

## **National Socialism and the Working Class, 1925-May, 1933\***

**Tim Mason**

*"We want to conquer the soul of the worker and build him into the new state."*

*Ludwig Brucker, NSBO, in a discussion with representatives of the Free Trade Unions, on April 13, 1933. (1)*

The following essay is intended to illuminate the pre-history of the problems of national socialist rule discussed in my book *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich*. A proper perspective for the analysis of class relationships in Germany after 1933 can be gained only by first outlining the development and social composition of the national socialist movement before the seizure of power and by reconstructing the process which led to the destruction of working class organizations in 1933. Further, it is of greatest importance to point out those changes in economic and political constellations produced by the world economic crisis. A thorough and differentiated treatment of these themes is of course impossible within the given framework. The discussion must thus concentrate on those aspects of the rise of the NSDAP which were then later to prove decisive for the development of the Nazi system after 1933.

The Nazi seizure of power denoted a marked shift of emphasis in the nature of domination (Herrschaft) in the capitalist system, a shift of emphasis from the labor process and the legal system to the realm of dictatorial political power. The class domination of the 1920s, which had been secured by the state (administration), by law and by the cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie, and which fell apart under the pressures of the world economic crisis, was replaced in 1933 by direct political domination within the class society, domination resting upon the exercise of open violence. The new system did not involve general domination over the class society, for, thanks to the massive repression of the working class, the capitalist economy was able to resume its development after 1933; and yet, the policies of the dictatorship were not primarily concerned with the task of perpetuating the capitalist economic order. Thus, the distinguishing feature of the new system of domination lay in the tendency for political violence to achieve an ever greater relative autonomy as against the driving forces of socioeconomic development.

The most important pre-conditions for this rapid shift in the character of domination were, on the one hand, the development of the powerful national socialist mass organizations in the years before 1933 which then destroyed or 'co-ordinated' all oppositional groupings and, on the other hand, self-preservation and self-assertion, within their own special spheres of interest and competence, of certain powerful organizations of the ruling classes—trade associations, cartels, civil service, armed forces—and their active co-operation with the new dictatorship. These two pre-conditions were closely linked with each other; they were inter-dependent basic features of the economic and political crisis. And they were both more clearly present and more marked in Germany in the years 1932-34 than in any other society which

produced a fascist regime.

In the process by which the capitalist order in Germany was stabilized in this purely fascist form, the Nazi mass movement played a twofold indispensable role. First, it robbed the conservative political forces of their own mass support, and then it destroyed the organizations of the working class. By the latter step, the NSDAP ruled out the only alternative resolution of the crisis of bourgeois society in Germany, namely the political shoring-up of the social order through a more gradual non-terroristic repression and co-optation of the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions. Such a resolution would surely have entailed a substantial loss of power for the organizations of the working class and their partial incorporation into an authoritarian corporative (*ständisch*) socio-economic order. But this would not have had the pure fascist quality of the national socialist dictatorship. As late as 1933 this corporative resolution of the crisis was still the ideal of many of the old elite groups in the economy and in the state. They failed to realize their goal not least because of the independence of the Nazi mass organizations which, acting largely on their own initiative in March and April 1933, destroyed the working-class movement from the bottom up. (1a)

Thus the Nazi mass movement has to be analyzed in the specific context of the creation of a terroristic dictatorship—a dictatorship which did not seek to use administrative, legal and economic pressures to weaken the working class presence, but which rather quite literally destroyed the working class movement, and thereby gained a far-reaching relative autonomy from the ruling classes. The causal nature of the connection between the elimination of independent working class organizations on the one hand and the relative autonomy of the regime in its subsequent relations with the ruling classes must be emphasized. The destruction of the working class movement was of immediate short-term advantage to the ruling classes, and it served as the basis for their co-operation with the regime in the years after 1933 (hence, the fact that the regime's autonomy was relative). Such wholesale repression and terrorism required, however, a concentration of power which set the mechanisms of 'normal' class domination out of action and this requirement was met in the spring of 1933. It is in this overall context that the question of the relations between the NSDAP and the working class before May 1933 has its significance. (1b)

After the re-founding of the party in 1925 the activists outside of Bavaria devoted themselves with some energy to the task of breaking the political preeminence of the SPD and KPD among the workers in large German cities. These activists, often erroneously termed the "National Socialist Left," agitated for a rebirth of the German people based on a new unity of national purpose; it was to bind together all those who produced the wealth and power of the nation and thus reconcile the "workers of the head" and "workers of the fist" in the struggle against alleged common enemies: international communism, international finance capital, international Jewry. Communism was attacked because it rejected the national principle, and Social Democracy because it had capitulated to "Jewish" financial interests which it was maintained—stood behind the policy of fulfillment of the governments of the Weimar Republic. At the same time the German National People's Party was denounced not only as being purely reactionary, as committed to the past and thus unrealistic in political goals, but also as being exclusive in the social interests which it represented. (2)

This shrewd propaganda strategy was put into effect in the second half of the 1920s with great enthusiasm and remarkable persistence by the Strasser brothers, Goebbels, Krebs and other "old fighters" in the urban centers of western and northern Germany. But before 1930 they achieved very little success with it. The Hitler putsch of November 1923 had left no doubt that the NSDAP belonged in the camp of counter-revolutionary forces, and thus it is not surprising that the politically educated workers in the cities saw through such demagogic endeavors and dismissed them as a new form of reactionary confidence tricks: the Nazis' political meetings were regularly disrupted by factory workers. Only in Berlin as well as in a few industrial cities in the Rhineland, in Westphalia, in Saxony, and in Thuringia could the NSDAP chalk up any gains at all in the ranks of the organized workers before 1930. These were, however, of only minimal numerical importance, in terms both of election support and of party membership.(3) The SPD and the KPD remained the strongest representatives of the German working class, and their pre-eminence in this respect was at no point before 1930 threatened in the slightest by the NSDAP.

The initial lack of success was of decisive importance in that it confirmed once and for all the relationship of National Socialism to the class structure of German society. If the NSDAP had won strong support among wage workers in the late 1920s it would never have been able later to become the beneficiary of the massive political reaction against the Left which began with the world economic crisis. If prior to 1928-1929 the party had unmistakably developed in a national-syndicalist or national-bolshevist direction, if the program's social and economic demands had emerged clearly into the foreground, then in subsequent years the fears and ambitions of the German bourgeoisie would have found their political home in another movement.(4) Although during the years of crisis many good German bourgeois considered the NSDAP too violent and too vulgar and thus not trustworthy, it developed into a large national political movement precisely because it promised to side with the middle classes and to confront the economic and political power of the working class. The NSDAP did not emerge into the forefront of national politics between 1928 and 1930 as an alternative to the SPD and KPD, but rather as their most unreconcilable enemy.

This fact is widely known and is scarcely disputed any more by scholars: every new study about the social composition and the activities of the party before 1933 brings it out with greater clarity. But for the complex of problems analyzed here, within which this fact becomes of critical importance, it cannot suffice merely to remark upon it. Explanation is needed. In the late 1920s the socialist parties and the trade unions (in Catholic regions the Center Party and the Catholic trade unions can be included) had firm support in the working class population. Their strong position was based, except in the case of the KPD, on long practical experience, efficient organization and on relationships of solidarity which had survived the confusion of the revolutionary phase.(5) Within the framework of the Weimar Republic's political system these organizations were also in a strong position to represent the immediate interests of their members and supporters. Thus, after the stabilization crisis of 1923-24, wages and living standards again rose quickly, and governments responded positively to demands for moderate social reform. Moreover, in Prussia as well as in many of the big cities the SPD was a major force in government coalitions and in public administration. Although the working class in the late 1920s undoubtedly would have held a position

of greater economic and political power if it had been united in a single movement, there was no evidence of decay, that is, of inner weakness, of the sapping of political loyalty and morale-symptoms which would have provided the NSDAP a bridgehead for successful agitation. Even the most plausible accusation drummed up by Nazi propaganda, that the leaders of the SPD and the Free Trade Unions had long given up the struggle for socialism and had abandoned their supporters for the sake of lucrative public offices, seems for the most part to have fallen on deaf ears.(6)

The extreme nationalism of the NSDAP, i.e., the most characteristic and distinctive aspect of their propaganda which set them apart most from all other parties vying for the votes of the working class, also evoked little response (7) This is due to the fact that in Germany aggressive nationalism had always been a programmatic point of the political parties supported by the middle and upper classes and had always been closely linked to reactionary domestic goals. In spite of numerous attempts by various Christian-national groups before and after 1914, a broad democratic German nationalism had never evolved which would have been capable of integrating the chief economic and political interests of the working class. The contradiction between nation and class around which the politics of imperial Germany revolved, continued, though in new forms, after the November revolution. To be sure, the struggle for national greatness and imperial expansion was no longer tied to the defense of an authoritarian constitution. But because of the complex of events in the winter of 1918-19 that contradiction reached a new level of emotional intensity for the German Right. Apart from short interludes in 1923, and then again in 1930 when the KPD assumed a decidedly nationalistic stance, the workers' parties resisted the temptation to adopt the slogans of their political opponents. On the other hand, they themselves-especially the Free Trade Unions-were patriotic enough in their own way to maintain the respect of those workers who were proud of their contribution to the war effort and who felt that the conditions of the peace treaty were unjust.(8) For all these reasons the extreme nationalistic demagoguery of the NSDAP found no response among factory workers before 1930.

This lack of success cannot, however, be ascribed only to the resistance which the NSDAP met in the form of firmly established organizations and opinions. In several decisive points the struggles of the Nazi party for "the soul of the German workers" were-despite their verbal bravado-half-hearted and smacked of dilettantism from the beginning. Thus the importance which Gregor Strasser and his supporters attached to the political conversion of the working class in the years between 1925 and 1928 elicited strong mistrust from the Munich leadership, particularly because of the effects which the emphasis on this line would have had on party organization. Here two problem areas converged which were to have a decisive influence on the future development of the party: the general question of practical politics regarding its stance towards the trade union organizations, and-superimposed on the first question-the controversy about Hitler's personal power position and the Fuhrer principle. In August, 1929, Hitler essentially won both controversies, though making great tactical compromises in order to allow the group which still chiefly wanted to enlist the support of the workers a certain freedom of action within the movement.(9)

But in many respects the line which Hitler represented set narrow limits to this kind of agitation. Hitler himself admitted openly that he knew of no solution which would

resolve the dilemma for the party. His remarks on "the trade union question" in the second volume of *Mein Kampf* were totally inconclusive and predominantly negative since he "had not yet found the right man for the destruction of the Marxist trade unions" (10) He conceded a legitimate function to the unions only as long as the state and employers failed to look after the workers' welfare. He denounced the class struggle, for which he made "Marxism" and not the unions responsible, and spoke out sharply against the founding of a National Socialist trade union because he had "the steadfast conviction that it is dangerous to link an ideological (*weltanschaulich*) struggle too soon to matters of economics. This could easily lead to economic aspects directing the political movement instead of *Weltanschauung* forcing the trade unions into its course ... A National Socialist trade union which sees its mission only in competition with the Marxist one, would be worse than none." (11) Only seldom did Hitler question the unifying power of *Weltanschauung* in this way; the much quoted, catch-all nature of the National Socialist movement, in good part the result of a calculated strategy, had its limits for Hitler at a point where it would have been necessary to institutionalize fundamental and deep-rooted conflicts of interest within the party. Conflicts for example between artisans and large-scale industry, between agriculture and industry, could still be moderated within the party because such groups had many other interests besides those which were mutually irreconcilable. In contrast, a trade union was only there to assert the claims of its members against the employer. (12) Class struggle within the party, which Hitler correctly predicted as the unavoidable outcome of the founding of a class-specific organization, could only weaken the party, complicate the position of the party leadership, and damage the plausibility of the central propaganda point, the call for an ideal national community.

Hitler's readiness to address the working class separately in his own propaganda scarcely went beyond the not very convincing but carefully maintained rhetorical distinction between the German worker, who was patriotic, industrious and skillful, and the criminal functionaries who dared to speak in his name; the assurance that manual skills would be granted their full recognition in the approaching Third Reich, the promise that a national socialist government would do away with unemployment by destroying the Versailles System on which it was allegedly based; occasional denunciations of bank capital; a vague anti-bourgeois and pseudo-egalitarian sentiment—Hitler had nothing but slogans to offer the working class. This rhetoric could no more satisfy the white- and blue-collar workers' wing of the party, which finally did organize itself in 1930, than Hitler's utterly vague projection of future national socialist unions as occupational representatives in economic councils and in the "Central Economic Parliament." (13) It is important to remember that the party leadership never decided on a positive strategy either towards existing unions or with respect to the possible foundation of their own trade union organizations. There can be no doubt that this neglect essentially cut off the party from a great number of wage earners who saw in the unions a decisively important bastion of their rights and interests. (14)

The orientation of the emerging mass movement within the existing social structure was influenced far less by the negative stance of the party leadership than by the fundamental transformation in Germany's economic and political situation—a transformation which took place quite independently of the activities of the NSDAP. Most important here were the first effects of the economic crisis and the radicalization of the German National People's Party. The Reichstag elections of 1928 showed unmistakably where the strongest voting potential for the NSDAP was to be found:

among the farmers and in the old Mittelstand in the Protestant areas. As the crisis of German agriculture intensified in 1929, the party doubled its efforts in these regions. In the same year the alliance with Hugenberg and the conservative Right came about in the referendum on the Young Plan. In view of the fact that the whole party—including the so-called Left—pursued a ruthless opportunism in their efforts for new members and supporters, these new developments finally confirmed the position of the NSDAP at the extreme right of the political spectrum. As a consequence of this altered situation they acquired a social base which was fundamentally and totally hostile to the workers—and this not only in an ideological and political sense, but also with respect to the central economic interests of the working class. There was no conceivable way that these latter interests could be reconciled with the demands of the new national socialist movement for lower taxes, higher prices for food, restrictions on department stores and consumer co-operatives, a reduction in social services and wages, etc (15) The social composition of the NSDAP membership, which grew by leaps and bounds between 1928 and 1930, decisively colored the future character of the movement: the possibility of plausible efforts in support of the working class was constantly reduced, for all attempts of that sort now ran the risk of offending present supporters. (16) With the intensification of the economic crisis, that is, with the intensification of the struggle over the distribution of a shrinking social product, this tension became steadily sharper.

There are two further reasons why, even at the beginning of the crisis, the NSDAP's orientation was determined so unambiguously by property interests (in the widest sense). The leadership of the local party groups which developed in the years after 1925 came overwhelmingly from the bourgeoisie or the old Mittelstand. The rather loose structure of the party organization allowed these local functionaries great political independence and propagandistic initiative. Almost all regional and local studies undertaken so far emphasize the fact that workers were scarcely ever to be found in leading positions in the party, even in larger cities: it is even reported that local groups sometimes resorted to dissimulation just to be able to display at least one worker in a responsible post.(17) Many analyses of the social composition of local leadership groups read like a roll-call of bourgeois occupations—government officials, school teachers, doctors, clerks, self-employed businessmen, salesmen, retired officers, engineers, students. (18) These people were of course themselves dissatisfied with the existing authority structure in German Society; without constant frustration and a profound distrust of the old ruling elite they would scarcely have come to National Socialism. But their newly awakened interest in politics was not in the least directed toward the improvement of the working class's living conditions. They were concerned first and foremost with their own advancement, with an advantageous position within a new elite. (19) The more the movement expanded, the more men of precisely this social background could solidify their positions within the local party organizations since they possessed both the education and often the experience in administration and organization which the increasingly complex bureaucratic structures of the party demanded. Less educated activists who had played a rather important role in the 1920s were now frequently relegated to the background by ambitious bourgeois newcomers. The latter were undoubtedly better equipped for active participation in a party which was at the point of transforming itself from a small sect to a mass movement. (20) The homogeneous non-proletarian character of the local leadership groups meant that the party at best regarded the central economic and social demands of the workers with

indifference. It further meant that the party could only rely on the incomparably weaker weapons of a diversionary or nationalistic propaganda when it wanted to be heard in working class quarters.

In addition to this was a second important reason for National Socialism's ties to property interests. For the strategy which Hitler followed after 1924, attempting to gain power "legally," it was imperative to be assured of at least the passive acquiescence of the old power elite, especially of the military and big industry. And open confrontation with these groups would not only have awakened the danger of a repetition of 1923 and thus the possibility of civil war, but it would further have overstrained the loyalty of those supporters of the NSDAP who viewed it as a genuinely conservative and restorative movement. This strategic line by no means excluded fierce propagandistic attacks on the political organizations and spokesmen of the older German conservatism. On the contrary, it practically demanded such tactics since the "legality" tactic made it necessary that the NSDAP overtake all other bourgeois parties electorally in order then to approach the power elite in the role of the strongest political representative of the "good," i.e., nationalist, non-socialist Germany. But for the same reasons the party could by no means risk lending support to political interests which this elite could have perceived as a direct threat to its various positions of power and interest. This was finally the decisive reason why the NSDAP did not emerge in politics merely as the rival of the workers' parties, but rather as that power which was committed to crushing them. Hostility towards the working class movement-closely combined with an aggressive nationalism-was hence the determining and common element that characterized all parties of the Right and conservative interest groups in the years after 1928. It was precisely the prospect that the NSDAP would act in accord with this basic position, and with more energy and success than any other political movement of the time, which lent the party such attractiveness, and which also assured it the acquiescence of that elite with whose help alone the seizure of power could take place without great upheavals.

The reaction of the working class to this threat was unequivocal but at the same time inadequate. Before the spring of 1933 remarkably few SPD supporters and union members converted to the cause of National Socialism. Though political loyalties were somewhat fluid on the boundary line between the KPD and NSDAP (especially in 1932), the growing strength of the KPD was nevertheless in every respect more important than its occasional losses to the national socialist movement. After 1930 both the KPD and the SPD understood themselves-of course in different ways-increasingly as anti-fascist parties of the working class.(21) The fact that the KPD waged this battle with greater energy, or at least greater volume, and the not less important fact that the acute distress of mass unemployment in industrial areas had a profound radicalizing effect caused a big shift in electoral support between 1928 and 1932 and a lesser shift in membership from the SPD to the KPD between 1928 and 1932. But the number of voters for both parties taken together did not decline under the challenge of National Socialism: between 1928 and 1930 they rose by 700,000 and remained constant after that at something over 13 million up to the last free Reichstag elections in November, 1932, which once again confirmed this position. However, the electorate was growing steadily in these years, and, in addition, the degree of voter participation rose. Thus, the figure of 13.1 to 13.3 million voters represented a declining percentage of the total electorate. The voting strength of the SPD and KPD

together tell from 40.4% of all votes cast in 1929 to 35.9% in July, 1932. (22) These figures show that the workers' parties had reached the limits of their expansive power, at least within the framework of the specific economic and political conditions of the time. To be sure, there were a series of more or less contingent factors which inhibited the further growth of the workers' parties-after 1928 both the SPD and the KPD lacked a decisive, convincing leadership, and both parties showed themselves incapable of responding to the crisis in the economy and the state with new non-sectarian strategies.(23) But it must be asked whether, even under the best leadership, the socialist parties could have succeeded in breaking through the sociological, ideological, religious and, not least, sex barriers which limited their expansion and thus their capacity for political integration after 1929. The election results indicate that those barriers were massive and firmly anchored. And after 1929 only such a breakthrough would have been able to prevent the national socialist seizure of power by constitutional means.(24)

In the course of the election campaigns between 1930 and 1932 there were certainly fluctuations between the workers' parties and the bourgeois parties (fluctuations which cannot be described with the necessary precision). But from the voting and membership statistics of the time one has the general impression that the SPD and KPD together formed a political ghetto-a ghetto of considerable size, it is true, and one which, despite the bitter inner struggles, was vigorously defended outside. It remained, nevertheless, a ghetto: after 1930 neither of the two parties could any longer make a convincing bid for hegemony in German politics. On the one hand, this derived from their inability to enter into political coalitions after the proclamation of the "social-fascist" line by the Third International and after the collapse of the Great Coalition. But, of course, more important in the context of this study is the fact that millions of German wage earners were not at all receptive to the political demands of the SPD and KPD. They remained immune to any attempt at political mobilization by the workers' parties. That in turn was one of the important reasons why these parties were not successful in expanding and consolidating their power base in the last years of the Weimar Republic.

It is not possible here to enter into a thorough discussion of the electoral sociology of the period. Some brief remarks on this topic do seem necessary, however, both to illuminate the most prominent characteristics of National Socialism as a mass movement and to reconstruct with greater clarity the structure of political class conflict in the period between 1930 and 1933. Wage earners and their adult dependents, including the relevant portion of the retired, constituted approximately half of the total electorate in these years: approximately 22 to 25 million of a total number of 42 to 45 million voters, belonged to households whose main income consisted of the weekly wage of a manual laborer. But, when one considers that in this period the SPD also received considerable support from groups aside from the wage earners, it appears that in the elections between 1930 and 1932 at most half of all wage earners gave their votes to the workers' parties. (25) The statistical material allows only rough classifications and estimates. Nonetheless, it is clear enough that-leaving aside the 1919 elections to the National Assembly-a very large proportion of the laboring population had never voted for a workers' party. The fact that these people did not change their position during the political and economic crisis which ended with the national socialist seizure of power proved to be decisive. With the exception of those Catholic workers



in the Ruhr area, southern Germany and Silesia who voted for the Center (26) only very little is known about the political opinions and affiliations of those millions of wage earners who supported neither Social Democracy nor Communism; and we also know little about their various living and working conditions.

Simply the number of workers not politically affiliated in this sense and the importance which thus developed upon them in the struggles of this period indicate the fundamental and at the same time abundant ambiguity of the concept of class: it is here a question of a category which pertains both to socioeconomic structures and to the historical process moved by human activity. The socio-economic dimension of the concept of class circumscribes the general situation of all those who are dependent for their subsistence on their labor power alone. The emphasis here lies on the general structures of capitalism and the objective conditions of economic development which determine the position of the wage earner in the production process. Class in this sense indicates the forms of exploitation and oppression to which wage earners are subject, their dependence on the law of supply and demand in the labor market as well as the resulting living conditions of economic deprivation. In the context of empirical research in social history this category is less precise than is generally assumed. The other meaning of the concept of class can only be determined with reference to the historical process, with reference to the history of the working class movement. If one pursues the premise which underlies Edward Thompson's pioneering study, *The Making of the English Working Class*, "class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs." (27) Here the accent falls on public activity which grows out of the common experiences of the workers, on active resistance to oppression, on solidarity as the class struggle creates it, in short, on the dynamic character of class conflict as the prime motor of historical development. When the concept of class is used in this sense, those individuals and groups come to the fore who, by speaking and acting for their class, actively determine the framework of the political struggle.

For the historian it would be a senseless undertaking to want to draw a sharp distinction between these two dimensions of the concept of class. For a purism of definition, whether turned in the one or the other direction, will only mean that an essential part of historical reality is obscured from the beginning: apolitical history of social structures is as uninteresting as the "biography" of this or that workers' organization. But it must be admitted that all investigations which attempt to interpret the political history of a society as the history of class relationships will conceive of the working class primarily in the form of those workers who organized to represent the class interest. It was they, after all, who challenged the propertied classes and drove them to counter measures. And in the period of the Weimar Republic German working class leaders could in fact maintain with a high degree of conviction that they were speaking and acting for all wage earners not just for the active members of the class, but also for the unorganized, the indifferent, even the politically conservative workers.

This approach is not necessarily bound to a general historical teleology and it is not derived from a mechanistic determinism. Only the unavoidable fact of class conflict was determined by the class structure of capitalist society in Germany and therein lay

its central importance as a principle ordering all public life-but not the specific forms and configurations in which this conflict manifested itself at each point. For this reason-since it presupposes a narrow, rigid determinism-it is also not useful for discussing the political role of those wage earners who supported neither the KPD nor the SPD with reference to the concepts of objective social situation and false consciousness since, in all probability, the objective social situation of these people was itself ambiguous. Few of them belonged to the industrial work force in the strict sense of the word: it cannot be emphasized strongly enough that less than 8 million of the 16 million employed (28) classified as "workers" in the occupational censuses of 1925 and 1933 were active in enterprises which could be classified as industries. The other 8 to 8.5 million workers were employed in agriculture, in public service, in transportation, in commerce and crafts, and in private service. And apart from a few exceptions-above all, the state railways and workshop trades like printing and some branches of engineering-the trade unions which constituted the hard core of the organized working class had little support in the non-industrial sectors of the economy. The working and living conditions of agricultural workers, craftsmen and tradespeople were considerably different from the situation of factory workers. Relationships to the employer, above all, were of a more individual than collective nature since many of these workers lived in the countryside and in small and medium-sized provincial cities where the working class movement had not been able to establish a stable and continuing presence. Conditions on the labor market were less extreme and less opaque: in many places the traditional hierarchical social order had still been preserved, and the church also exercised a considerable influence over political culture. Thus, these people had effectively little opportunity to develop a class consciousness through confrontation and organization.

To the working class in the broad socio-economic sense belonged also a large number of women who were heavily underrepresented in the electorate of the workers' parties. Their relationship to politics was decisively influenced by the fact that many left regularly paid employment and thus an essential area of public experience as early as age 20-25. For women in general it must be remembered that a long tradition of discrimination and subordination as well as restriction to purely familial responsibilities had militated against the development of that capacity for independent political decision and collective political activity which active participation in the working class movement demanded. (29)

Last, there was that considerable group of people who can be characterized as the victims of the war and of the post-war crises, as victims of economic competition in an era before the welfare state-people, whose lives had been destroyed by the loss of family members, war injuries, impaired health, by long unemployment, inflation, or the decline of their trade. In the late 1920s these people lived on the edge of poverty, dependent on public welfare and occasional work in order to eke out an existence at all. They were participants in a bitter individual struggle for mere survival, not in a political struggle for general goals.

For these as well as other reasons which were connected to the specific traditions of particular trades and occupations, the class experience-to use once more Thompson's central concept-of approximately half of those defined by the occupational census as "workers" was fundamentally different from the experience of organized members of

the class. For reasons which thus derived in part precisely from their objective social situation they had not been able to develop that sense of solidarity in larger economic and political contexts which had become the real mark of the working class movement. (30) The ambivalence which adheres to the concept of the working class may perhaps be expressed in the phrase that many workers were consigned to the working class without, however, belonging to it.

To say that they did not yet belong to it would be an oversimplification in two respects. Of course, one must take into consideration here the fact that those sectors of the economy where the organized working class was strongest continually gained workers from the provinces and from the handicraft sector, and that in this decade capitalist forms of economic organization continued to expand and subjected more and more areas of economic life to their distinctive patterns of progress. But it was crucial that the dynamics of these socio-economic developmental tendencies were slower in pace than in the pre-war period and that the proportion of the population which earned its sustenance by wage labor was as a whole no longer on the increase; that resulted primarily from the large growth in white-collar jobs.

It must, nevertheless, be remembered that the organized working class represented not only the immediate legal, social and material interests of the unorganized;(31) in its political practice it also anticipated their long-term future needs and interests by trying to transform the urban industrial world, dominated by big industry, big business and bureaucratic administration so that future generations who would be drawn into this world by the continuing process of economic development would experience less poverty, brutality and alienation. But the profound crisis which violently interrupted this developmental process in Germany between 1928-29 and 1933 thereby also robbed the working class movement of its anticipatory, future-directed role for the working class in general; to the degree that industry and trade shrank, the potential constituency of the workers' parties stagnated. Even more important was the narrowing of the political arena of the working class movement. Reforms could no longer be undertaken and carried out, and the social revolution seemed still possible only to those whose power of critical judgment had been lamed by the demands which the Third International placed upon their loyalty.

If the argument is valid to this point, it is a mistaken enterprise to pose the question in this way: why did approximately one-half of the working class electorate (to use the term in its sociological, positivistic sense) not vote for the workers' parties? There cannot be a simple, straightforward explanation. One could at best convey and describe the variety of relationships binding the different groups mentioned above into structures of political authority and culture which remained immune to the goals and forms of action of the organized working class. But what must be explained here is the fact that after 1929 the NSDAP gained considerable support from the ranks of those wage earners who were neither organized in trade unions nor had regularly voted for the SPD or KPD in the preceding years. Thus in September, 1930, roughly 26.3% and in January, 1933, some 31.5% of Nazi party members characterized themselves as workers. That was in the former case about 75,000 and in the latter about 300,000 persons. (In September, 1930, only a third of these wage earners were employed in industry.) These figures must be treated with great caution: first, the party expanded rapidly in the period between the two counts, and there was a very high turn-over rate

among members, many of whom dropped out after belonging for only a short time-this fact is not adequately reflected in the social breakdown of the membership; and second, it is certain that among those members who designated themselves as 'workers' was a considerable number of self-employed craftsmen, though it is not possible to say exactly how many. Despite these qualifications, the figures point to two clear conclusions. Workers were heavily underrepresented within the movement, but they did constitute a minority which was in every respect significant (see below).(32) Unfortunately corresponding figures for the Nazi electorate cannot be obtained. But it can be concluded that of the 13.42 million Germans who voted for Hitler as Reichs-president in April, 1932, and of the 13.77 million NSDAP votes in the Reichstag elections in July, 1932, there must have been several million wage earners and members of their families-at least 3.5 million, probably more.

The pseudo-egalitarianism, also the systematically ambivalent social rhetoric of the party leadership and the novelty and dynamicism which characterized their actions provided the movement access to this broad, heterogeneous and politically unstable sector of German society. Among the factors which influenced this part of the electorate, it is probably safe to ascribe particular importance to the extreme nationalism of the NSDAP, for the alleged "anti-national" stance of the working class parties-an accusation which conservatives and Nazis never tired of repeating-did act as a barrier between them and potential supporters among the wage-earning population. That nationalism and socialism (of the social democratic or communist variety) were fundamentally incompatible was a major and recurrent theme of Nazi propaganda. In conjunction with the egalitarian pose of the NSDAP, a conjunction which was new in German politics and for that reason doubly seductive, these nationalist slogans had considerable effect in the circles of unorganized and politically inexperienced workers. And in the heavily ideological political culture of the Weimar Republic organized workers distinguished themselves from the unorganized above all by their ability to put the interests of their class before the so-called national or people's (Volk) interest; more precisely, to comprehend the latter in terms of the former.

About the specific sociological conditions for this effect only little can be said to date: wage earners who voted for the Nazis were probably young rather than old. Among them, men were probably more strongly represented than women; in 1932 they could be found in all areas of industrial concentrations but mostly not in large numbers; numbers were somewhat higher in individual industrial cities in Saxony, Thuringia, Westphalia and Silesia; they were prominent above all and most numerous in the medium-sized and small cities of the Protestant provinces. (33) Further detailed research will have to test the hypothesis that a large proportion of those wage earners who were susceptible to the slogans of National Socialism were occupied in smaller businesses, in trade or handicrafts as well as in agriculture, and that they were strongly under the influence of their employers who since 1930-31 for their part had been among the most reliable supporters of the NSDAP. Wage earners in industry seem to have given the party little support before 1932. Hypotheses of this sort are difficult to test, for to date we know a great deal less about wage earners in the provinces than about those in the cities, and much less about Nazi voters than about party activists.

If one now turns to these activists, it becomes clear that especially in the sector of the unorganized wage earners in industrialized areas and big cities the so-called national

socialist Left achieved a certain political importance. If one ignores its confused political rhetoric which has been strongly emphasized in the scholarship of the past years, it becomes apparent that the Nazi Left offers little more than a further example of the party's strategic opportunism. It never constituted an independent political grouping of any significance. What it really amounted to was the workers' wing within the movement as a whole. The NSDAP appealed to various groups of potential supporters by telling them what they wanted to hear. Thus, the party pursued a specific line vis-a-vis peasants, artisans, shop-keepers, civil servants, the self-employed, students, women, soldiers and big industrialists-and vis-a-vis workers as well. (34) This strategic opportunism was expressed most forcefully in Goebbels' role as Gauleiter and newspaper boss in Berlin after 1927. His demagogic anti-capitalism, his energetic attempts to stir up social resentments and to portray the NSDAP as a movement of rough, simple, tough, rebellious young radicals were in tone much sharper than those of his former boss Gregor Strasser. But Goebbels enjoyed an incomparably securer position within the party leadership precisely because it was known very well in Munich that he himself did not take his socio-political propaganda entirely seriously, because his loyalty belonged above all to the movement as a whole and its leader and not to the supporters which he was able to win for the party in Berlin. (35) The same fundamental opportunism reveals itself as well in the history of the great debates and schisms within the party before 1933. From the Bamberg party conference in February, 1926, to the affairs of Otto Strasser, Stennes, Scheringer and Krebs, up to the (admittedly more complicated) case of Gregor Strasser's resignation-it was always these men in the party whose positions became untenable, (36) for they sought to define the party's role seriously as the motor of social change and did not consider political power a goal in itself.

Although the Nazis' social demagoguery was opportunistic through and through and lacked any real commitment, the mere fact that it was allowed free rein after 1929-30 and was not suppressed by the party leadership was of some importance for the future development of the movement. Through it the party gained the appearance of non-exclusivity-an achievement which, so to speak, continually reinforced itself, for the more wage earners joined the movement, the more it represented a plausible political alternative for others (37) - a popular movement, which distinguished itself precisely through this fact from the nationalist parties.

Those workers who identified actively with this variant of National Socialism formed-in accord with this opportunism-quite a heterogeneous body. Though much research must still be done on details here, it is nevertheless clear that they were less representative of their social class as a whole than those members of the old and new Mittelstand who before 1933 pursued their own anti-socialist variant of National Socialism. On the basis of existing studies it is possible to identify three totally different groups of "national socialist workers." In the first place are those young men who composed the gangs of storm troopers (SA) in the big cities. That this group has hitherto received the most attention-both at the time and in later scholarly investigations-can be explained on the one hand by the fact that because of their notorious street terror they were much more visibly in the public limelight than other workers in the party. Furthermore, they behaved precisely like the bourgeoisie expected workers to, even though they were certainly not all workers. A statistical analysis of the composition of these SA groups is still lacking. Because of the high

turnover among members it will not be easy to produce. It seems improbable that wage earners in the urban SA groups before January 1933 comprised more than half of the whole SA (about 300,000 men).(38) Reliable observers report that many of them were unemployed. The SA offered them soup kitchens, sometimes even clothes, shelter in SA homes, but above all activity, a superficial purpose in life and a perverse self-respect. (39) Some vacillated back and forth between the KPD and the NSDAP. Albert Krebs, who was familiar with this milieu in Hamburg and portrayed it with understanding, described these people as the "driftsand of the working class movement." (40) For them the SA gangs formed a point of order in the otherwise desolate, formless and decaying world of the big cities stricken by the crisis. Here could be found the possibility of expressing destructive resentments, unbearable frustration, despair and aggression. These aspects emerged most obviously in the capital. One of the major experts on the national socialist movement writes aptly of the "fatal confusion of mobilization and socialism which, more than its socio-political ideologies, occasionally led to the Berlin NSDAP's building a reputation as a party of socialist revolution .... At the same time the mob's propertylessness and lack of social interests, on which its lack of responsibility depends, lends it at times the positive image of social selflessness. Out of the flight, oblivious of self, into the dynamics of political action grows the appearance of a self-sacrificing dedication to the community. " (41)

A second group of national socialist workers was quite distinct from the volatile youthful Lumpenproletariat. This solid type was to be found mainly among those employed in public service - with the imperial railways and the post office, in city services and transportation. (42) Why the national socialists received support from precisely this group cannot be readily explained. Whether it is to be attributed to their consciousness of their special occupational prestige or to political influence on the part of superiors in the administration or finally to anger about cuts in pay ordered by city and state officials (i.e., for the most part by social democrats)-valid conclusions cannot yet be drawn about this. These two categories of national socialist workers-the young unemployed in the big cities and the "uniformed worker"-found themselves in a political minority within their own social peer group and thus were continually subject to tough conflicts. In addition a third type of active "worker-Nazi" can be identified whose situation was again different and, politically, in any case, less exposed: in the provinces numerous wage earners obviously simply followed the political example of their social superiors, so that here the national socialist organizations, including the SA, frequently reflected the hierarchical order of the local community.(43)

These are the three categories of active Nazi supporters among the laboring population recognized up to now. As the labor council elections showed, the movement had little success before 1933 with those who had been able to retain their job in industry in the narrower sense (see above).(44) To be sure, these election results do not provide conclusive proof, and there were also exceptions here: in individual firms and in some regions like Chemnitz-Zwickau as well as in various mining and textile cities of Westphalia, the NSDAP achieved a certain entry into the structures of the politically conscious working class. Even in these regions, however, the proportion of wage earners in the party by no means corresponded to their predominance in the local population. (45)

This interpretation finds confirmation in the fact that the single attempt undertaken by the party itself to found a political organization of their own for workers—the National Socialist Factory Cell Organization (NSBO)—was long denied any noteworthy success. It is true that the NSBO came about as a consequence of the initiatives and demands of party activists whose political stance was essentially motivated by dissatisfaction with the inequality and inefficiency of the capitalist order (among them were some former communists).(46) Nonetheless, from the beginning it was intended merely as a propaganda organization. Its founding in Berlin (1928) and its recognition by Hitler in 1929 were no more than a gesture by means of which the party leadership made concessions to those forces within the movement which had hitherto agitated in vain for a party trade union. And although these latter groups had come in good part from the ranks of nationalistic white-collar workers' organizations and thus had trained and experienced officials among them, the concessions were of very limited nature and were accompanied by little enthusiasm. The NSBO was supposed to refrain from all trade union activities and to limit itself to the role intended for it as a political shock-troop in the factories. The fact that until around the middle of 1932 the new organization received practically no financial support from the party shows that even this drastic prohibition against all genuinely class-specific activity did not dispel the doubts of the Munich leadership.(47)

Up to this point in time the development of the NSBO had lagged far behind the development of the NSDAP itself. Before May, 1932, it numbered scarcely 100,000 members. It thus did not include anything like all party members who classified themselves as workers. Even more indicative is that fact that many of these members were not wage earners at all, but white-collar workers and artisans. Among the artisans there were also self-employed workers who were obsessed by organization and joined every possible group in the crisis years; in July, 1932, they were ordered to leave the NSBO. More important in every respect were the white-collar workers. Their numerical importance is demonstrated by the NSBO's incomparably better results in the elections for employee committees than in the elections for labor councils of those years. (48) The egalitarian, nationalistic and state socialist slogans of the NSBO obviously struck a particular chord in this continually growing intermediary stratum, whose powerful non-socialist vocational organizations had long struggled for the realization of a series of contradictory aims. They attempted first of all to defend the special identity and the privileges of white-collar workers vis-a-vis manual workers; second, to gain for themselves as unions formal recognition and co-operation on the part of employers; and, third, together with the conservative parties supported by big industry, to agitate for the re-establishment of Germany's position of power in Europe. The interest-group elements in this program did not suit those pertaining to national politics. After 1928 it became increasingly clear to the members of the largest white-collar organization—the anti-Semitic German National Salesmen's and Clerk's Association (DHV)—that their aims could not be realized within the existing party system, at which point particularly the younger members joined the NSDAP and NSBO in great numbers in order to fulfill their vision of an "organic popular democracy" there. Gregor Strasser, for example, who along with Goebbels was one of the main supporters of the NSBO, directed special attention to these circles. (49)

Moreover, workers in public service were strongly represented in the NSBO, while in

industrial concerns their cells were often inspired and dominated by technicians, foremen, wage-earning artisans, and, in mining, by pit-foremen.(50) In the second half of 1932, however, the NSBO seems to have succeeded in expanding its base, and in these months it also probably attracted more factory workers. In any case, its membership tripled within eight months. The NSBO now also began to behave increasingly like a trade union by supporting a series of strikes, by talking about founding a united national trade union under its own leadership, and by staking a claim to the leading role in the socio-political arena for the period after the national socialist takeover. According to the propaganda, the goal of the NSBO remained the establishment of a social order organized by estates: its line towards the end of 1932 left no doubt, however, that it considered the workers the most important estate. "Through its practical experience," Schumann correctly observes, "the NSBO slid further to the left." (51) And it may well be that this radicalization of rhetoric and tactics was an important factor in the growing popularity of the NSBO in these months. Yet, it is equally probable that the hopeless situation on the lab or market, together with the increasing likelihood that the NSDAP would soon come to power, caused numerous workers to regard membership in the NSBO as a kind of insurance against the loss of their jobs. (52)

In spite of this surge in membership figures in 1932, in spite of the greater independence of the NSBO within the national socialist movement and in spite of the radicalization of its propaganda and actions, the workers' wing in the NSDAP never became a weighty political force on its own account. This is due to the fact that, first of all, the 300,000 members of the NSBO must be set against the 5.8 million blue- and white-collar workers who still belonged to the independent trade unions at the end of 1932, against the Reichsbanner (over 1 million members), the SPD, which counted about 650,000 wage earners among its members, and the KPD, about 250,000 members. (53) Taken in itself, the NSBO represented no serious threat at all to the organized working class; their loyalties remained for the most part unshaken until spring 1933. If the same point is now approached from another perspective, the chronology of the NSBO's development leaves little doubt that it owed what power it did have solely to the earlier, larger political gains of the movement as a whole. It seems to have profited more from the general success of the party in 1932 than it contributed itself. Third, it must be strongly emphasized that, although the NSDAP could increase its support among wage earners not just absolutely, but also relatively, in 1931-32, workers in general still remained massively underrepresented, both in the membership and among the voters. In spite of the economic crisis and the resulting economic distress and political insecurity in industrial areas, the NSBO thus did not succeed in shifting the social base of the whole party fundamentally and permanently: the NSDAP remained with almost 70% of its membership a party of property-owners and salary-earners. Hence, it followed necessarily that the NSBO was quite incapable of calling the basic economic and socio-political line of the party leadership into question. Developments in fact went in the opposite direction: in the course of 1932 the ties of Hitler and his closest advisers to existing property and power interests assumed even clearer and more definite forms so that towards the end of this year the danger that the NSBO could institutionalize class conflict within the movement became a burden, an uncomfortable hindrance to efforts to win the trust of the old power elite at any price. (54)



The real political importance of the NSBO and of the wage earners among the party members did not derive from programmatic aims and conscious intentions, nor from an independent position of power within the movement; it was rather indirect and functional, a consequence of the heterogeneous nature of the mass movement and of the devious multiple strategies of the leadership. Thus, first, it was one of the most important functions of this group of activists to make the bourgeois Nazis believe that they had joined a real "popular movement," a movement that was more than a new edition of the Pan-German League. Numerous indications of self-doubt among the nationalist bourgeoisie exist from this period, also social and cultural guilt feelings. The strong anti-bourgeois component in party rhetoric achieved resonance exactly among the bourgeois classes which Hitler himself despised as politically philistine and cowardly. The categorical denial of ethical norms and the denigration of the intellectual and cultural values of the bourgeoisie, which was manifested in the party's systematic employment of violence and propaganda, found a wide response precisely in bourgeois circles. Brute force, ruthlessness, recklessness and loud self-assertion -all these qualities of the mass movement carefully cultivated in the propaganda had an especially strong impact on those sections of the old and new Mittelstand who, as a consequence of the practically uninterrupted series of political and economic crises since 1914, were losing all trust in bourgeois forms of public life. In this severe crisis of confidence raw youthful activism offered itself as the only attractive alternative; it seemed after all to be superior to the political institutions and modes of behavior which had failed to defend bourgeois interests. These qualities of youthful strength and determination were in turn attributed to "the worker"; many bourgeois Nazis, and particularly the educated among them, attempted to accommodate themselves to this mythical figure. One can scarcely assume that this form of bourgeois anti-bourgeois sentiment impressed real workers very much (even if it perhaps flattered some of them). Yet, even such fantasies demanded some basis in fact. And the workers in the national socialist movement fulfilled just this function by helping to assure bourgeois members that they were struggling for a real social renewal in the party, for a genuine national community, etc. They attempted to establish their role of social and political leadership on a new basis of national solidarity, within which all bourgeois inhibitions, educational privileges and status differences, now made responsible for their previous political powerlessness, would lose their legitimacy. The road to this singular goal led through violence, irrationality and mindless activism-modes of behavior which seemed to transcend any class-determined model. (55)

With respect to the much larger group of passive Nazis-those who gave the party their votes without working actively in it-the workers in the movement fulfilled a quite different function. Much suggests that they performed a large part of the strenuous, risky and dangerous party tasks: demonstrations, distribution of propaganda literature, above all, street battles. It was the foot soldiers of the movement which in actual fact entered battle against communists and social democrats, and, while the bourgeoisie no doubt considered this task necessary, they showed little willingness to carry it out themselves. However, one should not ignore the fact that within the party there was no strict division of labor according to social class. A significant number of educated bourgeois members took on thankless political activities, risking beatings in the process. But without the tens of thousands of wage earners which the party had attracted by 1933, it would never have been able to assemble its civil-war army in Germany's big cities. After all, because of their physical constitution, origins and life style

these people were much better suited for rough, violent political confrontations than inhabitants of bourgeois suburbs, and they were also more familiar with the practices of the common political enemy, "the commune." Among the Nazis who were arrested by the police in the period between 1930 and 1932 for crimes of political violence, wage earners were heavily over-represented. (56) In the provinces the socio-political constellations looked different; in the big cities, however, these Nazi bands won the sympathy of broad non-proletarian strata primarily by putting pressure on the social democratic and communist organizations. Thus before 1933 their tactical importance for the movement was probably much greater than their numbers alone might indicate.(57)

Here a further consideration is involved: even when the SA and NSBO threatened to become too radical with their populist demands and thus reinforced the fears of those circles for whose support Hitler was then striving, they could still fulfill useful functions for the party leadership in the extremely unstable political situation after the fall of the Brüning government. For Hitler, they represented in these months a-to be sure rather uncertain-instrument of political blackmail. On the one hand, they embodied the possibility of a development dangerous for conservative forces-the possibility that the whole party might choose a radical course if the road to power should continue to be blocked by the elite in the economy and the state. In the context of the growing political crisis between November, 1932, and January, 1933, another possible development seemed even more threatening: it was feared that the national socialist movement would disintegrate if it were denied access to power, and that the KPD would then inevitably attract a large number of the earlier urban activists. (58) In the meantime the brown mass movement had become a significant political fact in its own right; the question of its fate became increasingly acute for all political leadership groups in Germany (including the leadership of the NSDAP).

In the spring of 1933 the NSBO performed a further important service to the party. This service, too, was an unplanned by-product of the political situation, exploited by the party leadership with ruthless opportunism. Through its very existence as a special workers' wing within the movement the NSBO intensified the confusion and insecurity of the Free Trade Union leadership (ADGB) in those decisive days, as union leaders tried to establish a political strategy vis-a-vis the new government. Along with a variety of other reasons which made a strategy of adaptation and compromise seem a lesser evil than unconditional confrontation and political struggle, discussions with spokesmen of the NSBO still offered the deceptive hope that, in spite of everything, room might perhaps still be found in the new political system for some form of independent working class organization like a trade union. That the NSBO had such a solution in view is clear; so is the fact of the simultaneous categorical rejection of this idea by the party leadership. In the discussions with representatives of the NSBO the union leaders reacted, to be sure, with undisguised scepticism to the national socialists' claim that they spoke for the German workers (among their "spokesmen" were a doctor and an editor). They also expressed well-founded doubts about the real influence of the NSBO in government circles. But the mere presence of an apparent alternative probably helped further to unsettle the ADGB. As Leuschner remarked in the discussion of April 13, 1933: "The members of your NSBO are in part still our members." Thanks to the political power which the party leadership now possessed in the state, the narrow bridgehead which the NSBO had been able to erect among the

industrial workers now achieved a certain tactical importance. (59) And, as these very discussions were going on, the decisive phase in the creation of a fascist dictatorship was taking place: the physical liquidation of the working class parties and the trade unions. In this process lay the final and most important function of the Nazi mass movement (see below).

The fact that the national socialist movement could convince a portion of the wage-earning population that their interests demanded struggle against the independent organizations of the working class is as such not to be denied. Yet, measured against the success with which the movement mobilized and integrated the heterogeneous economic and political interests of the propertied classes through its frontal attack on the KPD, the SPD and the unions, this fact was of minor significance within the total development of class relationships between 1929 and 1932. The promise that the NSDAP would sustain the economic, social and political prerogatives of the bourgeoisie with all means at its disposal seems to have been the decisive element in encouraging its growth, especially at the local level (60) At the national level the party was increasingly able to secure the sympathy of big industry because the latter began to view them as a useful instrument with which they could substantially undercut the political and economic power of the working class. The inability of all other conservative parties and groups to carry out this task formed one of the essential preconditions for the rise of National Socialism. Practically all German industrialists were in agreement after 1929 that this problem definitely had to be solved if the existing capitalist order in Germany were to survive at all. By no means was it here merely a question of a relatively short-term reduction of production costs (thus of wages), not just a question of a temporary, crisis-linked re-division of the social product in favor of capital. The much more fundamental question of the division of political and economic power in German society was at stake. To put it differently: small and large entrepreneurs, farmers, master craftsmen and house owners, commerce and big industry-they all demanded total affirmation of the power of property. It had to be assured with absolute certainty that the working class movement would never again possess the constitutional latitude which had made possible its considerable influence on the socio-economic policy of the state in the 1920s. The national socialist way out of this crisis of class society was not originally preferred by big industry. But with the collapse of all alternatives on the one hand, and with the openness of the party leadership to the ideas of the industrialists on economic policy on the other, it won increasing plausibility in these circles as well. (61)

These class-specific needs and efforts were common to all important groupings within the national socialist movement and among their supporters. They formed the foundation of the party's political platform, and they were transmitted to the general public in the form of an extreme nationalistic rhetoric. This propagandistic coupling of class interests with allegedly national interests increased the antagonism towards the organized working class. Hitler's programmatic statements in these years primarily referred to this large complex of class determined needs and ambitions since it provided the basic consensus on which the rise of the NSDAP rested. In its manifold outward forms the movement as a whole certainly moved beyond this basic platform: the violent anti-Semitism, the Fuhrer-cult, the various, in part backward-looking social and cultural utopias, above all the restless dynamics of party activity also contributed to the growing popularity of the Weltanschauung. But in the final instance it was class

antagonism which represented the unifying and harmonizing element in the confusing multitude of sectional interests and dogmas which comprised National Socialism before 1933. Without this unifying bond of anti-communist and antisocial democratic interests and ideas the movement would never have been able to develop so dynamic an integrative power. Without that, it would probably have disintegrated. Though they might agree on little else, all activists achieved unison about the identity of the internal enemy.

These basic conceptions, moreover, found the support of broad circles in the government bureaucracy, industry, the army, and among large property owners, although they otherwise regarded the unpredictable national socialist mass following and its vulgar, politically-inexperienced party leadership with some scepticism. For, in contrast to the extreme components of national socialist Weltanschauung mentioned above, this basic direction in social and foreign policy did not seem the arbitrary product of a fevered ideological imagination. Therein lay the real strength of the NSDAP in 1932-33: it was the most extreme and at the same time most popular political expression of a much broader economic, social and political reaction whose central aim consisted of repelling the working class movement.

The history of class relationships in the last phase of the Weimar Republic is a more comprehensive theme than the rise of National Socialism. The changes in class relationships came about-influenced above all by the economic crisis-for the most part independently of the rise of the NSDAP. Indeed, these changes themselves produced one of its essential preconditions: in the middle of 1932, workers' parties and trade unions were completely isolated, surrounded by a multitude of political forces and interest groups which, without exception, were out to reduce the power of the organized working class. To the right of the SPD there was not a single important grouping in German public life which was not determined to revise the Weimar Constitution in this direction. ("Constitution" must be understood here in the widest sense, including the areas of labor and industrial law as well as the legal status of the unions and the institutions of the welfare state.) Whether the talk was of restoring the monarchy or of strengthening the executive vis-a-vis the legislature, of establishing a corporate state, or of clarifying the relationship between Prussia and the empire, whether the removal of economic policy from the Reichstag's jurisdiction was demanded, or, in the most extreme cases, total renewal by means of an as yet undefined, but doubtless dictatorial "Third Reich"-the real tendency of all non-socialist political effort was directed towards the same general end. The organized working class did not have a single ally, whether in the political or in the economic arena. (62)

Closely linked to this was the additional fact that Germany's position in the international system altered swiftly between 1930 and 1932. After 1930 it was obvious both to government and to industry that the international consequences of the economic crisis-the progressive dissolution of the allied powers' common front, the economic collapse of neighboring states to the east and south-created new, favorable conditions for the re-assertion of Germany's position as a major power. But this general goal also presupposed the possibility of establishing military and economic priorities which were diametrically opposed to the political efforts of the working class parties and likewise to the basic interests of their members. Such a foreign policy was difficult to realize within the framework of a liberal constitution. Thus even Hitler's

aggressive foreign policy program won-for the first time-a certain plausible reality-content. And, thus the basis for possible co-operation between the NSDAP and the conservative elite was broadened.(63)

These remarks pertain to the general framework of the political developments in the months between July, 1932, and March, 1933. But the specific events leading to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor and to the Reichstag elections of March 5, 1933, were not wholly determined by it. And much depended on these events, immeasurably more than most of those involved were then aware. The open questions of this period-as to which concrete methods would the political reaction develop in order to secure the repression of the working class and as to what political forms a new system of domination would work out-were even then not trivial questions. Yet, a one-sided concentration on the tactical struggles of this sort within the conservative camp runs the risk of distorting our perception of the larger constant factors in the development of the political crisis. It was these socio-economic factors which determined the framework of political possibilities. They were the basis of the NSDAP's general popularity and finally conditioned the willingness of the old power elite to take the risk and allow the party to come to power. These factors can also explain why nationalist bourgeois Germany closed ranks behind the new regime between March and November, 1933. For, in this respect, the consolidation of the national socialist position of power was not primarily a result of intimidation and manipulation. Rather, it was tied to the fact that the regime had succeeded in asserting its own specific version of that general program of goals to which all these groups adhered. The KPD, the SPD and the trade unions no longer existed.

The constellation of bourgeois forces on the one hand and the initially still intact organizations of the working class on the other thus determined the structure of the political crisis which reached its climax in the first four months of Hitler's chancellorship. The first and only decisive task of the new government consisted in the conflict with the workers' parties and the trade unions. (64) That this confrontation quickly took an unexpected turn is not surprising; the source material shows rather clearly that the government was initially not at all certain how they should wage this struggle, which methods and what strategy they should employ in order to win. (65) Much depended on the form and the extent of the repression which was now to be initiated, and in February, 1933, no conclusive decisions were reached. However, these questions were solved shortly thereafter primarily by activists in the national socialist movement, not by the government

Much evidence suggests that the new government of the Reich wanted to proceed with caution in this conflict and was concerned above all to avoid a general strike or civil war. At the beginning of March, for example, Reich Labor Minister Franz Seldte had drafts of laws drawn up with the aid of which the power of the independent economic organizations of the working class was to be gradually reduced. In these laws the "yellow" trade unions, the Stahlhelm Self-Help Organization and the NSBO were to receive the right, denied them by earlier governments, to conclude collective wage agreements, and members of labor councils were to be deprived of their strong legal protection against recall and firing.(66) These measures corresponded to conceptions which had been current in conservative entrepreneurial circles for a long time, but they did not entail the immediate destruction of the working class movement; for the trade

union idea was "rooted too deeply in the hearts of the German workers," as a leading social ideologue of the NSDAP confirmed with respect to the government's uncertainty in this matter (67) - a rare insight in those circles.

After the Reichstag fire, however, the government increasingly lost control over the entire political course of events. The national socialist leadership backed itself into a situation in which only a 'go-for-broke' domestic policy was possible. The employment of SA units as auxiliary police to dissolve the KPD and persecute its members functioned as a blank check for the lower ranks of the party, the SA, NSBO and SS, allowing them to attack all organizations of the working class movement. As early as the first days of March several union offices were occupied by the SA, their furnishings destroyed, documents confiscated, burned or scattered, and functionaries mistreated in the most brutal way. This apparently spontaneous wave of terror spread in the course of March to all areas of the Reich so that by the middle of March the Free Trade Unions were scarcely able to function in the cities. The numerous and detailed letters of protest by the head of the Trade Union Federation were filed unread by the Reich President, Chancellor and all ministers to whom they were addressed. Everywhere union functionaries and members turned unsuccessfully to the police, who declared themselves totally without jurisdiction, even in the many cases where money and possessions were stolen by the SA groups, union members systematically tortured or even murdered (68) Not the numerical strength of the SA groups, but their violent fanaticism, their unpredictability, and the lack of involvement of state officials were decisive for the devastating effect of the wave of terror. By the end of March things had gone so far that the NSBO drew the attention of the Prussian Ministry of State to the need to permit unions to continue payment of unemployment benefits, etc., to their members for social reasons (a function which they naturally could only carry out under the supervision of NSBO personnel).(69) The main task of the "Action Committee for the Protection of German Labor," founded by the NSDAP leadership in those same days, was the preparation of a surprise attack on the whole union apparatus-a task, however, which for the most part had already been pre-empted by the wild excesses of the SA. The "national uprising" in the factories also took the same course. At the same time as experts in the Reich ministry were conferring on the legal formula for the recall of communist labor council members, SA and NSBO gangs went into the plants, threw the elected councillors out into the street and took over their jobs and offices. A comparison of the results of the Berlin labor council elections of March 2 with those in the Ruhr of April 7, 1933, confirms the effects of the terror. In Berlin the Free Trade Unions could still assert themselves, but in the Ruhr mines the NSBO had, with 30% of the votes, already achieved a relative majority.(70) The SA had previously proclaimed that union candidates would in any case not be allowed to assume office. The "Law on Shop Representatives and Economic Associations," rewritten several times, had been far outstripped by events before it was promulgated on April 4. (71)

The attitude of the Reich government towards this violent uprising of fanatical national socialist supporters is hard to interpret. In spite of certain similarities in individual attacks on the unions-destruction of files, inactivity of the police-it can be considered certain that the uprising was not centrally planned and executed. "For whom should it [the SA] obey?" wrote Diels, head of the newly founded Gestapo Office. "In reality nothing was commanded, nothing forbidden."(72)

As early as March 10, Hitler called the SA and SS to "highest discipline" so that the "process of the national uprising could be a planned one, directed from above." Subsequently, leading figures in the state and the party as well as in the Reich Association of German Industry issued similar appeals, warnings and instructions demanding the cessation of individual actions and the establishment of peace and order-for the most part, however, without success. (73) Although the government was accurately informed about the events and consciously refrained from employing state power against the terrorists, these appeals and warnings were not just propaganda intended to distance them from the excesses: they also bore witness to the well-founded concern that the leaders would lose hold of the reins of political power. Involved in addition was the fact that the individual actions were sometimes directed against industry, the state apparatus and foreign persons and interests, though in these cases in less violent a form. Finally, after the incomplete electoral victory of March 5, the new government was not sure enough of its own power within the country to be prepared to accept the consequences of the uprising which were at first totally unpredictable. When Goring, the leader of the police division in the Prussian Ministry of the Interior (Grauert), Frick and Seldte discussed the problem with leading party functionaries and industrialists on March 28, the wave of terror against the unions represented for them a challenge from the outside. "Immediate measures must be undertaken since the occupation of union offices drives things forward from the political side," Grauert remarked.(74)

Only when it became clear that the occupation and devastation of union offices called forth no united defense measures but rather seemed to increase the willingness of the union leadership to negotiate with them at the Reich level, did Hitler, Goebbels and Reich Organization Leader Ley decide to make use of the unexpectedly favorable and early opportunity to bring about a swift solution. But they were also forced to this decision by the violence of their supporters. Their own actions were to make clear that the leadership did not lag behind its following. (This interpretation is substantiated by the fact that in the origins of the boycott of department stores and Jewish businesses [April 1, 1933], wild, precipitate excesses stood in a similar relationship to the political decisions of the party leadership as in the process just described. (75)

The radical solution of May 2, 1933, was thus also in good part a sham action whose secretive organizational effort and military precision stood in no proportion to the expected opposition. It was intended to intimidate and impress the people and to satisfy their own supporters rather than to carry out a carefully planned policy. A majority of the offices of the Free Trade Unions occupied at 10 a.m. on the morning of May 2 had for weeks operated only under the supervision of the NSBO.(76) To the now urgently posed question, what sort of social order could replace that which was demonstratively abolished by surprise attack, there was, neither in the government nor in the party leadership, even the beginnings of a clear answer. Yet the purely power-political, destructive success was initially satisfaction enough. The main thing was that the unions no longer existed.(77)

The uprising of the little Nazis to which the unions fell victim had its origin above all in boundless hatred of the working class movement and of "Marxism," and especially for the individuals who represented it. This hatred, to which the party leadership systematically educated its members, reached a new climax in the course of the election

campaign and in the wake of the Reichstag fire. Here the opportunity was finally available to reckon up with opponents from earlier street battles without interference from the police and the law, and-even more important-the terrorists could also hope that, in the destroyed or neutralized organizations, they would themselves gain employment, security and power.

But even this does not fully explain the intensity of the hatred or the long duration of the excesses: nor does the embittered, civil-war nationalism in the light of which union functionaries appeared to be traitors to Germany. Particularly characteristic was the pervasive personalization of political and social relations by the SA storm troopers, whose main goal consisted in the systematic humiliation and intimidation of individual people, rather than in carrying out any sort of political-institutional restructuring in the real sense. They were less concerned with general issues and organizational structures than with what these persons allegedly embodied. And in the spring of 1933 the SA was interested not at all in issues of social policy. This main characteristic of the wave of terror was a logical consequence of the endlessly repeated propagandistic assertion that Marxists, "big time operators," reds and Jews, had intentionally produced Germany's misery, thus were personally responsible for it. Among the little Nazis there were in 1933 many who had experienced this misery in their own person in the form of chronic unemployment, bankruptcy, dashed expectations, thwarted careers and brutalizing disorientation.(78) To judge by their behavior in these months, in their desperate resentment, they believed literally in the words of their Fuhrer and looked around for "those who were responsible." (In defining "those who were responsible," they made no distinction between communists and social democrats.) The movement seemed to have become everything for these men-a organized, self-contained fantasy world, inhabited only by "friend and foe," and organized only by relationships of brute force. The total ruthlessness which went with this attitude, together with the unpredictability of individual actions against unions and the SPD simultaneously comprised the strength and the weakness of the SA uprising: on the one hand it came quite unexpectedly, thus there were scarcely any defensive measures which could have opposed the massive, but planless attacks.(79) On the other hand, the storm troopers were not consciously attempting to establish their own power positions, so that Hitler, Goring, Goebbels and Himmler were able in general to keep the political initiative in their own hands-on the condition, that they went along with their atavistic following, but simultaneously distanced themselves politically from their deeds. This aspect of the seizure of power deserves much greater attention and emphasis than it has so far received. A thorough investigation of the behavior of lower levels of the NSDAP in March, 1933, and its political effects would probably produce fundamentally new insights into the beginnings of national socialist rule and into the relationship of the mass base to the NSDAP leadership.(80)

If the working class movement has appeared up to now in this discussion primarily as the object of a hostile policy which was much too successful, this corresponds in the broadest sense to the historical course of events. (81) Nothing can be added here to that which has already been written about the political aspect of the capitulation or self-destruction of the workers' parties. As already mentioned, in 1932-33 the working class movement was completely isolated politically. Beyond that, the three main organizations of the working class moved increasingly further apart. The rivalry between the SPD and KPD which lamed the defensive struggle, the passive legalistic



stance of the SPD leadership, the equally unrealistic revolutionary tactics of the KPD Central Committee, and the increasing concern of the ADGB merely to preserve the trade union apparatus, a concern which determined its defensive political position as well as its disassociation from the social democrats and prepared its leading functionaries for one compromise after the other with the reactionary political forces- all these facts are taken for granted here.(82)

Behind the political history of the years from 1929 to 1933 stood however, above everything, the international economic crisis, which within three years reduced the German national income by 40%, put one-third of the working population out of work, and brought public finance and the banking system to the very edge of a total breakdown. Neither agriculture nor industry could settle its debts. A continuing decline in prices held all branches of industry back from further investment, while the continuing high prices of critical investment goods still bound by cartell agreements and the deflationary policies of the central government supported this tendency. Moreover, dismissals, which caused a further decline in purchasing power and thus a further decline in prices, were the result.(83) Until late 1932 the German economy seemed to move in an endless and hopeless spiral downwards.

The working class movement's loss of power in the wake of the world economic crisis contains a dimension of social and economic history which is of critical importance both for an understanding of the relatively easy political victory of National Socialism in 1933 and for the social history of the Third Reich. Of all groups in the population the industrial workers were generally struck hardest by the crisis. On the average in 1933, 40% of all male industrial workers were unemployed as against only 22% of workers in public service, 15% of agricultural workers and 13% of white-collar workers.(84) The system of state unemployment insurance collapsed under the burden of mass unemployment. Despite repeated increases in contributions and reductions in benefits, the unemployed were increasingly "steered out" of the insurance system into various relief organizations from which they drew less money, and even that only on the basis of a strict means test. Of the 5.8 million unemployed who were registered with the labor bureaus in December 1932, 1.3 million received no support at all, to them must also be reckoned the so-called "invisible" unemployed, estimated at over one million, who no longer registered. Of the rest, not quite 18% enjoyed full insurance support, 29% were supported by the state emergency relief scheme and over half had already been steered out of these two state systems and had to live on the support of the regional relief organizations. Thus, of the 7 million unemployed, only the 792,000 recipients of complete support from the unemployed insurance system got enough money to eke out a basic living.(85)

Of the 12.4 million who were still employed in December, 1932, at least 2 million worked substantially shortened hours. The average working day declined sharply and remained in 1931 and 1932 at under seven hours in most branches of industry.(86) Because of these conditions in the labor market and thanks to the Briining government's enactment of wage reductions, the real wages of those still working sank substantially faster than the cost of living. Even the very global calculations of the Reich Office of Statistics attested to a 10% decline in the per capita real income of all those employed between 1930 and 1933. The development in the case of the workers was estimated to be even less favorable. Indeed, a figure of 15% or more for the

average decline in the real income of those wage earners still employed would correspond more closely to reality; to this must be added a rise in tax and insurance deductions of about 3% of gross income. Many workers resigned themselves-if they could thus avoid dismissal to wages which fell short of the legal minimum.(87) A sure indication of this sudden impoverishment is given by consumption statistics: while the cost of living fell about 26% from 1929 to 1933, retail turnover in groceries fell by about 30% in the same time, in clothing and furniture by about 40%. Tobacco consumption declined by 15% and beer consumption by almost 45%.(88) At the same time, keeping a job demanded greater effort than ever before; workers found themselves in competition with each other because of the wave of dismissals. The consequence was a rise in productivity, for instance in coal mining.(89) The fate of the working class in these years was progressive immiseration, hunger, fear and hopelessness. They were the first victims of the death-throes of an apparently uncontrollable economic system which was quite indifferent to their interests and needs.(90)

The parallel between the economic and political powerlessness of the working class during the international economic crisis was no coincidence, but it needs closer examination. It was not a simple matter of linear economic determination. Nonetheless, the economic crisis did have certain inevitable consequences for political class conditions. The first was the unions' loss of substance: unemployment was highest in precisely those branches of industry which were best organized. There were almost 1 million unemployed in the engineering industry alone; in the mining, textile and clothing industries and the building trades there were over 200,000 in each one. In 1932 almost two-thirds of all union members were either unemployed on the average or they were forced to work reduced hours. The consequences for the financial and organizational strength of the unions must have been devastating.(91) Mass unemployment deprived the unions of their essential function: they could no longer represent the interests of their members. Without unions at all reductions in wages would certainly have been even greater, but their power to halt the process of immiseration was narrowly circumscribed which is clearly demonstrated by the decline in real wages. Their most important lever in negotiations with the employers' organizations was, as the statistics on strikes and their outcomes clearly demonstrate, no longer available to them. Only in one case of greater importance did the union movement succeed in putting up effective resistance in the area of wage policy: von Paperi's attempt, at the urging of industry, to do away with the binding nature of collective bargains and to legalize reductions below the standard minimum wage was frustrated mainly by a series of protest strikes and was rescinded three months later by the Schleicher government.(92) But that was an exception; otherwise the unions for the most part simply had to accept dismissals, reductions in wages, shortened hours, reorganization of the production line, etc. Their demand that the available work be divided among the greatest number of workers possible was dismissed by the employers as unprofitable. To use Rosa Luxemburg's illuminating metaphor, in these years the rock of Sisyphus rolled unchecked down the mountainside. The objective incapacity of the unions to represent the material interests of their members, their impotence with regard to the economic developments, explains to a great degree the political indecision and lack of will of the leadership in the critical months between July, 1932, and May, 1933; otherwise, that is, considered in isolation from the oppressive burden of their insoluble problems as trade unionists, the fatal political

stance of the leadership is completely incomprehensible.(93) The fear of individual leading union functionaries that, given mass unemployment and economic distress, a political general strike would end in a chaotic defeat, indicates a certain lack of militancy, but the concern was by no means without basis. It could not be unquestionably assumed that members would be unanimously prepared to risk their jobs, especially not in the case of workers in public administration and transportation whose actions would have been crucial in the event of a general strike. In addition, it wasn't as if there was a dearth of potential strike-breakers, a fact which also did not go unnoticed. (94)

If the international economic crisis necessarily produced a strengthening of the employers' power within the firm, it also affected the position of business within the political system-in both cases at the cost of the working class movement. Here, too, objective economic necessity played an important role. As a consequence of the crisis, the state and business moved closer together and became more dependent on another. That was expressed, among other things, in the fact that it was unquestionably in the state's interest to protect the economic system from even partial collapse. Examples of this are the reorganization of the large banking concerns after the 1931 crash and the purchase of Flick's Gelsenkirchen shares-both very costly undertakings. In addition, the direction of the government's economic policy became the deciding factor for the future of industry, and the direct political activity of business interests was thus increased accordingly. There is still much dispute about the political role of German industry in the years from 1929 to 1933, though one can really not speak of industry as a monolithic unit in this context. But beyond all the tactical struggles within the business world, the political attitude of the industry was characterized by two general tendencies. Both were directed against the working class movement, and both came to full expression in nationalism. Working indirectly against them was the general retreat of industrial circles from a democratic form of government which was rationalized by the allegedly proven inability of democratic governments to base their general policy on the needs of private industry. The various conceptions of an authoritarian constitution which won many supporters in industrial circles in these years all had the reduction of working class power as a main programmatic point. (95) Second, closely linked to this, was industry's general attack on the form and substance of Weimar social policy. The social democrats and trade unions had won considerable concessions in this sphere. The employers, who in the crisis lost their freedom of maneuver and their capacity to make economic concessions, intensified their criticism of the collective lab or law, of the binding character of wage agreements, of the labor councils, of the state arbitration system as well as of the whole principle of social insurance, especially unemployment insurance. It was maintained, for the most part incorrectly, that social reforms had caused the rise in production costs of the late 1920s which in turn were responsible for the extent of the crisis.(96) The demand for a "dismantling of social policy" (Preller) won economic and propagandistic credibility because of the crisis, but it was basically a disguised expression of a struggle for profit and power which could only be carried out at the expense of the working class. The fact that the Brüning government withstood this pressure, at least with respect to the institutions of social policy, if not their material benefits, in the long run weakened its position; it also explains the respect in which its successor was held in business circles. Schleicher's attempt to change the government's course again and to reach an understanding with the unions, which von Papen had opposed, probably succeeded in

dispelling industry's last reservations about National Socialism's accession to power.(97)

In Germany the international economic crisis led to a radicalization and politicization of class conflict on both sides. This development necessarily proceeded clearly in industry's favor, for its interests gained political weight, which also increased its political power. This power was deployed systematically against the working class movement which could not defend itself in the arena of socio-economic policy. Only the public political arena remained. The defeat of the working class movement in 1931-32 was finally a political defeat and cannot be understood as just an epiphenomenon of changes in economic power relationships. Indeed, economic and political powerlessness developed parallel to each other but were not identical. In the political stance of the workers' parties and the unions, a multitude of historical, sociological and strategic political factors played just as important a role as economic developments. And, these factors helped to determine their reaction to the crisis and mass unemployment. But, if one presupposes this general political framework, it is possible to isolate specific effects of the economic crisis which likewise contributed decisively to the political weakening of the working class. Thus, the Prussian Prime Minister, Otto Braun, characterized as "demoralizing" the fact that the crisis had forced "us to dismantle what we had striven after in vain for decades, what had been fought for." (98) Precisely in the area of state social policy, on the expansion and reform of which the SPD had focused its entire strategy, the international economic crisis robbed the SPD of all initiative: considerations of state and economic policy prevented it from fundamentally opposing cuts in welfare policy. On the other hand, the radicalization of its members and supporters, born of the distress, precluded their party's assuming joint responsibility for the deflationary policy by participating in the government. The SPD was also not able to propose any economically viable alternative to deflation. Continuing election losses and the superannuation of its cadre were not completely caused by this weakness, but probably derived in good part from it.(99) Together with the collapse of the party's general political strategy in the crisis years, this slow decline did not provide a good point of departure for a determined, aggressive defensive struggle against National Socialism. Basically, the social democratic leadership no longer knew what they were struggling for. In contrast, mass unemployment worked immediately to the advantage of the KPD, which was able practically to double its number of votes in the Reichstag elections between 1928 and November 1932; yet, this relative success was fateful in that it seemed to confirm the correctness of the unrealistic revolutionary strategy of the party leadership, yet was not great enough to produce a decisive change in the balance of political power. For this reason the political struggle between the SPD and KDP continued unabated, laming the working class movement until January, 1933, and afterwards. The increasing radicalization in the political mood of the industrial workers which could be observed everywhere thus found no united organizational expression.

In the long run, mass unemployment ate away at the basic substance of the working class movement. Anxiety about keeping a job, worry about finding a job, was not in the long term compatible with militant opposition to the existing social order. To be sure, this militance had its immediate cause in impoverishment and mass unemployment, but in 1931-32 it was as little able to remedy these conditions as it was to prevent the advance of political reaction. Many employers had deliberately dismissed those

workers who were active in politics and trade union affairs at the first reduction in staff (insofar as they did not enjoy special protection as members of the labor councils). After the elections of July, 1932, it must have become clear that in the future even stricter political criteria for the distribution of the scarce commodity, work, would be applied. In the frightful distress of this period the labor market, too, became politicized, the decision for political activism against National Socialism became more and more a decision for unemployment and hunger. The economic crisis thus provided the political and economic rulers with a potentially very strong weapon for disciplining the working class. It is, however, not easy to estimate its effectiveness before 1933. Scarcely any wide-spread timidity and resignation can be detected in the working class movement before January, 1933. In contrast, the relatively limited resistance to the destruction of the workers' parties and the unions in the spring of 1933 cannot be fully explained by the hesitant and indecisive tactics of the leadership groups and by the unbridled SA terror. Many Reichsbanner and union members were certainly waiting hopefully in these months for the call to active resistance.(100) But the general impression remains that the political defeat in March-May 1933 brought to the fore the compelling material needs of the individual worker. And this privatization, born of intense material deprivation and insecurity, undermined class solidarity. Given the lack of social historical research into mass unemployment, this impression rests in good part on inferences drawn from the distribution of jobs by the new Reich government and the NSDAP in the second half of 1933 (101)work was systematically given to Nazi supporters. It is also supported by the massive rush to join the NSBO, which by August almost tripled its membership, as well as by the numerous resignations from the SPD after the March elections in 1933. (102) The pressures on individuals to behave in an opportunistic manner were very strong indeed. For instance, the char woman who sympathized with the communists but who voted for the NSDAP in 1932 so that her husband would be present when jobs were handed out, illustrates the dilemma of the politically conscious working class. (103) In the capitalist economic system the socio-economic power of the working class movement is directly dependent and its political power indirectly dependent on the law of supply and demand, on conditions in the labor market. The German working class movement was broken on the wheel of the world economic crisis.

For the later history of the Third Reich it was of critical importance that working class organizations were destroyed for just these reasons and in just this way. The new regime had not won the voluntary allegiance of the workers. It had conquered them with weapons of terror and mass unemployment and thus could not rely on their loyalty or co-operation. From the beginning the regime confronted millions of exploited workers, subjugated by force, who viewed its policies with deep, if impotent resentment; it further had to reckon with tens of thousands who, despite all repression, attempted to continue the struggle in illegal underground groups. The heritage of the November revolution had not been overcome. (104)

*Source: New German Critique. No. 11 (1977)*

## **Notes**

\*This article was first published as Chapter Two of my book *Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich. Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft* (Opladen, 1977). It is published here in

English by permission of the Westdeutscher Verlag. The translation is by Sara Lennox.

1. A transcript has been published by Hannes Heer, *Burgfrieden oder Klassenkampf: Zur Politik der sozialdemokratischen Gewerkschaften 1930-1933* (Neuwied/Berlin, 1971), pp. 168-173; the cited quotation, p. 170.

(1a) There were at least three further reasons why this strategy for a resolution of the crisis failed: its supporters were not united; it had insufficient popular support; and it is very doubtful whether the KPD could have been broken in the same way that the non-Nazi Right hoped to break the SPD and the unions.

(1b). The general theoretical perspectives of these paragraphs remain largely implicit in the rest of my book. Its main concerns are not of a theoretical order. I have drawn on theories of fascism above all to identify and to elucidate central problems in empirical historical research. For concluding notes on violence and terroristic domination, see *Sozialpolitik*, pp. 312-322. By far the most illuminating recent contribution to the debate on theories of fascism is Jane Caplan's essay, "Theories of Fascism: Nicos Poulantzas as Historian," *History Workshop-a Journal of Socialist Historians*, 3 (1977).

2. A detailed description of this propaganda is presented by Max M. Kele, *Nazis and Workers: National Socialist Appeals to German Labor 1919-1933* (Chapel Hill, 1972). Kele's analysis leaves much to be desired. Cf. the review essay "The Coming of the Nazis," *Times Literary Supplement*, 1 (February, 1974).

3. See above all the detailed and balanced study by Wilfried Bohnke, *Die NSDAP im Ruhrgebiet 1920-1933*, Schriftenreihe des Forschungsinstituts der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Vol. 106 (Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1974), Part C; Herbert Kuhr, *Parteien und Wahlen im Stadt- und Landkreis Essen in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik*, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien, Vol. 49 (Düsseldorf, 1973), pp. 282 ff., Detlef W. Mühlberger, "The Rise of National Socialism in Westphalia 1920-1933," Diss. Univ. of London, 1975, pp. 297 ff., 333 f. Comparable studies of Saxony and Thuringia do not yet exist; short discussions in Kele, *Nazis*, pp. 108 f., 161; and in Gerhard Schulz, *Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus. Krise und Revolution in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main, 1975), pp. 479 ff.

4. This is in part how things first developed—rise of the Landvolk Movement, the Economy Party, etc.

5. In some regions the KPD, too, was characterized by a trained and experienced core of members and voters who had moved from the SPD to the USPD and then to the KPD.

6. Cf. Kele, *Nazis*, pp. 117 f.; Bohnke, *Ruhrgebiet*, Part E, Ch. II

7. In propaganda directed at workers, anti-Semitism played a subordinate role. Cf. Bohnke, *Ruhrgebiet*, p. 219.

8. This important theme deserves further scholarly investigation. The intense nationalism of the 1920s was certainly one of the weightiest political disadvantages for the workers' parties in their struggle for the preservation and expansion of their base. The unpublished dissertation by Ursula Hillbiisch, "Gewerkschaften und Staat. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Gewerkschaften zu Anfang und zu Ende der Weimarer Republik," Heidelberg, 1958, provides important information about this, particularly about nationalist tendencies in the ADGB in 1932-1933. Heer, *Burgfrieden*, relies strongly in detail on this analysis but ignores its historical perspective.

9. See Dietrich Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party, Vol. I 1919-1933* (Newton Abbot, 1971), pp. 102 ff., 168 r.. Kele, *Nazis*, pp. 97-103.

10. *Mein Kampf*, p. 479. Hitler's irrational tendency to personalize structural problems is nowhere as clear as in the continuation of this thought: "Anyone who at that time had really destroyed the Marxist unions in order to ... aid the victory of the national socialist conception of unions would in my eyes belong to the really great men of our people and his bust would some day be dedicated to posterity in the Valhalla at Regensburg. But I have come across no head which would belong on such a pedestal." *Ibid.*, printed in bold in the original, with the exception of the last sentence.
11. [*ibid.*, pp. 680 f. The last two sentences are printed in bold in the original.
12. In contrast to the army supreme command in World War I, Hitler refused to recognize that unions could also have other functions.
13. *Mein Kampf*, pp. 675, 677. Kele, *Nazis*, pp. 110 f.; 176 ff. does not emphasize clearly enough the importance of Hitler's own special line in these questions. See Henry Ashby Turner Jr., "Hitlers Einstellung zu Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft vor 1933," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 1 (1975), 89-117.
14. Even for the white-collar workers this problem played an important role; thus the basic anti-union position led to strong tensions between the party leadership and the leadership of the DHV, which to be sure did not prevent the party leadership from winning over numerous DHV members: Iris Hamel, *Viilkischer Verband und nationale Gewerkschaft: Der Deutschnationale Handlungsgehilfen-Verband 1893-1933* (Frankfurt am Main, 1967), Ch. 4.
15. Of the wealth of literature on this theme, see especially Jeremy Noakes, *The Nazi Party in Lower Saxony 1921-1933* (London, 1971); Rudolf Heberle, *Landbeuolkerung und Nationalsozialismus, Eine soziologische Untersuchung der politischen Willensbildung in Schleswig-Holstein 1918 bis 1932* (Stuttgart, 1963); Heinrich August Winkler, *Mittelstand, Demokratie und Nationalsozialismus: Die p olitische Entwicklung von Handwerk und Kleinhandel in der Weimarer Republik* (Cologne, 1972).
16. This risk was diminished by the fact that the movement displayed strong regional differences: thus, for example, it is questionable whether Nazis in East Prussia or in Bavaria even had to take notice of the Berlin party's radical rhetoric. Nonetheless the need to hold onto members and voters already won represents a very important aspect of the development of the NSDAP to which too little attention has hitherto been given. All studies emphasize in a one-sided way the recruitment to the movement of ever wider circles. Schulz, *Aufstieg*, pp. 550, 858 f., gives a summary of the very high turn-over rate of party membership before 1934.
17. See e.g. Albert Krebs, *Tendenzen und Gestalten der NSDAP, Erinnerungen an die Friibzeit der Partei* (Stuttgart, 1959), p. 44.
18. Alongside the works of Noakes, Bohnke and Kiihr, see in this matter also Geoffrey Pridham, *Hitler's Rise to Power: The Nazi Movement in Bavaria, 1923-1933* (London, 1973). That it was not outcasts from the bourgeoisie who were involved in these cadres is correctly emphasized by Theodore Abel, *The Nazi Movement: Why Hitler Came to Power* (New York, 1966), p. 315; cf. also Krebs, *Tendenzen*, pp. 45 f.
19. Albert Krebs, for a time Gauleiter in Hamburg, was one of the very few exceptions in this regard. On the striving for recognition and upward social mobility in these circles within the NSDAP, see William j annen Jr., "National Socialists and Social Mobility," *Journal of Social History*, 3 (1976), 339-366.
20. See Orlow, *Nazi Party*, pp. 146 f., Pridham, *Bavaria*, pp. 85-115; Noakes, *Lower Saxony*, pp. 89-100; Krebs, *Tendenzen*, pp. 47 H.
21. Of Abet's group of 'old fighters' only 7% had been members of left organizations

before they joined the NSDAP: Nazi Movement, p. 314. The classification of the KPD of these years as a "totalitarian" party by emphasizing the anti-republican and anti-social democratic line of the Central Committee is unsatisfactory, among other reasons, because it ignores the motivations of the members and particularly of the voters who supported the party. They were certainly more interested in the struggle against the NS than in the struggle against the SPD.

22. See Alfred Milatz, *Wähler und Wahlen in der Weimarer Republik*, Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, No. 66 (Bonn, 1965), pp. 90, 108, 126-150.

23. Neither with respect to their relations with each other nor with respect to the crisis were the strategies of the workers' parties appropriate to the situation. For the SPD's and Free Trade Unions' conceptions of economic policy, see the articles by Robert Gates and Michael Schneider in Hans Mommsen, Dietmar Petzina and Bernd Weisbord, eds., *Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik* (Düsseldorf, 1974), pp. 206-237.

24. The SPD and ADGB were not prepared to undertake extra-constitutional measures.

25. These figures represent rough estimates, based on statistics in Theodor Geiger, *Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 22, 51; Milatz, *Wähler*, p. 128; *Statistisches Handbuch von Deutschland 1928-1944* (Munich, 1949), p. 32. If one counts the white-collar workers as well, the number of those entitled to vote who had to rely for sustenance on their labor power alone rises to a total of 28-32 million. For a precise picture of the social structure of the enfranchised population one would need a breakdown by age of employed persons and their dependents. Milatz, *Wähler*, Ch. IV /4, does not pursue this question.

26. Johannes Schauff, *Das Wahlverhalten der deutschen Katholiken im Kaiserreich und in der Weimarer Republik*, ed. Rudolf Morsey (Mainz, 1975), provides no information about the social structure of the Center or the BVP voters. Among them there were probably 2-3 million wage earners (including dependents). If one assumes that a good half of non-voters were likewise wage earners (including dependents), in the four groups KPD, SPD, Center/BVP and non-voters one has thus counted 17.5 to 19 million enfranchised voters from the working class. That would leave 5 to 8 million.

27. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963), p. 9.  
28. *Stat. Handbuch*, p. 32; *Stat. [archiv] 1936*, p. 331. The figure of 16 million also includes those unemployed. The narrow category of industrial worker was not defined with perfect clarity: see, Mason, *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*, pp. 1239 H.

Even if those employed by the imperial railways and in larger artisan works are included, one does not arrive by far at "ten million industrial workers" (Schulz, *Aufstieg*, p. 551). It must, however, also be recognized that there was a constant and probably also relatively strong fluctuation within the industrial work force so that considerably more people possessed the basic experience of industrial labor than at any point could be included in this occupational group—departures due to change in occupation, rationalization, illness, retirement, marriage (women), etc

29. My essay, "Women in Germany, 1925-1940: Family, Welfare and Work," *History Workshop—a Journal of Socialist Historians*, 1 and 2 (1976), contains some remarks on this question. Shortened version in German in H. G. Backhaus et al., ed., *Gesellschaft, Beiträge zur Marxistischen Theorie*, Vol. 6 (Frankfurt am Main, 1976), pp. 118-193.

30. The category "worker" here again includes grown family members. The tautological quality of the argumentation in the preceding paragraphs is obvious. The difficulty lies for the most part in the fact that unorganized workers have left so many



fewer sources on the basis of which one could investigate their situation and their behavior-not least precisely because they were unorganized. General statistics on those employed in trade and crafts:

Winkler, *Mitte/stand*, pp. 30 f., Appendix I. Winkler could discover remarkably little about the wage earners among them.

31. For instance, by the reforms which were carried through in the area of labor and factory law, maternity protection and unemployment insurance, also by the effect of collective bargaining on the earnings of unorganized workers.

32. Albrecht Tyrell, ed., *Führer befehl ... Selbstzeugnisse aus der Kampfzeit der NSDAP* (Dusseldorf, 1969), pp. 379 f.; David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution; Class and Status in Nazi Germany 1933-1939* (New York, 1966), pp. 29, 38; Schulz, *Aufstieg*, p. 550. On the confusion between "artisan" and "worker" in industry: cf. Kele, *Nazis*, pp. 30, 36, 61, 69 f., 73, 124, 167; Bohnke, *Ruhrgebiet*, p. 198 f.

33. See Milatz, *Wähler*; Mühlberger, "Wesrphalia" Ch , IX, iii: Bohnke, *Ruhrgebiet*, pp. 175-180. The best published analysis of electoral support for the NSDAP is now the article by Thomas Childers, "The Social Bases of the National Socialist Vote," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 4 (October, 1976), 17-42.

34. Cf. Goebbels' instructions for the Reichstag election campaign of June, 1932, which prescribed totally different directions for the propaganda depending on which public was to be reached: quoted in Kele, *Nazis*, p. 206. On the "National Socialist Left" in general see also the concise assessment of Ernst Nolte, "Zur Phänomenologie des Faschismus," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 4 (1962), 395.

35. This is well demonstrated by Kele, *Nazis*, pp. 91 ff., 104 ff., 131 ff. Here he is building on the penetrating analysis of Martin Broszat, "Die Anfänge der Berliner NSDAP 1926/27," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1 (1960), 85 ff.

36. This tendency intensified still more after 1933; for the repression of the NSBO, see *Sozialpolitik*, pp. 107 ff., 178 ff. The memoirs of Krebs, *Tendenzen* : pp. 69-71, are very useful for this theme.

37. Among them, especially among the young, there were also genuine idealists: see e.g. Krebs, *Tendenzen* , p. 50 f.

38. Cf. Heinrich Bennecke, *Hitler und die SA* (Munich, 1962), p. 213 f. For the SA in general, see particularly the work of Wolfgang Sauer in Bracher, Sauer and Schulz, *Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung*, pp. 829-896.

39. Cf. Krebs, *Tendenzen*, p. 92; Rudolf Diels, *Lucifer ante Portas. Zwischen Severing und Heydrich* (Zurich, n.d. (1950j)), p. 55; Bohnke , *Ruhrgebiet* , pp. 154, 157, where the percentage of unemployed among the SA men is estimated at 30-40% -not a very high figure given the social structure of this region.

40. Krebs, *Tendenzen* , p. 74. The majority of urban unemployed probably went to the KPD without, however, being firmly integrated there. Along with the numerous eye-witness reports of political fluctuations, the instability of their political ties to the KPD is attested to by various election results from 1932, particularly the second presidential election: see Kühn , *Essen*, p. 291; Kele, *Nazis*, pp. 205-8; Bohnke, *Ruhrgebiet* , p. 185; Henning Timpke, ed., *Dokumente zur Gleichschaltung des Landes Hamburg 1933* (Frankfurt am Main, 1964), pp. 19-31. Bohnke, p. 192, stresses the return of these voters to the KPD in the course of the second half of 1932. It is probable that these circles of urban unemployed were likewise strongly represented among the numerous fluctuating members of the NSDAP in the crisis years.

41. Broszat, "Berliner NSDAP," p. 91. It is possible that further investigation of this question will lead to the conclusion that the situation of the young unemployed people

in the big cities was more marked by the collapse of social and familial ties or of political traditions than was the case with young unemployed people in the typical medium-sized industrial city which perhaps demonstrated greater homogeneity and unity.

42. See Noakes, Lower Saxony, pp. 175, 178; Bohnke, Ruhrgebiet, p. 171; William Sheridan Allen, *The Nazi Seizure of Power: The Experience of a Single German Town 1930-1935* (London, 1966), p. 210 f. The strike of the Berlin transportation workers might also be remembered here. Among these public service workers the Free Trade Unions were by no means weakly represented everywhere.

43. Cf. Allen, *Seizure*, pp. 29, 61, on the demonstrations in "Thalburg" to which SA men from neighboring villages were called into the city. The research of Richard Bessel (Oxford) on the SA in the eastern provinces, particularly in East Prussia, provides a similar picture. Useful general discussions about the origin and role of wage earners in the national socialist movement: Geiger, *Soziale Schichtung*, pp. 109-122; Martin Broszat, *Der Staat Hitler*.

44. Bohnke, Ruhrgebiet, pp. 173 f, 200.

45. All of the local and regional studies which are available reach this same conclusion. See esp. Mühlberger, "Westphalia," pp. 363-381. It must always be remembered that the social structure of even the most completely industrialized cities was highly differentiated. Thus in Essen 40%, in Chemnitz 42.8% of the working population were not wage earners in 1933: Stat. [abrb ucb 1934, p. 24 f.

46. Noakes, Lower Saxony, p. 146. (The statement in Mason, *Arbeiterklasse und Volksgemeinschaft*, p. 20, n. 9, that Johannes Engel, founder of the NSBO had been a communist, is mistaken.)

47. For a good general survey of the early stages of the NSBO see Hans-Gerd Schumann, *Nationalsozialismus und Gewerkschaftsbewegung* (Hannover, 1958), pp. 30-38; also Kele, *Nazis*, p. 149 H.

48. Bohnke, Ruhrgebiet, p. 173 H; Noakes, Lower Saxony, p. 178; Kele, *Nazis*, p. 202 f.

49. See Hamel, *Volkischer Verband*, Ch. 4; Krebs, *Tendenzen*, p. 13 ff; Kele, *Nazis*, pp. 108 f, 144, 202 f; Jürgen Kocka, "Zur Problematik der deutschen Angestellten 1914-1933," in Mommsen/Petzina/Weisbrod, eds., *Industrielles System*, p. 792 ff. The over-representation of white-collar workers in the Nazi movement was that much greater when one considers that 39% of all white-collar workers were women, but that women were barely present at all in the NSDAP. See Stat.  *Jahrbuch 1934*, p. 19.

50. Noakes, Lower Saxony, pp. 174-182. This brief discussion is the sharpest and best researched analysis of the NSBO. See also Schumann, *Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, p. 34.

51. Schumann, *Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, p. 38, also pp. 39 ff, 167; and Kele, *Nazis*, pp. 198-201.

52. For a further discussion of this thesis see below, pp. 57 H. We do not yet know much about the social origins of the new members of the NSBO in the latter half of 1932. Some were self-employed craftsmen: see Noakes, Lower Saxony, pp. 180-2. It would be important to discover whether there were also many unemployed among them. In some areas industrial workers who joined the NSBO continued to pay their trade union dues.

53. The figure of 5.8 mill. trade union members includes members of the Free and the Christian Trade Unions (white- and blue-collar), but not those of the Hirsch-Duncker and other less independent organizations: Schumann, *Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, p. 163 f. See further Karl Rohe, *Das Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold* (Düsseldorf, 1966), p.

73; Schulz, *Aufstieg*, pp. 554-9, 859 f. Schulz's critique of the statistics on the social composition of the SPD membership is plausible and useful, but his implicit conclusion that a very large proportion of the members belonged to the old or the new middle class is less plausible. This topic also requires further investigation.

54. Schumann, *Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, pp. 38-48; Schulz, *Aufstieg*, pp. 550-4. Schulz draws quite different conclusions from the statistics on the composition of the party, emphasizing above all its popular character.

55. The bourgeois cult of "the worker" in the 1920s would be worth a detailed investigation. An especially pregnant example is cited in Noakes, *Lower Saxony*, p. 22. J. P. Stern, *Ernst [unger] .. A Writer of Our Time* (Cambridge, 1953), p. 43 ff., makes apt critical comments on the basic attitudes. On the general theme of bourgeois anti-bourgeois feeling, see especially Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution*.

56. Kühr, *Essen*, pp. 146, 154f., particularly emphasizes the fact that the street battles were fought above all by the wage earners in the NSDAP. Cf. also Diels, *Lucifer*, p. 152 f. The Nazis called the strongly Communist areas of Berlin "the commune." It is not clear that the mass of bourgeois NSDAP voters in the big cities were ever direct witnesses of the violent actions of the movement they supported since most such uproar and attacks took place in the center of the city or in the working class districts. In this respect, too, the disparate character of the national socialist movement is striking.

57. To be sure, it is very improbable that the SA and NSBO alone could have subdued the organizations of the working class movement: it simply never came to that pitched battle.

58. These threats were of course not expressed: strictly speaking it was a matter here of the fears of conservative circles. Neither the one nor the other development could have been desired by the party leadership, but the formation of the "cabinet of barons" by von Papen compelled them to radicalize their rhetoric.

59. Heer, *Burgfrieden*, p. 172 f.: Hans Mommsen, "Die deutschen Gewerkschaften zwischen Anpassung und Widerstand 1930-1944," in Heinz Oskar Vetter, ed., *Vom Sozialistengesetz zur Mitbestimmung. Zum 100. Geburtstag von Hans Böckler* (Cologne, 1975), p. 279:

Gerhard Beier, "Einheitsgewerkschaft: Zur Geschichte eines organisatorischen Prinzips der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 13 (1973); and Beier, "Zur Entstehung des Führerkreises der vereinigten Gewerkschaften Ende April 1933," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 15 (1975).

60. See especially Alien, *Seizure*.

61. Among the numerous contributions to the recent discussion of this question, see Eberhard Czichon, *Wer verwalte Hitler zur Macht* (Cologne, 1967); Heinrich August Winkler, "Unternehmervverbände zwischen Ständeideologie und Nationalsozialismus," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 4 (1969); Elke Hennig, "Industrie und Faschismus," *Neue Politische Literatur*, 4 (1970); Reinhard Vogelsang, *Der Freundeskreis Himmler* (Göttingen, 1972); Henry Ashby Turner, Jr., *Faschismus und Kapitalismus in Deutschland* (Göttingen, 1972); idem., "Grossunternehmertum und Nationalsozialismus 1930-1933," *Historische Zeitschrift*, 221 (1975), esp. p. 68; Dirk Stegmann, "Zum Verhältnis von Grossindustrie und Nationalsozialismus 1930-1933," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 13 (1973); idem., "Kapitalismus und Faschismus in Deutschland 1929-1934," in Backhaus et al., ed., *Gesellschaft*, Vol. 6.

62. This approach is intended to indicate a possible way out of the cul-de-sac of conspiracy theories; it brings to the fore questions about the inability of the

economically dominant classes to consolidate their political power after 1930 and simultaneously emphasizes the essential harmony between National Socialism and the interests of big industry. The proof that this harmony was not a relationship of one-sided dependence has been provided by Henry Ashby Turner, but a new comprehensive interpretation of this relationship is still lacking.

63. Dorte Doering, "Deutsche Aussenwirtschaftspolitik 1933-1935." Diss. Freie Universitat Berlin, 1969; Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Okonomie und Klassenstruktur des deutschen Faschismus. Aufzeichnungen und Analysen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1973), part I; Edward W. Bennett, *Germany and the Diplomacy of the Financial Crisis, 1931* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

64. This confrontation also formed the means by which the government did away with other hindrances which stood in the way of setting up a dictatorship-civil rights, independence of the Ldn der governments. An especially clear example of this instrumentalization of the attack on the Left is documented by Timpke, Hamburg, pp. 35-41, 57 f., 62 ff.

65. With respect to the intention to dissolve and suppress the KPD violently, there was no lack of clarity at all. The following discussion centers primarily on the fate of the unions. On the destruction of the workers' parties, see Erich Matthias and Rudolf Morsey, ed., *Das Ende der Parteien* (Diisseldorf, 1960); Bracher, Sauer and Schulz, *Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung*.

66. BA Koblenz., R43II, Vo!. 369; DZA Potsdam, RAM, Vo!. 6462. Further material on the tentative tactics of the government in these weeks: Hiillbiisch, "Gewerkschaften und Staat," pp. 221-5.

67. Gerhard Starcke, 1934, cited in Schumann, *Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, p. 61.

68. Petition of the ADGB on March 8, 1933 to Goering, on March 11 to van Papen, on March 13 to Hindenburg. DZA Potsdam, RAM, Vo!. 6529, Bl. 16-40 and BA Koblenz., R43II, Vol. 531. Further documents, especially the petition to Hindenburg et al., of March 29, 1933: GPSA Berlin, Rep. 90 P, Vol. 71/1. The petition to Hindenburg of April 5, 1933 has now been published by Gerhard Beier- *Das Lebrsticck vom. 1 and 2. Mai 1933* (Frankfurt am Main, 1975), pp. 51 ff.; see also pp. 37-9. Gerard Braunthal, "The German Free Trade Unions during the Rise of Nazism," *Journal of Central European Affairs*, 4 (1956), 350 H., lists a further series of similar documents from these weeks. Bracher, *Machtergreifung*, p. 178, is of the opinion that the organizations in Silesia and Saxony were "unshaken to the last." The ADGB included these regions among those hardest hit: petition to Seldte of March 14, 1933, DZA Potsdam, RAM, Vol. 6529, Bl. 16\_

69. GPSA Berlin, Rep. 320, Vol. 10; this also happened e.g. in Westphalia: Sauer, *Machtergreifung*, p. 870.

70. DZA Potsdam, RAM, Vol. 502, Bl. 130-140, pp. 219 ff.; RWM, Vol. 10285; Bracher, *Machtergreifung*, p. 180; Schumann, *Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, p. 66; Beier, *Lebrsticck*, p. 32 r., RGB1, 1933, I, p. 161.

71. The latter was based on a decree by Goring of February 17, 1933, which prohibited the police from prosecuting criminal acts of the SA: Sauer, *Machtergreifung*, p. 865. But it is improbable that Goring wanted the unions included in the "subversive organizations" defined no more closely in the decree. The government's interest lay first in preserving a strict distinction between the KPD on the one hand and the SPD/ADGB on the other, as far as the measures of persecution and suppression were concerned.

72. Diels, *Lucifer*, p. 199: cf. also pp. 163 f.

73. Schultbess' *Europdischer Geschichtskalender*, 1933, p. 56; Schumann, *Geuierkschaftsbewegung*, pp. 63-65. Reaction of the SA to these warnings: Diels, *Lucifer*, p. 199. The vacillating position of Goring and Hitler: *ibid.*, pp. 69 f., 166 f., 173, 183 f. Schumann's assumption that these actions of the SA were "easy ... to control" by the party and state leadership is scarcely justified: *Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, p. 63. Sauer too maintains this standpoint: *Machtergreifung*, pp. 868 H. See in contrast Pridham, *Bavaria*, p. 311.

74. *Cutehoffnungshutte Sterkrade AG*, *Historisches Archiv*, Vol. 400101290/20. I would like to thank Professor Henry Ashby Turner for directing me to these documents. At the end of April, 1933, Grauert was promoted to state secretary.

75. Heinrich Uhlig, *Die Warenhiuser im Dritten Reich* (Cologne, 1956), pp. 77-91; Helmut Genschel, *Die Verdrdung der juden aus der Wirtschaft in Dritten Reich* (Gottingen., 1966), pp. 46-49.

76. The petition of the ADGB to Seldte of April 5, 1933 named over 60 cities in which the union offices had been occupied or destroyed and described these cases: DZA Potsdam, RAM, Vol. 6529, BI. 8; Beier, *Lebrstick*. The petition to Hindenburg et al. of March 20, 1933 already estimated the total number at 200.

77. The above interpretation has a strongly hypothetical character, for the available documents yield little information about the political calculations of the state and party leadership. Two requests of the SA supreme command for a free hand to destroy the unions were rejected by Hitler before the end of March: Arthur Schweitzer, *Big Business in the Third Reich* (Bloomington, 1964), p. 35. Cf. also Joseph Goebbels, *Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei* (Munich, 1937), p. 284. Some evidence indicates that Hitler, Goring et al. wanted to separate the union question from that of the workers' parties. That was difficult from the outset because the union offices often occupied the same building as the local SPD leadership, and the SA could thus wipe out both simultaneously. The destruction of the SPD was also carried out to a great degree from below, by attacks on the local offices, etc.. Matthias, in Matthias and Morsey, eds., *Parteien*, pp. 171-173.

78. Cf. Krebs, *Tenzen*, p. 92. The degree to which the SA leadership groups came from a different social milieu has not yet been adequately investigated.

79. The victims could not believe that the state machine would stand aside from the terror and trusted to the protective intervention of the Reich government. Thus, union members and functionaries received no instructions to defend the offices by appropriate means. Because of the strong element of surprise in the SA attacks this also would not have been an easy task; yet, it is still indicative that such instructions from above were waited for.

80. Sauer, *Machtergreifung*, Ch. III/2, emphasizes much too strongly the general rhetorical support of the terror by Hitler and Goring in contrast to their political-strategic conception; he characterizes the terror as "impulsiveness on command" but can only cite a few commands. In contrast, he omits discussion of the decrees and appeals to halt the "individual actions." Cf., in contrast to this, Bracher, *ibid.*, pp. 148 f., 179, who, however, mentions the question only in passing; on the legal aspect of the terror see Schulz, *ibid.*, pp. 427442. Numerous aspects of the events remain unexplained. For example, it would be useful to know which institutions were in principle spared the wave of terror, especially whether the co-ordination of the Christian trade unions was accomplished by the same methods. The best description of the events is still the *Braunbuch iiber Reichstagsbrand und HitlerTerror* (Base!, 1933). On the mentality of the extraordinarily important, but probably not typical Berlin SA,

see Diels, *Lucifer*, pp. 152 f., 163 f., 198.

81. Otto We Is on August 22, 1933 in Paris: "We were really only objects of the development." Matthias and Morsey, *Parteien*, p. 101.

82. Apart from the works already mentioned, see Karl Dietrich Bracher, *Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik: Eine Studie zum Problem des Machtverfalls in der Demokratie* (Stuttgart, 1957).

83. The best overview of the world economic crisis is given by the emigre trade unionist Wladimir Woytinski, *The Social Consequences of Economic Depression*, International Labour Office, Studies and Reports, Series C, No. 21 (Geneva, 1936).

On the problem of investments: Gerhard Kroll, *Von der Weltwirtschaftskrise zur Staatskonjunktur* (Berlin, 1958), p. 105; Dietmar Keese, "Die volkswirtschaftlichen Gesamtgrößen für das Deutsche Reich in den Jahren 1925-1936," in Werner Conze and Hans Raupach, eds., *Die Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise des Deutschen Reiches 1929/33* (Stuttgart, 1967).

84. Woytinski, *Consequences*, p. 151, Preller, *Sozialpolitik*, p. 168.

85. *Stat.* [abbr 1933, pp. 296 f. On so-called invisible unemployment, see Woytinski, *Consequences*, p. 175; Mason, "Women," part I.

86. The figures on short-time work are an estimate on the basis of figures in *Stat.* [abbr 1933, pp. 296, 308, the percentage statistics on short-time work, etc., of union members produces a sum far beyond 100%. Average working week: Woytinski, *Consequences*, p. 310.

87. See Preller, *Sozialpolitik*, pp. 150-164: *Stat.*, *Jahrbuch 1934*, p. 502. The calculations of the *Stat. Handbuch von Deutschland 1928-1944* indicate a decline of average real income from 1929 to 1932 of just under 15%. The data in Gerhard Bry, *Wages in Germany 1871-1945* (Princeton, 1960), pp. 189, 260, 304, 362, 409 ff., 423 ff., are somewhat unclear on this point. The figures cited by Sidney Pollard in his article in Mommsen, Petzina and Weisbrod, eds., *Industrielles System*, are much too high.

88. *Stat.* [abbrbuch 1934, pp. 333, 326 f.

89. From 1929-1933 the number of mine workers declined by about 40%, production in contrast by only about 31%. Thanks to lowered wages and cartellized prices the profit margin per ton due to the sale of coal rose sharply: *Stat.* *Jahrbuch 1934*, pp. 115, 259, 271; Bry, *Wages*, p. 405. Cf. Mason, *Arbeiterbelasse und Volksgemeinschaft*, Dok. 85.

90. A social history of the economic crisis has not yet been written: a brilliant sketch has been provided by Rudolf Vierhaus, "Answirkungen der Krise um 1930 in Deutschland:

*Beiträge zu einer historisch-psychologischen Analyse*," in Conze and Raupach, *Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise*. Heinrich Bennecke, *Wirtschaftliche Depression und politischer Radikalismus* (Munich, 1969), contains some interesting details, but the interpretation is very schematic. For a contemporary report see especially Graf Alexander Stenbock-Fermor, *Deutschland von unten - Reise durch die proletarische Provinz* (Stuttgart, 1931).

91. *Stat.* [abbrbuch 1933, pp. 291, 307. Cf. also note 86 above. The consequences of mass unemployment for the unions have not yet been investigated. Beier remarks that their liquidity was "scarcely assured any more": *Lebrstück*, p. 10.

92. *Stat.* [abbrbuch 1933, p. 311: Preller, *Sozialpolitik*, p. 416 f. Decree on increasing and preserving opportunities for work issued on September 5, 1932: decree on abolishing the same issued on December 14, 1932: *RGB1.I*, pp. 433, 545.

93. Neither Schumann, Gewerkschaftsbewegung, nor Ursula Hiillbiisch, "Die deutschen Gewerkschaften in der Weltwirtschaftskrise," in Conze and Raurach, eds., Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise, considers this aspect. Pollard's approach is in every respect broader, and thus more convincing: Mommsen, Petzina and Weisbrod, eds. *Industrielles System*, pp. 237-248.
94. Cf. Heer, *Burgfrieden*, pp. 131 ff., 193; Braunthal, "German Trade Unions," p. 340 f.; Beier, *Lebrstück*, p. 22. A thorough investigation of this complex of questions is needed. To be sure, not all aspects of the union leadership's policy can be attributed to their consciousness of weakness. On the opportunism of leading functionaries in Hamburg, see Timpke, *Hamburg*, pp. 85-88.
95. Czichon, *Wer verhalf Hitler zur Macht?*; Wilhelm Treue, "Die deutschen Unternehmer in der Weltwirtschaftskrise 1928 bis 1933," in Conze and Raurach, eds., Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise, esp. pp. 82, 119; Bracher, *Auflösung*, p. 438 f.; Schweitzer, *Big Business*, pp. 89-96. See also the literature cited in note 61 above.
96. Karl Erich Born, *Die deutsche Bankendrise 1931* (Munich, 1967), pp. 35 f., 158.
97. Treue, in Conze and Raurach, eds., Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise, p. 123 H.; Preller, *Sozialpolitik*, pp. 196-204, 391-399, 512, 528; Turner, *Faschismus und Kapitalismus*, pp. 149 ff.
98. Quoted by Matthias, in Matthias and Morsey, eds., *Parteien*, p. 214.
99. On the age-structure of the SPD see Richard N. Hunt, *German Social Democracy 1918-1933* (New Haven, 1964), pp. 71 f., 76, 86, 89 f., 106 f.
100. Examples in Alien, *Seizure*, p. 180, among others. The numerous examples of active resistance in *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, ed. Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim Zentralkomitee der SED, Vol. 5 (Berlin, 1966), pp. 14-39, probably convey an accurate picture, although they are given without sources. The strike appeal of the KPD went out to a membership unprepared in every respect. Without practical support from the social democrats and the unions it also had to remain without effect.
101. On this issue, see Mason, *Sozialpolitik*, pp. 135-7.
102. Schumann, *Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, p. 167; a portion of the 'converts' consciously wanted to infiltrate the NSBO. On the SPD, see Matthias, in Matthias and Morsey, eds., *Parteien*, p. 239 ff. The new regime ruthlessly exploited its power as employer in all areas of public service: cf. Timpke, *Hamburg*, p. 82.
103. Personal report to the author. The same resigned opportunism is documented by, among others, Böhneke, *Rubgebiet*; p. 158, note 101; Rudolf Heberle, "Zur Soziologie der nationalsozialistischen Revolution: Notizen aus dem Jahre 1934," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 4 (1965), 438 ff., Bernhard Tacke, "Erinnerungen um den 1. Mai 1933," *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte*, 7 (1975), 433.

