalist organizations, they attempted to sway public figures to adopt their own position. To be sure, the views on national and religious affiliation propagated by the Landesverein mostly failed to gain wide acceptance in Saxon society, and religiously inspired conflicts remained rare in daily life. At the same time, however, middle-class Protestant circles were not wholly resistant to such views. From the turn of the 20th century, the Evangelischer Bund's warnings that foreign infiltration represented a religious and national danger were repeatedly invoked to argue against, among other things, the expansion of Catholic ministry

to workers. By the same token, such nationally tinged efforts at social exclusion impeded the efforts especially of middle-class Catholics to achieve civic and economic integration into Saxon society.

Under these conditions, it was not possible for a coherent Catholic diaspora identity to crystallize. Instead, the study reveals the manifold and complexly interlaced negotiations by Catholic economic migrants in the Kingdom of Saxony regarding their religious, social, and national identity. In that respect, it makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the relationship between religion and processes of modernization.