Eve Rosenhaft

Beating the Fascists?

The German Communists & Political Violence 1929–1933

Beating the Fascists?

Beating the Fascists?

The German Communists and Political Violence 1929–1933

EVE ROSENHAFT
Lecturer in the Department of German,
University of Liverpool

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge
London New York New Rochelle
Melbourne Sydney

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521236386

First published 1983
This digitally printed version 2008

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 82-23525

ISBN 978-0-521-23638-6 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-08938-8 paperback

This book is for my mother

Contents

	Preface	ix
	List of abbreviations	xv
1	Introduction: Social crisis, radical politics and organized violence in Weimar Germany	1
2	The Party, the neighbourhood and the uses of violence in the 'Third Period'	28
3	Defining the enemy: The *wehrhafter Kampf* against the SA in theory and propaganda	57
4	Organizing the *wehrhafter Kampf*: The Communist defence formations	88
5	Between 'individual terror' and 'mass terror': The campaign against the SA-taverns, 1931	111
6	The shape of violence in the neighbourhoods	128
7	Who were the streetfighters?	167
8	Conclusion: Communist politics in the Weimar Republic	208
	A note on sources	216
	Notes	221
	Bibliography	251
	Index	268

Preface

The aim of this book is to examine the reasons why Communists in German cities during the closing years of the Weimar Republic engaged in a highly organized and often brutal form of gang warfare with their political opponents, usually the National Socialists. I have tried to show how it was possible that members of the Communist movement should have taken up such activities, and how the vigour and tenacity with which they carried on their 'battle for the streets' became a source of discord within the movement. When I began my research on this theme, as a graduate student in Cambridge, it was because I was interested in 'political violence' as such and its causes. It should be apparent that the book in its present form is very much a study in the history of the German Communist Party (KPD). I am convinced that such a shift of focus must arise inevitably from the nature of the question, once it is recognized that 'collective violence' and especially that kind that is known explicitly as 'political violence' is simply one of a number of possible forms of political action. Politics, so a leading British politician has recently declared, is for people. What is more certain is that politics is what people do for and about each other, and what people *say* they are doing. And in the last century it has been the parties of the working-class movement and their organized opponents who have provided the language and arguments in terms of which popular politics has been carried on in Europe. This does not mean that it is sufficient to study party organizations at the level of leaderships and official policies alone. The more urgent the imperative to understand the party, the more pressing becomes the task of evaluating its aims and 'official' self-image in the light of the actual situation and capacities of the people it claimed to represent. Approached in this way, the study of working-class parties becomes a vital aspect of the study of the societies of which they were a part. In this book the material marshalled under the rubric 'Communists and violence' offers illustrations of and insights into much more general problems of social and political life in the Weimar Republic.

But there is another reason why the focus of my research has shifted from

the analysis of behaviour to the study of a movement, and it is one that I share with growing numbers of my contemporaries in the historical discipline and the social sciences. The longer and more closely one examines the politics of the KPD, the more intriguing it becomes. The importance of the KPD in the history of the Weimar Republic has never been questioned, even among scholars outside the DDR. For some thirty-five years after the Nazi 'seizure of power' in 1933, Western historians and political commentators of two generations devoted their talents to demonstrating the heavy responsibility that the KPD leadership bore for those events. The Communists' policy underestimated the specific threat from the National Socialist Party (NSDAP) and insisted that the primary attack be directed against the Social Democrats (SPD), the majority working-class party known in KPD parlance as 'social fascists'. As a consequence, so the classic argument goes, the labour movement was divided and incapable of resisting the rise of the Nazis. That so patently absurd a policy should have been possible, historians of the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s explained by reference to the 'Stalinization' of the KPD. This process, going on throughout the mid-1920s, was said to have made the KPD increasingly monolithic and subservient to the interests of the Soviet political leadership as reflected in the policies of the Communist International, or Comintern. By implication the German party was a puppet of Moscow, the KPD rank and file puppets or passive victims of their leaders – and the movement as a whole presented an image of lifelessness and endless jargon-ridden tedium.[1] In the wake of the student movement of the late 1960s, accompanied as it was by disillusion with the post-war version of Social Democratic politics and renewed interest in revolutionary alternatives, younger German scholars began to look more closely at the rôle of the KPD. Few questioned the nature of the problem posed by the existing historiography, and the question of what a united labour movement might have done to stop Hitler – *ceteris* (as they never are) *paribus* – is still too rarely asked. But people did begin to examine Comintern and KPD theories of fascism and 'social fascism' in order to elucidate their internal logic as well as their practical weaknesses.[2] More important, they began to ask why the KPD had its greatest popular appeal, in terms of membership and electoral successes, at times, like 1929–33, when it was pursuing an apparently absurd policy, and to look for sources of the division and hostility between Communists and Social Democrats inherent in German economic and political life. A great deal of painstaking research has been and is being done on political relations between workers in the factories in the Weimar Republic.[3]

My study of the Party's efforts to organize and direct violence against the Nazis, conceived as self-defence against the terror of the NSDAP's storm troops (SA), and the reasons why the kind of action that resulted was not what the leadership had hoped for, belongs to the most recent stage in the

deconstruction of the KPD monolith: the critical examination of the forms of day-to-day agitation employed by the KPD *outside* the workplace to draw in various sections of the population. Students who initially approached the analysis of KPD policy and activities with gritted teeth, assuring themselves that however turgid the prose of the Party the subject was important and the documents had to be got through, found that their heightened sensitivity to the signs of life and diversity within the movement opened up entirely new perspectives on German Communism. There emerged the paradoxical image of a movement which was undoubtedly constrained by a rigid and artificial theoretical understanding of the nature of the working class and of its own rôle, but which was in practice tremendously vibrant, surprisingly responsive to the shifting needs of its actual and potential constituency, and above all extremely original in reaching out to groups with specific interests outside those arising from the direct conflict between capital and labour. This has been my experience, and I think I hear it echoed in the comments of scholars who have studied such aspects of KPD policy as its unemployed agitation (which I discuss in some detail in Chapter 2) and its attitude to the 'woman question'.[4]

If the fact that other historians are engaged on similar sorts of ventures were sufficient to legitimize my own, my choosing to consider 'what went wrong' with a very specific and limited element of Communist policy would hardly require an apology. As it is, it must be admitted that the lines of this study, although clearly relevant, are slightly oblique to the great issues of theory and practice associated with the KPD's use of terms like 'fascism' and 'social fascism'. The themes themselves permeate the narrative, of course, and I have made some effort to outline the issues for English-speaking readers unfamiliar with the literature; but their significance and theoretical implications are more the premises of the book than its subject. If 'social fascism' is the problem, then it may appear simply perverse to focus on the one area of policy in which the official Party line directed that Communists be harder on the Nazis than on the Social Democrats. But there are other, related and equally significant problems that this book addresses. At the very least, we want to know how the KPD worked, why it apparently flourished and finally failed in all its avowed aims. The examination of a form of activity that involved very palpable risks (though of different kinds) to both rank and file and leadership brings out particularly clearly how the KPD's policy was formulated and its public image shaped in the confrontation between a received theoretical line and the 'objective' and 'subjective' circumstances in which theory had to be applied. In the wider view, how to fight *fascism*, in the person of the Nazis, was the overarching problem for the *whole* of the German labour movement both before and after 1933. The Communists thought they had a formula, of which the use of violence was a significant element. To analyse the origins and effects of that

formula is to evaluate the possibilities for any resistance to National Socialism and that in turn yields insights into the ways persistent social and economic crisis affected (and may again affect) the conditions for collective working-class action.

A study that aims to fulfil all these functions must not only take into account but, initially at least, give equal weight to conditions at several levels: the political determinants of KPD policy, both national and international, the organs through which policy was communicated and administered, the social and economic conditions in which the Party operated, both as they informed the views of the leadership and as they determined and constrained Party activities 'on the ground', and, not least, the attitudes and forms of action 'native' to the Communist rank and file. The examination of what was going on at the lowest levels of the movement calls for a case-study approach, and I have chosen to concentrate on events in Germany's capital city, Berlin, in discussing the situation of the rank and file. In order to establish the context and significance of local conditions, I have cast the book as a series of essays, each of which examines the same general problem and the same events from a different perspective. Broadly speaking, each of these perspectives also represents a frame-work for formulating explanations of political violence, so that this structure makes it possible to examine in turn a series of hypotheses about the genesis of violence. The analysis proceeds through the various levels of experience that went to make up the Communist movement, from official theory to the raw conditions of daily life in the streets, from the Comintern to the individual streetfighter. After the nature and significance of political violence in the Weimar Republic has been characterized and the pattern of fighting in Berlin described, the first half of the book deals with the formulation and articulation of policy within the Communist movement as a whole. Chapter 2 describes the way that qualified approval of various kinds of tactical violence developed within the International and German leadership between 1929 and 1933 as a resultant of the respective pressures of revolutionary theory and depressed economic conditions. It also proposes a general model for the KPD's popular agitation in this period. Chapter 3 gives an account of the process through which the KPD leadership formulated its policy on defensive violence against the National Socialists in particular and the terms in which that policy was presented to the public and to members of the movement. In the fourth chapter, the self-defence organizations of the Party, principal vehicles of that policy, are examined, in terms both of their internal structures and of the attitudes and expectations fostered within them. Differences in perspective between leadership and rank and file that emerge in the first three chapters are considered more closely in the second half of the book. Three chapters deal in succession with the genesis and organization of a particular violent

episode in Berlin, considered from the viewpoint of the middle-level Party leadership, with the experience of violence and the culture and attitudes of the streetfighting rank and file in Berlin's working-class neighbourhoods, and with the possible socio-economic determinants of violence, as reflected in the biographies of a sample of Berlin streetfighters.

A research project this complicated, which rests on a wide range of sources and covers a number of distinct historical themes, would hardly have been possible without the help of many institutions and individuals. I am grateful for the help I received from the staffs of all the libraries and archives I have visited. Special thanks are due to the offices of the Senator für Justiz, and of the Generalstaatsanwalt beim Landgericht in Berlin, who granted me permission to use the prosecution files on which much of my study is based, and to Herr Jürgen Wetzel, Director of the Landesarchiv Berlin where the files are stored. The staff of the Landesarchiv made me welcome in the midst of redecorating works during the summer of 1976 and provided invaluable assistance on my three subsequent visits. The combination of efficient technical support and amused sympathy with which they responded to the spectacle of a very small person trying to work through a very large pile of documents in a very short time taught me why Berlin and the Berliners have been regarded as special by natives and visitors for a hundred years or more. During 1975–6 I was a fellow of the Institut für Europäische Geschichte in Mainz. Under the directorship of Professor Karl Otmar von Aretin, the Institute provided the financial support, technical facilities, helpful staff and milieu of a friendly scholarly community that greatly enhanced my first year of archival research in Germany. I have similar reasons to be grateful to the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge, where I was a research student 1974–8 and Fellow from 1978 until 1981.

Mine is a subject on which nearly everybody has an opinion, and many individuals have provided me with ideas and leads on sources in the seven years since I began my research. It is impossible to thank them all individually, but their contribution is not forgotten. I have learned something from conversations with veterans of the Communist movement: the late Otto Niebergall and Rosa Leviné-Meyer, and Margarete Buber-Neumann. Peter Hoffmann, who supervised my undergraduate studies at McGill University in Montreal, first drew my attention to the theme of political violence in the Weimar Republic, and my research supervisor, Jonathan Steinberg, was always ready with a sympathetic ear and a keen editorial eye. I owe more than I can say to Tony Judt, for showing extraordinary and disinterested faith in my abilities at a critical moment. Michael Geyer shared ideas and material with me, and helped me to recover my own self-confidence more than once during the painful process of

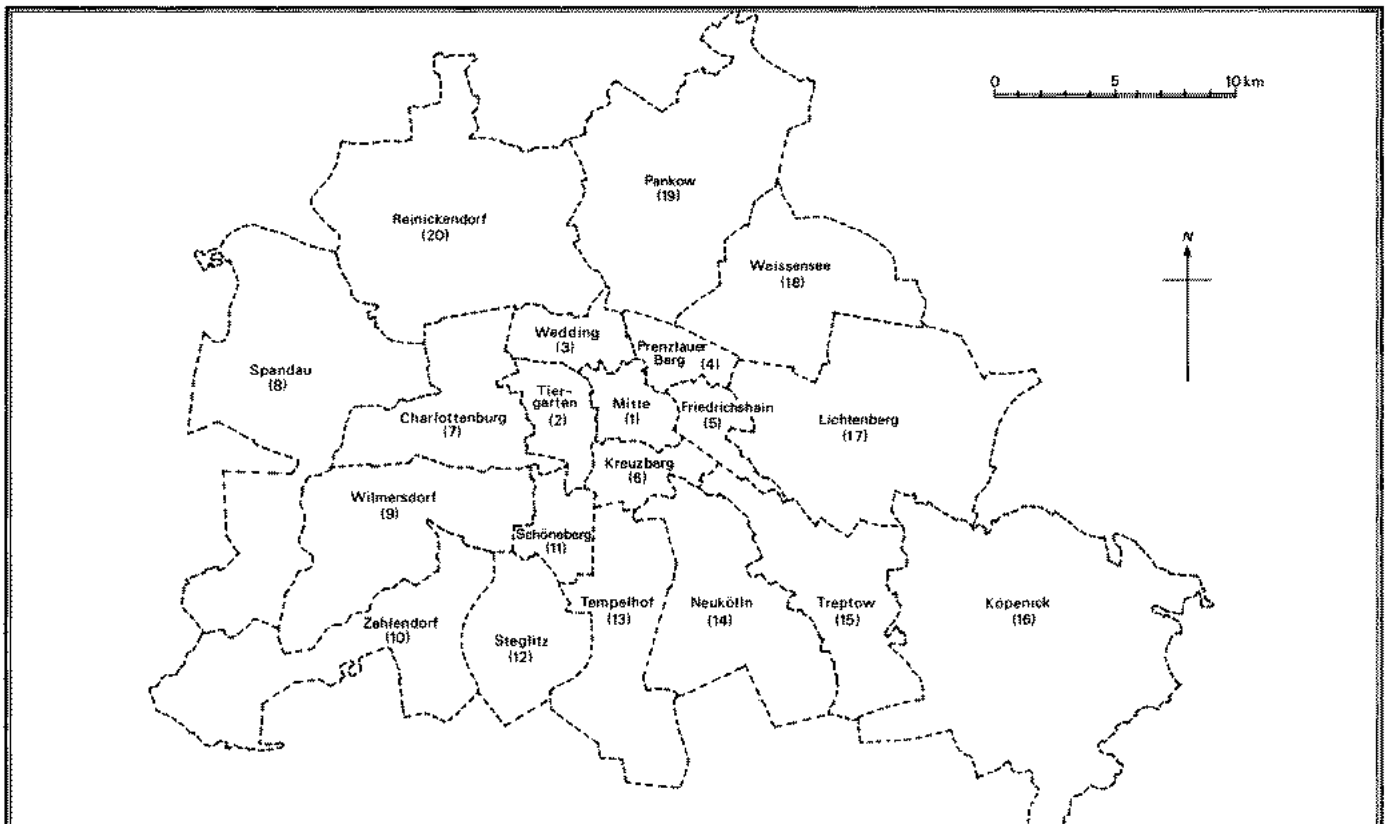
putting my thoughts into words for the first time. Tim Mason, Francis Carsten and Dick Geary acted as examiners for the manuscript when it was submitted, first as a fellowship dissertation and then as a doctoral thesis; they have all provided valuable comments and suggestions. Dick in particular has proved a surefooted and indispensable guide through the alien territory of industrial organization and the labour process. My colleagues in Cambridge, above all Nigel Swain and Raj Chandavarkar, helped to make this book what it is. They have offered their ideas and expertise as the gifts of friendship. While all these people may see something of themselves in this book, its conception and conclusions, its idiosyncracies and errors are entirely my responsibility.

My greatest debt is to my mother, Ann Williams Rosenhaft. If this book is anybody's but mine, then it is hers.

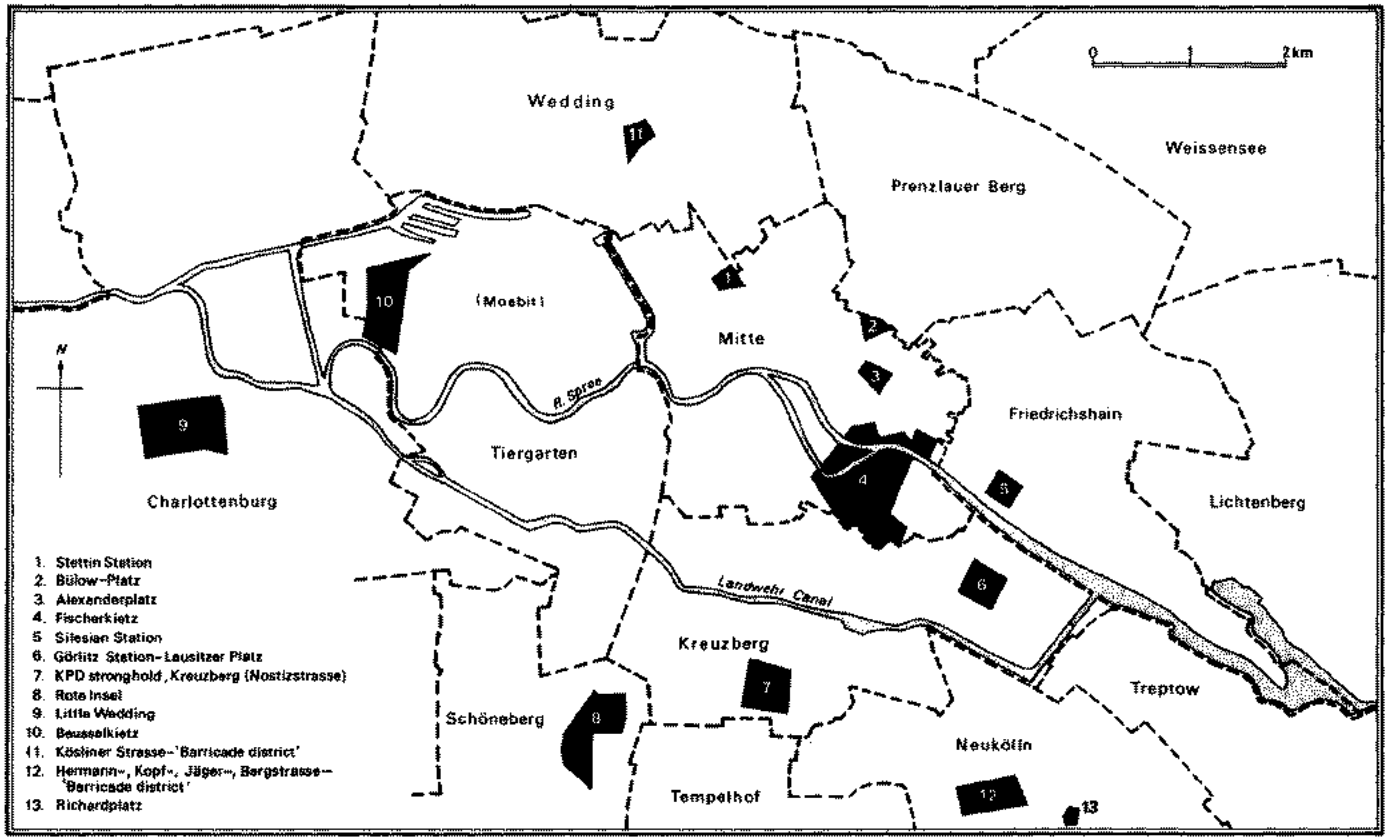
List of abbreviations

AfS	*Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*
AJG	Antifaschistische Junge Garde (Young Antifascist Guard)
BAK	Bundesarchiv Koblenz
BL	Bezirksleitung (District Leadership or Executive) Bundesleitung (National Executive)
*BT**	*Berliner Tageblatt*
BVG	Berliner Verkehrsgesellschaft (Berlin Transport Company)
*DAZ**	*Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*
DMV	Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband (German Metalworkers' Union)
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei (German National People's Party)
ECCI/EKKI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
FES	Archiv der Sozialen Demokratie, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GehStA	Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz
HJ	Hitlerjugend (Hitler Youth)
IISG	International Institute for Social History
Inprekorr	*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*
Internationale	*Die Internationale*
IWK	*Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*
KI	*Kommunistische Internationale*
KJVD/KJ	Kommunistische Jugendverband Deutschlands (Communist Youth)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (German Communist Party)
LA Bln	Landesarchiv Berlin
LAK	Landeshauptarchiv Koblenz
LKPA	Landeskriminalpolizeiamt (State Police)
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist Party)

OD	Ordnerdienst (Marshal Corps)
PS	Parteiselbstschutz (Party Self Defence)
PSS	Proletarischer Selbstschutz (Proletarian Self Defence)
RF	*Die Rote Fahne*
RFB	Roter Frontkämpferbund (Red Front-fighters' League)
RFMB	Roter Frauen- und Mädchenbund (Red League of Women and Girls)
RGBl	*Reichsgesetzblatt*
RGO	Revolutionäre Gewerkschafts-Opposition (Revolutionary Trade-union Opposition)
RJ	Rote Jungfront (Red Youth Front)
RMSS	Roter Massenselbstschutz (Red Mass Self Defence)
RMI	Reichsministerium des Innern (Reich Interior Ministry)
SA	Sturmabteilung (Storm section or storm troops)
SAJ	Sozialistische Arbeiter-Jugend (Social Democratic Youth)
Schulthess	*Schulthess' Europäischer Geschichtskalender*
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party)
StABr	Staatsarchiv Bremen
StDR	*Statistik des deutschen Reiches*
StJB	*Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Berlin*
StJR	*Statistisches Jahrbuch für das deutsche Reich*
UB	Unterbezirk (Local)
UBL	Unterbezirksleitung (Local Leadership or Executive)
USPD	Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Independent Social Democrats)
VB	*Völkischer Beobachter*
VBMI	Verband Berliner Metallindustrieller (Association of Berlin Metal-Industrialists)
VfZ	*Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*
*VW**	*Vorwärts*
*VZ**	*Vossische Zeitung*
ZfG	*Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*
ZGStW	*Zeitschrift für die gesamten Strafrechtswissenschaften*
ZK	Central Committee
*(A)	Morning edition
(B)	Evening edition



Map 1: Greater Berlin 1930



Map 2: Central Berlin 1930

1

Introduction: Social crisis, radical politics and organized violence in Weimar Germany

I

If it were possible to judge the character of a political order from the immediate circumstances of its birth and death, the Weimar Republic would have to be regarded as a remarkably, indeed painfully peaceable one. The new order was called into being by the simple act of Philipp Scheidemann, leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), who stepped out onto a balcony outside the dining-room of the Reichstag building on 9 November 1918 and proclaimed the 'democratic republic'. With Germany near collapse at the end of an exhausting war, her armed forces in a state of mutiny and her monarchy on the verge of abdication, Scheidemann stepped into a power vacuum which, for the moment, made it possible for him and his colleagues to form a provisional government and proceed to the consolidation of the Republic. Similarly, the Republic's demise was signalled by a series of political events, mostly within the broad bounds of constitutionality, bloodless in themselves and evoking no significant violent reaction. These culminated in Hitler's appointment to the Chancellorship in January 1933 and six weeks later the passage by the Reichstag, against the votes of the Social Democrats, of the Enabling Act which effectively gave Hitler dictatorial powers.

In fact, violence of all kinds, both large-scale and individual, was endemic to political life in the Weimar Republic. It was an expression of deep-running and unresolved social conflicts, and the obstinate pacifism of the men and women who had called the Republic into being and remained its defenders in the final crisis arose in part out of their consciousness of that fact. Those who, like Scheidemann's SPD colleague Friedrich Ebert, saw 'social revolution' in 1918 as something to be avoided 'like the plague' in the face of the overwhelming problems of public order and reconstruction posed by the immediate post-war situation came to recognize in the violent events of succeeding years a simmering threat of civil war that must not be allowed to boil over at any cost. And from the earliest years of the Republic

the Communists were deeply implicated in the organization and practice of violence.

The Revolution of 1918 itself did not remain bloodless for long. In Berlin during the following winter and in Munich in the spring of 1919 there were desperate attempts to carry the Revolution further in which the Communist Party, founded in January 1919 by the leaders of the 'Spartacist' left wing of the Independent Social Democrats (USPD) and trade-union militants, played a leading rôle. The uprisings of 1919 were put down by government troops and the volunteers of the right-wing Freikorps, with considerable loss of life. When a group of military officers under Generals von Kapp and Lüttwitz staged a coup against the Republic in March 1920, Social Democrats, Independents and Communists within the labour movement united to answer the coup with a general strike and, in some areas, with the raising of workers' militias. While the strike was successful in frustrating the coup, the only prospect held out by the Social Democratic leaders who were returned to power by the national resistance movement was that of restoration of a republican status quo ante. In the Ruhr and in Central Germany, members of the militias in their tens of thousands went into open revolt, demanding the socialist programmes and the improvements in living and working conditions that the national upheaval and negotiations among the working-class parties had led them to expect. Again, Freikorps and paramilitary police under Social Democratic administration put down the disturbances, in two months of bloody fighting. The following two years witnessed the assassination of two leading politicians (former Finance Minister Matthias Erzberger and former Minister for Reconstruction with responsibility for foreign affairs Walter Rathenau) by right-wing terrorists. And in 1921 the KPD, now a mass party following its merger with the majority of the USPD and increasingly guided by the tacticians of the Third International (or Comintern), tested its wings in half-hearted and easily suppressed revolutionary gestures in Central Germany, Berlin, Hamburg and the Ruhr. In 1923, against the background of the French occupation of the Ruhr and hyperinflation, movements of both the far left and the extreme right openly prepared and carried out insurrectionary actions. Hitler's 'Beer Hall Putsch' in November, like the uprising of the Communists in Hamburg the preceding month, was easily defeated but brought gunfire once again to the streets of a major German city.[1]

After 1924 there did not emerge again a threat to the stable government of the Republic so direct and so organized as to demand military intervention. But even as the new system appeared to consolidate itself, in both economic and political terms, people continued to talk and write anxiously about the 'coarsening of political manners'. A pugnacity borne and encouraged chiefly by the radical opponents of the Republic made itself felt equally in the parliamentary chambers and in relations between

neighbours of differing political parties.[2] Above all the streets, the arena of increasingly frequent and large-scale political activity in a new era of mass democracy, became the focus for a new form of political violence, to which one historian has given the descriptive name *Zusammenstoss* (clash)-violence.[3] This consisted of brawls between members of opposing parties, arising sometimes out of spontaneous confrontations and sometimes out of attempts of one party to disrupt the meetings or demonstrations of another. In the mid-1920s such clashes were commonplace, and during periods of general political mobilization, when the parties organized to contest elections or the campaigns for referendum and plebiscite made possible by the new constitution, they presented a serious problem for the police at the local and regional level. At the end of 1929 the Reich Interior Minister issued a memorandum in which he called attention to the threat to public order posed by the continuing violence and anti-republican agitation. When the Prussian authorities considered instituting a programme of regular reporting of violent incidents, the response of one civil servant was sceptical: 'Fist-fights and quarrels between formations of the Left and Right are the order of the day; the list of the Reich Interior Ministry could certainly be extended by hundreds of cases.'[4]

The groups most deeply involved in this kind of fighting were the paramilitary auxiliaries of the various parties.[5] In their conception and to some extent in their membership, these organizations formed a bridge between the insurrectionary movements of the early 1920s and later developments, as they provided the framework and set the style for *Zusammenstoss*-violence. Within them, political militants were organized into small, cohesive and mobile groups and – to a greater or lesser degree depending on the organization in question and local circumstances – trained in fighting methods. And the uniforms and badges that became the accoutrements of political activism under their aegis made the members of opposing parties highly visible to one another.

By the late twenties, the most important of these organizations were the Stahlhelm, the Sturmabteilung (Stormtroops, or SA) of the National Socialist Party, the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold and the Communist formations: Roter Frontkämpferbund (Red Front-fighters' League, RFB) and, after 1929, the Antifaschistische Junge Garde (Young Antifascist Guard, AJG), Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus (Fighting-League against Fascism) and sections of a broad-based movement known as the Antifaschistische Aktion (Antifascist Action). Of these the Stahlhelm, an independent militant veterans' organization closely associated with right-wing conservatism, was the oldest; it had been founded in 1918. The SA, created as a military marshal-troop in 1921, drilled and trained for participation in Hitler's Putsch of 1923 and was re-established with propaganda and defence functions after Hitler's release from prison in 1925. The Reichs-

banner came into being as a joint enterprise of the Social Democratic, Democratic and Centre Parties in February 1924. Intended to provide a militant (though largely propagandistic) defence of the Republic in the face of persistent right-wing paramilitary activity, the Reichsbanner came to be dominated by Social Democracy in its later years. The RFB was conceived in the summer of 1924 both as a way to compete with the evident popularity of the Reichsbanner and as a means of keeping together and channelling the energies of the men who had joined the troops known as Proletarian Hundreds during the revolutionary movement of 1923. While the RFB had very extensive propaganda functions, in addition to those of paramilitary training and physical defence, the post-1929 Communist organizations placed specific emphasis on agitation against National Socialism and on self-defence against the SA.

This shift in the functions of the Communist paramilitary organizations after 1929, which will be examined in detail in Chapter 4, reflects the way in which the pattern and intensity of political violence changed at that time. The fighting that was still a matter for resigned comment at the end of 1929 was soon to become both a terrifying fact of daily life in some areas of Germany and a central issue in national politics. During the years of economic depression and political crisis that preceded Hitler's 'bloodless' takeover, scores of lives were lost in a conflict that was now continuous, growing in intensity, and increasingly the preserve of the most extreme parties of right and left, the National Socialist Party and the Communist Party. This was a function of the general mobilization of radical sentiment that took place from 1929 onwards.

The general crisis through which the Republic was passing in those years involved developments both in economic life and at every level of politics. It arose out of a combination of international conditions and unresolved problems peculiar to the German situation that had begun to make their appearance as early as the mid-1920s. Germany's recovery from the disastrous economic effects of war and inflation after 1923 was accompanied by radical changes in the character of the industrial labour market. The liquidations that followed the collapse of the inflationary boom threw hundreds of thousands out of work in 1925–6, and the major industries that survived did so by adopting practices of technological and organizational rationalization that both reduced the absolute numerical demand for labour and made all but a minority of the most highly skilled workers dispensable. The result was an unprecedentedly high rate of chronic structural unemployment, even during the period of stabilization and relative prosperity.[6] Trade-union leaders were for the first time made active partners, along with the representatives of big business, in discussions with successive administrations about the best means of dealing with the social problems raised by these developments; one of the results of these

discussions was a new system of state unemployment insurance.[7] But at the same time the traditional bases of trade-union and socialist politics were weakened. The political division between the Communists and the Social Democrats that had emerged between 1917 and 1919 was reinforced by increasing divergences between the interests of different sections of the working class: between the employed and the unemployed and, more specifically, between the highly skilled and relatively secure minority and the fluctuating industrial population of the semi-skilled. For the latter group, trade-unionism lost much of its meaning, either as the organizational focus of working-class protest or as the means of remedying specific grievances. During this same period, the shape of anti-socialist politics began to change as well, as sections of the middle class, still suffering the after-effects of the inflation and alarmed at the prospect of losing out in the apparent co-operation between the powerful interests of big business and organized labour, started to turn their backs on the parties that had traditionally represented their interests and to look for new forms of political representation.[8]

Between 1929 and 1933, acute economic problems arising out of the worldwide Depression accelerated the process of dissolution of the traditional forms of politics. A general political mobilization at the grass-roots level coincided with a retreat from the institutions of representative government and the increasing use of repressive and dictatorial measures by the holders of power in Berlin. At the beginning of 1930 debates over the question of whether industry or labour should bear the costs of the unemployment insurance system, which had increased sharply since the onset of the Depression the previous autumn, led to the resignation of the coalition government led by the Social Democrat Hermann Müller. His successor as Chancellor, the Centre Party's Heinrich Brüning, regarded it as his first task in the crisis to establish Germany's financial credit in the world and rid the country of the burden of reparations; to this end he pursued a deflationary policy characterized, among other things, by repeated statutory restrictions on the money incomes of working people and the unemployed. Measures of this kind were hardly popular. When, in the summer of 1930, the Chancellor found himself no more able to win the support of a majority in the Reichstag for his new economic plans than his predecessor had been, Reich President Hindenburg agreed to use the powers granted him under Article 48 of the Constitution to dissolve the Reichstag and institute Brüning's policy by presidential decree.[9] This was the first step on the road to the system of 'presidential government' in which, under the Chancellorships of Brüning and his successors, Franz von Papen and Kurt von Schleicher, all major policy measures (and a good many entirely trivial ones) were instituted by decree rather than through decisions of the Reichstag. The disaffection in the country provoked by these

measures was answered with repeated attempts to restrict radical activity and muzzle the political press.

The mobilization of the grass roots that made that disaffection potentially dangerous was signalled by the general elections following the dissolution of the Reichstag in 1930. More qualified voters went to the polls than at any other election since 1919, and the only parties to gain were the radical parties of right and left. The KPD took votes from the SPD while the NSDAP, the party that called itself socialist while declaring its implacable opposition to Marxism in all its forms, won large numbers both of new voters and of those who had previously supported the middle-class parties of the centre. The growth in the National Socialist vote was spectacular, sweeping the party from sectarian isolation to the status of a mass-movement and major factor on the political scene. While the representative institutions through which large popular movements might otherwise have exercised power were effectively eliminated by the practice of 'presidential government', the two radical parties embarked on a struggle for influence over the members of distressed and disaffected sections of the population which brought political argument and conflict into every corner of daily life, from the shop-floor to the tenement courtyard, from the pub to the parents' associations in the state schools.

With the activation of the major radical parties, *Zusammenstoss*-violence began to spread at an alarming rate and to take on a new character. For the period 1924–9, the casualty figures provided by the parties themselves bespeak a persistent but by no means catastrophic conflict. The National Socialists claimed thirty killed by the Communists during those years and 1241 wounded in 1928 and 1929 alone. According to KPD sources, 'fascists' (apart from the police) killed ninety-two workers and wounded 239 more between the end of 1923 and the beginning of 1930. One estimate placed the dead of the Stahlhelm, fallen in the fight against Communism, at twenty-six, and the Reichsbanner lost thirteen members between 1924 and 1928.[10] In the period that followed the casualty figures rose dramatically. The NSDAP reported seventeen deaths and over 2500 injuries in 1930 and forty-two dead and 6300 wounded in 1931; the figures for the last year before Hitler's seizure of power were eighty-four and 9715 respectively. The Communist Red Aid, an organization devoted to legal aid and support for the families of the victims of political violence and repression, claimed forty-four deaths at the hands of the Nazis in 1930, fifty-two in 1931 and seventy-five in the first half of 1932, and over 18,000 cases of injury in 1930 and 1931. Between 1929 and 1933 nearly three times as many Social Democrats died as in the preceding five years; all of these killings after 1929 were attributed to the National Socialists.[11]

After 1929 the authorities, too, began to monitor these developments more closely. From that year on, regular memoranda on the incidence of

political attacks were prepared within the Prussian Interior Ministry. Beginning in mid-1930, the administrators of the Prussian territories presented quarterly reports to Berlin, in which the weapons seized from Communists and National Socialists were itemized in separate lists. From 1931 at the latest, regular reports reached the Prussian Minister in which the casualties and arrests resulting from 'political excesses' were broken down according to political allegiance of victim and attacker.[12]

Similar procedures were followed in the other federal states, so that there are figures available to check against the party sources, although these too are incomplete. Three hundred dead in the past year was the figure proposed by the Reichstag Deputy Hennes on 16 March 1931; the estimate was not challenged during the debate in the chamber, which was touched off by the brutal murder by armed Nazis of a Communist City Councilman in Hamburg.[13] In the Prussian Diet the following October Carl Severing, Prussian Interior Minister, declared that thirty-four people had been killed since January and 186 seriously wounded in clashes 'obviously' stemming from the Communists and another three killed, eight fatally wounded and seventy-eight seriously hurt in brawls started by National Socialists.[14] October and November of that year saw twenty-one reported killed and 1138 wounded in all of Germany; of the dead, fourteen were Nazis, six Communists, one a Reichsbanner member. The 1213 who had been arrested or were 'assumed with certainty' to be responsible for the attacks included 378 National Socialists – 184 involved in fights with Communists and 190 in fights with Reichsbanner members – 206 Reichsbanner and SPD (194 in cases against the Nazis) and 579 Communists, 547 of whom were suspected of crimes against the Nazis.[15] Between January and September 1932, the Prussian territories alone reported seventy Nazi and fifty-four Communist, ten Social Democratic and twenty-one 'other' dead.[16]

Subject to all the reservations that apply to compilations based on reports made by and to the police, these figures nevertheless suggest two things about the general pattern of *Zusammenstoss*-violence: first the very high participation of Communists and, second, the tendency, within a framework of general polarization, for Communists in particular to direct their attacks to Nazis, while Nazis – on the national scale – were more likely to distribute their attentions across the spectrum of the political left. Hitler's declared intention to wage 'a war of extermination against Marxism' in all its forms, which were included in his instructions to the SA of 1926, his urging that the SA undertake 'the conquest of the streets' and his stated conviction that 'terror can only be broken with terror' both legitimated the use of physical aggression and suggested that it should be directed with equal force against both the socialist parties.[17] The choice of specific targets would be determined by whether SPD or KPD was the predominant party in a given area. The situation of the Communists was more complicated. After

1928 the KPD maintained a political analysis that dictated that its members oppose with equal vigour the 'fascists' and the 'social fascists' (although the prescription was primarily for political, rather than physical confrontation). Yet it appears that Communists restricted the practice of physical violence during this period largely to the Nazis, and also that within the labour movement they were the ones who bore the brunt of the effects of the Nazi terror. This is apparent whether we read the police figures as an index of the actual involvement of various groups in fighting, as either attackers or defenders, or as an indicator of the extent to which numbers of any given group risked arrest for political activity in a situation of general mobilization.

The violence of the two radical parties had resonances and effects at many levels. In the highest circles of government, its suppression became a necessary element of every scheme for restoring or replacing the ailing system. Between July 1930 and January 1932 seven presidential decrees dealt with such related questions as the use of weapons, the wearing of uniforms and the maintenance of 'gathering-places for activities endangering the state'. These attempts to suppress violence were accompanied by various schemes for dealing with the problems of youth unemployment – since young people, who had suffered disproportionately in the economic contraction of the mid-twenties and continued to be among the main victims of the Depression, were also most deeply involved in the fighting between parties. The schemes included state-sponsored sporting and paramilitary activities and finally a form of labour service.[18]

During 1932 the question of controlling the violence of paramilitary formations was explicitly linked to the pressing one of how to deal with the continued growth of the NSDAP. On 13 April the SA and its élite sister-corps the SS were dissolved by decree, and a few days later, in a gesture to equity, President Hindenburg ordered that all paramilitary organizations open their books to the authorities on pain of dissolution and banned the Communists' atheist leagues. After Brüning's fall from grace, negotiations between Hitler and the new Chancellor, von Papen, led to the lifting of the SA ban and of the standing prohibition on the wearing of uniforms in June. The period leading up to and following the Reichstag elections in July was marked by an unprecedented wave of shootings and bombings, for which the SA was largely responsible. 105 of the 155 victims of political violence in Prussia in 1932 fell in June and July alone. On 9 August special courts were established and the death penalty extended to include unpremeditated manslaughter in political cases.[19]

A simultaneous development, not unrelated to the new Chancellor's receptiveness to Hitler's arguments, was the use of the need to suppress violence as a pretext for very much more significant attacks from above on the constitutional order. On 17 July 1932, fifteen people were killed when

SA demonstrators, members of defence units of the KPD's Antifaschistische Aktion and police clashed in the Hamburg working-class suburb of Altona.[20] Von Papen saw in these events an opportunity to put into effect a plan which had long been under discussion in conservative circles. On the twentieth a presidential decree dissolved the elected Landtag and the Social-Democrat-led government of Prussia and replaced it with a Commissioner responsible directly to the Reich; Berlin and Brandenburg were placed under a state of emergency for five days. The Prussian government, it was argued, had shown itself unable to cope with 'the bloody ... disorders ... originating with the Communists'.[21] At the high court sessions in which the deposed cabinet sued for confirmation that the Reich's action was unconstitutional, debate revolved around mortality figures and the question of how near Prussia had come to civil war.[22] And in the last months before Hitler was made Chancellor, the extent to which the radical parties were ready and willing to collaborate in an all-out opposition to the state, which would mean civil war, was a consideration repeatedly brought into play when Papen, Schleicher and Hindenburg discussed how the energies of the Nazi movement could be harnessed towards the creation of a new kind of constitutional order, without granting Hitler the leading rôle in government that he demanded.[23]

At the level of local communities, too, the fighting between the parties added a new element to social and political life; in some areas it radically changed them. The threat and use of physical force, combined with the intransigent rhetoric used by the combatants, made it possible for the contest for party-political influence to develop into a struggle for direct physical control of space and institutions. In the villages of Silesia, for example, there developed a kind of war of positions; the activists on either side used threats and violence to prevent meeting-halls under their control from being opened to their opponents. In the smaller localities this could mean the paralysis of political life.[24] In other areas, like the large industrial cities, the overall results were not so drastic before 1933, but the objects of the fighting were similar and the emotions it aroused equally strong. The way in which the violence of the crisis years was enmeshed with local structures of power and drew its energy from local concerns, is best illustrated by an examination of the pattern of fighting in a single city, Berlin. There it was the control of the neighbourhoods that were the traditional arenas of working-class politics that was at issue, in both the rhetoric and the practice of the Nazis and Communists.

II

In the 1920s Germany's capital had some four million inhabitants, nearly half of whom were dependent on industry for their livelihoods. Forty-one

per cent of the population at the 1925 census belonged to the manual working class. The largest single employer of male labour was the metal industry, including both electrotechnical and engineering firms, followed by the building trades. Clothing manufacture, which employed large numbers of women in small shops or at home, was also a major industry. In addition, as a metropolitan area in which both manufacturing and distributive operations were important (one quarter of the population lived from trade and transport), the city offered numerous opportunities for casual labour, so that Berlin's population included a higher proportion of unskilled and unspecialized labourers than did the national workforce.[25]

The working-class population was concentrated in the north and east of the city, with significant pockets in the centre. Around the pre-industrial slums of the old city, Berlin-Mitte, radiated block upon block of tenements built just after mid-century and to accommodate the workers who had flooded in during the boom years after 1870. These made up Berlin's 'classic' working-class areas: Wedding and Prenzlauer Berg to the north, Friedrichshain to the east, Neukölln, Kreuzberg and parts of Schöneberg in the southeast, Moabit and a corner of Charlottenburg in the northwest.[26]

Self-conscious tradition and economic necessity combined to make these streets and neighbourhoods a characteristic realm of working-class life and working-class politics in Berlin. There, as in many large German cities, the development of private and family life was physically limited by a shortage of housing for the working class. Already critical in the nineteenth century, this shortage was not eased by the reform measures and falling birth-rates of the Weimar period. A pre-war estimate observed that some 600,000 inhabitants of Greater Berlin lived in dwellings in which each room was occupied by five people or more. The census of 1925 revealed that 117,430 families were still without a home of their own, while a further 47,000 lived in attic or cellar flats or emergency housing of various kinds.[27] Personal and family life moved out into the courtyards, the pavements and the parks.

The character of the housing market in Wilhelmine Berlin was such that the proletariat was always on the move, from dwelling to dwelling, looking for a cheaper place to live, trying to evade paying the rent or suffering the consequences of being unable to pay. Heinrich Zille's drawings remind us time and again of this mobility, in his depictions of the first of the month, the streets crowded with carts full of furniture, of families slipping out just ahead of the rent collector, of *Trockenwohner*, wheeling their worldly goods from one freshly plastered house to another, only to be turned out each time as the plaster dried and made the house legally fit for habitation.[28] Even in this period, however, there is evidence that allegiance to a neighbourhood was very strong in spite of the necessity of constantly moving around. Thus Günther Dehn, in 1913 the pastor of a protestant congregation in the

heavily proletarian northwest corner of Moabit recalls that, although 'the worker often moved from one flat to another ..., he preferred to stay in the same neighbourhood [*Stadtteil*]'.[29] Between the turn of the century and 1933 a series of events and measures affected the stability of the traditional working-class neighbourhoods. There were two waves of suburban migration. The first followed the emigration of major industries to such inner suburbs as Lichtenberg, Steglitz, Treptow and Spandau before 1914. The second, after the War, drew better-paid workers with small families into new housing estates and garden suburbs; it was accompanied by extensive urban renewal programmes in the inner-city districts, which were well under way though not everywhere completed by the mid-twenties.[30] At the same time, the circumstances of the 1920s may have contributed to the settledness of the remaining population. These included the disappearance of the *Trockenwohner*, with the introduction of mechanical devices for rapidly drying plaster and, more important, the general decline in mobility encouraged by the sharpening of the housing shortage and compounded by state rent controls. The situation became more fluid again after 1929, as rent controls were loosened and large numbers of people were set in motion by the pressures of the Depression; the net result was a decline in the populations of the old working-class neighbourhoods between 1929 and 1933.[31]

An aspect of neighbourhood life in Berlin not captured by official statistics is the concept of the *Kietz*. This expression, taken over from the Slavic language of the Prussian frontier, denoted (and still denotes in Berlin slang) a neighbourhood within a neighbourhood, a coherent community with its own habits and attitudes, usually marked off from the surrounding district by some particular physical feature. Apart from the factories and power-plants, highways and railway-lines that characterize any large city and can serve as the border-posts between neighbourhoods, Berlin had a housing pattern that contributed to the crystallization of such communities in the old proletarian areas: high-density tenements packed together between broad boulevards. The use of the term *Kietz*, which, as we shall see, had itself become highly politicized by the 1930s, reflects a very high degree of local self-consciousness and allegiance to the neighbourhood.[32]

Allegiance to the neighbourhood was not a matter purely of sentiment or sociability. It was underpinned by a history in which the neighbourhood as a physical entity provided both a common source of grievance and a common medium of political expression for the proletariat. This was sometimes an extension of industrial struggles. The transport-workers' strike of 1910, which began in a firm in Moabit, was sustained by the willingness of the local residents and shopkeepers, not only to join in noisy demonstrations which were remembered long after the issues of the strike were forgotten, but also to provide food, blankets and shelter for the

strikers.[33] At other times, the neighbourhood itself, as a collection of streets and houses, was at issue, as in the housing riots which punctuated the city's expansion in the nineteenth century.[34] The practice of combined strikes and demonstrations on the first of May, in which more and more Berlin workers took part every year during the Wilhelmine period, despite official trade-union opposition, was one that recognized the workers' presence in the streets as a positive complement to their withdrawal from the workplace.[35]

At the same time, the very forms of sociability cultivated by the proletariat in the semi-public institutions of working-class neighbourhoods promised solidarity and cohesion in wider struggles. In 1891 Karl Kautsky responded to the arguments of the Social Democratic temperance movement with an observation that reflects very vividly the immediacy of the themes of public and private in the self-consciousness of the labour movement, and the tensions between them:

> The sole bulwark of the proletarian's political freedom ... is the tavern ... the only place where the lower classes can congregate and discuss their common problems. Without the tavern the German proletarian has not only no social, but also no political life ... Should the temperance movement succeed ... in persuading the mass of German workers to avoid the tavern, and, outside the workplace, to concentrate on that family life portrayed to them in such glowing terms ... the cohesion of the proletariat would be broken, it would be reduced to a mass of atoms, disconnected and consequently incapable of resistance.[36]

Kautsky's point – and he was arguing from the experience of the recently rescinded Socialist Law – was that the workers must fight to maintain certain spheres of their collective life as far as possible free from the surveillance and interference of the state. Viewed from above, the neighbourhood had always been the basic unit of administration. The more determinedly the state intervened in daily life, in the person of the police and, more important, through the local administration of welfare and education, the more the neighbourhood vied with the factory as a mould in which working-class experience was formed. At the same time, it gained importance as an arena for day-to-day confrontations with the state and its agents, in which questions of the participation of the proletariat in controlling its own life were contested. With universal manhood suffrage, moreover, the residential area, as electoral district, became a political unit as well. Through the activities of a Social-Democratic movement concerned equally with the transformation of working-class life and the winning of votes all these themes came together to form an image of the working-class neighbourhood in general, and of certain sections of Berlin in particular, that was already highly politicized by the opening years of the Weimar Republic.

It was this tradition that the Communist Party inherited, after the

revolution of 1918/19. The Party's claims began with the city itself. In Berlin the Party had been born and received its baptism of fire; there its greatest leaders Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht had been martyred during the revolutionary battles of 1919. Berlin was the largest single section of the KPD, numbering some 15,000 members in 1927. One tenth of all German Communists lived in the city, and in the last election of the Weimar Republic nearly a third of Berlin's voters chose the KPD.[37] 'No one who did not live through that time in our ranks', writes the former KPD militant and novelist Georg Glaser of his first arrival in the city from his Rhenish home-town,

> can imagine what Berlin, the reddest of all cities on earth outside the Soviet Union, meant to me ... I wandered through the streets for five or six days. I asked my way around and could speak the famous names of ... Wedding, Lichtenberg, Neukölln only with emotion. I looked for bullet-holes in every wall. I stared into the faces of all passersby, for I was convinced that an eye that had once looked over a barricade must be changed for all time.[38]

In March 1930 the Comintern Executive issued a statement which echoed the self-confidence of three generations of organized workers: 'The Bolsheviki began their conquest of the workers from St Petersburg. The KPD is already becoming the *hegemon* in the working-class neighbourhoods of Berlin.'[39]

It was in the traditional areas of working-class settlement that the KPD had its strongholds. 'Red Wedding' was the most celebrated of these. The site of two major electrical works employing over 60,000 people, as well as of large breweries, tanneries and engineering works, Wedding had a working-class population of 57 per cent in 1925. Before the war it had been a Social-Democratic bastion. In the municipal elections of June 1920, from which the KPD abstained, the inhabitants of Wedding gave more than three times as many votes to the left-socialist party, the USPD, as to the SDP. In the Landtag elections of 1921, the KPD participated and won its highest vote in Wedding. The KPD became the strongest electoral party in Wedding at the Reichstag elections of 1924, and retained its voters' loyalty even after the Nazi seizure of power. Wedding was among the handful of areas in Germany that returned a Communist majority in 1933, when the KPD had been banned and its supporters were subject to government terror.[40]

The two other Berlin districts that justified their reputations as Communist bases in the elections of 1933 were Friedrichshain and Neukölln. Like Wedding, though to a lesser degree, these two areas had clear working-class majorities in their populations. Friedrichshain was named after the large park in which the dead of the 1848 revolution were buried. Its employment structure reflected the concentration of the clothing industry in northeastern Berlin, the presence of three large breweries and the proximity of the municipal stockyards.[41] Neukölln, stretching into the

suburbs in the southeast of the city, had had a working-class settlement since its founding as a weavers' colony in the eighteenth century. In the Weimar period, its working population was representative of most of the Berlin trades. Although the KPD did not begin to win electoral majorities there until 1930, Neukölln was a keystone in the Berlin Communist organization. It was reportedly the seat of the largest RFB division in Germany, numbering some 2000 men.[42]

At least as important as Neukölln was Berlin Mitte, the city centre. Here the slums of the old city vied for space with the centres of government and commerce. Alexanderplatz was the site of Police Headquarters and the focus of Berlin's less glamorous night-life; on Bülow-Platz stood Karl-Liebknecht-Haus, the headquarters of the KPD. The Party-district Zentrum, which included this territory, was one of the strongest in the Berlin organization; in 1931 it had some 5000 members, or about one-fifth of the total Berlin membership.[43]

These were the principal strongholds of Berlin Communism, but the Communist presence was strong in all the heavily working-class districts of the north and east. This was demonstrated in the elections of 1932, when the KPD received the majority of votes in nine working-class areas. Besides Wedding, Friedrichshain, Neukölln and Mitte, there were Prenzlauer Berg, Kreuzberg and the industrial suburbs of Lichtenberg, Reinickendorf and Weissensee.[44]

Most of these areas, even the ones which showed a general pattern of Communist sympathy, had their special Communist enclaves, identifiable as *Kietze*. In Wedding and Neukölln, these were identified with the streets in which barricades were set up against the police during the disturbances of May 1929, to be described in Chapter 2: in Wedding the Kösliner Strasse, in Neukölln the twelve blocks bounded by Jägerstrasse, Bergstrasse, Kopfstrasse and Hermannstrasse.[45] The Fischerkietz, the area on and surrounding the southeast end of the island on which the former royal palace stood, was another Communist centre; with its warrens of courts and back alleys it provided cover against police interference for all kinds of activities.[46] A little further north, still in Berlin-Mitte, lay the Linienstrasse and the area just north of the Bülow-Platz, where the old Jewish ghetto ended and a concentration of proletarian housing, small shops and transport firms began. The heart of this area, known as the *Scheunenviertel*, was being demolished during the mid-twenties, but the area continued to provide a comfortable milieu for the KPD members and functionaries who frequented Karl-Liebknecht-Haus and the Berlin KPD headquarters, not far away in the Münzstrasse.[47] In Kreuzberg it was the section south of the Gneisenaustrasse that constituted a red *Kietz*, but there was a significant Communist presence in the streets round about the Görlitz Station as well.[48]

The working-class sections of largely middle-class districts were also

recognized as Communist pockets. Moabit, the section of the Tiergarten district north of the River Spree, was dominated by the works of the Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft and machine-tool, munitions and chemical factories. The streets nearest the factories – the 'Beusselkietz' – were strongholds of the KPD during the Weimar Republic.[49] Schöneberg had its 'Rote Insel' or 'Red Island', in the shadow of the gas-works, between the railway lines south of the Anhalt Station, and the district just south of the Charlottenburg Palace was known as 'Little Wedding'.[50]

At the best of times, the KPD leadership was ambivalent about the Party's relationship to these neighbourhood strongholds. In the Leninist interpretation of Marxist theory the factories, as the point at which workers experienced both common grievance and collective strength and as the bases on which the capitalist system rested, were the principal objects and arenas of the class struggle. Electoral politics was at best of secondary importance. Even as the Party celebrated the neighbourhoods and organized within them its theoreticians failed to digest the growing significance of life outside the factories as a basis for working-class action. If the grievances and means of redress characteristic of the proletariat outside the workplace had traditionally been an important complement to trade-union organization and action, the changes of the mid-1920s made the two sets of experience increasingly distinct. Suburbanization, which meant that Berliners were travelling very long distances to work by the end of the twenties, broke the geographical link between home and workplace for workers in many trades and at many levels of status and income. In the changed labour-market of the 1920s growing numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled workers travelled to short periods of work in several workshops or factories in succession, in different parts of the city and in different sectors of industry, or stayed at home because they could not get work. For them, the neighbourhood might be the one stable frame of reference for the recognition of interests and the construction of remedies. Certainly, the strike that was the traditional weapon of the labour movement lost both its relevance and its effectiveness under these circumstances. More than ever, proletarian groups were likely to draw their understanding of political and economic conditions from relations specific to the neighbourhood: from confrontations with the police and the representatives of the social services, with landlords and shopkeepers, and with other individuals and groups whose sphere of operation was the residential area. Similarly, the means they would find for enforcing their own interests in the context of such confrontations would be those available to the working class outside the workplace: such direct economic power as consumers wield, the use of physical force, and the mobilization of existing local structures of power and influence.

Even before the mass unemployment of the Depression years extended these conditions to embrace masses of workers, the areas that the KPD claimed as its strongholds had populations that were peculiarly subject to the influences of locality. One of the effects of suburbanization was to siphon off the more prosperous sections of the working class from the 'traditional' proletarian neighbourhoods. Most of the districts that were 'left behind' in the process of suburbanization in Berlin were also those that, in the mid-1920s, housed disproportionately high numbers of the least qualified workers: Wedding, Kreuzberg, Friedrichshain, Mitte, the Tiergarten district in which Moabit lay, and probably the older sections of Neukölln[51] – in short, the principal strongholds of the KPD.

The nature of the problems that residents of these neighbourhoods faced and the forms of response available to them are suggested by the fact that in all the Communist-dominated areas appalling living conditions coincided with perceived high rates of crime. It was in these districts that the overcrowding characteristic of nineteenth-century conditions persisted. Combined with the decrepitude of the buildings themselves, these circumstances contributed to disproportionately high rates of infant mortality, communicable disease and death from tuberculosis. These were also the districts that made the greatest demands on the time and resources of the public welfare agencies.[52] In Neukölln in 1929–30, numbers of people equivalent to the district's entire working-class population were processed through the various sections of the state system of social services. They included applicants for unemployment insurance and municipal welfare assistance, children and young people sent away to the country at public expense and entering and leaving approved schools and municipal shelters, and young people involved in court cases.[53] In many cases these numbers represent individuals making contact with several different agencies on separate occasions, but they nevertheless suggest the extent to which powerful agents of economic and social control outside the workplace played a rôle in working-class life.

The incidence of crime in Communist-dominated areas is more problematic. There is no statistical evidence that would make it possible to draw conclusions about officially registered crime rates in various sections of Berlin, but the anecdotal evidence is compelling.[54] Organized crime syndicates operated in Berlin-Mitte, in the proletarian sections of Schöneberg, in 'Little Wedding', and around the Silesian station in Friedrichshain (an area held to be generally unsafe, as were the environs of the Stettin Station, Mitte). Neukölln, Kreuzberg and Wedding were said, during the late 1920s, to be terrorized by organized youth-gangs. In Kreuzberg the area around the Görlitz Station was thought to be one of high crime; in 1932 the Social Democratic daily newspaper *Vorwärts* reported that the Skalitzer Strasse especially, 'appears to be suffering a regular reign of terror

from bandits, who lie in wait for passersby at night, attack and rob them'. Of the Linienstrasse, *Vorwärts* wrote: '... even before the War ... policemen went in pairs'. In 1927 the section of Neukölln that included Hermannstrasse, Berliner Strasse and Bergstrasse was plagued by 'rowdies'. And attacks and robberies in and around the Kösliner Strasse gave rise to repeated complaints during the twenties. *Vorwärts* wrote of its residents in 1931: 'For the most part, the mothers and fathers have previous convictions; what more can they do than pick up work wherever they can find it?' Reflected in these images of criminality is the existence of local networks of power, resting on both economic and physical force (organized crime), a certain readiness to use violence in pursuit of particular goals, a lack of respect for the official structures of authority, and, at the very least, a history of confrontations between residents of the neighbourhoods in question and the police. These were part of life in the neighbourhoods that the KPD claimed for itself.

This is not to say, however, that every member of each of the communities in question took part in such activities. Indeed, it is quite conceivable that the criminality of one section of the working-class community alienated others, against whom it was sometimes directed. The question of divisions *within* the neighbourhood was one of which the KPD's claims to hegemony took no account. In spite of the force of the appeal to a single socialist tradition, places like Wedding were not the same kind of neighbourhoods they had been when Wilhelmine Social Democracy had claimed them. Because they were no longer the only areas where workers could live, they could no longer be seen to embody and reinforce a single working-class interest, as might have been the case in the nineteenth century. If the old proletarian areas had never been anything other than mixed, in terms even of the representation of various occupational and status groups in their working-class populations, they had arguably constituted a terrain on which the various sections of the working class could mix and coalesce, socially and politically, under the leadership of the most qualified and articulate workers, for whom the SPD spoke – although this apparent unity probably depended on the silence or deliberate neglect by Social Democracy of the lowest proletarian strata, rather than their active integration into the community. The physical drawing-off from those neighbourhoods of the workers who benefited in relative and absolute terms from the economic developments of the twentieth century symbolized a divergence in expectations within the working class at the same time as it removed one traditional leadership group. One result of this may have been to intensify the status-anxieties of those relatively well-qualified workers left behind in the old neighbourhoods – who still represented the bare majority of workers in all of them – thereby sharpening the sense of distance and hostility between them and those 'below' them. An important element of

intra-class politics at this level was the fact that since the War the radical left out of which the KPD was formed had in various ways provided a voice for the least experienced, least well-organized and most ill-paid of the proletariat.[55] Another result of the drawing-off of the better-paid was to initiate the diminution of the collective economic strength of the working class in the old neighbourhoods, on which the maintenance of the physical institutions of a solid working-class and socialist culture (most notably the taverns) to some extent depended. This process was catastrophically accelerated by the conditions of worldwide Depression.

All of these conditions tended to exacerbate the practical consequences of more traditional divisions. With the possible exception of certain company towns and public housing projects, no urban working-class community is socially homogeneous. Even predominantly proletarian areas comprise groups of people – shopkeepers, landlords, publicans, policemen, resident or habitually on the scene – whose interests are different from those of their customers, tenants, patrons or charges, as well as occupational groups whose attitudes and aspirations diverge. Even if the Communist Party had not had to compete with Social Democracy for the allegiance of the workers, as the circumstances of its formation made inevitable, its power to control what went on in the neighbourhoods would never have been unchallenged.

It was the raising of just such a challenge by the NSDAP that led to spiralling violence in Berlin, and the fighting between Nazis and Communists developed around the institutions of working-class life in the neighbourhood and along the fissures that existed within it. The National Socialists made the penetration of the KPD's neighbourhood strongholds the first goal of their activities in Berlin, presenting their actions sometimes as a campaign of conquest against enemy territory and sometimes as a crusade to 'free' the neighbourhood from the 'criminal terror' of the Communists. After 1933 the victorious battle for the red Babylon became a standard theme in the self-congratulatory literature of the SA.

Founded at the beginning of 1925, the Berlin NSDAP was for its first year a party of peaceable burghers. Starting in March 1926, the Berlin SA began to form itself: its first members came from the right-wing athletic and paramilitary organizations already active in Berlin. Within a few months, the SA outnumbered the ordinary party members.[56] In the summer of 1926, a combination of aggressive contempt for the political enemy – above all the KPD – and a looking towards working-class and anti-bourgeois elements as a recruiting-ground was already apparent in the SA. The leader of the embryonic Neukölln section of the NSDAP, Reinhold Muchow, deliberately imitated Communist techniques in building up his organization. In a report of August 1926, he described the campaign of the NSDAP to organize the unemployed in Berlin – a form of activity long the preserve of the KPD:

This means nothing less than the first attempt to press forward, little by little, into the strongest and most important bulwarks of Communist domination ..., to undermine them and soften them up ... Berlin National Socialists almost without exception devote their energies to the conquest of the German workers (they are fed up with the bourgeoisie of all descriptions).[57]

To this contesting of the KPD's traditional constituency Joseph Goebbels added a territorial challenge when he was appointed Gauleiter for Berlin the following November. Under his leadership, the National Socialists' declared 'assault on Berlin' began with a series of rowdy meetings in the industrial southwest of the city.[58] On 11 February 1927, Goebbels himself spoke in Pharus-Säle, a traditional KPD meeting-hall in the heart of Wedding, on the subject of 'the collapse of the bourgeois class-state'. Four people were hurt in the brawling between Nazis, police and counter-demonstrators, both inside the hall and in the surrounding streets, that accompanied this first challenge to red hegemony in Wedding.[59] A month later a large group of Berlin SA men attended a meeting in the outlying village Trebbin, at which Goebbels reportedly declared that 'blood had always been the best cement, and would hold them together in the coming struggles'. On the train back to Berlin, five to six hundred of the SA men confronted a carload of RFB men. There ensued a bloody battle in the train which developed into a general mêlée when the train pulled into the Lichterfelde-Ost station where members of both parties were waiting to meet it. Afterwards, the Nazis regrouped outside the station and spent the evening roaming uncontrolled around the city's West End. Even the police, not ordinarily sympathetic to the Communists, regarded the incident as the responsibility of the SA. On its results Muchow reported, with very little exaggeration:

All over the car lie splinters of glass, pools of blood, bits of wood and over 200 stones. The first to be pulled out is a civilian: the Communist Landtag-Deputy Paul Hoffmann. His face is a shapeless bloody mass. One of the actual wire-pullers, whom you can't get at otherwise. He got his deserts.[60]

On 6 May the SA was banned in Berlin.

The ban was lifted the following March. Having maintained its cohesion during the period of illegality, the Berlin SA in early 1928 had about 800 members in nineteen sections. This compared with about 11,000 RFB members.[61] In this year there developed within the Berlin SA the institution of the *Sturmlokal*, or SA-tavern, whose existence both reflected the character of the Nazi assault on the working-class neighbourhoods and helped to shape the pattern of political violence in the capital. Like the members of other political and fraternal organizations, SA men traditionally met and held their functions in the taverns; these were the focus of the Berlin resident's public life. Some of these taverns would certainly have gained the reputation of Nazi hangouts in the early years. But the *Sturmlokal* was something new: a combined clubhouse and soup-kitchen,

often furnished with beds, under the undisputed sovereignty of the SA. The element of security provided to the heavily outnumbered SA by this kind of total environment gave the *Sturmlokal* the character of an operational base, a fortress in enemy territory: '*Sturmlokal*, that is, as it were, the fortified position in the battle zone. It is the sector at the front which offers rest and security in the face of the enemy, recovery and refreshment after strenuous service'.[62] Between 1928 and 1933, and especially after 1930, the *Sturmlokale* not only increased in number but moved closer and closer to the hearts of the 'red' districts, even taking over premises that Communists had traditionally frequented. They thus became both the symbol and the apparent instrument of Nazi penetration of Communist territory.

The Communist Party's response to the propaganda of challenge was to adopt and amplify the image of the SA-man as invader in its own propaganda and, through its anti-fascist defence formations, to organize to enforce its claims to hegemony. But the idea, actively propagated by both parties to the conflict, that the National Socialists were invaders in Communist areas, was misleading. By the early 1930s, at the latest, SA-men in working-class neighbourhoods could be described as outsiders only in a party-political sense. Very often, they were residents of the areas in which they operated, well known to their Communist adversaries. The National Socialist penetration reflected a real growth in popular influence for the NSDAP. In the municipal elections of November 1929, the party was able for the first time to elect thirteen city and fourteen district councillors, and in the Reichstag elections the following September it won over ten per cent of the vote in every district except Wedding. The Reichstag elections of July 1932 brought the NSDAP nearly thirty per cent of the votes in the city, at a time when the Berlin SA claimed over 22,000 members.[63] Conversely, in 1931 over half of a sample of Berlin SA men were described as workers.[64] When a *Sturmlokal* in Friedrichshain was attacked by Communists late in 1931, the police began their investigations by arresting everybody on the premises. Of the sixty men taken into custody, all but eleven of whom admitted belonging to the NSDAP or SA, twenty-nine gave addresses in the immediate neighbourhood of the tavern, nineteen in other sections of Friedrichshain and only eleven in other districts, mostly Kreuzberg and Mitte. Of fifty-three who named a specific trade or occupation, thirty-one were manual workers and three worked in ancillary non-industrial occupations.[65] Paradoxically, then, the period in which the most nearly absolute claims to Communist hegemony were being raised was the one in which such influence as the Party had was being most vigorously, and to some extent successfully, contested.

Within the framework of claim and challenge, events in Berlin followed a development similar to that in the country at large. The records of the Berlin public prosecutor, although by no means comprehensive, suggest the

changing dimensions of the problem:[66] 576 reported cases of violent confrontation between members of opposing political groups (including clashes with the police) break down as follows for the years 1925 to January 1933: 27, 23, 14, 21, 21, 50, 109, 311. Of these reports, 509 came from Greater Berlin. Before 1929 just under one-third of those cases involved clashes between Nazis and Communists; for the years from 1929 to 1933, the proportion was just about three quarters.

During 1931, and even more 1932, the police received a large number of reports that could not be confirmed; in some areas, the claim, 'I was attacked by the Communists', became a handy excuse for the roving *paterfamilias* returning home half-conscious after a night on the town or for the petty criminal caught out in the aftermath of some non-political violent incident.[67] This is a reminder that statistics can be misleading. Indeed, none of the variations in the *reported* incidence of *Zusammenstoss*-violence over time and from place to place can be read as directly indicating more than varying degrees of sensitivity of the police and the public to the much-talked-about phenomenon of violence. But the signs of heightened expectations of violence that appear during the Depression years are themselves significant; changed perceptions suggest a changing reality. In 1931 the police were arresting between twenty and thirty people a day for political activity – not all of them, of course, involved in violent clashes. And towards the end of the year the head of Department IA, the political police, complained to the Police Chief of the resulting strain on his officers in the field: 'The collapse of the political executive is to be feared, if fundamental assistance is not immediately forthcoming.'[68]

The fighting was also becoming more brutal. The Police Chief, Albert Grzesinski, writes of how 'ordinary brawls had given way to murderous attacks'; he dates the beginning of a spiralling series to political murders from the killing of the Communist Heimannsburg in May 1930.[69] By November of 1931, twenty-nine people had died: twelve Communists, six National Socialists, one Stahlhelm member, two Reichsbanner-men, four without known party affiliation, and four police officers; Communists were named as responsible in thirteen cases, National Socialists in eleven.[70]

This was associated with changes in the shape of violence. The breaking-up of public meetings, indoor brawls and spontaneous set-tos between political opponents continued unabated; in election periods, when meeting after meeting was held and representatives of all parties were regularly on the streets, easily identifiable by their clothing or the literature they were distributing, these forms of violence predominated. But at the same time there developed an undercurrent of everyday brutality, a peculiar pattern which included not only series of reciprocal attacks on taverns and headquarters, but also less obviously formal kinds of violent confrontation, often armed, that can be loosely described as streetfighting. This kind of

fighting appeared to have a dynamic of its own. In June of 1930, the SA man Ewald was ambushed in the Fischerkietz. One young Communist was convicted of the act. But the prosecutor in the case despaired of determining who was ultimately to blame in the tangle of allegiances that informed the conflict in the city's centre:

> Between the followers of the KPD and of the NSDAP in the so-called 'Fischerkietz' ... there rages an embittered small-scale war, in which the parties constantly insult, threaten and attack one another, without its being possible to judge which party should be characterized as the attacker.[71]

By this time, the fighting had also become focused, through and around the taverns that were the symbol at once of neighbourhood solidarity and of the assault on the community. While the sense of threat and disruption generated by the SA presence was to be found in all working-class areas by 1932, the prosecutor's records suggest a pattern of geographical concentration in the streetfighting. In the files for 1925 to 1928 there is no significant variation between the numbers of incidents reported in different districts; the highest number of recorded KPD–NSDAP clashes in any single district was four, in Tempelhof. Between 1929 and 1933 Friedrichshain, Mitte, Neukölln and Kreuzberg head the list of trouble-spots, in that order. Wedding comes seventh after Schöneberg and Tiergarten. The apparent relative peacefulness of so politically notorious an area may reflect variations in the character of policing or in the readiness of police and residents to report incidents to the police. Or it may have been an actual consequence of the relative stability of an area which, as a whole, was both more heavily proletarian and more solidly Communist than any other; the district's official historian has remarked that the Weddinger of 1933, so far from being a National Socialist, 'even had an extraordinary sense of security'.[72]

The way the fighting crystallized around the taverns is the most obvious indicator of the extent to which it involved a contest for actual control of specific institutions; this will become clearer in Chapter 5. At the level of individual cases, the mesh between the political fight and the mobilization of local concerns and power structures in the context of particular social and economic conditions is still more apparent. One illustration of this is the case of the murder of Horst Wessel. The case has the disadvantage of inviting trivialization by the nature of the kind of people and incidents involved, but it is one that is fairly well documented even in the published literature. What makes it interesting from our point of view is that the murder of one Nazi thug by members of a Communist squad and their associates involved three distinct but by no means separate stories.[73]

At the time he was shot, in January 1930, the former student Horst Wessel was involved in a series of disputes. First, his activities as a

particularly brutal and provocative SA-Sturmführer, much given to 'clean-up' operations in the taverns around the Silesian station and in the western end of Friedrichshain where he lived, made him generally hated by the local Communists. Second, the prostitution of the woman he was living with had brought him into conflict with local pimps, who had the backing of one of the organized crime syndicates (*Ringvereine*) in the area. Finally, the fact that he had a woman living with him meant that he was in trouble with his landlady, and this was what finally led to his death. She was afraid that she would lose her rights to the flat that she sublet to Wessel (as well as a useful addition to her income) if his own 'sub-tenant' did not pay rent. She made repeated requests to this effect, and finally demanded that Wessel's companion either pay rent herself or move out. She was answered with obstinate refusal and finally with threats. Wessel's landlady was the widow of a Communist, and although she had been estranged from the local Communist organization since insisting that her husband have a church burial, it was to his old comrades that she turned for help. She sought out a group of former RFB men who called themselves 'Sturmabteilung Mitte' in their tavern. After some hesitation it was decided that this was as good an opportunity as any to teach Wessel a lesson; as recently as the previous day a Communist had been shot in a fight in which Wessel was assumed to have been involved. At their trial, these defendants claimed that their intention had been to talk things over with Wessel and, if necessary, forcibly evict him. At this point the third element of Wessel's situation came into operation. The Communists sent a messenger to a nearby tavern to ask a local tough by the name of Ali Höhler to help them out. It is not clear whether Höhler had any but a social relationship to the Communist movement; he claimed to his lawyer that he was unpolitical, and that the others had asked his aid solely 'because it was pretty well known that it would take a lot to put the wind up me, and because nothing was ever pulled off in our district without I was in it'. More important, Wessel was known to be armed, and the Communists knew that Höhler had a gun. Also, as Höhler rapidly discovered, he had his own dispute with Wessel, since he was himself a pimp and *Ringverein* member. In the event, it was Höhler who did the shooting.

III

The murder of Horst Wessel involved three events: the settlement of a dispute arising within an unofficial and indeed illegal economy by means on the whole familiar to the underworld; the attempt to remedy a material grievance, made acute by the structure of the housing market and the general economic situation, by means of physical confrontation which conventionally appeared in landlord-tenant relationships only in the

highly qualified form of forcible evictions; and the expression of party-political enmities through violence on a substantially new scale. To say that streetfighting had both a social basis and a social function 'on the ground' is not to deny the significance of the political movements in whose name it was carried on. Indeed the distinction between the political movement and the 'social context' is an artificial and sometimes misleading one. When people engaged in *Zusammenstoss*-violence, then they did so as members of a movement, as Nazis or as Communists. This is true, whether they acted violently because they belonged to a movement or joined one movement in order to answer the violence of the other - parallel developments that characterized the KPD rank and file at this time. In either case, during the late 1920s and early 1930s, specific political labels provided the spur to violence and its rationale.

The ideological posture and organizational style of the National Socialists were such as to make physical violence an acceptable and encouraged element of party life, especially in the SA. But the participation of Communists in the 'battle for the streets' was more problematic, since their leaders and spokesmen nationally were distinctly ambivalent about activities of this kind. The KPD leadership was not free to formulate its policies as a simple response to events that bore directly on the rank and file of the labour movement. The Party's character as an organization of tens of thousands which periodically set out to mobilize and draw in thousands more meant that it could not remain aloof from local conditions. But the Party defined itself as the 'vanguard of the working class.... embodying the most essential experiences of the entire proletarian struggle... representing day by day the permanent, general interests of the entire class' - a position achieved 'by the class-consciousness of the proletarian vanguard, by its devotion to the revolution ... and by the correctness of its political leadership'.[74] Accordingly, the KPD operated within the framework of a theoretical understanding of the proper means and ends of political action as inherited from Marx and Engels, transformed by Lenin and interpreted by the ideologues of the Comintern. And from the mid-1920s the members of the Comintern Executive (ECCI) intervened with increasing directness to guide the activities of the European Communist Parties.[75] This made it possible for those parties to be mobilized in the interests of the internal and foreign policies of the Soviet leadership. More generally, it meant that the activities of the German Party were subject to constant review and correction by people standing outside the German situation. The many interventions that the ECCI made in the life of the KPD between 1929 and 1933 (described in detail in Chapter 3) bespeak *both* a certain insensitivity to the pressures under which rank and file and leadership alike operated *and* - by the same token - a relatively sober assessment of the immediate prospects for revolutionary action.[76] This assessment was important

because during that period all undertakings of the KPD were dominated by the view of the Comintern analysts that Western capitalism had entered a 'Third Period' of development, in which it would be possible to 'organize a revolutionary situation' in Germany. Although this analysis foresaw a crisis of the kind that did in fact develop in Germany, it initially offered very little scope for an appreciation of the aspect of the crisis peculiar to Germany, namely the rise of the NSDAP. Moreover, the revolutionary policies of the 'Third Period' were couched primarily in terms of action within the factories and agitation among the workers, specifically among members of the SPD and the Free Trade Unions. This served to confirm an orthodoxy in which the most striking peculiarity of the NSDAP, SA terror, appeared as an anomaly. Operating *outside* the factories, outspokenly independent of both state and employers and openly appealing to emotions and illusory interests, the SA in the large cities challenged the workers to respond in kind, with methods entirely foreign to the traditions of the labour movement.

But by the end of 1929 it was apparent that some kind of direct response had to be made – indeed, that the rank and file were already mobilizing for self-defence and that the Party must take up their cause or lose them. And it is possible to locate three areas of KPD policy in which a tactic of violent response to Nazi terror could be accommodated. The first and most important of these was the policy of the 'united front from below' with Social Democrats; the violence of the SA threatened both Social Democrats and Communists, and the Party that responded most vigorously could hope to win support from both. The second was the Party's approval of all kinds of violence as a solvent of 'bourgeois legalism' and public order and as a training-ground for insurrectionary cadres in the proto-revolutionary period. During the Depression *Zusammenstoss*-violence coincided with spontaneous outbursts of popular anger in the form of riots and violent demonstrations and strikes; the KPD approved, encouraged and did its best to organize such actions. The third, and least explicit was the 'street politics' pursued by the Party during the Depression. Without abandoning its conviction of the primacy of the factories, the KPD leadership came to view activities within the neighbourhood as legitimate. The continued ties of the KPD to residential areas and its long-standing but rather shamefaced practice of agitating around non-workplace concerns were mobilized and developed so that the Communist movement more or less deliberately adopted and legitimized anxieties and forms of action native to the working class in its neighbourhoods, hoping to politicize them and broaden their base. The 'battle for the streets' with the SA, defined by both parties as a fight for and about the neighbourhoods, fitted directly into the 'street politics' of the KPD. Indeed, the 'street politics', itself a direct response to the way that conditions of mass unemployment affected the possibilities for

working-class action, represents a direct link between the neighbourhood structures around and through which streetfighting developed and the Party in whose name it was carried on.

This link proved problematic as the KPD leadership began to qualify its approval of fighting back. Once it had been accepted that the NSDAP was *the* fascist mass-movement foreseen by the analysis of the 'Third Period', then the physical fight against the SA, in KPD parlance the '*wehrhafter Kampf gegen den Faschismus*', became a subordinate part of a much wider struggle against fascism. This demanded that physical violence be tempered with political argument. In addition the aim of all forms of action in this period was to mobilize large numbers of people and involve them simultaneously in economic and physical action. Consequently the KPD leadership drew a distinction between an ideal of 'mass terror' and 'individual terror', gang-style or individual acts of violence against the Nazis, which it condemned. But each attempt to introduce a modification in the *wehrhafter Kampf* met with resistance, and by the end of 1931 sections of the movement were in open revolt over the leadership's attempt to suppress 'individual terror' once and for all. Those who revolted were the groups most deeply involved in the *wehrhafter Kampf*, the Party's youth and the members of the antifascist defence organizations. Consideration of the ways in which Party policy was articulated and of the attitudes and activities of the Berlin streetfighters themselves suggests several reasons for their discontent, and also that what appeared to be a single impulse to resistance within the Party organization arose out of several different sets of experience and expectation. Not least of the problems in relations between leadership and rank and file was the different views they had of the fight. The leadership evaluated its importance and effectiveness in the light of national and international considerations, while individual streetfighters saw only the immediate threat of Nazi terror. Even within the leadership, however, there was a tension between the demands of theoretically correct and systematic organization and the need to maintain popular agitation and action at a constant high pitch. Expressed as a contradiction between propaganda and reasoned policy, this made the actual position of the KPD leadership unclear and added to the considerable difficulties of translating the official analysis into practice. There existed a similar tension between the policy of the Party's political leadership and the attitudes purveyed and encouraged within the Communist defence organizations, operating with their own martial traditions and under conditions of extreme police repression. In practice, moreover, any policy that depended, like the policy of mass terror, on the use of economic power, was bound to be undermined by the economic weakness of the working class in the Depression.

Finally, however, it was the character of the *wehrhafter Kampf* as a fight in and for the neighbourhood that reinforced 'individual terror' in Berlin.

Among the streetfighting rank and file, some, especially older militants show signs of being motivated by ideas about the revolutionary fight against fascism and images of national political developments absorbed from KPD arguments and propaganda. But the young workers who bore the brunt of the fighting, while they may well have yearned for a revolution as the only solution to intolerable circumstances, appear to have seen the fight against fascism almost entirely in terms of answering the threat that the SA posed to their freedom of movement and way of life. Their social attitudes and organizational life are characterized by the coexistence of party-political codes with practices and interests inherent in the culture of the neighbourhood. Among these was the practice of physical violence by organized gangs in defence of territory, whose utility the KPD acknowledged by attempting to recruit from the Berlin youth gangs or cliques. Similarly, the analysis of the biographies of a group of streetfighters shows them to have been people with particularly strong local ties who would have responded to the KPD's neighbourhood-based agitation: overwhelmingly young, living in crowded households in the areas where they were born, belonging to trades which suffered disproportionately from long- and short-term cycles of unemployment or which were highly localized or which had a culture of physical strength and violence, and subject in their daily lives to the intrusions of the police and other public agencies.

The question, 'why do members of a party resist the policies of their leaders?' may seem a nonsense to anyone who has studied political movements, since it rests on an idea of absolute obedience that evaporates as soon as it is examined. But just such assumptions have informed the historiography of German (and international) Communism, and this reflects the fact that an ideal of rigid party discipline was central to the KPD's own self-image. The testimony of Party veterans indicates that for many militants the breaking of discipline, when not unthinkable, was a difficult and painful step taken only as a last resort[77]–although one of the conclusions of this work must be that at certain times and in certain places, in the absence of democratic structures for the expression of internal dissent, the room for negotiation between leadership and rank and file was considerable. To examine the lines along which Party unity fractured is thus to elucidate a series of contradictions specific to the KPD. But while their consequences were particularly dramatic in the context of the Party's self-image, the ambiguities of the Communist movement were not so different from those inherent in any political movement. And the social conditions that exacerbated the contradictions affected a much greater section of the working class than ever belonged to the KPD.

2

The Party, the neighbourhood and the uses of violence in the 'Third Period'

In order to understand the context in which one form of violent action arose among Communists, it is necessary to consider the place that violence of any kind had in the official tactics of their party. Violent action against the Nazis was one of a series of agitational methods being propagated in this period, ranging from public demonstrations to various forms of direct, extra-legal self-help, all characterized by the exercise of physical force. In this chapter some of those methods will be described and their functions examined. There are several ways in which an analysis of this kind might be approached: in terms of the tactical prescriptions of the Communist leadership, of the general economic and social conditions of political activity, or of the character of the KPD's constituency. A combination of these approaches makes it possible to see the Party's violent agitation as the product of a specific conjuncture of social and political circumstances. The exercise of physical force, as a form of the street-politics being pursued by the KPD, appears as a characteristic function of the relationship between the Party and the working-class neighbourhoods that were so much a focus of the fight between Communists and Nazis.

The association of the KPD with certain residential areas had a firm basis in reality, not only in terms of electoral support but also in patterns of association and the structure of daily life. Initially a legacy of pre-war Social Democracy, the existence of neighbourhood 'strongholds' by the 1930s reflects the increasing isolation of the Communist Party from the majority of organized labour and from the factories which the Party regarded as the primary sites of class struggle. This was in turn the result of an interaction between two historical facts. The first was the KPD's innate tendency to define itself in opposition to the SPD, the party of the majority.[1] Secondly, the rationalization of major industries during the mid-1920s, which transformed patterns of employment, of labour mobility, relations between employers and workers and between different sections of the working class and introduced the German labour force to the effects of chronic unemployment on a large scale, contributed both to a hardening of the

fronts between Social Democracy and Communism and to the power of trade-union bureaucracy and employers alike to enforce sanctions against radicals. The material difficulties that faced known Communists who tried to accomplish anything from within the labour movement or inside the factories were reflected in the disproportionate numbers of unemployed in the KPD and a high rate of membership-fluctuation. Repeated campaigns for the 'Bolshevization' of the Party from 1924 on never succeeded in their aim of shifting the centre of gravity of Party organization from the street-cell to the factory-cell.[2] Meanwhile, the KPD encouraged the consolidation of a 'party culture', closely intertwined with the everyday life of the neighbourhood, through its mass organizations which appealed to people on the basis of common interests outside the work-place.[3]

But real though they were, the 'party culture' and the neighbourhood 'stronghold' were neither comprehensive nor unambiguous in their political value for the Party. It is clear that the Party's sphere of influence never extended to all the members of a working-class community, still less to all the residents of a neighbourhood. More generally, as the rate of fluctuation suggests, the KPD even at the best of times had difficulty in retaining a dependable following – whether drawn from the working class or from other sections of the population – outside a relatively limited group of the existentially committed. At the same time, those whose allegiance was a question of long-term commitment or way of life tended to weigh the Party down at its centre. It was in the Communist strongholds that it was possible to be a Communist without following the Party line, precisely because being a Communist meant more than adopting the current policy as one's own. And the 'party culture' had to compete constantly with the elements of other local traditions and concerns. The Party's problem was always to overcome the inertia at the centre – in a sense to politicize its own membership – while at the same time giving some stability to the fringes.

After 1928, these problems and contradictions were thrown into relief by the Party's conviction that a revolutionary crisis was approaching. This dictated a new phase of expansion, of opening-out, for the KPD. It gave special urgency to the establishment of a right relationship with social groups outside the Party – the 'masses' – at the same time as it set the Party the technical task of preparing cadres and masses alike for the final struggle.

I

The foundation for Communist tactics in the years leading up to 1933 was provided by the decisions of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, which met in Moscow from July to September 1928. The function of the Congress was to ratify and systematize a change in Comintern policy which had already taken place: the adoption of an 'ultra-

left' tactic aimed at discrediting and undermining Social Democracy. The tactic which required that the Communist Parties direct their front-line attacks against the Social Democrats in their own countries was originally formulated for use in the French election campaign in 1928. It was already apparent in embryonic form in the discussions and resolutions of the Ninth Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee (ECCI) in February of that year.[4]

Such a sharp turn in policy was required by the situation in Moscow: for his own intra-party struggles, Stalin needed a new line as a measure of orthodoxy and a means by which to range the Comintern and national Communist Parties behind himself. During the year 1928 it also became clear that the weakening of Social Democracy was the key to preventing the rapprochement between France and Germany from which the Soviet Union had everything to fear. The revolutionary analysis produced by the Sixth Congress was thus to some extent a rationale for a policy which in the first instance had nothing to do with revolution, but the *logic* of the revolutionary perspective was consistently maintained in theoretical and policy debates.[5]

The new analysis was contained in the theses on 'The International Situation and the Tasks of the Communist International' proposed by Bukharin and approved by the Congress.[6] At its centre lay the observation that post-war world capitalism had entered into a 'Third Period' of development. The first period of revolutionary activity in Russia and Europe had ended with the failure of the German revolution of 1923. It had been followed by the period of relative stabilization of capitalism, in which the struggles carried on by the working class were primarily defensive in nature. In the 'Third Period', continued expansion of the capitalist economies would serve to accelerate the development of the inherent contradictions of the system. Markets would shrink as production rose, and this would give rise to colonial conflicts, to wars among the imperialist powers and between them and the Soviet Union. To the effects of continuing rationalization in industry on the workforce would be added the pressures of war-production and mobilization; the result would be intensified class conflict. Moreover, the concentration of industry and the centralizing of finance would make the coalescence of government and capital – the class nature of the bourgeois state – all the more apparent. In consequence, economic conflicts would tend to assume a political character, while at the same time parliamentary democracy would suffer a crisis of identity and a loss of its ability to maintain itself by traditional methods. The apparent prosperity and continuing stability of the capitalist system (which led even some delegates to the Congress to question the actuality of a new stage of development)[7] must in the foreseeable future 'lead inevitably to the most severe intensification of the general capitalist crisis'.

The bourgeoisie could not be expected to remain inactive in the face of the crisis. Among the methods which it would use to retain its positions of power the Comintern theses isolated two: the coopting of the Social Democrats into the political power structure and the institution of a fascist régime. The Comintern theoreticians argued that a fusion of these two processes could be expected to occur, under the rubric 'social fascism'. This concept had been current within international communism since the early twenties; it reflected the conviction that Social Democracy's historical rôle was the betrayal of the revolution and was available for mobilization whenever that conviction had to be conveyed to the masses.[8] As introduced at the Sixth Congress and elaborated in the discussions of the following year, the term 'social fascism' was to be a source of confusion and error within the KPD during the 'Third Period'. This is not the place to discuss its implications in detail. But the Communists' view of the prospects for world revolution created by the approaching crisis and of the strategy needed if the Party was to take advantage of them must be understood against the background of the Comintern analysis of Social Democracy, fascism, and the relations between them.

In the discussions at the Sixth Congress and in the documents adopted there the term 'fascism' was used to mean both a type of bourgeois régime and a political movement. The 'process of fascization' was the term used to sum up the gradual concentration of economic and political power and the resulting transformation of bourgeois democracy into an openly reactionary dictatorship. Such a dictatorship could become truly fascist, given certain historical conditions:

> instability of capitalist relationships; the presence in large numbers of socially declassed elements; the impoverishment of broad strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia; discontent among the rural petty bourgeoisie; finally the constant threat of proletarian mass action.

These are the words of the new Programme adopted by the Congress. It goes on to detail the content of fascist demagogy and culminates in the characterization of fascism as a 'method of directly exercising the bourgeois dictatorship' which creates a 'hierarchy of fascist fighting squads, a fascist party machine, and a fascist bureaucracy'.[9]

The theses, having an immediate and tactical rather than a long-range programmatic purpose, take a slightly different line. There, fascism appears as a reactionary mass movement, created by the bourgeoisie through exploitation of the discontent of the petty bourgeoisie 'and even of certain strata of declassed proletarians'. Its function is 'to bar the road to revolution' and 'to win power' by the use of force against workers' and peasants' organizations.

As presented at the Sixth congress, the concept of '*social* fascism' was

essentially a rhetorical figure, an oxymoron calculated to point up the threat from the Social Democrats. The Comintern theses treated fascism and the coopting of the Social Democrats as alternative strategies for the embattled bourgeoisie, and adduced concrete examples for the latter and the dangers it posed for the working class: the deliberate embourgeoisement of the trade-union bureaucracy, the readiness of Social Democrats in government to avail themselves of the existing instruments of repression, and their resolute support of anti-Soviet foreign policies.

The discussions at the Congress did not go very far beyond this – the sense that the old rivalry between Communism and Social Democracy was reaching a critical point as 'Reformism' pursued its own traitorous tradition. Any broader theoretical implications of this were treated gingerly by the Comintern analysts. Bukharin himself warned: 'To throw Social Democracy and fascism into one pot ... would be both analytically and tactically wrong.'[10] When 'social fascism' as such was discussed, it was already evident at the congress that the theory in its most rigorous form embodied an arbitrary assimilation of the image of the Social Democrats to the party-régime schema current in the discussion of fascism. It was suggested that the process of absorption of the Social Democratic leadership into a reactionary government must be accompanied by fundamental changes within the socialist parties themselves, corresponding to the development of a fascist party in the process of fascization.

'Social fascism' thus appears as a propaganda formula with little theoretical foundation. But it gained force as both theory and epithet precisely in those situations where Communists already had long-standing material reasons to distrust Social Democracy. This was true in Germany, where, against a background of years of mutual recrimination and sense of betrayal, all the conditions laid down by the Comintern theses seemed to be fulfilled. The elections of 1928 had produced a cabinet led by the Social Democrat Hermann Müller. The new chancellor's own negative attitude to the Soviet Union made him especially susceptible to the pressure for a hard line against the Soviets which was coming from his own party.[11] The new SPD Minister of the Interior, Carl Severing, was a familiar adversary of the Communists; as Commissar for the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial district in 1919 and 1920 and a Prussian Interior Minister in 1921 and 1923 he had been instrumental in frustrating each attempt to turn discontent into insurrection during the critical years of the Republic.[12]

Since 1925 Prussia had been governed by a coalition under Social Democratic Minister-President Otto Braun. Braun himself was outspoken in his anti-Communism, as was his Interior Minister – from November 1930 Police-Chief in Berlin – Albert Grzesinski. Throughout 1928 relations between the KPD and the Prussian authorities were strained. The air was thick with plans for the suppression of radical political and paramilitary

organizations, which the Communists interpreted as camouflage for a judicial assault on the KPD and the RFB. On 26 May, a clash between RFB marchers and police in Berlin left one person dead and four others suffering from gunshot wounds. Only the pressure of time prevented the police from prohibiting the annual RFB congress, scheduled for the next day.[13]

By the middle of the next year, the prophecies of the Comintern had begun to fulfil themselves, as the newly aggressive posture of the Communists provoked sharp reactions from their opponents. During the second half of 1928, fights between opposing paramilitary organizations cost four lives. On 13 December, the Social Democratic Police-Chief of Berlin, Zörgiebel, issued a ban on open-air demonstrations in the city, and in March the prohibition was extended to the whole of Prussia. The ban was still in force on 1 May, the day on which Berlin's workers traditionally took to the streets in mass meetings and processions. The Communists had no choice but to challenge it, although there were anxieties within the Party leadership about the KPD's capacity to carry out such a large-scale mobilization. Pressure from the locals appears to have outweighed initial doubts about the wisdom of illegal demonstrations. While the Social Democrats organized their celebrations in closed halls, the KPD publicly called the workers on to the streets. It appealed to them to organize peaceful demonstrations but to be prepared to strike on 2 May 'if Zörgiebel dares to spill workers' blood'.[14]

The events of 1 May 1929 have to be seen as a decisive moment in the experience of the Berlin working class as well as of the KPD. The Communist policy of raising practical challenges to the system was nearly as much an accepted and familiar feature of the political scene as the tradition of May Day itself. In spite of the rhetoric of bloodshed used by both KPD and official police spokesmen, before the event, few people can have anticipated the violence of the police response. On the day itself, demonstrating groups were confronted by specially drafted riot-police who used baton charges and pistol shots to break them up. As the legal indoor meetings began to break up towards evening and the numbers of people on the streets grew, there developed running battles between police and crowds all over the city. Dozens of people were arrested simply because they found themselves on the wrong side of a police line or as they attempted to flee a charge; in the aftermath there were numerous complaints of people having been beaten in police vans and at the station-houses to which they were taken. The more significant development, however, came in the following days when whole districts of working-class Berlin were effectively placed under martial law. The area around the Kösliner Strasse and the section of Neukölln around the Hermannstrasse, where the police had encountered barricades and, they believed, sniping on the night of 1 May, were sealed off by police cordon for three days. During that period the police employed carbines,

personnel-carriers and armoured cars, directing their fire sometimes at the housefronts, to subdue the areas and 'capture' the barricades repeatedly constructed to hinder their progress. On 3 and 4 May whole streets of apartment blocks in the sealed-off areas were searched and arrests made on a large scale.[15]

Among those caught off guard by the events was the KPD leadership itself. The rapidity and fierceness of popular response to the police generated dismayed surprise. Even before 1 May there had been tensions between the Central Committee and rank-and-file representatives over the leadership's refusal to permit the issue of guns to the demonstrators. As the fighting developed the Party central was in danger of losing contact with local branches of the RFB; provoked and isolated, these were determined, not without some encouragement from the Party locals, to carry on the fight to a successful conclusion. There were demands for more guns, and the efforts of the Party to call off the action evoked anger and bitterness.[16]

The KPD leadership asserted publicly that it had never lost control of its membership; even within Party circles it was said that what sniping there was had come from non-Communist elements.[17] Moreover, there were grounds for optimism in other aspects of the popular reaction to the events. On 2 May, the Party issued its strike call, invoking the horrors of the fighting in lurid terms. The response was by no means overwhelming, given the size of the Party and the gravity of the events, but the KPD chose to see it as an encouraging sign: it was claimed that 25,000 had struck in Berlin on 2, 3 and 4 May, and that another 50,000 had walked out in sympathy in other Communist centres throughout the country. In Berlin, the strike movement 'had a real mass-character among the construction workers, pipefitters, shoemakers and tobacco workers'.[18] But there was no denying the dreadful consequences of the fighting itself. Over thirty people were killed, none of them police officers, all but one (who was hit by a speeding police van) by police bullets. Nearly two hundred were wounded. Some 1200 were arrested; forty-four of those were imprisoned, of whom five belonged to the RFB. *Die Rote Fahne* and the Party's provincial press were banned for several weeks. A decree of 3 May by the Prussian Interior Ministry officially ordered the dissolution of the RFB. By the fifteenth, the RFB and its youth arm, the Rote Jungfront (RJ), were illegal in all parts of Germany.[19]

When the Twelfth Party Congress of the KPD met a little over a month later in a hall a few blocks from the scene of the fighting, its deliberations were dominated by the memory of the barricades. The resolution adopted by the congress called the events of May 'a turning-point in political developments in Germany ... The preconditions are appearing for the approach of an immediately revolutionary situation, with the development of which the armed uprising must inevitably step onto the agenda.'[20] At the

same time, the confrontation between Social Democratic police and Communist workers was 'a necessary result of the whole previous development', a confirmation of the ultra-left tactic. Since the period between the Moscow and Berlin Congresses had also seen a bitter fight within the KPD leadership, ending with the expulsion of the Party's right wing, there was little opposition raised at the KPD assembly to a vigorous restatement of the 'social fascism' thesis: 'Social Democracy is preparing, as an active and organizing force, the establishment of the fascist dictatorship.'[21] At the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI a month later, the theory in its complete form was established for the international Communist movement.[22]

The first consequence of the Berlin events for the Party was thus to confirm the political analysis of the 'Third Period'. Before considering the further consequences we must return to considering the tactics implied by that analysis. As a sign of the crisis of capitalism, the fascization going forward on all sides represented a promise as well as a threat. If the Communists were to take advantage of the crisis and transform it into a revolutionary situation, they must not only fight the fascists and the social fascists, but also look to replace them as an 'active and organizing force' in the politicization of the masses. Counterrevolutionary movements which throve on mass discontent and the insecurity of the holders of power pointed the way for a revolutionary strategy of simultaneously broadening and toughening the Communist Party.

The Sixth Congress had been devoted primarily to presenting an analysis of the situation and fixing the broad outlines of Communist strategy. The Tenth Plenum took up the work of elaborating concrete tactics in the light of a perceived 'increase in the elements of a revolutionary upswing' since the congress. At the centre of the discussions stood Manuilski's speech on 'the problem, of the greatest importance in the third period, of how the decisive mass-element [*ausschlaggebende Massivelement*] of the working class can be brought closer to its vanguard, and how this vanguard can be broadened, towards the victorious struggle for the proletarian dictatorship'.[23] Manuilski also spoke of the 'question of the conquest of the majority of the working class', and thereby directed attention to the new offensive against the majority party.

The means by which the Communists aimed to win the leadership of the working class was the creation of a 'united front from below'. This meant separating the Social Democratic and trade union rank and file from its traditional leaders. One aspect of this was a concerted campaign of exposing the corruption of the reformist leadership through propaganda and action. The other was the recruitment of disillusioned Social Democrats to the Communist cause.

The pursuit of the united front from below involved not only intensified

application of traditional organizational techniques, but also a positive change in tactics. The Party itself had to provide an alternative leadership. It must prove its claim to be the only party of the working class by taking the initiative in organizing the conflicts of the pre-revolutionary period: 'The working masses must be able to convince themselves, on the basis of deeds, that the Communist Party is not a fire-proof safe for the accumulation of influence, or a bank-book in which they can deposit their revolutionary energies until the final decisive battle.'[24] The difference between the tactics of the second period and those of the third was the difference between agitation and propaganda, on the one hand, and the 'independent leadership of struggles' on the other. The most important of these struggles were to be the industrial ones, since they had the greatest bearing both on the interests of the workers and on the stability of the capitalist system. The 'preparation, setting in motion, and carrying through of economic struggles, even against the will of the Reformists' was the first major task to which the KPD applied itself after the Sixth Congress.[25]

Industrial workers were not the only section of the population on which the Communist party set its sights in the 'Third Period'. The need to organize the broad middle strata, along with the unorganized sections of the working class, also became acute in the crisis. The Twelfth Party Congress of the KPD resolved:

> The Party must forge the alliance of the revolutionary proletariat with all labouring people [*Werktätigen*] with renewed vigour and firmly anchor the hegemony of the proletariat within this alliance. Failure to fulfil this task would mean turning over broad masses of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the poor peasantry to Reformism and fascism.[26]

Strikes as such had little relevance to the situation of these people; the Party pledged itself to articulating their special needs, and to enforcing their demands through popular action outside the factory. By combining strikes and popular action, the Party could achieve a new alignment of class forces. And if the workers and other 'labouring masses' were to see their causes as a single revolutionary struggle, the two forms of activity must be tightly coordinated on every occasion.

The 'indivisible connection' of strikes with street demonstrations and mass-meetings became a central tenet of Communist tactics. Organized support outside the factory meant that the strike was sustained and that its impact was widened. It contributed to the politicization of strikes, visibly underlining the propaganda efforts of the Communists to join the immediate demands of the strikers to wider political slogans. At the same time, the strike itself was regarded as the most effective form of mass action in support of purely political, or non-industrial demands; the converse of politicizing each economic conflict was the organization of industrial action as the climax of every political campaign. All roads led to the political strike:

'We must understand that the decisive weapon of the working class today is not the political demonstration, but the political mass-strike, which alone (through consciousness of the gravity of the cause and of the sacrifices made for it) turns a demonstration into a real mass action.'[27]

Strikes and mass demonstrations were mutual guarantees of short-term success; in combination, they were the means to the long-range victory of the revolution. The Comintern Programme established a hierarchy of 'strikes, strikes combined with demonstrations, strikes combined with armed demonstrations, and finally the general strike combined with armed insurrection'. By the time the Tenth Plenum met, the mass-strike had moved to the centre of tactical discussion. This was largely the result of the events of May 1929. 'This most powerful action since 1923', Manuilski said, had 'put the question of the political mass-strike on the agenda as the proletariat's most important weapon in the present stage of the labour movement'.[28]

II

There was a whole series of lessons to be learnt from the Berlin events. The feasibility of the political mass-strike was the most important of these. But the unexpected vehemence with which the residents of Wedding and Neukölln reacted to the actions of the police also stimulated discussion of the form and function of demonstrations as such. The article which summarized the conclusions of the Tenth Plenum regarding the mass strike ended with an analysis of the importance of the 'battle for the streets' in a period when 'the masses learn propaganda and agitation primarily on the streets'.[29] And May Day 1929 had shown the conditions under which this battle would have to be carried on. In the context of the Party's deliberations on the problem of repression and legality, the demonstration took on an importance of its own as a tactical instrument.

The doctrine of the 'Third Period' held out the prospect of direct reprisals against the Communist parties and their auxiliary bodies as well as of continuous encroachments on the workers' freedom. After the events of May 1929, Hermann Remmele wrote: 'The prohibition of our party, the theft of party property, the suppression of the party's press and literature can ... be expected shortly ... The persecutions will be more terrible and more insidious than ever before.'[30] It would be four years before the German Communists would have to face the concentration camps, courts martial, and firing squads predicted by another Comintern publicist.[31] But in the last years of the Weimar Republic, political activity was already encumbered by repeated local, provincial and national prohibitions on public gatherings and by bans on various radical publications and organizations. Aimed in

principle at extremists of both right and left, these measures were applied with greater consistency and regularity to the Communists, as anti-subversive legislation had been throughout the Republic's history.[32] In the three months following the issuance of an Emergency Decree for Combating Political Excesses in 1931, there were 3418 cases of police action or prosecution against political organizations, their meetings, marches and literature under its provisions; 2027 of these cases involved action against the KPD itself, not including its auxiliary organizations. In the eyes of the Comintern, the German party in 1930 was already only 'semi-legal'.[33]

Questions of legality and illegality were thus a major preoccupation of the Communists from 1929 on. These questions were fundamental to the survival of the Party and the success of the revolution, and their solution was not simple: how was the Party to avoid being driven underground without abandoning its revolutionary activities, how to carry on those activities without provoking all-out reprisals? For the Party itself, the tacticians' answer was a characteristically paradoxical one, demanding a high degree of discipline and technical sophistication from the Party machine and putting at risk the relationship between party and masses. The Party must prepare to operate underground if necessary, by tightening up its organization and establishing special structures able to function conspiratorially – an illegal '*Apparat*'. The methods of illegal work should be practised and perfected at every opportunity, even while the Party itself was still officially tolerated. Meanwhile, the Party must establish itself and its influence so firmly among the masses as to frustrate any ban. And, of course, it must mount popular agitation against any and all repressive legislation.[34]

Important as were their implications for the way the Party operated, these were essentially precautionary measures. The long-range strategy of the Communists proposed another, more drastic answer to repression: to provoke it, to defy it, and in the process to forge a revolutionary mass-movement. 'The slogan of the day is: construction of an illegal *Apparat*, but by no means becoming submerged in illegality. The slogan of the day is – not "exploitation of all the legal opportunities", but development of the mass struggle of the proletariat to burst the bounds of police and trade-union legality.'[35]

Seen in these terms, the function of popular action in the 'Third Period' went beyond the simple manifestation of opinion or even the enforcement of concrete demands. Every action organized by the Communists was seen as a blow to the system, and in this character each action was designed to instruct and engage its participants. The achievement of the stated aims of any individual strike or demonstration was of material importance, both to the prestige of the Party and to the welfare of the workers, and the Party

celebrated its tactical victories as such. But in the light of history, it was the action itself that counted. The men of the 'Third Period' saw signs in the events of 1928–9 that the masses were ready to fight on just those terms. '*Hart gegen hart*', said Kuusinen at the Tenth Plenum, 'that is the mood of the broad working masses. Any partial defeats in this period no longer evoke depression, even serious setbacks can be more easily borne than cases of capitulation without a fight.'[36]

Direct defiance of the legality of the established order was thus important for its impact on those who did the defying as well as for its debilitating effects on the system. For a trade-unionist, to break through 'trade-union legality' in an unofficial strike, even a non-violent one, was to be radically divided from one's traditional allegiances and prejudices. The action in which people were led into direct confrontation with the forces of the state had the same effect on a 'higher' level; it was a purely political act. The ideal remained a combined assault on both levels. At the meeting of the ECCI Presidium in February 1930 Manuilski welcomed the fact that strikes were more and more often accompanied by 'street demonstrations, clashes with the police, with the constabulary, with the military, with strike-breakers, with social fascist spies'.[37]

But even when closely associated with a strike, the show of force was a distinct type of event, and one of the lessons of May 1929 was that a demonstration which exposed the brutality of the state could itself be the basis for a strike movement. In the view of the KPD, it had been the achievement of the Party in those days to overcome its own legalism, to the extent of openly organizing and carrying out demonstrations in defiance of the police ban. The violent form the demonstrations took represented a breakthrough on the part of the masses. They had taken up the challenge of a direct battle with the state itself.[38] The fight against the police was of the essence of armed insurrection. Every demonstration was an exercise for the coming military struggle and a lesson in the civil-war character of the existing political order.

The discussion of how demonstrations should be organized so as to gain the maximum agitational profit from the political situation at the minimum organizational cost tended to detach itself from the broader strategic argument. The demonstration was studied as a weapon in its own right, aimed directly at the system. In April 1931, the illegal KPD journal *Oktober* compared the various forms of public demonstration with the successive stages of insurrection – from the already obsolete legal mass-action, through demonstrations 'in which one has to reckon right from the start with some kind of incident', to the final armed march on the centres of power.[39] As District Leader of Berlin, Walter Ulbricht in mid-1931 initiated a programme of 'blitz' demonstrations: small groups of demonstrators would appear without warning, prepared to dissolve and regroup just as

suddenly if approached by the police. Their purpose was both to frustrate any ban and to confuse and exhaust the police.[40]

The problems encountered by the demonstrators in Berlin in May 1929 underlined the need for dependable groups of stewards to manage, protect, and give point to large demonstrations. The need was recognized by the Party and built into the functions of the Communist paramilitary organizations. The question of whether these cadres would be armed, also raised by the events of May, remained a difficult one. As the leadership had made clear in those days, armed demonstrations as such were rejected in principle, as long as no 'acutely revolutionary situation' existed. But the sentiment in favour of carrying and, if necessary, using weapons was strong; by the end of 1932 the view that demonstrations could no longer be carried out unless they were armed was widespread.[41] The use of guns did come to be approved conditionally, at least at the local level; in 1931 armed squads were a feature of several Communist demonstrations in Berlin.[42]

Finally, the calculated risk of confrontation was elaborated into an extended discussion of popular tactics against the police. This was touched off by the 1929 experience; at the Tenth Plenum, Ulbricht spoke of the workers' growing 'consciousness ... that the police, in spite of their armoured cars, are not invincible'.[43] It was carried further in the context of the Party's technical preparations for insurrection. Such preparations were implied by the anticipation of a revolutionary situation, and the Party issued an explicit call for the 'all-around preparation for armed insurrection' in the light of the military-political experience of May 1929.[44]

The evaluation of those experiences and their integration into a programme for armed revolt was the business of the Party's 'illegal' organization of military experts. The M[ilitary]-Apparat was founded as part of an extensive illegal organization after the Second Comintern Congress in late 1920. It was expanded, with technical assistance from the USSR, during the insurrectionary activities of 1923. After the collapse of the revolutionary effort in 1923, the illegal Apparat was severely cut back. In 1928–9 Hans Kippenberger took over, and the name of the M-Apparat was changed to A[nti]-M[ilitary]-Apparat.[45] In the literature of the Apparat discussion of the methods of self-defence against police terror was assimilated to the systematic propagation of the techniques of street-fighting, in language that made the authorities take notice. The 1931 re-issue of one of the Comintern's handbooks for revolutionaries, revised for distribution in Germany, cited:

> 'Knives, brass knuckles, oil-soaked rags', axes, bricks, boiling water to pour on the police-beasts raging in the streets of the workers' quarters, simple hand-grenades made of dynamite, to emphasize only the most primitive of the infinite and ubiquitous possibilities for arming the proletariat.[46]

But even the theoretical organ of the Party itself reported with satisfaction the construction of barricades, and the use of pepper, bricks, bottles and firearms against the police during the Ruhr strike in January 1931.[47]

The tendency of all these discussions was to subvert the original purpose of the demonstration as a means for leading the masses into a functional confrontation with the system. As the 'blitz' demonstrations suggest, emphasis came to be placed on mobility, technical preparation, and the effect on the 'enemy' rather than on mobilizing large numbers. At the same time, the danger of an inappropriate and premature explosion of bloodletting was heightened as the Party slid into a futile arms race with the police. Both of these processes were implicit in the insurrectionary posture of the Party in the 'Third Period'. They were dictated by the logic of the terms in which the question of organizing demonstrations was phrased. The more important the demonstration became in the Party's tactical arsenal, the more often it was used, the sharper and more frequent the repressive response, the stronger became the arguments for tight organization and the precautionary distribution of firearms. But there is also an element here of despair of organizing the masses. To understand why demonstrations themselves, and, in a broader sense, the show and exercise of physical force took on the tactical importance that they did, we need to consider not only the fundamental problems of Communist strategy and organization and their formal application to the Communists' aims in the 'Third Period', but also the conditions in which they were applied. The 'Third Period' brought a change for the masses as well as for the Party.

III

The collapse of the New York Stock Exchange in October 1929 ushered in the worst economic crisis in the history of the industrial West. Since the First World War Germany's economy had been peculiarly sensitive to international economic fluctuations, as a result of heavy foreign indebtedness and reliance on trade, and Germany was among the countries to suffer the worst effects of the catastrophe. Successive shocks to agriculture, industry and the banks, and the measures which the government took in response to them, had serious consequences for the standard and style of life of the German worker.[48] Millions were removed from the process of production; millions more suffered loss of income, status and security.

The overwhelming social fact of these years was mass unemployment. In 1929, some thirteen per cent of trade union members were unemployed; by 1931, the trade unions were reporting over one-third out of work, and in 1932 the figure rose to 43.7 per cent. In continuation of a practice which

had plagued labour conditions throughout the twenties, nearly as high a proportion of organized workers still employed in major industries was working short-time in 1932. The number of registered unemployed in Germany rose from under two million (already a considerable figure by comparison with other countries) in 1929, to over three million in 1930, to four and one-half million in 1931, and peaked at six million or something over thirty per cent of the working population in February–March 1932.[49] To the numbers of unemployed known to the authorities must be added the proportion of 'invisible' unemployed. According to one reckoning, the size of this group increased from 242,000 in 1929 to over two million, or one-fourth of the total number of people out of work, in 1932.[50] Every year, more and more were lost to the official statistics through the combined workings of unrelieved economic contraction and the three-tiered system of unemployment insurance and public welfare.

The structure of the welfare system made it possible to trace the development of long-term unemployment statistically. A worker who lost his job could claim assistance from the state unemployment insurance scheme (*Arbeitslosenunterstützung*) for twenty-six weeks, provided he had been in work long enough to be eligible. Having exhausted his entitlement there (or if he had not been eligible in the first place), he could go on to claim crisis-support (*Krisenunterstützung*) at a lower rate, for a longer period. Once this was exhausted, the unemployed became the responsibility of the municipality; themselves suffering severe financial strains, the towns and cities provided support according to their ability and discretion.[51] Beyond this stage there was no reason for the worker to make his presence known to the authorities; he had nothing to gain by visiting the labour exchange, since there were no jobs to be had and the welfare payments which were conditional on his attendance had stopped long since.

While official figures cannot reveal how many people belonged to the invisible unemployed they can suggest the rate at which that group was growing. In Berlin between January 1931, when the number of registered unemployed stood at 465,880, and December 1932, when 636,298 – thirty-two per cent of the city's work force – were officially out of work, the proportion receiving unemployment insurance fell from 39.6 per cent to 12.5 per cent. During the same period, the number of heads of households dependent on municipal welfare benefits rose to include more than half of all the unemployed. In the country as a whole, at the end of 1932 over a million of the registered unemployed themselves had exhausted their claim to public support.[52]

The system itself was so administered as to speed up this process. The effects of long-term unemployment were reinforced by repeated restrictions on eligibility, whose broadly social consequences – quite apart from the fact of financial hardship itself – appear most dramatically in the situation of

young workers. Under the provisions of the Brüning government's Second Emergency Decree of 1931, the age at which a worker could begin receiving direct benefits while living with his parents was raised from sixteen to twenty-one.[53] School-leavers and young workers were already over-represented among the unemployed, since their inexperience made them the last to be hired and the first to be fired. In Berlin, young people under thirty, who were twenty-nine per cent of the 1933 adult population, represented forty-three per cent of those receiving state unemployment and crisis-support benefits in January 1931.[54] They were in any case less likely to be eligible for benefits on the basis of previous work experience and contributions to the insurance scheme. The new decree gave the youngest of them a choice of leaving the welfare rolls (except as dependents) or leaving home – or both. Young people swelled the ranks of the invisible unemployed, and the plight of homeless or vagrant youth became a focus of public concern.

But the unemployment and welfare figures reflect two wider social processes going on within the population at large. One of these was the withdrawal of a whole section of the population to the margins of society. For increasing numbers of Germans, unemployment brought gradual but important changes in the daily routine. One after another, the institutions which had traditionally provided workers with an identity, a common interest and a basis for collective action lost their relevance; the labour exchange succeeded the factory, the welfare bureau the labour exchange. The sociologist Theodor Geiger argued that even before the crash, chronic unemployment had begun to create a new class in Germany, one characterized by its lack of relation to the process of production. He described the unemployed as 'socio-politically without location'.[55] Another observer, Bruno N. Haken, saw them more vividly as a nation within a nation and pictured the labour exchanges and welfare bureaux as a last 'link between one people and another'.[56] To lose one's entitlement to aid was to lose all reason for contact with the economic and social mainstream and to be thrown back on the company and the routine offered by street- and home-life. This dispersal of a section of the working class not only set the conditions for action by its members themselves, but it also dictated the range of strategies that must be adopted by any party that hoped to draw on the growing pool of young and discontented workers.

The second process reflected in the unemployment figures is the impoverishment of a whole class. The unemployed, their support constantly chipped away by new legislation, were in the worst position. The maximum state support available to a single claimant under the unemployment insurance scheme, regardless of the number of dependants, amounted to between sixty per cent of the previously earned wage for the highest paid and eighty per cent for the lowest. Municipal welfare payments

to the long-term unemployed were considerably lower, while perhaps a third of the three to four million working short-time earned less than the dole and received a subsidy from the state to make up the difference. An American journalist who visited Berlin in 1932 was told that the average German unemployed worker with wife and child received fifty-one Marks monthly, of which just over eighteen was available to buy food after other basic expenses had been met. From that sum it was possible at current prices to provide a half-pound of bread, a pound of potatoes, just over three ounces of cabbage, an ounce and a half of margarine for each of the three family members every day, plus a daily pint of milk for the child and occasional supplements of herring.[57] But economic hardship was not confined to the immediate victims of unemployment. Earned incomes also fell steadily throughout the Depression. This was partly the result of determined action by employers, who were more than ever in a position to dictate terms. It was helped along by the Brüning government's deliberate policy of deflation. The Fourth Emergency Decree, for example, ordered an across-the-board cut in wages of ten per cent or to the level of 1927, whichever was smaller.[58] The contractual hourly wage of an unskilled worker in the Berlin metal industry dropped from 88.4 to 69.5 Pfennig between 1930 and 1932.[59] The fall in *average* real income nationally between 1928 and 1932 has been estimated at thirty-six per cent. A corresponding fall in the cost of living meant an increase in real wages for those in work. To the extent that this was apparent in the face of the shrinking of the pay-packet, it meant a widening of the gulf between employed and unemployed.[60]

IV

It was against this background of a working class dispersed and divided, short on buying-power and on staying-power, that the Communists set out to organize the revolution. But the crisis had the effect of aggravating long-standing patterns of KPD organization that weakened the Party in terms of the tasks it set itself. First, the capacity of the Party to organize industrial action from within the factories was diminished.

The KPD had always shown itself peculiarly susceptible to economic fluctuations. During the Depression years, the balance between employed and unemployed within the Party shifted dramatically, as the number of members swelled. At the end of 1929, the Party claimed 135,160 members, slightly over half of whom were employed in factories. Two years later there were 381,000 registered members, of whom some 246,000 were dues-paying; of these, only about seventeen per cent were in a position to carry on the work of the Party within the factories.[61] The Berlin-Brandenburg district, about four-fifths of whose members were located in the city of Berlin, was one of the more stable Party organizations and one of

the more firmly factory-based. Of the roughly 30,000 KPD members there at the end of 1930, about forty per cent were working in factories, while another fifty-one per cent were unemployed.[62] The evolution of the KPD into 'an express party of the unemployed' was a source of comment and concern to leaders and critics of the Party alike.[63]

There was also an increase in the proportion of very young members. Ever since its founding, the KPD had been a youthful party, in comparison with the SPD, although the eighteen- to twenty-five-year-old group remained the least well-represented in the Party during the twenties. The crisis years saw large numbers of young people being drawn into the KPD and its auxiliaries. The membership of the Communist Youth (Kommunistischer Jugendverband Deutschlands, KJVD) nearly doubled between 1929 and 1930, and increased by more than two-thirds to reach 60,000 the following year. In Berlin in 1931, 396 of 621 new members in one local were under thirty, 237 under twenty-five. The majority of these new recruits was unemployed.[64]

The shifting patterns of employment among the membership were reflected in an intensification of the tendency for the Party to be grounded in the neighbourhoods rather than in the factories. After 1929, the number of street cells began to burgeon, out of all proportion not only to the number of factory cells, but also to the growth of the KPD membership at large. While the number of factory and street cells increased by eight per cent and twelve per cent respectively from 1929 to 1930, for the period between October 1930 and October 1931 the figures were thirteen per cent and eighty per cent. During the same period Party membership increased by some fifty-seven per cent. A new initiative in the formation of factory cells at the end of 1931 left the Berlin-Brandenburg Party with 451 factory cells for the whole district, as against 605 street cells.[65]

A further concomitant of the KPD's growth in the Depression was an accelerated rate of fluctuation in all sections of the Party and its auxiliaries. One functionary estimated the rate of fluctuation in Greater Berlin in 1931 at forty per cent. In one month, one of the strongest sections of the Berlin city organization, Zentrum, gained 251 members and lost 263. In this period, moreover, the fluctuation was affecting even the active cadres of the KPD. A survey of delegates to one of the local Party congresses in Berlin in 1931 revealed that two-thirds of them had joined the Party within the past three years; forty-four per cent had been members for less than a year. Of twenty-four Agitprop functionaries interviewed, in mid-1931, nineteen had held office for three months or less.[66]

The Communist leadership busied itself with preparing organizational measures to combat fluctuation. But organizational initiatives from within the KPD, which were themselves made more difficult by the very conditions that they were intended to remedy, could not begin to address the objective

causes of membership fluctuation. Those, like the reasons for the high proportion of unemployed in the Party and its apparent allergy to organization within the factory, lay in the material hardships associated with being a member of a vocal and belligerent minority movement. The extreme conditions of Depression, which made the whole working class more vulnerable, raised the risks involved in Communist activity. And the effect was reinforced by the new aggressiveness of the Party line. The trade unions hardened their stand against subversion in their own ranks, and ordered that any member who was active in the Communist trade-union organization, the Revolutionäre Gewerkschafts-Opposition, or RGO, be summarily expelled. Membership-fluctuation was even more pronounced in the RGO than in the Party itself; three-quarters of the members of its 'factory groups' were unemployed in 1932.[67]

Employers lost no time in taking advantage of the workers' loss of bargaining power, and in cases of rationalization or reprisal Communists were, as always, the first to go. The factory council elections of 1930 brought a disheartening political sign in the defeat of the Communist tickets in many of the country's largest factories. Several of these defeats came in Berlin, where KPD organizers in some of the larger works had refused to carry out the Party's instructions for the election. At the giant Leuna works in central Germany, the fall in the vote for the RGO list since 1929 corresponded closely to the 5000 layoffs of the past year. The shifts in the relation of forces within the factories which the dual threat of political reprisal and economic contraction could involve was further demonstrated in the next round of factory-council elections, in August 1931. Then, National Socialist and Conservative tickets made substantial gains.[68]

At the same time, the primary task that the Party had set itself, the carrying out of the mass strike, became more and more difficult to fulfil. The economic crisis raised barriers to any kind of strike activity; the existence of a large pool of cheap labour made the employed themselves reluctant to risk their livelihoods by striking and encouraged political retrenchment on the part of the trade unions.[69] And the Party was ill-equipped as an organization to overcome these barriers. Communist-led industrial action, whether organized around economic or political issues, continued to be potentially self-defeating and limited in its scope. Between 1929 and 1932, strikes in Germany presented a picture of increasing futility; fewer workers in fewer factories struck for shorter periods.[70] KPD comment consoled itself with the reflection that 'the vanguard constantly gathered ever-richer and more significant experiences',[71] but the experience gained was not always such as to increase the Party's organizational potential. The unofficial strike of 58,000 miners in the Ruhr in January 1931, celebrated by the KPD as the beginning of a new era in industrial relations and in the growth of the RGO, resulted in the expulsion and dismissal of 2500 of the Party's

best agents. To the chagrin of the Party, the bulk of Communist strike activity took place in small and medium-sized factories.[72]

The year 1932 brought an apparent upswing. The climax of the year's industrial agitation came with the strike of Berlin's transit workers, which coincided with the Reichstag elections of November. The concerted walk-out of some 20,000 employees in opposition to a new wage-contract, and against the wishes of the trade-union leadership, was hailed openly as a revolutionary mass-strike and 'the most powerful success so far of our turn to revolutionary work among the masses'. Even this action, however, revealed the limitations of the mass-strike formula. Attempts to extend the strike to other sections of municipal workers failed, and on 8 November the employer, the Berliner Verkehrsgesellschaft (BVG), announced the dismissal of 1000 employees for 'sabotage and other excesses'.[73] To the urgings of the RGO that the pace of strike activity must not be allowed to lapse, the representatives of other municipal workers within the Party answered that they needed four weeks to recover from the transit strike: 'If the national and district leadership thought they had to throw the workers out on the streets with one strike after another, then they had better not give themselves any illusions; the workers weren't going to go along with that kind of joke any more.'[74] Reflecting on the readiness of some Berlin Communists in 1929 to take to the barricades rather than follow the Party's strike call, the KPD instructor for Neukölln would write: 'Unfortunately, even the average politically active worker ... prefers a one-percent risk of falling in battle ... to a ninety-nine percent certainty of being dismissed by his employer for striking illegally and then being put on the blacklist.'[75]

This comment expresses in dramatic terms the dilemma that the KPD faced. The use of physical force and the exercise of economic pressure, originally intended to be complementary, came to be seen as alternatives as strikes proved more difficult to organize. The demonstration gained its tactical primacy by default. More than this, however, the focus and content of Communist activity both shifted as the Party directed its pursuit of the masses at those whose only weapon was the demonstration.

V

The gathering-in of the unemployed, the organizational effects of which have been described, reflected not only the general economic situation, but also a deliberate KPD policy of agitation and recruitment among the workless. This policy was implicit in the programmatic call for the winning-over of social groups outside the organized working class in the 'Third Period'. In June 1929 KPD Chairman Ernst Thälmann spoke generally of the need for a 'bending of all our energies to the assimilation of the most

immiserated and oppressed strata, to which we have so far given too little attention'.[76]

But as the dimensions of the economic crisis became apparent, the need to address the unemployed specifically as a potentially revolutionary group was articulated in the highest circles of the Comintern. Discussing the aims of the first round of unemployed agitation in February 1930, Losowski declared: 'We must say to the unemployed: Organize yourselves, rip all you can from the jaws of the bourgeoisie, through common demonstrations of the employed and the unemployed, through the fight on the barricades, through mass-actions, including armed insurrection.'[77]

From the very beginning of the unemployed agitation it was clear that Comintern and KPD tacticians alike saw a positive agitational value in the economic impotence of the jobless. The fact that they had no means of making their presence felt except demonstrations and physical force meant that they were available for any and all forms of popular action. The short-term advantage was put bluntly by Losowski at a Comintern conference in 1931, when he said: 'They go out on the streets with us and don't fret about getting hit by the police.' This in itself gave the unemployed a certain importance in the long term, too, since it was evidence that they found their way more easily to the 'higher forms of struggle'. Through 1931 and 1932, the recognition of a chronic character in the conditions of unemployment gave the movement of the unemployed as such, 'which is more and more directed at the capitalist state', a political significance of its own as the likely motor force behind a general development towards revolution.[78]

In Germany, the willingness to treat the unemployed as a revolutionary force in themselves was reinforced by the growth of the NSDAP. Such successes as the National Socialists had in their efforts to win over the unemployed were a sign of the ambiguous political character of the dispossessed. But the fact that they were able to mobilize and in some sense to radicalize broadly disaffected sections of the population gave a special edge to that competition to which the KPD was enjoined by the tactics of the 'Third Period'. As early as 1930, the first wave of unemployed agitation in Germany was being evaluated in the light of the KPD's recovery of the agitational initiative from the NSDAP. There was not only the fear that the unemployed – and especially the young – who were not won to the Communist cause would fall to the Party's enemies, but among certain leading KPD functionaries a positive sense that the appeal to the groups beyond the traditional class-conscious proletariat, as practised by the NSDAP, was a key to agitational and revolutionary success.[79] At the January Plenum of the Central Committee in 1931, Thälmann said that it was time 'to break with that ... ideology which consists in a certain under-estimation of the revolutionary significance of the unemployed'.[80] A

few weeks later, Heinz Neumann, Central Committee member and Editor-in-Chief of *Die Rote Fahne*, published an article on the sixtieth anniversary of the Paris Commune which suggested that he, at least, was speculating on a revolt of the unemployed. The Commune was represented as a realization of the formula of 'People's Revolution' (*Volksrevolution*) then being propagated by the Party – a concerted action of all anti-capitalist sections of the population. The *garde nationale* was compared with the defence troops of the unemployed created by the KPD: 'nothing more than the unemployed detachments [*Erwerbslosenstaffeln*] of 1871'.[81]

This was by no means an orthodox view, even in the terms of the 'Third Period'. The Comintern analysts themselves recognized that the reliance on the volatility of the unemployed involved 'a certain danger'. On the one hand, it represented a departure from the traditional Communist class analysis and threatened the Party's sense of its own identity. This may explain the insistence of Comintern commentators that the unemployed were literally no different from workers, 'for unemployment is not a profession' – the unemployed worker might return to the factory at any time. A year after Losowski made this comment, Piatnitzki pointed out that unemployment could no longer be regarded as a temporary phenomenon. But at the same time he expressed confidence in the prospects for conventional organizational methods: 'In the course of time many millions of unemployed will return to production ... Through them we shall ... be able to improve our ties with the factories and workshops.'[82] It is tempting to see this argument, offered at the Eleventh Plenum of the ECCI in April 1931, as a direct rebuke to Heinz Neumann's speculations about an insurrectionary army of the unemployed.

The second danger which the Comintern tacticians recognized in the unemployed agitation was that the unemployed might go over to 'higher forms of struggle' too soon; the revolution could easily be frustrated by precipitate violence in the wrong place.[83] The maintenance of the ties between the unemployed and the workers during the crisis was one means of preventing this, and the ideal of coordinated activity was never abandoned. 'The most dangerous thing', argued Losowski in 1930, 'is to isolate the unemployed, to create a special, segregated movement.'[84] In the KPD in the years of economic stability, the preferred organizational rôle of the unemployed was as affiliate members of their local factory cells. The Party attempted to retain this system during the Depression, although the state of the factory cells themselves did not promise much success. At the same time, the organization of the unemployed after 1929, as part of the united-front effort, had to be contained within a mass-organization not officially part of the KPD. The hopes for cooperation of workers and unemployed were expressed in the assignment of responsibility for the agitation to the RGO. The labour exchange or welfare office was adopted as

the basis for the formation of committees of the unemployed (*Erwerbslosenausschüsse*) and the focus for agitation; in its size (the larger Berlin labour exchanges were visited by tens of thousands of people daily) and in the social functions it fulfilled, it was the nearest thing to a factory in the psychological landscape of the unemployed.[85]

But the labour exchanges were not factories, and the attempts to coordinate the activities of the unemployed with industrial organization and action proved ineffectual. At times it appeared as though the respective successes of the two forms of activity varied in inverse relation to one another; more unemployed activity meant fewer strikes. The ideal of cooperation was gradually edged out by a recognition of the necessity for the development of new means of reaching and holding the unemployed. While the Party continued to press for more and better organization in the factories as part of its general line, the organizers of the unemployed agitation were coming to the conclusion that the Party must intensify its activity in the neighbourhoods. The workers who, in increasing numbers, were to be found neither in the factory, nor in the labour exchange, nor in the welfare bureau, had to be sought out in their homes. In early 1931 Piatnitzki asked, 'Wouldn't it be better to make an effort to organize the less well cared-for unemployed ... ?' And by September Walter Ulbricht could declare openly: 'Where the unemployed could up to now be reached in the labour exchanges, ... we must in future transfer our special labours to the residential areas.'[86]

The Party's unemployed agitation provided the context for two distinct but related developments. One was the resort to the show and exercise of physical force, in its simplest form the deliberate choice of the demonstration as a tactical instrument. The other was the process by which the KPD, making a virtue of long-standing necessity, made a deliberate turn towards the neighbourhoods and sought to anchor itself in the community through gestures of popular advocacy and assimilation to existing forms of social activity and organization. Both reflected the continuous diminution of the economic power of the sections of the population from which the KPD drew – and hoped to draw – its support.

Mass demonstrations were the mainstay of the Communist unemployed agitation, especially in its early years. The KPD took responsibility for formulating specific demands and for leading the actions intended to enforce them. At Christmas 1929 there were violent confrontations between demonstrators and police in the cities of the Rhine. Hunger marches in Berlin and Hamburg the following January and February were also accompanied by violence. In Bitterfeld in 1931 the unemployed, under the leadership of the KPD, stormed the town hall to demand that welfare funds be paid out at the previous rates, and twice succeeded in forcing payments. At the end of 1932, Berlin Communists prepared to lead the

unemployed in marches on the welfare offices; the demand was for free fuel and food.[87]

By this time, however, the mass movement of the unemployed showed signs of slowing down. The National Congress of the Unemployed called for December 1931 had been a fiasco. At the Twelfth ECCI Plenum in September 1932, Piatnitzki remarked that it was getting harder to persuade the unemployed to demonstrate as they once had.[88]

In the uncertain and erratic development of the unemployed movement it is possible to see a reflection of the ambiguous psychological cast of the unemployed themselves. It was in the nature of the situation of the unemployed that neither their allegiance nor even their volatility could be depended upon. Depending on the circumstances, being out of work for an extended period of time could result in passivity and resignation, just as easily as it could foster impatience and rebellion. A team of sociologists who studied an unemployed community in Austria in these years noted with interest the apparent contrast between the apathy of their own subjects and the intense politicization of the unemployed that was going on in Germany.[89] Even in the agitated condition of the German political scene, the two casts of mind could exist side by side, or for one to succeed the other. Where it was possible, as it was in Berlin in the summer of 1931, for the police to carry out a search of nearly 10,000 people in four labour exchanges, without arousing more direct opposition than a small demonstration on the street outside one of the buildings,[90] there was little chance for a spontaneous rising of the unemployed.

But then spontaneous risings are more the stuff of politicians' fantasies than of historical reality in any case; nor was such a rising the aim of the Communists. Within the overcrowded and over-stretched institutions of public welfare the incidence of individual acts of violence and protest rose to the point where social workers and administrators feared for their personal safety, office hours were cut back 'for security reasons' and police presence became a matter of routine.[91] This suggests that the will to action was not lacking. A problem at least as real as the psychology of the unemployed was the capacity of the Party to offer them realistic means and ends of struggle. Participation in Communist-led mass actions, for example, demanded of the unemployed considerable sacrifice with relatively little certainty of material return. In some cases, as when a hunger march of several miles through the countryside was organized without proper provision being made for feeding and clothing the marchers, the demonstration itself became a pointless hardship.[92] As early as November 1930, the Berlin organizers of the unemployed, balking at the constant aimless action, suggested that the Party hold fewer demonstrations, but make an effort to organize them better.[93]

For those who did not despair, but remained in the movement and

continued to hope for results, one answer was more forceful and dramatic action. There emerged a familiar pattern: fewer and fewer people becoming more and more disposed to violence. The speaker at an organizers' meeting in Berlin in March 1931 reported that the employees of the welfare bureaux were being armed with clubs: 'This situation must not deter the unemployed from enforcing their demands, where necessary, with the same methods.' At another meeting in June there was talk of storming the welfare offices and destroying the files.[94]

The association between violent action and the KPD's relative inability to produce concrete results through its own agitational efforts is also apparent in the Party's turn to the neighbourhoods. What did the Party have to offer the unemployed once it had sought them out? A party with large financial resources could, in a sense, create its own constituency; it could draw the unemployed to itself by offering material benefits. This was the rôle played by the NSDAP. In some areas the National Socialists were able to establish their own 'labour exchanges', to promise jobs to their members as a result of their good relations with businessmen. More common was the provision of on-the-spot relief in the form of food and shelter – in its canteens and soup-kitchens and above all in the SA-taverns that doubled as dormitories.[95]

The effects of the National Socialists' methods, both on recruitment and on the style and structure of their party's activities, were acknowledged and admired by the Communists. In November 1930, a leader of the unemployed defence groups in Berlin suggested that the Party establish its own shelters – 'an appropriate measure, to have the unemployed on call at all times in case of need'.[96] But the KPD at the local level did not have the financial resources of the NSDAP, and such suggestions, like the repeated efforts to establish self-help centres in the neighbourhoods, came to grief on the Party's inability to find money where none was to be had. In February 1932, the Berlin KPD distributed subscription-lists, based on the populations of the respective local districts, to raise funds for a 'Proletarian Self-help against the Plight of the Unemployed' (*Proletarische Selbsthilfe gegen die Erwerbslosennot*); from Neukölln/Treptow, with a population of over 400,000, a total of 2,68 Marks was received.[97] Attempts to raise money from shopkeepers through collection or sales of stamps and literature were often backed up by threats of boycott and even violence.[98]

As a result, the KPD had to develop its own kind of street politics,[99] to fall back on its old constituency, and to do the best it could with the means of self-help available to the unemployed themselves. This meant in the first instance going back to that cohesive but relatively limited community which the KPD's neighbourhood constituency represented, and addressing it in its own terms. The Party had not only to espouse the cause of its followers, but also to adopt the forms of action and organization familiar to them, in the hope of politicizing the actions and broadening their base. In

the process, the KPD went beyond the tribunician rôle implicit in the leading of demonstrations and aspired to vigilante functions.

VI

Sporadic impulses towards direct collective action for the immediate relief of material hardship were apparent in the slum population of Berlin. One of the most valuable resources on which the KPD could draw in its agitation was a long-standing and deep-rooted mistrust of the police. This reflected several generations of experience of policing that was openly repressive in style, relying heavily on the show of force and the display and use of deadly weapons and, under the Empire, had been explicitly anti-socialist in content. It was expressed in the sullen refusal of people in working-class neighbourhoods to co-operate with police inquiries, in initiatives for the organization of residents' vigilante squads in areas (like the Kösliner Strasse) where the police did not seem to be doing enough to combat crime, and most consistently, in the practice of popular interference with arrests.[100] The events of May 1929 thus appeared even to the courts as the repetition, on a catastrophic scale, of a familiar pattern of relations between police and community. In sentencing a young man to seven months' imprisonment for his presence in a crowd of demonstrators that had attacked a carful of policemen on 1 May, the presiding judge remarked:

> In assessing sentence it had to be taken into account that the act could have had serious consequences, since *we know from experience* that in similar situations the public is inclined to take up a stand against the officers and the officers are seriously endangered in life and limb when the instincts of the masses are stirred up by actions such as those of the defendant.[101]

In another sort of action in 1930 a spontaneous 'expropriation' was repaid when a group of unemployed youths forcibly seized a vat of stew and some bread-rolls. The food had been promised them, and they regarded it as a rightful supplement to their welfare benefit. When they arrived for lunch they found the hall locked, and saw no alternative to taking the food by force; the court that heard their case agreed.[102]

KPD activity in the neighbourhoods took the form of attempts to assimilate such impulses, to organize them, to systematize them, and to direct them so that they developed a mass political character. The propagation of violent popular resistance to the police discussed above may be seen as one form of this. Another was the Party's attitude towards what were known among the Communists as 'cashless' or 'proletarian shopping trips'. The 'plundering' of shops, as the police called it, was perhaps the most visible sign of unemployed activity in Berlin in 1931. In the first half of the year, the police reported thirty-four cases in which groups of people broke into food shops and seized goods without paying for them. The police

themselves were not always sure whether to characterize the raids as the spontaneous actions of hungry men, as purely criminal exploits, or as political ones, and there was a good deal of discussion as to how much of what kind of item had been stolen.[103]

Some at least of the incidents were politically motivated. They were approved in principle by the Communist leadership and reported sympathetically in *Die Rote Fahne*. Walter Ulbricht welcomed them as '... certain self-help measures, which, within the framework of the general mass-movement, have a great significance for the intensification of the movement ...' At the same time he made it clear that individual acts of thieving were not approved as such by the Party.[104] What the Party was interested in was the appearance of spontaneous mass action. But in spite of repeated urgings, the Berlin Party could not report, as the Chemnitz local did in 1932, that the 'self-help actions of the unemployed all had the character of a mass-movement, and not simply of attacks of individuals on food-shops'.[105]

The most perfect expression of the KPD's use of physical force as a medium for reaching and binding the masses on a neighbourhood basis was the function of 'tenant protection' (*Mieterschutz*) assigned to the Party's defence organizations. The forcible prevention of evictions first appeared in Berlin in the second half of 1931. In the first reported case in Friedrichshain, in September, a direct call to the Party for help brought a troop of between 250 and 300 men, who occupied the whole building. The police noted that the men were not local residents, but 'unemployed and KPD members' from other neighbourhoods.[106] In another case, *Die Rote Fahne* reported that 500 unemployed appeared *en masse* to prevent an eviction; when the tenant was given another apartment, groups of unemployed carried the furniture to the new house.[107]

Every eviction successfully prevented – and the KPD claimed many – was seen as a gain for the Party and the community alike. The KPD continued its efforts to create a network of neighbourhood organizations and to turn its self-defence organization into a comprehensive movement for the protection of the working-class community. In 1932 action against high rents, evictions and confiscations was written into the functions of the sections of the Antifaschistische Aktion, along with demonstrations for better conditions in the welfare offices and the fight against the National Socialist presence in the neighbourhoods.[108]

The Party's organization of this sort of vigilantism cannot be described either as an entirely novel tactic or as solely the result of ineluctable economic pressures. Very similar functions of economic control and self-help at the local level had been exercised in 1923 by the Communist dominated Control Commissions in cooperation with the Proletarian Hundreds.[109] In 1931 as in 1923, reaching out to the masses through

attention – with whatever means available – to their material needs was the mode of activity prescribed by the analysis of an immediately pre-revolutionary crisis in a period of general social distress.

But in 1931 the range of available means was radically reduced by an unprecedented economic depression. Collective self-help of this kind was only the most constructive item in a spectrum running from the show of force to the practice of violence against people and property. The spectrum was a very narrow one; the threat implied the act, particularly since the Party was inclined to accept and encourage violent confrontation for its own sake.

And there had been changes of another kind since 1923, changes in the structure and position of the German working class accompanied by shifts in the relationship between the parties that claimed to represent it. The resulting relative isolation of the KPD implied limits to its capacity to organize among workers. The effects of this are clear not only in the Party's weakness in the factories, but also in the fact that it proved extremely difficult to extend the scope even of 'popular' actions beyond a fairly constant core of regulars: the participation in unemployed demonstrations was erratic; in Berlin, 'proletarian shopping trips' remained the province of small groups and individuals; and the character of the *Mieterschutz*-troop in Friedrichshain suggests that even in its most practical gestures of popular advocacy the Party was failing to mobilize the community at large.

In this light the street-politics of the KPD appears to have had two functions: at one level, it involved the activation of the very real and long-standing links between the Party and sections of the urban working class whose shared interests arose out of common residence in certain neighbourhoods. At another, it represents an attempt, through appeals to a new constituency, to give content to the Party's very powerful but essentially ungrounded claims to hegemony over whole working-class communities. At both these levels, the impotence alike of the Party and of the people it was trying to mobilize was such that their identity of interests was regularly expressed in violent terms. Paradoxically, the very economic conditions which promised to provide a new source of recruits, and the insurrectionary posture of the Party which made the winning of those recruits so urgent, both contributed to the organizational tensions that tended to limit the Party's effective influence.

But the Communist Party tacticians never ceased to hope that the organization of violence could be made to fulfil the vital function of effecting a rapprochement between the Party and the working-class community and, beyond this, between the Communists and the broad strata of the dispossessed. The determination to see that violence organized for tactical reasons did not become a liability to the Party became a subject of open

controversy within the Party, in the context of the debate on how best to fight the combined political and physical threat posed by the Nazis. It is to the discussion of this specific form of Communist violence that we must now return.

3

Defining the enemy: The *wehrhafter Kampf* against the SA in theory and propaganda

By the time the National Socialist Party obtruded itself on the notice of the Communist policy-makers, the aims and tactics of German Communism in the 'Third Period' had already been laid down. Defining the threat that National Socialism posed to the Communist Party and the working class and developing a comprehensive policy of response to that threat thus demanded that a place be found for the NSDAP in the existing KPD analysis of the political prospect. This did not prove difficult. In 1932 Werner Hirsch, in what may be described as the first account of National Socialism and fascism that was both authoritative and comprehensive, described the NSDAP as 'the true [*eigentliche*] fascist mass-party',[1] but well before that the Nazis had taken their place in the broad fascist front envisaged by the Comintern. It is possible to identify a broadly consistent KPD policy towards the National Socialists, appearing late in 1929 and persisting even into 1933, which reflected the tactical preoccupations of the Party.

In the context of the KPD's general line on fascism, the question of the use of violence was raised as a question of the appropriate response to the violence of the Nazis, and the answer was dictated by the pre-existing formulas for mobilizing the 'masses'. As the KPD policy-makers saw it the violence of the SA had three important functions. Repeated physical attacks were aimed at undermining the fighting spirit of the working-class movement – in the interests of though not demonstrably by the controllers of the capitalist system and the bourgeois state. The 'romantic fighting methods' of the SA were also calculated by the Nazi leadership as a means of recruiting, and especially of appealing to, unemployed youths in search of excitement. Finally, the NSDAP's 'policy of open violence' was seen to have the unintended but 'objectively' important effect of 'battering the deeply rooted prejudices of bourgeois legality'. In addition to these three independent functions, Nazi violence represented a concrete grievance which Social Democrats and some unorganized workers shared with the Communists.[2] In order to maintain the morale of the Party and the labour movement at large, to compete effectively with the NSDAP in winning over

young activists, to contribute to the general collapse of a public order they held to rest on deceit and repression and at the same time build the united front that could set about replacing it, the Communists would have to lead the workers in fighting back. The policy of fighting back was known in the Party as the '*wehrhafter Kampf gegen den Faschismus*'.

At the same time, the KPD was concerned during the 'Third Period' to win over precisely those non-proletarian sections of the 'labouring masses' whose radicalization was signalled by the rise of a fascist party – the petty bourgeoisie and the 'peasants'.[3] And the Party leaders began to notice as early as 1930 that the Nazis, and especially the SA, were having some success even among the working class. At the beginning of 1933 Wilhelm Pieck could describe the results of fights between SA and Communists as 'murders among workers'.[4] This meant that the physical fight had to be tempered with argument and propaganda among the Nazis' actual and potential constituents, the so-called 'ideological struggle'.

In order to fulfil the agitational tasks prescribed by the policies of the 'Third Period', moreover, the *wehrhafter Kampf* had to be carried on in a particular fashion. The Party drew a distinction between 'individual terror' – violent actions by individuals or small groups – against which the whole weight of Marxist tradition was invoked, and what it called 'mass terror'. Actions against the National Socialists must be so organized as to involve as many people as possible. Ideally, response to the incursions of the SA in the neighbourhoods should take the form of a gesture of community solidarity, beginning with the exercise of economic pressure through boycotts and rent-strikes, continuing through the organization of collective self-defence on a united-front basis and the orchestration of mass demonstrations, and culminating in political strikes. Communist cadres should initiate and lead such actions; but as long as Party members alone were involved, without mass participation, the Party would never achieve the paramount aims of educating the people and forging visible links between economic and political struggles.

This, then, was the burden of KPD policy: a self-defence movement vigorous enough to discourage attack and maintain the integrity of the Communist movement, and so organized as to fulfil certain fundamental agitational functions, but not so aggressive or ideologically insensitive as to prejudice the chances for a broad front of the 'labouring masses'. Put in these terms, the policy reflects the logic of the official analysis of the 'Third Period', and the rudiments of the general line outlined here can be found in KPD literature from the earliest phases of the confrontation with National Socialism. In its totality, however, that line was articulated only as the result of a gradual process. From 1929 to 1933 the KPD leadership picked its way none too gracefully between the demands of the German political situation and the watchful presence of the Comintern, ever ready to

administer a maternal slap that would send the German Communists reeling back to the path of ideological correctitude – and as often as not, that path being a very narrow one, over to the other side. The process by which policy, once made, was articulated and communicated to the membership was still more tangled. Since the extent to which the membership adhered to the official policy of the Party (and the reasons for their failure to do so) can only be gauged in terms of how much the individual member could have been expected to know about that policy, it is on the multiplicity of considerations involved in formulating and presenting policy that this and the following chapter will concentrate.

I

I have discussed in Chapter 2 and will illustrate further in Chapter 5 the objective economic circumstances militating against the success of a policy that relied on mass action and the exercise of economic pressure as an alternative to individual violence. Here, in tracing the development of the KPD's line in its political context, I want to elucidate some of the sources of 'error' in the discourse of the Party itself. Misunderstandings and conflicts arose within the Party around this issue, and many of these can be traced to inconsistencies which in turn reflect the fundamental dilemma of Communist agitation: the difficulty of reconciling the respective demands of theoretical analysis, mobilizing the masses through propaganda, and the expectation of actually effecting changes in the immediate situation.[5] In so far as they were expressed in distinct preoccupations and styles of discourse, these three sets of interests can be described as corresponding respectively to the political, publicistic and military-technical perspectives coexisting within the Party. The last of these, being largely, if not exclusively embodied in the military and defence organizations of the Party, will be examined closely in Chapter 4, although its consequences form a major theme of this section. Some of the inconsistencies within and between the first two views may be pointed out in advance.

First, it will become apparent that the theoretical analysis of fascism prescribed by the Comintern was by its nature extremely difficult to translate into practice. The chronological and analytical priority that the battle against Social Democracy was seen to have in Germany dictated an offensive directed with equal force against the 'social fascists' and the NSDAP under the name of 'national fascists'.[6] This would have demanded tremendous tactical finesse and considerable material and emotional resources, even supposing that every Party member had been able to reconcile such a strategy with his perceptions of the reality of political and social relations. In the event, it was in this 'fight on two fronts'[7] that the KPD exhausted both its strength and its credibility.

Even the Party leadership had trouble maintaining the correct balance in its line, and this had serious implications for practice, particularly on the question of fascism and revolution. The use of the same word (fascism) for both the repressive system and the violent party and the refusal to concede that in Republican Germany the two remained distinct in practice (if not in principle) made an identification of the two in the minds of the membership all too easy. The tactical result was that every reference made by the official KPD to the existence of a fascist régime in Germany implied the existence of a revolutionary situation, in which the physical fight against the Nazis, now in the rôle of government troops, acquired the character of a fight to the death. The same logic was at work, of course, every time a new crisis of political and economic conditions combined with loose thinking and looser talk at the highest levels of the KPD to suggest the imminence of revolution.

The tendency of the publicistic perspective, which resided in the press and propaganda organs of the Party, was to sink the reality of the theoretical problems in a generalized call to action. At its most extreme, this policy was closely associated with the name of Heinz Neumann, editor of *Die Rote Fahne* and Central Committee member, 'the Goebbels of the KPD'.[8] While it is difficult to trace with any precision the process by which press policy was made in the KPD, the approach of *Die Rote Fahne* from late 1928 to the end of 1929 can be easily characterized. Its keynote was the most rapid and the most emotive possible reaction to events. The verbal propaganda directed at the Communists' actual and potential followers tended to encourage unreflecting violence and thus to upset the delicate balance between individual and mass action, physical force and political argument. Whatever the current orthodoxy might be as to the meaning of Nazi terror and its appropriate remedies, Communist propaganda regularly presented it in such a way as to underline its character as an immediate threat to the individual worker. In screaming headlines and lurid depictions of bloody clashes the press subsumed all the systemic violence of class rule in the person of the raging 'Goebbels-Bandit'.

This process was enhanced by the close association that was regularly made between the Nazis and the group for whom the urban working class had the longest tradition of fear and detestation: the police. What the policy-makers were looking for in mass resistance to Nazi violence was essentially a reprise of the unexpected general uprising against the police of May 1929, and it is hard to avoid the suggestion that the assimilation of the image of the Nazi to the more familiar one of the *Schupo* was calculated to provoke an old response to a new situation. In fact, large-scale actions against the SA often turned more or less spontaneously into actions against the police.[9] But the circumstance that party-political enemies of the Communists had been portrayed in much the same terms – both as terrorists and as collaborators with the police – before the advent of the Nazi

threat reinforces the impression of deliberate calculation in the KPD's propaganda techniques.

To this was added a pathetic celebration of the Communists' own victimization. Personal heroism was prized as a quality even of Communist speakers, who made a point of risking mayhem by appearing in hostile meetings. Martyrs were at a premium. Each murder of a Communist or major incident of SA-terror sparked off a series of protest meetings and fund-raising campaigns in which a direct and emotional appeal was made to the collective outrage of the listeners. Funerals of the fallen were early recognized as an important focus of propaganda and agitation.[10] Photographic exhibitions and the use of portraits of the SA's victims on the Party's fund-raising stamps encouraged a sense of identification with the victims.[11]

The phrase 'Goebbels-Bandits' is itself instructive. It is symptomatic of the war of words between Nazis and Communists in which each presented the other as a radical threat to social order and thus outside the law. One technique was to brand the enemy as a criminal: 'brown murder-plague', 'fascist killer gangs', 'brown-murder', 'red-murder', 'the identity of Communism with the fifth estate', 'underworld' or, with still more radical connotations, 'sub-human'.

Another technique of KPD propaganda in the *wehrhafter Kampf* was to assert as an absolute claim that ideological and social hegemony over whole communities which, as we have seen, was highly problematical for the Party even where it approached realization. The SA itself provoked these assertions with its propaganda of the 'assault on Red Berlin'. The result was a very suggestive depiction of the SA man, in the first instance a *political* adversary, as an invader, and intruder whose very presence threatened the safety and integrity of the community. There will be more to say below about the reflection of this very powerful myth in the consciousness of the streetfighters themselves. Examples of its use in Communist propaganda could be multiplied endlessly. Let it suffice here to cite a single headline from *Die Rote Fahne*, which combines all the elements of the standard image of the adversary: 'Bloody heads for the Goebbels-Bandits. The "Conquerors" of the Fischerkietz and their Criminal Activity'.[12]

It would be an over-simplification, however, to see KPD propaganda as purely manipulative or concerned with imposing an artificial image of social and political relations on a naïve public. It reflected a sense of embattlement within the Communist and working-class movement, just as much as it was calculated to reinforce such attitudes. The *wehrhafter Kampf* was an example of the 'street politics' of the KPD, not only in that its principal locus was admittedly the neighbourhood, but also in the fact that in undertaking to organize it the Party was conscious of taking responsibility for a real impulse to action among ordinary people, which it hoped to broaden and politicize.

The effects of anomalies within and inconsistencies between the various perspectives on the *wehrhafter Kampf* that existed within the Party at the highest level were, if anything, reinforced by the fact that the policy had by its nature to take account of the views of the rank and file. To trace the process by which official policy was made and articulated over time is to see their consequences being worked out in practice, in the context of such increasingly important circumstantial contradictions as that between the national and international perspective of the KPD leadership and the more narrow local concerns of middle and lower functionaries, and the pressures for action inherent in a spiralling battle for the streets. From the autumn of 1929 onwards, the question of how the Party and its members should respond to the increasingly visible and aggressive presence of the NSDAP became a preoccupation within the KPD at all levels. Changing perceptions of the character of the Nazi threat and more or less independent tactical considerations on the part of the KPD leadership dictated a differentiation in the official policy towards the Nazis. The process of making and enforcing Party policy in turn brought to light the fact that there was very little consensus on the subject, either among the various sections of the Party organization, or among the competing personalities at its centre, or between one region or level and the next.

II

Early 1929

As late as the summer of 1929, the KPD leadership resisted taking seriously the rise of the Nazis. The elections to the Saxon Landtag on 12 May, in which the NSDAP gained more than 50,000 votes over the 1928 Reichstag election (while both the SPD and KPD votes fell), provoked the first suggestions that the Nazis had been neglected by the Party for too long. In June, the Central Committee admitted that the NSDAP was the only organization in the 'fascist camp' that was showing any signs of growth. But the balance-sheet it laid before the Party Congress insisted that this was no more than had been expected, and repeated earlier warnings against overestimating the Nazis' political potential.[13]

To most of the delegates who gathered for the Twelfth Congress in the wake of the May Day fighting, the arguments of the Central Committee must have made perfect sense. The police were and would remain the front-line enemy of the proletariat; in August, looking back over the experience of the summer, Walter Ulbricht would refer only to 'police terror' in reiterating the need for popular self-defence.[14] And the most plausible ally of the police against the Communists was still the Reichsbanner.[15] In fact, direct 'terror' on the part of the Reichsbanner was an essential element of the official image of social fascism. The Central Committee's report to the

Twelfth Congress made a point of the SPD's use of the Reichsbanner to carry out 'open fascist terror' in the elections of 1928, in terms that bear a remarkable similarity to the classic picture of National Socialist propaganda techniques.[16]

Less significant than the Reichsbanner, but still taken very seriously in mid-1929, was the Stahlhelm. This was the oldest established right-wing paramilitary organization in Germany and a long-time streetfighting opponent of the Communists, second in size only to the Reichsbanner. The brawling that accompanied the Stahlhelm rally in Halle in May 1924 had provided the occasion for the founding of the RFB.[17] The latest such rally, in Munich in June 1929, had been allowed to pass without an official response from the Central Committee, and this omission was sharply criticized by a Bavarian delegate at the Congress. 'We must see', he argued, 'that the Stahlhelm really is the leading element within the framework of white fascism.'[18]

Police, Reichsbanner and Stahlhelm each represented a dual threat. Acts of violence, of 'terror', were the outward and visible sign of the opposition of interests between themselves and the working class. But this hostility could be seen as a real danger only in conjunction with the weight that each group had in the political balance of power: its official backing, its class base, or its potential for hegemonic growth. In the balance as it stood in June 1929 there was little room for the NSDAP as an independent political force. Nor had its activities been such as to justify the Party's treating Nazi 'terror' as an issue in itself. In March it had been predicted that Hitler would move to curb militant action by his followers for fear of isolating the NSDAP from the other parties of the right.[19] In the resolutions of the Congress, the Nazis are subsumed into an undifferentiated 'fascism', or at best take second place to the Stahlhelm among the 'fascist fighting organizations' riding the predicted wave of repression.[20]

August 1929 to June 1930: 'Schlagt die Faschisten!'

When the Party did begin to take official notice of the Nazis, it was as a direct consequence of the violence of the SA. The occasion for the change was the NSDAP Congress in Nürnberg, at which the appearance of some 60,000 SA men and Nazi leaders alike in uniform for the first time was accompanied by bitter fights between the National Socialists and their opponents. Reichsbanner members figured heavily among the victims of the SA's outburst.[21] On the sixth of August, *Die Rote Fahne* carried the headline: 'Fascist Murder-gangs on the Rampage. Nazi Revolver-Attacks on Nürnberg Workers' Buildings. Police Protect Stormtroops. Hitler's Alliance with Hugenberg. Terror Plans for Pomerania and Mecklenburg. SPD Leaders Encourage the fascist Mob. Beat Fascists and SPD!' The old enemies were not forgotten; on the following day the paper's front page was

occupied by reports of 'bloody Reichsbanner-terror' in Berlin. But 'white fascism' now wore a brown shirt, and Nazi terror came more and more to dominate the pages of the Communist press, while articles about the Reichsbanner took on a different tone and function. By the end of August, the Berlin District Leadership could state with a certain finality that the task of demoralizing the proletariat had passed from the hands of the social fascists into those of the Nazis.[22]

Violence was treated by observers at all levels of the KPD as the fundamental characteristic of the Nazi movement in this period. Writing in the Comintern organ, *Inprekorr*, Fritz Rück reported in mid-August that the NSDAP was undergoing its most important change in tactics since the Munich Putsch of 1923. In apparent contradiction to earlier expectations, the Stahlhelm was pursuing a legalistic line, while 'the NSDAP has retained its expressly putschistic attitude. The stormtroops are systematically educated by the leadership to provocative action, and in the activity of these stormtroops is to be seen the most important expression of the life of the party.'[23]

The shift in the Communists' awareness of the NSDAP had its basis in a changing reality, of which Nürnberg was only one manifestation. The SA, along with the whole Nazi Party, underwent an activation in late 1929, and this was expressed in increased aggressiveness. Official sources confirmed Communist claims of a new wave of confrontations and direct attacks by the SA, and the Berlin SA was no exception. On 22 August, SA-Sturm 5, under the leadership of Horst Wessel, carried out a 'clean-up operation' in two Communist taverns in Kreuzberg. SA troops marched through Communist sections of Schöneberg, Neukölln and Kreuzberg in September. On the twenty-fourth of that month SA members on their way to a meeting in the Fischerkietz met with a violent reception from groups of Communists stationed around the streets giving access to the island, and *Die Rote Fahne* expressed its wholehearted approval.[24] The paper had already given its blessing to such actions at the end of August: 'The patience of the Berlin proletariat is exhausted ... Wherever a fascist dares to show his face in the quarters of the working class, workers' fists will light his way home. Berlin is red! Berlin is staying red!'[25]

It was in these days that the paper began to carry the slogan that set the tone for a whole phase of the fight against National Socialism: '*Schlagt die Faschisten, wo Ihr sie trefft!*' ('Hit the fascists wherever you meet them!'). This slogan had been used before, in 1924, to refer to the Stahlhelm. Heinz Neumann resurrected it in connection with the fight against the SA in Berlin. At this stage the line of *Die Rote Fahne* under Neumann's editorship, represented by '*Schlagt...!*', clearly had the backing of the Central Committee.[26] The slogan was immediately adopted by the Berlin District Leadership, and within weeks it had become a standard part of Communist

rallies all over the country, especially of meetings called for the formation of antifascist defence organizations.[27]

The perceived increase in Nazi violence was itself closely linked with new political initiatives and electoral gains by the NSDAP. These the Communists could not long ignore. In June, the gains made by the Nazis in their independent campaign for the Landtag elections in Mecklenburg-Schwerin were characterized, not without some perplexity, as 'a remarkable feature of the contradiction-ridden process of radicalization of the workers and middle strata'.[28] In July, Hitler took his first step onto the national political stage. He joined the leaders of Stahlhelm, German National People's Party (DNVP) and other conservative groups in a national commission whose aim was to mobilize opposition to the Young Plan, the latest scheme for the payment of reparations. The campaign for a national referendum, which would force the Reichstag to vote on a bill nullifying the principal provisions of the Versailles Treaty, involved a propaganda drive on an unprecedented scale. This provided the context for the increased visibility of the SA and the accompanying sharpening of political sensitivities. Drawing up a balance-sheet in the light of most recent political developments, the Central Committee member Rudolf Renner described in mid-September an almost hysterically energetic party, with a youthful and growing membership, whose skilfully directed propaganda was carrying it from success to success, and concluded that the NSDAP was 'the most dangerous and active fascist grouping in Germany'.[29] When the polling for the Young Plan referendum produced some four million yes-votes, just over the number needed to lay the proposition before the Reichstag, *Die Rote Fahne* declared categorically, 'they [the National Socialists] alone are the gainers from this action'.[30]

In the meanwhile, the Communists had initiated their own campaign against the Young Plan,[31] but when the Central Committee sat in plenary session on 24 and 25 October, the principal subject of concern was still how the KPD could regain the political initiative. Among the weaknesses discussed were 'the absence of an ideological fight against the National Socialists and the insufficient aggressiveness in the suppression of the fascist menace'.[32] In his speech to the meeting Thälmann emphasized the need for greater concentration on the 'revolutionary annihilation of fascism'. He insisted that it would be pointless to look for a single comprehensive formula, but elaborated on the two areas in which activity must be intensified. The Communists must first devote their energies to the exposure and discrediting of National Socialist demagogy, as embodied in the Young Plan agitation: 'Then we will snatch from them those working-class elements which still follow them, confused by their phrases.' Along with the political offensive must go 'the revolutionary violence of the masses' in the physical resistance to Nazi terror. And Thälmann concluded: 'We are on

the attack, on the offensive against fascism. We must root it out and crush it, applying all, even the most extreme, methods of struggle.'[33] On the following day, *Die Rote Fahne* supplied its own gloss: 'With iron, irresistible force, the proletarian storm-columns must and will smash fascism ... The Communist Party answers the bloody acts of terror and provocation with revolutionary violence, which *alone* is capable of ending the danger of fascism and foiling Hitler and Goebbels once and for all.'[34]

Rhetoric of this kind only served to obscure for Communists and outsiders alike the beginning discussion about how the physical fight against the Nazis fitted into the Party's broad strategy and how it should be carried on. The attitude of the political leadership of the Party was suggested in Thälmann's speech. Simply striking back was not enough, and Thälmann referred obliquely to the form that the popular response to the SA should take when he described the fight against fascism as 'a mass problem'. This point was elaborated in the process of defining the structure and function of the new antifascist defence organizations. Circulars issued in late 1929 pointed out that the actions of small squads, while they might strike at the hard core of SA troops, could not affect the NSDAP's electoral reserves. Nor could they, in the long run, put an end to Nazi terror. The ideological and physical offensives must reinforce one another, and this could be best achieved if as many people as possible took part in both.[35] It is characteristic of the Party's confusion in this period that these points were not made to the membership and public at large; they were echoed only feebly in the political directives of the Party and not at all in the Communist press.

By the end of 1929, the Communists had identified the NSDAP as a serious challenge, a force to be reckoned with by virtue of its political appeal as well as of its militant violence. But the KPD was still convinced that that appeal was limited. With the formulation of a policy towards the National Socialists, the way towards winning back the renegade social elements to which Nazism appealed had been shown and a standard provided, in terms of which the effectiveness of future activity might be judged. The successes and failures of the Communists in the municipal elections of November, the Party's high hopes of which had been disappointed everywhere except in Berlin, were interpreted as reflecting the amount of vigour shown in the offensive against the Nazis.[36] As the first wave of the Party's unemployed agitation climaxed in the following February, Rudolf Schlesinger, observing the situation from Berlin, could argue that the Nazis had passed their peak.[37]

That optimism did not outlast the spring. The initial undifferentiated propaganda of violence reflected a tacit consensus compounded of surprise at the sudden resurgence of the Nazis and a lingering confidence that National Socialism, being an anomaly on the political scene, could literally

be beaten back. But the political and publicistic approaches already appeared as distinct and potentially competing. The contradiction between them became clear as the political fight intensified.

June 1930 to September 1930

The first public attempt by the Party to readjust the balance came on 15 June 1930 when *Die Rote Fahne* published a resolution of the Political Bureau on the fight against fascism.[38] The resolution was dated 4 June. In it, the Party declared once again its intention 'to sharpen drastically the fight against the fascist threat... to fight fascism and its terror-gangs down to the point of total annihilation', but it laid out in more systematic detail than ever before how it meant to go about it.

New emphasis was placed on the forging of working-class unity as the function of the fight against fascism. The radical claims of the NSDAP must be exposed in the light of Nazi practice, but in the process a distinction must be made between the Nazi leadership and the 'misled masses of their labouring supporters'. The 'schematic' use of the slogan *'Schlagt die Faschisten, wo Ihr sie trefft!'* was thus no longer appropriate; the Party must avoid alienating rank-and-file Nazis from the working class. The fight itself would be eased by the fact that outrage at Nazi violence had spread beyond the ranks of the Communists; other workers, and especially Social Democratic workers, could be mobilized. And this, in turn, would facilitate the creation of the united front from below with the Social Democratic rank and file. The physical fight remained an important element of policy. Here, the resolution identified two 'deviations' in current practice:

> On the one hand, the tendency towards a terroristic tactics of desperation, which places the emphasis of the fight on isolated armed actions against the fascists; on the other, the tendency to shrinking back, to panic and to pessimism... The *wehrhafter Kampf* against fascism must under all circumstances be an organized mass-struggle.

There was little in the resolution that was substantially new, but the fact that ideas already in circulation had been digested, systematized and published, with considered emphasis, in the name of the Party, represented a policy in itself. Weeks of deliberate preparation preceded the publication of the resolution, as the Communist rank and file and readers of the Party press were gradually introduced to the elements of the new line. The caution of the Central Committee in withdrawing *'Schlagt...!'* reflected anxieties about the reaction of the membership, anxieties which were speedily justified.[39] In Berlin the publication of the full text of the resolution met with strong disapproval from the rank and file. People were even – it was said within the Party – refusing to turn out for public demonstrations because of their objections to the new line. On 23 June, a meeting was held to form a 'Fighting Committee of Red Berlin against Fascism', whose

function would be to coordinate the new campaign. The speaker felt compelled to explain that the disavowal of the old slogan 'should not be interpreted to mean that in the future no hair of their heads should be touched, but you can just as easily take advantage of an appropriate opportunity'.[40]

Given the apparent strength of feeling within the Party, it is worth while considering what motivations prompted the policy shift. Fear of prosecution – the explanation offered by the police – was certainly part of it. In addition to the various individuals called to account for their use of '*Schlagt die Faschisten!*' in the courts, *Die Rote Fahne* itself was prosecuted, in the person of its managing editor, Hans Steinicke, for publishing the slogan. The confiscation of the paper, with the consequent loss of revenues, was known to be an effective way of bringing the Communists to heel.[41] When the Party finally withdrew its imprimatur, '*Schlagt die Faschisten!*' had not in fact appeared in *Die Rote Fahne* for over four months.

At the time of Steinicke's prosecution in January, the Party was already suffering some embarrassment over the attack on Horst Wessel, who was shot on 14 January and died in hospital on 23 February. The KPD immediately denied any association with 'such deeds', and of the group accused of the murder *Die Rote Fahne* wrote indignantly: 'Zörgiebel knows perfectly well that the Sturmabteilung Mitte... was dissolved by the Communist Party itself... when it became clear that Zörgiebel's spies had managed to creep into it.'[42] The KPD did not often admit to having dissolved its own organizations. The reference to *agents provocateurs* suggests that this particular group had been getting out of hand – that '*Schlagt die Faschisten!*' was being too vigorously applied for the purposes of the leadership or the good of the Party.

The resolution of 4 June, however, implied more than the simple withdrawal of a slogan. As always, the positive elements of the new line reflected a series of shifts in perception of the general political situation, the advantages it offered and the strategy it dictated. The most important of these was in the area of policy towards the Social Democrats.

On 28 February 1930, the Enlarged Presidium of the Comintern's Executive Committee met in Moscow to discuss the prospects for the new year. It was asserted that the world crisis had entered a new phase; the industrial nations were already one step closer to a revolutionary situation than they had been at the time of the Tenth Plenum. But it was made clear that they were not there yet.[43] The German Party was called upon above all to renew its efforts to create a united front from below with Social Democratic workers. Thälmann brought back from Moscow the message that the KPD must abandon the attitude represented in its most extreme form by the epithet 'the little Zörgiebels': the tendency to treat Social Democratic rank and file, functionaries and leadership alike as the enemy,

to alienate Social Democratic workers through words and actions and to explain one's own organizational inadequacies by reference to the irredeemable corruption of the whole social fascist movement.[44]

Not only did the hope of winning over Social Democrats inform the physical fight against the Nazis, but the idiom of the united front from below began to be applied to the Nazis themselves. The resolution of 4 June referred to a 'work of differentiation and subversion within the camp of the labouring followers of the fascist organizations'. Where previously the KPD had looked to broad political campaigns to cut into the NSDAP's electoral reserves, the emphasis here is on immediate ideological confrontation with members of the NSDAP. In these months, Communist observers began to see National Socialism less and less as 'a military organization of a few tens of thousands of mercenaries of German capital'[45] and more as a mass movement, whose very growth, by drawing in restless and radical elements, made it vulnerable to exposure and subversion.[46]

Under these circumstances, uncoordinated violence against individual Nazis could only be counter-productive. When the Central Committee met in plenary session on 16 and 17 July, it criticized 'passive toleration of the terroristic measures of the state forces and the enemy front', but its official statement stressed ideological confrontation.[47] Instructions went out to the district organizations that Communists must seize every opportunity to expose the reality of National Socialist policies in local agitation. They must see to it that they were allowed to speak in Nazi meetings and challenge the Nazis to defend their line in Communist meetings. One-to-one agitation was to be facilitated through the indexing of names and addresses of local Nazis. KPD speakers were expected to leave the physical fight in the background.[48]

As the Central Committee met, a new budget was being debated in the Reichstag. In view of the recent successes of extremist agitation, no party which pretended to advocate the interests of the people could afford to take responsibility for the hardships that the proposed economy measures would place on unemployed and working people alike. The budget was rejected by the combined votes of the Communists, National Socialists, Social Democrats and part of the DNVP delegation. When the Chancellor issued two emergency decrees under Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution containing a package of financial and police measures, the Reichstag nullified them by the same majority. On 18 July the Reichstag was dissolved; new elections were set for 14 September. In the parliamentary vacuum that intervened, the Chancellor's decrees were reissued.[49]

The KPD saw in these events a sign that the 'economic crisis' was already transforming itself into a 'political crisis'. The representatives of the bourgeoisie in government had taken the first steps towards the abrogation of parliamentary democracy, and must, in the logic of the Communists, continue along the road to fascist dictatorship. The answer was to place

directly before the people the prospect of revolution as the only alternative way out of the crisis, and to work towards that goal in day-to-day agitation around immediate issues. The propaganda of dialogue with the Nazis became an important element of the electoral battle carried on under the slogan 'Soviet star or swastika'.[50]

The Party had not abandoned the *wehrhafter Kampf*, but its functions and correct application were subject to differences of opinion and judgment. In the Party journals, there was still room for heterodox positions, some writers arguing that the offensive against National Socialism in all its aspects was an unnecessary diversion from the broad revolutionary campaign, others, that the sole value of the physical fight was as an outlet for political aggressions frustrated by the modification of policy towards the SPD.[51]

In practice, the way in which the Party's line on violence was interpreted depended on both the pragmatic evaluation of political circumstances and the personal inclinations of the speaker. The situation consequently varied from one section of the Party to another. In Bremen, where KPD speakers were fairly conscientious in encouraging moderation among the membership, the police reported that Nazis and Communists could be seen conversing amicably at public meetings.[52] It was otherwise in Berlin. There, Heinz Neumann continued to use a provocative and inflammatory rhetoric in his public speeches and *Die Rote Fahne* continued to print them. At a meeting on 13 August, Neumann promised that the Communists would see to it, 'that the Third Reich lies not on earth but under it' and reinforced his remarks with vivid references to the impending revolution.[53] Württemberg, where neither KPD nor NSDAP was so self-confidently aggressive as in Berlin, provided yet another picture. The Nazis' avoidance of violence, even when they had the numerical advantage, led the Communist organizer to report:

> Naturally the Nazis will soon have overcome this 'peaceful' period even in this area. But for the time being ... one cannot simply apply the methods which are appropriate to industrial areas. The precondition for a counter-terror on the part of the workers in this case is generally the ideological exposure of the fascists. The breaking up of meetings by Communists from outside the area without the involvement of local workers has only hurt us.[54]

The multiplicity of semi-official voices within the Party, offering views on the *wehrhafter Kampf* from different areas, levels and intellectual stances suggests that the decision as to which way Party policy would finally go was still to be made. It also illustrates the number of different considerations that the central policy-makers had to take into account and how their view of the situation must have differed from that of any single member or local group. In September 1930 the leaders of the KPD were still watching to see what the fruits of violence would be.

14 September 1930 to March 1931

In the polling on 14 September, the KPD and the NSDAP were the only gainers. But while the Communists improved their position by 1.3 million votes, the Nazis surpassed all predictions, winning nearly eight times as many votes as they had in 1928. With 107 seats the NSDAP had the second largest delegation in the Reichstag. The SPD still had the largest, and the Communists took third place with seventy-seven seats.

Within a week the Central Committee issued a questionnaire to the district organizations; they were asked to report on the measures taken in carrying out the election campaign, their success, and Party response to the election results. One of the things the Central Committee was interested in learning was what effect, if any, fights with NSDAP members had had on the election results. Not all the districts responded to this question, and the answers received did not represent a mandate for violence. Halle reported that the Nazis had been unable to make real gains in areas where physical resistance had been organized as a 'mass movement' – to which the Central committee in its final report added: 'But the gains of the KPD are very minimal.' In Mecklenburg, the KPD made progress in all the towns where confrontations had occurred – but the Nazis made even more. The District Leadership related that in the strongly National Socialist town of Gnoien Reichsbanner men too had been 'beaten out of town with bloody heads'; SPD, KPD and NSDAP had all gained votes. Thuringia and Southern Bavaria showed no correlations between physical confrontation and electoral success, while the KPD in Pomerania, where the National Socialists' gains were disproportionately high, claimed that the Communist vote had suffered as a result of the 'terror of the Nazis'.[55] Success in Berlin, where the KPD won more votes than any other party, was attributed to the achievement of the proper balance of ideological and physical offensives under the watchful eye of the Central Committee.[56]

All in all, the campaign to win voters from the Nazis had proved a failure. The Central Committee conceded that in the 'main struggle between KPD and National Socialists, [the struggle] for hegemony over the labouring, non-proletarian strata', the NSDAP was still ahead: 'The gains of the Nazis mean in the first instance a mass-mobilization for the fascist counter-revolution.' The fear that recognition of the 'monstrous threat' would lead to despair and panic among the Communist membership now became explicit.[57]

At the same time, the success of the Nazis heralded a deepening of the political crisis. Already, the Communists might well reason, the forces of revolution and counter-revolution were being consolidated, as the centre fell away.[58] In this context, the united-front function of the defence movement came again to the fore. At a meeting of Berlin functionaries, Ernst Thälmann argued that the Party had been right to concentrate its

attack on the Nazis rather than the SPD: 'In reality, the fight against the fascist forces of the bourgeoisie, which shows our party to the Social-Democratic workers as the only anticapitalist and antifascist force, is the strongest support of their disengagement from the social fascist leaders.'[59]

The Party leaders predicted 'an unavoidable struggle' to follow within the coming year upon the deepening of the economic crisis and the sharpening of police terror. But the Comintern's military-political expert reminded readers that 'the emphasis of this struggle does not yet lie on physical combat with the fascists'. And during these weeks Thälmann referred for the first time directly to 'the propaganda, preparation and carrying-out of the political mass-strike against the fascist attacks'.[60]

The last months of the year saw a recrudescence of inflammatory attacks on the NSDAP, beginning with the Central Committee's prediction on 6 October that a new wave of Nazi terror was in the offing. In Bernau, just outside Berlin, on the seventeenth, eight people returning home from a Communist meeting were shot and wounded by the SA. *Die Rote Fahne* called it 'a warning to the whole German proletariat, [to take up] the *wehrhafter Kampf* against worker-murdering fascism'. *'Schlagt die Faschisten!'* reappeared briefly at the end of the month, when Heinz Neumann once again reminded a Nazi audience that Communists would not hesitate to defend themselves.[61] To a shooting attack by the notorious Sturm 33 of the Berlin SA on a Communist gathering place *Die Rote Fahne* responded: 'Through the whole of red Berlin there flows deep abhorrence and the firm will...: we must put an end to the murderous incendiaries in the Nazi Party.' It was announced that there would be a protest meeting the same evening. That meeting was turned into an appeal to Social Democrats to join the newly founded Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus. Walter Ulbricht directed his remarks at the activist elements within the SPD whose dissatisfaction with their Party's policy on Nazi terror and with its instrument, the Reichsbanner, had recently threatened to break out in open rebellion.[62]

Meanwhile, political events appeared to fulfil the KPD's predictions of a radically new situation. In reaction to the beginning wave of pay-cuts in industry, 130,000 Berlin metalworkers struck for two weeks in October; Walter Ulbricht greeted the strike as a 'turning point'.[63] In the middle of the strike, on 18 October, the SPD Reichstag delegation voted with the government parties to disregard all no-confidence motions before the house and proceed to consideration of Brüning's new programme. In thus declaring their intention of tolerating the 'presidential government' the Social Democrats made themselves more vulnerable than ever to Communist charges of collaboration. In mid-November, the KPD press began to speak of a decided 'sharpening of the economic and political crisis'.[64] Municipal elections at the end of the month in Baden, Mecklenburg and Bremen compounded the NSDAP's successes of September.[65] On 1

December the Chancellor introduced his 'First Emergency Decree for the Protection of Economy and Finances', which placed new hardships on civil servants and consumers while easing the tax burden on industry and big agriculture.[66]

On 2 December a lead article in *Die Rote Fahne* declared: 'The current policy of the government represents the fascist transformation of the country.' A Resolution of the Political Bureau confirmed a few days later that the Central Committee had made up its mind that the fascist dictatorship was already present in its first stages, in the form of the Brüning government. 'The call to a People's Revolution [*Volksrevolution*] arising from this', the District Leaderships were instructed shortly thereafter, 'makes a wide-ranging change in our whole Party-work necessary.'[67]

What the Party called for in concrete terms was less a change than another try at the old tactics. This applied to the question of the fight against the Nazis. In a speech to the Central Committee, Ernst Thälmann named 'shrinking back before murdering-fascism' as 'the decisive deviation in this period'. He enumerated for the first time the advantages of vigorous response:

> There must no longer be a single act of terror by the Nazi murderers without the workers everywhere reacting immediately with the most offensive, physical [*wehrhaften*] mass-struggle. What does this counter-action mean? It means: 1. a political security in the proletariat; it means 2. that the Social Democratic workers gain confidence in us, because they see that we are there and fight back. 3. it means that the fascist front is undermined and decimated. 4. that we strengthen, forge and steel our cadres together with the mass front for higher tasks in the revolution. Comrades, I think a really serious change is necessary in this area.[68]

Later in the speech, Thälmann raised the point again, when he talked about the responsibilities which the KPD faced in the new situation. He spoke of the crucial importance of the political mass-strike, and continued:

> a decisive problem is of course ... the armouring [*Wehrhaftmachung*] of the proletariat ... Our class-enemies are helping us with this ... The workers are already declaring: We won't let ourselves be hit any more! This mood is especially harsh against murder-fascism ... Today the outrage in the proletariat is already so great that one may almost say: If the KPD were to neglect this fight, the masses themselves would spontaneously begin to answer each new fascist murder with antifascist punitive expeditions.[69]

In Berlin, the ideological campaign was immediately pushed into the background. Walter Ulbricht and Joseph Goebbels confronted each other at a meeting in Friedrichshain on 22 January. When the assembly ended in a brawl the Berlin District Leadership answered: 'The workers of red Berlin will answer the Nazi provocations with the *wehrhafter Kampf* against fascism. A blow is the best defence!'[70] At a mass protest meeting, the sister of a murdered Communist appeared on the stage in tears, to lead the audience

in the cry of 'Revenge!': 'Erich Weinert recited, Egon Erwin Kisch spoke. The meeting unanimously adopted a resolution to fight ruthlessly against the fascist murder-mob.'[71] The friends of another victim reportedly promised, 'We are now going to join the antifascist defence organization and avenge our friend.'[72] Amid reports of the growing strength and energy of the Kampfbund, appeals were made to Communists and Social Democrats alike to forge a fighting united front.[73] But Ulbricht complained in early March of a 'loss of momentum'; if all the efforts of the Party so far had not been able to discourage Nazi terror, then those efforts must be increased.[74]

KPD propaganda for violent response to Nazi attacks reached a fever pitch in mid-March. On the night of the fourteenth Hamburg National Socialists shot to death a Communist town councillor, Ernst Henning, and severely wounded his companion in a city bus. Hitler issued a statement regretting and condemning the action, but declared at the same time that he saw in the culprits 'only the unhappy victims of a bloody and murderous baiting by the communist Antifa[scist movement] that has gone unpunished for months.'[75]

For *Die Rote Fahne*, the events represented yet another turning point. The call 'to free the country from the fascist murder-plague', repeated in various forms during the following days, was given an apocalyptic note by Heinz Neumann's article on the sixtieth anniversary of the Commune. Neumann's principal aim was to put into historical terms the preoccupation with ways of mobilizing non-proletarian groups reflected in the slogan of 'People's Revolution'. But he must have had the highly charged situation of the moment in mind when he pointed out that the Commune had failed because it dealt too gently with its enemies.[76]

At the same time, the KPD's rejection of individual terror was repeated with renewed emphasis, both for Party members and for the public at large. In its official statement on the murder of Henning, the Central Committee declared that the working class would make full use of its right of self-defence, 'without allowing itself to be lured into the methods of individual terror that Marxism rejects'.[77] An instructional circular defined individual terror briefly as 'individual actions against individual fascists'. The circular, written in question-and-answer form, undertook to explain *inter alia* why '*Schlagt die Faschisten!*' was no longer appropriate. It argued that only comrades who conceived of violence solely in 'individual' terms could see the abandonment of the old slogan as a complete turn away from violence: 'But proletarian mass-terror is necessary (where a distinction must be made between the fascist cadres and the fellow travellers), and this has for its precondition, under all circumstances, a broad ideological and political propaganda and mass-agitation.' 'Proletarian mass-terror' was not more closely defined. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this document is that

the ancillary relation of political agitation to violent action is not only made explicit, but – for the first time – thought through to the conclusion: '... a fight with *only* the fists ... can ... once again become correct when the fascist movement is sufficiently eroded and undermined in the political struggle'.[78]

By the end of March, the Central Committee was claiming (once again) that the National Socialists had passed their peak. The Communists had scored a propaganda coup on the nineteenth, when Reichswehr Lieutenant Scheringer, convicted five months earlier of high treason for carrying on Nazi propaganda within the army, publicly declared his change of allegiance to the KPD.[79] If the NSDAP had ever been 'eroded and undermined', the Central Committee's statement suggested, it was now, and individual terror on the part of the Nazis was a sign of desperation, 'the actions of a retreating army'. The enemy's loss of nerve was attributed in part to the increased activity of the Communists on the self-defence front, but there was no suggestion that the time had come to strike the final blow. The Central Committee was apparently content to discredit individual terror by association with the Nazis, and to call for a 'really serious political work' and the creation and activation of 'Nazi-Commissions' within the local Party organizations.[80]

As usual, this message was transmitted to the membership with the emphasis that seemed appropriate to speaker and audience. The representative of the Berlin District Leadership sent to present the official view on 'work with the opposition [*Gegnerarbeit*]' to the Party in Moabit pointed out that much could be achieved by playing upon the contradictions within the NSDAP. But more could be done:

> The Nazis for their part have also gone over to more forceful methods of terror ... These methods naturally demand a more forceful defence. But the defence-tactic must be left to the initiative of the comrades. But the important thing is fastest reaction to Nazi acts of terror, immediate proletarian response and greatest forcefulness.[81]

April 1931 to November 1931

The spring that began on a note of aggressive optimism was followed by a summer and autumn of unprecedented economic distress and spiralling civil disorder. By the time winter came, the KPD was deep in a public campaign to force all sections of the Party to practice the hitherto muted policy of mass-action. And the need for the new campaign was explained in terms of the failure to correct the errors of 1930–1.

Those errors had been identified as early as April, when leading members of the Central Committee journeyed to Moscow for the Eleventh Plenum of the ECCI. Thälmann's report to the meeting included a lengthy discussion of the changes in KPD policy towards the National Socialists since the last ECCI session, which had made it possible 'to bring the march of fascism to a

standstill and produce a certain stagnation, even the first serious signs of a falling-off in the National Socialist movement'.[82] The official resolutions of the Plenum followed Manuilski's keynote address in holding up the general line of the KPD as a model for emulation; the Party's unemployed agitation received special encouragement.

There were fundamental criticisms to be made as well, though. In the principal speeches and documents, and even more vigorously in the discussions during and between sessions, the Comintern leaders voiced their disapproval of a package of deviations implicit in the KPD's recent policies. These included the tendency to overlook the fundamental character of the Nazis as the class enemy, and thus to treat the National Socialist rank and file as potential allies. The KPD's description of the Brüning government as a fascist régime was also replaced with the more considered appelation, 'the government of the implementation of fascist dictatorship'. The Communist parties were warned against the 'revolutionary impatience' that characterized the radicalized but politically inexperienced elements currently being drawn into the movement. And the German leaders were reminded of the dangers of a policy of action at all costs and the associated pattern of terroristic violence.[83]

Thälmann's report to the Central Committee on the conclusions of the Plenum was a characteristic exercise in the kind of self-criticism that consisted in veiled self-congratulation. He called for a new energy in the prosecution of old policies. The Central Committee resolved among other things to intensify its propaganda and agitation among the Nazis 'without allowing a weakening of the mass physical fight against all fascist terror'.[84]

Communist activity continued to alternate between winning the Nazis over and beating them back, in the context of a general activation of the Party which we have already seen at work in the unemployed agitation, and which increased the likelihood of violent clashes of all kinds. The height of tactical absurdity was reached in August, when the KPD gave its support to the campaign for plebiscitary dissolution of the Social-Democrat dominated government of Prussia – a campaign led by the right-wing parties and actively supported by the NSDAP. On the day of the plebiscite, two police officers were shot to death near KPD headquarters, ushering in a phase of desperate activity within the Berlin Party, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. A sense that the situation was about to break seems to have been widespread among the Communist membership at this time, encouraged by the rhetoric of the more radical Party leaders. In the atmosphere of deepening crisis produced by the collapse of the banks and the issuance of three emergency decrees 'against political excesses' between March and August, the Party began the first serious preparations for underground activity.[85] The insurrectionary handbook *Der Weg zum Sieg*, originally compiled in 1928, was reissued in an updated version. In June,

the Kampfbund leadership remarked reprovingly: 'Our comrades often talk about the imminent revolution, one often hears: It's starting this autumn!' At the end of the year members of the illegal RFB were told that they were approaching 'great struggles': 'Only a short time remains to us until then.'[86]

Clashes between Communists and Nazis became more frequent and more deadly. In September and October, the Berlin leadership attempted to introduce some coherence into the *wehrhafter Kampf* in the form of a campaign of 'mass terror' against the tavern headquarters of the SA. Conceived as a programme of boycotts, rent-strikes and mass demonstrations, the campaign resulted in a series of isolated shooting-raids.[87] During the first days of November, the word went out in the Party that fights with the Nazis were to be discouraged.[88] On the thirteenth was published a new resolution of the Central Committee which, in the words of the Berlin police, 'struck like a bomb' among the membership.

Like the declaration of June 1930, the resolution adopted on 10 November did not add substantially to the Party's line as already articulated on many occasions. It described as a 'serious threat' the existence within the Party of 'left-sectarian states of mind, directed against the mass-work of the Party', characterized by 'terroristic states of mind, the application of individual terror against the fascists ... the carrying-out of senseless isolated actions and isolated armed attacks ... adventurist fooling-around with explosives'. Such tendencies, the Central Committee declared, had 'nothing in common with Communism'; they contradicted the teachings of Marx and Engels and the programme of the Communist International, whose condemnation of 'individual terror' was directly quoted in the resolution.

> Without refraining for one moment from the use of all appropriate fighting methods, and without limiting in the slightest the Communist formula of organized proletarian mass self-defence, the Central Committee declares the advocacy or toleration of terroristic ideology and praxis in any form to be absolutely forbidden. Whoever allows himself to be swayed by the counsels of despair, whoever allows his behaviour to be dictated by the enemies of the proletariat, whoever yields to fascist provocation, whoever breaks party discipline, is not worthy of the name of Communist.

The Central Committee invoked against all such 'the sharpest disciplinary measures up to and including expulsion from the Party'.[89]

In explanation of this policy, the Central Committee adduced 'not ... any considerations of bourgeois morality or "white moderation" ', but 'compelling reasons of expediency'. Individual terror could only weaken and divide the proletariat, distract the Party from the task of organizing the masses, and needlessly provoke repressive measures from the state. A lead article in *Die Rote Fahne* published at the same time as this resolution closed with a text from Lenin: 'In the best circumstances, [individual terror] is appro-

priate as one of the methods in the decisive assault of the masses', and the conclusion: 'but at the present moment the preconditions for this assault do not exist.'[90]

These statements vibrate with a dual sense of threat. On the one hand, they reflect most vividly an atmosphere of rage and impatience among sections of the membership; on the other, the feeling of the Party leadership that that atmosphere put the whole Party at risk, and the determination to suppress it, are unmistakable. Within the next months the strength of both would be revealed in the confrontation between them. It is worth considering briefly why the Central Committee chose to clamp down at this time. Many reasons were proposed at the time, and in spite of continuing speculation it remains impossible for historians outside of the DDR to trace precisely the decision-making process in this case.

As usual, the resolution needs to be seen in the context of the Party's reaction to a changing political situation. The left-wing opposition to the KPD speculated that the Central Committee was preparing the ground for a collaboration with the SPD leadership. A few days after the resolution was published, Rudolf Breitscheid, Reichstag Deputy and member of the SPD Executive, remarked in a speech that the KPD's rejection of individual terror had removed a major barrier to understanding between the two parties. The contemptuous reaction of the Communists to this overture made it clear that the KPD had not abandoned its line on social fascism. But the preceding two months had witnessed a new initiative in the Communists' 'ideological' agitation among Social Democrats and particularly within the Reichsbanner, as well as new signs of interest in cooperation on the part of some Social Democrats.[91] Moreover, on 17 and 18 October the convention of the SA in Braunschweig led to violent slashes and attacks by the National Socialists on workers' quarters. The Communists took the concerted resistance of the Braunschweig workers to these attacks and the protest strikes that followed as a sign of the feasibility of mass self-defence and a signal to begin a new campaign for the organization of strikes and mass-actions on a united-front basis.[92]

The need to consolidate the working-class front against fascism was made particularly acute in the eyes of Communists and Social Democrats alike by the apparent regrouping of forces on the right. In the results of the Prussian plebiscite, and the municipal elections in Hamburg and Bremen, the KPD recognized a 'concentration of fascist forces'; this continued into November with the Hessian Landtag elections. The working-class core remained unaffected by the Nazi gains, it was argued, but the middle classes were pouring into the fascist movement. At the party level, the changing balance of political interest was signalled in October by the creation of the 'Harzburg Front', an alliance of right-wing parties from the right-liberal People's Party to the NSDAP, whose purpose a National Socialist speaker

described as being to win state power. In government, too, there was a move to the right. On 6 October the Chancellor issued his third blanket emergency decree, which closed (for the first time) with the express declaration that the basic civil rights enumerated in Article 48 of the Constitution were suspended. The fusion of the ministries of defence and the interior in the person of General Wilhelm Groener in the second Brüning cabinet (9 October), with its simultaneous weakening of the moderating influence of the Centre Party, promised worse to come.[93] All of these circumstances demanded of the Communists not only rapprochement with Social Democracy but also renewed efforts in the ideological fight against the Nazis.

These events also represented an acute threat to the legality of the KPD. In a series of statements in which it tried to impress upon readers and listeners that it meant what it said, the Central Committee and its members freely admitted that the legality of the Party was a primary consideration in the issuing of the resolution.[94] But there is no reason to question the genuineness of the other reasons adduced by the Party: the need – 'entirely independent of questions of legality or illegality' – to concentrate all energies on the organizing of mass actions, to foster 'clarity about the perspective of the Party' and end 'all adventurist ideas that the decisive battle is just around the corner', and to 'free the way' for ideological agitation among rank-and-file Nazis.[95] Wilhelm Pieck's speech to the Central Committee Plenum the following February conveys something of the urgency that these tasks appeared to have at the time:

> Without falling into a mood of panic, the Comrades in the Comintern are filled with grave concern... We have a situation in which fascism can come to power in Germany without the Communist Party's being able even to begin a serious fight; ...in which it is possible for the Party to be beaten by the fascists without succeeding in leading the masses into the fight. Such a situation can break over the Party. What that would mean for the Comintern, anyone can count on his ten fingers.[96]

In fact, it was the concern of the Comintern leaders and their determination to see their criticisms of April implemented that tipped the balance in the decision to issue the resolution; police agents within the Berlin Party reported that some time in October or early November Thälmann and Neumann had been summoned to Moscow and conferred with the Comintern Executive along with Pieck and other members of the KPD.[97]

November 1931 to January 1933

The November resolution ushered in the final phase of the *wehrhafter Kampf*. During the year and a half that followed, the Communist leadership seized every opportunity to reaffirm its opposition to individual terror. The line established by the resolution was maintained consistently in both internal and public discussion, although the worsening of the economic

and political situation in 1932 raised new anxieties and sources of confusion in aspects of policy closely related to the *wehrhafter Kampf*. The presidential elections in the spring brought a serious shock to the Party, with the realization that some of the thirteen million votes cast for Hitler had come from Communist voters looking for a quick resolution of the crisis.[98] At the same time, the terror of the SA seemed to be having its desired effect in some parts of the country; from Wolfenbüttel and Braunschweig came reports of 'a real anxiety-psychosis in the face of fascist terror', of 'streets in which our comrades hardly dare appear on the street after dark'.[99] The SA and SS were outlawed on 13 April, but this only served to shift the focus of the conflict. On 25 May hand-to-hand fighting broke out in the chamber of the Prussian Landtag; the first blow had been struck by the Communists after provocation from the right, but in the general *mêlée* that ensued they proved no match for the savagery of the Nazis, since the elections of 24 April the largest caucus in the house, who marched out in triumph singing the Horst-Wessel-Song.[100] In a letter to fellow members of the Central Committee Thälmann reflected that in the light of these events it would be necessary to counter both depression and 'an inclination towards individual acts against the fascists'.[101]

During the second half of the year what were viewed as radical changes in the political situation suggested a readjustment in the Party's interpretation of fascist terror. In its plenary session on 24 May the Central Committee discussed the imminent danger of Nazi participation in government. The fall of Brüning and the institution of an undisguisedly reactionary cabinet under von Papen on 1 June led Thälmann to declare:

> Fascist terror, which was already...an indispensable element in the execution of the dictatorship by emergency decree, is expected to be openly legalized, the SA and SS made into the fascist militia of the ...government... I believe... we have to state the question in Germany in a different way from what was the case, for example, in Italy... But we must not underestimate the danger.[102]

References to Italy now became commonplace, and in the wake of the re-legalization of the SA and Papen's 'coup' against the Prussian government, the Party leadership was seriously expecting a Nazi 'march on Berlin' at the beginning of August.[103] At the Twelfth ECCI Plenum in September, Knorin confirmed the view that 'Germany has entered into some kind of qualitatively new stage'; while reminding his listeners that 1932 was not 1922, and that Germany was not Italy, he decried any attempt to draw a distinction between the fascistic state and the 'private' bands of the SA, and made the remarkable suggestion 'that the revolutionary crisis can arise suddenly and unexpectedly on the basis of the confrontations between the fighting-troops of the bourgeoisie and proletarian mass rousing itself to the battle'.[104]

All of these prospects demanded action, but none was meant to suggest

that armed conflict was on the immediate agenda. There remained the task of gathering in the workers still outside the Party, and all through the year Party activity stood under the twin signs of the ideological fight against the Nazis and renewed efforts in the creation of the united front from below.[105] The organizational embodiment of this was called into being in the wake of the battle in the Prussian Landtag: the Antifaschistische Aktion was intended to provide a framework in which people from all walks of life could be brought together in loose coalition to fight economic, social and legal repression, and above all a basis on which Social Democrats and Communists could join in self-defence against the Nazis.[106]

Even the immediate prospect of the Nazis in government could no longer provoke a tactical change. On 22 January 1933, when the SA held a mass procession through Berlin, the Comintern showed its unwillingness to provoke a general confrontation by quashing plans for a counter-demonstration.[107] After Hitler's appointment to the Chancellorship on 30 January, there was certainly a general sense that this 'seizure of power' meant the beginning of a new era, but leading members of the Party denied that any radical change had occurred. 'As gravely as we regard the situation', Wilhelm Pieck told reporters on 6 February, 'we are by no means pessimistic. Instead of bread, potatoes, coal, the government offers only promises and terror, and this must have a demoralizing effect on the labouring people in the NSDAP... *For the present* our task is limited to making the workers capable of action for the struggle for their existence.'[108] At the first illegal meeting of the Central Committee on the following day, Thälmann spoke of 'certain elements of civil war', but the agenda remained the same. The sections of the Party were charged with preparing to go underground while at the same time carrying on a wide-ranging propaganda for the new elections in March, with organizing resistance against the new wave of terror while doing everything to avoid provoking a ban.[109] By the end of the month, the KPD, its press and its leaders were proscribed, its members subject to the terror of state and party alike. The 'battle for the streets' had taken on a new character, as Communists who did not rapidly disappear or make amends with their former streetfighting adversaries learned to their cost.[110] But as late as May 1933 the Party was still explaining to anybody who was still listening: 'Our motto, now as ever, is: Not through individual terror, but only through mass terror will we go forward in our fight... To follow the tactic of individual terror would mean the end of the Party...'[111]

III

During 1932 the Party leadership gave evidence of wanting to distance itself from the *wehrhafter Kampf* altogether, as it had previously been

conceived. The ambivalence of orthodox Marxists about an agitation located primarily outside the workplace came out in slightly garbled terms in January 1932, when the Berlin District Leadership condemned:

> tendencies towards exclusive concentration of the fighting energy of the workers against Nazi-terror ... Such a false orientation means ... concentrating the struggle on the neighbourhoods and the petty-bourgeois masses, where the Nazi influence is strongest. But the struggle ... concerns above all struggle for the factories.[112]

This may reflect official optimism about prospects for a new initiative in the united-front campaign, and, indeed, the Berlin Party organization was censured by the ECCI the following June for allowing itself to be tempted into negotiations with SPD officials.[113] But even apparent successes of the united-front effort in the *wehrhafter Kampf* prompted anxieties at this time. The Party was never satisfied with the formation of local SPD–KPD alliances on the purely 'technical basis' of self-defence in any case, since the ultimate aim of the united-front campaign was the avowed commitment of the Social Democrats to the Communist movement. During late 1932 there were not only complaints within the KPD that the Social Democrats' 'will to the united front' was still manifested largely on the basis of 'isolated demands and ... resistance to fascist terror', but even claims that SPD and Reichsbanner members were encouraging individual terror by their exclusive emphasis on joint defence.[114]

This suggests a deeper-running worry on the part of the KPD leadership about the persistence of individual terror. The fact that the Central Committee's resolution of November 1931 did not bring an end to Communist violence, interpreted by the police as a sign of the KPD's insincerity, was in fact evidence of a rebellion within the Party, which the leadership did its best to suppress. The united-front initiatives of the months that followed the issuing of the resolution were accompanied by vigorous attempts to enforce the resolution. If it had been possible before then for individual members to miss the point of the Party's official statements, or to pick and choose among the contradictory elements of the presentation of the *wehrhafter Kampf*, it was no longer so afterwards. And the fact that the resolution not only failed to suppress gang-style violence in practice but also met with active and outspoken opposition from certain sections of the Party makes it possible to begin to examine more closely the divergences in attitudes between leadership and rank and file and the fault-lines in the Communist organization along which they developed.

The most important of the KPD members to be disciplined in the name of the November resolution was Heinz Neumann. The meeting of Central Committee and Comintern Executive members in Moscow which preceded the issuance of the November resolution also brought to an end a struggle for power betweeen the members of the leading 'triumvirate' in the Central

Committee – Thälmann, Neumann and Hermann Remmele – which had been raging since the spring. Neumann was removed from the Party Secretariat in May 1932.[115] The following August, he was expelled from the Political Bureau, and at the Twelfth ECCI Plenum in September he was publicly condemned for underestimating the Nazi threat and advocating individual terror.[116]

The extent to which the struggle within the KPD leadership was a conflict over substantive issues, in which Neumann maintained a distinct 'terroristic' position in opposition to Thälmann and the orthodoxy of the Comintern, remains a subject for debate. Neumann did personify the more sensational aspects of Communist propaganda, and there is evidence that in Berlin, at least, the Party rank and file was aware of the existence of a 'Neumann-tendency' and a 'Thälmann-tendency', and identified the former with activism. Moreover, Neumann was an exceedingly popular figure within the Party, much in demand as a speaker. Whatever its value for Thälmann's personal power-position, the disciplining of Neumann fulfilled the function of impressing on the membership the seriousness of the Central Committee's intentions in the *wehrhafter Kampf*.[117]

Among other leading figures censured, removed from their posts, or brought publicly to recant in the course of the following year were Central Committee members Hermann Remmele and Leo Flieg, the Communist Youth leaders Alfred Hiller and Kurt Müller and the Organizational Leader for Berlin, Albert Kuntz.[118] 'With the liquidation of the Neumann–Müller–... Remmele ... group', Thälmann announced at the end of 1932, 'the KJVD is sacrificing a full dozen functionaries to the Party'.[119] In keeping with the resolution and with Ernst Thälmann's remark that 'we should not fear [pursuing] the consequences of this resolution, even at the organizational level',[120] still harsher measures were applied at the lower levels of the Party. Some members were expelled; others, probably the majority of Party workers, preferred the lesser humiliation of carrying out a political about-face.[121]

Within a week of its formulation, the Party's decision was being expounded in the Berlin locals. Heinz Neumann himself was dispatched to speak to one of the series of Party-workers' conferences held around the city.[122] As the Party's instructors and local secretaries took up the task of advocating a policy which many of them had been directly contradicting the week before, voices of protest began to be raised. Members were loath to take the new line seriously, speculating that it had been inspired by such diverse and peripheral considerations as the Chinese war, fights among the Party's intellectuals, or the inability of the Party's Red Aid organization to pay the costs of any further prosecutions. Others saw the resolution as a genuine reflection of the Central Committee's views, but nevertheless balked at accepting it.[123] The meetings of some of the Berlin cells witnessed

stormy debates and even fist-fights.[124] Even functionaries who had adopted the new line expressed doubts about its feasibility, 'in view of a situation in which the Nazis are openly arming for civil war', while others returned within a few weeks to the open advocacy of terror.[125]

The Party's youth accused the leadership of cowardice and betrayal. A letter of protest from a Communist Youth group in the north of Berlin called the resolution 'a licence for the fascist terror-groups against the workers':

> We, as revolutionary youth, have always seen the best defence against fascist attacks in retaliation. *Not only mass-struggle – but also individual terror!* We don't care for the idea that, if we are murdered by SA-men, a small part of the proletariat will carry out a half-hour's protest strike, which only makes the SA laugh for having got off so lightly... We have come to the conclusion that the fear of illegality played an important rôle in the formulation of the resolution. To this we remark that we Young Communists carried out a large part of the illegal work of the Party at the time of the emergency decrees, without grousing or asking the consequences. But if illegality appears so frightful to the Central Committee, then we will of necessity stop all illegal work, so that nobody can try to lay the blame on us in case of a ban on the Party. It's quite clear to us that that will cost us much in revolutionary energy and dynamism and we will lose our character as a revolutionary youth organization. Thanks to this resolution the once purest flame of revolution will be reduced to a flickering oil-spot – and we shall no doubt have to wait for the Soviet Germany that we all yearn for so passionately until it drops down as a gift from heaven.[126]

The Communist Youth was and remained a source of resistance to the resolution.[127]

The situation in the defence organizations was even more serious. There, many categorically refused to adhere to the Central Committee's ruling. Along with the familiar arguments, that the Party was neglecting the interests of its members and of the revolution, 'that the resolution ... is a product of cowardice and calculated to make the cowardice of the Party leadership obligatory for the opposing party', RFB leaders excused their recalcitrance with the view that the resolution was binding for the Party, but not for its auxiliaries. Some left the defence organizations; one RFB leader was quoted as saying, 'If the Party won't lead the fight against fascism, we'll just join the Nazis.' Others remained and carried on the fight with their accustomed violent methods, or maintained a truculent passivity in the face of all efforts to involve them in the Party's mass-actions.[128]

These groups continued to generate problems for the Party leadership for some time to come. At the end of 1931 it was reported that several Communist Reichstag deputies had proposed that the RFB be dissolved, in order to put an end to the embarrassing indiscipline of its members. The suggestion foundered on the threat of the RFB leadership not to tolerate the posting in the next election of any candidate who had supported it.[129]

The conflict was reactivated in the wake of the Twelfth ECCI Plenum, when it became still clearer that organizational rivalries were fuelling the

policy debate. In Berlin in October and November 1932 there was a round of attacks from the Party on the RFB, which, Party faithfuls complained, was 'getting completely out of line [*tanze vollkommen aus der Reihe*]'. They received a characteristic answer from one RFB leader in Pankow:

> In the past months the Party had cut off the fighting organizations completely and characterized them as 'Neumann-Formations'. The members of the 'Einheit' [illegal RFB] were put out, and it was right that just at present they weren't directly following the instructions of the Party. He was doing his best to keep the members under control, but if they didn't turn out for demonstrations there was nothing he could do about it. After all, the fighting formations were not created to go on public promenades.[130]

The Party pointedly refused to call out the RFB to help in the Berlin transport strike. By the time the District Party Congress met in Berlin on 19 and 20 November, however, the new wave of organizational measures, combined with the agitational successes of the strike and the Reichstag elections, had effectively silenced opposition.[131]

In the course of the campaign of enforcement, the Party theoreticians and publicists developed their own stereotype of the 'terrorists': they came out of the elements most recently recruited to the Party, the young and 'parts of the unemployed'. They were therefore unschooled, subject to theoretical 'confusion' and easily swayed by 'antique, hackneyed "arguments" ' such as 'intimidating the enemy' and 'stirring up the masses'. They were also peculiarly liable to react emotionally to SA violence, with feelings of 'despair and revenge'. All of this became particularly volatile in combination with a false understanding of the revolutionary perspective – either expectations of an immediately impending insurrection or (paradoxically) a belief that the Nazis should be allowed – or helped – to seize power as the necessary prelude to a proletarian uprising, or some unformulated combination of the two.[132]

We shall have occasion to compare this image with one level of reality as we examine some streetfighting groups and individuals. It has already been suggested that a whole set of attitudes which the Party retrospectively condemned and linked to the practice of individual terror were implicit in the Party line itself. In the 'fight on two fronts' which the KPD waged during the 'Third Period', the line between deviations of left and right, between euphoria and despair, adventurism and resignation, which represented the theoretically correct position, was very thin indeed. The highly functionalist character of the theory of fascism propagated by the Soviet and German parties, by making the drawing of distinctions between the violent 'fascist' party and the repressive 'fascist' system both illegitimate in principle and semantically difficult, was as likely to encourage exclusive concentration on the physical fight against the SA as to produce the reaction of the RFB leader who thought he could fight fascism by joining the Nazis.

But consideration of the responses actually evoked by the attempts to enforce that line suggests that the fractious rank and file was not so much thinking incorrect thoughts as speaking a different language from that of the leadership. Terror, fascism, organizing the revolution – all these words had special meanings for them. That the words themselves were drawn from the official vocabulary of the Party underlines the central problem of any analysis of KPD policy. The leadership itself was using the same language for two different purposes: on the one hand, to communicate its understanding of the political situation, and on the other, as a spur to action. Responsible both for practical action and agitation and for the maintenance of a correct theoretical line, the Communist leaders could not cease to represent both senses of every expression, however incoherent the resulting discourse might be, and the same paradox appears in their unsuccessful attempts to control and direct the forms of violence that they could not cease to encourage.

The meaning individual members drew from the words of the leadership, like the way they perceived the uses of violence, was determined by their position in the struggle to which the Party directed them. The social and political events that presented themselves to the leadership as problems for analysis and challenges to the integrity and versatility of Leninist theory appeared to the membership most immediately as real threats and tasks demanding practical solutions. Even when the rank and file continued to operate within the framework of officially established priorities, the need to make sense of and respond to everyday reality could lead to a bending or stretching of Party policy. Thus a KPD organizer in East Prussia, taxed with encouraging individual terror, threw the Central Committee's logic back in its face: '...it was necessary to talk radically so that there would be a fight with the Nazis in Königswalde for once so as to come to a united front with the SPD'.[133]

In the reaction of the November resolution in Berlin, however, there are signs of a much more radical disjuncture between the perceptions of leadership and membership. The *wehrhafter Kampf*, for the leadership in essence an instrument of propaganda and one – and by no means the most important – of a whole series of struggles and levels of struggle, had become, for some Communists at least, the fight against a direct menace to life and limb in which the stakes were raised with every new confrontation. The problem was the SA, the solution, its removal with the simplest and most effective means available.

This is the 'military-technical' approach in its simplest form, and it is not surprising that the toughest resistance to the November resolution came from the sections of the Party that were most closely involved with the execution of the *wehrhafter Kampf*. If the language of opposition was that of anxiety and commitment to the physical fight, the accent in which it was

expressed was that of organizational self-consciousness. An examination of the Party's defence organizations, which were both the focus for discussion of the *wehrhafter Kampf* and, by their very existence, the embodiment of official propaganda for it, should suggest some of the sources of that self-consciousness and its relation to the practice of individual terror.

4

Organizing the *wehrhafter Kampf*: The Communist defence formations

The banning of the RFB at a time when all signs pointed to a new round of brutal repression from above and revolutionary action from below was a double blow to the Communist Party. It had been deprived of the organizational framework in which an effective self-defence movement might have been developed; this, at least, was what the Party publicists continued to argue for the next three-and-a-half years.[1] At the same time, the KPD had lost one of its most popular and successful united-front organs. Since its earliest years, the RFB's defence functions had been ancillary to its broader purpose as a mass-organization: to draw non-Communists into the movement, to spread propaganda, especially through 'antimilitarist' agitation, and to carry argument and discussion into the ranks of the army, police and other paramilitary formations, most notably the Reichsbanner.[2]

In the discussions over possible replacements for the RFB, Party tacticians were wont to stress that the tasks of the 'Third Period' required a new kind of organization. Significantly, the functions of active self-defence were explicitly emphasized in contrast to the popular propaganda, parades and 'militaristic *Brimborium*' appropriate to the years of social peace.[3] But as long as the gathering-in of the masses remained the immediate aim of the Party, this distinction was imperfectly realized. The military and defence organizations of the KPD translated into practice a by now familiar set of tensions: between the principles of cadre- and mass-organization, of factory and neighbourhood, of propaganda and technical efficiency.

I

The first considerations of the Party in the wake of the fighting in Berlin were technical ones; what was needed was an organ of physical self-defence which could also provide marshals for demonstrations. This conception was dubbed 'Proletarischer Selbstschutz' (PSS, Proletarian self-defence). At the Twelfth Congress, in June, the Berlin organization pressed for a resolution laying out in detail the structure and functions of a PSS. This

proposal was rejected by the Political Commission, for 'the character of the self-defence organs must vary ... according to the character of the various struggles'.[4] At the beginning of July, however, a set of provisional instructions for the creation of a PSS was issued. It emphasized the need to prepare the proletariat for the coming military conflict while at the same time giving special attention to preventing a further outbreak of 'spontaneous armed fighting-actions'. These functions were to be combined with 'broad ideological education and schooling on the lessons of the German and international civil-war experience' and broad political activity, but above all with specific defence tasks in the factories, at meetings and demonstrations, and in all forms of public agitation. Like the RFB, the PSS was to be factory-based and serve as an organ of the united front, but the traditional element of mass-appeal was subordinated to the interests of technical efficiency and reliability:

> Although a broad mass basis must be striven for from the beginning ... it must nevertheless be understood that the PSS will find its broad mass-base only when the workers' struggles culminate in revolutionary struggles ... The cadres of the PSS comprise the most politically active comrades ... and members of the ... mass-organizations as well as reliable workers.[5]

At the same time as the PSS was under discussion, Communist organizers were casting about for instruments to fulfil the old RFB's broader political and organizational rôle. In this process the Comintern military experts offered guidance in the form of a carte-blanche: 'The organizations for self-defence must not be secret organizations within the Communist Parties, but organs of the united front ... unless, of course they are broad mass-organizations or smaller groups for special tasks.'[6] The conclusions of the Tenth ECCI Plenum were somewhat more explicit: they called for a combination of Proletarischer Selbstschutz in the factories with 'broad, solid, permanent proletarian resistance-organizations', neither of which however should be allowed to prejudice the Party's duty to maintain the RFB as an underground formation.[7]

The Comintern's decision helped to resolve confusion and uncertainty in several areas. Numerous large-scale organizations had sprung up following the RFB ban, in what some observers described as a '*Wehrwirrwarr*', and the Central Committee began to encourage the consolidation of these groups with its memorandum of 25 July. The memorandum, which referred to the danger of the district organizations' 'letting themselves be surprised by the initiative of the workers from below', suggested that the Party had been in danger of losing control of the movement.[8] There followed a series of organizing rallies, at which new formations were founded, whose functions lay in the area of broad antifascist agitation. While they had self-defence tasks to carry out in the neighbourhoods and factories, these groups were

instructed to avoid the use of the term '*Wehrorganisation*' ('defence organization'). Their names varied widely, in a calculated attempt to confuse the police; and, indeed, all outward signs of uniformity or centralization or of continuity of structures or personnel with the RFB were discouraged in order to frustrate the persistent efforts of the authorities to prove that the new organizations were (illegal) continuations of the old.[9]

The Antifaschistische Junge Garde (Young Antifascist Guard) provided a cautionary example. Founded in Berlin in July, the AJG had nearly 2000 members in the city by the end of September. But by February 1930, following the murder of Horst Wessel, the Berlin authorities thought they had enough evidence to ban the AJG on the basis that it was a cover-organization for the banned Rote Jungfront.[10] A year later, the remaining sections of the AJG counted some 4000 members across the country.[11]

By this time, the Party could argue that it had no need of a replacement for the RFB, since that organization had never been dissolved. Here, too, the Tenth Plenum brought the beginning of the end of debate and indecision. Although there were signs that the ban on the RFB had not been entirely unexpected, the initial reaction of the Communist leadership in May was one of uncertainty. The ban posed the immediate practical problem of holding onto the RFB's membership, which began to fall away very rapidly. By the end of May the Berlin police were reporting that about one-quarter of the old RFB membership remained true to the Party, and only the organization's marching-bands – officially regarded as recreational rather than political groups and consequently relatively immune to prosecution – showed any sign of holding together.[12] It was clear at this stage that considerable opposition existed within the Party to the wasteful and hazardous prospect of carrying on the RFB as such underground. At the end of August, however, Party speakers began to report to the district organizations that the Central Committee had finally decided that the RFB was to continue operating as an illegal organization. By the middle of October, the RFB in Berlin had already developed a considerable underground machine, with couriers, cover-names, safe addresses and front-organizations.[13]

The only function that the RFB as such possessed, now that the triad of organizational forms was officially established, was that of agitating for its own legality. The PSS had taken over its self-defence functions, the antifascist organizations its propaganda rôle. There was no clear picture at first of what the illegal RFB had to do except be itself, and this was characteristic of the Party's *ad hoc* approach to its organizations during this whole period. As the Central Committee's representative in Saxony said, addressing himself to some of the prevailing notions about the future of the RFB: 'We cannot create any forms of organization to last for years, nor can we say that the illegal RFB will be the basis for a future revolutionary army.

We can only organize according to the political necessities as they exist at the moment.'[14]

II

Before going on to consider the development of the RFB in the context of the Party's illegal activities, we may return to the sphere of legal organization. Even after the decision had been made to maintain all three forms of organization concurrently, there was some dissatisfaction about the status of the legal antifascist and defence groups. Members of the RFB and even of the Party feared that they would draw members away from the RFB, and it was widely felt that they should never have been formed in the first place.[15] Nevertheless, the reasons for their formation – public self-defence and popular agitation – remained compelling. The changes that took place in their organization generally followed the changes in the Party's policy on fascism.

The tactical errors that had been committed at the time of their founding began to work themselves out early in 1930. By late spring it was clear that the replacement-organizations for the RFB were not flourishing as had been hoped and that the Party leadership was considering a reorganization. The resolution on the fight against fascism of 4 June 1930 included a call for the formation of Rote Betriebswehren (Red Factory Guards).[16]

Like many of the KPD's organizational initiatives in this period, the campaign for the creation of Red Factory Guards gave the impression of solving a problem that it only served to obscure. The new formations represented not a coordination of the defence movement but rather an additional layer of organization and administration. This was apparent in the directives for their creation, issued at the end of July, in which the Party leadership reminded its members: 'In the formation of the Red Factory Guards it must be clear from the beginning that they must not be confused with the antifascist and other self-defence organizations of the revolutionary proletariat.'[17] The 'Fighting Committee of Red Berlin against Fascism', founded shortly after the publication of the June resolution to coordinate the new campaign, also recognized as a parallel task to the creation of Factory Guards that of 'organizing the fight against fascism in the proletarian neighbourhoods through the consolidation of the marshal corps [*Ordnerdienst*] and with the aid of antifascist fighting-committees'.[18]

The greater significance of the Red Factory Guards was as the organizational expression of the concerns voiced in the June resolution. Fundamental to Communist activity in the light of that resolution was the idea that the fight against fascism, as a part of the broad fight against the enemies of the working class, had to be fought in the terms and with the means that were essential to the Communist movement. The need for the

concentration of self-defence in the factories was already being discussed in KPD organs in the spring, when it was argued that factory-based organization had practical advantages over neighbourhood organization because the workers' 'sense of belonging together' was stronger in the workshop than in the apartment-block.[19]

The second aspect of policy which the Factory Guards were designed to embody was that of mass-struggle. Unlike the PSS, the Factory Guards aimed at the broadest possible participation; unlike even the mass antifascist organizations, they were conceived as being loosely organized voluntary associations, not distributing membership cards or exacting dues. The conviction that lay behind this was made explicit in the July directives: 'The fight against fascism is not to be carried on with individual acts or unplanned brawls, but above all in the broad ideological mass-struggle and with the appropriate mass-organs.'

At the same time, the Factory Guards represent in their structure an incomplete realization of this principle. The Party was still guided by considerations of technical efficiency when it recommended from the beginning that the basic unit or organization be the group of ten 'in order to reinforce the sense of strength and guarantee a certain degree of striking power'. In the autumn of 1930, however, writers in Comintern and Party organs began to articulate a more broadly political conception of proletarian self-defence. Special emphasis was placed on maintaining the distinction, in theory and practice, between the highly centralized formations of the National Socialists and the forms of self-defence appropriate to the working-class movement. Exclusive reliance on military 'professionals' and disciplined cadres, the Comintern's military expert argued, could be tolerated in a movement which organized among the lower-middle classes and which operated with the approval of and in cooperation with the police; but he condemned the persistence of such ideas of a division of labour within the Communist movement. There, the conditions of life and of political activity required that 'every revolutionary worker must be [both] politician and "military man" '. Special defence-formations could participate – 'but *only* participate' – in the self-defence movement, which must be a mass-movement, its organizational forms flexible and responsive to changing circumstances.[20]

The Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus (Fighting League against Fascism), founded in September 1930, came a little closer in some ways to embodying this conception of a self-defence movement than had the Factory Guards, although in others it represented a return to more familiar forms of membership organization. The occasion for the creation of the Kampfbund was the Reichstag election of 14 September; the gains made by both Communists and National Socialists made it imperative that the Party find a means for simultaneously collecting and holding the millions of new

Communist voters and combating the influence of Nazism among the others. In addition, this new initiative, like every major organizational undertaking of the KPD since 1924, mirrored a change in the Social Democratic camp; just after the elections the Reichsbanner had begun to organize special sections (Schutzformationen or Schufos) for self-defence purposes. *Die Rote Fahne* announced the Communists' new organization on the 26th, and the Kampfbund was officially founded at a mass rally in Berlin on the 28th.[21]

In the eyes of the Party leadership, the functions of the Kampfbund were primarily political and organizational: 'to create the political conditions in which it will be possible to strike down fascism decisively'.[22] It stood squarely in the tradition of Communist mass-organizations, nominally independent of the Party itself, its purpose to draw outsiders into the Communist movement.[23] In this case, the principal object of attention was the worker who might ordinarily be attracted to the Reichsbanner, and the means was emphasis on a common antifascism. At the same time, of course, the Kampfbund was to be instrumental in weakening the fascist movement through action and argument. The functions of physical defence, the *wehrhafter Kampf*, were thus essential to its aims. In the multiplicity of its projected activities, the Kampfbund was the nearest thing to a new edition of the RFB that the KPD could have produced after 1929, and within the Comintern the conviction of the Kampfbund's propaganda character was so strong as to provoke suggestions that its militant defensive aspect should be sacrificed in the interests of the kind of popular appeal that had characterized the legal RFB.[24] Nevertheless, the insistence of the Kampfbund leadership that the organization was neither a 'substitute RFB' nor a 'red SA' – neither a parading-formation nor an instrument of terror–[25] may be taken as reflecting a real difference in conception between the old mass organization and the new.

The differing rubrics under which the two organizations operated themselves implied variations in practice. The RFB's opposition to 'militarism' was part of a long revolutionary tradition and was accordingly diffuse in its methods and targets. The Kampfbund's antifascism reflected the immediate political crisis, characterized by the rise to prominence of a single adversary; although its ultimate ambitions were as global as the orthodox definition of 'fascism', its activities were explicitly directed against the National Socialists.

The directives for the formation of the Kampfbund, issued together with a draft set of statutes within two weeks of the Berlin rally, called for action to halt the progress of National Socialism in three areas:[26] in the factories Kampfbund members had to carry on an 'ideological' fight against existing National Socialist factory groups; they had to prevent the creation of new groups through 'systematic political cultivation of the workers' and by

agitating for the expulsion from the factory of intransigent fascists. The Kampfbund must respond to Nazi propaganda with its own literature, hold its own meetings in the factories and provide speakers to appear at Nazi meetings. It must fight strike-breaking and provide defence for antifascist workers during strikes and in meetings within the shop. The functions of the Kampfbund in the labour exchanges paralleled those in the factory; they included distribution of propaganda material, the organization and defence of meetings, 'fight against the fascist practice of the labour-exchange directors', and support of the organization's activities in the factories and neighbourhoods. In the neighbourhoods the Kampfbund was expected not only to carry on Communist propaganda but to find out which residents were members of the NSDAP and readers of the fascist press and give special attention to winning them over. To the organization and defence of meetings were added the systematic defence of workers' taverns and other establishments and 'the organizing and carrying out of decisive measures against National Socialist street propaganda'.

In spite of the ideal and appearance of administrative centralization characteristic of all Communist organizations, the Kampfbund's structure left room for a considerable degree of local initiative. The single most potent solvent of the lines of command between Berlin and the individual sections was the financial situation of the Kampfbund's national leadership, regularly described as 'disastrous' or 'catastrophic'. The locals were thrown back on their own resources, and the organization's poverty continued to reflect the poverty of its members; at a meeting of the Kampfbund in the Zentrum district of Berlin on 5 October 1931, the group leaders pointed out:

> The fact that the sale of *Fanfare* [the Kampfbund's newspaper] cannot be pushed enough is partly due to the fact that the market is literally flooded with proletarian literature. These masses cannot even raise the 10 Pfennigs for the newspaper any more. On the other hand ... the comrades ... always try to unload them on the already impoverished shopkeepers.[27]

Repeated failure to live up to the expectations of the leadership led to organizational changes on several occasions during the two and a half years of the Kampfbund's life; these were carried out with varying degrees of consistency at the local level. As early as January of 1931 the detachments were encouaraged to delegate the most important and delicate organizational tasks to groups (*Aktivgruppen*) of three to five men.[28] The following April the first national conference of Kampfbund leaders, meeting in Berlin, complained that too many locals were neglecting the political duty of 'ideological mass-struggle' and called for a general reorganization as the answer to the Kampfbund's problems.[29]

The most compelling anxiety behind these continual readjustments in organization arose from the spectacle of stagnation and even falling numbers. The Kampfbund absorbed most of the existing antifascist and

Table 1. *Membership of Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus 1931 and 1932*

	Germany		Berlin	
	Registered	Paid-up	Registered	Paid-up
1931[1]				
May	ca. 111-113,714		10-12,000	
October	98,208	43,912	6,809	3,546
November	99,207	46,841	6,809	3,723
December	106,293		7,000	
1932[2]				
January	32,197	18,599	7,000	3,127
February	36,950	25,394	7,000	2,920
March	75,871	29,538	6,500	3,319
April	79,863	21,709	4,500	2,565
May	63,351	14,773	4,700	1,953
June	61,114	11,782	5,000	2,024

Sources

[1] 'Die organisatorische Entwicklung der Partei im Jahre 1931', BAK NS 26/810, p. 115.

[2] Sekretariat des ZK to Orgabteilung des ZK, 30 August 1932, BAK R45 IV/23. The figures for 1932 were admitted to be incomplete, since it was discovered that the Kampfbund had not been keeping a regular record of membership figures.

defence organizations, so that membership rose rapidly during the first few months of its existence. In mid-December it claimed 38,000 members; at the beginning of March *Die Rote Fahne* reported 95,000 Kampfbund members and 100,000 still in other antifascist groups.[30] During the second half of 1931, however, the movement began to stagnate, and numbers continued to fall through 1932; at times fewer than one in five of the registered members were paid-up. The situation in Berlin-Brandenburg was particularly unsatisfactory; the number of registered Kampfbund members fell from between ten and twelve thousand in May 1931 to 5000 in June of 1932 (see Table 1). One Berlin local, with a total Party membership of 5000, had no more than thirty-five detachments.[31]

The Kampfbund also suffered, if anything to a greater extent than the Party, from a familiar complex of problems: high unemployment, unsatisfactory basis in the factories, and rapid fluctuation of membership. In December of 1931, Berlin-Brandenburg had only four Factory Detachments. At the district conference for Berlin-Brandenburg in September 1931, eighty-eight of the ninety-six delegates from the city of Berlin were unemployed, as were three-quarters of all the delegates. In contradiction to

claims in the Party press that the vast majority of the Kampfbund's membership was Social Democratic or of no party, speakers at the Berlin district conference criticized the lack of success in united-front efforts. Here, too, their audience was living proof of their point: fifty-one of the Berlin delegates, and fifty of the ninety-five provincial representatives were Party members; fully twenty-one of the 216 present had come to the Kampfbund from outside the Communist movement - one from the SPD, one from the SAJ and fourteen from reformist trade unions.[32]

Without abandoning the Kampfbund, the Party continued to search for the means of broadening the basis of the self-defence movement. The next organization to be created was the Red Mass Self-Defence (Roter Massenselbstschutz, RMSS). The campaign for the RMSS had its origins in the intensive united-front drive that began, for the Communists, at the end of 1931, and which paralleled efforts on the part of the SPD and organized labour to create their own organs of resistance to National Socialism.

In December 1931, the Iron Front (*Eiserne Front*) was formed by a coalition of Social Democrats and Free Trade Unions as a mass antifascist movement; in January the Trade Unions began to make propaganda for their own antifascist cadres, the Hammerschaften. Against this background, the Berlin Communists started their agitation for mass self-defence, taking as the occasion the battle between Nazis and colonists in the allotment colony 'Felseneck' in Reinickendorf on 18 January, in which a Communist and a National Socialist were killed. On 14 February, *Die Rote Fahne* reported on the first delegates' conference of the new self-defence movement: 170 detachments were represented, including five Factory-, five Women's-, eleven Kampfbund-, fifteen Settlement- (*Siedler*), twenty-five Unemployed- and ninety-two Neighbourhood-Detachments. The delegates adopted a resolution which read in part: 'We regard it as our primary task to win back the Social Democratic workers and those organized in trade-unions from the "Iron Hindenburg-Front" for the red united front.'[33]

At the Plenary Session of the Central Committee a week later, the Organizational Leader for Berlin, Albert Kuntz, claimed that 'thousands' had already been organized into the neighbourhood and unemployed detachments in the city, two-thirds of them without previous party affiliation. This was the meeting at which the Party's new attempts to enforce united-front policy after the storms of Autumn, 1931, were ratified, and here Ernst Thälmann first referred directly to the 'development of red mass self-defence on the broadest basis against the murderous terror of Hitler-fascism'.[34] Within a few weeks the sections of the Kampfbund were instructed to begin organizing the RMSS, in order to make up for a recent lull in the *wehrhafter Kampf* (interpreted as a reaction to the anti-terror resolution of November 1931) and to coordinate the offensive against the

Nazis with the attack on the Iron Front. A set of official directives for the RMSS was issued in April.[35]

These directives described the RMSS as a loosely organized united-front movement, designed to include all 'forces of the working class that are prepared for militant defence' still remaining outside the proletarian (Communist) defence organizations, in non-partisan formations under the leadership of the KPD and the Kampfbund. Its functions included providing defence and security in the familiar areas of working-class and Party activity, as well as the more general 'armouring of all antifascists'. Distribution of the Kampfbund press and mass-propaganda against Nazi and 'social-fascist demagogy' were its principal political tasks.

In addition, the rôle of the Communists as representatives and protectors of the working-class community at large was more clearly articulated than ever before. During 1931 the Kampfbund had been exhorted on occasion to make itself generally useful in the community, particularly in rural areas where it might intervene against foreclosures or help out in natural catastrophes. Detachments of the unemployed had already begun to interfere with evictions in Berlin in late 1931.[36] The RMSS directives brought the first mention of the prevention of evictions and forcible sale by auction as a statutory function of the defence movement. The range of broadly social tasks allied to the antifascist and defence functions was extended during the summer of 1932, the period of the Antifaschistische Aktion, when the RMSS formations were absorbed into the movement. They were regarded as the 'principal component' of the Unity Committees (*Einheitsausschüsse*) that were the organs of the Antifaschistische Aktion. These were formed, like the RMSS, on the basis of factories, labour-exchanges, neighbourhoods, apartment-blocks and allotment gardens, and pursued the same aims as the RMSS in agitation against the Nazi presence, against economic and social hardships and for the concrete demands of the workers in their respective spheres.[37]

The recommended structure of the mass self-defence movement accorded with the breadth of its ambitions. Membership was open to all who shared 'the sincere will to fight actively against fascism in every form, especially against the Nazis'. The only necessary procedure for joining an RMSS formation was the entering of one's name in a membership-list; there were no membership cards or dues. No formal organizational distinction was made between men and women or youth and adults. Non-Communists were encouraged to participate in local leadership. Initially it was recommended that individual formations should comprise no more than fifty members in groups of between nine and eleven. But during the first months considerable room was allowed for local initiative in the choice of organizational forms.

As with the Kampfbund, however, the second half of 1932 brought an

attempt to streamline the organization. In the instructions for formation of the recommended 'Unity Committees', the size of individual RMSS-formations and groups was reduced, and the defence sections were declared to be independent within the context of the Antifaschistische Aktion. The leadership of the Party and of other defence organizations in the movement was confirmed by the establishment of local executive boards composed of one representative each of the Party, Kampfbund, RMSS, 'other defence organizations' (usually the illegal RFB) and Communist sport league. These boards were to control the training and deployment of groups of individual detachments in their own neighbourhoods and were exclusively empowered to authorize a formation to act outside its assigned territory; only in emergencies could a detachment decide on action for itself.[38]

Beginning in August, moreover, the leadership of the RMSS placed special emphasis on the aspects of military training and preparedness. This was almost certainly inspired by the reality of National Socialist terror in the summer of 1932 and by the Party's fears of a Nazi coup. Information reaching the Berlin police suggested that it was undertaken under the pressure of circumstances and in spite of the sense that the training-up of new troops might further encourage adventurism and individual terror.[39]

A memorandum circulated to the RMSS sections in early August set forth the ideal of a network of street-detachments, highly disciplined, flexible, and prepared to respond to any threat. It identified three degrees of mobilization: the most serious (*höchste Alarmbereitschaft*), a Nazi *Putsch*; 'local disorders, which can be inhibited by the neighbourhood-sections'; and 'small incidents, which are dealt with by the street-detachments themselves'. It called for special attention to be given to the outlying areas of cities and towns (in anticipation of a march on Berlin) and for the provision of 'barracks' ('reading rooms, Party-offices, gardens, etc.') for the detachments.[40]

This image is already very far from the original conception of the RMSS as an organization for the masses in every walk of life, or even as a ginger group for mobilizing the masses to political action or self-defence. At its best, the RMSS could have such a local mobilizing effect; the Berlin police reported that on one Sunday afternoon in July the shouted warnings of local house-defence detachments that the Nazis were on the way brought 'great masses of people' into the streets to the north-east of Alexanderplatz: 'The National Socialists having thereupon withdrawn from the area, Communist discussion-groups stood talking until late in the evening.'[41] At the same time, the return to more familiar forms of paramilitary organization can be seen (as in the case of previous defence organizations) to reflect disappointment with the implementation of the mass-movement. The Party leadership itself credited the Antifaschistische Aktion and its organs with single-handedly holding off and beating back the Nazi menace in the summer of

1932, but it was also admitted that the movement had concentrated on the physical fight and neglected its political duties. In particular the RMSS failed in its task of drawing in factory-workers and Social Democrats; *ad hoc* cooperation with Reichsbanner formations was the easier and more common alternative to the absorption of Social Democratic elements into the RMSS itself.[42]

The character of the mass-self-defence movement was such as to make it impossible to judge its size and composition nationally. In Berlin, the RMSS probably had more value as a cover- and replacement organization in case of the suppression of the Kampfbund than as an instrument for the gathering-in of the masses. It was estimated in September 1932 that the organization had 300 to 500 detachments in the capital, ranging in size from five to eighty members - many of whom, as in other cities, were also members of the Kampfbund and RFB. Given the notorious weakness of the movement in the factories, the vast majority of these detachments must have been street and neighbourhood formations or unemployed-detachments. As between these two types, the former certainly predominated, as had been the case in February 1932. There were only about twenty functioning unemployed-detachments in Berlin at the end of the year, with something over 600 members; at least seventy would have been required if the Party hoped to be represented in each of the city's labour exchanges.[43]

Certain patterns can thus be traced in the development of the legal self-defence movement: each new organizational initiative from mid-1930 on represented a broadening of the concept of self-defence, a means of easing the participation of more and more varied types of people in the movement and of extending the movement into all spheres of social life. To a certain extent this meant a progressive broadening of the tasks of the various organizations, although political and economic struggle against 'fascism in all its forms' remained intrinsic to the functions of Communist mass-organizations and the NSDAP was always identified as the immediate adversary from 1930 on; certainly, the specification of concrete vigilante functions was a development of the later stages of the movement. Extension of the movement's popular base was accompanied by official concessions to the autonomy of neighbourhood and unemployed organizations, in spite of continuing exhortations to build the movement in the factories. This, of course, reflected the reality of a massively unemployed membership, disproportionately neighbourhood-based. At the same time, it is significant that at some point in the history of each of the major organizations the leadership intervened with structural adjustments to promote the technical efficiency, the '*Schlagkraft*', of its sections. 'Militarization' of this kind implied a discounting of the importance and reliability of the mass-element in the job that the defence organizations had to do, and such readjustments

did coincide with periods when the organizations were threatened from within by stagnation and inertia and from outside by extraordinary pressure from police and Nazis. In short, there was a tendency, in contradiction to their original conception but largely sanctioned by the leadership, to adapt the forms of internal life in the legal mass-organizations to those cultivated by the Party's illegal and cadre-type formations.

III

From mid-1930 on, all cadre-type organizations were also clandestine organizations. The last such formation to be openly announced and advertised was the PSS. Although police reports continued to list the PSS among the KPD's insurrectionary organs through 1932, the organization does not appear in Communist documents after the formation of the Factory Guards. The cadres that remained carried on their activities in the half-light of illegality. Although it suited the purposes of the Party leadership to vary the depth of the shadow, so that they were not equally hidden from the view of public and authorities, all these organizations shared certain characteristics determined by the common fact of working underground. Not the least important of the conditions imposed by illegality was dependence on the Party's illegal Apparat. The purpose and traditions of the Apparat dictated that the character of the formations associated with it would be strongly influenced by considerations of preparedness for future revolutionary action and technical efficiency in the carrying out of present tasks, as well as by the need to develop the forms of conspiratorial activity. These were the groups in which the military-technical approach to the *wehrhafter Kampf* was most consistently cultivated.

By far the most important of the illegal organizations was the RFB with its youth section, the Rote Jungfront. As we have seen, the circumstances under which the decision to carry on the RFB underground was taken resulted in some uncertainty as to its character and functions, and it remained something of a hybrid. Willi Leow, its national leader before the ban, set the tone for later appeals when he described the RFB in the most decided terms as a mass-organization and not a cadre. At about the same time, another RFB functionary described the organization as a formation with military-technical functions which could be expected to gain in reliability and flexibility what it lost in numbers.[44]

These statements reflected complementary aspects of the official conception of the illegal RFB. On the one hand it was expected to continue the work of the old legal organization with a new vigour: in politicizing both its own membership and the masses outside the Party, in presenting an alternative to the non-Communist paramilitary organizations and taking the initiative in argument and subversion within their ranks and among the police and

the army, in spearheading the Party's mass-agitation and especially in propagating the idea of resistance to war against the Soviet Union. In the process, the RFB was to use all means to increase its own numbers and to ensure itself the support of the masses.[45] On the other, the decision to carry on the RFB involved a determination at the highest levels that it should be entrusted to a greater degree than ever before with the tasks of recruiting and training the cadres of a German Red Army. It was the view of the RFB as a body of military activists that prevailed in the long run.

The combination of political and military elements in the RFB's duties was itself sufficiently problematic, but the organization's capacity for popular agitation was necessarily limited in any case. Insofar as the RFB had an attraction after 1929, it lay precisely in the romance of conspiracy, which could be maintained only at the price of mass-appeal. After the initial fall-off in membership, numbers began to rise again, but such figures as there are suggest that growth was halting and that membership remained fairly stable from 1930 on. In July of that year, the RFB claimed 3095 members in Berlin, where it had had between eight and nine thousand before the ban. Predictably, the faithful remnant was concentrated in the north and east of the city; the breakdown of locals was as follows:[46]

Zentrum (Mitte, Kreuzberg, Tiergarten[?]: 275
Nord (Wedding, Reinickendorf): 790
Nordost (Weissensee, Pankow, Prenzlauer Berg): 450
Nordwest (Charlottenburg, Moabit, Spandau): 280
Süd (Neukölln, Treptow, Tempelhof): 350
Südwest ([?]) Schöneberg, Steglitz, Zehlendorf, Wilmersdorf): 200
Ost (Friedrichshain, Lichtenberg, Köpenick): 750

In April 1931 a new, relatively independent leadership was installed under Erich Wollenberg, and the burst of activity that followed has been credited with winning large numbers of new members. By July, however, the Berlin police estimated that not more than one half of the 1929 membership had been recovered. As early as May 1930 the leadership in Berlin had to censure the RFB locals for 'left-sectarian tendencies' – reluctance to recruit new members and failure to involve the masses in their own actions (especially against the Nazis) – and the complaint that in spite of all directives the RFB was still mobilizing only its own members became routine.[47]

That the RFB's character as the training-ground for a military élite should overshadow its residual political functions was also in keeping with the traditional self-image of its members. The cultivation of martial forms, initially adopted in order to add to the glamour of the organization and, even more powerfully, the practical defence functions that it had to fulfil contributed even before 1929 to the development of a picture of the RFB as a

militant fighting formation.[48] This image was further reinforced and its elements more clearly articulated at the end of 1930.

The formation of the Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus put the RFB under pressure to specify its peculiar functions. It had to respond to competition for members from the new organization and to suggestions that the tasks to which it traditionally had aspired could best be carried out by the legal mass-organization. The police received a report that in September 1930, pressed by the RFB to clarify its position, the Central Committee issued an order that the RFB should create an effective revolutionary army within six months.[49] This sounds more like the weary bureaucrat's challenge to an over-eager colleague than a considered policy statement, but it was clearly the sort of thing the RFB leadership wanted to hear.

In answer to those who saw the maintenance of the illegal RFB as a pure propaganda gesture, an internal memorandum of November 1930 argued:

> The unmistakeable trend towards the most brutal fascist dictatorship demands offensive counter-measures towards an organized resistance ... Today we need militant [*wehrhafte*] workers, who can take over such special tasks, who can, in case of a sharpening of the conflict, form the cadres for the creation of such an army as the Ruhr-proletariat had in 1920 in its resistance to the Kapp Putsch ...

The Kampfbund's tasks were narrower: 'the concrete fight against fascism'.[50]

The most concrete element of that fight, however, namely the physical fight against the Nazis, was also claimed by the RFB at this time. Encouraged throughout 1929–30 to take a leading rôle in the mass-struggle against fascism and in the formation of antifascist organizations and Factory Guards, the RFB shared in the sharpening of focus that affected all the KPD's organizational efforts in the wake of the 1930 Reichstag elections; the NSDAP was singled out as front-line enemy. A post-election memorandum of the RJ declared that 'the sharpest emphasis on our specific tasks in the fight against fascism and the threat of war' was henceforth to be a precondition of political activity and to provide the basis for overtures to Reichsbanner members.[51] These tasks were elaborated in turn in an article in the illegal journal *Oktober*:

> ... the intensified and aggressive fight against state authority and its fascist gangs becomes an unavoidable and necessary duty ... In the foreground of [our] tasks stands the immediate political and physical fight against the SA, the Stahlhelm, the gendarmes and the armed cadres of the bourgeoisie, against Reichswehr and police. As far as that applies to the military struggle, naturally not yet in the fully-developed form of armed uprising. The most palpable form is subversion through political and physical activity ...[52]

The battles of the present were to be the proving-ground for the RFB's

revolutionary techniques, and the RFB had a well-developed programme of training in those techniques, although it is unlikely that the ideal was ever practised with any consistency in the locals.[53]

In keeping with its new rôle, the illegal RFB was structured on conspiratorial principles. Initially, the basic unit was the group of eight, three of which formed a *Zug*, or section. In the autumn of 1931 a reorganization was undertaken. The group was reduced to five men, each of whom was a functionary: the group-leader, the technician, the organizer, the intelligence expert (*Nachrichtenmann*), the treasurer. Four groups, plus an executive of four in which all the functions of the individual group members were duplicated, made up the *Zug*. The next unit was the *Kameradschaft*, comprising four *Züge* and an executive. The *Kameradschaften* were grouped together in *Untergauen*, roughly corresponding to the Party locals, the *Gau* itself being equivalent to the Party district.[54] This basic structure persisted into 1933.

The very proliferation of organizational directives in the RFB was in part a reflection of the impossibility of putting them into practice. Since the opportunities available to the leadership for carrying out the kind of regular general review that would have guaranteed consistency were severely limited, the structure itself varied according to local conditions. In Berlin there was only one level between the group and the *Untergau*. It was known most commonly as 'Einheit' (Unit), although occasionally *Kameradschaft* was also used, and varied in size from one section to another.[55]

The reorganizations were justified to the membership on the basis of the greater tactical efficiency of small groups, both in combat conditions and in the more likely case of fascist attack. Above all, however, the five-man group was adapted to conspiratorial activity; it was cohesive, mobile, inconspicuous, and difficult to infiltrate. Its security was further guarded by a set of injunctions not to discuss organizational affairs, even with other members or higher Party functionaries, and by encouraging anonymity and the use of cover names as far as possible.[56]

The maintenance of strict conspiratorial methods was combined with the fight against the Nazis and other enemies in the person of the intelligence expert. It was his job to enforce discipline and take all necessary measures against police spies and provocateurs. The *Nachrichtenmann* at each level was also an enemies-expert responsible for the gathering of information about oppositional groups, for the planting of spies and for 'subversion' in their ranks. The body of intelligence experts at all levels formed a discrete section within the RFB; the importance it had by virtue of its concrete and immediate tasks is suggested by the attempt of the RFB leadership at the end of 1932 to create a special Organization-, Defence- and Intelligence Department (*Organisations-, Schutz- und Nachrichtenabteilung*: OSNA) which would comprise 10 per cent of the membership.[57]

The relationship between RFB and illegal Apparat was essentially circumstantial. The RFB provided an opportunity to test the techniques of illegality on a grand scale, and it depended on Moscow-trained military experts – of whom Erich Wollenberg himself was one of the best – for guidance in technical and tactical questions. But the RFB also had a relatively autonomous political tradition and self-consciousness. For specific tasks the illegal Apparat had its own active groups in Berlin. These represent the simplest type of cadre formation.

The historical model for a Communist military unit in times of civil war was the OD or Ordnerdienst (marshal-corps), whose formations had been projected as forming the hard-core of the revolutionary army in the struggles of 1923.[58] It dissolved into the RFB after 1925, but the suppression of the RFB in turn gave rise to thoughts of a revival. In 1935 Michael Klause, a long-time member of the Party's military arm, recalled under questioning by the Gestapo that an OD had been formed in Berlin in early 1930 by the man who had been military adviser for Berlin in 1923, Joseph Gutsche.[59] Georg Fischer, for five years a KJVD activist in Kreuzberg, refers in his memoirs to an OD, made up of about 1200 picked members of the Communist Youth, operating in Berlin in 1929–30; and this is presumably the OD referred to in the June 1930 statement of the 'Fighting Committee of Red Berlin' as an organ of neighbourhood-defence.[60] It may have been this resurrected OD too, or some section of it, that was reflected in an observation of the Berlin police at the end of 1929. The Chief of Police reported that the Communists had created a 'central raiding-party', consisting of five men from each of the Berlin districts; they wore neither uniforms nor badges and carried no identification, and they were armed.[61] Klause stated that this OD was dissolved by Hans Kippenberger in March 1931, with the explanation that it was competing with the RFB.

At about this time, the Parteiselbstschutz (Party Self Defence) was formed, probably on the suggestion of Thälmann himself. This formation, known variously as PS or Kader (Cadre), was a clandestine organization, whose tasks included the armed protection of leading Party functionaries and Party buildings. According to Klause, who claimed to have been entrusted with its formation, it initially consisted of a group of about twenty former members of the OD. After the murder of Anlauf and Lenk – carried out by members of this group under orders from Kippenberger – the PS was expanded. It now had a section in each of the seven Berlin Party locals, made up of four or five groups of five men each, all especially reliable members. These groups took turns providing a guard for the KPD headquarters, Karl-Liebknecht-Haus, and for important Party conferences, and in their spare time they had courses of training in the use of guns. In addition, they were available to both the Central Committee and the locals for special tasks, some which, like the Bülow-Platz murders, had a

political function, and others, including minor acts of sabotage, which were intended to test the reliability of the respective groups.[62]

A great deal was said and written during the crisis years about Communist 'Terror-Groups'. The Berlin police announced publicly that they held such groups responsible for all the deadly assaults on policemen in mid-1931, and the most brutal attacks on National Socialists were blamed on small groups of Communists operating outside their own neighbourhoods. The Communists themselves vigorously denied all such reports, and in fact the police were never able to find any of these groups. It seems probable that some of the actions attributed to 'Terror-Groups', especially isolated cases of fire-bombing and the shooting of police during demonstrations, were the work of the PS, and it is not unlikely that similar formations existed in other cities.[63] As far as can be discovered, this was the only context in which the active practice of 'partisan' tactics was officially condoned, and then only when specific orders had been given. Most of the reports of terrorist activity can be accounted for by excessive zeal on the part of local groups or by confusion or mendacity on the part of individuals who claimed to have been attacked by 'unknown Communists'.

Making certain that only 'authorized' groups indulged in certain kinds of activities required the establishment of systems of control which were not always easy to enforce. The illegal RFB and the PS were the only organizations, for example, whose arming was officially sanctioned by the Communist leadership. In the case of the RFB, the licence to collect guns for use in training and in preparation for future revolutionary actions did not signify an acceptance of their routine use. In the illegal Apparat arrangements were made to keep the ongoing collection of weapons and explosives administratively separate from the training activities in which they were used, so that in each district one specialist always had control over the supply.[64] This procedure was followed in the RFB locals as well; weapons were kept by one reliable member, distributed for use in training, and returned to storage after each session. This did not prevent RFB groups from using guns on police or political opponents at the discretion of individual 'armourers' (*Waffenwarte*) or on higher authority, but it did promise a certain measure of control. In Berlin at the end of 1931 even this system had begun to break down; embarrassing incidents of 'individual terror' were blamed on the fact that RFB members were allowed to keep their guns: 'The result of this measure was that they played wild-west with them and blasted around quite senselessly in world history.'[65]

As far as it can be reconstructed from the fragmentary evidence available the command structure of the illegal organizations appears to have been designed to provide a further check to the development of a 'military interest' and to adventurism at the local level. In principle, the illegal Apparat was an instrument of policy, and the deployment of the PS groups

was subject to the determination of the Central Committee or the political secretary of the local. They were immediately responsible for their actions to the local political secretary; but they also received technical instruction from Klause. Klause in turn had to answer to the Berlin District Leadership and also, to Kippenberger himself. Similarly, the intelligence expert in the RFB local, whose job it was to organize and observe all major actions undertaken by his group, worked under the guidance of the local instructor of the illegal Apparat. At the same time the *Nachrichtenmänner* routinely took orders from their own political leaders within the RFB, and these were expected to work closely with the Party local.[66]

By its very complexity this network of duplicated and competing authorities was difficult to operate. The effectiveness of the controls it could provide depended not only on the political reliability of each individual official whether of the Party or of the military organization, but also on cooperation and sympathy of outlook between Party and Apparat. The degree to which political and military leadership cooperated at the highest levels remains a moot point. Herbert Wehner, for example, emphasizes the close personal contacts between Thälmann and Kippenberger, but admits that the Anlauf and Lenk murder appears to contradict the suggestion of a common pursuit of common interests, while Rudolf Schlesinger writes of his efforts as instructor to counteract the effects of the illegal members' 'isolation from general political problems' and from the life of the Party.[67] It is easier to be certain about the attitudes of the members of the Apparat. By virtue of the present and future tasks allotted to them, they developed a characteristic view of the political perspective and of the rôle of violence in it. Important elements of this view were shared by members of the legal defence organizations, and they had a direct bearing on the style of the *wehrhafter Kampf*.

IV

While the political leadership of the Party treated Nazi terror as a problem of morale and propaganda, it was the business of the military technicians to consider it from the standpoint of revolutionary practice and military efficiency. In the November 1929 number of *Oktober* Ernst Schneller, the leading technician in the Apparat, published an article entitled 'New possibilities and methods of struggle'. He noted that the apparent shift in Nazi tactics from isolated excesses to a systematic campaign of gang warfare (*Bandenkrieg*) against the working class represented a 'civil-war-like phenomenon': 'The illusion ... that civil-war-like fights appear only after the struggle for power or its immediate prelude must be done away with.' Leaving the questions of mass-organization and united fronts to the politicians, Schneller suggested some of the prerequisites and implications

of combat itself: the answer to individual terror was 'mass terror'; the strategic advantage of the working class lay in numbers. The workers' will and preparedness to fight must be broadened and intensified. For the present, however, both the functions of self-defence and the task of arousing the masses were assigned to the cadres of the Proletarischer Selbstschutz.

Ultimately, Schneller saw mass self-defence as serving a much broader long-range goal: 'intensification of day-to-day actions, over the political mass-strike, in the direction of general strike and armed uprising'. This formula summed up the direction of all KPD agitation, but the ruminations of the military strategist bear a characteristic emphasis. Schneller managed to impart more meaning and – paradoxically – more immediacy both to the final revolutionary uprising and to the initial provocative actions of the vanguard than to that intermediate phase of mass participation in limited struggles which was the preoccupation of the Party politicians. Another article in the same issue of *Oktober* went further: it posed the question of 'whether in the current period of class-struggle individual actions with no guarantee of the participation of broad masses may be approved', and answered in the affirmative – provided the political conditions were such as to guarantee a mass propaganda effect.[68]

For the members of the Apparat, then, the insurrectionary future was very much present. This was equally true of the organization whose conception of the revolution was formed on the teachings of the military technicians. It is not surprising that the military and defence organizations were identified as a focus of 'deviationist' revolutionary expectations in 1931 and 1932. Under the circumstances of spiralling political and physical conflict it was too much to expect that the techniques of partisan warfare, street-fighting and terrorist action that were regularly recommended to RFB members for use in time of civil war would be held in reserve until such time as the Central Committee made up its mind to declare an 'acutely revolutionary situation'. In the Rostocker Strasse in Moabit, the repeal of the ban on the SA, in July 1932, was answered with the smashing of street-lamps and the construction of barricades.[69]

Nor were the military texts as consistent as the political ones in their condemnation of pre-revolutionary terror. The authors of *Der Weg zum Sieg* were loath to condemn 'partisan-actions, bombings, sabotage, expropriations, attacks on individuals, etc.' out of hand:

> There can be acts of violence which are understood by the broad masses and which are directly helpful to the mass-struggle, are subordinate to it and contribute to [its] success. Such acts of violence are by no means to be condemned, but must be approved and in certain cases directly organized ... even in moments when the armed uprising is not immediately on the agenda ...[70]

In any case, the RFB, whose leaders liked to refer to themselves as the General Staff of the Socialist Liberation Army of Germany, was not

particularly receptive to the language of caution and sustained organizational work. The official line on terror within the RFB followed that of the Party, but it always carried a characteristic gloss. In mid-1930 it was duly recommended that '*Schlagt die Faschisten ...*' be disavowed, but the following April brought the admonition: 'The more strongly the terror of the SA-bandits rages against the workers, the more offensively must the RFB organize its resistance, answering like with like.'[71]

The difficulty of reconciling the demands of the ideological fight with the organization's habits and traditions was still more clearly reflected in the RFB literature of 1932. The official rejection of individual terror and the case for mass terror were repeated over and over again, in forms ranging from the direct order to reasoned political argument. And at the same time there was no let-up in the exhortations to decisive action: 'Let us break the edge of the coming sharpened SA-terror by immediately going over to the attack ourselves', urged a 'call to battle' of September, while an article with the orthodox title 'Mass-Organization, Mass-Defence, Mass-Work' recommended: 'We must constantly attack. Just as a U-boat glides up to the enemy, torpedoes him and then makes itself scarce, so must we constantly torpedo the enemy and then "dive." Dive into the masses of enthusiastic workers.'[72]

A similar pattern prevailed in the rhetoric of the legal defence organizations. For the Kampfbund and its affiliates the possibility and expectation of a practical alternative to individual terror were greater than in the case of the RFB, and the emphasis on mass-agitation and politicization of the *wehrhafter Kampf* was accordingly sharper. Detailed instructions were given for approaches to Reichsbanner members and for the organization of actions that were calculated to have the widest possible agitational effect:

> The establishment of common sentries ..., driving the fascists from the factories, downing tools, strikes, sabotage ... Scouring Nazi terror from the streets of the neighbourhood by means extending from rent-strikes to forcing the clearing of Nazi-dens, riots, gathering in the streets, chanting, mass marches, in short, all means available must be used to bring Reichs- and Jungbanner, SPD and Christian workers into the fight, to strengthen the mass-resistance of the working class and to carry on the fight against fascism ever more broadly and offensively.[73]

Members were repeatedly warned that the success of activities of this kind was prejudiced by individual terror and the organization of special 'defence-squads'. But the complaint that 'all too often ... because of a Nazi attack, for days, even in some cases for weeks, no revolutionary work was done except practising "civil war" in "miniature" ',[74] underlines the fact that the Kampfbund, like the RFB, had developed a militant self-image. This grew naturally enough from the tasks it took upon itself; it was also deliberately encouraged in the interests of the organization's popularity.

Whatever the functions intended for it by the Party leadership, the

Kampfbund was advertised from the beginning as an organ of militant physical defence, a *Wehrverband*. Those who attended the founding rally in Berlin received a leaflet that urged: 'Fight against fascist terror and mass-deception! Protect your lives and the property of your organizations! In every city, in every village, join together in antifascist fighting-organizations! Gird yourselves [*macht euch* WEHRHAFT] in the fight against the brown murder-plague!'[75] The Kampfbund's image was further fixed in a leading article *Die Rote Fahne* devoted to it a month later; at the head of a list of recent victims of the Nazis the collective enemy was characterized:

> The 'arguments' ... of Hitler and Goebbels have a special tone. It is the crack of the Parabellum fired from ambush. It is the dull thud of clubs, steel rods, lead-pipes, which crash down upon the heads of lone workers in treacherous blood-lust. It is the clatter of smashing beer-mugs, hurled ... by misled SA-men on the orders of *Feme* officers.[76]

The motif of 'ideological struggle', though present, is severely muted in this pathetic symphony. The internal literature of the Kampfbund sustained this tone, as for example in the slogan (echoing the SA's Horst-Wessel-song) '*Die Strasse frei den Arbeiterbataillonen*' ('Clear the streets for the workers' batalions!'), or in the exhortation of late 1932: 'Pursue the retreating enemy! Keep on his heels! Don't let him rest! Force him further back! Drive him from every hiding-place!'[77]

The official attempts to establish a division of labour between RFB and Kampfbund, *ad hoc* as they were and contradictory as were their results, did little to dampen the ambitions of Kampfbund activists. In one local, officials of the movement attempting to rationalize the situation produced the formula that in a revolutionary situation, the Kampfbund would form a Red Army, while the RFB would play the rôle of the GPU.[78] More commonly, rivalries developed between the RFB and the Kampfbund, and even between the Kampfbund and the leaders of mass-self-defence formations. In Berlin, RFB leaders could be heard joking about the 'Krampfbund', while the Kampfbund regularly complained that the senior organization was drawing off its best members.[79] Competition required that each group prove itself equal to the most immediate and glamorous tasks of a *Wehrverband*, if it was to justify its own existence and keep a hold on its membership.

Considered as an instrument of policy, then, the complex of Communist military and defence organizations presents an ambiguous picture. It is not difficult to locate even at the level of mass-organization sources of the differences in attitude that became apparent in the debate over the anti-terror resolution of 1931. The idea that the legal organizations, and even the RFB, must be simultaneously vehicles of discussion with the opposition and organs of aggressive resistance involved the whole Party in a contradiction. So, in a way, did the demand that the defence organizations be both immediately effective in beating back the Nazis and politically

correct in the methods they used. The success of the policies of mass-terror and the united front (in its widest sense) depended on reconciling that contradiction, and this was hardly possible as long as the 'paramilitary' mode was tolerated and even encouraged at the highest levels. At the notional head of the defence movement stood a subterranean élite, in whose organizational structure terror, conspiracy and the fight against fascism were closely linked, for whom the revolution of the future was not easily distinguished from the violent adventures of the present, and which operated under conditions of repression that weakened the Party's power to control at the same time as they fostered the most intense forms of political opposition. The pattern of legal organizations followed this lead. In the interests of popularity and *élan*, and to some extent in deliberate emulation of the SA, a martial language and bearing were encouraged. For the sake of technical efficiency, compromises were made in the structures of the mass-organizations that carried them ever further from their respective political ideals.

In short, the prescribed structure and official language of the defence organizations themselves provide a plausible framework for the development of an ideology and practice of individual terror. But this is still only half the story. For the individual members of the Communist movement, the interpretation and implementation of those prescriptions meant involvement in a war in the streets which it was not substantially within the power of the Party to control and which it was politically disinclined to avoid. At this point we may begin to look more closely at the character of that war in the neighbourhoods and the rôle of the Communists in it.

5

Between 'individual terror' and 'mass terror': The campaign against the SA-taverns, 1931

In the autumn of 1931 the Berlin political scene was marked by a series of attacks on taverns which were known to be frequented by members of the SA. On the ninth of September an SA-man standing guard in front of the tavern 'Zur Hochburg' in the Gneisenaustrasse, Kreuzberg, was shot to death in the course of such a raid. On the twelfth, shots were fired at an SA-tavern in Schöneberg. The fifteenth of October brought the culmination of weeks of tension between SA and Communists in Neukölln, with a demonstration and shooting-attack against a tavern in the Richardstrasse, in the course of which the proprietor was killed. Four days later, yet another incident resulted in the crippling of a National Socialist in the Schillingstrasse, not far from the Alexanderplatz. These attacks were remarkable, in the eyes of the authorities, for the systematic use of firearms and for the fact that, unlike the majority of political brawls and even shoot-outs, they did not appear to have arisen spontaneously out of *ad hoc* confrontations. Their suddenness gave every appearance of careful planning.[1]

This series of raids arose out of efforts by the Berlin Party to put the formula of mass terror into action, and it is with an analysis of that crucial phase of the *wehrhafter Kampf* in the capital, the campaign against the SA-taverns which immediately preceded the promulgation of the November resolution, that our examination of the world of the Communist rank and file begins. This study will concentrate on the Communist organizations at the level of the local and district leadership, with the aim of reconstructing something of the political atmosphere in which individual terror developed and illustrating some of the arguments advanced in preceding chapters. At its centre will lie a description of the attack in the Richardstrasse.

Viewed on the national scale, the trend towards individual terror appears as a reflex response to accumulating evidence of the futility of mass-action. In spite of the hopes aroused in the Party leadership during 1931 by the results of collective action and protest strikes in Braunschweig on 18 October and in the Berlin working-class suburb of Nowawes a month later, it was clear by the end of 1932 that the policy of mass self-defence was not

being carried out as intended. At the Twelfth ECCI Plenum Knorin admonished: '... The political strike in protest against fascist terror was accompanied by success in a number of workers' centres in the Ruhr. Serious resistance was made to the fascists in a number of other places, too. But this was not everywhere the case.'[2] Political strikes were no easier to organize than economic ones. Even in May 1929, there had been resistance to the strike-call among some functionaries, and the 25,000 Berlin strikers had been scattered over some thirty-two shops.[3] In the second half of 1931, the RGO claimed twenty-five political strikes involving some 30,000 participants. What *Die Rote Fahne* headlined as a 'strike movement' in Berlin after the Felseneck shootings in January 1932 amounted to no more than a half-hour protest strike on the part of 180 workers, the entire workforce of a metalworking plant, and a series of protest meetings and resolutions in other factories. Referring specifically to the antifascist protest strikes of 1932, Ulbricht admitted that these had affected only medium-sized firms, while an *Inprekorr* correspondent reported: 'Although there were nearly 100 political strikes in July, this fight [against the Nazis] took place largely in the streets. The factories and mines were only slightly involved.'[4] In December the Political Secretary for Berlin, a specialist in strike tactics, was heard to admit that the KPD was in no position to carry out a general strike on its own.[5]

In the view of the leadership, individual terror was the easy way out: it arose not from disappointment with methods tried and found wanting, but from despair of the possibility of success. It was thus distinct from the ideal in character and origins as in form. The absolute incompatibility of the two, so often asserted in principle, was very neatly exemplified by cases where a planned mass-action was wilfully disrupted by individual terrorists. Herbert Wehner reports an incident of 1932 'in the neighbourhood of the Stettin Station': a carefully organized protest movement involving both Communists and Social Democrats broke up after a group of RFB men took it upon themselves to carry out a raid on the SA-tavern in question.[6]

In many cases, however, the decision, conscious or unconscious, for individual terror must have been formed under specific circumstances, out of situations and attitudes which did not preclude the possibility of either type of action. Such a situation existed in Berlin in late 1931, and it speaks for the force of circumstances that the Party was nevertheless unable to organize a true mass-action. The nearest thing to a success, in its own terms, that the KPD achieved in the campaign against the SA-taverns, was the demonstration-and-attack in the Richardstrasse. The events of September and October in Neukölln were adopted by the Party as an example *faute de mieux*, and the very fact that there some effort was made to mobilize the community makes the case of Richardstrasse 35 an excellent illustration of the ways in which the economic vulnerability of the KPD's constituency,

the conditions of political activity in Berlin in a period of increasing repression, the character of the local Party leadership, and the existence of overlapping and competing 'political' and 'military' spheres of authority combined to frustrate broad-based political action and push the Party towards reliance on the violent actions of small groups.

I

The campaign against the SA-taverns, or barracks (*Kasernen*), as they were commonly known, began in principle in April of 1931. *Die Rote Fahne* of 23 April published a list of known SA quarters, giving addresses and telephone numbers, and ending: 'Self-defence is the right of all who are attacked.' The landlord of a tavern in the Petersburger Strasse, Friedrichshain, brought suit against the paper, claiming his premises had been attacked as a result of the article, and the trial of the editor was set to begin early in September.[7] It was not until the end of August, however, that the Party began to call directly for action against the taverns.

The new campaign arose out of and addressed anxieties at all levels of the Party. For the leadership and the KPD as a whole, the political situation in late 1931 could be defined in terms of the plebiscite of 9 August and its aftermath. The plebiscite, which, if successful, would have required the dissolution of Prussia's state legislature and SPD-dominated caretaker government, had been proposed by the Stahlhelm in concert with other parties of the right, including the NSDAP, and had been condemned by the Communists as a demagogical manoeuvre. As late as mid-July, the majority of the Central Committee rejected suggestions that the Party should take part in the campaign. In spite of the generally cautious line of the Comintern Executive, however, powerful figures in Moscow were disposed to accept the argument of the minority, represented by Heinz Neumann, that the toppling of the Prussian government was feasible and would help radically to weaken the Brüning régime. On 22 July, the KPD, under pressure from members of the ECCI and Stalin himself, joined the anti-Social Democratic front with the exhortation to transform the campaign into a 'Red Plebiscite'.

The plebiscite was not the agitational success that the Party publicists projected and claimed. Rank-and-file Communists, confused at the Party's last-minute decision to support it, had failed to campaign actively. In Berlin, the party proved unable to bring as many of its own voters to the polls as it had in the previous Reichstag election, and the proposal itself did not win enough votes to take effect.[8]

On the 9 August, polling-day, Police Captains Anlauf and Lenk were shot to death on the Bülow-Platz. Both of the officers were notoriously unpopular in the area, and had, most recently, been implicated in the shooting of a

demonstrator the day before, at a spot not far from where they were cut down. The motives of certain Party and Apparat leaders in ordering the action have been variously described as a desire to demonstrate the Party's effectiveness in avenging its followers, a wish to reinforce the disruptive effects of the plebiscite, and a need to distract attention from the plebiscite's failure. This murder was the most notable of a whole series of attacks on policemen and clashes between demonstrators and police that accompanied the rise of political tension during 1931. Including Anlauf and Lenk, four officers were shot to death and two severely wounded between May and August. In mid-September the leader of the Berlin political police complained that his officers 'had reached the limits of their capacity'.[9]

Reaction to the murder of Anlauf and Lenk within the Party was mixed. Many functionaries condemned it, and there was talk of opposition to the whole 'current course' within the Party. At a meeting in Prenzlauer Berg, the Political Secretary of the local (UB Nordost), a member of the District Leadership, declared that the Party leadership thoroughly approved the act, although he went on to point out that individual terror 'in general' was to be condemned: 'We shall discuss these problems seriously in the near future.' At the next meeting of the local, an instructor raised the more general issue: 'People talk about a Thälmann- and a Neumann-tendency. It must be made clear that the activist tendency, which is supposed to be represented by Heinz Neumann, is approved.' Another member of the local leadership expressed his approval of the Bülow-Platz murder. Until the beginning of December there could be heard self-congratulation throughout the Communist movement about the demoralizing and intimidating effect the murder had had on the police.[10]

But the immediate result of the killings was a series of unprecedented police measures. Police officers occupied and searched Karl-Liebknecht-Haus for ten days, and combed whole streets of apartment-blocks in Communist-dominated areas for weapons. Linienstrasse and Markusstrasse near the scene of the crime, Rostocker Strasse in Moabit, Kösliner Strasse and adjoining streets, and suspicious allotment gardens were effectively under martial law for several hours, and *Die Rote Fahne* was banned for two weeks from 11 August.[11] Of the atmosphere in Berlin during these weeks, Carl von Ossietzky wrote in *Die Weltbühne*: 'The picture of these sad events has been distorted and falsified by a wave of red-baiting such as we have not seen in a long time. Indeed, at the moment all domestic politics seems to be red-baiting and nothing more.'[12] In spite of widespread expectations, the KPD was not banned, but the organization had had a taste of illegality, and it was revealed how ill-prepared its sections were to carry on their activities under illegal conditions, in spite of months of preparation.[13] At the end of August the KPD, having gambled with its political identity, was left

isolated, vulnerable to accusations of 'terrorism', and conscious of its own weaknesses.

During the same period, the NSDAP in Berlin was preparing a new political offensive, one to which the Communists were particularly sensitive. On the first of September, the National Socialists publicly launched their 'HIB campaign'. Under the slogan '*Hinein in die Betriebe!*' – 'Into the factories!' – the party pressed forward its efforts to build up factory cells of its own.[14]

The natural response of the KPD to this sort of combination of threats was to reactivate its united-front campaign. In September Heinz Neumann and the Berlin SPD leader Franz Künstler debated in Neukölln, and the Political Bureau reportedly instructed members of all KPD organizations to refrain from 'insults and fist-fights' with Social Democratic workers.[15] The campaign against the SA-taverns was an integral part of this new initiative, but even as such it can be seen to reflect a wider set of concerns. It provided a means for simultaneously reactivating the Party membership and, through action, re-establishing the Party's links with the community and reasserting its distinct position *vis-à-vis* both NSDAP and SPD.

This combination of functions is apparent in the measures which were called for in the Party and its auxiliary organizations. A leaflet for general distribution listed a series of steps under the heading 'Red Offensive against the Nazi-Barracks': systematic propaganda (especially in the houses 'infested' by Nazis), tenants' meetings, rent strikes, the founding of a house-defence squad, formation of an action committee with representatives of all sectors of the population – all leading up to an antifascist conference for Greater Berlin.[16] Within the Kampfbund, whose activity in the past year had been very disappointing and which was particularly in need of a revival, the campaign was made a central point of agitation. As was appropriate to the functions of the Kampfbund, instructions to and discussions within the organization carried the dual message that the *wehrhafter Kampf* must be continued and intensified and that this should be done in cooperation with members of the Reichsbanner and SPD.[17] In the illegal RFB, too, the slogan 'Close the SA-Barracks' was recommended as an instrument of the united-front effort. At this level, the language of action is at its most extreme: 'We must intensify this action against the Nazi barracks so far that it is possible for us, through our struggle and through the organizing of a mass-assault [*Massensturm*], which must develop into a mass-terror-action, to drive the SA-troops out of their murder-dens.'[18]

II

If the leadership's decision to undertake a new campaign was a response to the change in the general political atmosphere, the choice of the SA-taverns

as its focus reflected shifts in the balance of power in the neighbourhoods which were experienced by the rank and file of the labour movement as a new wave of Nazi incursions into its territory. In the late summer and autumn of 1931 the Berlin SA was especially active and successful in setting up new quarters. The taverns attacked in the Gneisenaustrasse and Richardstrasse incidents had both been taken over by the SA since August, and the Kreuzberg attack was reportedly precipitated by the opening of a second SA base two streets away.[19] The restaurant in the Petersburger Strasse, Friedrichshain, whose landlord had sued *Die Rote Fahne* in April under a claim of political neutrality, was a thriving SA-tavern by October – so much so that a new *Sturm* was formed from its overflow. This *Sturm* moved into a tavern in the nearby Posener Strasse, to become in its turn the object of a Communist attack in mid-December.[20]

Social Democrats were as alarmed at the new initiatives of the SA as were Communists. *Vorwärts* vied with *Die Rote Fahne* in publishing lists of SA-taverns and in its exhortations to 'Close the Nazi-barracks!' Social Democratic commentators hardly bothered to disguise their satisfaction at the Communists' discomfiture when the SA took over a tavern at the end of the Kösliner Strasse, but they knew, too, that their own readers were not to be spared in the triumphal progress of the common enemy: 'There are pubs around the Gesundbrunnen [Wedding]', *Vorwärts* reported in November, 'where a Reichsbanner comrade can't get a beer any more.'[21]

For Communists, there was a special provocation in the fact that many of the new SA-taverns, threateningly close to the heart of KPD territory, had until recently been KPD bases. In the 'Toter Heinrich' in Tegel, Communists emerged from their meeting in the back-room one September evening to find the bar packed with SA-men. The Friedrichshain SA's new home in the Posener Strasse had been the venue for sessions of the Communist street cell until the morning when, in agreement with the landlord, a group of National Socialists took over the meeting room for a card game.[22]

It would be very surprising if Goebbels' SA had not chosen Communist taverns as its first targets for takeover as for attack. But the fact that the KPD represented the most economically vulnerable sections of the working class contributed to the vulnerability of its local bases. It was common knowledge within the labour movement that the SA's 'conquests' during these months depended on direct approaches to individual landlords backed up with the promise of financial advantage – in Friedrichshain and Neukölln people talked about guaranteed sales of thirty barrels of beer a month – and as such the Nazi campaign underlined the desperate situation of the Communist rank and file. Not only were the Nazis fed and clothed by their leaders; they were able to buy the workers' institutions out from under them.

The deepening crisis of small business in the second half of 1931 created new opportunities for the National Socialists. Restaurateurs and publicans,

like small shopkeepers, suffered from the general conditions of financial stringency and the deflationary policies of the government, but the most direct and visible motor of their distress was the fall-off in trade that resulted from the decline in the purchasing power of working people. Poverty, not so much shared as mutually reinforcing, was a strong solvent of personal and political ties between tradesmen and residents in working-class neighbourhoods. In February 1932 *Vorwärts* published a letter from a publican, who estimated that three-quarters of his colleagues were 'ruined or on the verge of ruin', thanks to the fall in sales and rise in taxes since 1929:

> For me personally the situation was so bad that in the middle of last year I had to give up my membership in the health insurance fund and the union – after belonging for twenty-nine years – because I couldn't raise the ... fifteen Marks a month ... If I hadn't been subscribing to *Vorwärts* since 1900 – and my father since 1888 ... I think I would even have cancelled my favourite paper at that point.[23]

Communist taverns, having the poorest clientele, were most at risk. In some cases, a publican who was familiar in the area and relatively sympathetic to the left had sold up and moved away, to be replaced by a new man more susceptible to the blandishments of the SA. This was what happened in the Posener Strasse, where the new landlord, formerly proprietor of a delicatessen in a middle-class suburb, pointed out to protesting Communists 'that they had completely abandoned me lately and anyway it was all the same to me who drank his beer in my place'.[24] In other cases, political sympathies were not at issue; the National Socialist offer presented itself as the only way to stave off bankruptcy, and it is clear that the SA watched for taverns in particularly parlous circumstances and couched their approach in just such terms. The SA leader who called on the publican in the Posener Strasse inquired first 'whether I was going to be able to survive with my place so empty' and only later whether he had any political views. Many publicans, of course, refused to treat with the SA as a matter of principle, just as many continued to welcome them on political grounds, without regard to the economic advantages. But the susceptibility of so many of the uncommitted under the extraordinary pressures of mid-Depression Berlin must have provoked considerable anxiety among the Communist rank and file. It involved a disruption and a direct challenge to whatever sense they had of their power to control important aspects of everyday life in the neighbourhood. And at the same time it implied a challenge to the premises of Communist policy and agitation. It was an unpleasant reminder that the solidarity of the working-class community to which the Party so confidently appealed was internally flawed, the hegemony of the proletariat over the 'labouring masses' still a chimera.

In initiating the campaign against the SA-taverns, the Berlin Party leadership was as aware of such weaknesses as it was of the membership's anxieties. The ambivalence in the expectations of the politicians is reflected

in the use of the expression 'mass-terror-action': ideally it should be possible to organize mass economic and political pressure against the Nazis, and this in turn would guarantee a broadening of the Party's base. At the same time, the Party must be seen by its own members to be active, and its actions must be shown to have an effect on the immediate enemy and on the wider public; this had been the principal recommendation of the Bülow-Platz shootings. Where it was not possible to do both, the Party leadership was prepared to compromise, to tolerate violent attacks as long as they appeared to come spontaneously from the masses.

In 1935, Michael Klause attributed to Walter Ulbricht an explicit statement to this effect, made to a meeting of leaders of the locals and higher functionaries at the beginning of September: The first measure to be taken against the SA was a rent strike.

> If, in addition, demonstrations were to be organized in front of the tavern and workers, on the basis of the demonstration, were to ... demolish the tavern or otherwise fire into the tavern, then that was not an individual attack on the tavern, but an attack arising spontaneously from the masses. For such an act, mass-terror of this kind, the Party could not be made responsible.[25]

This ambivalence, itself an admission of the difficulties involved in the basic plan of the campaign, provided the policy context for a shift from the ideal, as set forth in the plan, of mobilizing people outside the immediate Party organization for effective political action, to its replacement by more simple and dramatic gestures of 'individual terror'. In the case of the raids in the Gneisenaustrasse and the Schillingstrasse, and in the final stage of the Posener Strasse incident, that shift had occurred before the action was undertaken; the men involved acted as though the raid itself was sufficient fulfilment of the Party line. The events in the Richardstrasse, Neukölln, represent a mid-point between mass and individual action; they show the shift developing in practice.

III

In Neukölln, the campaign against the SA-taverns began with a sharp note from the Berlin central office. The local was censured for its inactivity in the previous months, and the District Leadership demanded specifically that more energy be shown in action against the Nazis. On 31 August, the Party Secretary and Political Leader for Neukölln, Paul Jahnke, delivered the message to a meeting of the members of the local whose responsibility it was to interpret the instructions of the Party to the cells. He reminded his listeners that the mass struggle against the Nazis was the issue of the day, and reproved them angrily for their failure to follow instructions in the past. Following Jahnke's lecture, the Organizer of the local laid out the details of how best to organize 'the broadest strata of the population ... for the battle

against the Nazi plague'. He gave instructions for the organization of house-defence squads, for the systematic surveillance of SA and police activity, and for the activation of the Party cells for the campaign. The focus of the action was to be the tavern of Heinrich Böwe in Richardstrasse.[26]

The house at Richardstrasse 35 was in many ways a model of society in Neukölln. It was one of the largest tenements in the area; built in 1905, with six courts and five rear-houses, it contained 144 apartments. Four-fifths of these were typical workers' quarters with kitchen, one living-room and shared toilet. They housed around 500 people. These included about a dozen shop-keepers and mastercraftsmen, nine clerks, salesmen and domestics, two artists, twenty-one pensioners, and some ninety skilled and unskilled workers representing the major Berlin trades. Among the leaders of the tenants' movement against the SA were a printer, a pipefitter, a tailor, a metalworker, two construction workers, two unskilled labourers, and a disabled veteran. The tavern in the ground floor front of the building had been bought in October 1929 by Heinrich Böwe, a contractor who had made a disastrous investment in his home town of Magdeburg and decided to set up in business with the remains of his savings. It had been a centre for the activities first of a religious youth group and then, after the War, of clubs with left-wing political affiliations, and this continued after Böwe took over.[27] As the Depression deepened, more and more of Böwe's guests were unable to find work; they continued to spend their days and evenings in the tavern, but the meagre allowance they received from the employment office and the welfare bureau did not permit them to go on eating, drinking and spending as they had in the past. When the SA offered to guarantee a minimum turnover of a barrel of beer a day if Böwe would put his premises at their disposal, the innkeeper saw the offer as the nearest way to avoid financial ruin. He consulted the local police commander, who assured him that there would be no serious danger involved, and accepted the SA's proposition. The clubs which had previously patronized the tavern promptly withdrew their custom, 'although Böwe would have been happy to keep some of them, especially the ones who used the bowling-alleys'. Shortly thereafter, Böwe himself joined the NSDAP, 'for business reasons'. On 26 August, Sturm 21 of the Neukölln moved into Richardstrasse 35, and Böwe's expectations were fulfilled, with upwards of 100 people gathering regularly in the assembly room at the back and some thirty hungry SA men appearing for lunch every day.[28]

The establishment of Sturm 21 in the Richardstrasse was thus very much like other SA takeovers of taverns during these months; like them it reflected the growth of the Berlin SA, a development in which self-confidence ran before and fuelled a numerical expansion. The Nazis were outsiders only in the sense that they declared themselves to be so; the SA had a long history in Neukölln. An NSDAP local had been operating there

as early as 1926; and the leader of Sturm 21, a twenty-five-year-old salesman born and raised in Neukölln, had belonged to the party since its founding. By mid-1931 Neukölln had three SA *Stürme* and, according to the Communists' own intelligence, the NSDAP had 1300 members and nine tavern-headquarters in the district at the end of August.[29] Communists and SA-men had been getting to know each other for several years. On the Communist side the SA was being identified and treated as a physical threat as early as October 1929, when the first SA group there already claimed seventy members; the SA leader dated the intensification of hostilities between the two groups from an incident during the election campaign of 1930.[30] In 1931, the developing relationship between the two parties had already produced one change of allegiance, from SA to Kampfbund. In the course of the prosecutions following the attack on Böwe's tavern, a leading Communist activist joined the SA.[31]

That the SA was familiar in Neukölln did not, however, mean that it was welcome in the Richardstrasse. As Sturm 21 moved in, public attention was being focused on the crimes of the Berlin SA by reports of the murder trial of members of Sturm 33, the notorious Charlottenburg squad. Given the character and history of the house, and the political sensitivity which had been growing in Neukölln with the National Socialist presence, tension was bound to arise between the tenants of the building and Böwe's new guests. Very soon after Sturm 21 took up residence, there were reports that the SA men were urinating in the hallways, waving their pistols at children playing in the courtyard, and threatening to shoot into people's windows.[32]

On 28 August the KPD functionary to whose cell Richardstrasse 35 belonged organized a tenants' meeting at which Communist speakers urged the calling of a rent strike. The proposal was adopted, and a few days later *Die Rote Fahne* reported success all along the line: 300 extra copies of the paper had been sold, Social Democrats were showing interest, a house-defence squad already had sixty members, and the tenants had formed an action committee. The rent strike was set to begin on 1 September if the SA was not turned out. Goebbels, it was reported, had given orders that Richardstrasse 35 was not to be abandoned under any circumstances. In fact, the rent strike failed to materialize. In the weeks that followed, tensions increased as both the Communist and the National Socialist press focused on the conflict. On 3 September *Der Angriff*, the National Socialist paper, claimed: 'In any case, things have gone so far that an SA-man doesn't dare venture into the Richardstrasse alone.' The Berlin central office of the KPD received reports from Neukölln that local girls were no longer safe on the streets at night. Groups appeared in the courtyard behind Böwe's tavern chanting '*Schlagt die Faschisten*' and 'Keep up the rent strike'. The windows of the assembly-room overlooking the court were smashed, and by the middle of October a special police-patrol had been assigned to prevent

people from gathering in front of the house. A group of KPD officers who visited the Richardstrasse one evening found the street completely deserted – an unusual scene in a working-class neighbourhood and a clearer sign than any amount of rowdiness that something was wrong.[33]

In the meantime, the rent strike had started again. On 29 September, the tenants met and resolved to begin the strike on 1 October. This time, the effort was better prepared and publicized. *Vorwärts* reported sympathetically, remarking that Reichsbanner men as well as Communists had already been attacked. Posters were printed announcing the strike and mimeographed newsletters were issued. These explained that the strike had been postponed in the first place because the manager of the building had yielded to pressure and promised to evict the SA. The manager later denied that he had made any such promise; in any case, the SA stayed. Nor, the tenants claimed, had the police been of any assistance; according to the resolution of the tenants' meeting, police officers had been heard to declare that the house should be 'smoked out', since half the tenants were criminals anyway. All that was left to the beleaguered residents was self-help; tenants who continued to pay their rent would be regarded as strike-breakers and allies of the troublemakers. A notary was named to whom rent payments could be made for the duration of the strike.[34]

In spite of the weeks of acrimony that lay behind it and the material and technical support which it received from the KPD in its execution, the October rent strike failed. It was impossible to mobilize a power which did not exist, and the tenants proved to be practically without power against their landlord. The threat of eviction, which the building manager raised at the first sign of action by the tenants, was a powerful deterrent in itself. What finally broke the back of the strike, however, was the fact that those tenants who were on welfare were not in a position to withhold their rent; the welfare bureau paid the rent directly to the manager.[35] After two weeks of the strike, the manager claimed that eighty per cent of the rents had been paid, and a proposal was made formally to call off the action. The united response of Braunschweig's workers to the violence of the SA on 18 October inspired a burst of optimism strong enough to make the Communists reconsider (see above, p. 78). But the tenants' meeting at which those events were to be discussed, on 21 October, was the last that was heard of the strike. On the eighteenth, Böwe died of the wound he received in the attack on his tavern; the tenants' meeting was broken up by the police and the thirty participants arrested.[36]

IV

Jahnke had apparently made up his mind by the middle of September that the rent strike alone was not going to have the desired effect.[37] The decision

that 'something must be done' to back up the strike meant that even as the strike was being revived, the basis for action was no longer the Party-in-the-community, the Richardstrasse cell and the tenants of number 35. From this point on, the course that that action would take was the business of the Party acting independently of those whom it claimed to represent. The conditions of working-class life in Neukölln had fostered a situation of tension and mutual threat and frustrated mass economic action. Henceforth, it was the objective circumstances which bore specifically on the KPD as a political organization that enforced the isolation of the Party. This in turn made it possible for the pressures and contradictions within the organization itself to influence the implementation of policy.

Once the rent strike appeared to have failed, there was never any doubt that a demonstration should be held. The Berlin central office approved Jahnke's proposal for a demonstration against the tavern at the end of September. At issue in the discussions leading up to the events of 15 October was how the action should be organized and what its effect should be. On the question of the necessity and desirability of violent confrontation, there were clear differences of attitude between the Neukölln organization and the Berlin leadership.

To a certain extent, the character of the proposed action was predetermined by the conditions of its organization. In the autumn of 1931, street-marches in Berlin were under police ban, and local functionaries and policy-makers alike had to take account of that fact. This automatically limited the scope of any popular action, since it was taken for granted at all levels of the Party that any demonstration would need to be carefully, even conspiratorially, arranged. Moreover, the decision to hold any illegal demonstration implied a possibility of confrontation with the police, and the plan to march against an SA-tavern involved even more serious risk of violence. If the Party led its members into confrontation with both the police and the SA, it could not then leave them defenceless against possible retaliation; again, it was accepted that an illegal demonstration might be covered by armed members of the Parteiselbstschutz. Finally, of course, the calculations of the Berlin political leadership included the possibility that 'resistance' on the part of the SA might evoke a physical attack on the tavern.

Given these hazards, the evidence indicates that the Party leadership at the district (Berlin) level was concerned to avoid casualties as far as possible and minimize the risk to the Party of any violence that might develop. Even the testimony of participants interrogated in 1934 and 1935, who were under pressure to implicate the entire KPD leadership, suggests that the impulse for the organization of an armed raid did not come from above. From Karl-Liebknecht-Haus came repeated demands that the Neukölln organization act, and act quickly, but also the insistence that there be a

large-scale march, that the police be drawn from the scene by a simultaneous demonstration several blocks away, and that a time be chosen when the tavern would be relatively empty. 'If the plan that had been agreed upon in our local had been carried out properly', wrote the KPD Instructor for Neukölln Rudolf Schlesinger, some years later, 'the whole business would have ended with a handsome glass-bill for the innkeeper ... and an interruption of the Nazis' "triumphal progress".'

Schlesinger placed the blame for the raid that finally took place on Paul Jahnke's own determination to have a shoot-out. Certainly the character and activities of the Party in Neukölln were strongly influenced by the personality of its local Secretary. Jahnke was known in the Party as an activist, a tough administrator who could be expected in carrying out his instructions to employ even sharper measures than the Party demanded. He had made his career in the Berlin Party by crushing opposition groups in the locals under his control. Given to the use of violent and apocalyptic language, in November 1931 he refused to recognize the sincerity of the Party's resolution against individual terror.[38] Jahnke's subordination to the Berlin district leadership did not seriously limit his power or responsibility to put into practice according to his own lights the plans that had been worked out in consultation with Karl-Liebknecht-Haus, and in fact Jahnke appears at the head of all the arrangements that were made for the demonstration and the attack within the Neukölln organization.

Jahnke could not have acted without the support of his own organization, however, and even his personal bearing must be seen as reflecting the attitudes current among his colleagues. In the Communist 'military' establishment in Neukölln, particularly, Jahnke had both a convenient instrument for the implementation of a policy of violence and a source of special pressure for violent action within his own jurisdiction. One of the most remarkable aspects of the Richardstrasse case is the sheer number of different paramilitary groups involved. The activism, organizational rivalries, and direct availability to Jahnke of any or all of these groups at any given time favoured the carrying of violence beyond the limits set by official policy.

The two organizations most deeply involved in the planning and execution of the demonstration were the illegal RFB and the Kampfbund, and it was in the context of their rivalry that the plan for the use of weapons developed. At the first meeting of the local after the decision was made to hold a demonstration, their respective leaders each proposed to carry out the action with his own men. In the course of the argument that followed, the two leaders, with Jahnke's encouragement, tried to outdo each other in their promises; both offered to use weapons against the tavern. The question of firearms was thus raised openly for the first time, and that was the occasion on which an armed raid was discussed and approved by the

local leadership. Jahnke promised to consult the Berlin office as to which group should take responsibility. He requested and received permission from the Party and the *Gau*-leadership of the RFB to use the Neukölln RFB to cover the demonstration. Specifically, Schlesinger reports that a plan to use the Treptow RFB, which lay in the same *Untergau* but whose members would not be recognized in Neukölln proper, was known and approved by the Berlin office. At the next meeting of the local Jahnke instructed that the RFB would be posted in the Richardstrasse and carry out the attack, while the Kampfbund would also provide armed men to stand watch in a side-street. Vanities were satisfied, everyone had a part to play, and each group had a stake in the execution of the raid.

The third group taking part in the demonstration was the cadre associated with the local M-Apparat, which was part of the PS. In this case, too, the activism of the members of the cadre themselves combined with a jurisdictional uncertainty to allow Jahnke to place yet another armed group on the scene. The posture of the Apparat in Neukölln reflected the impatience and militancy of the military experts in Karl-Liebknecht-Haus. If anything, the members of the Neukölln Apparat, the cadre leaders and the counterintelligence specialists, had been alerted to the campaign against the SA taverns earlier than the Party at large; as early as 25 August it was being put to them in characteristically ferocious terms: 'The time for the armed uprising has come and the question must be put on the agenda. Our duty is to apply all means and methods that are necessary, in order to set the masses in motion ... The time for discussion is forever past. We must answer with the same terror as our opponents.'[39] In contrast to this, and to the general Party approval of the use of the cadres as a cover for illegal demonstrations, Klause, as organizer of the PS, did not want to allow the Neukölln cadre to take part in the Richardstrasse action at all, and refused categorically to give his permission for its members to carry guns if they did go to the Richardstrasse. This refusal threatened for a while to interrupt the preparations for the demonstration. Both Jahnke and the leader of the Neukölln cadre tried to persuade Klause to reconsider; Jahnke reproached him scornfully, and the cadre-man invoked the wrath of Walter Ulbricht, then Leader of the KPD in Berlin. The conflict was overcome in the simplest way, however, when the cadre leader made up his mind to obey Jahnke's orders and not Klause's; the choice was open to him because the regulations of the PS made him directly subordinate to both Jahnke and Klause. On the day of the demonstration, members of the cadre were posted in surrounding streets to watch for the police.

In the event, it was not the Kampfbund, the PS or the RFB proper that gave the action its violent character, but a fourth group. Having decided on a shooting attack in collusion with the RFB and received the Party's permission to bring in armed members of the RFB, Jahnke seems to have

doubted that the RFB alone could be depended on to deliver the action required. The core of the group that fired on Böwe's tavern came from a formation existing on the fringes of the Communist organization and directly responsible to Jahnke. It was organized and led by the head of the Treptow RFB. He was known within the RFB to have a special group under his control, but the members of the group had their own meeting-place and their own special assignments. The existence of such a group, which was accepted within the local Party organization but apparently unknown to the higher political authorities of the KPD, working in the 'underground' of an organization already underground, was in itself a significant indicator of the state of mind of the locals and a foil to any attempt of the central office to control the activities of the rank and file.[40]

On the fifteenth, the action went more or less according to plan. Kampfbund and RFB were summoned by their organizers to demonstrate, the Kampfbund and some RFB members in the Richardstrasse, other RFB-men in the Hermannstrasse. There, nearly a kilometer distant from the scene of the action, was held the 'mass' demonstration, whose sole function now was to distract the attention of the police. At the same time a young man was dispatched to chain up the back gate of the police station. Witnesses in the Richardstrasse at about half-past seven in the evening saw knots of men suddenly assemble themselves into a procession. Between thirty and fifty approached the tavern at Number 35 in slow march, shouting 'Down with fascism' and singing the International. Suddenly there was a shout, the procession stopped, and the first shot was fired. It was followed by at least twenty more, fired in rapid succession by four or five young men, while the crowd of demonstrators remained standing in the street. The gunmen then fled and the crowd dispersed. Four of the eighteen people present in Böwe's tavern were wounded in the attack, and Böwe himself died three days later of the effects of a head-wound. The tavern was closed.

V

Initially, the Party was able to avoid serious police reprisals against the raid's organizers and participants, though at the cost of wearisome prosecution and imprisonment for some participants in the covering demonstration. Within a few weeks after the incident, twenty-two of those present in and near the Richardstrasse – chiefly Kampfbund members and a handful of RFB and cadre men – were arrested and indicted. In their trial the following spring ten were acquitted, eleven found guilty of disturbing the peace, and one convicted of being an accessory to the commission of grievous bodily harm.[41] Of the men directly associated with the shooting, one, an RFB member, went into hiding in Berlin until being given a passport

and ticket to take him to Russia; he returned to Berlin, disappointed with life there, in October 1932 and was arrested three days later. The Treptow group managed to avoid discovery until its members took part in an armed robbery in early 1932; the leader was helped to escape to Russia, but others were arrested and convicted on the robbery charge. Their testimony formed the basis for a new series of prosecutions and a show trial after the National Socialist takeover.[42]

Within the Party, reaction to the incident was immediate and largely favourable. The greatest enthusiasm was expressed, predictably, in military circles and among the middle functionaries. *Die Rote Fahne*, which had stopped reporting on the Richardstrasse situation early in September, reported simply that there had been a 'serious clash'. Among the members of the Neukölln Apparat the action was described as a complete success, the proof that intimidation was the most fruitful accompaniment to discussion: 'First try to win them over, then hit them.' At a meeting of all the leaders of the Berlin locals with representatives of the RFB, and Kampfbund and some Party instructors, there was talk of a new campaign to produce a 'pogrom mood' within the SA. And Kippenberger himself held the action up as an example to his organization, saying: 'With a really thorough application, it will be possible after four weeks to say that there once was an SA.'[43] But even had the violent methods themselves been approved, this was clearly wishful thinking; Böwe's tavern was back in operation as a Nazi hangout within three months of the raid.[44]

At the same time it was clear that the action in the Richardstrasse was unique in its apparent success, in the fact that a forceful gesture was combined with the mobilization of the whole Party, if not the whole community. In most cases, attacks on the SA-taverns were – even in the eyes of the Apparat – misconceived, failed in their effects, and brought Party members into confrontations with the police under unnecessarily embarrassing circumstances. Neither in the Gneisenaustrasse incident in September nor in the Schillingstrasse on 19 October was more than a handful of men involved. In the first case the RFB had been able to cover its members' tracks both literally and ideologically; as the gunmen escaped across the border and to Russia, a leaflet was issued which asked, 'Was this Bolshevist terror?' and urged the necessity of mass action.[45] The Schillingstrasse raiders were not so fortunate, and the Party was not happy to write off the first twenty-two arrests in the Richardstrasse case.[46]

The adoption of the resolution against individual terror in November led to the KPD leadership's withdrawal of even its conditional approval of direct attacks on Nazis and their gathering-places. In December, Ulbricht was still talking about answering the SA's violence with 'such a storm that they don't bother to come back for months'. Within a few days of that speech the RJ members who had taken part in the attack in the Posener Strasse were

called into the offices of the Friedrichshain Party and threatened with expulsion. In January 1932 the Berlin leadership publicly condemned the action in the Gneisenaustrasse. And when, in the following July, Schöneberg Communists arranged for two SA-taverns to be fired on from a moving car, a representative from Karl-Liebknecht-Haus appeared in the neighbourhood, questioning the residents about the identities of the organizers, and promised that the culprits would be expelled from the Party if discovered.[47]

The campaign against the SA-taverns developed into a series of isolated raids, which came to be seen as more trouble than they were worth to the Party. The KPD's public repudiation of the raids, and its attempts to prevent them in the context of enforcement of the resolution on individual terror, represent the articulation of a conflict between the interests of political action and the impulse to respond to violence with violence. This, in turn, revealed serious differences in tactical perceptions between various sections of the Communist organization. In the autumn of 1931, as the campaign against the SA-taverns began, the conflict was extenuated by the ambivalence of the Party leaders themselves and the all-purpose rhetorical ambiguity of their line. In the planning of the attack on Richardstrasse 35, differences of approach within the Party organization were already apparent, but in contrast to the raids in which the RFB acted without or against the Party's sanction, the Neukölln action reflected a near-synthesis of political and paramilitary tactics. This very fact, however, made it a model for the dilemma which the Party faced as an organization: the conditions of political activity in Depression Berlin and the character of the Party itself and its auxiliary organizations militated against mass action and encouraged the development of an atmosphere of panic conspiracy. With the resolution of November 1931, the Party attempted to deny the necessity of that development and to force its reversal, but the 'terrorists' had absorbed the implications of the Richardstrasse incident. At the end of November Paul Jahnke told his colleagues: 'In my opinion, mass-terror is a sheer impossibility ... Fascism can only be held down by terror now, and if that fails, in the long run everything will be lost.'[48]

6

The shape of violence in the neighbourhoods

The case of Richardstrasse 35 and comparable incidents, seen as calculated risks embarked on by the middle-level Party bureaucracy, appear to confirm the official Communist view that 'individual terror' resulted from the isolation of the Communist organization from the community at large. Even these incidents, however, when considered from the perspective of the rank and file, take their place among the routine activities of the local defence organizations. Those, in turn, demand consideration as an integral part of the life of the neighbourhood. It hardly needs to be argued that each fighting group was subject not only to the broadly ideological and organizational pressures that constituted official policy but also to the influences of the neighbourhood situation in which it operated. These included, at one end of the scale, the simple fact of spiralling popular and police violence, to the demands of which, as has been pointed out, the Party leadership was relatively sensitive. At the other end of the scale lay all the forces working on the fighters as members of a community with its own concerns, attitudes, styles of action and interaction.

I

Among the Communists, the combination of the 'social' and the 'political' – and the character of the violence that depended on it – was a function of the street-politics of the Party. It was hardly within the power of the Party to wipe out the pre-political personalities of most of its members in any case, but the official attitude was itself ambivalent. The process by which the Communist organizations merged with the community provided the dynamic for KPD tactics in the 'Third Period'. The most comprehensive effort undertaken by the defence organizations in this direction was the development of the Antifaschistische Aktion into a movement for collective self-help. But an intrinsic element of the political functions of each of the defence groups was that it should make a direct appeal to certain sections of the community on their own ground and in their own terms. Above all, the

Communist leadership, ever mindful of the successes of the SA, looked to the mass defence organizations and the RFB to spearhead its agitation among the unemployed and the young. The goal for the RFB/RJ was set at forty to fifty per cent of the membership around twenty years old; this meant constant efforts to increase the proportion of sixteen- to twenty-year-olds in the organization.[1]

The series of interviews held by Günther Dehn with pupils in vocational schools in Berlin in 1929 confirms the relative lack of appeal of the paramilitary organizations for young people in this age group.[2] The survey of the leisure interests of working-class adolescents that it provides also suggests the challenge posed to the street-politics of the Communists by the structure of working-class life. The world in which the defence groups moved was a highly organized one. Apart from the rival paramilitary organizations, a range of formal and informal associations, each with its characteristic authority structure and spheres of activity, gave form to daily life in the neighbourhood. The allegiance and free time of local youth were vied for by the youth arms of the parties – KJ, HJ, SAJ – by school associations, by confessional youth clubs, by the YMCA and by scout groups. Where the young people interviewed by Dehn admitted to membership in any of these groups, it was overwhelmingly Socialist and Communist organizations, rather than in the confessional clubs, especially among the unskilled.

By far the most popular of the organizations that offered themselves, however, were the sport clubs. In this, the inclinations of the young workers led them to follow an established working-class tradition. But Dehn thought he recognized a new spirit: 'The numerous football teams, which can be seen in the cities heading out for their sports-ground on Sundays, hold-all in hand, present by no means the spectacle of *frisch-frei-fröhlich-fromm* athletes of the old style; rather, these are lively youths, who, one can tell, would do anything to win victory for their cause.' The sport movement had, of course, long since been politicized, and the Communists had staked out a powerful position in the contest for the competitive energies of the young with its Sportverein 'Fichte'. One of the most successful of the Party's mass-organizations, 'Fichte' was expected to work closely with the defence organizations in their physical-training programmes. Among the Communists as in all the radical parties, sport clubs often provided a cover for illegal formations, and '*Rotsportler*' were regularly involved in brawls and disorders.[3]

More problematic, both for the Communist policy-makers and for the student of working-class politics, was the relationship between the Communist organizations and the associations that young people formed themselves. When the Communists took their agitation into the streets, they were entering the special preserve of the young. Traditionally

forbidden to play in the courtyards of the *Mietskasernen*, the proletarian child found company and recreation in the open: on the pavements and in nearby open spaces. There was even less room in the cramped slum apartment for the adolescent; the street, with its annexes in the cinemas, dance-halls, sweet-shops and *Rummelplätze* – street fairs or amusement-arcades that dotted built-up areas of the city – was a zone of freedom between the twin oppressions of home and work. In periods when there was no work, and when provisions for special education, training and institutional relief were being cut back, the importance of the street in the life of the young could only increase – not only for the adolescents on whom the KPD set its sights, but also for the young adults, whose minority was artificially prolonged by the social and legislative concomitants of depression.[4]

In official Party parlance, the members of this 'streetcorner society' fell into the catch-all category of the 'unorganized' or those 'of no party'. Their potential as an undifferentiated physical presence was acknowledged in such relatively general suggestions as the one that every RJ local should organize the young people of the street into a 'Fighting Column'.[5] But the Communist Youth and the defence organizations also took account of their specific common interests and social bonds in trying to win them over. Sections of the Party were thereby drawn into association with some of the most tumultuous and ungovernable elements of the community, since the middle ground between participating in the officially recognized (and policeable) range of organizations and the suspicion of delinquency was not wide,[6] and the life that was lived outside the law had little place in it for the forms of authority and discretion that the organized working class (Communist officialdom included) shared with the bourgeoisie.

In fact, the Party made a direct appeal to those youths officially branded as delinquent through its campaign against the reform school system (*Fürsorgeerziehung*). Conceived as a form of 'aid' to families that were unable to give their children the care and education necessary to make them useful members of society, *Fürsorgeerziehung* had since before the War been administered as a punishment for children and youths up to 18 who had proved themselves to be 'neglected' by breaking the law. Attempts of a new generation of social workers under the Republic to apply pedagogical principles and diminish the punitive element merely added to the inconsistency of its administration. By the time he reached late adolescence, the working-class child was already more likely to be sent to prison for his misdemeanours than to be placed in care, but he had long since learned to hate and fear the 'FE' as one of the earliest challenges raised by the state to his freedom of action. Moreover, the homes themselves were odious places; there were frequent reports of brutal and humiliating treatment of the inmates, escapes were commonplace, and the staff were subject to verbal and physical attacks.[7]

In the case of *Fürsorgeerziehung*, the common interest of those who had been, or were in danger of being caught up in the system set them in direct opposition to the power of the state. It was thus an ideal rallying point for KPD agitation. The Party introduced resolutions in parliamentary committees calling for supervision of the homes by working-class organizations and demanding that no escapee should be sent back. It published articles and pamphlets exposing the abuses in the homes. Communists also undertook direct agitation within the homes, which sometimes amounted to fomenting rebellion, a tactic that was also (and more easily) applied in the more accessible day-homes and recreation centres set up for the unemployed by municipal agencies.[8] Residents of the surrounding neighbourhood were drawn into this kind of agitation by demonstrations outside the homes, in which members of the defence organizations played an important part. On 31 August 1929 the Lindenhof home in Lichtenberg was the scene of such a demonstration, and on the night of 23 March 1930 there occurred what the authorities described as an attempt to storm the Struweshof home in Steglitz. At least six of the 120 youths arrested in that incident were also active in *Zusammenstoss*-violence, three of them as admitted members of defence organizations and two of the Communist Youth.[9]

More interesting and potentially more promising than this agitation, although carried on with less public commotion, were the efforts of the Communists to organize among these elements on their home ground. At the end of September 1930, in the context of the review of Party tactics that followed the Reichstag elections, the leadership of the RJ ordered the Berlin and Hamburg sections 'to work out a plan for agitation among the cliques and to compile their experiences in this area in the form of a report to the national leadership so that they can be used for the whole organization'.[10]

The cliques were gangs of youths between the ages of 16 and 25 that flourished in working-class areas. In Berlin, they were popularly associated particularly with Wedding, Neukölln and Kreuzberg, although in fact they existed all over the city.[11] Their origins lay in the 'wild hiking clubs', proletarian parodies of the middle-class *Wandervogel* movement, that appeared in Berlin during the First World War. By 1923 their activities were an object of general public concern, an aspect of popular and official anxieties about the effects of war and inflation on the moral condition of young people. The recession of 1925–6 generated fresh anxieties and led to the creation of institutions for the unemployed young which, in turn, heightened the visibility of the cliques, so that many sources identified 1927 and 1928 as their heyday; but in 1931 they could still be described as 'a phantom, impossible to grasp or to unmask', lurking in the background of all criminal prosecutions of juveniles in Berlin.[12] Estimates of their numbers during the Depression years ranged from 100, with memberships of

between ten and 100, to 600, with a combined following of 30,000 youths.[13]

The cliques appeared before the public and the police in their most lurid aspect. At best, one authority wrote, 'the very existence of a clique exercises an unhealthy influence on the youth of a district'; at worst their activities represented a 'first step on the way to organized crime'. The same commentator pointed out, however, that many of them could be characterized as 'harmless walking-clubs'.[14] At this end of the scale, the structure and activity of some cliques probably overlapped with those of the more conventional (although still suspect) smoking-, savings- and social-clubs which working-class boys and girls organized for themselves, but such groups, in so far as they existed, remained invisible. Where the cliques were sufficiently active to make an impression on observers, they were universally represented as sharing a specific set of characteristics.[15]

The most disturbing aspect of the activities of the cliques in the eyes of the police and 'public opinion' was the emphasis that their members placed on toughness, their readiness to engage in physical violence, whether in pursuit of entertainment or of material gain. The central experience of membership in the classic clique was a weekly camping trip and, true to their traditions, some even adopted the costume and pennants of the *Wandervögel* or scouts. In the course of these outings, it was common practice to attack members of respectable scout troops encamped nearby and, if possible, seize their badges and pennants as booty. Individual hikers were also attacked, robbed and sometimes beaten. Between the cliques, too, there existed a rivalry, which was expressed both in spontaneous brawling and in relatively formal, organized fights, but also provided a framework for diplomatic manoeuvres and tactical alliances: two fighting gangs might turn on the police officers trying to separate them, or a confederacy of cliques might organize a punitive expedition against a suburban tavern in which some of their members had been refused service.[16] The clique was led by a 'clique-bull', often the founder, who maintained his position by his ability to keep the group together, to hold his own in a fight and to devise successful schemes for fulfilling the aims of the group and the needs of its members. The authority of the 'bull' was such that his arrest could mean the dissolution of the clique. New members were sometimes expected, as a condition for admission, to give proof of their aptitude by committing some petty crime or act of vandalism. One concomitant of this aggressive posture was a self-conscious masculinity. There were reportedly a few mixed groups as well as some gangs of girls, but the toughest of the cliques excluded girls from full-fledged membership as a matter of principle; they appeared on the scene only as 'clique-darlings', one or two whose rôle was to minister to the physical needs of the gang.[17] A second concomitant was absolute solidarity within the clique:

The regulations of the clique are usually of a lapidary brevity: the member must always pay for his round ..., he must defend an attacked or insulted comrade under any and all circumstances, he must never 'rat'.[18]

The 'Tartarenblut' case of 1928, which was widely reported, established the model for the popular image of the clique: eighteen members of the gang, unemployed youths from Neukölln, attacked a group from the Akademischer Turnverein Berlin at a suburban campsite. They searched them and carried off their Deutsche Turnerschaft badges as well as all their money and provisions. When they were caught by the police the members of the clique were carrying knives, knuckledusters and other dangerous instruments – and their banner: red, with a white border and rising golden sun, inscribed W.C. TARTARENBLUT. According to one newspaper report, the youths were dressed 'in Tyrolean style', with knee-socks, black 'fascist jackets', open shirts and feathered hats. A short trial ten months later resulted in commuted prison sentences for several members of 'Tartarenblut'. In January 1929 members of the clique were again convicted and released for their rôle in an incident in which several cliques had attacked a tavern. Finally, in 1929, the 'bull' himself had to serve a prison term for brawling and the clique broke up.[19]

When members of a clique fell on hard times, the skills, cohesiveness and mobility fostered by this kind of recreation could be mobilized in service of other functions of the group: mutual support, a common front against the police, officers of the Child Welfare Bureau or FE or among truly vagrant gangs, cooperation in the daily pursuit of food and shelter – not always by legal means. Although their varied pursuits could take them all over the city and into the suburbs, they remained for the most part closely identified with their own neighbourhoods. They regularly congregated in the same local taverns or, failing a hospitable landlord, in a convenient park, dance-hall or *Rummelplatz*, and they were prepared to defend their hegemony over these 'strongholds' against all comers. The tie to the neighbourhood, an attitude natural to the very young and reinforced by the availability within the area of such cheap forms of entertainment, could likewise become functional for a gang whose members were unemployed and living by their wits or from street-crime. While one authority reported that 'certain cliques dominate and terrorize whole blocks and sections of the city', another cited the case of a vagrant gang being actively supported and shielded from the police by local residents.[20]

Once it was mobilized within the wider community for the enforcement of material interests, the exercise of physical force that had originated as a form of entertainment or self-presentation had the potential to draw the cliques into local networks of economic and broadly political power. The most notorious of such unofficial networks was that of the *Ringvereine*, city-wide organizations which acted as 'friendly societies' for professional

criminals and ex-convicts and controlled significant sections of Berlin's night-life and vice operations. Especially in the entertainment centres of Mitte and Wedding, it was reported that 'all porters, handbill-distributors, barkers in small night-clubs, all shoe-shine boys, street vendors, lavatory attendants ... are exclusively paid-up members of these associations'.[21]

In fact the members of the *Ringvereine* were inclined to regard the cliques, like other disruptive outsiders, as a nuisance at best, and although some clique members joined professional gangs as they grew older the cliques as such remained largely distinct from the structures of organized crime.[22] Their characteristic offences were disturbing the peace, assault, robbery and petty theft, occasionally stealing an auto for a joy-ride. Very few demonstrated the aptitude for serious crime of 'Eierschlamm', whose members carried out some fifteen motorized robberies in 1931 and 1932, ending their career with an attack on a wages transport in which a guard was killed.[23]

Nevertheless, the *analogy* between cliques and *Ringvereine* is suggestive, particularly in the light of their common politicization. On the one hand, it was observed that after 1929 even the professional gangs were increasingly adopting party-political allegiances (usually opting for the Communists). On the other, the politicization of the cliques was, by 1932, a matter of public discussion and concern; one informed commentator estimated in 1930 that while seventy-one per cent of non-criminal cliques were apolitical, twenty-one per cent had left-wing (usually Communist), seven per cent right-wing (usually *völkisch*) sympathies.[24] If we choose to regard the conflict between the political parties as, at least in part, a struggle to establish real and direct control in certain areas, then the politicization of groups whose power was already mainly of an immediate and local kind may indicate that they were being squeezed out in the increasingly open and physical fight for control of the streets, or being forced to take shelter under the rival claims to hegemony in order to retain and legitimize actual positions of influence.

What is more certain, in the light of the history of the KPD's approaches to the cliques, is that the Party was most interested in their capacity to back up its own position and arguments with physical force. The earliest of those approaches was in the spring of 1923, when members of the Berlin leadership of the KJVD organized a federation of cliques under the name Roter Wanderring. The programme of this group included provisions for free legal aid, establishment of a common housing-list, support for revolutionary organizations, and 'collective defence against our enemies'. Its members figured prominently in *Die Rote Fahne*'s reports on clashes between Communist or Socialist youths and members of the police and right-wing formations during the following months. After the revolutionary effort of 1923 had collapsed and the Ring had dissolved, numerous

clique members were reportedly attracted to the Communist Youth, and especially to the newly formed RJ. During the mid to late twenties, sympathetic cliques continued to operate on the fringes of the Party. In May 1928, for example, members of the Neukölln clique 'Adlerkralle' were arrested in a crowd which had attacked a group of SA men. And when the RJ was banned in 1929 observers noted that 'a large section' of the Berlin membership floated back into the cliques.[25] The RJ instruction of 1930 thus reinstituted, for the national organization, an agitation that had already been tried at the local level in circumstances comparable to those of the 'Third Period': 'asocial elements' were invited into the movement as the Party aimed to broaden its appeal, to win the affections of proletarian youth back from a vigorous right-wing movement, and to recruit the shock troops for a militant, physical fight against the political opposition.

The principal literary instrument in this agitation in its last phase was Walter Schönstedt's novel *Kämpfende Jugend*, issued in 1932 by the Communist publishing house. Advertisements in other Party publications recommended as 'humorous and interesting' its 'depiction of how Tomcat and Spider and their wild hiking clique become members of the Communist Youth', and KJVD locals were advised to organize 'discussion evenings' around the novel, to which clique members should be invited.[26] Schönstedt was himself a leader of the RJ in Kreuzberg and active in the *wehrhafter Kampf* and his portrait of a local clique concentrates on those attitudes most directly relevant to the expectations of the Communists. The boys of 'Edelsau' are characterized as fundamentally friendly to the Communists, admiring forceful leadership but deeply contemptuous of political jargon and regimentation. '... Punch-ups, a little Thälmann, and as for the rest, they don't care.' But the specific value of the *Clique* in the present struggle was unambiguous:

> ... when word went out: The Nazis are coming through the Nostizstrasse, then the lads were better than many of the organized ones ... 'Getting ready to make another speech, Theo? [one of them asks the Party organizer] Don't bother, man. you know if anything happens, we'll be there, we know what we've got to do. Just smash'em, smash'em, till the roof falls in!'[27]

Among the biographies of the streetfighters there is evidence of a continuous process of competition and coalescence between the cliques and the Communist movement. An apprentice bricklayer, Erich Irmer, sixteen years old when he was arrested in the 'Adlerkralle' incident, joined the AJG in 1929 and was at the end of 1931 treasurer of a KPD streetcell and *Staffelführer* in the Kampfbund. Alfred Jäger joined 'Tartarenblut' in 1926 at the age of fifteen, was twice arrested, once for illegal camping and once for assault and battery against Stahlhelm members, and moved on to the AJG and a series of political offences when the clique broke up in 1929. In the course of the investigation into the Posener Strasse shooting it emerged

that one RJ leader was a former member of 'Apachenblut', while another belonged to the 'Sparverein Immer Pleite'; the names of two other cliques, 'Waldvögel' and 'Seepiraten', made brief appearances in the files.[28] The charter members of 'Eierschlamm' had belonged to the Communist Youth before forming their clique, and had continued to meet in the Communist tavern in the Yorckstrasse and even to be politically active – to the extent of getting into fights with National Socialists – at the same time as they were carrying on their criminal career. One had been expelled from the KJ because of his clique activities. During the trial for the 1931 and 1932 armed robberies it came to light that one of the members had acted as chauffeur in shooting attacks on SA-taverns in Schöneberg on the night of 30 June 1932, while another had accompanied the assault squad and a third testified under Gestapo 'pressure' that he, too, had gone along, thinking it was 'one of the usual robberies'.[29]

When the Hitler Youth Hans Hoffmann was shot to death on the Lausitzer Platz in July 1931, the police looked for a connection between the murder and the conflicts that existed between the members of the clique 'Lustig Blut' and other local youths. Although they did not find any direct association, it became clear that the cliques and the political formations in Kreuzberg inhabited the same world, and that the lines between them were very fluid. An article published in the organ of the Kreuzberg RJ a little earlier in the year characterized a local SA leader thus: 'This character, who is also known by the name of "Scholli", has already made off with the treasuries of the hiking club "Lustig Blut" and the social club "Hand in Hand".'[30]

The relationship between the cliques and the defence groups offers a key to some of the most striking ambiguities in the position of the Communist organizations. By virtue as much of common socialization as of mutual recruitment, the two shared a social code and an organizational culture in which masculinity, solidarity based on affection and mutual aid, aggressive competition and toughness in defence of one's territory were closely linked with the gang style of organization. The Party granted a kind of legitimacy to this culture when it sanctioned active recruitment from the cliques.

At the same time the leadership remained uncertain as to the aims and value of such recruitment and suspicious of the cliques themselves. No direct public statement was made about why the Party was recruiting them; indeed, it was never directly acknowledged that such an agitation was going on. And while the evidence of KPD practice supports the view that the Party saw the cliques as potential allies from outside the ranks of the 'class-conscious proletariat', whose specific value lay in their violence, the various comments that were made about them in the Communist press reflect no such consistent view. For Schönstedt's hero, the KJ leader trying to recruit 'Edelsau', the gang members are proletarians fighting the system in the only way they know how, but even their spontaneous antifascism,

though praiseworthy, does not relieve them of the necessity to choose between joining the movement and sinking into the *Lumpenproletariat*. The Party member who reviewed *Kämpfende Jugend* for the Communist literary journal emphasized the 'proletarian comradeship' of the gang, their mutual concern and 'the feeling that each cares for the other', as a desirable quality too often lacking in the Party organization; at the same time he described the politicization of 'Edelsau' as 'the confluence of two streams from the reservoir of the street'.[31] In the eyes of another commentator, however, writing for the popular consumption in the weekend supplement of *Die Rote Fahne*, there was little to distinguish the cliques from the workers' vanguard:

> The 'bull' is elected at a meeting on democratic principles for an unlimited period. Everyone owes him absolute obedience, every clique keeps the strictest discipline ... New members are apprentices and have to go through a strict probationary period ...

and gangs always clean up after themselves when they go camping, 'unlike the *Spiesser*, who decorate the park with ... sandwich wrappers'.[32] The tension between the idea that the cliques were outsiders who needed to be convinced that they had a common cause with the Communists, and the axiom that there was no real antifascist politics outside the movement is also apparent in the reporting of a violent incident in Schöneberg in March 1931. The victim of a Nazi shooting, an apprentice bricklayer, was described by *Vorwärts* as a member of a 'Communist hiking club'. In successive reports of *Die Rote Fahne*, he was transformed from 'an unorganized worker who belonged to a hiking club' and whose friends had now vowed to join the antifascist movement, to a 'valiant young proletarian ... on the way to [joining] the Communist Youth', who 'organized the comrades in his hiking club into the Red Aid', to 'member of a hiking club, red "shop steward" and organizer of the *wehrhafter Kampf*' in his vocational school.[33]

The uncertainty in the Party's understanding of what the cliques were and what it expected from them was echoed in the leadership's ambivalent response to clique-like forms of behaviour within the movement. In fact, the Communist organizations were distinguished from the cliques by the fact that the elements of a 'street culture' were combined with, their application in a sense directed by those of a self-consciously party-political world-view. But this compound was not always acceptable to the Communist leadership. An RJ circular of March 1930 set the tone for continuing tensions with the reminder 'Enemies-work has mighty little to do with playing cops-and-robbers and wearing dark glasses.'[34] The persistence of a style learned in the streets was closely related to the problems the leadership had in enforcing its policies on terror and the *wehrhafter Kampf*, which appear in this context as a further example of the Party's failure to politicize its own followers. In the following study of the actual operation of a sample of fighting groups, the

prescriptions and complaints of the leadership can be regarded as guides to the points at which communal and organizational pressures combined or conflicted.

II

This study is based on material in the Berlin police files, containing information about 179 separate cases of *Zusammenstoss*-violence in Berlin, most of them between 1929 and 1933, and over 300 individual streetfighters.[35] Certain limitations may be stated at the outset. First, it is not possible either to state how many separate groups we are dealing with, or to make any systematic distinctions between the sections of one organization and another. Only in a few cases has it been possible to reconstruct groups, and then usually only partially. This reflects in part the nature of the sources: the statements made by individuals to the police are bound to be fragmentary and – where the speaker's organizational allegiance is concerned – deliberately misleading. Moreover, confusion of titles and functions and overlapping membership was characteristic of the Communist defence movement at every level. On the basis of official figures, therefore, it is hardly possible even to make more than a rough estimate of the numbers of groups and individuals involved in the whole city of Berlin. Of the 318 streetfighters whose interviews we have on record, 223 stated that they were current or former members of Communist organizations or appeared as such in the files of the political police. Of these, thirty-nine were current or former Party members, eighteen current or former members of mass-organizations other than defence organizations, and 166 could be shown to be or to have at one time been active in defence organizations. The last group included twenty-five who were simultaneously members of *other* Communist mass-organizations (usually Red Aid) and fifty-one current members of the Party or Communist Youth. Among those with no organizational affiliation with the Communists, twenty-six described themselves as or gave evidence of being Communist sympathizers; an equal number named other organizations, usually trade unions; one was a former SPD member; and forty-two gave no information.

It should be emphasized that the groups under discussion are those whose members were involved in violent incidents and who were apprehended by the police in the course of their activities. It is difficult to state with any certainty to what extent they are characteristic of the movement as a whole. In Berlin, certain sections were recognized by Nazis and Communists alike as being particularly tough. One member of the Fischerkietz section of the formation calling itself Proletarischer Selbstschutz Mitte reported that his own group had been notorious for its activism until mid-1931; then for a while 'things were pretty quiet at

Hoppe's [their tavern]' and people 'talked a lot about how the better and more active groups were Kreuzberg, Prenzlauer Berg, and Frankfurter Allee'.[36] Groups like these, for whom violent armed actions were routine, were relatively rare.

On the other hand, it seems likely that a high proportion of the defence formations regularly participated in activities in which they openly courted violent confrontations, so that the groups that actually became involved in spontaneous *Zusammenstösse* can stand for a much wider circle of fighting groups *in posse*. This should become apparent in the course of a closer examination of the forms, occasions and context of violence. Within the general framework of the *Zusammenstoss* style, the forms were highly variable and the occasions innumerable, the force of immediate local circumstances or the simple momentum of the fight often enforcing a shift from defence to offence, from routine political activity to 'individual terror' in its pure form. The context for all of these was the neighbourhood, defined on one level as a nexus of personal and economic relationships and on another as the geographical area in which each individual group held its writ to run.

Violent confrontations, although usually anticipated, were often incidental to the other activities of the groups. One enthusiastic seventeen-year-old, recently recruited to an RMSS formation in Schöneberg, described his group as a 'pure defence organization', whose activity consisted exclusively of 'intelligence, provision of defence for meetings, occupation of our taverns in case of alarm'.[37] Other groups, however, took their political tasks more seriously. Several RFB members testified that, once they had been recruited with open or implicit promises of action and excitement, their first experience of organizational life was to receive a fund-raising list or a bundle of newspapers for distribution. Propaganda actions that required more caution and daring, such as the painting of slogans on walls or pavement, or the hanging of banners in barely accessible places, were a speciality of these young activists. Moreover, the frequency with which both Communists and National Socialists admitted to recognizing one another from meetings and discussions suggests that the 'ideological fight' was not being entirely neglected.[38]

Each of these activities carried with it the risk of a clash with the police or with political opponents, and often the consequences of an evening's propaganda were out of all proportion to the intrinsic dangers of the operation. In the general atmosphere of political tension, often heightened by the influence of several beers, the 'discussion' that began with a half-friendly challenge could easily turn into a brawl; it needed only one person on either side to feel offended or be spoiling for a fight.[39] The stabbing of SA-man Erich Sagasser on 23 December 1932 is a case in point: on the way home from their Christmas party, he and some other members of Sturm 66

(Moabit), passed a Communist tavern and were invited in. Everyone had had a few drinks, and the conversation proceeded peacefully enough, until one of the SA-men asked where Anton Krause was now 'boozing and whoring around'. Krause was a highly respected local RFB-leader who had recently been released from prison under an amnesty; his wife was in the tavern that evening. Tension began to mount, as one of the Communists responded; 'You're just like those swine from Potempa!' – a reference to the brutal murder of a Communist in Silesia the preceding August.[40] A Communist cycled to the nearest KPD tavern to get reinforcements, and shortly after their arrival, a troop of SA-men appeared outside and began to force their way in. This was the signal for a general melée inside the tavern, in the course of which Sagasser received a knife-wound in the belly; he died on the 8 January.[41]

Even so self-consciously tough a group as the Proletarischer Selbstschutz Fischerkietz was not always looking for trouble, and its first major 'action' after the lull of mid-1931 was more or less accidental. On 20 November 1931, the group held a meeting to elect a new leader, at the end of which all the members who did not have to go to work the next day were ordered to take part in a 'painting action'; slogans were to be painted on the Spree bridges and at the entrances to the Underground. They set out with their paint-buckets and brushes at about 11.30 p.m., posting guards along the way to watch for approaching police cars. Instead of the police, however, they came face to face with local SA-men. There were brief skirmishes between groups of two and three, and then, when the Communists turned to go back to their tavern, they found the way blocked by a large troop of SA. After an exchange of insults between the SA-leader and one of the Communists, the Nazis began to advance; outnumbered, the Communists took to their heels. Three of them, however, turned just before the bridge over which they had to pass and began firing pistols to hold off the Nazis. In this case there were no casualties, but a number of members of the group, including the newly-elected leader, were arrested and put out of circulation for several months.[42]

In these cases, the preparedness for and exercise of prescribed defence functions contributed to the heating-up of essentially non-violent situations. In others, the groups acted solely as defence formations, warding off Nazi attacks on other organizations or institutions, most commonly taverns. It is not always easy to determine how much was anticipation and how much response in such actions. Police and eyewitness reports are often frustratingly circumstantial, as in the case of an incident in Kreuzberg on 21 June 1932: all afternoon and evening SA-men in uniform had been strolling up and down the Gneisenaustrasse in defiance of police requests that they disperse. Alarmed by this, and remembering earlier incidents, the landlady of the KPD tavern at the corner of Schleiermacherstrasse asked

for and received a police guard. Meanwhile, groups of Communists had gathered in and around the tavern. Around 11.30 a troop of between twenty and twenty-five SA-men marched past the tavern on its way down Schleiermacherstrasse.

> At this moment a large number of Communists stormed out of the tavern, formed a chain across the Schleiermacherstrasse and pursued the N[ational] S[ocialists]. The NS had faced about at the approach of the Communists and some had begun to take off their cross-belts in expectation of an attack. At this moment the first shots were fired.

The shooting continued on both sides, and at the end of it one SA-man was dead and eleven Communists were in police custody.[43]

The mutual distrust was so pervasive, the provisional mobilization for self-defence so much a matter of routine, that the expectation of attack itself must often have provided the spark for a battle. A particularly disturbing example of how mutual anxiety could compound tragedy was the incident in the garden-allotment colony Felseneck, which the KPD used as the occasion for initiating its campaign for mass self-defence in January 1932. The incident arose when a troop of SA-men, with a police escort, made a detour through the colony on their way home from a meeting. Wild rumours had been flying around Reinickendorf all evening, and both the SA and the local Communists were in a state of nervous expectation. The SA-men began to throw rocks at one of the sheds where a Communist was sleeping. Shots were fired, an alarm bell was rung, and in the ensuing confusion, as residents and intruders stumbled about in the pitch darkness, the Communist Klemke was shot at close range. As members of the SA troop fled, they were confronted by Kampfbund members in a nearby street and one of their group was beaten and stabbed. Both of the principal victims, one on each side, died that night.[44]

Within the neighbourhood, the expectation of violence was fed by rumour. If either side was planning an action against the other, it was not easy to keep the plans a secret. When the Neukölln SA decided to 'clean out' the local Communist bookshop, their plan was being openly discussed in the surrounding streets several hours before the attack took place.[45] The expectation could harden into certainty with the appearance of the SA, or with the report of a sympathetic passer-by or of one of the cyclists sent out to reconnoitre, that the Nazis were coming. If a major confrontation was expected, and if the Communists were warned far enough in advance, several groups might be alarmed by couriers or over the telephone and called to strengthen the guard at the threatened spot. The very presence in the area of these 'outsiders', who knew they had been called to fight but were not always sure whom or why, could occasion a new round of skirmishes.[46]

These *ad hoc* local alarm situations were reproduced on a much larger

scale in the mobilizations of the whole Berlin organization that the Party routinely ordered during periods of intense political activity. Whenever there was a large National Socialist meeting or demonstration the local defence groups were expected to stand by in their taverns, as they were every evening during election campaigns and at times, like the summer of 1932 and early 1933, when offensive action by the SA was expected.[47] It was on these occasions that the Communist organizations most nearly resembled that compact revolutionary force whose vision haunted the Party and the police alike. When they acted, however, it was rarely as an army; their ordinary frame of reference was the political fight in its local aspect.

This was true as much of offensive as of defensive action. Members of the defence groups undertook actions which can be characterized as 'terror' in terms both of structure and intent: planned raids and attacks on individual Nazis, often combined with personal threats, aimed at eliminating, radically intimidating, or taking revenge on the opposition. As persuasive as was Grzesinski's image of terror-groups ranging throughout the city in closely guarded anonymity, most actions of this kind grew out of local conflicts and depended for their effectiveness on some degree of familiarity between victim and attacker. The murder of Horst Wessel, for example, which took place within a twenty-minute walk of the tavern in which it was planned, was made possible by a web of political and personal relationships.

Wessel was one of a number of activists on both sides who presented themselves as being personally under threat. Klemke, the Communist killed in the Felseneck incident, was a marked man because of his participation in a fight in front of the Reinickendorf labour exchange two weeks earlier. Arrested for taking part in an attack in which a group of Nazis were stabbed, beaten and kicked, the Schöneberger Walter Neubauer maintained that the SA had been threatening him for weeks because he refused to join them; he was convinced that his photograph hung in the SA-tavern with a sign under it saying that he had to die.[48]

This personalizing of the conflict did not always lead to murder. It frequently did not go further than the threat – in notes dropped into an SA-man's toolbox at work, or messages chalked on doorways, giving notice that the resident's political activities were no secret. Some of the groups were equipped with pre-printed posters for this purpose. One example, measuring about nine by twelve inches and printed in red ink, read: 'Eyes open! / Young worker, this concerns you: / Here lives / *The Fascist* / ———— / who takes part in attacks on workers. / Hit him wherever you see him: / Die Rote Jungfront.' Another, headed with two swastikas, provided spaces for the name and address of the 'Fascist and Murderer of Workers', and admonished: 'Workers, spit in his face. Hit the fascist wherever you meet him!'[49]

The anonymous note received by a father of three in Wedding in 1932, by no means atypical, represents an act of terror in itself.

> Dear Herr Bindermann! In consequence of the spread of the brown murder-plague, to which your three brats also belong, we must take steps in self-defence, which will cause great pain to the parental heart; but there is nothing for it. We stand under threat and in self-defence against the brown mob. Your daughter has repeatedly given herself sexually to the brown murder-bandits. The youngest kid poses an impudent challenge to the workers of Wedding. Very well. We take up the challenge. Enough is enough. From now on, we will send all Nazi bandits who are known to us to the place where the Third Reich wants to send us. We herewith inform you that your Nazi-brats will have to make this trip too. Whether fair or not, is not our business to decide. Our patience is exhausted. ... There is no way back to the working class.[50]

The leader of the SA in the Richardstrasse claimed that he had been being 'shadowed' for years before the Communists took decisive action, and the feud between the Fischerkietz activists and the local SA-leader was carried on with insults, mutual accusations and litigation as well as with knives and clubs.[51] When weapons came into play, the stakes were raised. It was only through luck that two of the Fischerkietz group's offensive actions, a shooting-ambush of the SA-man Ewald at the Inselstrasse bridge and an attack with rocks and guns on an SA-tavern in the Wienerstrasse (in revenge for the murder of a Communist), did not result in serious casualties.[52] Sometimes, however, the hated opponent would simply be killed, either in cold blood (like Horst Wessel) or under cover of a broader action. Herbert Norkus, the Hitler Youth member stabbed to death while distributing leaflets in Moabit on 24 January 1932, was the victim of the latter kind of attack. He was mistaken for a Nazi leader who was detested by both Communists and oppositional National Socialists, and members of both organizations planned the attack together.[53] The shooting of Hans Steinberg on the Lenzener Platz in July of the same year was another such case, also apparently involving mistaken identity.[54]

Between the extremes of defence and terror may be located a type of action best described as policing. This took various forms, but in each of them the central function can be seen as an assertion of the authority of the group and its power to control what went on in the street. Collectively, these actions probably account for the bulk of violent incidents. One form, which obviously had a practical political value as well, was physical interference with Nazi propaganda. This could be carried out on the basis of a city-wide or local alarm, and in such cases it might be fairly well coordinated. The first action of one Unemployed Detachment in Friedrichshain, part of a general mobilization against a planned Nazi propaganda action in the area on 7 February 1932, involved their spending the night in their tavern, sending out regular couriers to determine where the Nazis were, and heading out first thing in the morning in groups of two and three. Some of them were

dispersed by the police; others got involved in a brawl on the Petersburger Platz, and one hapless Communist followed some others fleeing the police and found himself hiding out in an SA-tavern.[55] The many cases in which fights developed after Communists had attempted to 'confiscate' pamphlets and literature attest to the frequent application of the same principle on an *ad hoc* basis; the stands where the *Völkischer Beobachter* was sold were frequent targets for attack.[56]

But the mandate to counter Nazi propaganda allowed of broad interpretation. Official Party circulars often carried references to 'purging the streets of fascist provocateurs' and similarly sweeping injunctions.[57] At a meeting of the same Unemployed Detachment a few weeks earlier, the leader told his audience:

> Wherever the Nazis appear and make propaganda in our district, we will impede their propaganda and drive the Nazis out. As an example he announced that when several Communists, members of the E-Staffel, meet, say, three Nazis on the street and recognize them, they must strike them down immediately.[58]

In accordance with this dictum, local groups spent a good deal of their time standing on streetcorners or in playgrounds or wandering the streets and parks watching for Nazis. Many an apparent attack was initiated by the shout, 'There's one' or accompanied by warning to the Nazis to 'just get out of here' or 'get the hell home'.[59]

Determining whether the quarry was in fact a Nazi, which usually involved a body-search for armbands or badges, was sometimes the ritual preliminary to a beating. More often, this symbolic (sometimes literal) disarming of the enemy, though almost always accompanied by blows of some sort, was an end in itself. It was carried out even on men whose identity as Nazis was generally known, and the 'confiscated' badges were kept as prized trophies.[60] A member of the Rote Jungfront in Kreuzberg, questioned in connection with a case in which a young Nazi's refusal to hand over his swastika-patterned belt-buckle led to his being shot to death, stated that nearly every meeting of his group ended in a '*Durchzug*' – 'patrols, in which the badges of opposing parties are hunted' – which had never before in his experience led to 'serious confrontations'.[61] Similarly, the shooting in the Posener Strasse was the climax to a 'patrol [*Streife*] through the east end'. In this characteristic form of 'policing' the tie between the individual group and a relatively fixed territorial sphere of influence is especially clear.

The element of territoriality is further emphasized by the fact that 280 of the 318 streetfighters in our sample were arrested for incidents occurring exclusively in their own districts (*Verwaltungsbezirke*) or immediately adjoining areas of neighbouring districts. Cases in which groups acted outside their own neighbourhoods often reveal a consciousness of locality, of where the group had a right to claim authority, that was curiously

compounded of political and communal memories. Here again, the Fischerkietz group provides an excellent example. In contrast to the authorities, for whom the Fischerkietz was simply the 'south-east end of the island formed by the Spree', a member of the group was able to describe his neighbourhood as an area whose boundaries snaked through the districts on either side of the river, taking in some blocks and excluding others:

> Parochialstrasse, near the Rathaus across the Molkenmarkt, Gertraudenstrasse up to the Spittelmarkt, from there to Seidelstrasse, Stallschreiberstrasse up to Moritzplatz, from there Buckowerstrasse, Luisenufer to Annenstrasse, Jannowitz Bridge, Holzmarktstrasse up to Raupachstrasse, from there back to Stralauer Strasse, Klosterstrasse, and Parochialstrasse.[62]

The group's activities were not restricted to the immediate neighbourhood, however; its members often joined in actions with the Kreuzberg group, ranging as far as the Gneisenaustrasse and the Wienerstrasse, or about half-a-mile from the outer edge of the Fischerkietz.[63]

Although the group's members never made any attempt to rationalize such excursions, it was possible to see Kreuzberg and parts of Berlin Mitte as belonging to the same general neighbourhood. For one thing, the divisions between the city's administrative districts were relatively recent. Before the reorganization of Berlin in 1920 the divisions within the sections of Berlin proper – Mitte, Tiergarten, Wedding, Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain, and Kreuzberg – were as important as the divisions between them, both conceptually and for administrative purposes. The 1920 boundary between Kreuzberg and Berlin Mitte, for example, split the old Luisenstadt district.[64] Moreover, the administrative divisions were artificial in many important senses; the jurisdictions of the regional labour bureaux, which determined who went to which labour exchange or welfare office, did not coincide with them, Berlin Mitte taking in large sections of Tiergarten, Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg.[65]

To the traditional and administrative determinants of community consciousness must be added those generated by the Party itself. We have seen that the regulations for the defence organizations showed a concern for fixing jurisdiction and controlling the activities of groups outside their own neighbourhoods. The Party districts themselves coincided more closely with the economic divisions of the city than with the administrative ones, so that the Fischerkietz and Kreuzberg groups were sections of the same district organization.[66] Finally, there was laid over all of these considerations the decade-old myth of Red Berlin, and the combination of territorial and political resentments is reflected time and again – in the battle cry of Köpenick Communists, 'The Red *Kietz* is ours!' or the Kreuzbergers' 'What, you fascist swine, you dare to show your face in the Southwest?'[67] A leader of the Friedrichshain Communists, expostulating with the new-minted Nazi publican in the Posener Strasse, remarked: 'You mustn't imagine that

you're in Steglitz, or wherever you came from; you're in a thoroughgoing workers' quarter...'[68] The perplexity of official comment on the attitude of one young Communist, though expressed with characteristic insensitivity, is understandable:

[The defendant said:] 'What business did "they" – that is the National Socialists – as Schönebergers, have in Lichterfelde', although he himself as a resident of Steglitz claims the right to take part in brawls outside his own neighbourhood.[69]

III

The influence of the neighbourhood and its 'street culture' is still clearer in other aspects of the routine of the defence formations: their forms of leadership and internal discipline, collective interests, and attitudes towards other members of the community and the Communist hierarchy. The fate of Otto Regenthaler, which suggests the many points of uneasy coexistence of party-political and communal codes, provides a fitting introduction to a discussion of organizational life among the streetfighters:

I am a member of Red Aid. Until January 1929 I was a member of the RFB ... I don't take part in any political actions any more, since about six months ago. The reason for that is as follows: since I hadn't participated in the Communists' demonstration at New Year's [1931], on my father's orders, some RFB members came to our courtyard in the early hours of the morning, blew on a trumpet and shouted: This is where the coward Regenthaler lives! Come on down, we'll bust your ass [*Wir hauen dir auf's Brötchen*]! The very next day I went to the RFB leader and had the rowdies expelled. The following period I felt as though I was always running the gauntlet. Because of the constant vilification I avoided the Communists entirely and devoted myself ... exclusively to my girl-friend ... I deliberately avoid my former friends, because I don't have any inclination any more for political activity and would probably have to expect to be beaten up one of these days, since I am now accused of being a Nazi spy.[70]

Physical violence and its threat were a common currency of social relations within this section of the Communist movement, as they were in working-class life outside it, and the official attitude of the Party was ambiguous. One Communist reported that the members of an Unemployed Detachment had been warned that 'anyone that didn't turn for meetings [would be] beaten up by his own comrades', another that he had been forced out of the Party because he objected to his colleagues' brawling with other workers at a factory meeting.[71] In 1928, an article in the journal of the Communist Youth International criticized the common practice of roughhousing, 'so-called *Rabaukentum*', within the KJVD, whereby older groups intimidated and interfered with the work of the younger members. The situation was particularly bad in Wedding, where *Rabaukentum* was held to account for the high turnover of membership in the youth

organizations. At the same time, the article described the rowdies themselves as 'absolutely revolutionary elements', whom the movement could not afford to lose.[72]

The ambivalence of the Communist leadership towards roughhousing reflected the ambiguity of the phenomenon itself. Internal terror might irrevocably alienate actual or potential members, but when practised by a group that was cohesive and self-confident, it could have the looked-for disciplinary and integrative effect at the local level. Regenthaler's case underlines this. On the one hand, the victim himself was lost to the movement; on the other, his former comrades continued to cooperate in harassing him, in spite of Party sanctions. Moreover, the aspect of public humiliation in their actions suggests that they were conscious – no doubt to an exaggerated degree – of speaking for the community at large.

This kind of cohesiveness and self-confidence depended to a large extent on the force of individual personalities. In the section of Kreuzberg around the Lausitzer Platz and Görlitz Station where the unfortunate Regenthaler lived, the figure to be reckoned with was Otto Singer, a nineteen-year-old unemployed woodworker's son. As a KJ organizer, he was inclined to violent outbursts against opponents, and was 'because of his strongly radical attitude ... respected but also feared by his comrades'.[73] The Kampfbund leader in Neukölln, Hermann Lessing, showed similar qualities; he was notorious in the neighbourhood for his activism and his predilection for violence: 'He really keeps his people in line ... If you don't go along with his views, you're eliminated [*kaltgestellt*] and can't work in the organization any more.'[74] The importance of strong leadership is also illustrated by examples of failure: When the Fischerkietz group lost its leader, the veteran RFB man Alfred Scherlinski, in early 1931, it began to crumble and continued to lose members until he returned from prison a year later and brought it back to strength.[75]

Like the 'clique-bulls', leaders like these were an asset to the movement in terms of the survival of the individual group, but the same qualities that made them effective made it possible for them to pursue an independent line. As the campaign to enforce the anti-terror resolution of 1931 revealed, the authority of the Party leadership over the rank and file was subject to continuous negotiation. When members of the Friedrichshain defence organization were threatened with expulsion for taking part in the raid on the Posener Strasse, the organizer of the action had only to point out that such a measure would wreck the whole of the RJ in Friedrichshain and Lichtenberg in order to force a compromise; the representatives of the Party went away promising that they *would* be expelled if they did it again.[76]

Beyond the broad margin of negotiation and acquiescence, however, there were individuals who were able openly to defy Party discipline. This very often depended on their capacity to create their own power bases. In

the plethora of competing organizations many young people aspired to lead independent groups; few succeeded, especially where the organizers' ambitions went beyond the familiar forms of sociability. Hermann Klein, Neukölln, joined the Kampfbund and urged his friends to do the same only after the collapse of his own plans to form a 'Social Club', in which Communists and Social Democrats would cooperate in defence against the Nazis.[77] By contrast, Hermann Lessing was the founder of the 'Kampfkolonne Neukölln', which he led into the Kampfbund himself, and was sufficiently certain of the support of his membership to give an aggressive answer to official remonstrances about his violent tactics. In the words of an acquaintance:

> He had all the members behind him. 1929 or 1930 ... the KJ ... tried to introduce a new line in Lessing's movement. But Hermann Lessing didn't have any trouble discouraging [them].[78]

Alfred Richter, leader of a Street Detachment in Wedding, had been expelled from the Party in 1929, taken over the leadership of the (not otherwise identified) 'Jugendwehr Wedding', and been accepted back into the Communist local in 1932 against the wishes of the Party authorities.[79] And the case of Otto Singer brings us back to the world of non-political street youth. After being expelled from the Party several times, Singer quit and founded his own group – 'But this was only for ace lads [*knorke Jungen*]'.[80]

The fact that even in the toughest groups leadership could be elective – by acclamation of the membership in the Fischerkietz, for example[81] – underlines the importance of a combination of formal and informal ties. This appears again when we consider the ways in which individuals were recruited to the defence organizations. Alongside evidence of officially organized meetings like those at which the PSS Berlin Mitte and the Unemployed Detachment in Friedrichshain were founded, there is testimony to a wide range of less formal styles of affiliation. In the illegal organizations, of course, one-to-one recruiting was the only way to guarantee security, and the most likely target was a friend or acquaintance, persuaded to join over a glass of beer or a card game.[82] One former RFB member claimed that he had been recruited by his cousin, a Kampfbund member that he had been brought in 'by friends who grew up with me in the street'.[83] It was said of one of the activists around the Alexanderplatz area that, although he went along on all the actions of the RFB local, he had never been accepted for membership. And several non-members participated with the Moabit RFB in the action in which Herbert Norkus was killed. One of them, the son of an RFB man, with close ties to the local SA, was particularly exhorted to join at the same time as he received permission to take part in the action.[84]

In these groups there is little or no sign of the formalized internal

anonymity so strongly urged by the RFB leadership as essential to conspiratorial work. Arthur Eber testified that he did not know the real names of four of the thirteen members of the Fischerkietz group who took part in the shooting of Ewald; he did, however, know who they were, what they did, and where they lived. The names by which they, and other (identified) members of the group were known to each other are not the cover names of espionage and political conspiracy, but the nick-names of adolescent street-life: Bubi, Scharlie, Sinalko (the brand-name of a soft-drink) Tarzan I, Tarzan II, Ocker, Pickel (Pimple), Igel (Hedgehog), Zicke/Zigeuner (Gypsy), Opa (Grandpa) and so on. One of the Neukölln defendants, who worked in a woodworking factory, was known as 'Holzkopf' (Wooden-Head), another, for less obvious reasons, as 'Bomme'. Similar names appear among young Communists in Friedrichshain and Lichtenberg.[85] Reminiscent of the cliques, and sometimes a relic of past membership in a gang, these nicknames had the function, not of suppressing the fighters' identities, but of underlining the individuality of each while reinforcing his identification with the group.

The material tokens of membership were two: the uniform and/or badge and the gun. The memoranda of the RFB and Kampfbund leadership suggest that the idea of being fully kitted-out in uniform style exercised a persistent fascination on the membership, which the organizations could not afford, either legally or financially, to satisfy. The high boots or gaiters, knee-breeches, and blue peaked caps that recur in descriptions of the street-fighters probably represent attempts at a makeshift uniform, and the badge, being simple and cheap, was still more commonly worn. Attachment to the uniform was limited by the practical necessities of the fight, however. If there was a danger of arrest or recognition, even in the more routine kinds of large-scale actions, members would be instructed to leave all badges, uniform items and identity papers at home.[86]

The gun, on the other hand, had clustered around it all the affects of popular mythology as well as of revolutionary legend. Since the possession of firearms was in itself unambiguously incriminating, the gun also had the quality of an entry-pass, if not into a secret society, then into a section of the Party and the community set apart from the rest by shared mysteries. Moreover, as violence spiralled, weapons took on an indisputable utility; faced with a show-down, unarmed members of a group commonly pretended to have guns, the bluff leading sometimes to the desired effect of frightening their antagonists away and at other times to their being seriously hurt by better-armed opponents.[87] Certainly more activists aspired to having weapons than ever had the chance to handle a gun, but the statements of members of the violent groups show a preoccupation with guns that cannot be explained solely in terms of the special interest the police had in getting information about the arms of the Communist

organizations. One member of the RFB in Neukölln testified that he had been recruited with the promise of a pistol, which he received (along with instructions for its use) within a month of joining. Some streetfighters were described as having their own guns, or were personally associated with a particular make or calibre.[88]

Even where the weapons continued to be retained by the *Waffenwart* of the group as a means of binding the membership and controlling its activity, the tie could be personalized. Thus a member of the Fischerkietz group reported that most of the group's weapons, including the one he had used before his arrest, were 'property of the organization': 'But my weapon is being well looked after, since my brother Bobbi is now a member of the PSS, section Fischerkietz, and one of the other defendants told me that my brother now has my gun.'[89]

In their choice of gathering-places, the defence groups remained within the range of alternatives proffered by traditional patterns of association: the *Rummelplatz*, the local petrol-station, and above all, especially for official purposes, the tavern. Typically, each group had its own tavern, in which meetings were held, plans were laid, and the paraphernalia of the organization – banners, flags, literature – were stored. But the tavern was not occupied exclusively by the defence group; workers' sport and cultural organizations and Party cells also used it as a base, and others presumably treated it simply as their 'local'.[90] In short, it was part of the neighbourhood scene, so that the statement of the landlord of a Communist tavern in the Nostizstrasse: 'I don't much care for my clientele [politically], but I have to keep my business interests in view', or a Friedrichshain labourer's remark: 'I knew that Hoffmann's was a KPD tavern, but I just went there because Hoffmann is cheaper with his drinks than other places...', however disingenuous, were not beyond the range of plausibility.[91]

There is a sharp contrast between the picture of the KPD tavern presented in both Communist literature and documentary sources and the type of the SA *Sturmlokal*. In the National Socialist literary tradition, the tavern is characterized as a bastion and a refuge, radically isolated from the surrounding community.[92] The Communist tavern appears as something far less numinous. There is no evidence for the existence of dormitories in Communist taverns, although, as has been noted, they might be occupied throughout the night if an early-morning action were planned. Nor do the taverns appear to have been a source of material welfare for members of the defence formations in quite the same way as the SA-barracks. The Red Aid used tavern premises as soup kitchens for the surrounding neighbourhoods, but the case of one of the accused murderers of Horst Wessel, who, arriving in Berlin without work at the end of 1929, found 'support' in the tavern in the Dragonerstrasse and consequently joined the RFB-section that called itself Sturmabteilung Mitte, does not seem typical.[93] Where the

Communist tavern does have the aspect of a fortress, it is that of a guerrilla force, whose first enemy is the police. The base of the Fischerkietz group was (according to one of its members) equipped with hiding-places for weapons, escape-routes into the surrounding alleyways, and a regular guard.[94] Usually, however, the image presented, and even cultivated, in the Party-approved novels was innocuous to the point of self-deprecation:

> The workers of the alley gave the 'Red Nightingale' a distinct political atmosphere, something not to be found in usual pubs. This one was more like a Red workers' club than anything else. Everybody knew everybody else, and strange faces were rarely seen ... Several Communist ... papers ... hung on the wall. Above were large notice boards with photographs belonging to the Workers' Sport Clubs which met there... If you had no money, or did not feel like a drink, you just sat there without one, took part in any discussion that might be going on, or else played cards or chess ... On a piece of cardboard above the piano was a hand-written sign: Dance Sunday night, Admission Free.[95]

Unofficial sources confirm this image: 'At Denzer's we mostly passed the time playing cards. Of course we discussed the recent political events and clashes in Berlin and the Reich.'[96] The divisions between social and organizational life are much less clear-cut here than in descriptions of the SA-taverns.

The tendency to adjust political imperatives to the immediate and familiar social frame of reference – which sometimes, as in the practice of internal terror, meant radically distorting or contravening Party policy – is further apparent in the area of collective and individual attitudes. In their attitude towards women, for example, the fighting groups showed themselves very much closer to the pattern of slum life than to the ideal established by the Party leadership. There is ample evidence of the relative subordination and disadvantage of women in daily life during this period, in the working class as in society at large. The male exclusiveness that was associated with toughness in the cliques reflected not only traditional and age-specific prejudices, but also a continuing division of labour between proletarian men and women. One professional observer, writing in 1932 about the condition of young female workers, commented:

> Nowhere is the position of women held in such low esteem as in the proletariat. This is reflected in ... conditions in the factory and the workshop. But it has its real origin in private life... Even little girls complain bitterly, how unthinkingly they are expected to sacrifice every free hour for their brothers and sisters or for the household. Much less is demanded from a brother of the same age... He is allowed without question to spend Sundays with friends or in clubs. But every possible obstacle is placed in the way of girls' forming clubs... The woman, even the young girl, is the beast of burden in the proletarian family.[97]

The economic and moral survival of the working-class household had always depended on the labour of its women, very often a double burden of wage work and housework. The recession, rationalization, and depression

of the Weimar years, which made the situation of many households more precarious than ever, may also have tended to increase the differential between men's and women's contributions in time and effort, as industry shed male workers more rapidly than cheaper female labour.[98] The effect of this can only have been to reinforce the view that any energy devoted by women to public activities was given at the expense of their fundamental economic responsibilities. The SPD member whose daughter was forbidden to join the SAJ summed up a whole political economy when he said 'she should stay home and darn socks; that was the right thing for her.'[99]

The society in which the streetfighters grew up offered two kinds of alternative to women's subordination. First, there was the tradition of the working-class movement itself. The leaders of German Social Democracy had been among the most consistent proponents of ideas of equality and partnership between the sexes, in public and private life, since the middle of the nineteenth century. Although opinions differed within the movement as to the practical meaning and implications of sex equality, and arguments generally rested on shared assumptions about the appropriateness of separate spheres for men and women, the extent to which political principle coloured the ideas about relations between the sexes held by members of the Social Democratic (and later the Communist) subculture should not be underestimated. The reminiscences of socialists about the inter-war period reveal that it was thought to be 'unsocialist' to behave towards women in certain ways, from the exploitative to the sexually irresponsible. Such a view itself implies a largely passive rôle for women, however, and the socialist parties' relative neglect of the analysis of relations within the private sphere left room for such 'unreconstructed' attitudes as that of the SPD father cited above.[100]

The second alternative to self-effacement that Weimar society offered girls and women was the ideal of the sexually emancipated and self-confident 'working girl'. This ideal was purveyed through the expanding media of mass entertainment, like the cinema, broadcasting and recorded music that accompanied the eroticized popular dances of the period, and through newly imaginative and aggressive forms of advertising. The function of the latter was to generate a market for a new range of cheap consumer products. The wage-earning woman could buy the cosmetics which had previously been a mark either of wealth or of easy virtue, and fashionable clothes were placed within her reach by the extensive use of synthetic fibres – even if most working-class families still could not afford the new labour-saving household devices through which German industry promised a revolution in the lives of women. The fact that many of these goods were produced by a feminized labour force gives edge to the ambiguity of the resulting image: the woman who was her own mistress, if only because she had won the right to decide whose mistress she would be,

whose independence rested on her permanent subordination to systems of employment which did not cease to discriminate against women in working conditions and pay. The socialist parties, where they acknowledged the appearance of this new woman, looked principally to condemn moral decline and bourgeoisification; there was little recognition of the extent to which working-class girls benefited in themselves by acquiring a new self-consciousness and confidence, still less of the fact that the penetration of the values of mass consumer culture into the working class were the complement to the defaulting of socialist analysis in the cultural sphere.[101]

The girlfriend of one of the Friedrichshain fighters expressed something of the new spirit, with a statement that gains programmatic force from the fact that it was made in the relatively public context of a police interview. A clerk whose first name, Bringfriede ('Bring peace'), epitomized the tragedy of her generation explained that she had broken off with 'Zicke' some time earlier, because '[he] was always patronizing and trying to control me'. However, she continued, 'I asked [him] not to stop visiting right away, but to come to my parents' house from time to time, since I was afraid my mother would make trouble.'[102] These remarks suggest both the young woman's own self-confidence and her consciousness that her attitude to sexual relationships differed from that of the previous generation. But even if she had not gone on to say that she and 'Zicke' had 'never talked about politics', the lack of resonance of that self-confidence in the world of political action – least of all in the attitudes of male activists – would be sadly evident.

The fact that the activities of the streetfighters took place in the context of pervasive expectations of female passivity ought to warn us against assuming that the absence of women from official reports or from the dock necessarily means that they were not involved. In one case, a sort of youthful parody of the streetfighting, the woman's perception of what was going on was quite distinct. A Communist youth group allegedly 'stormed' a meeting of a club which included some former members of their organization, assailing the renegades with rocks and pitchers of water. Two of the principal witnesses for the prosecution were girls who belonged to the club, and one of them stated that it was the female members of the Communist group who had led the discussion that preceded the attack. No girls were arrested.[103] Similarly, stories of women secreting weapons about their persons and holding them ready for use in fights rapidly entered into the mythology of streetfighting on both sides.[104]

On the other hand, while the number of women involved in prosecutions for violent crimes of all kinds was generally very low,[105] the police were not loath to arrest women for most kinds of political offence, including violent and potentially violent ones. Twenty-six women were arrested during the events of May 1929 (during which six more were shot dead), seventeen during the BVG strike in November 1932.[106] In January 1931, sixteen

women and six men were arrested for throwing chairs from the gallery during an NSDAP meeting in Friedrichshain, while, at a Nazi meeting a year earlier, where Heinz Neumann spoke, witnesses commented that 'women, obviously Communists, sat in the gallery with large numbers of ashtrays' – presumably waiting for the right moment to aim them at the Nazis below.[107] And in the one recorded case where the police responded to violent incident by making a sweep of the local Communist and Nazi taverns, women were not bypassed, although the one woman picked up (with the Communists) was released at about 2 a.m. without being interviewed.[108] The numbers of women arrested in such city-wide popular actions are still very small in comparison to the total of arrests, but they offer a striking contrast to the all but total absence of women (except for mothers, landladies and girlfriends) from the world of the streetfighters. We must conclude that neither the politicization of working-class life nor the generations-old criminalization of Communist activities on the part of the authorities stopped short at women. Women were active in Communist politics but their participation was not uniform throughout the various spheres of Party life. Within the context of the *wehrhafter Kampf*, they formed the front line in local crowd actions against both Nazis and the police, but they were excluded from the day-to-day operations of the defence groups themselves.

This exclusion may be seen as largely unreflected function of the sexual division of labour and its ideological consequences. Defence activities were very demanding on one's time and energies, and even at their most casual depended on their participants' being available in places like the tavern or contactable through personal networks that rested on male friendships and workplace- or labour-exchange-associations. There is simply no evidence about what efforts, if any, rank-and-file women made to break into the active defence formations. At the same time, women in a position to speak out publicly within the Communist organization, including those who were entrusted with organizing the women's auxiliaries of such formations as the RFB, repeatedly complained that women were not being taken seriously, let alone treated as equals, within the movement.[109] By the middle of the 'Third Period', however, the Communist leadership as a whole had adopted a thoroughly egalitarian line, and the record of attempts to enforce that ideal throughout the Party makes it clear that the exclusion of women was a deliberate policy of certain groups among the streetfighters.

During the first year or so of the *wehrhafter Kampf*, 1929 to 1930, Communist officialdom exhibited a characteristically ambivalent view of women's rôle. The fact that the Roter Frauen- und Mädchenbund, the RFB's feminine auxiliary, was never officially banned reflects a contempt for the potentialities of a women's formation shared by the police and the KPD leadership, but it might have offered new opportunities for adjusting the

balance of the sexes within the movement, in the form of relative autonomy and a relatively greater public rôle for women. In practice the RFMB was passed over in the rush to create new defence organizations, and its sections were instructed to join the Kampfbund at the end of 1930.[110] The directives for the formation of 'Boys' and Girls' Detachments' to replace the banned AJG in early 1930 still prescribed a clear differentiation between the activities of the boys (shooting-practice, athletics, field sports) and those of the girls (first aid, ball- and hoop-games, swimming).[111] For the girls and women in the Kampfbund, however, official literature emphasized that their tasks were identical with those of men, including the physical fight, and poured contempt on ' "men" who want to conquer the world and are afraid of organizing women'.[112] But very early on, the leadership ran up against principled opposition to any form of cooperation. There is a hint of this in the report of the directorate of the AJG Berlin-Brandenburg to the conference of the federation in November 1929:

> At the founding of the AJG ... there appeared in certain organizations the idea ... that we are a fighting organization [*Wehrorganisation*] like the RJ ... In certain organizations there was also a number of serious differences ... over the related question of whether girls can become members of our organization. Except for the Neukölln organization and Berlin Mitte, this question was also resolved after extended discussion.[113]

It is interesting that the greatest resistance should have come from two of the toughest sections of the Communist organizations and from neighbourhoods with very rich legacies of social violence, and tempting to speculate that the tension between Herman Lessing and the Neukölln Party was informed by the fact that the Communist Youth leader in Neukölln was a woman.[114] This was a problem that deeply and persistently worried the Party's organizers, and they attempted to reform the rank and file both by appealing to their own *machismo* (as above) in re-defining what it was to be a 'man' and by denying them proletarian legitimacy, in terms that could only confuse the issue:

> Even the wives of our comrades in the neighbourhood will have to be approached. In the process will be revealed much of the backwardness of comrades who always talk big but at home turn out to be red-painted petty-bourgeois.[115]

IV

When we come to consider the political attitudes and motivations of the streetfighters it is more difficult to gain a clear picture. Police interrogations do not ordinarily produce political manifestoes. It is nevertheless worthwhile recording such evidence as there is. This suggests certain comparisons with the Party's own analysis of its 'terrorists' as well as with the characterizations of other observers.

Over against the positive image of the RFB man as 'simultaneously soldier and politician', the militant but disciplined fighter for the cause of the working class, the Party set its own ideal type of the individual terrorist: young and unschooled, driven to desperation by unemployment, and haunted by premature expectations of revolutionary apocalypse. There are traces of both these images in the fighters' testimonies. The type of the 'terrorist' that appears in official KPD argument, however, because it resulted from forcing fairly accurate perceptions of the mood of the rank and file into the moral, sociological and political categories provided by pre-existing theory, misrepresented both the complexity and the coherence of Communist violence.

There will be more to say about the age and employment histories of the streetfighters in the following chapter. As far as the relationship between unemployment and violence goes, there is no testimony from Berlin to match the statement reported by the KPD organizer in East Prussia: 'An ... unemployed man declared quite openly ... that he felt himself compelled to break windows if he didn't get any support-money.'[116] In Berlin, being out of work meant being available for any daytime or late-night action that was afoot:

> Fritz said ... we had to give the Nazis one in the eye, and asked me if I wanted to go along. At first I said I had something to do in the morning ... He wanted to know what this was, and I told him I meant to go out and find some casual work. Now he declared that I could certainly put that off one day.[117]

Unemployment might also provide the spur to political activity as such. One man, who had quit the RFB after a brawl with members of the German Nationalist Party in 1925, explained: 'Since I had work, I didn't engage in any kind of party-political activity any more. Only after I had been out of work for a while ... did my distress force me to join an organization.'[118] There was equal plausibility in the converse, namely that people would drop out of the movement because they could not afford to pay dues, and in general terms it is clear that the relationship between financial circumstances and loyalty to the Party varied with individual temperament and, more important, with the character of the local Communist organization. Nowhere in the Berlin sources do poverty or idleness in themselves appear as motives for assaults on political opponents, however. This is true in spite of the fact that the courts were inclined to accept unemployment and idleness as extenuating circumstances, at least in the case of first offenders.[119] In fact, it is noteworthy that the motivations offered by the fighters themselves were very rarely of the kind calculated to appeal to the prejudices of the court; their statements have to be read as *post-hoc* justifications, but in practice, when not directly exculpatory, they represent an appeal to ideas of right and justice, both moral and political, prevalent in the fighters' world.

In order to test the official view that youth, political inexperience or inadequate indoctrination resulting from recent entry into the Communist organization, and a deviant analysis of the revolutionary perspective, were constitutive for aggressive violence, it is necessary to consider somewhat more closely the organizational histories of the streetfighters. Of the 223 activists of 1929–33 who could be shown to be current or former members of Communist organizations, 141 gave evidence of how long they had been associated with the movement. Their birthdates ranged from 1874 to 1914. The group breaks down as follows:

Time since first contact with KPD	Number	Median year of birth
1 month or less	8	1908/09
1 to 6 months	11	1908
6 months to 1 year	14	1906/09
Over 1 year	40	1910
RFB/RJ before 1929	67	1906
(RFB/RJ since 1924/25)	(14)	
Total	140	1908
(Sample) (318)		(1908)

The two last groups show some interesting characteristics. Not surprisingly, the former RFB members as a group were older; they included most of those born before 1901, with a median birthdate of 1906. The hard core of the Fischerkietz group appears here, as do fifteen of the defendants in the Richardstrasse case. Less predictable is the age distribution among the one-year-plus-members: they were significantly younger than any other group, more than half of them having been born in 1910 or later. This group is dominated by those whose first encounter with the Party was in the Communist Youth during the twenties (most of them in the later years) or in the AJG from 1929. Here, too, are concentrated the individuals who came out of the cliques and the leading personalities Lessing, Singer and Richter.

The evidence of the two groups taken together is that the predilection for violence was not necessarily a consequence of lack of exposure to the Party line. The longest-organized were among the most active in *Zusammenstoss*-violence. As in the case of the more colourful of the streetfighters, relatively few of those who described their political careers had actually maintained continuous contact or a constant level of activity within their respective organizations since first exposure; one stated that he had been in the KJVD 'with interruptions' since 1925, others that they had belonged to the Party or one of its auxiliaries at some time in the past and then dropped out.[120]

Nevertheless, anyone who had travelled in Communist circles for a year or more had had *time* and occasion to learn and digest the KPD's policies. In this light, the peculiarities of attitude that made the streetfighters act as they did appear the result less of ignorance than of selective listening.

It is in the analysis of what the fighters were listening for that the age structure of the sample becomes interesting. Clearly, youth was not a necessary precondition for militant violence, any more than it was necessarily linked to organizational inexperience. The hard core of relatively experienced militants comprised a significant number of mature men, 'old hands', as well as the predictable group of youthful activists. What appears from a distance to be a single phenomenon emerges, on closer inspection, as an amalgam of the violence of two generations, each deviating in particular ways and for particular reasons from the ideal of the disciplined cadre. Scholars who have found a similar dual pattern reflected in their interviews with former KPD members outside Berlin have distinguished between the older worker, the '*Tatmensch*' or 'man of the deed', faithful to the Party but impatient with political debate and given to actions that did not always have the official blessing, and the Communist youth whose whole political experience was in the fight against fascism and repression. The latter is characterized by attitudes that we have already recognized among the streetfighters: an 'emphasis on common youth and comradeship' and a 'strong bond with the social context of the neighbourhood'.[123] In terms of their relationship to the Party, the difference between the two generations of militants might be described as one between those who saw the Party as the engine of a historic revolutionary movement and who, by virtue of their own active rôle in the earlier struggles of the movement, had no doubt that they *were* the Party, and those who espoused the cause of the KPD because and so long as the Party offered to support them in their own battle against a series of immediate threats to their way of life.

It would be a mistake to draw too sharp a distinction between the two types. Previous chapters have already argued that for many being a Communist was itself part of a way of life that embraced all age-groups; conversely, the response of some Communist Youth groups to the anti-terror resolution constitutes a formal acknowledgment of the legitimacy of Party discipline, however sardonic. As older and younger workers met and cooperated, both within the defence groups and in other areas of daily life, there was considerable opportunity for those who had taken part in the War and the post-War revolutionary battles to pass on their experiences and expectations to those who had not. Within the working-class household, too, there was room for communication as well as conflict between the generations. Evidence on the relationship between the fighters' political views and those of their parents reveals a range of possible forms of

influence, some positive and some negative. Of the nine men for whom such evidence exists (including four involved in the Pharus-Säle incident of 1927 and one in the alleged attack on the Lichtenberg scout-group described above), three were the sons of active Communists; one stated that he had joined the USPD after the War on the advice of his father, who was an SPD member, and moved on to the Communist movement at the end of 1920; one had moved away from home because his father was an SPD functionary, while it was simply said of four others that their parents disapproved of Communist activities.[122] Finally, there was one crucial political event in the lives of the Berlin working class that both the youngest and the oldest of the streetfighters had experienced: the assault by the police on proletarian neighbourhoods in May 1929, which both raised a new threat of open repression and prefigured the renewed incursions of the Nazis.

Like the spontaneous popular movement for self-defence and the activities of the RFB on that occasion, the particular interests of the younger activists and the 'old hands' in the *wehrhafter Kampf* can be seen as complementary. On the question of how the struggle would be fought, for example, each group had access to ideological and organizational resources which facilitated the development of violence and terror. Those whose concerns and actions were dictated by their bond with the neighbourhood and their relative nearness, in terms of cumulative practical experience, to the pre-political elements of 'street culture', drew from that culture the acceptance of physical violence as a means of resolving conflicts and of the male gang as the form in which collective interests were represented and power organized. To this more experienced Communists could, if they chose, add the skills and technology of insurrectional training and a paramilitary ethos.

Why the fighters should have made the decision to implement the forms of violence to which they had access is a different question, and one that brings us back to the theme of their political analysis. Broadly speaking, the peculiarities of attitude of the streetfighters consisted not in an unorthodox analysis, but rather in the lack of any articulated political rationale. In this the men represented here confirm the image of the politically indifferent 'soldier' presented by contemporary observers and memoir-writers. One avowed Kampfbund member even described himself as 'apolitical'.[123] They were sufficiently committed to the cause to know which side they were on, but in the context of the fight against the SA their stance reflected immediate personal experience rather than political deliberation. It is in this sense that the streetfighters as a group might be better described as '*Tatmenschen*' or even technicians than as soldiers.[124] But in the realm of motivation, as in that of means, there are differences between the older and the younger fighters.

The most detailed and coherent statement about the general political situation provided by the documents is to be found in Anton Krause's letter to his wife from prison. Krause was not especially old, having been born in 1900, but by the 1930s he was already a leading figure in the local Communist movement and an established member of the community, a skilled metalworker with five children. He had been a member of the RFB since its founding, and before his arrest for involvement in a shoot-out in 1932 had distinguished himself by the judicious use of force in the political arena. In early 1930 he was convicted of having led a group of armed men who forced their way into one of the Moabit polling-stations during the plebiscite against the Young Plan and destroyed the electoral register.[125] Embedded between an account of his life in gaol and affectionate exhortations to his wife and children, his remarks are the clearest statement we have of the perspective of the older militants:

... How is everything otherwise out there in the movement? All quiet. Thanks to the Easter Truce [*Burgfrieden* – the ban on political activity decreed by the Reich President] you can hunt Easter eggs and pick flowers undisturbed. Oh boy, it makes you want to shit when you see Mr XXXX's Punch and Judy show ... Workers' blood is going to flow again in Braunschweig. Just like at the last march there. But the blood will be on the head of those who abet these gangs ...And the 'Leaden Front' still takes the liberty of talking about the fight against fascism. Hell. And where's Mr Groener's Reichswehr and Severing's Schupo? They certainly did well in Saxony in 1923. But then it was against the revolutionary workers, who were beaten back just as bloodily as the proletariat in Central Germany in 1930. The recent events in the Waldstr. show how fresh the Nazis are getting. If the whole working class isn't vigilant, the events in the Hebbelstrasse (Sturm 33) will repeat themselves in Moabit. Only a common front of all workers can stand up to this gang. We were all glad in here when we read that the roadworkers fought off that attack in true proletarian fashion. The shop-woman who was shot at and the shopkeeping petty bourgeoisie in the Waldstr. now have a perfect example of how it looks in the Third Reich. Maybe these people, who mostly vote for the Nazis, will have their eyes opened now. What does Max say? His shop is just across the road from there, he should put the sardine tins under the counter, otherwise he'll have the sauce running out through the bullet-holes. I'll bet the old boy howled. What does the police do? Regulates traffic. You can't just close down the Nazi-shop. Of course, if it were Max's shop, or Theo's, it would long since be shut up tight. What does the Reichsbanner have to say? Sits in the tavern and carries on the fight against fascism, Landlord, another pint ... Our song, the one that's most often sung and whistled around here, is: Someday the day will come when we take our harsh revenge...[126]

Krause's letter expresses the rage that the Communist leadership identified in the rank and file, but without the despair that was assumed to go with it. Each of the elements of KPD orthodoxy is interpreted in terms of the physical fight, but the confrontation with the Nazis is seen in a historical perspective, in its relation to other moments of violent repression of the labour movement as well as to the certainty of resurgence and retribution. Krause's anger is structured and directed by a lived insurrectionary

tradition, and the moral authority achieved through participation in that tradition in turn legitimizes his own practice of violence, makes it possible for him to use Party expressions like 'in true proletarian fashion' to describe actions of the kind that the Party officially condemned. For older militants like Krause, the onslaught of the Nazis, as dangerous as it was in itself, underlined many more familiar problems: the cynicism and partiality of the police, the supineness of Social Democracy, the betrayal of the workers by their own petty-bourgeois neighbours and potential allies. The acutely menacing character of the current situation could thus be seen in the light of a conjuncture of traditional challenges, a replay of previous revolutionary situations – although the 'old hands' ' historical memory might at the same time prompt them to react to the actions of police and Nazis since 1929 as a new challenge to the traditional sovereignty of the working class in its own neighbourhoods.

In the testimony of the younger men, the sense of threat is more immediate and more radical. They cannot have escaped the impact of the cumulative political and economic pressures that simultaneously reinforced the Nazi movement and dissolved the bases of socialist politics; if anything, the hostility of police and other state agencies, the antagonism of local tradespeople, the sudden and arbitrary denial of access to their accustomed pubs and gathering-places must have been felt more keenly by those whose experience and affections were largely bounded by the neighbourhood. When young militants talked about the Nazis, however, they did not speak of the social conditions that gave the SA its opportunity; rather, what they saw was the progressive penetration of an alien and openly inimical movement into every aspect of daily life. Asked why they had joined defence organizations or taken part in violent actions, the fighters testified that they or their friends had been attacked by SA-men.[127] In 1929 Arthur Böttcher was arrested for distributing leaflets bearing the slogan, *'Schlagt die Nazis, wo Ihr sie trefft!'*. He pleaded self-defence, claiming that KJ members had already been attacked by SA-men: 'I hold the view that the Young Communists absolutely must defend themselves against the attacks of the National Socialists.' His plea was not recognized by the court.[128] Of another Communist Youth member it was reported: 'He is full of energy and has declared that he won't let anybody take away his right to walk on the street.'[129]

If the fighters were aware of the ideological content of National Socialism, this awareness was not apparent in the remarks they made in the course of the fight. Fascism as such is mentioned only in the context of slogans like: *'Schlagt die Faschisten!'* or 'Death to the Fascists!'[130] Otherwise, the Nazis appear as a disruptive element in family, community and Party relationships. One man left the Communist organization when his brother joined the SA, another was expelled because he had a friend who was a Nazi.[131]

The only mention of characteristic National Socialist attitudes comes in the statement of Alfons Reichhardt, brother-in-law of Willi Noris, one of the Fischerkietz activists, and in a highly personalized context: he voiced his suspicion that a member of the local SA whom he had known for some ten years had recently become distant and hostile because Noris was half-Jewish.[132]

This reflects in part the situations in which the streetfighters' comments were made, at the police station or in the heat of battle, and the same might be said of the evidence concerning the men's consciousness of KPD policy. The reports of police informers show that the members of the defence organizations were fairly regularly subjected to lengthy expositions of the current Party analysis at their meetings, and some of the streetfighters, when pressed, could remember the content of those speeches.[133] But in most cases their practical awareness of political issues outside their immediate sphere was largely confined to vivid images. These included the names of places where major incidents of SA terror had occurred, like Braunschweig and Potempa. In addition, the picture of Soviet Russia, one of the traditional rallying points of the RFB, was especially potent in contrast to the unending wretchedness of Depression Germany. One of the participants in the Gneisenaustrasse shooting testified that he had joined in the action because 'I had been told in the Party that I might be sent to Russia as soon as I had proved myself by taking part in a major action.' Similar motives influenced one of the other gunmen in that case, as well as one of the defendants in the Richardstrasse case. All three were disappointed. One had 'differences with the Organization' in Stalingrad, where he had been assigned to work in a munitions factory, and made his way back to Berlin via the German consulate, another returned to spread the word about how badly he and other Germans had been treated in the USSR, and the third apparently slipped out of Russia just in time to avoid a prosecution for sabotage.[134]

The fighters occasionally paid their respects to the axis of KPD policy, by making mention of the united front or, more often, giving vent like Anton Krause to their contempt for the Reichsbanner. But on the whole Social Democrats are surprisingly absent from the scene, whether in person or as objects of political speculation. There are among the Prosecutor's files cases of violence between Social Democrats and Communists, including spontaneous clashes growing out of demonstrations and propaganda actions at election time, and the mobbing of Reichsbanner men who attempted to help embattled police and SA-men, as well as explicit acts of intimidation and revenge.[135] There is also evidence of clashes of all kinds between Reichsbanner militants and right-wing organizations.[136] At this level of documentation, however, it appears that the counter-terror of KPD and SPD forces, where not directed at each other, remained largely separate.

The one item of KPD policy of which there are echoes in these documents

is the anti-terror resolution of November 1931. As early as mid-October 1931 Hermann Lessing, questioned about the Richardstrasse case, was declaring that he had always opposed violence. By the end of November the 'approved' Party language had already begun to appear, as in the statement of another Kampfbund member in the same case: 'I would personally not have gone along with such an action, because I reject acts of terror as a matter of course.'[137] Interviews carried out in the wake of the two attacks on Schöneberg SA taverns the following June revealed a range of attitudes to violence in the circles with which the culprits associated. Thus a former AJG member boasted:

> In my circle of friends it was said that the business was ace [*knorke*], and I take the same view. The Nazis have also gunned down a whole bunch of us ... I am not in a position to say anything about who did it, and if I did know, I would hold my peace anyway.[138]

while another KPD sympathizer reported more circumspectly:

> ... Among us, the general opinion prevailed that the reason for the clashes, the lifting of the ban on the SA, is largely to blame for them ... I myself did not regard the shooting-raid as correct and hold the view that, when an action is undertaken, it should at least happen in large masses. Other comrades, however, regarded the deed as good and even said, a lot more should have happened, they should have thrown bombs and hand-grenades in.[139]

Signs of tension between the fighters and the leadership over the resolution may be seen in the cases of Otto Pohle and Bruno Hermann. Pohle claimed to have quit the Kampfbund in November 1931 'because I didn't like it there any more', and was expelled from the KPD a few months later 'accused of subverting the Kampfbund'.[140] Hermann left the KPD and probably the RFB as well in 1932 'because I had arguments about the fact that the Party sends its members into the firing-line in a senseless way.'[141]

V

The sense of betrayal that informed the conflict over the November resolution illustrates how heavily the collective values of solidarity and good faith weighed against the political imperatives of adherence to an official line or allegiance to an impersonal Party organization. In the cases of individual streetfighters the tension between the two has a particular poignancy; for many of them their very appearance in the documents is a sign that both systems had broken down. The organization had turned its back on them, and they were ready to reject and even betray their former comrades. In a badly spelled letter from gaol one of the Richardstrasse defendants declared his withdrawal from the Kampfbund:

> Go ahead and show the letter to Comd. Anton, cause I'm quitting your group I've nothing to lose you just despise me and why should I come to your meetings. Dear

Cde. Richard the hearing's coming up if I am acquitted I resignate the organization working with you, cause you'll never make it to a Red United Front and that you'd leave me to rot I'd never have believed.[142]

The combination of official and unofficial languages here is a telling reminder of the constant interpenetration of local and personal values with the world of symbols and values provided by the Party. Even the Fischerkietz activist, Arthur Eber, who had been in the movement since joining the RJ in 1925, took his inside information to the police after he had spent half a year in prison for the shooting of Ewald. The Party's lawyers had not been able to save him, and the men who had actually done the shooting had failed to come forward, as Eber expected, and prove his innocence.[143]

This interpretation of solidarity in affective terms, like the personalization of leadership, was largely, though not exclusively, characteristic of the younger streetfighters. At their arrests in 1931 the Neukölln Kampfbund member was seventeen, Arthur Eber at twenty-four one of the youngest of the Fischerkietz group. For them, the 'proletarian comradeship' that rested on friendships formed in the neighbourhood was at least as real as the demands of national politics. But the kinds of personal and collective self-sacrifice that that kind of comradeship implied ran counter not merely to some arbitrary notion of Party discipline but also to the perfectly rational requirement of the organization that no more members should be hurt, imprisoned or otherwise endangered than could help it. By couching its objections in terms of moral absolutes and blind loyalty, however, the Party did little to discourage disillusion and defection. When two of the fighters who had been helped to escape to the Soviet Union returned and went to the Berlin headquarters of the Party to register their protests about the way German 'political refugees' were treated there, they were received with the declaration 'that the way was open to us to go over to the Anti-bolshevist Front'. Thereupon one of them took his story to the National Socialist press.[144]

The most radical action that a Communist could take in turning against the Party was to join the opposite camp. The files on the Berlin streetfighters provide some insights into the often mentioned but little discussed phenomenon of membership fluctuation between Communist organizations and the SA. On the basis of these it is possible to offer a hypothesis as to the significance of such fluctuation and its place in the world of the streetfighters.

Broadly speaking, the change of allegiance in either direction before 1933 was exceptional in relation to the masses who took up and maintained positions behind the party lines. At the same time, however, it was by no means unheard of and within certain circles it appears almost commonplace. Nor is this surprising, given the competitive element in radical politics during these years. Both Communist and National Socialist

propaganda combined the preaching of an absolute opposition of interests between the two camps with vigorous attempts at mutual recruitment, and the fighting formations were the focus for both sets of arguments. The consequence of this is that, while it would in fact be surprising if crossovers did not occur, any single case, viewed in ideological terms, takes on a symbolic significance far beyond its numerical weight or possible political consequences. In the absence of conclusive documentation on the total numbers involved in this kind of fluctuation, the ambivalence of the parties themselves must be taken into account when the (still relatively isolated) testimony of Communist, SA and police observers is weighed.[145]

The expression 'exceptional but commonplace' is particularly appropriate to streetfighting circles in Berlin. Among the personalities who appear in the cases surveyed for the period 1929–33, there were eight Communist fighters and four National Socialists, antagonists and witnesses, whose pre-1933 careers included a change of party. The testimony surrounding the bloody battle at Lichterfelde-Ost in 1927 provides four additional cases.[146] This number is significant in contrast to the lone KPD activist who claimed to have come from the Reichsbanner, but it is quite small in comparison to the size of the sample, and offers no firm basis for generalizations. Nevertheless, one or two points may be made about conscious motives.

The first concerns a claim made by the Communist leadership itself, that there was a wave of 'emigration' to the SA after the banning of the RFB in May 1929.[147] The present survey has been directed towards the Communist fighters rather than the Nazis and must therefore be even less representative of this side of the fluctuation. The evidence of 1927 alone shows that, in Charlottenburg at least, the process was already well in train quite early. The two cases that we have of men who left the RFB in 1929 and subsequently joined the SA, however, suggest a slower development. One, the former Communist cited above as maintaining that 'distress' compelled him to resume his political activity, joined not the KPD but the SA – but only in August 1932. The second joined at the end of 1931, and stated, 'My political conversion is to be explained solely by the influence of my wife.'[148] These two are balanced by one Kampfbund and one former AJG member, both of whom came to the Communists from the Hitler Youth around 1929. Perhaps the KPD leadership's perceptions, first stated publicly and explicitly in the summer of 1932, reflect a projection of current anxieties into the earlier situation.

If the change became easier with the passage of time and growing familiarity, it is equally clear that the line between parties was only one of many possible parameters of social commitment, and by no means the most compelling. The lines of personal and economic interest, themselves constantly subject to re-evaluation in the light of changing conditions,

crossed it at several points, as Communists and National Socialists shared in the life of the neighbourhood. Cases in which friends or brothers belonged to different parties have already been cited, and a young man who had been caught up in the fighting in Kreuzberg reflected the sense of an ideological free-for-all when he stated: 'Young people whom I know have invited me to join the SA as well as the KPD, but I have always refused.'[149]

The effects of propinquity were reinforced by shared economic distress. The crossovers included an office worker, a housepainter, a bricklayer, a shoemaker, a machinist, a fitter, a smith, two drivers, and six 'workers' – eight of whom declared themselves to be unemployed. While we do not have direct evidence of financial advantages accruing to changes of allegiance as such, several individual careers show that in the shadows of a civil war, those with access to such coveted and costly items as guns or even information could easily be tempted into collaboration with the enemy. The results of this kind of activity in turn are not easily distinguished from the mutual planting of spies and provocateurs which also contributed something to the incidence of fluctuation.[150]

Significantly, another quality that the renegades shared was their youth. Two each were born in 1901 and 1902, one each in 1904 and 1905, four in 1909, three in 1912 and two in 1913. Not only some of the youngest, but also some of the toughest of the streetfighters fall within this group: Hermann Lessing joined the SA during the trial in the Richardstrasse case, and was subject to repeated attacks from Communists on that account.[151] A particularly extreme case is represented by one of the 1927 defendants, the type of the paramilitary adventurist who was, however, too young to go to war. For him, a spell in the Roter Wanderring briefly interrupted a right-wing career which had led him (he claimed) from the Freikorps to the SA by way of several protofascist organizations and the army.[152] One of the defendants in the Felseneck clash was a former member of the Horst-Wessel-Sturm of the SA, and said that he had moved to the Kampfbund 'out of a sense of justice', after several arrests for attacks on Communists.[153]

In fact, in spite of such maxims as 'no way back to the working class' or the policy formula offered in Schönstedt's novel: 'If we do it right, we can win them back. If we hear that they have taken part in attacks on workers, then we'll treat them as fascist.'[154] – violence did not necessarily reinforce the fronts. As the party propagandists calculated, it might even weaken them. One converted SA man told his former comrades that he finally went over to the Communists because he was always being attacked and beaten up at the labour exchange.[155] Here, where violence has not only replaced argument but taken over some of its functions, may be seen the most extreme consequence of mobilizing the nexus of youth, disaffection, affinity to the personal and social context, and attachment to the forms of action and organization generated within it.

7

Who were the streetfighters?

It remains to examine the lives of the streetfighters as a group, and to consider how the personal, social and economic conditions reflected therein may have influenced their actions. My concern here is less to speculate about the fighters' states of mind than to catalogue the evidence of their 'objective' circumstances, but the question of motivation is never very far away. We are bound to try and guess what it is that links the social circumstances which we can describe to the actions that we know, if only because the evidence on the streetfighters' lives provides a valuable test of previous observers' attempts to relate political attitudes and social conditions. Three such approaches have to be confronted. The first, the conviction of the KPD leadership that the Party's 'terrorist' element was made up of socially and politically marginal men, and particularly of the unemployed as such, has already been addressed in the previous chapter. It shares with the second, the view that widespread political violence represents an outbreak of irrational behaviour in direct response to material distress, a tendency to define the streetfighters and their actions in negative terms. Because they were not mature, employed, thoughtful, intellectually or industrially schooled, because they had no place in a system that was itself not functioning very well, they acted in politically and socially unacceptable ways. The data presented in this chapter offer a simple answer to this view. What we have here is not a free-floating mass of deprivation and frustration but a group of people with very distinct, if not unambiguous, social and occupational features. To be sure, material distress and uncertainty are visible or implicit in the economic situation of most of the fighters, but in most cases it is apparent that the same circumstances that generated a need or a grievance affected the means of redress available. The focus on specific aspects of people's lives makes it possible to consider violence as a means of coping with real problems rather than – or at any rate as well as – a reflex of social or psychic imbalance.

The third approach, or set of approaches, is more problematic, both in itself and in its possible application to the analysis of the streetfighters. This

is the study of the determinants of 'working-class radicalism'. In the context of that discussion, what has emerged as a major talking-point and complicating element is the question of defining or identifying radicalism,[1] a question of clear importance to the characterization of the streetfighters. Broadly speaking, participation in the *wehrhafter Kampf* may be described as a radical activity in that it ordinarily reflected allegiance to a party which can be unequivocally defined as radical in its stated opposition to both capital and the state. Moreover, fighting the Nazis usually meant breaking the law and always meant rejecting the power and legitimacy of the public forces of order, and, again, the propaganda of the Communist Party provided a public and repeated definition of it in just those terms. Thus the streetfighters' actions *were* politically radical in the context of the bourgeois state, and also involved a form of behaviour (i.e. physical violence) which bourgeois culture avoided and condemned in everyday life.

Viewed in the context of working-class life and of the life of the Party, the activities of the streetfighters take on a more ambiguous political and moral colouring. The Party line was never simply a touchstone of loyalty; it often reflected a fairly realistic assessment of the effectiveness of certain tactics in the light of wider political considerations, so that we need to ask seriously whether the actions of the streetfighters, where they contravened Party policy, reflect a more radical position than that of the Party leadership (because of the extreme nature of the actions themselves) or whether they can be better described (and here it is difficult to avoid adopting the leadership's terms) as defensive, hence apolitical, and counter-productive to the implementation of radical policies. Moreover, it must be remembered that although the *wehrhafter Kampf* unquestionably represents a form of working-class action, it can be only indirectly related with the classic and essential forms of working-class radicalism, namely those that occur in the sphere of industrial organization and action.

Since the evidence of the preceding chapter has already indicated that at least two different kinds of fights were going on within the *wehrhafter Kampf*, it is probably most useful to accept the insight of one of the more original of recent writers on this subject, Erhard Lucas. Lucas has studied two kinds of working-class oppositional activity, each with its own type of programme, style of action and (accordingly) its own determinants in the daily industrial and social life of its participants, and does not hesitate to name each of these a form of radicalism.[2] We should not be surprised if we find in the streetfighters' lives evidence of a variety of circumstances conventionally viewed as constitutive of different kinds of radicalism. But the question of just what is peculiar, and peculiarly radical, about streetfighting will recur again and again as we consider the characteristic social features of the fighters as a group and compare them with the adherents of other, more or less radical sections of the Communist and labour movements, with

participants in other forms of militant action, and with the community at large.

While the answers thus provided to the more general questions of motivation are no less ambiguous than in the preceding chapters, the process of analysis is made somewhat easier in this chapter by the state of the evidence. The form on which the statements of prisoners and witnesses were taken down by the police included entries for place and date of birth, parents' names, occupation, religion, marital status and number of children, if any. Statements regarding previous arrests were ordinarily checked against the police records, extracts from which were included in the prosecutors' files. In addition, biographical information not volunteered in the course of interrogations was often provided by social workers in the employ of the court or the appropriate Local Authority. In the case of juvenile offenders, officers of the Legal Aid section of the local Youth Bureau were routinely required to report on the circumstances of the defendant and the background to the case.[3] In some cases, it has also been possible to confirm or supplement information through reference to the Berlin city directories. It is thus possible (with certain reservations, which will be pointed out where appropriate) to build up a fairly comprehensive and consistent picture of what sort of people the streetfighters were.

The study is based on the lives of 318 men, from seventeen of the twenty districts of Berlin. The districts are represented as follows:

Neukölln (14)	83
Kreuzberg (6)	46
Wedding (3)	36
Steglitz (12)	26
Tiergarten (2)	24
Friedrichshain (5)	21
Schöneberg (11)	21
Mitte (1)	19
Treptow (15)	16
Köpenick (16)	10
Reinickendorf (20)	6
Tempelhof (13)	4
Spandau (8)	2
Prenzlauer Berg (4)	1
Charlottenburg (7)	1
Wilmersdorf (9)	1
Weissensee (18)	1

The process of selection of the cases was such that the distribution of the fighters by neighbourhoods cannot be certainly said to be representative of

the totality of left-wing participants in *Zusammenstoss*-violence.[4] Nevertheless the predominance of working-class neighbourhoods is clear, as might have been expected, and this extends to the fighters' locations within socially mixed districts as well. The bulk of the Schöneberg men, for example, lived in the 'Rote Insel' or surrounding streets; two-thirds of those who lived in the Tiergarten district hailed from Moabit, while the rest inhabited the most southerly corner of the district, on the edge of the 'Rote Insel'.

Occupations

a. Occupational structure of the sample

Accordingly, it may not seem surprising that the occupational structure of the group is dominated by manual workers in crafts, industry and transport, although the disproportion, in comparison with the working population of Berlin in 1933, is very striking. (It has been assumed in every case that men engaged in occupations with craft titles were waged workers rather than petty proprietors. This assumption makes it possible to proceed with broad comparisons of occupation, though it may lead to distortions in the assessment of status.) According to the census of that year, waged manual workers represented just over 55 per cent of the economically active male population of Berlin;[5] among the streetfighters, the 220 men engaged in industry, crafts and transport represent more than 93 per cent of the 237 specifying an occupation. The non-industrial trades named by the streetfighters include clerical and office jobs, both relatively skilled (such as bookkeeping) and menial (messengers and office-boys), commercial activities including helping in shops and independent sales (whether as shopkeepers, assistants or street-vendors is not clear), gardening, work in entertainment and catering, and barber-shop work. In considering the range and distribution of occupations among the street-fighters, this chapter will concentrate on the manual and industrial trades so heavily represented among the fighters.

On the whole, the *range* of occupations represented by the streetfighters is fairly representative of the spectrum of manual trades in Berlin. Male workers in the fighters' occupations made up just under 81 per cent of all male workers in Berlin in 1933. In order to assess the distribution of trades within the sample, which involves comparison between the sample and the census of 1933, it is necessary to subtract from the total the eighty-two men who described themselves simply as 'worker' ('*Arbeiter*'). The problem of allocating this group illustrates very clearly the problems associated with this sort of evidence. If it is assumed that the group of 'workers' corresponds to the census category of (unskilled) 'Labourers' ('*Arbeiter*'), then unskilled workers appear to be drastically overrepresented in the sample. The sum of

this group and of those classed as 'Other Workers' – unspecialized and unskilled – in the census (Table 1) represents forty-seven per cent of the sample after non-industrial occupations have been subtracted, while 'Other Workers' comprised only about a quarter of male workers in Berlin. That assumption is itself precarious, however. On the one hand, a worker might not ordinarily be expected to suppress the fact that he belonged to a respected and desirable (skilled) trade – and the analysis of standard occupational surveys usually proceeds on the assumption that actual occupational status is more likely to be lower than implied by the stated job-title than higher.[6] But our sample is not the result of a standard survey; it reflects the peculiar context of the police interrogation-room and the political fight. The man who characterizes himself as a 'worker' or, more eloquently, 'a worker without work', may be moved by defiance or reticence before the police, or he may be making a political statement. Thus, while one interviewee described himself as a 'machine-fitter, now worker', deliberately distinguishing his learned trade from his present, presumably unskilled, occupation, another, an active Communist, stated to the police that he was a 'worker', and was only later named as an apprentice bricklayer. Because of the danger of distortion involved in taking the label at its face value, only those men have been counted as unskilled labourers among the 'Other Workers' whose description of themselves as such could be confirmed by reference to the Berlin city directory or the court records. When the eighty-two 'workers' are removed from the sample, the proportion of 'Other Workers' in the remaining sample of 220 fighters engaged in industry, crafts and transport – including packers and warehousemen, furnace tenders, factory and machine workers and other unskilled operatives as well as building-site labourers (*Bauarbeiter*) and transport workers (*Transportarbeiter*) – approaches more nearly their representation within the workforce at large.

At the same time, the peculiarities of distribution of the other occupations are magnified. The other occupations listed represent, so far as it is possible to know on the basis of testimony and material in the prosecutors' files, the most highly specialized trade ever practised by the individual in question. In the vast majority of cases, all we have is a simple statement of job-title, but in the few cases where training and employment histories were given a rule of thumb was applied such that the 'machine-fitter, now worker' mentioned above was counted under the machine-fitters, the glazier who had resorted to lorry-driving in 1929 as a glazier, because they had at one time practised their respective trades, while the labourer who had served a butcher's apprenticeship but never taken the journeyman's test, and the delivery-boy and window-cleaner who had gone through apprenticeships in the metal trades but never practised those

Table 1. *Occupations*

Sample					Berlin	
Occupations[a]	Number	Apprentices	Unemployed[b]	%[c]	I	II
Metal Trades						
A: Moulder[1]	5		3	2.3	0.5	0.4
Smith	7		7	3.2	1.1	0.9
Coppersmith	1		1	0.5	0.1	0.1
Machine-fitter[2]	6		1	2.7	3.8	3.1
Other fitters[3]	21	1	11	9.5	6.2	5.0
Electrician	1		1	0.5	1.1	0.9
Toolmaker	3		2	1.4	1.8	1.5
Mechanic	2		1	0.9	3.0	2.4
Pipefitter and sheet-metal[4]	5		3	2.3	2.4	1.9
B: Brassworker (*Gürtler*)	2		2	0.9	0.3	0.2
Assembler	2		1	0.9	2.4	1.9
Machine operator[5]	4		4	1.8	2.0	1.6
Turner	2		2	0.9	2.0	1.6
Other[7]	4		2	1.8	0.5	0.4
Construction Trades						
A: Bricklayer	11	3	7	5.0	2.7	2.2
Carpenter	4		4	1.8	1.2	0.9
Other[8]	5		4	2.3	1.0	0.8
B: Painter and varnisher	9		4	4.1	3.0	2.4
Other[9]	4		1	1.8	0.9	0.7
Woodworking						
A: Joiner[10]	8		7	3.6	4.2	3.4
Other[11]	3		1	1.4	0.6	0.5
B: Operative[12]	2		1	0.9	0.5	0.4
Food Trades						
A: Skilled[13]	8	1	2	3.6	4.9	3.9
B: Dairy-hand	2		1	0.9	0.1	0.1
Clothing Trades						
A: Tailor	4		2	1.8	3.0	2.4
Other[14]	2		2	0.9	1.1	0.9
Other Industry and Crafts						
A: Ceramic[15]	2		1	0.9	0.3	0.2
Printing[16]	3		2	1.4	3.5	2.9
Saddler	1		1	0.5	0.6	0.4
B: *Facharbeiter* of uncertain status[17]	4		3	1.8	1.8	1.4
C: Other workers (Total: 60)			(32)	(27.3)	(31.3)	(25.2)
Transportarbeiter	4		3			
Construction[18]	15		8			
Other[19]	41		21			
Transport						
B: Driver[20]	21		11	9.5	8.0	6.5
C: Other[21]	2		1	0.9	4.1	3.3

Table 1 (*cont.*)

Trade, Commerce and Clerical		
Bookkeeper	1	0
Forwarder	1	1
Messenger	2	0
Vendor[22]	3	2
Other[23]	2	1
Others		
Gardener	1	1
Waiter	2	2
Barber's assistant	1	1
Barber	1	0
Artiste	1	0
Publican	1	0
'Worker'	82	50
TOTAL	318	186

Notes

[a] By categories of 1933 Census

[b] At first arrest 1929 or after

[c] Of members of sample in Industry, Crafts and Transport (N = 220)

A: Workers in skilled trades (gelernte Facharbeiter, Handwerker)

B: Workers in specialized trades

1) semi-skilled workers (angelernte Facharbeiter)

2) workers with occupational titles which may include both skilled craftsmen and unskilled labourers, but which are likely or presumed to include minimally skilled workers and those trained on the job (see text)

C: Unskilled

I. Number of male workers in occupation as % of all male workers in trades listed here (total = 100). N = 637,343
Source: *StDR*, 454/3, pp. 29 ff

II. Male workers in occupation as % of male workers in Berlin 1933. N = 789,050
Source: *StDR*, 454/4, pp. 29 ff; *StJB* 1936, p. 15

[1] 2 Former, 1 Metallformer, 2 Kernmacher

[2] 4 Maschinenschlosser, 2 Autoschlosser

[3] 2 Bauschlosser, 1 Schiffsbauer, 1 Geldschrankschlosser, 17 Schlosser

[4] 4 Klempner, 1 Heizungsrohrleger

[5] 1 Monteur, 1 Elektromonteur

[6] 1 Bohrer, 3 Schleifer

[7] 3 Metallarbeiter, 1 Kabellöter

[8] 1 Einschaler, 1 Glaser, 1 Stukkateur, 1 Zementierer, 1 Dachdecker

[9] 2 Linoleum- und Teppichleger, 2 Fensterputzer

[10] 7 Tischler, 1 Kistenmacher

[11] 1 Drechsler, 2 Stellmacher

[12] 1 Holzarbeiter in Holzbearbeitungsfabrik, 1 Tischlereiarbeiter

[13] 7 Bäcker, 1 Schlächter

[14] 1 Schuhmacher, 1 Kürschner

[15] 1 Töpfer, 1 Ofensetzer

[16] 1 Schriftsetzer, 1 Buchdrucker, 1 Metalldrucker

[17] 1 Färber, 1 Maschinist, 1 Bergmann, 1 Heizer

[18] 12 Bauarbeiter, 1 Dachdeckergehilfe, 1 Steinsetzergehilfe, 1 Steinträger

[19] 1 Rotationsarbeiter, 1 Fabrikarbeiter, 1 Brenner, 2 Kohlenarbeiter, 4 Packer Lagerarbeiter, 3 Hilfsarbeiter, 1 Maschinenarbeiter, 1 Radfahrer, 27 Ungelernt

[20] 12 Kutscher, 3 Kraftwagenführer, 2 Chauffeur, 1 Autoführer, 1 Motorradführer, 1 Mitfahrer, 1 Fuhrgeschäft

[21] 1 Schiffer, 1 Schaffner

[22] 1 Gemüsehändler, 1 Schokoladenverkäufer, 1 Tabakwarenhändler

[23] 1 Bürogehilfe, 1 Drogist (Gehilfe)

trades were listed in the unskilled and semi-skilled categories appropriate to their actual occupations. Both sets of individuals have something to tell us about patterns of expectation and occupational mobility, but those issues will be dealt with under a separate heading. As indicator of personal social position, the occupation a man practised as an adult under 'normal' economic conditions has been taken to be the most appropriate. By the same token, the three men who gave evidence of being employed by the Party have been included, where appropriate, under their industrial (in one case clerical) trades: the Party editor trained as a toolmaker, the joinery worker who got a job as a telephonist with the Russian Trade Commission after becoming unemployed in 1929, and the bookkeeper who worked in the offices of *Die Welt am Abend.*

If the range of occupations represented by the streetfighters is more or less typical, the peculiarities of distribution of those occupations within the sample are very marked. Table 1 shows the two possible groups with which the sample may be compared, both drawn from the 1933 census. The first represents all men working in the occupations represented among the streetfighters (excluding non-industrial occupations) (Berlin I). The second represents all male workers in Berlin in 1933 (Berlin II). Whether we choose to assume that *any* worker might have been involved in the fighting (and take the wider base) or accept that the occupations actually named here effectively represent the field of potential mobilization (and consider the distribution of trades within the smaller comparative group) three occupational groups appear to be overrepresented among the streetfighters: metalworkers, construction workers (excluding site labourers) and drivers.

Of these, the construction workers are the most consistently overrepresented. Workers in the metal trades represented among the streetfighters comprise 29.5 per cent of the fighters engaged in industry and transport, 27.2 per cent of male workers in all the occupations represented, and 22.0 per cent of male workers at large. The figures for drivers are respectively 9.5 per cent, 8.0 per cent and 6.5 per cent. In both cases the overrepresentation is greater the larger the comparative base. For skilled and semi-skilled construction workers, however, the discrepancy between their representation among the streetfighters and their representation in the working population varies less sharply according to which base is used: 15.0 per cent of labouring streetfighters, as against 8.8 per cent and 7.1 per cent respectively of the comparative samples.

Any attempt to make comparisons on a district-by-district basis is made impossible by the lack of comparable figures. In the 1933 census, the districts are broken down by sector and industry rather than occupation. It is not possible on the basis of the present evidence to ascertain in what industry the individual worker in a given occupation was employed, nor, on

the other hand, do the official statistics make it possible to determine what proportion of those associated with a given industry were manual or wage-workers. Metalworkers, in particular, were scattered over so many different kinds of industry as to make guessing which any one of them belonged to a perilous business.

Another group that does invite comparison with the streetfighters is the membership of the Communist Party itself. Here, again, the statistics do not allow of close and detailed analysis, but the broad outlines are suggestive. At the time of the last membership survey carried out by the Party, in 1927, 77.7 per cent of the membership were workers in industry and crafts (in Berlin, 72.4 per cent of Party members were named as manual workers) – a lower proportion of manual workers than appears among the streetfighters. Of the KPD membership surveyed, 17.7 per cent belonged to metal-workers' unions (29.8 per cent of those belonging to trade unions), 7.3 per cent to construction unions (12.2 per cent), and 4.8 per cent to organizations of 'factory workers' (8.0 per cent), unions which, historically, represented textile and chemical workers. The next largest group was that of the miners, followed by the transport workers (3.6 per cent or 6.0 per cent).[7] Making allowances for the relative insignificance of the textile, chemical and mining industries in Berlin, the distribution of trades among the streetfighters is broadly similar to the one that characterized the traditional core of active Communists. If the actual degree of representation is considered, however, both skilled and semi-skilled construction workers and drivers figure more highly among the streetfighters than in the movement at large. Moreover, in order to make the KPD survey and the group of fighters more comparable, both building-site labourers, who represented a considerable section of the main construction workers' union, and the two stove-fitters formally classified as 'ceramic workers' must be added to the construction workers and 'transport workers' to the drivers and other workers in transport within the sample of figures. The results are fifty construction workers, or 22.7 per cent of the 220 workers in industry and transport, and 27 transport workers, or 12.3 per cent, among the fighters. Each of these figures is strikingly high in comparison to the KPD survey, while the proportions of metalworkers in the two samples remain about equal.

The Berlin police records have provided us with a third group with which to compare the streetfighters: the 559 men and women arrested during the Berlin Transport strike in the first week of November 1932. The use of this sample allows us to compare one form of militant action with another, and should therefore help to emphasize the peculiarities of streetfighting in the context of patterns of 'working-class radicalism'. In essence, of course, the BVG strike represents a kind of militant industrial action, an unofficial strike,[8] and we can expect the occupational structure of the participants to

be skewed in favour of employees of the BVG. But the strike had a character that widened its social scope. Organized in the first instance by the strong RGO fraction among the BVG employees, it was highly politicized right from the beginning, and when the Berlin NSDAP decided to take up the strikers' cause, it became a focus for the general mobilization of both radical parties. On the afternoon of the first day, the police authorities were informed that the government regarded the strike as illegal and any strike activity as a punishable offence; the police were ordered to post guards around all police and military buildings.[9] Moreover, in contrast to most strikes in a single factory or industry, the transport strike could not be geographically contained; it was a city-wide and highly public action. Strike actions such as picketing and meetings took place at widely scattered points, and many non-strikers were drawn into the dozens of incidents of sabotage, insulting behaviour and intimidation, as well as into the overtly political activities, registered over the strike's four days. Of those arrested, only about one-third were employees of the BVG. About half were charged with explicitly strike-related activity (picketing, leafletting, 'strike support'; 'attending an illegal meeting', 'high treason'), and about half with various forms of violent, obstructive and insulting behaviour, including acts of sabotage and 'endangering public transport'. Among those arrested 114 were Nazis and 114 Communists.[10] Two of the streetfighters appear among the BVG defendants.

In terms of its general social composition, the BVG sample differs strikingly from the group of streetfighters in two ways. First, it includes seventeen women, seven of whom were KPD members. Second, 103, or one-quarter of those who named their occupations, were non-industrial workers and employees; only seventy-five per cent of the identifiable BVG defendants can be characterized as workers in industry, crafts and transport, to set against the 93.2 per cent of the streetfighters.

In order to compare the details of occupational distribution among the workers in the two samples, one woman, a seamstress, and nine men who gave only 'apprentice' or 'foreman' as their job-titles have been removed from the BVG sample, leaving a numerical base of 299. Within this group, the major trades are represented as in table at head of p. 177.

The very high proportion of transport workers clearly reflects the circumstances of the strike. About half of them were drivers of various kind of vehicles, including public transport, and half workers in other forms or branches of transport, most of those conductors and station and depot workers. In order to avoid this kind of skewing, it would be convenient simply to discount all BVG employees from the sample, since they represent a minority of the defendants in any case. However, only about 90 of the men are clearly identified as employed by the BVG, and all but one of these was engaged in transport. For comparative purposes, the best that can be

Trades	Number	% (N = 299)
Metal	77	25.8
Construction (including site labourers)	26	8.7
Wood	21	7.0
Food	19	6.4
Clothing	5	1.7
Printing and Bookbinding	6	2.0
Transport	129	43.1
'Other Workers' (less construction-site labourers)	9	3.0

done is to ignore transport altogether, and focus on workers in industry and crafts in the two samples. This probably tends to magnify the presence of metalworkers among the strike activists - since the BVG certainly employed mechanics and fitters and probably smiths and sheet-metal workers as well – and may also compound the overrepresentation of woodworkers, for the same reasons, but in other ways the formal and organizational structure of the BVG sample shows a rather different pattern from that of the streetfighters:

Trades	BVG % (N = 170)	Sample % (N = 198)
Metal	45.3	32.8
Construction (including site-labourers and stove-fitters)	15.3	25.3
Wood	12.4	6.6
Food	11.2	5.1
Clothing	2.9	3.0
Printing and Bookbinding	2.9	1.5
'Other Workers' (less construction-site labourers and transport workers)	5.3	20.7

Metal, wood and food trades appear to be concentrated among the BVG activists, but the most striking thing here is the relatively high proportions of both construction and 'other' workers among the streetfighters. This may serve, first, to underline the fact that the range groups available for mobilization around radical activities was considerably wider than the field tapped by the *wehrhafter Kampf*.

Occupational traditions and militant action

To go beyond this involves speculating about the relationship between occupations and radical activity, a project made all the more difficult by the

fact that we have only a handful of job-titles (which may or may not be strictly accurate) and a still smaller range of stated political and organizational allegiances. Comparison between the BVG and streetfighting samples suggests the following hypothesis: the transport strike represents a familiar, and in terms of its form and aims 'traditional', type of working-class militancy extended to embrace the current forms of political radicalism. Consequently, its participants represent, apart from the strikers themselves, occupational groups which had strong traditions of industrial militancy and/or were highly politicized, as well as a miscellany of the politically engaged.

From this point of view the most problematic group among the BVG defendants is that of workers in the food trades: a dairy-hand, a sweet-boiler, a dairyman, a brewer, three butchers, and fully twelve bakers. The significance of this group almost certainly lies in the fact that eleven of them were NSDAP members and only three Communists. Whether we choose to see in this the mobilization of the declining small tradesmen conventionally attributed to the National Socialist movement or of a section of the labour force which was traditionally under-organized and had shown itself relatively responsive to the appeal of the nationalist trade unions in the late 1920s,[11] it is clear that this group represents the epitome of right-wing radicalism among the manual trades. It is therefore hardly surprising that they are not so well represented among participants in the antifascist fight.

The group of metalworkers shows a closer fit between transport-strike participants, streetfighters and militant traditions. In both the samples metalworkers appear to be overrepresented, in the BVG group even more than among the streetfighters. The involvement of metalworkers in both forms of Communist-led action and their relatively higher representation in the more public and trade-union based activities are in keeping with the history of the metal trades in Berlin.[12] Skilled workers in the engineering trades in Berlin had formed one of the centres of opposition to the official trade-union policy of support for the war effort and one of the principal bases for the revolutionary movement of 1919. During the 1920s the Berlin metalworkers remained a combative group, with a strong radical component which came to be closely associated with the KPD and its RGO. Among the first consequences of the Communists' ultra-left policy was the split from the German Metalworkers' Union (DMV) of the Berlin pipefitters' section in June 1929. And in October 1930 fear of Communist opposition within the Berlin DMV was credited with forcing the union leadership to approve the third city-wide strike of metalworkers since 1919.

In short, although it is impossible to speak for either the BVG strikers or the streetfighters as individuals, it could be argued that any metalworkers who had belonged to the DMV-Berlin (which represented 60.1 per cent of metalworkers at its peak in 1919, twenty per cent during its lowest ebb at

the end of 1925, and around one half in 1933),[13] and many who had not, would have been exposed by virtue of their occupation to political arguments, including practical and theoretical expositions of the Communist analysis of society. They would also have been regularly challenged to take a position on matters both of principle and of immediate action, and their decision might often have been in favour of action in opposition to existing power relations rather than acquiescence. In this light the metalworking streetfighters might be described as representative of a group which was historically given to taking direct action in its own interests and many of whose members had explicitly associated themselves with the radical politics of the KPD in the course of such actions.

One test of this view involves examining the extent to which those occupational groups which were particularly militant in the metalworkers' movement are present in the sample. Table 1a lists the metalworkers by specific job-titles and compares their representation among the streetfighters with their relative weight in four comparable groups. These are: first, that section of the metalworking (male) population at large which they represent and second, the BVG-strike metalworkers. The third comparative group comprises 'important trades' in the workforce of the companies represented by the Verband Berliner Metall-Industrieller. Member-companies of the VBMI, the principal employers' association for the metal trades in Berlin, employed between sixty-nine per cent (1925) and eighty-two per cent (1933) of workers in the city's metal trades. In 1925 just over half of those workers worked in plants employing 5000 and more workers. This sample, then, reflects most strongly the structure of the large-scale engineering and electrotechnical industries represented by such names as Borsig, AEG and Siemens. 'Important trades' in this case were defined as those trades – both skilled and semi-skilled – 'in which it is both vital and in most cases possible for the industry itself to maintain the supply of newly trained workers'.[14] The last column in the table represents the relative weight of those 'important trades' in the Berlin branch of the DMV.

From the point of view of assessing the impact of occupational traditions of militancy, the groups that interest us most are those with the best attested militant traditions, the turners, who had been among the most active groups in the revolution of 1918–19, and the pipefitters. Here the contrast between the streetfighters and the BVG sample is significant as compared with the metalworking population as a whole. In both samples of militants turners are underrepresented although the deficit is much greater among the streetfighters. At the same time the pipefitters – the most recent group to take an explicitly radical stand – are massed among the BVG defendants. As a focus for 'traditional' militancy, the *wehrhafter Kampf* appears to have been significantly less attractive than the politicized strike.

Table 1a. *'Important trades' in the Berlin metal industry*

Occupation	As % of all metalworkers in Sample (N = 65)	As % of all male metal-workers in trades represented in Sample, Berlin 1933[a] (N = 173,599)	As % of all metalworkers in BVG strike (N = 77)	As % of 'Important Trades' represented in 1928 in[b]	
				VBMI	DMV-Berlin
Moulder	7.7	2.0	3.9	2.3	4.4
Smith	12.3	4.3	6.5	4.4	5.7
Machine-fitter	9.2	14.2	6.5	7.8	11.2
Other fitters	32.3	22.7	37.7	34.6	27.1
Pipefitter	1.5	8.8	10.4	—	—
Sheet-metal worker	6.2		2.6	1.7	5.0
Mechanic	3.1	11.0	5.2	12.3	9.1
Toolmaker	4.6	6.7	2.6	8.5	8.3
Turner	3.1	7.3	5.2	15.4	14.9
Metalworkers (Brassworker, Machinist, Other)	15.5	10.4	5.2	3.0	7.5
Assembler etc.	3.1	8.7	10.4	7.2	4.2
Electrician	1.5	4.0	1.3	—	—
Setter	—	—	—	1.3	2.0
Melter	—	—	1.3	—	—
Engineer	—	—	1.3	—	—

[a] *Source*: *StDR*, 454/3, pp. 29 ff
[b] *Source*: Hartwich, p. 411

The labour process and conditions of work as conditions of political action

As an alternative approach to the significance of occupation we may consider the conditions of the job itself as possible contributing factors to action outside the workplace. This sort of analysis demands comparison not only within but also between occupational groups – in this case between metalworkers and the group that is most strikingly overrepresented among the streetfighters (and not significantly so among other militants) namely construction workers. Table 1b shows the skilled and semi-skilled construction workers in the sample broken down by occupation and compares this with their relative weight among construction workers at large. Unlike that of the metalworking streetfighters, the occupational profile of the construction workers corresponds roughly with the distribution of their trades in the comparable working population. If there was something about the character of certain occupations that made workers in them prone to physical violence, as a specific form of particularly militant action, this evidence suggests that that characteristic was shared by most of the construction trades and only by a few of the metal trades.

Now one significant aspect of the tasks peculiar to construction workers is the extent to which they involve the exercise of physical strength. The work of unskilled building labourers and of such skilled site-workers as masons and carpenters alike involves the carrying and manipulation of heavy materials. More generally, the tasks and dangers involved in large-scale construction make the building worker peculiarly reliant on his own physical capacities. Simple stamina, too, is important for those who work outdoors – and the outdoors, public character of their work adds a political dimension to the occupational profile of the construction workers. The

Table 1b. *Construction workers*

Occupation	As % of all construction workers in Sample (N = 35)	As % of all male workers in construction trades represented in Sample, Berlin 1933* (N = 57,788)
Bricklayer	31.4	29.8
Carpenter	11.4	12.7
Stovefitter	5.7	3.4
Other skilled	14.3	10.8
Painter and varnisher	25.7	33.1
Other semi-skilled	11.4	10.2

* *Source*: *StDR*, 454/3, pp. 29 ff.

operation of the building site is both highly localised – over the period in which a single project is being carried out – and peculiarly mobile, as the gang moves from one site to another. Building workers are the witnesses to everything that goes on in the streets, the recipients of popular rumour and opinion which, over the longer term, they can carry back to their homes and into other neighbourhoods. A further social aspect of their work which cannot be irrelevant to the possibilities of collective action is the high degree of teamwork involved in construction. The tendency to mutualism and solidarity encouraged by this might have been enforced by the relatively high mobility *between* jobs within the industry necessitated by its seasonal nature. Site workers had to find ways to provide for themselves during the winter, when outdoor work was impossible. On the one hand, this necessity provided the spur for a tradition of militant and effective trade-union action around issues of wage- and job-security. On the other it meant that many site workers, skilled and, especially, unskilled, moved into un- and semi-skilled jobs in such indoor trades as painting during the low season – with the result that the physical culture of the building site became part of the culture of the wider building and decorating industry as a whole.[15]

The Berlin Prosecutor's files have provided a vivid example of the combined effects of workplace solidarity and the routine use of physical force to resolve a dispute among construction labourers, in the case of the beating and subsequent death of the SA-man Hans Kuetemeyer. This case has not been included in the discussions in Chapter 6, nor do the defendants appear in the sample, since it took place in 1928. Moreover, from the point of view of Kuetemeyer's attackers the action was clearly not a political one; the whole tone of the interrogations differs significantly from that of cases involving KPD members and sympathizers. The action involved road-workers, or navvies, rather than building workers proper, but the attitudes and conditions of work – seasonal work, heavy physical labour, geographical mobility – are broadly comparable.[16]

The outlines of the case are as follows. At about 1.30 a.m. the work-gang employed in mending the road at the corner of Zieten- and Bülowstrasse was taking its break. As the workers stood around outside the builders' hut three National Socialists, among them Kuetemeyer, approached and attempted to engage them in a political discussion, haranguing them about the 'Jew-press'. One of the workers asked repeatedly that the Nazis go away; in response, Kuetemeyer knocked the sandwich out of the worker's hand, and received a box on the ear in his turn. A general mêlée broke out and the Nazis, after throwing some rocks at their adversaries, turned and fled. Kuetemeyer was pursued by the workers and cornered two blocks away; one witness saw about twenty men standing in a circle, participating and looking on as Kuetemeyer was beaten and kicked. A taxi-driver was overheard to remark, 'That's no sport, thirty to one!' – but no effort was

made by any of the onlookers to interfere, and when another taxi drove up someone said, 'Now he can get to the hospital', and the crowd dissolved. Kuetemeyer himself never sought medical aid, but wandered around the area, apparently dazed. Sometime before dawn he fell into the Landwehr Canal and drowned, thus earning himself a place among the SA's martyrs.

When arrested and questioned about the incident, the workers without exception admitted to having taken part in chasing and hitting the SA-man; while some of them recognized that the action itself had been a brutal one and dangerous for both their victim and themselves, they clearly regarded it as an appropriate way to handle troublemakers. One of them said that they had originally intended to turn Kuetemeyer over to the police, without denying that they meant to teach him a lesson of their own beforehand, 'And one of the taxi drivers ... wanted to make him show us his identity papers. But we finally decided to let him go...' Another of the assailants gave a characteristic gloss on his actions: 'I have to add that I had no reason for this brawl, but I pitched in out of feelings of solidarity.'

In this case, taxi-drivers played something of the rôle of a Greek chorus; in others, we have found drivers directly involved in the *wehrhafter Kampf*, and to a very high degree. This may be partially explained by the same sorts of occupational characteristics that contributed to the activism of construction workers, though certain caveats are in order here. The category of drivers is in fact a highly problematic one. The terms used by the streetfighters include *Chauffeur*, *Fahrer* and *Kutscher*, idiomatic expressions which could apply equally to taxi-drivers and lorry-drivers and, in the case of *Kutscher*, to motorized or horse-drawn vehicles. Moreover, the distinction between drivers and transport workers, imposed by the census, is one that individuals probably did not draw in everyday parlance; for the purposes of the census, *Transportarbeiter* were low-grade workers in industry, possibly those engaged in the transport and delivery operations of larger industrial concerns, while drivers – *Kraftwagenführer* and *Kutscher* were under separate headings – came into the category of transport. If the title of 'driver' represents the tasks of a lorry-driver, we can speak of the conditions of work as being similar in some ways to those of building workers. Where large vehicles were concerned, whether motorized or horse-drawn, physical strength was important for driving, strength and teamwork for loading and unloading. Of the drivers of passenger vehicles, on the other hand, it is difficult to generalize beyond pointing out that they are comparable to building workers in their capacity to pick up and carry news and opinions within the trade and to the community at large. Moreover, while it is impossible to determine whether the drivers of taxis and other small vehicles represent individualist small-businessmen owning their own cars or waged workers driving shifts for a large firm, either of these types might have been drawn into the *wehrhafter Kampf* through force of circumstances: not only were

they present at the focus of conflict, on the streets at all hours; they also had access to a resource that was nearly as valuable as weapons in the battle for the streets, namely rapid and convenient transport to and from the scene of an incident.[17]

Can the occupational characteristics shared by construction workers and, to some extent, by drivers, be found among the metalworkers? First, it should be pointed out that several of our nominal metalworkers were, like those formally listed under the 'ceramics' heading, actually engaged in construction work. This group includes the two building fitters and the heating installer, and probably some proportion of the smiths and other fitters. Beyond this, however, it may be significant that the groups most heavily overrepresented by any comparison are those whose tasks involved the heaviest physical labour: the moulders, the smiths and the group of 'metalworkers' which, in the definition of the VBMI, includes brass-founders and metal-spinners as well as the relatively sedentary machinists.

In short, if we consider those significant groups among the streetfighters whose occupations we know something about, we may conclude that the nature of the work they did was itself an important factor in disposing them to use physical force in dealing with problems that other kinds of people, with different experiences of their own capacity to act in the material world, might have dealt with in other ways. However, such an argument should not be seen simply in terms of individual proclivities, but also as a way of presenting the impact of the social and broadly political conditions that are concomitants of the physical characteristics of work. Among the other aspects of workplace situation generally held to be relevant to people's attitudes and action in the wider world are relative status and income and security of employment – including in its broadest sense, the question of whether a worker is actually employed in his learned or ascribed occupation. These are all closely related both to the degree of skill associated with a given occupation and to the changes in demand for particular skills at particular times. To the constituents of workplace situation and industry characteristics should be added the size and type of shop in which the worker is employed. In discussing each of these factors, we will focus again on the metalworkers among the streetfighters, since they constitute the largest and most highly differentiated of the occupational groups represented.

Skill and status

In Table 1, the occupations named by the streetfighters have been grouped under the headings A, B, and C. These groupings represent a very rough estimate of possible or likely status. It is a commonplace of occupational surveys that the job-titles they yield provide an inadequate guide to the degrees of skill involved. As the DMV leadership itself admitted, the titles

assigned to tasks in metalworking are particularly ambiguous, since they cover a wide range of different types of production and since technological change in this sector has continually outpaced changes in vocabulary. The Weimar years, moreover, were a period in which the application of new technology in the context of a radical shift in management policies tended particularly to blur the distinctions between skilled and semi-skilled.

Before and during the War, the Berlin metal industry had shown an apparently insatiable appetite for labour; it was a favoured career choice for school-leavers, its skilled trades among the most glamorous and desirable.[18] But during the 1920s the whole industry underwent a process of rationalization in which staffs were cut, some skilled workers were relegated to operating machines that fulfilled their former tasks, and unskilled labour was increasingly preferred because it could perform the same mechanized jobs more cheaply. It was in the electro-technical branch that the process of de-skilling went furthest during the twenties – the branch that employed nearly half of Berlin's metalworkers. The report of the DMV-Berlin for 1927 stated:

> The tremendous increase in productivity of mechanized production as well as the replacement of skilled workers by semi-skilled, young and female workers has resulted in a considerable restructuring of the workforce in decisive sections of the metal industry. As far as skilled workers are concerned, only people of middling years with the highest personal qualifications were sought.[19]

The social and political consequences of this development will be considered below: its effect on our categories of relative skill and status are self-evident. An assembler (*Monteur*), for example, may be either a highly trained engineer or an assembly-line operative, a turner or other machinist either a skilled worker with a high degree of responsibility and autonomy or an operative running a machine under the supervision of such a skilled worker. Similar ambiguities are intrinsic to the building trades, though for different reasons; indoor work, like painting, could be performed by semi-skilled workers, no less qualified to call themselves 'painters' than the master craftsman who supervised them. Driving a team of horses or a motor vehicle involves skills that have to be learned – although the skills of car- and lorry-driving had been routinely practised during the War by workers too young to serve in the army and have since the 1930s been easily acquired by large sections of the population. Category B, then, is a very broad category, representing a combination of probability and educated guesswork. Among the metalworkers, the presumption of relatively low status among the groups classed under B rests on a breakdown of their ages. Eight of the twelve were born in 1908 or later; they would have reached school-leaving age in the mid-twenties at the earliest, when, according to one authority, there were no apprenticeships to be had in the metal industry.[20]

Given all these uncertainties, the present evidence suggests that the distribution of industrial skills among the streetfighters was roughly the same as that within the working population at large. If we consider the whole group of 220 streetfighters engaged in industry, crafts and transport, the proportions of categories A, B and C are very close indeed to those that appeared in the national census of 1933:

	Sample	Per cent	Germany: Census 1933[21]	Per cent
A	102	46.4	'Skilled specialists'	48.6
B	56	25.4	'Semi-skilled specialists'	21.3
C	62	28.2	'Others'	30.1

The last census to offer a breakdown of Berlin's working population according to status was that of 1925. Using the categories of 'Specialist', 'Factory Artisan' and 'Others', that survey resulted in a profile that differs slightly from the above: 48.6 per cent, 9.6 per cent and 41.8 per cent respectively.[22] Within the sample, a comparable balance between those with nominally specialized manual occupations on the one hand and 'Other Workers' on the other, appears if the drivers (an ambiguous group whose members could hardly be called either specialists or artisans) are moved from category B to C: roughly sixty-two per cent skilled or semi-skilled (A/B) to thirty-eight per cent 'Others' (B/C).

The structure of the sample also shows some correspondence with that of the KPD of 1927. Within the national party, unskilled industrial workers represented 36.3 per cent of manual workers in industry and small trades.[23] The imponderables here include the differences between the structure of the Berlin and national Parties, possible changes in the structure of the Party with the expansion of the Depression years and the very wide margin for error provided by the eighty unspecified 'workers'.

Returning to the specific case of the metalworkers, we find (Table 1a) that the seventy-nine per cent of streetfighters naming category A jobs compares favourably with just under seventy-two per cent of workers in VBMI factories and over seventy per cent of metalworkers in important trades in the city of Berlin. Within this nominally highly skilled group, however, two aspects are of special interest. First, it was characteristic of some of the more heavily represented trades – fitters and, most strikingly (by comparison with the staffs of large factories represented by the VBMI figures), smiths, pipefitters, sheet-metal workers and plumbers – that they were often carried out in very small workshops or as one-man businesses.[24] There is no evidence that any of the streetfighters naming these trades was a proprietor,

but anyone working in a small business would be subject in his actions and attitudes to two kinds of influence that are relevant to the genesis of radical action in the neighbourhood: on the one hand, the relative vulnerability of small enterprises to shifts in the economic climate and the experience of financial insecurity, and on the other the social recognition and relatively close ties to the community that attach to the situation of the local tradesman. The second peculiarity of the metalworkers in the sample is that while nearly all of the principal skilled or trained occupations are represented, the traditionally least prestigious and lowest paid appear most often. Within the group of fitters, for example, six machine-builders and mechanics are outweighed by twenty-one in unnamed or less highly valued branches of the trade. On either side of this group, toolmakers and mechanics proper (the most desirable of the metal trades and the ones involving the most expensive training) are underrepresented, while moulders and smiths are slightly overrepresented, by comparison with the metal-working population at large.[25]

On this showing, the streetfighters were very far from belonging to the rootless and undifferentiated type of the *Lumpenproletarier* implicit in certain Communist analyses. Nor – by way of answer to an intrinsically more plausible hypothesis – can they be fitted easily into the category of 'mass-workers', the operatives in large plants whose lack of experience and high degree of alienation have been postulated by some students of working-class radicalism as determinants of sporadic and relatively undisciplined but highly militant action.[26] At the same time, they hardly represented the élite of the Berlin working class. And the details of some individual careers suggest that even the middling to normal expectations reflected in these job-titles may have been frustrated by the economic circumstances of the 1920s.

Social mobility and security of employment

Here we can return to our discussion of the effects of rationalization on the workforce. We have already encountered the 'mechanic, now worker' and the trained glazier whose last job, in 1929–30, had been as a driver. One who described himself as a fitter had had a more complicated career than the title alone would suggest. His hopes of a mechanic's apprenticeship had been frustrated by lack of funds, but work in defence plants during the War had led to employment in a repair-shop which lasted until the end of 1930. Another had begun his training as a toolmaker during the twenties but resorted to work as a courier and newsboy when the firm in which he was apprenticed closed, while a second toolmaker, after completing his apprenticeship, switched to window-cleaning, for no stated reason. A third had spent the past three years alternating between casual labour and abortive apprenticeships in the mechanical and plumbing trades – more,

Table 2. *Occupations of fathers and male relatives*

Sample	Age	Fathers	Sample	Age	Male relatives[3]
Labourer	18	Form-builder (*Einschaler*)[2]	Labourer	18	Bricklayer
Labourer	25	Agricultural labourer[1]	Construction worker	19	Carpenter
Labourer	26	†Driver (*Kutscher*)[1]	Typesetter	19	Engine-driver
Labourer	19	Loading boss[1]	Printer (metal)	20	Roofer
Stone-carrier	24	Mechanic[2]	Tailor	27	Tailor
Construction worker	23	Council worker[2]	Apprentice baker	18	Painter
Packer	28	Milk[2]	Carpenter	19	Joiner
Transport worker	24	Lithographer/Metalworker[2]	Bricklayer	23	Chemist's shop
Chauffeur	25	Bank officer[1]	Bricklayer	22	Gasworker
Driver (*Kutscher*)	22 }	Brewer[2]	Form-builder (*Einschaler*)	22	Municipal worker
Driver (*Kutscher*)	18 }		Lathe operator (metal)	19	Lathe operator (metal)
Driver (*Kutscher*)	18	Motor vehicle owner[2]	Smith	28	Turner (wood)
Co-driver	21	Labourer[2]	Smith	22	Painter
Woodworker	18	Woodworker[1]	Toolmaker	25	Pensioner
Joinery worker	20	†Pipefitter[1]	Machine-fitter	20	Fitter
Varnisher	19	Construction worker[1]	Motor mechanic	19	Assembler
Painter	21	Carpenter[2]	Motor mechanic	19	Joiner
Dyer	20	Painter[2]	Fitter	18	Theatre doorman
Printer	24 }	Sales assistant[2]	Fitter	26	Labourer
Carpenter	19 }		Electrical assembler	28	Engraver
Box-joiner	26	Foreman[2]	Dairy-hand	25	Labourer
Joiner	21	Furniture[2]	Chemist's shop assistant	20	Railway station inspector
Apprentice bricklayer	17	†Toolmaker[1]			
Apprentice bricklayer	19	Construction worker[1]			
Apprentice bricklayer	19	Plasterer[2]			
Plasterer	19	Plasterer[2]			
Metalworker	18	Postal officer (lowest grade)[1]			
Metalworker	20	Driver (*Kutscher*)[2]			
Borer	19	†Shoemaker[1]			
Smith	22	Glazier[1]			
Brassworker (*Gürtler*)	20	Proofreader[2]			
Sheet-metal worker	21	Driver (*Kutscher*)[2]			
Machine-fitter	22	Foreman[2]			
Machine-fitter	20	Driver (*Kutscher*)[1]			
Apprentice fitter	16	Printer's assistant[2]			
Assembler	21	Motor mechanic[2]			
Dairy-hand	18	Labourer[2]			
Waiter	36	Dancing master[1]			
'Worker'	19	Butcher[2]	'Worker'	26	Bricklayer
,,	18	†Smith[1]	,,	19	Labourer
,,	18	Labourer[2]	,,	17	Engine-driver
,,	22	Well-builder[1]	,,	15	Labourer
,,	22	Painter[2]	,,	23	Dealer
,,	22	Factory worker[2]	,,	30	Driver (*Kutscher*)
,,	21	Barber[2]	,,	19	Labourer
,,	20	Streetcleaner/Pest control[2]	,,	19	Labourer
			,,	15	Smith
			,,	23	Dealer
			,,	19	Labourer
			,,	21	Driver (*Kutscher*)
			,,	21	Labourer
			,,	20	Labourer
			,,	25	Construction worker
			,,	26	Labourer

Notes

} Brothers

† Deceased

Sources:

[1] Subject's own testimony or documentary evidence

[2] Subject's own testimony combined with *Berliner Adressbuch*

[3] *Berliner Adressbuch*

the authorities felt, through weakness of character than for economic reasons. Subjects' descriptions of their actual activities in other trades, too, remind us that an objective measure of skill is by no means an indication of status or security. It is impossible, for example, to assess how many of the streetfighters who described themselves as drivers or decorators were recording the most recent stage in a cycle of temporary or seasonal jobs. Parallels for this are offered by two of the 'other workers', one whose career included jobs as odd-job man (*Arbeitsbursche*), driver, housepainter and coal-deliveryman and another who worked for a coal-merchant during the winter, was a deliveryman for a soda factory in the summer, and was 'temporarily unemployed in between'.[27]

One possible test of a general pattern of social decline is a comparison of the fighters' occupations with those of their fathers (Table 2). This was possible in a total of thirty-eight cases (of those specifying occupations). This sample is distorted by virtue of the fact that in twenty-one cases, the father's occupation was taken from the city directory on the basis of the fighter's statement that he lived with his parents. It is thus biased towards the very young, and in a handful of cases an apparent decline may actually reflect the fighters' employment in their fathers' businesses: the two driver sons of a brewer, the packer whose father ran a dairy store, the cabinetmaker whose father sold furniture, the driver whose father called himself a 'motor vehicle owner'. By the same token, the picture is confused by those fathers whose title, foreman, is a statement of status rather than of occupation. The general pattern presented by these cases is not unambiguous, and the largest group is that of those who had roughly the same nominal level of skill as their fathers. The same is true if the occupations of male relatives with whom the fighters were living are taken into account (although it is not impossible that some of the 'male relatives' are in fact the subjects themselves listed in the Berlin Directory with mistaken Christian names). The mothers and female relatives of the streetfighters included three 'workers', three seamstresses, a portress, a gardener and a charwoman. Table 2 also includes lists of the occupations of fathers and male relatives of twenty-four streetfighters who described themselves as 'workers'. They are similar to the preceding ones, and simply help to fill in the picture of the milieu in which the streetfighters lived. This was one in which a very wide range of occupations was represented; indeed, the social spectrum among the older generation is rather wider than that of the streetfighters themselves, but this in itself may be significant.

In particular, among both the fathers and the male relatives there are relatively few metalworkers of any kind - ten in all compared to twenty among the young fighters who named an occupation. Again, although the sample is tiny, the information it provides is highly suggestive. On the one hand, we find that of the eight men with metalworking relatives who

named their occupations, only four were themselves metalworkers; of the other four only one, an apprentice mason, had a job-title approaching the status of his father's. If we take into account the prestige and self-consciousness that attached to metalworking *as such* in Berlin's industrial tradition (leaving aside the differentials of skill)[28] it may be appropriate to see in this a pattern of relative decline in status over two generations of industrial workers. That leaves twelve first-generation metalworkers, including only one of unequivocally high skill and status (the toolmaker), whose relatives' jobs include a range of low-grade or non-industrial trades. For these young men, metalworking may have represented a step up in the world, possibly following upon a move to the city from the provinces. But, as has already been pointed out, the re-organized industry that initially created jobs for the relatively unqualified young was equally prompt to discard them in the face of economic pressure or in the interests of further rationalization. For first-generation metalworkers in the 1920s, access to relatively high pay and status (high by comparison with what they could have earned as unskilled labourers) was bought by submission to an acutely tangible and, in this industry, relatively novel degree of job insecurity.[29] This evidence bears out the impressions discussed earlier in this chapter, that the significance of metalworking, at least among the younger fighters, lies less in an occupational tradition of radicalism than in the fact of a highly fluctuating and insecure job market, just as, in Chapter 6, their attitude to the *wehrhafter Kampf* seemed to reflect immediate experiences and anxieties rather than an explicitly political posture.

In general terms, too, the overwhelming impression gained from an examination of the occupations of the streetfighters in the light of economic considerations is that of relative insecurity. They were drawn from the middle ranks of the manual and industrial proletariat as well as from those of the chronically impoverished and unstable, from fields like the building trades, in which even the most highly skilled and well paid workers suffered from seasonal fluctuations in employment, or the metal trades in which all categories of skill and status were being blurred. If we consider this insecurity, and the low income that must have accompanied it, as circumstances of relatively long standing in the lives of the fighters, viewing them as components of a way of life, then there are three principal ways in which they might have informed the fighters' political actions. First, they represent a grievance against the existing economic and social system, one which the parties of left and right alike were busy articulating in terms of political opposition. Second, they blocked the possibilities for sustained action of a non-violent kind. In strictly material terms, physical force was an obvious recourse for settling immediate and local grievances in the absence of economic power; this point has already been made in previous chapters. Beyond this, we may recall the commonplace of sociological

studies, recently adopted by such students of the proletariat as Lucas, that those who find it impossible or self-defeating to plan their domestic lives (because their income is unreliable) are less disposed than others to engage in sustained and systematic actions towards medium-term or long-range goals.[30] This would be an important argument if we could accept the view of the KPD leadership, that its terrorists were people looking for quick results, but it does not make much sense when applied to those, especially older fighters who were all the more terrorists for being relatively determined and systematic planners. Moreover, the presumed *psychosocial* incapacity to plan is nearly always accompanied by the *material* inability to put into effect the kinds of broadly economic action – saving and storing in domestic life, strike and boycott in the political sphere – that are ordinarily associated with planned and sustained action. And the material problem is more easily demonstrated than the psychological one. The third and related way in which relative poverty and insecurity might have influenced the fighters' actions is by enforcing a life-style which has been partially characterized in the preceding chapter, in which public and physical confrontations with agents of the state and other adversaries were inevitable, so that people both experienced social and political relations in the most vivid visual and sensual form and were especially responsive to the aspects of KPD agitation closely associated with the *wehrhafter Kampf*, like opposition to FE and the police. This is a theme that will arise again in the discussion of other aspects of the fighters' biographies.

Where insecurity involved not simply a shifting and uncertain source of income but poverty of an extreme and catastrophic nature, we cannot afford to overlook the possible psychological effects of physical distress. It was apparent to contemporaries that bad economic conditions led to a pervasive state of 'general irritability' in working-class areas, a heightened readiness to take offence and to strike out at the nearest target.[31] There is certainly an element of this in the fighting, and particularly in the spontaneous affrays that could touch off a round of more deadly attacks.

The catastrophe nearest at hand was, of course, the Great Depression. By 1933 there was hardly a worker in Germany whose income and security had not been threatened by its devastating effects, and this is the economic circumstance that emerges most dramatically in the testimony of the streetfighters. Over fifty-seven per cent of those who named an occupation and nearly fifty-nine per cent of the total declared themselves unemployed. These figures are very high in comparison to the rates of unemployment in the labour force at large, but if the differential effects of the Depression on various trades are considered, the levels of unemployment among the streetfighters themselves become less striking, as their relation to the occupational structure of the sample grows clearer.

The mass unemployment of these years, although it struck hardest at the

least experienced and well trained, did not spare the skilled, or nominally skilled workers. In the country at large both the construction industry and the metal trades had very high rates of unemployment after 1929, the class of fitters being one of the most severely depressed occupations. In Berlin in 1933, when forty-five per cent of manual workers were unemployed, 56.8 per cent of all men employed in construction and allied fields and 52.2 per cent of those in the metal trades were out of work. When the specific trades represented within the sample are considered, the results are as follows for the city as a whole: 55.4 per cent of construction workers excluding labourers (55.1 per cent of bricklayers), 58.3 per cent of metalworkers excluding electricians (57.1 per cent of machine-fitters and 48.4 per cent of other fitters), 41.4 per cent of drivers and chauffeurs, and 51.7 per cent of 'other workers'.[32] The comparable figures for the streetfighters are 60.6 per cent (63.6 per cent), 62.5 per cent (61.7 per cent and 52.4 per cent), 52.4 per cent and 50.0 per cent respectively. These figures are not far from the norm for the trades represented. The fact that they are considerably lower than the estimates of the degree of unemployment within the KPD and the Kampfbund during this period cited in preceding chapters is not easy to interpret.

Other biographical data

Age

Whether through interrupted apprenticeship or lack of prospects in the years of 'relative stabilization' or through enforced idleness after 1929, it was the young whose existence was most precarious in Weimar Germany. It has already been suggested that the young fighters represent a significant group in terms of attitudes. In numerical terms they dominate the sample. For the purposes of comparison, two calculations of age have been made: one of the age of the subject at his first arrest for an act of political violence from 1929 to 1932[33] (Table 3) and another of his age in 1933, as the difference between 1933 and his year of birth (Table 4).

The results of the first, showing the real age of the streetfighters, suggest the importance of youth as a social condition: 268 of them, or 84.3 per cent were under thirty, and over a third of those were under twenty-one. Among the minors, the predominance of the upper three years confirms the impression of a contemporary criminologist: 'Not so much the juveniles [seventeen and under] as the young adults [*Halberwachsene*, eighteen- to twenty-year-olds] are to be found in all the outrages with which the newspapers of every political colouring are filled.'[34] The group took its character, however, not from the very young, the delinquent adolescent, but from the young adult worker; the largest single contingent was between nineteen and twenty-two. There is no clear correlation between

Table 3. *Age at first arrest*

Age	Number in age group	Thereof unemployed	Age	Number in age group	Thereof unemployed
15	2	1	36	4	3
16	2	0	37	1	1
17	5	4	38	2	2
18	22	10	39	3	1
19	32	22	40	2	1
20	30	14			
21	30	16			
22	32	19	44	1	1
23	18	13	45	1	1
24	23	17	46	1	0
25	22	9	47	1	1
26	15	8	48	2	1
27	14	6	49	1	1
28	13	9			
29	8	3	51	2	2
30	8	5	52	1	1
31	3	3	53	1	1
32	5	2			
33	2	1	55	1	1
34	5	4			
35	2	1	57	1	1

age and unemployment within the sample, however; those twenty-five and under are no more likely to be unemployed than the group as a whole. But among the individual numerically significant age-groups, the nineteen-year-olds and the twenty-three- and twenty-four-year-olds include very high proportions of unemployed.

Evidence for the age structure of the Communist movement shows that the streetfighters were considerably younger even than the inflated Party of the Depression years. The youngest contingent within a group of new members in the Zentrum district of Berlin in 1931 was that of the twenty- to twenty-five-year-olds. These made up 38.2 per cent of the total, while twenty-six- to thirty-year-olds formed another 25.6 per cent.[35] Not only do men from twenty to thirty years of age form a somewhat larger proportion of the streetfighters (213, or 67.0 per cent), but the younger of the two groups is also much more strongly represented (155 men between twenty and twenty-five), while the weight of the under-twenties and over-thirties stands in inverse proportion to their representation within the Party sample.

The defence organizations of the Communists appear to offer a closer fit, since their membership was always, on the whole, considerably younger. In the mid-1920s, when only twelve per cent of the Party membership was

Table 4. *Age in 1933*

	18–19	20–29	30–49	50–65		18–19	20–29	30–49	50–65
1. Berlin					5. Tiergarten				
Sample					Sample				
Number	7	233	69	9	Number	0	19	5	0
%	2.2	73.3	21.7	2.8	%	0	79.2	20.8	0
Census, %†	3.2	23.2	40.5	21.7	Census, %†	3.1	23.8	39.8	21.8
2. Neukölln					6. Mitte				
Sample					Sample				
Number	1	52	23	7	Number	1	10	7	1
%	1.2	62.7	27.7	8.4	%	5.3	52.6	36.8	5.3
Census, %†	3.5	23.2	40.6	22.4	Census, %†	2.9	25.8	39.3	20.9
3. Kreuzberg					7. Central Berlin*				
Sample					Sample				
Number	1	37	8	0	Number	4	113	28	2
%	2.2	80.4	17.4	0	%	2.7	76.9	19.0	1.4
Census, %†	3.0	23.3	39.3	21.6	Census, %†	8.4	23.7	39.5	21.9
4. Wedding									
Sample									
Number	2	28	5	1					
%	5.6	77.8	13.9	2.8					
Census, %†	3.5	23.3	40.4	21.5					

† of men over 14. Source: *StJB* 1934, p. 9

* Mitte, Tiergarten, Wedding, Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain, Kreuzberg

under twenty-five, twenty-one per cent of a sample of RFB leaders was twenty-three years old or younger. The RFB report of 1932 that in some districts more than half were between twenty-two and twenty-three suggests that there, as in the Party, a process of rejuvenation accompanied the crisis.[36]

The calculation of the age of the streetfighters in 1933 allows a comparison with the population at large. Since we can assume that women and children were not active in *Zusammenstoss*-violence, the base used for comparison is the age structure of the male population over fourteen. In spite of the artificial effect of raising and levelling the ages of the streetfighters the basic structure of the sample is still recognizable, with the greatest weight now in the mid to late twenties. This represents a severe distortion of age patterns within the city as a whole, where twenty- to thirty-year-olds form less than one-third, thirty- to fifty-year-olds nearly twice as great a proportion as among the streetfighters. Since variations in age distribution from one neighbourhood to the next were slight, breakdown by district shows a similar pattern of distortion in every community, although there are differences in structure between various local groups of streetfighters, possibly exaggerated by the variant sizes of local samples.

Family situation

The ages of the streetfighters are closely related to their family situations. One aspect of this, which has bearing on both the character of the individual's ties to the community and his freedom of action, is marital status (Table 5). Of the subjects, 279 provided information on their own families; 200 were single. This is more than twice the proportion of single men in the male population at large, but the distribution is characteristic of the younger age-groups so strongly represented within the sample. Sixty-three of the streetfighters had children of their own. Of these, thirteen described themselves as single (*ledig*) and one, a father of six, more ambiguously as 'free'. A further seven, although married, had children too old to have been conceived since the wedding. In some cases, particularly where the children were several years old, the interviewees may have been recording step-children or the children of a previous marriage. But taken together these circumstances seem to reflect the familiar practice among urban workers of postponed marriage and toleration of illegitimacy, a practice enforced by material constraints such as housing shortage and lack of other material resources that could make possible a planned and ordered domestic life. In Neukölln, out-of-wedlock births approached 30 per cent of live births in some years.[37]

The relative youth of most of the streetfighters makes it possible at the same time to consider them as children themselves – fifty of them stated that they were living with their parents – and thereby to place them in the

Table 5. *Marital status*

A.	Married	Single	Divorced	Widowed
Sample				
Number	72	200	6	1
%	25.8	71.7	2.2	0.4
Census, %*	62.4	31.5	2.4	3.7

B.	Single men in age group		
	Sample		Berlin 1933†
	Number of single men	% of those in age group giving status	Single men in age group, %
15–20	50	100.0	99.9
20–25	116	86.6	89.2
26–30	26	47.3	54.8
31–35	4	26.7	27.5
36–40	4	33.3	14.9

* of male population over 14. *Source*: *StJB* 1934, p. 9; 1936, p. 10

† *Source*: *StDR*, 451/2, p. 127

social history of contemporary Germany. As a group, they did not belong to the 'front generation'; only fifty-three of them were old enough to have served in the war. Rather, they were the sons of that generation, and the conflict had affected them indirectly, though deeply. Ten had lost fathers in the war, and the father of one had died in 1921 as the result of a wound received in combat. Eight others reported simply that their fathers were dead. (One was an orphan; another stated: 'parents unknown'.)

Evidence about the living arrangements of the fighters, based on a combination of their own testimony and information provided by the Berlin Directory, suggests that still more of them had suffered the loss of their fathers: twenty-three were living with their mothers, eleven of whom were named as widows, a further eighteen lived in apartments registered under the name of widows of the same name, and five single men between seventeen and twenty-seven years of age lived with female relatives not listed as widows. This is not a tremendously high figure, in view of the fact that something over seventeen per cent of heads of families in Berlin in 1933 were widowed or divorced women.[38] The special hardships suffered by the children of single women – lack of money to pay for an apprenticeship, the need to begin earning as much as possible as early as

possible – gave an extra dimension to the economic insecurity that plagued the streetfighters' generation.

Information about where other fighters were living, evidence of the shortage of cheap housing, may serve as a reminder not only of the cramped and distressed conditions in which the working class dwelt, but also of the unavoidably public and open character of the life they led. Apart from the fifty-five living with their parents, fifty lived with other relatives, one with his wife's, one with his girlfriend's family. Of one of the roadworkers prosecuted in the Kuetemeyer case, married with a three-month-old daughter, the Wedding welfare bureau reported:

> The wife lives with her parents ... B is registered as living with his parents, but sometimes sleeps in the home of his parents-in-law. Because of the unfavourable housing conditions, the couple lives during the summer in a garden-allotment in Saatwinkel [Reinickendorf], which belongs to the wife's mother.[39]

Sixty-one lived, presumably as lodgers, with people not obviously relations, and four gave taverns or pensions as their address. Two were homeless, one gave an address identified in the city directory as 'barracks', one shared a boathouse, and seven, including two of the Felseneck defendants, were living in garden allotments. Two named as their dwellings places identified by the Directory as construction sites; one of them, not, one suspects, without irony, gave his address as 'Colony "Wet Earth", Catwalk 6'.[40]

Religion

The category of information that ostensibly has the least to tell us about the social condition of the streetfighters, namely religion, none the less throws a particularly sharp light on their consciousness. 210 gave evidence on this point (Table 6). The most significant group among the streetfighters is that of the *Dissidenten*. They are overrepresented even in Neukölln, which had the highest proportion of registered dissenters in the city. This reflects very clearly the influence of radical politics, and particularly of the Communist Party, which had been leading the drive for resignation from the Churches since the early twenties. Of the delegates to the Berlin conference of the Kampfbund in 1931, seventy-seven per cent had officially turned their backs on organized religion.[41] Describing his life in gaol, the Moabit RFB-man Anton Krause wrote: 'In this block you can see a D (Dissident) hanging on almost every door – a real Communist colony.'[42]

Among those naming a religion Protestants outweighed Catholics, as was characteristic of the population of Berlin and of each of its sections. The actual representation of Catholics among the streetfighters citywide was considerably closer to the norm than that of Protestants. This was little more than half of what it would be in a representative sample, a function of the high proportion of *Dissidenten*. The relative representation of Catholics among the streetfighters varied widely from one part of the city to the next,

Table 6. *Religion*

	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	None	Other
1. Berlin					
Sample					
Number	79	16	0	113†	2††
%	37.6	7.6	0	53.8	1.0
Census, %[c]	71.1	10.4	3.8	14.2	0.5
2. Neukölln					
Sample					
Number	24	3	0	42[a]	0
%	34.8	4.3	0	60.9	0
Census, %[c]	67.9	8.3	0.9	22.2	0.7
3. Central Berlin*					
Sample					
Number	32	8	0	48	1[b]
%	36.0	9.0	0	53.9	1.1
Census, %[c]	68.8	5.4	3.9	15.8	0.5

* Mitte, Tiergarten, Wedding, Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain, Kreuzberg
† Includes 111 *Dissident*, 1 *'ohne'*, 1 *'keine'*
†† 1 *'freireligiös'*, 1 *'neu-apostolisch'*
[a] 41 *Dissident*, 1 *'keine'*
[b] *'neu-apostolisch'*
[c] Source: *StJB* 1934, p. 10

reflecting, perhaps, pre-existing patterns of confessional association among the fighters.

There are no professed Jews in the sample, although one of the murderers of Horst Wessel was described by the Nazi prosecutor as 'of non-Aryan descent'. This is understandable, in view of the largely non-proletarian character of Berlin's Jewish community, and the KPD's relative neglect of it on that account. It was not until the Nazis had taken power and introduced their racial legislation that Communist officialdom began to treat the Jews as such as one of those groups whose situation qualified them for recruitment to the fight against fascism.[43] Other evidence, though scanty, suggests that the prevailing attitude of the streetfighters towards Jews was one of routine anti-semitism, recognizing them as a special group but not extending to dogmatic racialism or indiscriminate hostility. Anton Krause's letter from prison reflects something of this:

Tell Mrs O... the Jew ... is in my cell-block, you know, the old leaseholder on the social club, who cheated the tenants out of their deposit. Now the fat cat has to clean out his own bunker like the rest of us. But what's the word, what'll he get? Probation, cf. Katzenellenbogen etc. 'Only' cheated little folk. These bandits belong up against the wall.

The Jewish boss or shyster, even the Jews at Party headquarters, were a stock object of contempt,[44] but one of the members of the inner circle of Fischerkietz activists was half Jewish, as his nickname, 'Jew-Noris', attested.

Geographical mobility

The fighters' place of birth and the length of time they had lived in Berlin should offer a key to their social condition and the strength of their local ties (Table 7). Of them, 317 named their place of birth, of whom 122, or thirty-eight per cent, had been born outside Berlin. Their birthplaces showed a distribution characteristic of Berlin immigrants. Twenty-two came from Brandenburg, seven of them from the immediate environs of Berlin, and fifty-five – the largest group – from the Prussian east: Pomerania, Silesia, East and West Prussia and Posen. Forty were from other parts of Germany, including sixteen from Central Germany, ten from the Rhineland, six from Southern Germany, and eight from Northern Germany. Four had been born in Hamburg, two in Düsseldorf, and one each in Bremen, Braunschweig, Leipzig, Chemnitz, Halle and Munich.

Unfortunately, the only published statistics available for reference are too far from the position of the sample, either chronologically or in terms of the base they choose, to be strictly comparable. The last census in which place of birth was recorded was in 1910, when it was revealed that just over forty per cent of the inhabitants of the six districts of Berlin had been born there. In the census of 1925, respondents were asked where they had been living at the outbreak of the war in August 1914. Of the three-and-a-half million Berliners who had been alive in 1914, 81.6 per cent had been living in the city then.[45] The proportion of native Berliners in the sample, sixty-two per cent, falls uncomfortably between these two figures. In view of the cumulative effects of war, revolution, inflation, stabilization, and depression, there is no reason to expect that the citywide figures for 1930–3 would be comparable to those of 1910. The results of the 1925 census are relevant only if we assume that everybody born in Berlin before 1914 and living in Berlin during the depression was also living in Berlin in both 1914 and 1925, and also that anybody not born in Berlin moved to the city after 1914.

While we must therefore reluctantly abandon the measure of representativeness in this case, it is possible to evaluate the 'settledness' of the fighters in absolute terms. Among those born in Berlin, 44 specifically named the district in which they lived as their birthplace. Of the Neuköllin men for example, thirty-two had been born in Neukölln (or Rixdorf, as it was called until 1912), four explicitly named other parts of Berlin, and nineteen stated simply 'Berlin'. In the six districts of Mitte, Tiergarten, Wedding, Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg, which together were described for administrative purposes as Berlin before 1920, seventy-

Table 7. *Place of birth and age*

	15–17	18–20	21–25	26–30	31–35	36–40	Over 40	Total
Same district of Berlin	2	22	18	6	1	0	0	49
Different district of Berlin	0	5	11	6	1	1	0	24
'Berlin'	7	40	40	22	8	3	2	122
Suburbs	0	3	3	1	0	0	0	7
Brandenburg	0	1	11	0	1	0	4	17
Eastern regions*	0	10	23	11	4	2	5	55
Central Germany†	0	2	5	6	1	1	1	16
Other parts of Germany	0	0	12	6	1	4	1	24
Outside Germany	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3

* Pomerania, Silesia, East and West Prussia, Posen
† Saxony, Thuringia

six out of the 147 fighters had been born in 'Berlin', as against twelve from other districts and fifty-eight from out-of-town – probably, though not certainly, a sign that they were still living in the district where they were born.

There is a distinct relationship between 'settledness' and age. The younger the streetfighters were, the more likely they were to have been born in the city. Of the ninety-nine men between eighteen and thirty born outside of Berlin, moreover, sixteen were living with their parents and sixteen with relatives who might have been their parents. Nine gave other evidence of having been in Berlin for several years, while only sixteen gave clear evidence of having come to the city alone or since growing up. Assuming that the fighters were in any sense representative of the population at large, some such pattern was inevitable; simply by virtue of their age, older people are more likely to have had the opportunity to move about the country. In themselves, however, the relatively close local ties of the young people who form the bulk of the sample appear to confirm the points raised in Chapter 6 about the neighbourhood context of political violence: the defence of the *Kietz* was the business not of anxious immigrants, but of embattled natives.

Delinquency and deviance

Finally, the documents provide some other, not easily quantifiable but nonetheless telling indicators, which offer further insight into the social background to the fighting. The first of these is criminality. The perception of contemporary observers, that there was a significant degree of overlap between political and non-political delinquency, has already been discussed. I have tried to suggest that *in so far as the police records of the fighters reflected an objective reality*, both forms of delinquency were manifestations of a set of values and postures shared by organizations like the cliques, which were both actually disruptive and officially labelled by the authorities as sociopathic, and the Communist groups compelled by policy and necessity alike to operate within the working-class milieu as it was. Of the streetfighters surveyed, eighty-seven had previously been arrested for offences that were not obviously political. There is a very wide margin for misinterpretation here, given the tendency of the judicial authorities to criminalize political acts. Grabbing a bunch of leaflets from the hand of a political adversary might eventually appear as 'theft' in the individual's file, or selling literature as 'unlicensed peddling'. If we nevertheless choose to read at least some previous convictions as a guide to the fighters' 'pre-political' condition, it is important to distinguish, on the one hand, between actual crimes of 'comportment' – crimes of violence against persons and property – and actual economic crimes, committed for personal gain, and, on the other, between the actual incidence of crime (of which police records

are a notoriously poor reflection) and the fact of the individual's coming to the attention of the police.

The crimes of 'comportment' merge with minor offences against representatives and agents of the state. They can be seen as reflecting both culturally influenced styles of action and interaction and the kinds of experiences that the streetfighters had of the exercise of state power by virtue of their social situation. In individual cases, they included such offences as assault and battery, damage to property, arms violations, disturbing the peace, constraint, extortion, threats, trespassing, resisting arrest, freeing of prisoners, insulting an officer. These charges might arise from the characteristic activities of delinquent gangs, as well as being routine in cases of riot or *Zusammenstoss*-violence. Beyond this, however, an ordinary altercation with the ever-present and unpopular policeman, or a spontaneous outburst of temper in the labour exchange might result in prosecution under one of these headings.[46]

The class of economic offences tells us something more about the fighters' material way of life. There appear several whose 'delinquent' character is manifestly arbitrary: begging, vagrancy, gambling, and peddling without a licence. These are occupational crimes of the financially insecure and the non-specialist poor. The occupational offence of the carter, cruelty to animals, appears more than once, and the convictions of the older fighters include the delict of the soldier in arms, desertion, as well as the more long-term occupation of pimping. The number of offences whose sole aim was personal gain points to a situation in which low wages or unemployment made the search for a second source of income imperative. One of the youths prosecuted following the incident at the Pharus-Säle in 1927 (see above, p. 19), a nineteen-year-old, had recently given up a job as a machinist in an engineering works and was receiving unemployment support as a council worker:

> When it is pointed out to the youth that his elegant clothes do not tally with the low income that he has had for years ... he admits that he has other things going besides the unemployment money, he won't say what kind of things ... is seriously warned to make an effort to get work. We have the impression that the youth is a very sharp and enterprising person.[47]

Pilferage and embezzlement, characteristic and traditional expedients of transport workers, warehousemen and other casual labourers,[48] are represented here, as are burglary, robbery, receiving stolen goods and fraud. Fifty-one of the streetfighters had been convicted of one, many of several of these. It is worth noting in this context that the streetfighters with previous convictions are not manifestly drawn from the 'residuum' of the proletariat, the casual unsettled groups traditionally identified as the 'dangerous classes'. Our occupational categories A, B, C, 'workers' and non-industrial occupations are represented among them in roughly the

same proportions as in the sample as a whole with only a very slight bias towards the lower classes: 27, 19, 16, 21 and 4 respectively. This appears to confirm the suggestion above, that the streetfighters belonged to a section of the working class in which nominal distinctions of status veiled common conditions of demoralization, insecurity and impoverishment.

To what extent can the fact of having been arrested itself be regarded as a marker of social position? It is well known that the relative visibility of certain groups in the population and the expectations that the police and public opinion have of them affects the rate at which they come under suspicion of having committed crimes or come into conflict with the police.[49] In Berlin in the 1920s and 1930s, those most likely to suffer from this kind of discrimination – apart from political groups – were groups of men, especially young men, and people conspicuously badly or unusually dressed. In addition, the more time one spent on the streets or in the parks, the more likely one was to come up against the police. And again, we know of specific practices in the reporting of crime that discriminated against the least well-off. In Berlin during the First World War, a survey of employers revealed that most of them would overlook minor criminal acts on the part of apprentices, but unskilled labourers would be both dismissed and reported to the police if they were caught committing or were known to have committed punishable offences.[50] In fact, the relative vulnerability of young people to criminalization is not unequivocally confirmed by the case of the streetfighters; their median age and median year of birth both make them older, as a group, than the sample as a whole (twenty-five and 1905 as against twenty-three and 1908). On the other hand, thirty-eight of the eighty-seven had been born outside Berlin, a somewhat higher proportion than in the sample as a whole. This accords with contemporary reports that there was a disproportionate number of immigrants among convicted criminals, and especially juveniles, a circumstance that criminologists explained both by the relative poverty of migrants and by the fact that, being unfamiliar with the city and its ways, they found it harder to escape arrest than their native confederates.[51]

Another characteristic of the streetfighters that is interesting as much for the fact that such information exists as for its intrinsic value is the incidence of disease and disorder – physical, emotional and domestic. One Neukölln AJG member was crippled on his left side, another pleaded epilepsy when it was proven that he had been at the scene of a fight. The fathers of three were described as heavy drinkers, and of one Richard Most the child welfare bureau reported: '... the situation of the family, economic and otherwise, makes uninterrupted care and supervision necessary...' He had been sent off to a home in the country at the age of eleven and returned little improved; one of the Wedding activists had been placed in *Fürsorgeerziehung* at eleven and been through ten institutions and twenty escape attempts before he was

finally released at twenty-one – on the very eve of the Depression. Arthur Hagen, Neukölln, suffered from every possible disability: his father drank, there was conflict in the family, attacks of brain fever meant that he had to attend a remedial school, and finally he was relegated to the FE.[52] Otto Singer, known in Kreuzberg as a leader of 'ace lads', was known to his social workers as a bedwetter. In the words of the same agency, one of Singer's neighbours was 'easily excitable'; another was characterized as 'intellectually limited', a third 'gives the impression of an intellectually very inferior person'.[53] Even the KPD advocate in the Richardstrasse case thought it tactically worthwhile to emphasize the emotional problems of his clients – the functional illiteracy of one, the adolescent suicide attempt of another.[54]

In these cases, to relate the observations of the authorities is not merely, perhaps not even, to record the actual pathology of life in the working-class slum. The concern to excuse and extenuate was as much a part of the social worker's brief as of the defence lawyer's.[55] And, again, it would be a mistake to dismiss the argument that those young people who were caught and tried, whether guilty or not, were most likely to be the ones who were slowest on their feet or most notoriously troubled and troublesome. Finally, however, the very fact that the tragi-comic trivia of everyday life were subject to such scrutiny was a condition that these streetfighters shared with anyone who had had dealings with the law or called on the aid of the social services. It reflects the real limitations on their freedom of action that they encountered as members of an impoverished and economically dependent class, and as such is both a marker of their political situation and a measure of their political powerlessness.

The biographical data on the streetfighters reflect with some consistency the character of the *wehrhafter Kampf* as a fight to maintain or recover actual power in the neighbourhoods. It is the *location* of the fighting, rather than its roots in a radical analysis of politics, that seems to determine the character of the participants. This is apparent not only in the youth and relative settledness of the streetfighters, but also in their occupations. While the type of the traditional political or industrial militant is not entirely absent, the sample is dominated by those for whom the neighbourhood was at least as important a context for the experience and interpretation of social relations as the workplace. For some, like construction workers, some drivers and metalworkers in small shops, the street and the workplace were identical. For the many with histories of irregular employment, whether as a function of individual circumstances or, as in the case of metalworkers, of the destabilization of whole trades, presence in the streets and neighbourhoods was the corollary to absence from the workplace. This was most obviously true for those who were unemployed at the moment of being

arrested and interviewed. It has been pointed out that the streetfighters were no more unemployed than their occupations would lead us to expect, but the fact that they belonged to trades which, even in the Depression, suffered relatively high rates of unemployment is itself significant. And absence from the workplace was more than simply a matter of location. Unemployment generated a sense of grievance, of course. But, equally important, it meant that both people's understanding of whom they were fighting and what they were fighting for and their experience of how they could fight were bounded by the alternatives provided by the neighbourhood. Alongside workers in construction and transport for whom the exercise of physical force was part and parcel of economic activity, we have found others for whom it represented the only instrument available after the loss of the means of applying economic or political pressure. Consideration of the fighters' day-to-day relationship with the state and relative experience of its efficacy in defending their interests produces a similar picture: the streetfighters include some, like transport and casual workers, whose occupational traditions of petty crime set them in natural opposition to the police. At the same time, it appears that many other fighters had had confrontations with the police and public welfare agencies, with at best ambivalent results, by virtue simply of being relatively poor and economically unstable.

If the overwhelming impression given by the social and occupational histories of the streetfighters is one of economic distress and, above all, insecurity, it is clear that the fighters were more than *Lumpenproletarier*. By any definition of the term, *lumpen* – or such associated expressions as 'mass worker' or 'the unemployed' *tout court* – can hardly do justice to men whose descriptions of themselves would, in a previous generation, have marked them as members of the stable middle to upper ranks of the working class. The fact that people like this were suffering as they were points to significant, large-scale changes in the shape of political life. The reorganization of major industries involved the destruction of existing traditions of political organization and action within the factories. Rationalization provided an opportunity for the removal of shop-floor militants, while deskilling undermined the sense and reality of occupational community which made militancy effective, and the new patterns and tempos of work severely restricted the possibilities for discussion and action at the workplace. Even among the historically militant metalworkers, the decline in trade-union membership in the mid-1920s suggests that the young workers so strongly represented among the streetfighters stepped into a political vacuum when they entered the workplace.[56] In their work situations, the cardinal grievance of insecurity coincided with the withdrawal of the traditional political and economic means of response. And, of course, many found little or no work at all; rationalization brought chronic

unemployment and underemployment to large sections of the labour force. The conditions were thereby created for a general shift in the instruments and objects of radical action as well as, most obviously, in its location : from the strike to the demonstrative or coercive use of physical force, from actions against the wielders of economic power in the private sector to direct pressure on representatives of the state, either as agents of official violence or as administrators of a new kind of economic dependence, from the workplace to the neighbourhood. In examining the development of political violence in working-class neighbourhoods we may see, beyond the desperate acts of a section of a militant minority party, the signs of the breaking of the mould of working-class politics.

8

Conclusion: Communist politics in the Weimar Republic

The streetfighting of the Depression years was one consequence of a shift in the bases of working class and popular politics. The changes were both material and organizational; new kinds of political movements appeared as the economic and social structures through which the old ones had operated broke down. The migration of working-class radicalism from the workplace to the neighbourhood was a function equally of the effects of employment patterns and the beginnings of the welfare state on the way collective interests were structured and perceived and of the specific politics of the radical working-class party, the KPD. The terror of the SA, as one of a whole range of grievances peculiar to the neighbourhood and a threat specifically directed against working-class radicalism, evoked a response with the weapons familiar to the neighbourhood. There the active use of physical force, by bailiffs, policemen, 'criminals' and ordinary people was a form in which power was commonly exercised; and violence gained in importance as the Depression diminished the workers' capacity to participate in the cash nexus.

This helps to explain why the neighbourhoods became an object of the political fight and why, once the NSDAP had raised its challenge, the fight became an increasingly bloody one. It does not explain why the KPD found it impossible to transform 'individual terror' into 'mass terror', except insofar as the use of economic force through boycotts, rent-strikes and protest strikes was intrinsic to the conception of 'mass terror'. I have argued that the same culture of the neighbourhood that encouraged the use of physical force dictated that violence would be organized in a particular way – that the defence of the community would be 'delegated' by default to small groups of mostly young men. There is also a *prima facie* common sense in the explicit and implicit arguments of the streetfighters: that the 'individual terror' of the strongest, most daring and most mobile members of the community was a natural and on the whole effective way of preventing and avenging Nazi attacks and that the toughness of the SA, which attracted some young men nearly as often as it threatened others,

had to be met by an equally visible toughness on the part of the Communists. But these practices and arguments represent short-term political strategies, self-evident only in the context of a particular culture; they referred back to that culture and tended to reinforce it. And that culture was essentially a defensive one, one that made it possible to survive in wretched circumstances but no more. The aim of the KPD was always to transform the culture of self-defence into an offensive revolutionary movement, and its efforts so to politicize its own membership were reflected in challenges to the categories in which its members thought (as on the question of sexual rôles) as well as the more common exhortations to action. In Berlin, a sustained practice of mass terror under Communist leadership would arguably have represented such a breakthrough. Among the reasons why this did not happen we can count the elements of unclarity and inconsistency in the Party line itself, including a readiness on the part of KPD leaders and propagandists to appeal directly to the simple urge to 'put the boot in'. But the failure of the policy of mass terror had as much to do with wider social and political circumstances as with the terms in which the KPD presented them to its followers.

If we consider the incidents that the KPD itself held up as models of mass terror at a critical period, those in Braunschweig and Nowawes in the autumn of 1931, it is clear that their principal basis was the *ad hoc* cooperation of sections of the working class – which usually meant the realization of a local 'united front' between Social Democrats and Communists. This in turn depended on the histories and structures of the local workforces, the relative influence of the two working-class parties and, not least, the local character and composition of the state. In Nowawes, an industrial town of some 27,000 people in the suburbs of Greater Berlin, what impressed the KPD leadership most was the carrying out of a relatively effective protest strike following the murder of two young workers by the SA. But what seems most significant is that although Nowawes was the location of considerable private industrial concerns the protest strikes took place overwhelmingly in municipal offices and in locations where the unemployed were engaged in public works projects, key areas of radical and Communist influence.[1]

On the situation in Braunschweig, where the KPD leadership praised the combination of physical defence on the streets and protest strikes, we have more information, and the determinants of action appear more complex. Braunschweig was a much smaller city than Berlin; it had a more heavily concentrated working-class population with a large component of highly skilled metalworkers, which had before the War developed a strong Social Democratic movement. This was a workforce, moreover, with a history of independent solidaristic action, a characteristic most notable among Braunschweig's young workers; for example, the imposition of a com-

pulsory savings plan for workers eighteen and under during the War evoked large-scale strikes in Braunschweig, while in Berlin the only sign of discontent was the widespread passive resistance of individuals in collusion with their parents. As a result of this tradition there was arguably a significant middle ground between the SPD right wing and the KPD on which militant workers could continue to act. Perhaps more important, throughout the 1920s the KPD in Braunschweig was both relatively weak and ill-disciplined by the standards of the Party Central; in 1929 the local KJVD suffered mass expulsions rather than accept the increasing formal suppression of internal discussion.[2] There therefore existed the preconditions for cooperation among the members of the labour movement. But the spur to collective action against the assault of the massed SA was provided by the fact that since September 1931 the NSDAP had been in power in Braunschweig; the link between state terror and SA terror was self-evident and in the face of a common enemy the workers had no recourse except to one another.

In the light of these examples, it is clear that the voluntaristic conviction of the KPD leadership, that if only all Communists did exactly as they were told the Party could transform the situation single handed, was a dangerous illusion. The ways in which the Party even sabotaged the practical realization of the united front by insisting on its correct implementation 'from below' are notorious. But we need to consider, too, how the terms in which the KPD interpreted the political situation and the images of themselves that it presented to its actual and potential supporters, to the extent that they gained credibility from the experience of sections of the working class, did influence people's actions, and also what that implied for the success or failure of its policies. Here the question of the relationship between the working class and the state is crucial.

When the KPD organized and agitated in the neighbourhoods and around areas of working-class concern outside the workplace, it entered an arena in which members of the working class confronted the state directly, in the person of the agents of the police, the legal system and the welfare services. The consciousness of this is apparent in the Party's campaigns around issues of social policy and public welfare, which were elevated to the status of a major aspect of KPD agitation after the Unemployment Insurance Act was passed in 1927.[3] And it became explicit in the Comintern's plans for organizing proto-insurrectionary movements in the 'Third Period'. This was entirely in keeping with the aims and character of the KPD; as a revolutionary party, it had to be preoccupied with questions of the control of state power, and all its activities aimed at simultaneously making the people aware of the character of the state and undermining its capacity to function. Sometimes this policy dictated a posture of sheer obstructionism and sometimes it meant that the KPD took on the task

of calling for specific reforms to make government more subject to workers' control.

The KPD thereby came to speak for the members of the working-class who, by virtue of being young or unsteadily employed, had to deal with the representatives of the state, as adversaries and as arbiters of a relationship of economic dependence, at least as often as they faced an employer in industrial conflicts. For people whose principal frame of reference was the neighbourhood, moreover, the Party's theoretical analysis may well have had a certain credibility, since it addressed specifically political relations and events in the broadly political realm of the streets. I have suggested that the link that was regularly made in KPD propaganda between Nazis and the police was the result of deliberate calculation, but it resonated with both a long-standing hatred of the police and the current perception that the SA never appeared *en masse* in a working-class neighbourhood without police protection. That is, even where the police did not openly side with the Nazis, they were themselves old enemies of the radical working class, and the presence of the SA always brought with it their hostile presence. By the same token, the 'social fascism' thesis, which was, after all, about the behaviour of the Social Democrats in government, meant something in areas, like Prussia, where Social Democrats were in charge of the administration of the police and social welfare and to people who were on the receiving end of that administration. The idea of a single fascist front, Nazis–police–state administration–SPD, thus confirmed, might actually have given individual streetfighters the sense of being engaged in a mission much wider than mere self-defence, providing the bridge between revolutionary hopes and beating the fascists.

In the long run, however, the KPD's theoretical understanding of the nature of working-class politics involved the whole Communist movement in a series of contradictions. Three assumptions underlay the arguments and analysis of the Party's spokesmen, each of which, as used within the movement, served to obscure the actual prospects and limitations of Communist activity. First, in spite of the Party's insurrectionary heritage, the idea that the state as such could be either an independent object of struggle or a source of material and social goods worth fighting for was overshadowed by the orthodox view of capitalist society as a system in which the state administered the affairs of the ruling class (economically defined). In KPD theory, the economic and political spheres were indistinguishable – although this did not prevent KPD spokesmen from talking about the transition from economic to political struggles, sometimes with distinctly surreal results. The same functionalist view, of course, made possible the 'social fascism' thesis. The second, and related premise of KPD politics, was the definition of the working class exclusively as a social group essentially generated by capitalist production relations, which experiences

both common interest and common strength at the point of production (in the factories) and is therefore the motor for transformation of society. Finally, the Communist Party defined itself as the party of the working class, or at any rate of its most progressive and in that sense most representative sections.

Now, each of these premises has a long and respectable tradition; each of them continues to generate serious discussion among Communists and non-Communists alike. For the KPD they became problematic because in the language of the Comintern they were used equally with analytical and with programmatic force. This meant that there was always a danger of slippage in the arguments of the KPD leadership between statements about what the Party was doing and exhortations about what the Party ought to be doing, and the net result was at best ambivalence and uncertainty, at worst illusions about what was actually happening. To be more concrete: the KPD won a significant and largely working-class constituency during the closing years of the Weimar Republic by appealing to experiences and perceptions in the sphere of politics and by agitating around particular kinds of interests; these were peculiar to sections of the working class but perceived as arising out of social relations outside the workplace, and especially out of the relationship between some workers and the state. At one level, this appeal represented a conscious strategy on the part of Communist tacticians. At another, there was an awareness that this was happening *and* that it contradicted traditional formulae; this is apparent both in the Comintern leaders' ambivalence towards the unemployed agitation and in the repeated campaigns for 'bolshevization' and official anxieties about their failure. At the same time, the tendency of the Party's analytical discourse was to deny not only the utility or legitimacy but even the reality of such perceived interests. As we have seen in *Die Rote Fahne's* portrayal of the cliques, the official vocabulary of the KPD hardly had the words to describe working-class militants who not only were outside the ranks of the Party but whose collective existence depended on their not working. Other students of the KPD have argued that the relative insensitivity that the Party displayed to special needs, once it had mobilized them, made it difficult to retain the allegiance of new recruits; this must be one explanation for its relative failure to appeal to women, although they constituted a significant interest-group within our definition – as the KPD's militantly radical stance on women's issues acknowledged.[4] At least as important is the way that the 'slippage' in KPD arguments, combined with a Hegelian optimism that allowed the leadership to see signs of progress in every setback, encouraged the Party to overestimate not only its own capacity, but its current strength. The premises of Communist politics made it possible to celebrate every success for the KPD as a success for the working class, and that in turn implied an access of strength to a class already in a

position to take control of the means of production and thereby of the whole economic and political system. At the same time, that is, as the Party deplored its actual weakness in the factories and expressed doubts about the prospects for action outside, it fêted its neighbourhood constituency as that very working class that was the motor of social change. The Party also attempted to bridge the contradiction by seeking analogues to the factories in the everyday lives of the workers – again, usually in state institutions like the schools, the labour exchanges and the welfare bureaux. But the relationship between workers and the state within and outside these institutions was a distinctly more unequal one than that between organized labour and the employer, because it rested on varying degrees of physical coercion over whose use the state had a monopoly in theory and a very considerable control in practice. The Party's refusal to acknowledge the force of interests arising outside the workplace as a basis for solidaristic working-class action made it difficult to assess accurately the possibilities of such action and in particular blinded the leadership to the fact that workers could be *both* solidly opposed to a common adversary and relatively weak.

This problem was directly relevant to the practice of the *wehrhafter Kampf*. Although the Communist fighters might succeed in beating the Nazis locally, in the middle and longer terms the fight against the SA almost invariably brought them into confrontation with the police and the judiciary system – a fight which they could not hope to win. The youths who protested against the Central Committee's Resolution of November 1931 were almost certainly correct in their view that the KPD leadership was more acutely aware of its own relationship to the state – its legality – than of the risk of injury and arrest that they, as militant Communists, ran every day. It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the wider consequences of the streetfighting, but we know that it ended in anger and disillusionment for some rank and file members before 1933, and it is possible that wider circles of the working class drew from it the lesson that the battle for the streets could not be won.[5] If that was the case, then the functions of SA terror may be said to have been just those the KPD leadership warned against: to draw the fighting energies of the militants away from the traditional foci of working-class action and onto the terrain on which the proletariat was at its weakest. What the KPD only dimly perceived, however, was that while the terror was a real source of anxiety, and the terrain on which it operated an intrinsic aspect of working-class experience, the alternative – work in the factory – was no longer either an experience common to the whole working class nor a basis of collective strength even for the employed.

When Hitler was made Chancellor in 1933 the movement that had inscribed the militant fight against National Socialism on its banners was exhausted and confused. If the coalescence of the fascist party with the state

were itself sufficient to inspire spontaneous unity in the labour movement, Germany ought then to have witnessed a reaction at least as unified and vigorous as that of Social Democratic and Communist workers in Braunschweig fifteen months earlier. But Hitler's was a legal, bloodless coup, and the leaders of the working-class parties, trapped as they were by their own logic, continued to guide the actions of the labour movement. The Social Democratic leaders hesitated to precipitate a civil war, which they were probably correct in thinking the left could not win. The KPD leadership refused to acknowledge that any significant change had occurred. Georg Glaser, who had arrived misty-eyed in Red Berlin three years earlier, remembers:

> Dead men were found in the surrounding forests, and no one dared to know anything about them. People disappeared without a sound, and their best friends did not have the courage to ask where they had gone. Only very rarely did a scream, a gruesome rumour ... make itself heard; they were paid less notice than everyday traffic accidents.
>
> The New Age came silently and invisibly. The only thing one could feel was the emptiness that each of its footsteps left behind, like the emptiness of a bookshelf, from which all the books have suddenly disappeared.
>
> 1933 we saw the machine against which all our weapons were useless roll towards us and roar past a whole summer long, and we thought the attack would never end.[6]

After the brawling uncertainties of the Depression years, the events of 1933 ushered in a period of relative silence in Berlin, as in most German cities. With the political leaders of the working class imprisoned, in exile or underground, heightened police repression and the enforced return to full employment, the forms and arenas of resistance to fascism were bound to change in any case. New research is turning up more and more examples to contradict the still potent image of the proletariat's passive acquiescence to National Socialism, especially cases of collective action at the workplace.[7] Outside the factories, in the battle for the streets, the Nazis appeared to have won. Significantly, the forms of working-class resistance in the neighbourhoods continued as before, though on a much smaller scale: the activities of small groups of mostly young people on the one hand and on the other, occasional bursts of collective action on the part of whole communities, in direct response to some extreme provocation. KPD cells continued to operate, now more than ever conspiratorially, until the majority of them were liquidated in the mid-1930s.[8] After a few months in 1933, when the Nazi police authorities boasted of having wiped out juvenile crime, the cliques reappeared in Berlin, some of them obviously cover-organizations for Communist youth groups and others simply the well-known hiking clubs of the slums. By the middle of World War II, the Gestapo had identified the youth gangs of Germany's cities as bearers of a form of opposition that expressed itself in physical attacks on the Hitler Youth and could be dealt

with only through long periods of detention in concentration camps.[9] In late 1933, the residents of Wedding could still be moved to hurl flowerpots when they heard the cry 'Red Front' and saw a mass of brown shirts; and in March 1943 women living near the Rosenthaler Platz (Wedding) staged a public protest against the deportation of local Jews.[10] The new régime's determination to face down the sullen resentment of the old neighbourhoods was expressed in the renaming of Friedrichshain after Horst Wessel and in the special gusto with which the town planners turned to demolishing Berlin's rotten housing and clearing its allotment garden colonies after 1933.[11] But the fact that after four years of bloody battles 'Red Berlin' could answer its 'conquerors' with no more than sullen resentment and the old familiar mechanisms of collective self-defence reflects the failures of the party that claimed to speak for the *Kietz*.

Notes

Notes to Preface

1 This is the approach of the works that are still the classics in KPD historiography: Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt a.M., 1969); Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt a.M., 1969); Siegfried Bahne, *Die KPD und das Ende von Weimar* (Frankfurt a.M./New York, 1976); Horst Duhnke, *Die KPD von 1933 bis 1945* (Köln, 1972), especially Chapter 1.

2 One example of this is Photios A. Kalambokis, 'Soziologische Aspekte der kommunistischen These vom Sozialfaschismus' (Unpublished Dissertation, Frankfurt a.M., 1967). The critical analysis of the theory and practice of the KPD has been informed and inspired during the last decade by the work of Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (Frankfurt a.M., 1973). Cf. also the work of Nicos Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship* (London, 1974), which has been influential among English-speaking scholars.

3 Eva Cornelia Schöck, *Arbeitslosigkeit und Rationalisierung* (Frankfurt a.M./New York, 1977); Uta Stolle, *Arbeiterpolitik im Betrieb* (Frankfurt a.M./New York, 1980); James Wickham, 'Social Fascism and the division of the working-class movement', *Capital and Class*, VII (1979), 1–65.

4 Cf. Rose-Marie Huber-Koller, 'Die kommunistische Erwerbslosenbewegung in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik', in *Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie* 10 (Frankfurt a.M., 1977), p. 127; Silvia Kontos, *Die Partei kämpft wie ein Mann* (Basel/Frankfurt a.M., 1979), p. 243; Atina Grossman, 'Abortion and economic crisis: the 1931 campaign against §218 in Germany', *New German Critique*, XIV (Spring 1978), 119–38.

Notes to Chapter 1

1 Works on this period, with special reference to the activities of the KPD and the radical left include: A.J. Ryder, *The German Revolution of 1918* (Cambridge, 1967); George Eliasberg, *Der Ruhrkrieg von 1920* (Bonn, 1973); Erhard Lucas, *Märzrevolution im Ruhrgebiet* (Frankfurt a.M., 1970); Richard Lowenthal, 'The Bolshevisation of the Spartacus League', in David Footman (ed.), *International Communism* (London, 1960), pp. 23–71; D.W. Morgan, *The Socialist Left and the German Revolution* (Ithaca, New York, 1975); Werner T. Angress, *Stillborn Revolution: the Communist bid for power in Germany 1921–1923* (Princeton, N.J., 1963).

2 For examples of such complaints against the Communists: *VW* 29 March 1923 (B), 9 May 1923 (B), 11 May 1924 (A), 3 January 1929 (B).
3 The term is that of Gerhard Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik* (München, 1976).
4 Gotthard Jasper, 'Zur innerpolitischen Lage in Deutschland im Herbst 1929', *VfZ*, VIII (1960), 280.
5 On these groups see, most recently, James M. Diehl, *Paramilitary Politics in the Weimar Republic* (Bloomington, Ind., 1977).
6 Schöck, pp. 75ff.; Stolle, pp. 187ff.; Ludwig Preller, *Sozialpolitik in der Weimarer Republik* (Reprint, Kronberg/Düsseldorf, 1978), p. 336; Theodor Geiger, *Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes* (Stuttgart, 1932), p. 96.
7 Preller, pp. 363ff. and *passim*.
8 For a synthesis of the growing literature on this theme, see Larry Eugene Jones, 'The dissolution of the bourgeois party system in the Weimar Republic', in Richard Bessel and E.J. Feuchtwanger (eds.), *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany* (London, 1981), pp. 268–88.
9 Werner Jochmann, 'Brünings Deflationspolitik und der Untergang der Weimarer Republic', in Dirk Stegmann *et al.* (eds.', *Industrielle Gesellschaft und politisches System* (Bonn/Berlin, 1978), pp. 97–112. Cf. Werner Conze, 'Die politischen Entscheidungen in Deutschland 1929–1933', in Werner Conze and Hans Raupach (eds.), *Die Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise des deutschen Reiches 1929/33* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 176–252.
10 Adolf Ehrt, *Bewaffneter Aufstand!* (Berlin/Leipzig, 1933), p. 166; *RF* 21 November 1931; *Der NSDFB (Stahlhelm)* (Berlin, 1935), pp. 4f.; Karl Rohe, *Das Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold* (Düsseldorf, 1966), p. 342.
11 Ehrt, p. 166; cf. H.R. Knickerbocker, *Germany – Fascist or Soviet?* (London, 1932), pp. 38f.; Rote Hilfe Deutschlands, *Schluss mit dem SA-Terror* (Berlin, [1932]), pp. 7f.; cf. *RF* 10 July 1932, 21 November 1931; Rohe, p. 342.
12 FES, Nachlass Severing, 63/2. Cf. 'Der Preussische Minister des Innern, II.1272', 8 July 1930, LAK 403/16797, p.1; 'Der Regierungspräsident, Koblenz, Ia.3 Nr. 1406', 12 December 1931 (responding to Erlass II.1272 of 8 December 1931 of the Prussian Interior Minister), LAK 403/16798, p. 267.
13 *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, vol. 445, 1602ff. The KPD speaker in the debate noted the deaths of 101 workers 'in the past weeks and months'.
14 *Schulthess*, 1931, p. 243. Cf. Otto Braun, *Von Weimar zu Hitler* (New York, 1940), p. 319; Carl Severing, *Mein Lebensweg*. Bd.II: *Im Auf und Ab der Republik* (Köln, 1950), p. 287.
15 'Zusammenstellung der in den Monaten Oktober und November 1931 vorgekommenen politischen Gewalttaten im Reich', Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg, I, 193/343. (I am grateful to Hartmann Wunderer, Kassel, for making a copy of this document available to me.)
16 'Übersicht über Todesfälle bei politischen Ausschreitungen vom 1. Januar bis Ende August 1932', LAK 403/16798, pp. 619ff. Cf. *Preussen contra Reich vor dem Staatsgerichtshof* (Berlin, 1933), pp. 14ff.
17 Heinrich Bennecke, *Hitler und die SA* (München/Wien, 1962), pp. 238f.; Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (München, 1935), p. 550. Cf. Wolfgang Sauer, 'Die Mobilmachung der Gewalt', in Karl Dietrich Bracher *et al.*, *Die nationalsozialistische Machtergriefung* (Köln/Opladen, 1962), pp. 830ff.
18 *RGBl* I (1930), Nr. 32, I (1931), Nrs. 11, 34, 53, 67, 79, I (1932), Nr. 19; Preller, p. 452.
19 *RGBl* I (1932), Nrs. 22, 26, 36, 54.
20 For accounts of this incident and its background, see *inter alia*: Severing, pp.

346ff.; Lothar Danner, *Ordnungspolizei Hamburg* (Hamburg, 1958), pp. 236f.; Jan Valtin [Richard Krebs], *Out of the Night* (New York, 1941), pp. 421ff. For the official report on the incident: Der Regierungspräsident in Schleswig, J. Nr. I P.P. 6, 17 July 1932, to Prussian Minister of the Interior, FES, Nachlass Severing, 64/8.

21 *RGBl* I (1932), Nr. 48; *Preussen contra Reich*, pp. 482ff.

22 *Preussen contra Reich, passim.*

23 Cf. Thilo Vogelsang, *Reichswehr, Staat und NSDAP* (Stuttgart, 1962), pp. 333f., 372f., 484f.

24 Report of the Landrat, Glogau, 10 June 1932, BAK NS26/516.

25 *StJB* 1927, pp. 8f., 1928, p. 24; *StDR* 462/3, p. 9. Cf. Gustav Böss, *Berlin von heute* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 10f.

26 Hsi-huey Liang, 'Lower-class immigrants in Wilhelmine Berlin', *Central European History*, III (1970), 94–111; Werner Hegemann, *Das steinerne Berlin* (Braunschweig, 1979), pp. 221ff.

27 Hegemann, p. 335; F. Rosenthal, 'Klein-Heim – oder kein Heim', *Proletarische Sozialpolitik*, II (1929), 47.

28 On Zille's art and career, see Winfried Ranke, *Vom Milljöh ins Milieu* (Hannover, 1979).

29 Günther Dehn, *Die alte Zeit, die vorigen Jahre* (München, 1962), p. 167.

30 Peter Czada, *Die Berliner Elektroindustrie in der Weimarer Zeit* (Berlin, 1969), Chapter III; Annemarie Lange, *Das wilhelminische Berlin* (East Berlin, 1967), pp. 110ff.; *Bauen in Berlin 1900–1964* (Berlin, 1964).

31 *VW* 1 January 1927 (A), 22 February 1927 (A); Preller, pp. 286ff., 485f.; *The Rural Exodus in Germany* (London, 1933), pp. 51ff.; R. Heberle and F. Meyer, *Die Grosstädte im Strome der Binnenwanderung* (Leipzig, 1937), p. 20; *StJB* 1931, p. 14, 1933, p. 19, 1934, p. 9.

32 *Berlin. Historische Stadtgestalt und Stadterneuerung* (Berlin, 1975), pp. 33ff.

33 Helmut Bleiber, 'Die Moabiter Unruhen 1910', *ZfG*, III (1955), 173–211.

34 Annemarie Lange, *Berlin zur Zeit Bebels und Bismarcks* (East Berlin, 1972), pp. 134ff.; Hegemann, p. 234.

35 Lange, *Berlin*, pp. 730ff.; Lange, *Das wilhelminische Berlin*, p. 409; Carl Schorske, *German Social Democracy 1905–1917* (New York, 1972), pp. 91ff.

36 Cited in Otto Rühle, *Illustrierte Kultur- und Sittengeschichte des Proletariats* (Reprint, Frankfurt a.M., 1971), p. 434. Cf. James S. Roberts, 'Wirtshaus und Politik in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung', in Gerhard Huck (ed.), *Sozialgeschichte der Freizeit* (Wuppertal, 1980), pp. 123–39.

37 Weber, I, 368f.; *StJB* 1933, p. 262.

38 Georg K. Glaser, *Geheimnis und Gewalt. Ein Bericht* (Frankfurt a.M., 1956), p. 42.

39 *RF* 5 March 1930.

40 Karl Baedeker, *Berlin and its Environs* (London, 1923), pp. 165f.; Eduard Bernstein, *Die Geschichte der Berliner Arbeiterbewegung*, II (Berlin 1907); *StJB* 1921, p. 886, 1925, pp. 108, 111, 1927, p. 9, 1933, p. 264.

41 *StJB* 1934, p. 19; Baedeker, 1923, pp. 49, 167.

42 J.K. von Engelbrechten and Hans Volz, *Wir wandern durch das nationalsozialistische Berlin* (München, 1937), p. 185; *StJB* 1931, p. 340. Cf. Bernstein, II, 271f.

43 Hsi-huey Liang, *The Berlin Police Force in the Weimar Republic* (Berkeley, Calif., 1970), p. 14; Walter Rist, 'Die KPD in der Krise', *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus*, II (1931), 441.

44 *Inprekorr* XII, Nr. 64 (5 August 1932), 2064.
45 Engelbrechten/Volz, pp. 143, 189; Klaus Neukrantz, *Barricades in Berlin* (London, [1930]); Knickerbocker, p. 17; Liang, *Berlin Police*, p. 15.
46 Engelbrechten/Volz, pp. 174; Liang, *Berlin Police*, p. 14.
47 Liang, *Berlin Police*, p. 15; *VW* 7 April 1927 (A), 3 January 1928 (A).
48 Engelbrechten/Volz, pp. 74, 179ff.; Walter Schönstedt, *Kämpfende Jugend* (Reprint, Berlin, 1972); 'Persönliche Aeusserung des Polizeipräsidenten Grzesinski', FES, Nachlass Severing, 60/4.
49 Baedeker, 1923, p. 165; Engelbrechten/Volz, pp. 122f.; Liang, *Berlin Police*, p. 17. Cf. Dehn, *Die alte Zeit*, pp. 164ff.; Arnold Littmann, *Herbert Norkus und die Hitlerjungen von Beusselkietz* (Berlin, 1934).
50 Engelbrechten/Volz, p. 113; Liang, *Berlin Police*, p. 17; cf. Jan Petersen, *Our Street* (London, 1938).
51 *StJB* 1928, pp. 18ff.
52 See the annual figures in the *StJB*, e.g. 1931, p. 19 (deaths in the first year of life, p. 21 (deaths from tuberculosis), p. 218 (recipients of public welfare per thousand of population). Cf. Stadtrat Dr Riess, 'Aufgaben der Stadtverwaltung und regionale Struktur', in Hans Brennert and Erwin Stein (eds.), *Probleme der neuen Stadt Berlin* (Berlin, 1926), pp. 23–31.
53 *StJB* 1931, pp. 213, 217; 1932, pp. 186ff.
54 *VW* 25 February 1932, 3 January and 19 August 1928, 3 and 30 January, 29 April, 19 August and 18 December 1927, 30 September 1924 (all A); 24 March 1931 (B); *BT* 5 August 1930 (A); *VZ* 6 August 1930 (A); *DAZ* 24 September and 3 December 1927 (both B); Frank Ruhla [Werner Dopp], *Wir sind doch kein Gesangverein, sagten die Ganoven, und so war es auch* (Rosenheim, 1971), pp. 61ff.; Ernst Engelbrecht, *In den Spuren des Verbrechertums* (Berlin-Schöneberg, [1931]), pp. 94ff., 116ff.; Liang, *Berlin Police*, pp. 15ff. Cf. below, Chapter 6.
55 On the differences between the constituencies of SPD and KPD, and the appeal of the Communist movement to lower-status industrial workers, see Schöck, pp. 226ff.; Stolle, pp. 20–107; Dick Geary, 'Radicalism and the worker: Metalworkers and revolution 1914–1923', in Richard J. Evans (ed.), *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* (London, 1978), pp. 274ff.; Robert Wheeler, 'Zur sozialen Struktur der Arbeiterbewegung am Anfang der Weimarer Republik. Einige methodologische Bemerkungen', in Hans Mommsen *et al.* (eds.), *Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik* (Düsseldorf, 1974), pp. 184ff.
56 Martin Broszat, 'Die Anfänge der Berliner NSDAP 1926/27', *VfZ*, VIII (1960), 89.
57 *Ibid.*, p. 97.
58 *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 104ff.; J.K. von Engelbrechten, *Eine braune Armee entsteht* (München, 1937), pp. 52f.; Joseph Goebbels, *Kampf um Berlin. Der Anfang* (München, 1939), p. 60.
59 Broszat, 'Anfänge', p. 111; Engelbrechten, p. 55; Goebbels, pp. 64f.; LABln 58/364, 365, 366.
60 Broszat, 'Anfänge', p. 117; police and prosecution reports in LABln 58/302.
61 Engelbrechten, pp. 72ff.; Weber, II, 370.
62 Engelbrechten, p. 85.
63 *StJB* 1930, p. 352, 1931, pp. 340f., 1933, p. 266; Engelbrechten, p. 206.
64 'PP Tgb Nr 686, IA.7.31' (Report on police raid on Berlin SA offices). BAK

R45I/2682, pp. 645ff. Cf. Rudolf Diels, *Lucifer ante Portas* (Zürich, [1949]), pp. 157f.

65 'Berlin, den 11. Dezember 1931', LA Bln 58/2624, III, p. 4.

66 The following figures are based on the entries in the catalogue of the files of the Generalstaatsanwalt beim Landgericht, Berlin (LA Bln 58).

67 Cf. for example the case of a Nazi, of whom the reporting police officer noted: 'Claims do not seem very credible. It is most likely that B. ... fell down ... as a result of his drunken state ...': LA Bln 58/1029, and of the SA-man who claimed he had been shot at in his flat by Communists because he had previously belonged to the KPD; he turned out to be, not an ex-Communist, but an ex-gangster: 'I Ad IV², 31.8.32, Schlussbericht', LA Bln 58/1861, p. 17.

68 Albert Grzesinski, *La Tragi-comédie de la république allemande* (Paris, 1934), pp. 178f.; Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr. 1663.

69 Albert Grzesinski, *Inside Germany* (New York, 1939), pp. 130ff. Cf. *RF* 18 May 1930.

70 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr. 1675; cf. Grzesinski, *Inside Germany*, p. 132.

71 'GenStA LG I, 7.9.30', LA Bln 58/2205, I, p. 124.

72 Bruno Stephan, *700 Jahre Wedding* (Berlin, 1951), p. 80. Cf. Wheeler, 'Zur sozialen Struktur', pp. 187ff.

73 The following account is based on the judgment in the trial of a group of the attackers' accomplices: '(500) 1.pol.b.K.13.34. (60.34)', LA Bln 58/22; and Alfred Apfel, *Behind the Scenes of German Justice* (London, 1935), Chapter 9.

74 Programme of the Communist International, September 1928, in Jane Degras (ed.), *The Communist International 1919–1943. Documents.* Vol. II: *1923–1928* (London, 1960), p. 520.

75 Fernando Claudin, *The Communist Movement: from Comintern to Cominform* (Harmondsworth, 1975), Chapter III; for the details of this process in Germany: Weber, I, Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 7.

76 Cf. Stolle, pp. 265f.

77 Conversation of the author with Otto Niebergall, Mainz, 2 February 1976. Cf. Georg Glaser's depiction of his friend, a streetfighting KPD militant, especially p. 47.

Notes to Chapter 2

1 Flechtheim, *Die KPD*, pp. 330ff. Cf. the concept of a 'camp mentality', characterizing both the attitude of the whole Socialist movement to society at large and that of the Communists to all those outside the Party, introduced by Negt/Kluge, pp. 384ff.

2 Wickham, 'Social Fascism', pp. 12ff.; Schöck, *passim*; Stolle, *passim*; Hartmann Wunderer, 'Materialien zur Soziologie der Mitgliedschaft und Wählerschaft der KPD zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik', *Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie* 5 (Frankfurt a.M., 1975), pp. 257–81; O. Pjatnizki, *Die Bolschewisierung der kommunistischen Parteien* (Hamburg/Berlin, 1932).

3 Cf. Kurt Finker, 'Revolutionäre Massenorganisationen in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik', *Geschichtsunterricht und Staatsbürgerkunde*, VI (1964), 919–34; Bahne, *Die KPD*, pp. 19ff., 107.

4 Degras, pp. 432ff.; Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 12.

5 The consequences of this contradiction in practice will become apparent in Chapter 3. Cf. Thomas Weingartner, *Stalin und der Aufstieg Hitlers* (Berlin,

1970), p. 15 and *passim*; Dietrich Geyer, 'Sowjetrussland und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung 1918–1932', *Vf Z*, XXIV (1976), 37.

6 Degras, pp. 459ff.

7 Degras, p. 455; cf. Ernst Schneller, 'Der VI. Weltkongress der Kommunistischen Internationale', *Internationale* XI (1928), 582.

8 Cf. Siegfried Bahne, 'Sozialfaschismus in Deutschland. Zur Geschichte eines politischen Begriffs', *International Review of Social History*, X (1965), 211–45.

9 Degras, pp. 484f.; cf. Kalambokis, pp. 81ff. For a further discussion of the Communist interpretation of fascism proper, see below, Chapter 3.

10 Kalambokis, p. 84.

11 Weingartner, pp. 21f.

12 On Severing's political career: Severing, *passim*.

13 Kurt G.P. Schuster, *Der Rote Frontkämpferbund 1924–29* (Düsseldorf, 1975), pp. 212ff.

14 *Ibid.*, pp. 216f.; Hermann Remmele, 'Tempoverlust. Vor oder hinter den Massen?', *Internationale* XII (1929), 213ff.; Rudolf Schlesinger, 'Erinnerungen aus einer Zeit grosser Kämpfe. Bd. I: Wohin geht Deutschland? 1901–1933' (MS, 1964?), pp. 449f; *RF* 27 April 1929, reprinted in *Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*. Bd. VIII. *Januar 1924–Oktober 1929* (East Berlin, 1975), Nr. 273.

15 For a detailed account of these events see Eve Rosenhaft, 'Working-class life and working-class politics', in Richard Bessel and E.J. Feuchtwanger (eds.), *Social Change and Political Development in the Weimar Republic* (London, 1981), pp. 224ff.

16 Reichskommissar für Überwachung der Öffentlichen Ordnung to Polizeipräsident, Landeskriminalpolizeiamt (IA), 4 May 1929 and reponse of Abteilung IA, 8 May 1929: GehStA 219/45, pp. 89f and 90f; Schlesinger, pp. 459f.

17 *Protokoll. 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (Hamburg/Berlin, 1929), p. 299. Cf. Kurt Wrobel 'Zum Kampf Wilhelm Piecks gegen imperialistischen Terror und Faschismus 1929–1932', *ZfG*, XII (1975), 1428ff.; Margarete Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau* (Stuttart, 1958), p. 152.

18 *Dokumente und Materialien*, Nr. 274; *Waffen für den Klassenkampf. Beschlüsse des XII. Parteitags der KPD* (Berlin, [1929]), p. 24; on participation in strikes, cf. 'Zusammenstellung der nach den Maifeiern entstandenen Streiks' and 'Abteilung IA, 4.Mai 1929', GehStA 219/45, pp. 38 and 39ff.

19 'IA III.G.St., Berlin, den 8. Mai 1929, Betrifft: Unruhen aus Anlass der Maifeier', GehStA 219/45, pp. 95ff.; Schuster pp. 219ff.

20 *Waffen*, p. 25.

21 *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des 12. Parteitags der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 71ff; *Waffen*, p. 17.

22 *10. Plenum*, p. 474. Heinz Neumann, Central-Committee member, told the assembly: 'If Italy is the classical country of fascism, Germany is the classical country of social fascism.'

23 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

25 R. Gerber, 'Über die jüngste Entwicklung der Bedingungen des Kampfes gegen die faschistische Diktatur in Deutschland', *KI* XI (1930), 426; 'Aus der Rede des Genossen Gussew...', *KI* XI (1930), 539f.; 'Aufruf für die Bildung der revolutionären Einheitsfront in den Wirtschaftskämpfen', *Dokumente und Materialien*, Nr. 260; Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim Zentralkomitee

der SED, *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*. Bd. IV: *Von 1924 bis Januar 1933* (East Berlin, 1966), pp. 178f.; Flechtheim, pp. 271ff.; cf. *12. Parteitags*, pp. 429ff.

26 *Waffen*, p. 27.

27 R. Gerber, 'Über die besonderen Formen der Organisiertheit der Massenbewegung in der Dritten Periode', *Internationale* XII (1929), 643. Cf. M. Jablonski, 'Die dritte Periode und der politische Massenstreik', *KI* X (1929), 1685; Wilhelm Florin, 'Revolutionäre Streikstrategie', *Internationale* XIII (1930), 520ff.

28 Degras, p. 522; *10. Plenum*, pp. 74ff, 681f.

29 Jablonski, 'Die dritte Periode', pp. 1685f.

30 Hermann Remmele, *Die Lehren des Berliner Blutmai und das drohende Verbot der KPD* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 55ff.

31 [A. Bewer], *Brennende Fragen der bolschewistischen Partei* (Metz, [1930]), p. 2.

32 Cf. Heinrich Hannover and Elisabeth Hannover-Drück, *Politische Justiz 1918–1933* (Frankfurt a.M., 1966), *passim*.

33 'Polizeidirektion Bremen, den 11. September 1931', StABr 4,65/II.A.12.a; [Bewer], p. 21.

34 [Bewer] pp. 2f; Jablonski 'Die dritte periode', p. 1686; *Waffen*, p. 34; A. Martynow, 'Die illegale und legale revolutionäre Arbeit der Kommunistischen Parteien im Lichte der russischen Erfahrung von 1904 bis 1914', *KI* X (1929), 1269ff.

35 Martynow, 'Die illegale und legale revolutionäre Arbeit', p. 1276.

36 *10. Plenum*, pp. 45f.

37 *Inprekorr* X, Nr. 24 (11 March 1930), 574.

38 *Inprekorr* IX, Nr. 42 (14 May 1929), 1019ff.

39 'Bemerkenswerte Parolen und Agitationsmethoden der KPD und ihrer Hilfs- und Nebenorganisationen', StABr 4,65/IV.13.i; cf. Nachrichtensammelstelle im Reichsministerium des Inneren, 26.2.30, 'Die kommunistische Bewegung', BAK R 134/60, pp. 139f.

40 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr. 1393; Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau*, p. 251.

41 *Inprekorr* IX, Nr. 42 (14 May 1929), 1021. Remmele referred at the Twelfth Plenum to the prevalence of 'the mistaken view that unarmed demonstrations can no longer be carried out at the present time', *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr. 13 (27 January 1933), 453.

42 Schlesinger, p. 577; 'Denkschrift über Kampfvorbereitung und Kampfgrundsätze radikaler Organisationen', BAK R134/58, pp. 37ff.

43 *Inprekorr* IX, Nr. 78 (19 August 1929), 1800.

44 *Waffen*, p. 25.

45 Cf. Erich Wollenberg, *Der Apparat. Stalins fünfte Kolonne* (Bonn, [1952]), *passim*; Weber, I, 290. A very detailed memoir of the organization, activities and leading personalities of the M-Apparat has recently been published: Franz Feuchtwanger, 'Der militärpolitische Apparat der KPD in den Jahren 1928–1935. Erinnerungen', *IWK*, XVII (1981), 485–533. For further discussion of the functions of the M-Apparat, see Chapter 4.

46 'Alfred Langer', *Der Weg zum Sieg. Die Kunst des bewaffneten Aufstandes* (n.p., [1931]), p. 48; cf. Severing, p. 287. On the composition of *Der Weg zum Sieg* see Erich Wollenberg's introduction to the reprint of 'A. Neuberg', *Der bewaffnete Aufstand* (Reprint, Frankfurt a.M., 1971).

47 E. Birkenhauer, 'Der Ruhrstreik, seine Lehren und Erfahrungen', *Internationale* XIV (1931), 125.
48 Gustav Stolper *et al.*, *The German Economy, 1870 to the Present* (London, 1967), pp. 110ff.
49 Dietmar Petzina *et al.*, *Sozialgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch* III (München, 1968), p. 119; Preller, p. 148.
50 Wilhelm M. Breuer, *Deutchland in der Weltwirtschaftskrise 1929/1932* (Köln, 1974), p. 38.
51 The basic structure was established by laws of 16 July and 28 September 1927: *RGBl* I (1927), Nrs. 32, 43.
52 *StJB* 1933, p. 105; *StJR* 1933, p. 297.
53 *RGBl* I (1931), Nr. 22. Cf. *ibid.*, Nr. 72; *Preussisches Archiv* 1930, II, 1227ff.
54 *StJB* 1934, p. 9, 1932, p. 90.
55 Geiger, pp. 96f.
56 Bruno N. Haken, *Stempelchronik. 261 Arbeitslosenschichsale* (Hamburg, 1932), p. 110.
57 Knickerbocker, pp. 20ff.; *StJB* 1932, p.109, 1933, p. 106.
58 *RGBl* I (1931), Nr. 79.
59 *StJR* 1932, p. 274.
60 Jürgen Kuczynsky, *Die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter unter dem Kapitalismus.* Bd. 5: *Darstellung der Lage der Arbeiter in Deutschland von 1917/18 bis 1932/33* (East Berlin, 1966), p. 218; cf. Preller, p. 163.
61 Weber, I, 363; A. Creutzburg, *Die Organisationsarbeit der KPD* (Hamburg/Berlin, 1931), p. 53; O. Pjatnizki, *Brennende Fragen* (Hamburg/Berlin, 1931), pp. 25, 42; 'Die Organisatorische Entwicklung der Partei im Jahre 1931', BAK NS 26/810, pp. 75ff.
62 Pjatnizki, *Brennende Fragen*, p. 25; Wolfgang Kiessling, *Stark und voller Hoffnung. Leben und Kampf von Albert Kuntz* (East Berlin, 1964), p. 113; Weber, I, 369f.
63 Walter Rist, 'Die innere Krise der KPD', *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus*, III (1932), 137f.; cf. *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr. 13 (27 January 1933), 452.
64 Creutzburg, *Organisationsarbeit*, pp. 15, 17, 49f.; Weber, I, 365. Cf. Robert Wheeler, 'German labor and the Comintern: A question of generations?', *Journal of Social History*, VII (1973), 304–21; W. Kaasch, 'Die soziale Struktur der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands', *KI* IX (1928), 1051f.
65 Percentage increases calculated on the basis of Weber, I, 363; Pjatnizki, *Brennende Fragen*, pp. 24f., 27; 'Organisatorische Entwicklung ...' (n. 61).
66 Rist, 'Die KPD in der Krise', pp. 441f.
67 Wunderer, p. 266; Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 181.
68 N. Lenzner, 'Die Lehren der Betriebsrätewahlen in Deutschland', *KI* XI (1930), 1039; 'Rede des Genossen Gussew', pp. 544f.; H. Eberlein, 'Die Faschisten und die Betriebsrätewahlen', *KI* XII (1931), 1422.
69 Ursula Hüllbüsch, 'Die deutschen Gewerkschaften in der Weltwirtschaftskrise' in Werner Conze and Hans Raupach (eds.), *Die Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise des deutschen Reiches 1929–33* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 126–54.
70 Cf. Kuczynski, p. 245.
71 P. Jottkas, 'Analyse der Streikaktivität in den Jahren 1929–1931', *Internationale* XV (1932), 292ff.
72 E. Birkenhauer, 'Der Ruhrstreik', pp. 118ff.; Creutzburg, *Organisationsarbeit*, p. 16; S. Schwab, 'Die Arbeit der KPD in den Betrieben und bei der Organisierung von Wirtschaftskämpfen', *KI* XIII (1932), 841ff.

73 *Inprekorr* XII, Nr. 105 (16 December 1932), 3378f.; *RF* 24 November 1932; 'Der Polizeipräsident, Berlin, 7. November 1932, Betrifft: Verkehrsstreik in Berlin', 'Verzeichnis der festgenommenen Personen' GehStA 219/80, pp. 80ff. and 120ff.; *BT*, 8 November 1932 (A).
74 'Bericht über Funktionärsitzung der RGO Gemeinde-Verkehr am 14.11.32. ...', GehStA 219/9, p. 137.
75 Schlesinger, p. 457.
76 *12. Parteitags*, p. 83. On the KPD's agitation, cf. Huber-Koller, *passim*.
77 *Inprekorr* X, Nr. 18 (21 February 1930), 415.
78 Creutzburg, *Organisationsarbeit*, pp. 112f.; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr. 76 (4 August 1931), 1705ff., Nr. 94 (30 September 1931), 2125ff., XII, Nr. 85 (14 October 1932), 2733ff.
79 Gerber, 'Über die jüngste Entwicklung', p. 427.
80 Ernst Thälmann, *Reden und Aufsätze 1930–1933* (Köln, 1975), I, 102.
81 *RF* 18 March 1931; cf. Weingartner, p. 52.
82 *Inprekorr* X, Nr. 18 (21 February 1930), 415; Pjatnizki, *Brennende Fragen*, pp. 3, 23.
83 'Rede des Genossen Gussew', p. 550.
84 *Inprekorr* X, Nr. 18 (21 February 1930), 415.
85 Pjatnizki, *Brennende Fragen*, pp. 20f.; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr. 76 (4 August 1931), 1717ff.
86 'Die Lage in Deutschland und die Aufgaben der KPD', *KI* XII (1931), 1148ff.; Pjatnizki, *Brennende Fragen*, pp. 8f.; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr. 94 (30 September 1931), 2132.
87 *RF* 31 January 1930, 2 February 1930; IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr. 1430; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr. 76 (4 August 1931), 1717ff.; 'I Ad. II[1], Berlin, 6. Dezember 1932' (Report on a conference of KPD organizers of the unemployed), GehStA 219/2, pp. 191f.
88 *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr. 11 (26 January 1933), 376.
89 Marie Jahoda *et al.*, *Marienthal. The Sociography of an Unemployed Community* (London, 1974), p. 41.
90 'I.A.IV., Berlin, 5.Juni 1931', 'I.A.IV, Berlin, 9.6.31.', GehStA 219/31, pp. 176 and 180.
91 Cf. Rosenhaft, 'Working-class life and working-class politics', pp. 219ff.
92 Herbert Wehner, *1933–45. Untergrundnotizen, von KPD zur SPD* (n.p., n.d.), p. 3.
93 'Bericht über die Bezirksausschusssitzung der RGO – Abt. Erwerbslose – am 17.11.1930 in der Linienstrasse', GehStA 219/31, pp. 23f.
94 'Bericht über die Sitzung der Erwerbslosen-Funktionäre ... am 16. März 1931', 'Bericht über die ... 16.6.31 stattgefundene Gross-Berliner Funktionärsitzung der Erwerbslosenausschüsse in Gemeinschaft mit den Staffelleitern des Kampfbundes', GehStA 219/31, pp. 68f. and 203f.
95 Engelbrechten, pp. 172f.; cf. F. Fischer, 'Das Eindringen des Faschismus in die Reihen der Jugend in Deutschland', *KI* XI (1930), 2069ff.; Pjatnizki, *Brennende Fragen*, pp. 13f.; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr. 94 (30 September 1931), 2130.
96 'Bericht über die Bezirksausschussitzung ...' (n. 93); the recipient of this report in Police Headquarters noted in the margin: 'Überfalllokale'.
97 'I.Ad.IV[2], Berlin, 22. Februar 1932', LA Bln 58/1079, p. 3; on the Party's financial situation cf. Bahne, *Die KPD*, p. 17; Kiessling, *Stark*, p. 111.
98 'Bemerkenswerte Parolen ...' (n. 39).
99 I have not encountered any equivalent of 'street politics' in the German

sources. The expression 'street work' is used by a British ex-Communist to characterize the British Communist Party's agitation in the East End in the Depression years; he makes it clear that this represented a deliberate turn to a new constituency in the neighbourhoods, which was abandoned in the mid-30s with the adoption of the Popular Front policy – not without protest from some of the neighbourhood activists. 'Street-work' was distinct from 'Trade Union' work and closely associated with the movement for self-defence against Mosley's 'Blackshirts': Joe Jacobs, *Out of the Ghetto* (London, 1978), pp. 151ff.

100 For examples of resistance to and complaints about police behaviour, see: *VW* 13 February 1924 (B), 20 June 1924 (B), 18 December 1927 (A); *DAZ* 17 July 1923 (A); IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr. 1429; LA Bln 58/156, pp. 42ff,/175, p. 5,/896,/2220, I, pp. 14f. and 20,/2624, I, p. 103. Cf. Robert Dinse, *Das Freizeitleben der Grosstadtjugend* (Berlin-Eberswalde, [1932]), p. 114.

101 '(47) II. P.J. 469.29 (229. E/29)' (Judgment), LA Bln 58/131, p. 37 (italics supplied).

102 LA Bln 58/2350, I, pp. 247ff.

103 'Bemerkenswerte Parolen ...' (n. 39); IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nrs. 1429, 1447; 'Der Leiter der Abteilung IA, Mai 1931', GehStA 219/31, p. 139; 'Si.Pb.I., 29. Juni 1931', GehStA 219/31, p. 195.

104 *RF* 4 June 1931; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr. 94 (30 September 1931), 2128.

105 Report of KPD speaker from Chemnitz, July 1932, BAK R45IV/28.

106 'Berlin, den 30. September 1931, Bericht', GehStA 219/32, p. 105.

107 *RF* 20 January 1932.

108 'Anleitung für den Aufbau und die Arbeit der Einheitsausschüsse und des Massenselbstschutzes der Antifaschistischen Aktion', BAK R134/72, pp. 134f.

109 Helmut Gast, 'Die proletarischen Hundertschaften als Organe der Einheitsfront im Jahre 1923', *ZfG*, IV (1956), 439–65; Angress, pp. 289f.; cf. Fritz Selbmann, *Alternative Bilanz Credo* (Halle, 1969), pp. 121f.

Notes to Chapter 3

1 Werner Hirsch, 'Faschismus und Hitlerpartei', *Internationale* XV (1932), 18.

2 On the appeal of Nazi fighting methods to youth, see *inter alia*: F. Fischer, 'Das Eindringen des Faschismus in die Reihen der Jugend in Deutschland', *KI* XI (1930), 2073. On 'bourgeois legality': *Inprekorr* XI, Nr 49 (29 May 1931), 1161. On the functions of National Socialist terror: *RF* 28 May 1930. Cf. Edgar Doehler, 'Zur Rolle des wehrhaften antifaschistischen Kampfes in der Politik der K.P.D. (1929–1933) – 1', *Militärgeschichte*, XVII (1978), 534f. and *passim* for the current DDR view of the *wehrhafter Kampf*.

3 Cf. Theo Neubauer, 'Die Arbeit unter den kleinbürgerlichen Mittelschichten', *KI* XII (1931), 460; S. Erkner, 'Die NSDAP und die Klassen', *Internationale* XIV (1931), 331f.

4 *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr. 17 (7 February 1933), 570. For other examples of KPD acknowledgment of Nazi inroads into the working class, see *Inprekorr* XII, Nr. 6 (3 June 1932), 1430f.; Hirsch, 'Faschismus und Hitlerpartei', pp. 38ff.; H. Eberlein, 'Die Faschisten und die Betriebsrätewahlen', *KI* XII (1931), 1426.

5 This point is made most cogently by Beatrix Herlemann, *Die Kommunalpolitik der KPD im Ruhrgebiet 1924–1933* (Wuppertal, 1977), p. 9.

6 Cf. 'Der Kampf gegen den Nationalfaschismus in Deutschland', *KI* XI (1930), 1592ff.
7 Cf. 'Die KPD im Kampf auf zwei Fronten', *KI* XI (1930), pp. 982ff.
8 For this characterization of Heinz Neumann, see 'O.B. Server', 'Führerwechsel in der KPD', *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus*, III (1932), 607f. On press-policy in the KPD, see Karl-Egon Lönne, 'Thesen zum publizistischen Tageskampf der KPD gegen den Faschismus: Die "Rote Fahne" – Zentralorgan der KPD', in *Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie* 6 (Frankfurt a.M., 1976), pp. 242–91; Kurt Koszyk, '*Die Rote Fahne* (1918–1933)', in H.-D. Fischer (ed.), *Deutsche Zeitungen des 17. bis 20. Jahrhunderts* (Pullach bei München, 1972), pp. 391–403; Fritz David, 'Zur Geschichte der Zeitschrift "Die Internationale" (1919–1933)', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, XV (1973), 967–86, and cf. Schlesinger, pp. 625ff.
9 This was the pattern followed by the fighting on 'Bloody Sunday' in Altona, 17 July 1932 (above, p. 9): Police chief, Altona, to Prussian Interior Minister, 1 September 1932, FES, Nachlass Severing 52/23.
10 Selbmann, p. 188.
11 *Inprekorr* XII, Nr. 61 (26 July 1932), 1957; LA Bln 58/29, I, appendix.
12 *RF* 26 September 1929.
13 *Zwei Jahre Arbeit und Kampf. Bericht des ZK an den 12. Parteitag* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 378f. Cf. R. Renner, 'Das Ergebnis der Landtagswahlen in Sachsen', *Internationale* XII (1929), 344ff.; 'Resolution zu den Sachsenwahlen und ihren Lehren', *ibid.*, 351f.
14 W. Ulbricht, 'Die Lehren des 1. August', *KI* X (1929), 1927.
15 *12. Parteitag*, pp. 378, 467, 484, 498; *Zwei Jahre Arbeit*, pp. 376f.
16 *Zwei Jahre Arbeit*, p. 338.
17 Schuster, pp. 22f.
18 *12. Parteitag*, pp. 210f. Cf. *Waffen*, pp. 16f.
19 'Bundesführung des RFB, Ressort Gegner, Berlin, den 15. März 1929, Gegner-Material I/29', StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.24.
20 *Waffen*, pp. 16f., 89.
21 Jasper, 'Zur innerpolitischen Lage', p. 286; Dietrich Orlow, *The History of the Nazi Party* (Newton Abbot, 1971), p. 170.
22 *RF* 29 August 1929.
23 *Inprekorr* IX, Nr 75 (13 August 1929), 1746.
24 Jasper, 'Zur innerpolitischen Lage', pp. 282, 286ff.; Engelbrechten, pp. 102f.; Engelbrechten/Volz, pp. 169, 185f.; 224. Cf. *RF* 25 August, 12 and 26 September 1929.
25 *RF* 31 August 1929.
26 *RF* 15 May 1924; Margarete Buber-Neumann, *Kriegsschauplätze der Weltrevolution* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 269f. Cf. Paul Merker, *Deutschland, Sein oder Nichtsein?* Bd. I: *Von Weimar zu Hitler* (Mexico City, 1944), p. 256; Wehner, p. 4.
27 *RF* 28 August, 26 September, 19 October, 5 November, 31 December 1929; LA Bln 58/693.
28 H. Fröhlich, 'Die mecklenburgischen Landtagswahlen und ihre politische Bedeutung', *Internationale* XII (1929), 422ff.
29 Rudolf Renner, 'Die faschistische Bewegung in Deutschland', *Internationale* XII (1929), 576ff.
30 *RF* 5 November 1929.
31 On the Young Plan and KPD attitudes to reparations, see: W. Hirsch, 'Die

Bedeutung des Young-Plans für das deutsche Proletariat', *Internationale* XII (1929), 598ff.

32 'Internes Rundschreiben vom 2. November 1929', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 20' (15 November 1929), StABr 4,65/II.A.12.a.

33 *Ibid.*; *RF* 27 October 1929. On the importance of this meeting as a turning-point in KPD policy, cf. Bahne, *Die KPD*, pp. 13f.; Edgar Doehler and Egbert Fischer, 'Ernst Thälmanns Beitrag zur Entwicklung des wehrhaften Kampfes...', *Militärgeschichte*, XV (1976), 274ff.

34 *RF* 29 October 1929.

35 'Disposition zur Bildung antifaschistischer Abwehrorganisationen' (appendix to letter of Polizeipräsident Bochum, 25 April 1930) and 'Merkblatt für die Schaffung und Zusammenfassung antifaschistischer Schutz- (und Abwehr-) Organisationen' (appendix to report of Polizeidirektion Bremen, 8 April 1930), both StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.30.

36 *Inprekorr* IX, Nr. 108 (19 November 1929), 2561f.

37 R. Gerber, 'Über die jüngste Entwicklung der Bedingungen des Kampfes gegen faschistische Diktatur in Deutschland', *KI* IX (1930), 425ff.

38 *RF* 15 June 1930, reprinted in part in *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, IV, Nr. 66.

39 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 12' (15 June 1930), StABr 4,65/ IV.13.1; *RF* 27 May, 13 and 14 June 1930; *Der Funke. Organ für Mitglieder der KPD des Bezirks Berlin-Brandenburg-Grenzmark-Lausitz. Sonderausgabe zum Bezirksparteitag, Mai 1930*, BAK R45IV/17.

40 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 13' (1 July 1930), StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.30.

41 The charge against Steinicke was 'incitement to the commission of a punishable offence': Indictment: 'IJ 918/29 / 2u O.N. 12', LA Bln 58/2165, pp. 20f; *RF* 23 January 1930. Cf. the prosecution of Ernst Torgler for use of the expression in a public meeting, LA Bln 58/693, and of a Communist youth member for distributing leaflets bearing the slogan, LA Bln 58/134.

42 *RF* 14 February 1930.

43 *Inprekorr* X, Nr 38 (2 May 1930), 860.

44 *Inprekorr* X, Nr 36 (25 April 1930), 824f.

45 Stefan Heymann, 'Massenkampf gegen den Faschismus', *Internationale* XIII (1930), 536.

46 Rudolf Renner, 'Die Sachsenwahlen und ihre Lehren', *Internationale* XIII (1930), 404ff.; F. Heilmann, 'Frick-Regierung und Proletariat', *ibid.*, 409ff.; 'Zersetzung in den bürgerlichen Parteien. Die Stosskraft der KPD wächst', *ibid.*, 515f.; *RF* 4 July, 29 and 30 August, 2 September 1930.

47 *RF* 24 July 1930.

48 'Rundschreiben Nr 10, 17.7.1930'; 'Referentenmaterial zum antifaschistischen Kampf: Rededisposition über "Bolschewismus und Nationalsozialismus", 24.7.1930', both StABr 4,65/II.A.12.a.

49 *Schulthess* 1930, pp. 174ff.; *RGBl I* (1930), Nr 32.

50 'Kampf gegen die faschistische Diktatur – für die Diktatur des Proletariats', *Internationale* XIII (1930), 385ff.; *Inprekorr* X, Nr 61 (22 July 1930), 1433f. Nr 69 (15 August 1930), 1679.

51 Heymann, 'Massenkampf'; I.K., 'Zum ideologischen Zweifrontenkampf', *Internationale* XIII (1930), 538ff.

52 Cutting from 'Lagebericht, Bremen, 7/30 BN 2238/30 geh. vom 10.9.1930', StABr 4,65/ II.A.12.b.

53 *RF* 14 August 1930.

54 'Bericht über die Wahlarbeit im UB Schwenningen', BAK R45 IV/18.
55 'Schriftlicher Vorbericht über das Resultat der Wahlen aus dem Bezirk Halle-Merseburg', 'Bericht zur Reichstagswahl am 14. September 1930 der BL Mecklenburg...': both BAK R45 IV/18. 'ZK, Orgabteilung, Politische Analyse der Reichstagswahlen', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 21' (1 November 1930), StABr 4,65/ II.A.12.a.
56 *Inprekorr* x, Nr 78 (16 September 1930), 1929f.; *RF* 18 September 1930.
57 'Rundschreiben Nr 12, 18.9.1930', StABr 4,65/ II.A.12.a.
58 Cf. H. Rau, 'Die KPD vor der Eroberung der Mehrheit der Arbeiterklasse', *KI* XI (1930), 1989ff.; *RF* 16 September 1930.
59 *RF* 18 September 1930.
60 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 19' (1 October 1930); cf. 'Das Ergebnis der Reichstagswahlen und die Aufgaben der Partei' (Resolution of the Political Bureau): both StABr 4,65/ II.A.12.a; L. Alfred, 'Für Klarheit in der Frage des proletarischen Selbstschutzes', *KI* XI (1930), 2009; Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 34.
61 'Rundschreiben Nr 14, 6.10. 1930', BAK R134/61, pp.85f.; *RF* 19, 26, 30, 31 October 1930.
62 *RF* 25 and 26 November 1930. On the tensions within the Berlin SPD, see Olaf Ihlau, *Die Roten Kämpfer* (Meisenheim, 1969), pp. 40, 48; Rohe, pp. 321f.; Martin Martiny, 'Sozialdemokratie und junge Generation am Ende der Weimarer Republik', in W. Luthardt (ed.), *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterbewegung und Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt a.M., 1978), II, 59ff.; *RF* 22 November 1930.
63 Walter Ulbricht, 'Der Streik der Berliner Metallarbeiter', *Internationale* XIII (1930), 641ff.
64 *Schulthess* 1930, p. 215. Cf. 'Verschärfung der wirtschaftlichen und politischen Krise', *Internationale* XIII (1930), 673ff.
65 Cf. *RF* 22 November, 2 December 1930.
66 *RGBl* I (1930), Nr 47.
67 *RF* 2 and 9 December 1930, 7 January 1931; Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 120ff.; 'Rundschreiben Nr 19, 19.12.1930', StABr 4,65/II.A.12.a.
68 Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 90, 105.
69 *Ibid.*, 107.
70 *RF* 24 January 1931.
71 *RF* 3 and 5 February 1931.
72 *RF* 13 March 1931.
73 *RF* 22 February, 1 and 14 March 1931.
74 *RF* 4 March 1931.
75 *Schulthess* 1931, pp. 78f.; *VB* 18 March 1931. For a very vivid but probably spurious 'eyewitness' account of the murder, see Valtin, pp. 299ff.
76 *RF* 17 March 1931; cf. *RF* 18 and 20 March 1931.
77 *RF* 18 March 1931.
78 'Lehrbrief Nr 2, Faschismus und Sozialfaschismus!', BAK R134/62, pp. 95f.
79 *Inprekorr* XI, Nr 28 (24 March 1931), 769.
80 'Rundschreiben Nr 6, 25.3.1931', BAK R134/62, pp. 41ff. Cf. Creutzburg, *Organisationsarbeit*, p. 9.
81 'Berlin, den 26. März 1931' (Report on a Conference of Instructors and Political Leaders of UB Nordwest, Berlin 23 March 1931), GehStA 219/20, pp. 84f. For a view of the middle functionaries as a 'disruptive' and activist group within the KPD, see Wehner, p. 8; the attitudes expressed by Schlesinger, if typical of the body of middle functionaries, would seem to bear this out – see

e.g. pp. 452f., 625ff. Cf. also Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau*, pp. 257f.

82 Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 166.

83 *Ibid.*, 295ff.; Weingartner, pp. 53ff. Cf. D.S. Manuilski, *Die kommunistischen Parteien und die Krise des Kapitalismus* (Hamburg, 1931), pp. 114ff. and *passim*; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr 38 (24 April 1931), 946ff., Nr 49 (29 May 1931), 48ff.

84 Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 217ff.; *RF* 24 May 1931.

85 *Schulthess* 1931, pp. 97f., 151ff.; *RGBl* I (1931), Nrs 11, 34 and 53. 'RMI, IA 2130/15.7, Berlin 25.6.1931, Geheim!'; 'Nachrichtensammelstelle im RMI, IAN 2160/1.10.a., Berlin, 1.10.1931'; 'Vortrag über die kommunistische Bewegung, Gehalten auf der Nachrichtenkonferenz vom 14.12.1931, von RR W. von Lengriesser': all StABr 4,65/II.A.12.a. Cf. Weingartner, p. 45.

86 'Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus, Bezirksleitung Ruhrgebiet, 9.6.1931', StABr 4,65/II.H.4a.32; 'Rundschreiben Nr 1 zur politischen Lage und den nächsten Aufgaben', StABr 4,65/VI.1000.44.d.1. Cf. 'Berlin, den 28.8.1931', LA Bln 58/2538, VIII; IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1379.

87 See below, Chapter 5.

88 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1386.

89 *RF* 13 November 1931, reprinted in *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, IV, Nr 82.

90 *RF* 13 November 1931.

91 'Nachrichtensammelstelle im RMI, IAN 2160 d.6/a/27.11', StABr 4,65/II.A.12.b.18; Franz Osterroth and Dieter Schuster (eds.), *Chronik der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*. Bd. II: *Vom Beginn der Weimarer Republik bis zum Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Berlin/Bonn 1975), p. 249. Rohe, pp. 392f.; *RF* 17 and 20 November 1931; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr 109 (17 November 1931), 2473.

92 *RF* 20, 21, 23 October 1931; Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 320. Cf. Ministerialrat Dr Guyet, 'Die kommunistischen Bestrebungen auf Bildung von Einheitsorganisationen mit Sozialdemokraten' (Report to Nachrichtenkonferenz, 1931), StABr 4,65/II.A.12a.; Wehner, p. 7. On the Braunschweig events, see below, pp. 209f.

93 *Schulthess* 1931, pp. 223f.; *RGBl* I (1931), Nr 67; *RF* 17 November 1931; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr. 105 (6 November 1931), 2357ff. Cf. IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1390; *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, IV, 304ff.

94 Cf. 'Nachrichtensammelstelle im RMI, IAN 2160 d.6/a/27.11' (n. 91); 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 23' (1 December 1931), StABr 4,65/II.A.12.b.18; Walter Ulbricht, *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*. Band I: *1918–1933* (East Berlin, 1953), pp. 548f.; 'Niederschrift über die Konferenz der Innenminister der Länder ...', BAK R43 I/2701a, pp. 258–60. For insiders' views on the sincerity of the Central Committee: Gustav Regler, *Das Ohr des Malchus* (Köln/Berlin, 1958), p. 185; Maria Reese, 'Lebenserinnerungen' (MS, 1953), p. 16.

95 'Rundschreiben des ZK der KPD, 8.12.1931', LAK 403/16776, pp. 681–733 (Excerpts also in 'RMI, IAN 2160/28.12', BAK R134/64, pp. 142–5). Cf. Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 315ff. and 447f., and the police report of the speech to the Central Committee on which this text was based: 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 8' (15 April 1932), StABr 4,65/IV.13.i.

96 Wrobel, 'Zum Kampf', p. 1437. Cf. *Die Brüsseler Konferenz der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands* (Frankfurt a.M., 1975) p. 81; *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, IV, 325f.

97 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1389; cf. Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau*, p. 286.
98 'Rundschreiben Nr 6, 6.4.1932', 'Rundschreiben des ZK, 12.4.1932', both StABr 4,65/II.A.12.a.
99 'Aus dem Bericht des Gen. Rohmer', BAK R45 IV/21; Adolf Burscheid to ZK, 29 April 1932, BAK R45 IV/25.
100 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1680; *RF* 26 May 1932; Engelbrechten/Volz, pp. 68f.
101 'Schreiben Ernst Thälmanns vom 28. Mai 1932 an die Mitglieder des ZK der KPD', reprinted in Heinz Karl and Erika Kücklich (eds.), *Die Antifaschistische Aktion* (East Berlin, 1965), Nr 11.
102 *Inprekorr* XII, Nr 48 (10 June 1932), 1523. Cf. *RF* 27 May 1932.
103 *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr 13 (27 January 1933), 450. Cf. *RF* 10 June 1932. On the 'Italian motif' in German Communist analyses of fascism, cf. Lönne, pp. 242ff.
104 *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr 13 (27 January 1933), 437.
105 See for example *Inprekorr* XII, Nr 51 (21 June 1932), 1617 and XIII, Nr 6 (17 January 1933), 200ff.; Thälmann, *Reden*, II, 268; *RF* 9 June 1932.
106 'Rundtelefonat an die Bezirksleitungen' (Secretariat of Central Committee, 26 May 1932), BAK R45 IV/24 (excerpts in *Antifaschistische Aktion*, Nr 7); 'Rundschreiben Nr 11 des ZK der KPD' (4 June 1932), excerpts in *Antifaschistische Aktion*, Nr. 20 and Bahne, *Die KPD*, Document Nr 1.
107 Bubr-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau*, p. 294; Schlesinger, pp. 695ff.
108 *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr 17 (7 February 1933), 570.
109 Thälmann, *Reden*, II, 440ff. Cf. Wehner, pp. 13f.; Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik*. Teil II: *1917–1945* (East Berlin, 1966), pp. 310f.
110 For a catalogue of SA revenge-killings during the first months of 1933, see *Braunbuch über Reichstagsbrand und Hitler-Terror* (Basel, 1933), pp. 332ff. Cf. K.Sohl, 'Entstehung und Verbreitung des Braunbuchs über Reichstagsbrand und Hitlerterror 1933/1934', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte*, XXI (1979), 289–327, especially p. 297. See also, more recently, Detlev Peukert, *Die KPD im Widerstand* (Wuppertal, 1980), pp. 79–89; Ulrich Klein, 'SA-Terror und Bevölkerung in Wuppertal 1933/34', in Detlev Peukert and Jürgen Reulecke (eds.), *Die Reihen fast geschlossen* (Wuppertal, 1981), pp. 45–61.
111 'An alle Unterbezirks- und Bezirksleitungen des Kampfbundes gegen den Faschismus', StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.32.
112 *RF* 10 January 1932. Later in the year, W. Florin wrote: 'The primary basis of the united front must be the factory ... If that doesn't happen, then the emphasis of the struggle is transferred to the street, is directed only defensively against fascist street-terror, although the fight against the bourgeoisie at its most sensitive can be ... led from the factory ...': 'Fragen unserer Einheitsfrontpolitik', *Internationale* XV (1932), 341.
113 *Inprekorr* XII, Nr 104 (13 December 1932), 1618; Thälmann, *Reden*, II, 242 and 266; *Brüsseler Konferenz*, p. 82. Cf. Wehner, p. 7.
114 Florin, 'Fragen unserer Einheitsfrontpolitik' p. 339; Report on the election campaign, July 1932, in Dresden, BAK R45 IV/28; 'I Ad II, 7.1.1932' (Meeting of Enemies-Experts with instructors of UB Nord-Ost, Berlin), GehStA 219/20, p. 216. Cf. 'Gute und schlechte Beispiele der Einheitsfrontbewegung' (June 1932), BAK R45IV/28; 'Rundschreiben, 8. 12.1931', LAK 403/16776, p. 683f.; KPD Mecklenburg to ZK der KPD, 13 August 1932, GehStA 219/33, p. 329; *Inprekorr* XIII Nr 13 (27 January 1933), 458.

115 Cf. Selbmann, pp. 201f., who claims to have been present at 'embittered battles of words' within the Central Committee, but gives no details as to the issues discussed; Georg Schwarz, *Völker, höret die Zentrale* (Berlin, 1933), p. 219; Weingartner, pp. 59ff.

116 Thälmann, *Reden*, II, 271ff. and 262f.; *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr 11 (26 January 1933), 373. On Neumann's career, see Weber, II, 233ff.; Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Biographisches Lexikon* (East Berlin, 1970), pp. 345f.; Weingartner, pp. 101ff.

117 For varying views on Neumann's tactical position, which however generally concur on his 'adventurist' and 'irresponsible' attitudes, cf. Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau*, pp. 258, 288f.; Schwarz, p. 215; Schlesinger, pp. 160, 580ff.; Merker, *Deutschland*, p. 256; Wehner, pp. 10f.; Reese, pp. 16ff. Cf. also Weingartner's attempt at a systematic analysis of the Neumann-Remmele position, pp. 230ff. On rank-and-file attitudes and Neumann's popularity: IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1678; BAK R45IV/5 and 27 (requests for Neumann to come and speak, 1930 and 1932).

118 Cf. 'I Ad II[1], 15.11.32', BAK R58/390, pp. 182f.; *Inprekorr* XII, Nr 99 (22 November 1932), 3184; Thälmann, *Reden*, II, 384ff. Cf. Weber, II, 59, 117, 121, 200, 237, 348; *Biographisches Lexikon*, pp. 133, 378.

119 Thälmann, *Reden*, II, 390f.

120 Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 144.

121 *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr 17 (7 February 1933), 570; 'I Ad II[1], Berlin, den 26.11.1931' (Report of meeting of UBL Nordost), GehStA 219/32, pp. 154f.; IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1390.

122 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nrs 1388, 1388a, 1389; cf. *RF* 17 and 18 November 1931.

123 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1389; Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 433; 'Berlin, den 12.12.1931' (Report on meeting of UB Nordwest), GehStA 219/20, p. 197.

124 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1390.

125 'I Ad II[1], Berlin, den 26.11.1931' (n. 121), p. 155; IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nrs 1391, 1392.

126 KJVD Gruppe Nordkap (UB Nord) to Central Committee, 19 November 1931, BAK R45 IV/27.

127 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1388a; Thälmann, *Reden*, II, 375; A. Hiller, 'Der KJVD im Kampf um die Gewinnung der Mehrheit der Arbeiterjugend', *Internationale* XV (1932), 83; Emil Paffrath, 'Das ist die Rote Jungfront, die sich nicht verbieten lässt ...', *Militärgeschichte*, XI (1972), 83.

128 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nrs 1389, 1390, 1391; Regler, p. 185; 'Die Lage in der KPD', StABr 4,65/II.A.12.a.; 'I Ad II[1], 29.12.1931' (Report on UBL Conference, Nordost), BAK R58/390, p. 44.

129 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 1' (1 January 1932), StABr 4.65/VI.1000.44.d; Cf. IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1391; Schuster, pp. 234f.

130 'I Ad II[1], 28.11.1932' GehStA 219/33, p. 76; cf. 'I Ad II[1], 31.10.1932', BAK R58/390, p. 146; 'I Ad II[1], 15.11.1932', (n. 118); 'Bericht über den am 14.11.1932 ... stattgefundenen UB Parteitag des UB Prenzlauer Berg', GehStA 219/9, pp. 132ff.; Wehner, p. 8.

131 'I Ad II[1], 15.11.1932' (n. 118); 'I Ad II[1], 18.11.1932', BAK R58/390, p. 194; 'Bericht einer Vertrauensperson...' BAK R58/390, pp. 295ff.; *Inprekorr* XII, Nr 98 (22 November 1932), 3158; 'Aus der Resolution des Bezirkspar-

teitages der KPD Berlin ...', in *Antifaschistische Aktion*, Nr 87. The 'organizational measures' included a reorganization of the Berlin Districts; they were broken down into smaller units for the sake of 'our mass-influence and the contact between upper and lower sections of the Party': *Inprekorr* XII, Nr 99 (22 November 1932), 3183; cf. Willy Sägebrecht, *Nicht Amboss, sondern Hammer sein* (East Berlin, 1968), p. 175.

132 See e.g. *RF* 13 November 1931, 27 March 1932; A. Hiller, 'Der KJVD im Kampf', p. 83; Nach drei Wahlen', *Internationale* XV (1932), 222; Manuilski, *Die kommunistischen Parteien*, p. 87; *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr 13 (27 January 1933), 453; Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 297 and II, 224 and 252.

133 'Bericht vom Versammlungstournee zur Reichstagswahl vom 1. Juli bis 30. Juli 1932', BAK R45IV/21. The instructor making the report commented: 'By this example one can see absolutely typically how left and right deviations are coupled in the false application of the united-front tactic.'

Notes to Chapter 4

1 *12. Parteitag*, p. 516; *RF* 23 July 1929, 7 March, and 6, 18 and 28 May 1930, 20 January 1932.; Cf. Hermann Dünow, *Der Rote Frontkämpferbund. Die revolutionäre Schutz- und Wehrorganisation der deutschen Arbeiterschaft* (East Berlin, 1958), Kurt Finker, 'Aufgaben und Rolle des Roten Frontkämpferbundes in den Klassenschlachten der Weimarer Republik', *Militärgeschichte*, XII (1974), 133–44.

2 Cf. Schuster, Chapter 3, especially pp. 60ff.; Ernst Thälmann, 'Fünf Jahre Roter Frontkämpferbund', in *Kampfreden und Aufsätze* (Moscow, 1932), p. 27; Willi Leow, 'Partei und Roter Frontkämpferbund', *Internationale* XII (1929), 299ff.

3 R. Gerber, 'Über die besonderen Formen der Organisiertheit der Massenbewegung in der Dritten Periode', *Internationale* XII (1929), 644, 646; L. Alfred, 'Zur Frage des proletarischen Selbstschutzes', *KI* X (1929), 1641f.

4 *12. Parteitag*, p. 515. Cf. *Inprekorr* IX, Nr 74 (13 August 1929), 1734; *Waffen*, p. 89; 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 9' (31 May 1929), StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.

5 'Rundbrief Nr 22 W/E, Berlin, den 6.7.1929', appendix to 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 13' (31 July 1929), StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.30; Cf. for this and the following, 'Deutsche Nachrichtenkonferenz am 28. und 29. April 1930', BAK R134/58, pp. 37ff.

6 Alfred, 'Zur Frage', p. 1644.

7 Cf. *RF* 16 August 1929.

8 'Rundschreiben Nr 30, Anweisung des Sekretariats', reprinted in *Dokumente und Materialien*, Nr 285; *RF* 28 July 1929.

9 'Merkblatt für die Schaffung und Zusammenfassung antifaschistischer Schutz- (Abwehr-) Organisationen' (early 1930, appendix to letter of Polizeidirektion Bremen of 8 April 1930); cf. 'Instruktion für die Schaffung...' (October/November 1929, appendix to 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin. Nr 20 [15 November 1929]), both StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.30.

10 *RF* 22 July 1929; 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 13' (n. 5); 'KJVD, Rundschreiben Nr 5, 16.1.30, Betr: AJG', LAK 403/16774, p. 543; 'Polizeipräsidium Berlin, Abteilung IA, 24.9.1930' to Oberstaatsanwalt beim Landgericht II, GehStA 219/15, pp. 141ff.

11 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 7' (1 April 1930), StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.30; Creutzburg, *Organisationsarbeit*, p. 26.
12 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 9' (n. 4).
13 'Lagebericht, Polizeidirektion Nurnberg-Fürth, 24.6.1929', 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 19' (28 October 1929), both in StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.
14 'Bericht von der Sitzung der erweiterten Bezirksleitung am 28.8.1929', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 11' (1 June 1930), StABr 4,65/ IV.13.i.
15 'Bremen, den 27.11.1929', StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d; 'Bremen, den 11.11.1929, Betr: Arbeiterwehren und RFB', StABr 4,65/II.H.4.b.30.
16 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 10' (15 May 1930), StABr 4,65/ II.H. 4.a.30; Resolution of 4 June 1930 (cf. above Chapter 3, n. 38).
17 'Richtlinien für die Organisierung roter Betriebswehren', StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.31.
18 'Lagebericht, Polizeidirektion Nürnberg-Fürth, 31.7.1930', StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.31.
19 'Warum Selbstschutz des Proletariats?', *Jugendinternationale*, H. 8 (April 1930), appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2160/25.6.', StABr 4,65/ II.A.12.a.
20 Hugo Eberlein, 'Die Kampforganisation des deutschen Faschismus', *KI* XI (1930), 2030; L. Alfred, 'Für Klarheit in der Frage des proletarischen Selbstschutzes', *KI* XI (1930), 2006ff.
21 *Inprekorr* X, Nr 85 (10 October 1930), 2080; Rohe, pp. 365ff.; *RF* 26 and 30 September 1930.
22 *Alarm*, Nr 3 (February 1931), StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.32.
23 As in other mass-organizations, contact with the Party was officially maintained through the 'Reichsfraktion der Kommunisten im Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus', as well as through personalities at the top; the first Bundesführer was Hermann Remmele. Cf. Bahne, *Die KPD* p. 21.
24 Creutzburg, *Organisationsarbeit*, p. 82.
25 *Alarm*, Nr 16 (January 1932), StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.32.
26 'Organisationsrichtlinien für den Aufbau und die Aufgaben des Kampfbunds gegen den Faschismus, 10.10.1930', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 21' (1 November 1930), StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.32. (and for the following).
27 'Abteilung I, Berlin, 5.10.1931', LA Bln 58/2538, VIII.
28 'Arbeitsplan für den Werbemonat (Bezirksverbandsleitung Berlin-Brandenburg)', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 3' (1 February 1931), StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.30.
29 Resolution of first Reichsführertagung of the Kampfbund, 4 and 5 April 1931, appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2166 h SH.1/22.4', BAK R134/74, pp. 55ff.
30 *RF* 1 March 1931. Cf. Creutzburg, *Organisationsarbeit*, p. 25.
31 The district was UB Zentrum: 'Abteilung I, Berlin 5.10.1931' (n. 27).
32 'I Ad II', Berlin, 13.10.1931', LA Bln 58/2538, VIII; 'Die organisatorische Entwicklung der Partei im Jahre 1931', BAK NS 26/810, p. 116.
33 Rohe, pp. 392ff.; *RF* 18 December 1931, 20, 21, 22 January, 14 February 1932; cf. Ulbricht, *Zur Geschichte*, I, 569.
34 Kiessling, *Stark*, p. 122; Thälmann, *Reden*, I, 415.
35 'Der revolutionare Antifaschist. Mitteilungsblatt für alle Staffeln' (Kampfbund, Ruhrgebiet March 1932), 'Kampfbund, Reichsleitung, Rundschreiben' (26 March 1932), 'Richtlinien für Massenselbstschutz-Formationen' (appendix to report of Polizeipräsidium Bochum, 9 May 1932), all in StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.32.

36 See e.g. *Alarm*, Nr 10 (July 931), StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.32, and cf. above, Chapter 2.
37 'KPD, Rundschreiben Nr 11', in *Antifaschistische Aktion*, Nr 20; Reichseinheitsausschuss der Antifaschistischen Aktion, 'Anleitung für den Aufbau und die Arbeit der Einheitsausschüsse und des Massenselbstschutz der Antifaschistischen Aktion' (appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2260/6.10'), BAK R134/72, pp. 133ff.
38 On the involvement of the illegal RFB, see Finker, 'Aufgaben und Rolle', p. 144.
39 'RMI, IAN 2166 i/15.9', BAK R134/75, pp. 55ff.; cf. 'I Ad IV, 6.8.1932, Bericht über die Sitzung der kommunistischen Staffelleiter...', GehStA 219/33, p. 2.
40 'Technische Vorschriften für Häuser- und Betriebesstaffeln', appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2166 i/19.8', BAK R134/75, pp. 47ff.
41 'RMI, IAN 2166 i/12.12', BAK R134/76, p. 37. For reports of Communist organizations from other areas, see *Antifaschistische Aktion, passim*.
42 Walter Ulbricht, 'Die KPD im Kampf um die Eroberung der Mehrheit der Arbeiterklasse', *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr 7 (18 January 1933), 240; 'RMI, IAN 2166 i/15.9' (n. 39).
43 'RMI, IAN 2166 i/15,9' (n. 39); 'I A II^{5}, 21.1.33. Betr: Erwerbslosenschutzstaffeln', GehStA 219/35, pp. 41f.; *Berliner Adressbuch* 1931; 'RMI, IAN 2166 i/12.12' (n. 41).
44 'Auszug aus einem Bericht aus Karlsruhe vom 20.2.1930', 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 2' (15 January 1930), both in StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.
45 'Bundesbefehl der 2. illegalen Reichsführertagung, 1.1930', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 3' (1 February 1930), StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.
46 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 19' (1 October 1930), StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d. The actual extent of some of the locals is uncertain, since the evidence is fragmentary. Sources include; Statement of H. Klenk, BAK R134/64, pp. 236ff.; 'I Ad II^{1}, Berlin, 16.10.1932', LA Bln 58/2610, p. 55; Statement of A. Zeller, LA Bln 58/29, XIV, pp. 128ff.
47 Schuster, pp. 231f.; 'Organisation und Tätigkeit des verbotenen RFB in Deutschland' (report of LKPA Berlin, 21 July 1931), StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d; *Der Funke, Organ für Mitglieder der KPD des Bezirks Berling-Brandenburg-Grenzmark-Lausitz. Sonderausgabe zum Bezirksparteitag, Mai 1930*, BAK R45IV/17. Cf. 'Rundschreiben Nr 1 zur politischen Lage und den nächsten Aufgaben', appendix to report of Polizeipräsidium Bochum, 30 July 1931, StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.1.
48 Schuster, Chapter 3. Cf. Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau*, p. 122, *Kriegsschauplätze*, p. 138; Karl Retzlaw, *Spartakus* (Frankfurt a.M., 1974), p. 300; Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (London, 1948), p. 424; Rosa Levine-Meyer, *Inside German Communism* (London, 1977), p. 71.
49 'Organisation und Tätigkeit' (n. 47); Schuster, p. 230.
50 'An alle Freunde', appendix to report of Polizeipräsidium Bochum, 5 January 1931, StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.
51 'Rotes Oktoberaufgebot. Arbeitsplan für die Monate Oktober bis Dezember. Unser wehrhafter Massenkampf um die werktätige Jugend', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 23' (1 December 1930), StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.
52 P.H. 'Einiges zu den Aufgaben des RFB', *Oktober*, VI, 1/2 (April 1931) appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2169 c/25.4', BAK R134/62, p. 211.
53 'Nachtrag zum Arbeitsplan', appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2166a/14.12', BAK R134/93, pp. 78ff. Cf. 'Warum Wehrsport?', BAK R134/75, pp. 66ff.;

'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 4' (15 February 1930) and 'Nr 18' (15 September 1931), StABr 4,65/ VI.10004.d.

54 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 19' (30 September 1931), StABr 4,65/VI.1000.44.d.

55 Cf. n. 46 and 'Berlin, 15.4.1932' (report on a meeting of RFB functionaries), StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.

56 'Die Ausbildung der Gruppe', appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2160d/18.11', BAK R134/76, pp. 23ff; 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 19' (n. 54) and 'Nr 22' (15 November 1931), StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d; Statement of H. Klenk (n. 46); 'Organisation und Tätigkeit' (n. 47).

57 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 19' (n. 54) and 'Nr 1' (1 January 1933), StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.1; 'Anweisung zur sofortigen Bildung von Organisations-, Schutz- und Nachrichtenabteilungen (O.S.N.A. – Osna)', appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2166a/22.12', BAK R134/93, pp. 115ff.

58 Retzlaw, pp. 252f., 278ff., 301; Babette Gross, *Willi Münzenberg* (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 152; Fischer, *Stalin*, p. 294; Franz Schweyer, *Politische Geheimverbände* (Freiburg, 1925), p. 105; Walter Zeutschel, *Im Dienst der kommunistischen Terror-Organisation* (Berlin, 1931), p. 11; 'Denkschrift über die Bürgerkriegsvorbereitungen des Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands ... Ende Januar 1925', BAK R134/50, pp. 64ff. Cf. Schuster, pp. 30ff.; R. Meister and H. Voigt, 'Der Kampf der KPD für den Aufbau proletarischer Wehrorganisationen', *Militärgeschichte*, XIII (1973), 528f.

59 Statement of M. Klause, 5 February 1935, LA Bln 58/29, XVI, pp. 134ff. On Gutsche, cf. Wollenberg, p. 11. Kiessling, *Stark*, p. 156, describes Klause as a Gestapo agent. There is no evidence for this in the sources; it seems most likely that Klause was one of those illegal operatives described by Schlesinger, p. 575, who 'under Hitler's torture ... turned into traitors'. Cf. the anonymous report of 1933 on Klause and the PS reprinted by Duhnke, pp. 531f.

60 See above, p. 91; Georg Fischer, *Vom Aufrechten Gang eines Sozialisten* (Berlin/Bonn, 1979), pp. 92f.

61 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 4' (n. 53).

62 Doehler/Fischer, 'Ernst Thälmanns Beitrag', p. 281; this is the first reference to the organization to appear in the literature of the DDR. Statement of M. Klause (n. 59); Statement of G. Reinecke, 21 December 1934, LA Bln 58/29, XIV, p. 136a; 'IA, Berlin, 22.6.34' (Report of the Gestapo on results of the seizure of the KPD's 'Abwehrarchiv'), StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.b.2; 'Bericht einer V.P., die als Mitglied der Organisation M... Ordnerdienst versehen hat', BAK R58/390, pp. 295ff.; Indictment in the murders of Anlauf and Lenk, LA Bln 58/52, Sonderheft. Cf. *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, IV, 308, and below, Chapter 5; Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau*, pp. 148, 259.

63 For the views of the police, see *inter alia*: IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1678; Grzesinski, *Inside Germany*, p. 130. For the activities of Communist organizations: 'Denkschrift über Kampfvorbereitung und Kampfgrundsätze radikaler Organisationen', BAK R134/59, p. 37; 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 19' (n. 54). For the KPD's response: *RF* 25 August and 20 November 1931, 4 February 1932.

64 Cf. 'Auszug aus einem Bericht aus Karlsruhe' (n. 44) and 'IA, Berlin, 22.6.34' (n. 62).

65 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1391; cf. Nr. 1386.

66 Doehler/ Fischer, 'Ernst Thälmanns Beitrag', p. 281; Statement of M. Klause (n. 59); Statement of M. Klause, 28 May 1935, LA Bln 58/29, XXIII, pp.

116f.; 'Anweisung zur sofortigen Bildung' (n. 57); IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1380.

67 Wehner, p. 6; Schlesinger, pp. 574f.

68 *Oktober*, IV, 3 (September 1929), in LAK 403/16773, pp. 671ff.

69 *RF* 24 June 1932; IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1668. Cf. 'Strategie und Taktik des Bürgerkrieges. 1. Teil (Partisanenkrieg), appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2160/19.1', BAK R134/74, pp. 164ff.; *Der bewaffnete Aufstand*, pp. 215ff. and *passim*.

70 *Der Weg zum Sieg*, p. 28.

71 P.H., 'Einiges zu den Aufgaben' (n. 52).

72 'Das Ziel nicht aus dem Auge! Kampfappel!', appendix to RMI, IAN 2166a/26.9, BAK R134/75, p. 117; 'Massenorganisation, Massenschutz, Massenarbeit!', *Der Rote Frontsoldat. Organ für proletarische Wehrpolitik*, Nr 5 (November 1932), in StABr 4,65/VI.1000.44.d.

73 'Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus, an alle Bezirksverbandsleitungen und Bezirksleitungen des Kampfbunds, 6.8.1932', appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2166 h/1.9', StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.32.

74 'Der revolutionäre Antifaschist. Mitteilungsblatt für alle Staffeln' (Kampfbund, Ruhrgebiet, October 1931), StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.32.

75 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 21' (1 November 1930), StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.32.

76 *RF* 26 October 1930.

77 'Arbeitsrichtlinien beschlossen von der Führertagung des Kampfbunds... am 5.8.32', Kampfbund, Reichsleitung, 'An die 223 besten Ortsgruppen des Kampfbunds...', 3 August 1932, both StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.32.

78 Polizeidirektion Bremen to Nachrichtensammelstelle im RMI, 2 November 1932, StABr 4,65/II.H.4.b.32.

79 Reichsfraktionsleitung der Kommunisten... to Sekretariat des ZK, 3 August 1932, BAK R45/23; 'Abteilung I, Berlin 5.10.1931' (n. 27); 'Organisation und Tätigkeit' (n. 47); 'I Ad II', Berlin, 13.10.1931' (n. 32); Wehner, p. 8.

Notes to Chapter 5

1 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 18' (15 September 1931), StABr 4,65/11.H.4.a.32; Indictment in the Richardstrasse case, LA Bln 58/29, VII, pp. 6ff.

2 *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr. 13 (27 January 1933), 439.

3 'Zusammenstellung der nach den Maifeiern entstandenen Streiks' and 'Abteilung IA, 4. Mai 1929', GehStA 219/45, pp. 38 and 39ff.

4 *Inprekorr* XIII, Nr 7 (18 January 1933), 238 and XII, Nr 105 (16 December 1932), 3379; *RF* 21 January 1932; S. Schwab, 'Die Arbeit der KPD in den Betrieben und bei der Organisierung von Wirtschaftskämpfen', *KI* XIII (1932), 843.

5 'Bericht über die Gross-Berliner Partei-Arbeiter-Konferenz am Donnerstag, den 29. Dez. 1932...', GehStA 219/9, p. 214.

6 Wehner, p. 7.

7 *RF* 23 April and 3 September 1931; Records of the prosecution: LA Bln 58/2630, I, *passim*.

8 On the origins and consequences of Communist participation in the Plebiscite, see *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, IV, 301ff.; cf. Wehner, p. 5;

Weingartner, pp. 89ff. For a highly coloured and certainly distorted account, Schwarz, *Völker*, p. 215, and cf. Buber-Neumann, *Von Potsdam nach Moskau*, p. 387. 'Berlin, den 28. August 1931' (Report on meeting of Enemies-Experts and cadre representatives), LA Bln 58/2538, VIII; *StJB* 1932, p. 258; cf. *Inprekorr* XI, Nr 87 (8 September 1931), 1952ff.

9 On strains on the police: 'Bemerkenswerte Parolen und Agitationsmethoden der KPD...', StABr 4,65/IV.13.i; IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nrs. 1678 and 1663; cf. Severing, p. 287, Grzesinski, *Tragi-comédie*, pp. 178. On the background and planning of the attack, LA Bln 58/52, Sonderheft (fragments of indictment in the murder case); Ehrt, p. 149; *RF* 14 September 1930, 9 August 1931; LA Bln 58/1033 (includes a report of death threats to officers of the precinct the previous June); *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, IV, 308; Wehner, p. 6; Buber-Neumann, *Kriegsschauplätze*, pp. 311ff. and *Von Potsdam nach Moskau*, pp. 275ff. In contrast to the other accounts, which name Kippenberger and Neumann as the originators of the plan, Buber-Neumann maintains that it was ordered by Ulbricht in order to discredit Neumann.

10 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nrs 1377, 1378, 1385, 1386, 1391.

11 *RF* 11 August 1931; 'Persönliche Aeusserung des Polizeipräsidenten Grzesinski' in 'Anlageheft zu der Erklärung des Preussischen Staatsministeriums vom 10.8.32', p. 35, FES, Nachlass Severing, 60/4; IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr. 1677; Grzesinski, *Inside Germany*, p. 131; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr 85 (1 September 1931), 1903.

12 Carl von Ossietzky, 'Bülow-Platz', *Die Weltbühne*, XXVII (1931) part II, 239.

13 'Berlin, den 28. August 1931' (n. 8); IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1378.

14 Engelbrechten/Volz pp. 37, 203; Engelbrechten, p. 182. Cf. *RF* 8 January 1932, *VW* 27 January 1932 (A).

15 *RF* 15 and 16 September 1931; *Inprekorr* XI, Nr 90 (18 September 1931), 2015f.; 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 22' (15 November 1931), StABr 4,65/VI.1000.44.d.

16 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 20' (15 October 1931), StABr 4,65/II.H. 4.a.32.

17 *Ibid.*; 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 18' (15 September 1931) and 'Nr. 22' (15 November 1931), StA Br 4,65/II.H.4.a.32; 'Berlin, den 4. September 1931' (Report of a Kampfbund membership meeting), 'Berlin, den 11. September 1931. An alle Staffelleitungen', 'Abteilung I. Berlin, den 5. Oktober 1931' (Report of a Kampfbund district meeting), 'I Ad. II[1]. Berlin, den 13. Oktober 1931' (Report on the Berlin-Brandenburg district conference), all in LA Bln 58/1538, VIII.

18 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 22' (n. 15).

19 On the Richardstrasse case, see below. On the Gneisenaustrasse case: '(17a) II P.K.10.33 (14.33)' (Judgment in the case), LA Bln 58/34, III, pp. 138ff.

20 On the Posener Strasse incident: prosecution file LA Bln 58/2624, *passim*; here Statement of G. Lucas, 11 December 1931, LA Bln 58/2624, III, p. 24.

21 *VW* 25 November 1931 (A); cf. 2 October 1931 (A), 11 November 1931 (A).

22 *VW* 2 October 1931 (A); Statement of the landlord, Posener Strasse 25, 12 December 1931, LA Bln 58/2624, III, p. 187.

23 *VW* 26 February 1932 (A).

24 Statement of the landlord, Posener Strasse 25 (n. 22).

25 Statement of M. Klause, 29 May 1935, LA Bln 58/29, XXIII, pp. 120ff.

26 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr. 1379; Statement of A. Zeller, 21 December 1934, LA Bln 58/29, XIV, pp. 140ff.
27 'Das Haus Richardstrasse 35 im Kampf' (mimeographed tenants' newsletter), Statement of H. Fricke, both LA Bln 58/29, XXI, p. 193; *Berliner Adressbuch* 1931, III, p. 1903: The tenants' newsletter mentions 145 households; the *Berliner Adressbuch* lists 138 tenants by name. Wilhelm Schmidt, 'Abriss der "Richardsburg". Richardstrasse 35 in Neukölln', *Britzer Heimatbote*, XXII (1971), pp. 135–7; *VW* 2 October 1931 (A); Engelbrechten, p. 186.
28 Statement of W. Herbst, 30 December 1931, LA Bln 58/29, IV, pp. 221f.; '(17a) II.P.K.I.32 (5.32)' (Judgment in Richardstrasse case), LA Bln 58/29, IX, pp. 120ff.; Statement of H. Fricke (n. 27).
29 Broszat, 'Anfänge', p. 87; Statement of A. Rahm, 17 October 1931, LA Bln 58/29, I, pp. 22f.; Engelbrechten, p. 161; Berlin, den 28. August 1931' (n. 8).
30 LA Bln 58/134 (case of Communist youth arrested for distributing leaflets against Nazi terror, 1929); Statement of A. Rahm (n.29); Engelbrechten, p. 102.
31 Statement of A. Rahm (n. 29); '(17a) II.P.K.I.32 (5.32)' (n.28).
32 '(17a) II.P.K.I.32 (5.32)' (n. 28); *RF* 3 September 1931. On Sturm 33: *VW* 23 August and 13 September 1931 (A).
33 Statement of H. Fricke (n. 27); *RF* 1 and 5 September 1931; *Der Angriff*, 3 September 1931; '(17a) II.P.K.I.32 (5.32)' (n. 28); Statement of M. Lehmann, 19 October 1931, LA Bln 58/29, I, p. 40; Schlesinger, p. 576.
34 *VW* 2 and 6 October 1931 (both A); Poster 'Mieterstreik', 'Arbeiterstimme, Organ der Werktätigen des Berliner Südens, Sonntag, den 4. October 1931', 'Entschliessung' (of tenants' meeting 29 September 1931), 'Mieterstreik-Mitteilungen Nr 1', 'Das Haus Richardstrasse 35 im Kampf', LA Bln 58/29, XXI, p. 193.
35 '(17a) II.P.K.I.32 (5.32)' (n. 28); *RF* 22 April 1932.
36 'An die Mieter des Hauses Richardstrasse 35' (Leaflet), LA Bln 58/2538, VIII; Statement of H. Fricke (n. 27); *RF* 25 October 1931.
37 Except where otherwise noted, the following account is based on Schlesinger, pp. 577f., the 1932 Judgment in the Richardstrasse case (n. 28) and statements to the police in LA Bln 58/29: Statements of G. Reinecke, 15 April and 29 May 1935 (XXI, pp. 170ff. and XXIII, pp. 120ff.); Statements of M. Klause, 5 February and 28 May 1935 (XVI, pp. 134ff. and XXIII, pp. 116ff.); Statements of A. Zeller, 19 and 21 December 1934 (XIV, pp. 128ff. and pp. 140ff.).
38 Statement of Klause, 28 May 1935 (n. 37); IISG. Nachlass Grzesinski, Nrs. 1379, 1391, 1392; cf. Wehner, p. 18.
39 'Berlin, den 28. August 1931' (n. 8).
40 This is mentioned by Schlesinger, p. 577, as well as in the prosecution files: Statement of A. Zeller, 19 December 1934 (n. 37); Statement of E. Gläser, 11 December 1934, XIV, pp. 62ff.; 'II.P.K.1/32. Vermerk', XXV, pp. 180ff.
41 '(17a) II.P.K.I.32 (5.32)' (n. 28); *RF* 24 April, 1 May 1932.
42 Statements of A. Bölke, 15 November 1932 and 25 February 1933, LA Bln 58/29, X, pp. 40f. and 213f.; Statement of E. Gläser, 11 December 1934 (n. 40); 'II.P.K.1/32. Vermerk' (n. 40); Schlesinger, pp. 578f.
43 Schlesinger, p. 578; *RF* 16 October 1931; IISG Nachlass Grzesinski, Nrs 1384, 1385, 1386.
44 Cf. '(72) II. PM 66.32 (96.32)' (Judgment in the case of a fight between two

Communists and two Nazis on their way home from Richardstrasse 35, January 1932), LA Bln 58/223, pp. 15f.; *Berliner Adressbuch* 1932. Cf. Engelbrechten/Volz, p. 189.

45 '(17a) II.P.K.10.33 (14.33)' (n. 19); 'Arbeiter von Kreuzberg ...' LA Bln 58/34, I, p. 208.

46 LA Bln 58/2538, *passim*; IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1385.

47 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1393; 'I Ad II[1], 22.12.31, Vertraulich...', LA Bln 58/2624, V, p. 1; *RF* 10 January 1932; Statement of M. Bockling, 14 July 1932, LA Bln 58/31, I, pp. 55f.

48 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr. 1391.

Notes to Chapter 6

1 'Reichskonferenz des RFB, Dezember 1932, Braunschweig', appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2166a/31.1', BAK R134/76, p. 98.

2 Günther Dehn, *Proletarische Jugend* (Berlin, [1929]), pp. 42ff.

3 IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nrs 1397, 1443–8; Severing, pp. 288ff. Cf. Robert Wheeler, 'Organized sport and organized labour', *Journal of Contemporary History*, XIII (1978), 191–210.

4 Liang, 'Lower-class immigrants', p. 103; Otto Rühle, *Zur Psychologie des proletarischen Kindes* (Frankfurt a.M., 1975), pp. 100ff.; Dinse, pp. 75ff.

5 RJ, 'Liebe Jugendfreunde', appendix to report of Polizeipräsidium Bochum, 24 July 1931, StABr 4,65/VI.1000.44.d.

6 During the War and in the years that followed the spectre of juvenile delinquency became a general subject of public discussion: cf. Eve Rosenhaft, 'Organising the "lumpenproletariat": Cliques and Communists in Berlin during the Weimar Republic', in Richard J. Evans (ed.), *The German Working Class 1888–1933: The Politics of Everyday Life* (London, 1981), pp. 177 ff. The idea, frequently voiced by authorities at all levels during this period, that the paramilitary formations should be encouraged as an 'answer' to the 'problem' of youth, was an extension of this. For a direct application, see Heinz Jacoby, 'Die Kriminalität der Jugendlichen in den Jahren 1930 und 1931', *ZGStW*, LIV (1935), 93, citing a child-welfare officer's opinion that those groups 'regardless of their aims' had had a positive effect in keeping down the rate of increase of juvenile crime. The same article noted an increase in the number of political offences by under nineteen-year-olds.

7 Manfred Heinemann, 'Normprobleme in der Fürsorgeerziehung', in Manfred Heinemann (ed.), *Sozialisation und Bildungswesen in der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart, 1976), pp. 131–56; Rose Ahlheim *et al.*, *Gefesselte Jugend. Fürsorgeerziehung im Kapitalismus* (Frankfurt a.M., 1976), *passim*. Cf. Elsa von Liszt, 'Die Kriminalität der Jugendlichen in Berlin in den Jahren 1928, 1929 und 1930', *ZGStW*, LII (1932), 266ff.; Rühle, *Zur Psychologie*, pp. 20f.; Ernst Haffner, *Jugend auf der Landstrasse Berlin* (Berlin, [1932]), pp. 18ff.; Albert Lamm, *Betrogene Jugend* (Berlin, 1932), pp. 16, 39; Justus Ehrhardt, 'Cliquenwesen und Jugendverwahrlosung', *Zentralblatt für Jugendrecht und Jugendwohlfahrt*, XXI (1930), 417.

8 Lamm, pp. 12f.; Ahlheim *et al.*, pp. 258ff., 313ff. Georg Glaser was one of those whose first contact with the Communist movement was in a reform school: Glaser, pp. 21ff.

9 *BT* 24 March 1930 (A); *RF* 25 March 1930; LA Bln 58/143, I, p. 60; /150, I,

p. 124; /159, I, p. 108; /179, p. 147: these youths came from Schöneberg and Steglitz; the youngest was fifteen, the oldest twenty-nine.

10 'Rotes Oktoberaufgebot. Arbeitsplan für die Monate Oktober bis Dezember', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 23' (1 December 1930), StABr 4,65/ VI.1000.44.d.

11 On the origins and development of the cliques, see Rosenhaft, 'Organising the "lumpenproletariat"', pp. 176ff.; O. Voss and H. Schön, 'Die Cliquen jugendlicher Verwahrloster als sozialpädagogisches Problem', in *Erfahrungen der Jugendlichen* (Potsdam, 1930), p. 83; Christine Fournier, 'Ringverein der Jugend', *Die Weltbühne*, XXVII (1931), part I, 90; *VW* 3 March 1923 (A), 20 July 1923 (B), 5 April 1924 (A), 20 September 1924 (B); Ehrhardt, 'Cliquenwesen', p. 413. The work of Hellmut Lessing and Manfred Liebel, *Wilde Cliquen* (Bensheim, 1981), provides an outline of the character and activities of the cliques, based largely on interviews, and also reprints some of the texts cited here; the manuscript of this book was already completed when Lessing and Liebel's work was published, and consequently it has not been possible to integrate their conclusions into the text.

12 Fournier, 'Ringverein', p. 89.

13 Ehrhardt, 'Cliquenwesen', p. 414; Heinrich Berl, *Der Kampf gegen das rote Berlin, oder Berlin eine Unterwelts-Residenz* (Karlsruhe, 1932), pp. 69f.; Adolf Lau, 'Jugendliche Verbrecherbanden?', *VW* 9 July 1931 (B).

14 Ehrhardt, 'Cliquenwesen', p. 414.

15 Except where otherwise noted, the following account is based on: Ehrhardt, 'Cliquenwesen'; Fournier, 'Ringverein'; Voss/Schön; Berl, pp. 63ff.; Justus Ehrhardt, 'Jugendliche Verbrecher', *VZ* 22 May 1932 (Postal edition); Haffner, pp. 7ff., 66ff., 138ff.; Dinse, pp. 108ff.; and contemporary press reports.

16 E.g. *VW* 29 October 1923, 24 January 1929, 25 April 1931 (all B), 24 November 1927, 18 June 1931 (both A).

17 Voss/Schön, p. 83. Cf. Ehrhardt, 'Jugendliche Verbrecher'; Dinse, p. 109.

18 Ehrhardt, 'Cliquenwesen', p. 415.

19 *VW* 6 February 1928 (B), 30 January 1929 (A); *BT* 7 February 1928 (B); *DAZ* 6 February 1928 (A); *VZ* 7 December 1928 (A); Statement of Alfred Jäger, 18 October 1931, LA Bln 58/29, I, pp. 34f.

20 Ehrhardt, 'Cliquenwesen', p. 414; Voss/Schön, p. 75; cf. *ibid.*, p. 71.

21 H.R.B., 'Wie ist die Berliner Unterwelt organisiert?', *VZ* 5 January 1929 (Postal edition). Cf. Ruhla, *passim*; Engelbrecht, pp. 83ff.; Liang, *Berlin Police*, pp. 145ff.; Berl, pp. 42ff.

22 Cf. Ruhla, pp. 61ff.

23 Judgment in the 'Eierschlamm' case: LA Bln 58/31, Appendix. Cf. Justus Ehrhardt, 'Die Kriminalität der Jugendlichen in den Jahren 1932 und 1933', *ZGStW*, LIV (1935), 685; Franz von Schmidt, *Vorgeführt erscheint* (Stuttgart, 1955), pp. 343ff.

24 Von Schmidt, pp. 374, 396f.; Voss/Schön, p. 85. The presence of 'criminal elements' in the ranks of both SA and Communist formations in Berlin, which went along with the use by both parties of *Ringverein*-style names and organizations as 'camouflage', was observed by contemporaries and has received some attention from historians. In both cases it is most often mentioned in order to discredit the party in question or to demonstrate the senselessness of the streetfighting. E.g. *Inprekorr* XII, Nr 32 (19 April 1932), 962; Engelbrechten/Volz, p. 114; Diels, p. 158; Engelbrechten, pp. 40, 102,

227, 240; Schlesinger, pp. 458, 578; Schwarz, pp. 164, 170; 'Spartakus', *German Communists* (London, [1944]), p. 63; Arthur Koestler, *The Invisible Writing* (London, 1969), pp. 29f. Cf. Sauer, p. 847; Liang, *Berlin Police*, pp. 138f.; Broszat, 'Die Anfänge', p. 91.

25 Voss/Schön, pp. 84f and appendix; *RF* 4 and 10 August, 15 and 22 September 1923; *VZ* 14 September 1923 (B); Gertrud Ring, ' "Südostpiraten" und der "lange Stamm". Die "wilden Klikken" ', *RF* 3 April 1931; documents on the 'Adlerkrallie' case: LA Bln 58/116.

26 Wrapper to *Fürsorgehöllen*, issued by the Central Committee of the KJVD (Berlin, [1930]); L. Anton [Louis Kaufmann], 'Ein Buch der Jugend', in Alfred Klein, *Im Auftrag ihrer Klasse* (East Berlin/ Weimar, 1972), p. 772.

27 Schönstedt, pp. 25, 14. On Schönstedt's career, see the autobiographical notes, *ibid.*, p. 129, and police report; LA Bln 58/138, p. 16 and Klein, pp. 541f. Cf. Hanno Möbius, 'Der Rote Eine-Mark-Roman', *AfS*, XIV (1974), 157–212, especially 209f.

28 Statement of A. Jäger, 18 October 1931; Arrest record of E. Irmer; Statement of E. Irmer, 23 November 1931; Report of Jugendamt Neukölln on A. Jäger, 28 November 1931; 'Abt. I, II² I.4.B.78/31, 18.2.32' (Police report on Richardstrasse defendants): LA Bln 58/29, I, pp. 34f. and Appendix; III, p. 21; IV, p. 126; V, pp. 185ff. Cf. also the case of another Communist Youth member, member of a Neukölln clique in 1928: 'I A II², Berlin. 28.11.1930'; GehStA 219/15, p. 162.

29 Judgment in the 'Eierschlamm' case (n. 23). Statement of S. Albrecht; Arrest records of R. Siebenmann and S. Albrecht; 'I.pol.b.K.13.33 (90.33)': LA Bln 58/31, II, p. 79 and Appendix; III, pp. 197ff. Cf. the cases of Fritz Marquardt, 1927 member of the RJ, 1928 arrested for attacking SAJ members as member of the Wanderverein Falke and Gustav Barth, who left the Communist Youth to join the clique 'Lustig Blut': Police Report on Marquardt, 30 December 1930, LA Bln 58/150, I, p. 124. Statement of G. Barth, 22 July 1931, LA Bln 58/2595, I, p. 15.

30 Statement of G. Barth (n. 29); Statement of F. Hammel, 22 July 1931, LA Bln 58/2595, I, p. 17; 'Bemerkenswerte Parolen und Agitationsmethoden der KPD', p. 14, StABr 4,65/ IV.13.i.

31 Anton, pp. 170f.

32 Ring, ' "Südostpiraten" und der "Lange Stamm" '.

33 *VW* 12 March 1931 (A), 17 April 1931 (B); *RF* 12, 13, 15 and 21 March 1931.

34 'Anweisungen zur Durchführung des 5. Märzaufgebots', appendix to report of Polizeipräsidium Bochum, 20 March 1930, StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.30.

35 See below, pp. 217f., for details of selection and sources.

36 Statement of A. Ganter, 23 January 1932, LA Bln 58/1034, p. 41.

37 Statement of F. Netzer, 5 July 1932, LA Bln 58/31, I, pp. 31f.

38 Statement of H. Korn, 2 December 1934, LA Bln 58/29, XIV, p. 12; Statement of F. Lange, 8 July 1930, LA Bln 58/2205, I, pp. 38f. Cf. Statement of A. Wilke, 24 April 1932, and '(17a) II.P.K.3.32 (9.32)', LA Bln 58/21, I, p. 40 and II, pp. 1ff. See also LA Bln 58/1; /9, IV; /141, pp. 170ff.; /160, pp. 60ff; /179, pp. 118ff; /180, pp. 52ff; /572, p. 3, and below.

39 See e.g. LA Bln 58/159, I, pp. 146ff.; /180, pp. 52ff.; /193, pp. 24ff.

40 Cf. Paul Kluke, 'Der Fall Potempa', *VfZ*, V (1957), 279–96 and, most recently, Richard Bessel, 'The Potempa murder', *Central European History*, X (1977), 241–54.

41 '(500) 1.pol.K.5.33 (11.33)' and '(500) 1.pol.a.K.5.33 (11.33)', LA Bln 58/19, I, p. 204 and III, pp. 103ff. Cf. Engelbrechten/ Volz, pp. 135f; *RF* 14 January 1933. The KPD distributed a leaflet in the neighbourhood stating that Sagasser had been about to join the Communists and had been murdered by his own comrades: 'Wie kam es zum Tode des SA-Mannes Sagasser, Birkenstrasse?', LA Bln 58/19, I, p. 204.

42 Statement of A. Eber, 10 May 1932, and '(200) 1.pol.M.18.32 (9.32)', LA Bln 58/1311, pp. 26ff and 66.

43 'II.P.J.1221/32, Vermerk', LA Bln 58/53, IV, pp. 36f. (The authorities declared that it was not possible to determine which side had started the shooting, and the prosecution was suspended for lack of evidence.)

44 '(I. Schw.) E.I.k.7.32 (19.32)', LA Bln 58/37, XV, pp. 117ff.; *RF* 20, 21, 22 January 1932. Cf. LA Bln 58/209, pp. 116ff.

45 Statement of A. Hoch, 20 June 1932, LA Bln 58/212, pp. 7f. Cf. *RF* 21 June 1932.

46 See for example LA Bln 58/1, (no pagination) (incident of 14 January 1933); LA Bln 58/2624, II, pp. 1f. (Report on incident of 16 December 1931); I, p. 70 (Statement of landlord of Communist tavern, 17 December 1931). On local alarms, see for example LA Bln 58/1, (no pagination) (incident of 1 July 1932); /9, IV, (no pagination); /1071, pp. 4 and 43f; /2223, I pp. 37ff.; 2536, II, pp. 133ff. On outsiders in the neighbourhood: LA Bln 58/37, XV, pp. 117ff. (Felseneck); /159, I, pp. 146ff.; /216, p. 140a; 2223, I, pp. 37ff.

47 Cf. Statement of F. Netzer, 5 July 1932 (n. 37).

48 '(47.) II.P.J.406.31 (79 E/31)/4', LA Bln 58/160, pp. 60ff.

49 Copies in the file LA Bln 58/2506, IV, p. 85. Cf. '259. Pol. Revier, 14.9.31, Bericht', LA Bln 58/600, p. 2; Engelbrechten, pp. 105, 375f.; LA Bln 58/1451; Ehrt, p. 141.

50 Text in 'RMI, IAN 2166 i/12.12', BAK R134/76, p. 41. Cf. Ehrt, pp. 143f.

51 Statement of A. Rahm, 17 October 1931, LA Bln 58/29, I, pp. 22f.; Statement of A. Eber, 6 June 1932, and 'Vermerk': LA Bln 58/2205, I, pp. 72f., 82; 'Vermerk', LA Bln 58/2538, I, pp. 227f.

52 LA Bln 58/2205 and 2353.

53 '(12) 1.pol.K.L.6.32 (16.32)' LA Bln 58/9, IV. Cf. Littmann, *Herbert Norkus und die Hitlerjungen von Beusselkietz*, a fictionalized depiction of the incident and its victim.

54 '(500) 1.pol.a.k.18.34 (101.34)', LA Bln/58, p. 1.

55 Statement of F. Krämer, 9 February 1932, LA Bln 58/1071, pp. 21ff.

56 See, for example LA Bln 58/101, pp. 103ff.; /143, II, pp. 34ff.; /154, pp. 86ff; /158, pp. 73ff.; /159, I, pp. 146ff.; /172, pp. 54ff.; /188, pp. 47ff.; /207, p. 84; /209, pp. 116ff.; /228, pp. 82ff.; /2535, pp. 106ff.

57 'Kartell antifaschistischer Jugendorganisationen Berlin, Kartellarbeitsplan für den Monat November', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 22' (15 December 1929), StABr 4,65/ II.H.4.a.30.

58 Statement of F. Krämer, 9 February 1932 (n. 55).

59 See, for example LA Bln 58/132, pp. 41ff.; /136, pp. 40ff.; /572, p. 3.

60 Lists of items found in possession of H. Schulz and M. Dieffenbach, LA Bln 58/34, I, p. 202 and /2606, I, p. 136. Cf. LA Bln 58/150, II, pp. 100ff.; /176, I, pp. 143ff.; /182, I, pp. 101ff.; /189, pp. 32aff.; /193, pp. 24ff.; /194, pp. 78bff.; /205, pp. 52ff.; /217, pp. 75ff.; /1030, p. 12; Littmann, p. 97.

61 Statement of G. Hintze, 5 August 1931, LA Bln 58/2595, II, p. 13. The use of

police terms here – *Patrouillengänge, fahnden* – is suggestive, although the written statement may be a police officer's paraphrase.

62 Statement of A. Eber, 10 May 1932 (n. 42). Cf. Indictment, 7 September 1930, LA Bln 58/2205, I, p. 124.

63 Cf. LA Bln 58/561; /2353; /53.

64 Cf. Karl Baedeker, *Berlin und Umgebung* (Leipzig, 1904), p. 126; Baedeker, 1923, p. 41.

65 Cf. *StJB* 1930, p. 137.

66 See above, Ch. 4, p. 98. Cf. Statement of A. Eber, 10 May 1932 (n. 42); '(17a) II.P.K.10.33 (14.33)', LA Bln 58/34, III, pp. 138ff.; '(I. Schw.) E.1.K.7.32 (19.32)', LA Bln 58/37, XV, pp. 117ff.

67 '(71) II.P.L. 30.32 (85.32)', LA Bln 58/228, pp. 82ff.; '(46) II.P. L.23.32 (47.32)', LA Bln 58/2535, pp. 106ff.; '(17) II.P.I.86.30 (24.30)', LA Bln 58/138, pp. 63ff.

68 Statement of H. Neu, 16 December 1931, LA Bln 58/2624, III, pp. 220f.

69 '(11) II.P.L.14.31 (15.31)', LA Bln 58/159, I, pp. 146ff. (Steglitz lies between Schöneberg and Lichterfelde, and forms with Lichterfelde, Mariendorf and Lankwitz the twelfth Berlin *Verwaltungsbezirk*.)

70 Statement of O. Regenthaler, 25 August 1931, LA Bln 58/2595, I, pp. 78f.

71 Statement of F. Krämer, 9 February 1932 (n. 55); Statement of H. Korsch, 15 December 1931, LA Bln 58/2624, III, pp. 218f.

72 E. Auer, 'Ein Beitrag zum Kapitel Fluktuation', in *Der 5. Weltkongress der Kommunistischen Jugendinternationale. Diskussions-Sonderheft der "Jugend-Internationale"* (Berlin, 1928), pp. 426ff.

73 Statement of O. Singer, 25 July 1931; Police report on Singer, 7 August 1931; Report of Jugendamt Kreuzberg, 3 September 1931: LA Bln 58/2595, I, pp. 32f., 111, 133.

74 Statement of A. Muller, 20 October, 1931, LA Bln 58/29, I, p. 49. Cf. Statement of H. Lessing, 19 October 1931, LA Bln 58/29, I, pp. 64ff. For Lessing's activities, see also LA Bln 58/232, /591, and /2346.

75 Statement of A. Eber, 10 May 1932 (n. 42); Statements of A. Scherlinski, 20 June 1930 and 29 June 1932, LA Bln 58/2205, I, p. 14 and /1311, p. 50. On Scherlinski, cf. Wehner, p. 8.

76 'I Ad II[1], 22.12.31, Vertraulich... ', LA Bln 38/2625, I, p. 1.

77 Statement of A. Wilke, 24 April 1932 (n. 38).

78 Statement of A. Müller, 20 October 1931 (n. 74).

79 '(500) 1.pol.a.K.18.34 (101.34)' (n. 54).

80 Police report on O. Singer, 7 August 1931 (n. 73).

81 Statement of A. Eber, 10 May 1932 (n. 42).

82 Cf. Statement of H. Korn, 2 December 1934 (n. 38); Statement of F. Lange, 8 July 1930 (n. 38); Statement of E. Gläser, 11 December 1934, LA Bln 58/29, XIV, pp. 62ff.

83 Statement of A. Wilke, 24 April 1932 (n. 38); Statement of E. Kläber, 27 February 1930, LA Bln 58/138, p. 16. Cf. Statement of O. Peters, 16 September 1932, who attended a Communist meeting 'because all his former school-friends belong to the KJ': LA Bln 58/236, p. 5.

84 Anonymous statement, 1 October 1931, LA Bln 58/1126; Statement of A. Herbst, 28 January 1932, LA Bln 58/9, II, pp. 122ff.

85 Statement of A. Eber, 12 May 1932, LA Bln 58/1311, pp. 32ff.; Statement of A. Wilke, 24 April 1932 (n. 38); Police report on K. Moor, 18 February 1932, LA Bln 58/29, V, p. 186; Statement of K. Scheel, 19 October 1931, LA Bln

58/29, I, pp. 53ff.; Statement of A. Schmidt, 4 February 1931, LA Bln 58/2363, pp. 15ff.; Statement of A. Gollwitz, 24 February 1931, LA Bln 58/2624, II, p. 29. In other contexts, current and former RFB members confirmed the maintenance of conspiratorial practice – cf. Statement of H. Klenk BAK R134/64, pp. 238f. and Anonymous report on an RFB meeting, 16 October 1932, LA Bln 58/2610, pp. 55ff. – and the possibility that, in the violent Communists who were caught, we are dealing with the failures of the movement should not be overlooked.

86 See for example LA Bln 58/9, I, p. 60; /21, I, p. 40; /192, pp. 64ff.; /1126, (no pagination); /29, VII, pp. 20f. Cf. Schönstedt, p. 49; above, Chapter 4, p. 90.

87 See for example LA Bln 58/1, (no pagination) (incident of 1 July 1932); /9, IV (no pagination); /21, II, pp. 1ff.; /135, pp. 59ff.; /138, pp. 63ff.; /230, pp. 43ff.

88 Statement of H. Korn, 2 December 1934 (n. 38); Statement of A. Eber, 12 May 1932 (n. 85); Statement of A. Ganter, 5 January 1932, LA Bln 58/1034, pp. 30ff.; Anonymous statement, 1 October 1931 (n. 84).

89 Statement of A. Eber, 12 May 1932 (n. 85). On the weapons of the Fischerkietz group, cf. Anonymous statement, 17 August 1931, LA Bln 58/1034, p. 1.

90 See for example LA Bln 58/1; /136, pp. 40ff.; /566, p. 4. Cf. Statement of H. Korn: 'my official *Verkehrslokal*' (n. 38). '(500) 1. pol.b.K.13.34 (60.34)', LA Bln 58/22, (no pagination), shows the Party local and the defence group meeting simultaneously in the same tavern. Cf. Statement of A. Eber, 10 May 1932 (n. 42).

91 Statement of K. Walter, 28 February 1931, LA Bln 58/162, pp. 9f. Cf. The comment of the police: '[Walter] politically known to us, because his tavern is frequented primarily by Communists who meet there and discuss attacks on their political opponents.', *ibid.*, p. 11; Statement of H. Meyer, 11 December 1931, LA Bln 58/2624, III, p. 160.

92 See above, Chapter 1, p. 19. It remains to be seen whether the ideal-type of the embattled SA-barracks corresponded to everyday reality; the documents I have seen suggest that the self-contained dormitory was an exception in Berlin, in contrast to the more traditional type of hang-out or headquarters, from which SA-men ordinarily returned after meetings to their homes in the neighbourhood. The contrast of self-images between Communist and Nazi taverns remains significant, however, as a key to social attitudes.

93 '(500) 1.pol.b.k.13.34 (60.34)' (n. 90); Statement of A. Gollwitz, 25 December 1931, LA Bln 58/2624, II, p. 36.

94 Statement of A. Eber, 12 May 1932 (n. 85).

95 Neukrantz, pp. 26f., 34. Cf. Schönstedt, pp. 35ff.

96 Statement of M. Olbrysch, 14 July 1932, LA Bln 58/31, I, pp. 55f. Cf. also Petersen, pp. 15, 50, and 119.

97 Lisbeth Franzen-Hellersberg, *Die jugendliche Arbeiterin. Ihre Arbeitsweise und Lebensform* (Tübingen, 1932), pp. 46ff.; cf. Dinse, pp. 4, 171ff.

98 Cf. Renate Bridenthal, 'Beyond "Kinder, Küche, Kirche": Weimar women at work', *Central European History*, VI (1973), 157.

99 Dehn, *Proletarische Jugend*, p. 50.

100 Cf. Kontos, *passim*; Grossman, *passim*; Michael Rohrwasser, *Saubere Mädel–Starke Genossen* (Frankfurt a.M., 1975) Chapter 2, especially pp. 79–104; Richard J. Evans, *Sozialdemokratie und Frauenemanzipation im Deutschen Kaiserreich* (Berlin/Bonn, 1979); Robert Neuman, 'The sexual question and Social Democracy in Imperial Germany', *Journal of Social*

History, VII (1974), 271–86; Stefan Bajohr, 'Illegitimacy and the working class: Unmarried mothers in Brunswick 1900–1933', in Richard J. Evans (ed.), *The German Working Class 1888–1933: The Politics of Everyday Life* (London 1981), pp. 215f.

101 Cf. Bridenthal, 'Beyond', p. 162; Dinse, pp. 62ff.; James Wickham, 'Working-class movement and working-class life' (Unpublished MS, 1981).

102 Statement of B. Matteck, 27 December 1931, LA Bln 58/2624, V, p. 38.

103 Statement of A. Schmidt, 4 February 1931 (n. 85), and LA Bln 58/2363, *passim*.

104 See e.g. Valtin, pp. 456f.; Engelbrechten, pp. 152, 224.

105 Von Liszt, 'Kriminalität ... 1928, 1929 und 1930', p. 254.

106 'IA, III. G. St., Berlin, den 8. Mai 1929', GehStA 219/45, pp. 95ff.; 'Betrifft BVG-Streik im November 1932. Verzeichnis der festgenommenen Personen', GehStA 219/80, pp. 120ff.

107 LA Bln 58/514 and /137, pp. 121ff. Cf. Engelbrechten, pp. 139, 178, 227; Zeutschel, pp. 49f., 95ff., 108.

108 'Berlin, den 11. December 1931', LA Bln 58/2624, III, p. 4.

109 See for example the complaints of Lisa Ullrich, 'Die proletarischen Frauen gehören in die Wehrorganisationen des Proletariats', *Internationale* XII (1929), 558ff.

110 Report of Polizeidirektion Nürnberg-Furth, 4 April 1931, StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.32. Cf. Schuster, pp. 116ff.

111 Central Committee to BL Ruhrgebiet, 27 January 1930, in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr. 7' (1 April 1930), StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.30.

112 'Richtlinien für die Arbeit der Frauen- und Mädchenstaffeln des Kampfbunds gegen den Faschismus'; *Alarm*, Nr 3 (February 1931), both in StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.32.

113 'Bericht der Kartelleitung zur Kartellkonferenz, 2./3.11.1929', in 'Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin, Nr 22' (15 December 1929), StABr 4,65/II.H.4.a.30.

114 Cf. Statement of A. Müller, 20 October 1931 (n. 74).

115 'Richtlinien' (n. 112).

116 'Bericht über die im Ruhrgebioet und Ostpreussen abgehaltenen Versammlungen in der Zeit vom 14. zum 24. April 1932', BAK R45 IV/21.

117 Statement of F. Lange, 10 July 1930, LA Bln 58/2205, I, pp. 41ff. Cf. Statement of A. Eber, 10 May 1932 (n. 42).

118 Statement of F. Lorenz, 16 January 1933, LA Bln 58/19, I, p. 167. Cf. Statement of E. Schweers, 16 October 1932: 'Since I then [1928] found work, I resigned from the RFB.' (Schweers was probably still a member of the RFB when interviewed): LA Bln 58/2610, I, pp. 97f.

119 Cf. '(47) II.P.L. 50.31 (157 E 31)', LA Bln 58/176, I, pp. 143ff.

120 These included M. Gerhardt (/19, I, p. 85), O. Messerschmitt (/21, I, pp. 50ff.), K. Hartung (/135, pp. 11f. and 81), W. Schäfer (/141, insert), E. Nelke (/141, p. 2), R. Seilmann (/173, p. 3), M. Dürr (/210, p. 5), E. Jagusch (/1034. p. 4).

121 'Zur Sozialgeschichte der Arbeiterbewegung in Hannover. Fragestellungen und erste Ergebnisse', *IWK* XI (1975), 337–46.

122 'Abt IA, III. G. Stelle, den 17. Juni 1927', LA Bln 58/364, I, p. 132; '(12) 1.pol.K.L.6.32 (16.32)' (Judgment), LA Bln 58/9, IV, (no pagination); Report of Bezirksamt Wedding, 3 May 1927, LA Bln 58/365, I, p. 77; Statement of A. Zeller, 19 December 1934, LA Bln 58/29, XIV, pp. 126f.; Report of Jugendgerichtshilfe Neukölln, 13 December 1929, LA Bln 58/134, p. 23; Statement of A. Gollwitz, 23 December 1931, LA Bln 58/2624, V, p. 34; '50.

Pol. Rev. 21.3.27', LA Bln 58/365, I, p. 61; Report of Bezirksamt Wedding, 29 April 1927, LA Bln 58/365, I, p. 74; Report of Bezirksjugendamt Lichtenberg, 21 April 1931, LA Bln 58/2363, p. 72.

123 Cf. 'Spartakus', pp. 69f.; Regler, p. 185. One avowed Kampfbund member described himself as 'unpolitical': Statement of 18 March 1932, LA Bln 58/227, pp. 34f.

124 The only evidence of a 'military' consciousness, as reflected in the use of military metaphors, appears in the report of an incident in Friedrichshain, when fleeing Communists were heard to shout: '*Auf die siegreiche Schlacht ein dreifaches Rot Front!*': 'I. pol. J.809.30 (280.30)/ zu 11', LA Bln 58/2330, pp. 76ff. Cf. 'Zur Sozialgeschichte', p. 141.

125 Materials relating to A. Krause, LA Bln 58/2536, I, pp. 22f. and 76ff., and /2142.

126 A. Krause to G. Krause, 25 March 1932, LA Bln 58/2536, I, pp. 62ff. 'Waldstrasse' refers to an incident of 21 March in Moabit, when a newly-opened SA-tavern was stormed and shots were fired at the attackers. Cf. *RF* 22 and 23 March 1932.

127 See e.g. Statement of W. Wiese, 30 December 1931. LA Bln 58/2624, VI, p. 11; Statement of A. Wilke, 24 April 1932 (n. 38); Statement of F. Lange (n. 38); '(17) II.P.J. 491.29 (100.29/6)': 'because you do the same to us and knife our people': LA Bln 58/2135, pp. 50ff. Cf. the case of Richard Most, who was found guilty of starting a brawl by shouting, '*Arbeitermörder!*' at Nazi demonstrators: LA Bln 58/135, p. 81.

128 LA Bln 58/134, pp. 3, 7f. and insert.

129 Report of Jugendamt Schöneberg on O. Belzig, 17 June 1930, LA Bln 58/141, p. 145.

130 For examples, see LA Bln 58/ 132, /135, /150, /205, /207.

131 Statement of G. Hermens, 22 June 1932, LA Bln 58/53, I, pp. 75f.; Report of Jugendgerichtshilfe on R. Seilmann, 29 January 1930, LA Bln 58/2157, p. 61.

132 Statement of A. Reichhardt, 17 July 1930, LA Bln 58/2205, I, pp. 53f. For more on attitudes to Jews and antisemitism among Communists, see below, Chapter 7.

133 Cf. Statement of A. Eber, 10 May 1932 (n. 42); Anonymous statement, 16 October 1932 (n. 85); Statement of F. Krämer, 9 February 1932 (n. 55).

134 Statement of H. Eichhorn, 6 January 1933, LA Bln 58/34, II, pp. 67f.; '(17a) II.P.K. 10.33 (14.33)', LA Bln 58/34, III, pp. 138ff.; Statement of A. Bölke, 15 November 1932, LA Bln 58/29, X, pp. 40f.

135 E.g. LA Bln 58/175, p. 5; /2342, I, pp. 221ff.; /2199, (no pagination); /2206, (no pagination); /212, pp. 7ff.; /2624, I, p. 70.

136 E.g. LA Bln 58/152, /366, /2356.

137 Statements of H. Lessing, 19 October 1931 (n. 74) and F. Heckert, 18 February 1932, LA Bln 58/29, V, p. 186.

138 Statement of S. Bennecke, 12 July 1932, LA Bln 58/31, I, p. 53.

139 Statement of M. Olbrysch, 14 July 1932, LA Bln 58/31, I, pp. 55ff.

140 Statements of O. Pohle, 22 June 1932 and 1 December 1932, LA Bln 58/53, I, pp. 62f. and III, p. 192.

141 Statement of B. Elbing, 15 December 1932, LA Bln 58/34, II, pp. 28f.

142 'Lieber Gess ...', 27 January 1932, LA Bln 58/29, V, p. 145.

143 Statement of A. Eber, 10 May 1932 (n. 42).

144 See n. 134 and Statement of H. Eichhorn, 15 December 1932, LA Bln 58/34, II, p. 13.
145 For the perceptions of this phenomenon by contemporaries, cf. IISG, Nachlass Grzesinski, Nr 1395; Grzesinski, *Tragi-comédie*, pp. 245f.; Regler, pp. 185, 192; Gross, p. 248; 'Spartakus', p. 63, Leviné-Meyer, p. 71; Wehner, p. 15.
146 W. Bauer (/37, II, pp. 62ff.), R. Apel (/227, p. 57), G. Mahler (/29, I, pp. 22f.), H. Lessing (/232, I, p. 121), O. Vogel (/37, X, p. 27), W. Stott (/2595, I, p. 172), G. Bockling (/521, pp. 6 f.), F. Lorenz (/19, I, p. 167), A. Baum (/181, p. 3), W. Braun (/181, p. 38), W. Weiss (/37, III, pp. 100f.), A. Herbst (/9, II, pp. 122f.). Cf. LA Bln 58/101, pp. 103ff.,/34, I, p. 10, /1855, p. 13, and /1516.
147 *Inprekorr* XII, Nr 46 (3 June 1932), 1431. Cf. 'Spartakus' p. 63. Cf. also the article in the *RF* 14 April 1932: 'KPD defections to Hitler – lies from A to Z'.
148 Statement of F. Lorenz, 16 January 1933 (n. 118); Statement of W. Weiss, 25 January 1932, LA Bln 58/37, III, pp. 100f.
149 Statement of G. Achtenhagen, 24 April 1932, LA Bln 58/21, I, pp. 54ff.
150 Cf. the cases of Reichhardt, who sold Communist weapons to the SA and Stahlhelm ('Vermerk', 1938, LA Bln 58/2606, III, insert), Mahler, accused in 1935 of having been a Communist spy during the twenties ('Berlin, 9. April 1935', LA Bln 58/29, XXI, p. 59), and Herbst, who passed information on to the SA while still a member of the KPD ('I Ad II², Berlin, den 28.1.32', LA Bln 58/9, II, pp. 122ff.).
151 Indictment, 19 October 1932, LA Bln 58/232, I, pp. 120ff.
152 Statement of F. Bauer, 13 May 1927, LA Bln 58/302, III, pp. 175ff.
153 Report of Bezirkswohlfahrtsamt Wedding, 19 April 1932, LA Bln 58/37, X, p. 27.
154 Schönstedt, p. 90.
155 Statement of R. Schliefer, 17 October 1931, LA Bln 58/29, I, pp. 22f.

Notes to Chapter 7

1 Cf. Dick Geary, 'Identifying militancy: The assessment of working-class attitudes to state and society', in Richard J. Evans (ed.), *The German Working Class 1888–1933: The Politics of Everyday Life* (London, 1981), pp. 220–46.
2 Erhard Lucas, *Zwei Formen von Radikalismus in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Frankfurt a.M., 1976).
3 The guidelines for the reports of legal social workers were reprinted in Margarete Hoffmann-Gwinner, 'Soziale Gerichtschilfe', *Proletarische Sozialpolitik*, I (1928), pp. 151f.
4 Cf. Note on sources.
5 *StJB* 1936, p. 15.
6 Cf. International Labour Office, *International Standard Classification of Occupations*. (Geneva, 1949), pp. 25ff.
7 Wilhelm Kaasch, 'Die soziale Struktur der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands', *KI* IX (1928), 1060f.
8 See above, p. 47.
9 'Abteilung I, Ad. IV², Berlin, den 8. November 1932. Nachweisung der anlässlich des BVG-Streiks in der Zeit vom 2. bis einsch. 8.11.1932 eingegangenen WE-Meldungen', GehStA 219/80, pp. 100ff.
10 Sources cited in Chapter 2, n. 73. Some difficulty in the analysis of this material arises from the fact that the police reports discuss a total of 583 arrests but contain the names of only 559 individuals.

11 *StJR* 1928, pp. 595f.; Dieter Fricke, *Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung 1869–1914* (East Berlin, 1976), pp. 730f.
12 On the following points: Hans-Hermann Hartwich, *Arbeitsmarkt, Verbände und Staat 1918–1933* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 75ff., 167ff.; Geary, 'Radicalism and the worker', pp. 267ff.; Retzlaw, pp. 56ff.; Dehn, *Die alte Zeit*, pp. 192f.
13 Hartwich, p. 67.
14 *Ibid.*, pp. 52f., 410.
15 On the conditions of work and organization in the building trades, see Alfons Petzold, *Raw Life* (London, 1926), pp. 72f.; Kurt Neu, 'Die Arbeitslosigkeit in der deutschen Bauwirtschaft', in Manuel Saitzew (ed.), *Die Arbeitslosigkeit der Gegenwart* (München/Leipzig, 1932), p. 103; Péter Ullmann, *Tarifverträge und Tarifpolitik in Deutschland bis 1914* (Frankfurt a.M., 1977), pp. 82, 91f.; Arnulf M. Baring's account of the rôle of construction workers in the Berlin uprising of 17 June 1953: *Uprising in East Germany* (Ithaca, New York, 1972), pp. 34f.; and Jeffrey W. Riemer's study of American construction workers: *Hard Hats* (Beverly Hills/London, 1979).
16 Documents on this case can be found in LA Bln 58/2087. Cf. Engelbrechten/Volz, pp. 195ff.
17 Bleiber, 'Die Moabiter Unruhen'. Cf. Günther Dehn, *Grosstadtjugend* (Berlin, 1919), p. 76 on youthful *Transportarbeiter* and *Kutscher*.
18 Dehn, *Grosstadtjugend*, pp. 60f.; Hartwich, pp. 47f.; Czada, pp. 182ff.
19 Hartwich, p. 143.
20 Schöck, p. 151.
21 *StDR*, 462/3, p. 9.
22 *StJB* 1928, p. 24.
23 Kaasch, 'Soziale Struktur', pp. 1052f.
24 See the statistics on number and size of shops employing men in various trades, *StDR*, 463/2, p. 4.
25 Cf. Kuczynski, p. 370; *Grosstadtjugend*, pp. 60f.; Dora Landé, 'Arbeits- und Lohnverhältnisse in der Berliner Maschinenindustrie', in *Auslese und Anpassung der Arbeiterschaft in der Elektroindustrie, Buchdruckerei, Feinmechanik und Maschinenindustrie* (Leipzig, 1910), pp. 374ff.
26 E.g. Karl-Heinz Roth, *Die 'andere' Arbeiterbewegung und die Entwicklung der kapitalistischen Repression von 1880 bis zur Gegenwart* (München, 1974).
27 Cf. Dehn, *Grosstadtjugend*, pp. 76f.
28 Cf. Liang, 'Lower-class immigrants', p. 95; D. Baudis and H. Roth, 'Berliner Opfer der Novemberrevolution 1918/19', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1968, part III, 95, for comments on degrees of skill among an earlier generation of left-wing radicals.
29 Schöck, pp. 166ff.; Stolle, p. 200.
30 Lucas, *Zwei Formen*, p. 251.
31 See for example the comment of *VW* 24 July 1923 (B) on how the inflation and poverty had contributed to the 'irritability and nervousness' of neighbours in overcrowded houses, and the observations of physicians and psychologists on the effects of shortages of food and housing on children: Ruth Weiland, *Die Kinder der Arbeitslosen* (Berlin-Eberswalde, 1933), pp. 13f. Cf. Rudolf Vierhaus, 'Auswirkungen der Krise um 1930 in Deutschland', in Werner Conze and Hans Raupach (eds.), *Die Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise des deutschen Reiches 1929/33* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 155–75.
32 *StJB* 1934, pp. 14, 24; *StDR*, 454/3, pp. 29ff. Cf. *StDR*, 453/2, pp. 12, 25f.; Neu, pp. 83ff.; Hartwich, pp. 64f.

33 'Acts of political violence' include participation in the riots of May 1929, for those who were afterwards involved in *Zusammenstoss*-violence. Involvement in violence *before* 1929 has been ignored; this applies to a total of about twenty individuals. Since the file for one arrest between 1929 and 1933 may contain evidence for an earlier arrest during that period, without its having been possible to trace the earlier file, biographical data (especially home address and employment information) do not in every case reflect the situation of the fighter at first arrest.
34 Von Liszt, 'Kriminalität . . . 1928, 1929 und 1930', p. 259.
35 Creutzburg, *Organisationsarbeit*, p. 17.
36 Kaasch, 'Soziale Struktur', p. 1051; Schuster, p. 242; 'Reichskonferenz des RFB, Dezember 1932, Braunschweig', appendix to 'RMI, IAN 2166a/31.1', BAK R134/76, p. 98.
37 Cf. *StJB* 1930, p. 30; 1931, p. 18. On illegitimacy among the urban working classes in Germany, see Bajohr, 'Illegitimacy', *passim*.
38 *StJB* 1935, p. 14.
39 Report of Bezirkswohlfahrtstamt Wedding, 14 October 1932, LA Bln 58/2087, III, p. 244b.
40 Statement of G. Engels, 15 January 1932, LA Bln 58/37, VIII, pp. 4f.
41 'I Ad II, 13.10.1931', LA Bln 58/2538, VIII. Cf. Dehn, *Die alte Zeit*, p. 177.
42 A. Krause to G. Krause, 25 March 1932, LA Bln 58/2536, I, pp. 62ff.
43 Margot Pikarski, *Berliner Jugend im Widerstand. Herbert Baum und Kampfgefährten* (East Berlin, 1978), p. 53 and *passim*. The ordinary course for Jewish militants in Berlin was to join the Reichsbanner: Arnold Paucker, 'Der jüdische Abwehrkampf', in W. E. Mosse (ed.), *Entscheidungsjahr 1932* (Tübingen, 1965), pp. 453f. The ethnically self-conscious might also join the Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten, with its own self-defence squads: Ulrich Dunker, *Der Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten* (Düsseldorf, 1977), pp. 50ff.
44 Cf. Alfred Scherlinski's remarks, cited by Wehner, p. 8: 'He counted off for me how many Jews worked in Karl-Liebknecht-Haus, how that figure related to the number of Jews in the Party, and more of the same.'
45 *StJR* 1911, pp. 6f.; *StDR*, 401, pp. 438ff.
46 Cf. von Liszt, 'Kriminalität . . . 1928, 1929, und 1930', p. 259.
47 Report of Bezirksjugendamt Wedding, 22 July 1927, LA Bln 58/364, I, p. 161. Because of the date of his arrest, this individual is not included in the statistical sample. Compare the case of another youth, who, with his friends, attempted to raise money by singing in courtyards: Statement of B. Herbert, 25 January 1932, LA Bln 58/9, I, pp. 18ff.
48 Von Liszt, 'Kriminalität . . . 1928, 1929 und 1930', p. 259.
49 For the classic textbook statement of the problems involved in assessing criminal statistics, see Roger Hood and Richard Sparks, *Key Issues in Criminology* (London, 1970), Chapters I and II, especially pp. 70ff.
50 W. Bloch, 'Kriegstagung der deutschen Jugendgerichtshilfen, Berlin, 12.–14.4. 1917', *Soziale Praxis*, XXVI (1917), 647.
51 Von Liszt, 'Kriminalität . . . 1928, 1929 und 1930', p. 256. Von Schmidt, p. 293, states that from the mid-twenties, the most troublesome gangs 'consisted almost exclusively of former provincials'.
52 Report of Bezirkswohlfahrt- und Jugendamt Neukölln, 25 November 1929, LA Bln 58/132, p. 52; '(45) II.P.M. 191.31 (28.32)', LA Bln 58/198, pp. 125ff.; Report of Jugendamt Steglitz, 19 April 1930, LA Bln 58/135,

pp. 84 ff.; Report of Bezirkswohlfahrtsamt Wedding, 19 April 1932, LA Bln 58/37, X, pp. 23ff.; Report of Landeswohlfahrts- und Jugendamt Berlin, 16 May 1929, LA Bln 58/128, p. 39. Cf. Gerichtshilfe Report on O. Messerschmitt, 10 June 1932, LA Bln 58/21, I, pp. 164f.; Report of Jugendamt Steglitz, 12 May 1930, LA Bln 58/135, pp. 91f.; Report of Jugendamt Schöneberg, 16 June 1930, LA Bln 58/141, p. 145; Statement of A. Herbst, 26 January 1932, LA Bln 58/9, I, pp. 53ff.

53 Report of Bezirksamt Kreuzberg, 3 September 1931, LA Bln 58/2595, I, p. 111; Report of Bezirkswohlfahrts- und Jugendamt, 4 November 1932, LA Bln 58/236, p. 82; Jugendgerichtshilfe Report, 3 November 1932, LA Bln 58/232, I, p. 148; Report of Landeswohlfahrts- und Jugendamt Berlin, 18 May 1932, LA Bln 58/228, p. 66. Cf. Report of Jugendamt Neukölln, 9 November 1931, LA Bln 58/29, II, p. 166.

54 Hans Litten to Landgericht II, Strafkammer, 17 March 1932, LA Bln 58/29, VII, pp. 109ff.

55 Cf. Hoffmann-Gwinner, 'Soziale Gerichtshilfe', p. 152, who comments on the specific instruction to social workers to enumerate possible psychological reasons for the offence, including 'weakness of character': 'Who can ignore the importance of the question whether these observations are made by proletarian or bourgeois representatives?'

56 Hartwich, p. 67; Wickham, 'Social Fascism', *passim*; Stolle, p. 204.

Notes to Chapter 8

1 Czada, pp. 61, 64; *Henius' Grosses Orts- und Verkehrslexikon* (Berlin, [1929]); *RF* 20 November 1931.

2 Friedhelm Boll, 'Spontaneität der Basis und politische Funktion des Streiks 1914–1918. Das Beispiel Braunschweig', *AfS*, XVII (1977), 337–66; Christian W. Zöllner, 'Zur Problematik der kommunistischen Jugendbewegung in der Stadt Braunschweig während der Stalinisierungsphase der KPD von 1924 bis 1929', *Braunschweigisches Jahrbuch*, LII (1971), 193–210; Ernst Schwandt, 'Der Lohnsparzwang Jugendlicher', *Soziale Praxis*, XXVII (1917), 97–9; *VW* 19 and 20 October 1931 (both B).

3 Cf. F. Bender, 'Proletarische Sozialpolitik', *Proletarische Sozialpolitik*, I (1928), 193–6.

4 Cf. Kontos, pp. 234ff. and *passim*.

5 Cf. Negt/Kluge's critique of the idea of 'learning by defeats': pp. 400ff.

6 Glaser, pp. 51f.

7 Tim Mason, 'The workers' opposition in Nazi Germany', *History Workshop*, XI (Spring 1981), 120–37.

8 Duhnke, Chapters 2, 3, 4; Peukert, *KPD*, pp. 98–250. For an example of the growing body of autobiographical and historical studies of the KPD's underground activity (published in the DDR), with special reference to Berlin: Erich Hanke, *Erinnerungen eines Illegalen* (East Berlin, [1976]).

9 Daniel Horn, 'Youth resistance in the Third Reich: A social portrait', *Journal of Social History*, VII (1973), 26–50; Detlev Peukert, *Die Edelweisspiraten* (Köln, 1980). A Berlin police memorandum of May 1933 reads: 'It has been reported confidentially that the Rote Jungfront in Neukölln is still about 300 strong, and the groups Lenin, Leviné, Thälmann and Bodanik have joined

together to form the Freie or Neuköllner Wanderjugend.': 'I J II[a], 22.5.33', GehStA 219/15, p. 190.

10 Ernst Hanfstaengl, *Zwischen Weissem und Braunem Haus* (München, 1970), pp. 326 f. (The occasion was the filming of a biography of Horst Wessel.); Ursula von Kardorff, *Berliner Aufzeichnungen 1942–1945* (München, 1976), pp. 37 f.

11 Engelbrechten/Volz, pp. 77 ff., 89; Albert Schorr, 'Die Wohnlauben in Berlin', *Der Gemeindetag*, XXIX (1935), 793–7.

Bibliography

Unpublished archival material

International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam:
Nachlass Albert Grzesinski

Landesarchiv, Berlin:
Rep. 58: Akten des Generalstaatsanwalts beim Landgericht, Berlin

Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin-Dahlem:
Rep. 219: Polizeipräsidium Berlin

Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Bonn-Bad Godesberg:
Nachlass Carl Severing

Staatsarchiv, Bremen:
Bestand 4,65: Polizeidirektion Bremen

II.A.12.	VKPD
II.H.4.	Kampforganisationen der KPD
IV.13.i.	Mitteilungen des LKPA Berlin
VI.1000.44	RFB-Verbot

Landeshauptarchiv, Koblenz:
Rep. 403: Oberpräsidium der Rheinprovinz

Bundesarchiv, Koblenz:

Bestand	NS 26	NSDAP Hauptarchiv
	R 431	Reichskanzlei 1918–1933
	R 45IV	KPD
	R 58	Reichssicherheitshauptamt
	R 134	Reichskomissar für die Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung

Kleine Erwerbungen:
Nr. 379 Reese, Maria. 'Lebenserinnerungen' Manuscript (typescript), 1953.
Nr. 609 Schlesinger, Rudolf. 'Erinnerungen aus einer Zeit grosser Kämpfe. Bd. I: Wohin geht Deutschland? 1901–1933' Manuscript (typescript), 1964[?]

Periodicals

Der Angriff. Berlin.
Berliner Tageblatt. Berlin.
Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung. Berlin.
Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz. Berlin.
Die Internationale. Berlin.
Kommunistische Internationale. Berlin.
Die Rote Fahne. Berlin.
Völkischer Beobachter. München.
Vorwärts. Berlin.
Vossische Zeitung. Berlin.

Official publications, handbooks, etc.

Baedeker, Karl. *Berlin and its Environs*. London, 1923.
Berlin und Umgebung. Leipzig, 1904.
Berliner Adressbuch. Berlin, 1929–32.
Henius' grosses Orts- und Verkehrslexikon. Berlin, [1929].
Petzina, Dietmar *et al. Sozialgeschichtliches Arbeitsbuch*. Vol. III. München, 1968.
Preussisches Archiv. Berlin
Reichsgesetzblatt. Berlin.
Schulthess' Europäischer Geschichtskalender. München, 1929–32.
Statistisches Amt der Stadt Berlin. *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Berlin*. Berlin.
Statistisches Reichsamt. *Statistik des deutschen Reiches*. Berlin.
Statistisches Jahrbuch für das deutsche Reich. Berlin.
Verhandlungen des Reichstags. Berlin.

Other published sources and contemporary publications

Apfel, Alfred. *Behind the Scenes of German Justice 1882–1933*. London, 1935.
Bender, F. 'Proletarische Sozialpolitik', *Proletarische Sozialpolitik*, I (1928), 193–6.
Berl, Heinrich. *Der Kampf gegen das rote Berlin, oder Berlin eine Unterwelts-Residenz*. Karlsruhe, 1932.
Bernstein, Eduard. *Die Geschichte der Berliner Arbeiterbewegung. Ein Kapitel zur Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*. 3 vols. Berlin, 1907–10.
[Bewer, A.]. *Brennende Fragen der bolschewistischen Partei*. Metz, [1930].
Bloch, W. 'Kriegstagung der deutschen Jugendgerichtshilfen, Berlin 12.–14.4.1917', *Soziale Praxis*, XXVI (1917), 647.
Böss, Gustav. *Berlin von heute. Stadtverwaltung und Wirtschaft*. Berlin, 1929.
Braun, Otto. *Von Weimar zu Hitler*. New York, 1940.
Braunbuch über Reichstagsbrand und Hitlerterror. Basel, [1933].
Broszat, Martin. 'Die Anfänge der Berliner NSDAP 1926/27' [Documents], *Vf Z*, VIII (1960), 85–118.
Die Brüsseler Konferenz der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (3.–15. Oktober 1935). Ed. Klaus Mammach. Frankfurt a.M., 1975.
Buber-Neumann, Margarete. *Kriegsschauplätze der Weltrevolution. Ein Bericht aus der Praxis der Komintern 1919–1943*. Stuttgart, 1967.
Von Potsdam nach Moskau. Stationen eines Irrweges. Stuttgart, 1958.
Büchner, J. *Kampf gegen Provokation und Spitzelei*. Die Bücherei des Parteiarbeiters, vol. 5. Hamburg/Berlin, 1931.

Creutzburg, A. *Die Organisationsarbeit der KPD.* Die Bücherei des Parteiarbeiters, vol. 4. Hamburg/ Berlin, 1931.

Danner, Lothar. *Ordnungspolizei Hamburg. Betrachtungen zu ihrer Geschichte, 1919 bis 1933.* Hamburg, 1958.

David, Fritz. 'Zur Geschichte der Zeitschrift "Die Internationale" (1919–1933)', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung,* XV (1973), 967–86.

Degras, Jane (ed.). *The Communist International 1919–1943. Documents.* Vol. II: *1923–1928.* London, 1960.

Dehn, Günther. *Die alte Zeit, die vorigen Jahre. Lebenserinnerungen.* München, 1962.

Grosstadtjugend. Beobachtungen und Erfahrungen aus der Welt der grosstädtischen Arbeiterjugend. Berlin, 1919.

Proletarische Jugend. Lebensgestaltung und Gedankenwelt der grosstädtischen Proletarierjugend. Berlin, [1929].

Diels, Rudolf. *Lucifer ante Portas. Zwischen Severing und Heydrich.* Zürich, [1949].

Dinse, Robert. *Das Freizeitleben der Grosstadtjugend. 5000 Jungen und Mädchen berichten.* Schriftenreihe des deutschen Archivs für Jugendwohlfahrt, vol. 10. Berlin-Eberswalde, [1932].

Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Bd. VIII: *Januar 1924 bis Oktober 1929.* Ed. Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED. East Berlin, 1975.

Ehrhardt, Justus. 'Cliquenwesen und Jugendverwahrlosung', *Zentralblatt für Jugendrecht und Jugendwohlfahrt,* XXI (1930), 413–18.

'Die Kriminalität der Jugendlichen in den Jahren 1932 und 1933', *ZGStW,* LIV (1935), 665–91.

Ehrt, Adolf. *Bewaffneter Aufstand! Enthüllungen über die kommunistischen Umsturzbestrebungen am Vorabend der nationalen Revolution.* 4th edn. Berlin/ Leipzig, 1933.

Engelbrecht, Ernst. *In den Spuren des Verbrechertums.* Berlin/Schöneberg, [1931].

Engelbrechten, J.K. von. *Eine braune Armee entsteht. Die Geschichte der Berlin-Brandenburger SA.* Berlin/München, 1937.

and Hans Volz. *Wir wandern durch das nationalsozialistische Berlin. Ein Führer durch die Gedenkstätte des Kampfes um die Reichshauptstadt.* München, 1937.

Feuchtwanger, Franz. 'Der militärpolitische Apparat der KPD in den Jahren 1928–1935. Erinnerungen', *IWK,* XVII (1981), 485–533.

Fischer, Georg. *Vom aufrechten Gang eines Sozialisten. Ein Parteiarbeiter erzählt.* Berlin/Bonn, 1979.

Fischer, Ruth. *Stalin and German Communism. A Study in the Origins of the State Party.* London, 1948.

Fournier, Christine. 'Ringverein der Jugend', *Die Weltbühne,* XXVII (1931), part I, 89–95.

Franzen-Hellersberg, Lisbeth. *Die jugendliche Arbeiterin. Ihre Arbeitsweise und Lebensform.* Tübingen, 1932.

Der 5. [fünfte] Weltkongress der Kommunistischen Jugendinternationale. Diskussions-Sonderheft der "Jugend-Internationale". Berlin, 1928.

Fürsorgehöllen. Issued by ZK des KJVD. Berlin, [1930].

Geiger, Theodor. *Die soziale Schichtung des deutschen Volkes.* Stuttgart, 1932.

Glaser, George K. *Geheimnis und Gewalt. Ein Bericht.* Frankfurt a.M., 1956.

Goebbels, Joseph. *Kampf um Berlin. Der Anfang.* München, 1939.

Gross, Babette. *Willi Münzenberg. Eine politische Biographie.* Schriftenreihe der *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte,* vol. 14/15. Stuttgart, 1967.

Grzesinski, Albert C. *Inside Germany*. Trans. by Alexander S. Lipschitz. New York, 1939.

La Tragi-comédie de la république allemande. Souvenirs. Trans. by Armand Pierhal. Paris, 1934.

Haffner, Ernst. *Jugend auf der Landstrasse Berlin*. Berlin, [1932].

Haken, Bruno Nelissen. *Stempelchronik. 261 Arbeitslosenschicksale*. Hamburg, 1932.

Hanfstaengl, Ernst. *Zwischen Weissem und Braunem Haus. Memoiren eines politischen Aussenseiters*. München, 1970.

Hanke, Erich. *Erinnerungen eines Illegalen*. East Berlin, [1976].

Hitler, Adolf. *Mein Kampf*. München, 1935.

Hoffmann-Gwinner, Margarete. 'Soziale Gerichtshilfe', *Proletarische Sozialpolitik*, I (1928), 149–53.

Jacobs, Joe. *Out of the Ghetto. My Youth in the East End. Communism and Fascism 1913–1939*. London, 1978.

Jacoby, Heinz. 'Die Kriminalität der Jugendlichen in den Jahren 1930 und 1931', *ZGStW*, LIV (1935), 85–115.

Jahoda, Marie *et al. Marienthal. The Sociography of an Unemployed Community*. Trans. by the authors with John Reginall and Thomas Elsaesser. London, 1974.

Jasper, Gotthard. 'Zur innerpolitischen Lage in Deutschland im Herbst 1929' [Document], *VfZ*, VIII (1960), 280–9.

von Kardorff, Ursula. *Berliner Aufzeichnungen 1942–1945*. 2nd edn. München, 1976.

Karl, Heinz and Erika Kücklich (eds.). *Die Antifaschistische Aktion. Dokumentation und Chronik Mai 1932 bis Januar 1933*. East Berlin, 1965.

Kluke, Paul. 'Der Fall Potempa' [Document], *Vf Z*, V (1957), 279–96.

Knickerbocker, H.R. *Germany–Fascist or Soviet?* London, 1932.

Koestler, Arthur, *The Invisible Writing. The Second Volume of an Autobiography: 1932–40*. The Danube edition. London, 1969.

Lamm, Albert. *Betrogene Jugend. Aus einem Erwerbslosenheim*. Berlin, 1932.

Landé, Dora. 'Arbeits- und Lohnverhältnisse in der Berliner Maschinenindustrie zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts', in *Auslese und Anpassung der Arbeiterschaft in der Elektroindustrie, Buchdruckerei, Feinmechanik und Maschinenindustrie*. Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, vol. 134. Leipzig, 1910, pp. 302–498.

'Langer, Alfred'. *Der Weg zum Sieg. Die Kunst des bewaffneten Aufstandes*. N.p., [1931].

Leviné-Meyer, Rosa. *Inside German Communism. Memoirs of Party Life in the Weimar Republic*. London, 1977.

von Liszt, Elsa. 'Die Kriminalität der Jugendlichen in Berlin in den Jahren 1928, 1929 und 1930', *ZGStW*, LII (1932), 250–71.

Littmann, Arnold. *Herbert Norkus und die Hitlerjungen von Beusselkietz*. Berlin, 1934.

Manuilski, D.S. *Die kommunistischen Parteien und die Krise des Kapitalismus. Bericht vor dem XI. Plenum des EKKI*. Hamburg/Berlin, 1931.

Merker, Paul, *Deutschland, Sein oder Nichtsein?* Bd. I: *Von Weimar zu Hitler*. Mexico City, 1944.

Der NSDFB (Stahlhelm). Geschichte, Wesen und Aufgabe des Frontsoldatenbundes. Berlin, 1935.

Neu, Kurt. 'Die Arbeitslosigkeit in der deutschen Bauwirtschaft', in Manuel Saitzew (ed.). *Die Arbeitslosigkeit der Gegenwart*. Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik, vol. 185/II. München/Leipzig, 1932, pp. 81–120.

'Neuberg, A.' [Hans Kippenberger *et al.*]. *Der bewaffnete Aufstand. Versuch einer theoretischen Darstellung*. Reprint. Frankfurt a.M., 1971.

Neukrantz, Klaus. *Barricades in Berlin.* London, [1930].
'O.B. Server'. 'Führerwechsel in der KPD', *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus,* III (1932), 607–8.
von Ossietzky, Carl. 'Bülow-Platz', *Die Weltbühne,* XXVII (1931), part II, 239–47.
Paffrath, Emil. 'Das ist die Rote Jungfront, die sich nicht verbieten lässt ...', *Militärgeschichte,* XI (1972), 80–4.
Petersen, Jan. *Our Street. A Chronicle Written in the Heart of Fascist Germany.* Trans. by Betty Rensen. London, 1938.
Petzold, Alfons. *Raw Life.* Trans. by E. Bennett. London, 1926.
Peukert, Detlev. *Die Edelweisspiraten. Protestbewegungen jugendlicher Arbeiter im Dritten Reich* [Documents]. Köln, 1980.
Pjatnizki, O. *Brennende Fragen. Die Arbeit unter den Arbeitslosen. Partei- und Gewerkschaftsarbeit im Betrieb. Die Fluktuation im Mitgliederbestand.* Bücherei des Parteiarbeiters, vol. 2. Hamburg/Berlin, 1931.
Die Bolschewisierung der kommunistischen Parteien der kapitalistischen Länder durch Überwindung der sozialdemokratischen Traditionen. Bearbeitetes Stenogramm des Berichtes auf der Beratung der Lehrer für Parteiaufbau an den internationalen kommunistischen Parteischulen. Bücherei des Parteiarbeiters, vol. 6. Hamburg/Berlin, 1931.
Preussen contra Reich vor dem Staatsgerichtshof. Stenogrammbericht der Verhandlungen vor dem Staatsgerichtshof in Leipzig vom 10. bis 14. und vom 17. Oktober 1932. Berlin, 1933.
Protokoll. 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der K.I. Moskau, 3. Juli 1929 bis 19. Juli 1929. Hamburg/Berlin, 1929.
Protokoll der Verhandlungen des 12. Parteitags der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Sektion der Kommunistischen Internationale). Berlin-Wedding, 9.–16.6.1929. Berlin, 1929.
Regler, Gustav. *Das Ohr des Malchus. Eine Lebensgeschichte.* Köln/Berlin, 1958.
Remmele, Hermann. *Die Lehren des Berliner Blutmai und das drohende Verbot der KPD.* Berlin, [1929].
Retzlaw, Karl. *Spartakus. Aufstieg und Niedergang. Erinnerungen eines Parteiarbeiters.* 3rd edn. Frankfurt a.M., 1974.
Riess, Stadtrat Dr. 'Aufgaben der Stadtverwaltung und regionale Struktur', in Hans Brennert and Erwin Stein (eds.). *Probleme der neuen Stadt Berlin.* Berlin-Friedenau, 1926, pp. 23–31.
Rist, Walter. 'Die KPD in der Krise', *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus,* II (1931), 434–45.
'Der Weg der KPD', *Neue Blätter für den Sozialismus,* III (1932), 79–91.
Rosenthal, F. 'Klein-Heim – oder kein Heim', *Proletarische Sozialpolitik,* II (1929), 47–8.
Rote Hilfe Deutschlands. *Schluss mit dem SA-Terror.* Berlin, 1932.
Ruhla, Frank [Werner Dopp]. *Wir sind doch kein Gesangverein, sagten die Ganoven, und so war es auch.* Rosenheim, 1971.
The Rural Exodus in Germany. Results of Investigations Made in 1931 by H. Böker and F.W. von Bülow. I.L.O. Studies and Reports, Series K, vol. 12. London, 1933.
Sägebrecht, Willy. *Nicht Amboss, sondern Hammer sein. Erinnerungen.* East Berlin, 1968.
von Schmidt, Franz. *Vorgeführt erscheint. Erlebte Kriminalistik.* Stuttgart, 1955.
Schönstedt, Walter. *Kämpfende Jugend. Roman der arbeitenden Jugend.* Reprint. Berlin, 1972.
Schorr, Albert. 'Die Wohnlauben in Berlin', *Der Gemeindetag,* XXIX (1935), 793–7.

Schwandt, Ernst. 'Der Lohnsparzwang Jugendlicher', *Soziale Praxis*, XXVII (1917), 97–9.
Schwarz, Georg. *Völker, höret die Zentrale. KPD Bankrott.* Berlin, [1933].
Schweyer, Franz. *Politische Geheimverbände. Blicke in die Gegenwart des Geheimbundwesens.* Freiburg, 1925.
Selbmann, Fritz. *Alternative Bilanz Credo. Versuch einer Selbstdarstellung.* Halle, 1969.
Severing, Carl. *Mein Lebensweg.* Bd. II: *Im Auf und Ab der Republik.* Köln, 1950.
'Sparkatus'. *German Communists.* London, [1944].
Thälmann, Ernst. *Kampfreden und Aufsätze.* Moscow, 1932.
Reden und Aufsätze 1930–1933. 2 Vols. Köln, 1975.
Ulbricht, Walter. *Zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung.* Bd. I: *1918–1933.* East Berlin, 1953.
Valtin, Jan. [Richard Krebs]. *Out of the Night.* New York, 1941.
Voss, O. and H. Schön. 'Die Cliquen jugendlicher Verwahrloster als sozialpädagogisches Problem', in *Erfahrungen der Jugendlichen.* Sozialpädagogische Schriftenreihe, vol. I. Potsdam, 1930, pp. 69–89.
Waffen für den Klassenkampf. Beschlüsse des 12. Parteitags der KPD. Berlin, [1929].
Wehner, Herbert. *1933–45. Untergrundnotizen von KP zur SPD.* N.p., n.d. (pirated edition of hectograph manuscript of 1946).
Weiland, Ruth. *Die Kinder der Arbeitslosen.* Schriftenreihe des deutschen Archivs für Jugendwohlfahrt, vol. II. Berlin-Eberswalde, 1933.
Wollenberg, Erich. *Der Apparat, Stalins fünfte Kolonne.* Bonn, [1952].
Wrobel, Kurt. 'Zum Kampf Wilhelm Piecks gegen imperialistischen Terror und Faschismus 1929–1932' [Documents], *ZfG*, XXIII (1975), 1424–37.
Zeutschel, Walter. *Im Dienst der kommunistischen Terror-Organisation. (Tscheka-Arbeit in Deutschland).* Berlin, 1931.
Zwei Jahre Arbeit und Kampf. Bericht des ZK der KPD an den 12. Parteitag. Berlin, 1929.

Secondary works cited

Ahlheim, Rose *et al. Gefesselte Jugend. Fürsorgeerziehung im Kapitalismus.* 4th edn. Frankfurt a.M., 1976.
Angress, Werner T. *Stillborn Revolution: The Communist Bid for Power in Germany 1921–1923.* Princeton, 1963.
Bahne, Siegfried. *Die KPD und das Ende von Weimar. Das Scheitern einer Politik 1932–1935.* Frankfurt a.M./New York, 1976.
'Sozialfaschismus in Deutschland. Zur Geschichte eines politischen Begriffs', *International Review of Social History*, X (1965), 211–45.
Bajohr, Stefan. 'Illegitimacy and the working class: Unmarried mothers in Brunswick 1900–1933', in Richard J. Evans (ed.), *The German Working Class 1888–1933: The Politics of Everyday Life.* London, 1981, pp. 174–219.
Baring, Arnulf M. *Uprising in East Germany: June 17, 1953.* Ithaca, New York, 1972.
Baudis, D. and H. Roth. 'Berliner Opfer der Novemberrevolution 1918/19. Eine Analyse ihrer sozialen Struktur', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 1968, part III, 73–149.
Bauen in Berlin 1900–1964. Berlin, 1964.
Bennecke, Heinrich. *Hitler und die SA.* München/Wien, 1962.
Berlin. Historische Stadtgestalt und Stadterneuerung. Issued by Senator für Bau- und Wohnungswesen. Berlin, 1975.

Bessel, Richard, 'The Potempa murder', *Central European History*, x (1977), 241–54.

Bleiber, Helmut. 'Die Moabiter Unruhen 1910', *ZfG*, III (1955), 173–211.

Boll, Friedhelm. 'Spontaneität und politische Funktion des Streiks 1914–1918. Das Beispiel Braunschweig', *AfS*, XVII (1977), 337–66.

Botz, Gerhard. *Gewalt in der Politik. Attentate, Zusammenstösse, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich (1918–1934)*. München, 1976.

Breuer, Wilhelm M. *Deutschland in der Weltwirtschaftskrise 1929/1932*. Köln, 1974.

Bridenthal, Renate. 'Beyond "Kinder, Küche, Kirche": Weimar women at work', *Central European History*, VI (1973), 148–66.

Claudin, Fernando. *The Communist Movement. From Comintern to Cominform*. Trans. by Brian Pearce and Francis MacDonagh. Harmondsworth, 1975.

Conze, Werner. 'Die politischen Entscheidungen in Deutschland', in Werner Conze and Hans Raupach (eds.). *Die Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise des deutschen Reiches 1929/33*. Industrielle Welt, vol. 8. Stuttgart, 1967, pp. 176–252.

Czada, Peter. *Die Berliner Elektroindustrie in der Weimarer Zeit*. Einzelveröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission zu Berlin, vol. 4. Berlin, 1969.

Diehl, James M. *Paramilitary Politics in the Weimar Republic*. Bloomington, Ind., 1977.

Doehler, Edgar. 'Zur Rolle des wehrhaften antifaschistischen Kampfes in der Politik der K.P.D. (1929–1933)-1', *Militärgeschichte*, XVII (1978), 534–41.

and Egbert Fischer. 'Ernst Thälmanns Beitrag zur Entwicklung des wehrhaften Kampfes der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung gegen die wachsende faschistische Gefahr (1929–1933)', *Militärgeschichte*, XV (1976), 274–85.

Dünow, Hermann. *Der Rote Frontkämpferbund. Die revolutionäre Schutz- und Wehrorganisation der deutschen Arbeiterschaft in der Weimarer Republik*. East Berlin, 1958.

Duhnke, Horst. *Die KPD von 1933 bis 1945*. Köln, 1972.

Dunker, Ulrich. *Der Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten. Geschichte eines jüdischen Abwehrvereins 1919–1938*. Düsseldorf, 1977.

Eliasberg, George. *Der Ruhrkrieg von 1920*. Bonn, 1973.

Evans, Richard J. *Sozialdemokratie und Frauenemanzipation im deutschen Kaiserreich*. Berlin/Bonn, 1979.

Finker, Kurt. 'Aufgaben und Rolle des Roten Frontkämpferbundes in den Klassenschlachten der Weimarer Republik', *Militärgeschichte*, XIII (1974), 133–44.

'Revolutionäre Massenorganisationen in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik', *Geschichtsunterricht und Staatsbürgerkunde*, VI (1964), 919–34.

Flechtheim, Ossip K. *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik*. 2nd edn. Frankfurt a.M., 1969.

Fricke, Dieter. *Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung 1869–1914. Eine Handbuch über ihre Organisation und Tätigkeit im Klassenkampf*. East Berlin, 1976.

Gast, Helmut. 'Die proletarischen Hundertschaften als Organe der Einheitsfront im Jahre 1923', *ZfG*, IV (1956), 439–65.

Geary, Dick. 'Identifying militancy: The assessment of working-class attitudes to state and society', in Richard J. Evans (ed.). *The German Working Class 1888–1933: The Politics of Everyday Life*. London, 1981, pp. 220–46.

'Radicalism and the worker: Metalworkers and revolution 1914–1923', in Richard J. Evans (ed.). *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany*. London, 1978, pp. 267–86.

Geyer, Dietrich. 'Sowjetrussland und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung 1918–1932', *VfZ*, XXIV (1976), 2–37.

Grossman, Atina. 'Abortion and economic crisis: The 1931 campaign against §218 in Germany', *New German Critique*, XIV (Spring 1978), 119–38.

Hannover, Heinrich and Elisabeth Hannover-Drück. *Politische Justiz 1918–1933*. Frankfurt a.M., 1966.

Hartwich, Hans-Hermann. *Arbeitsmarkt, Verbände und Staat 1918–1933*. Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission zu Berlin, vol. 23. Berlin, 1967.

Heberle, R. and F. Meyer. *Die Grosstädte im Strome der Binnenwanderung*. Leipzig, 1937.

Hegemann, Werner. *Das steinerne Berlin. Geschichte der grössten Mietskasernenstadt der Welt*. 3rd edn. Braunschweig, 1979.

Heinemann, Manfred. 'Normprobleme in der Fürsorgeerziehung', in Manfred Heinemann (ed.). *Sozialisation und Bildungswesen in der Weimarer Republik*. Stuttgart, 1976, pp. 131–56.

Herlemann, Beatrix. *Die Kommunalpolitik der KPD im Ruhrgebiet 1924–1933*. Wuppertal, 1977.

Hood, Roger and Richard Sparks. *Key Issues in Criminology*. London, 1970.

Horn, Daniel. 'Youth resistance in the Third Reich: A social portrait', *Journal of Social History*, VII (1973), 26–50.

Huber-Koller, Rose-Marie. 'Die kommunistische Erwerbslosenbewegung in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik', in *Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie* 10. Frankfurt a.M., 1977, pp. 89–140.

Hüllbüsch, Ursula. 'Die deutschen Gewerkschaften in der Weltwirtschaftskrise', in Werner Conze and Hans Raupach (eds.). *Die Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise des deutschen Reiches 1929/33*. Industrielle Welt, vol. 8. Stuttgart, 1967, pp. 126–54.

Ihlau, Olaf. *Die Roten Kämpfer. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik und im Dritten Reich*. Marburger Abhandlungen zur politischen Wissenschaft, vol. 14. Meisenheim, 1969.

Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED. *Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. In acht Bänden*. Bd. IV: *Von 1924 bis Januar 1933*. East Berlin, 1966.

Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik. Teil II: *1917–1945*. East Berlin, 1966.

Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Biographisches Lexikon. East Berlin, 1970.

International Labour Office. *International Standard Classification of Occupations. Report Prepared for the Seventh International Conference of Labour Statisticians*. Geneva, 1949.

Jochmann, Werner. 'Brünings Deflationspolitik und der Untergang der Weimarer Republik', in Dirk Stegmann *et al.* (eds.).*Industrielle Gesellschaft und politisches System. Beiträge zur politischen Sozialgeschichte. Festschrift für Fritz Fischer zum 70. Geburtstag*. Schriftenreihe des Forschungsinstituts der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, vol. 137. Bonn/Berlin, 1978, pp. 97–112.

Jones, Larry Eugene. 'The dissolution of the bourgeois party system in the Weimar Republic', in Richard Bessel and E.J. Feuchtwanger (eds.). *Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany*. London, 1981, pp. 268–88.

Kalambokis, Photios A. 'Soziologische Aspekte der kommunistischen These vom Sozialfaschismus. Zu Theorie und Praxis der KPD 1929–33'. Unpublished dissertation, Frankfurt a.M., 1967.

Kiessling, Wolfgang. *Stark und voller Hoffnung. Leben und Kampf von Albert Kuntz*. East Berlin, 1964.

Klein, Alfred. *Im Auftrag ihrer Klasse. Weg und Leistung der deutschen Arbeiterschriftsteller 1918–1933*. Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen sozialistischen Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert, vol. 3. East Berlin/Weimar, 1972.

Klein, Ulrich. 'SA-Terror und Bevölkerung in Wuppertal 1933/34', in Detlev Peukert and Jürgen Reulecke (eds.). *Die Reihen fast geschlossen. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alltags unterm Nationalsozialismus*. Wuppertal, 1981, pp. 45–61.

Kontos, Silvia. *Die Partei kämpft wie ein Mann. Frauenpolitik der KPD in der Weimarer Republik*. Basel/ Frankfurt a.M., 1979.

Koszyk, Kurt. '*Die Rote Fahne* (1918–1933)', in H.-D. Fischer (ed.). *Deutsche Zeitungen des 17. bis 20. Jahrhunderts*. Pullach bei München, 1972, pp. 291–403.

Kuczynski, Jürgen. *Die Geschichte der Lage der Arbeiter unter dem Kapitalismus*. Bd. 5: *Darstellung der Lage der Arbeiter in Deutschland von 1917/18 bis 1932/33*. East Berlin, 1966.

Lange, Annemarie. *Berlin zur Zeit Bebels und Bismarcks*. East Berlin, 1972.

Das wilhelminische Berlin. East Berlin, 1967.

Lessing, Hellmut and Manfred Liebel. *Wilde Cliquen. Szenen einer anderen Arbeiterjugendbewegung*. Bensheim, 1981.

Liang, Hsi-huey. *The Berlin Police Force in the Weimar Republic*. Berkeley, Calif., 1970.

'Lower-class immigrants in Wilhelmine Berlin', *Central European History*, III (1970), 94–111.

Lönne, Karl-Egon. 'Thesen zum publizistischen Tageskampf der KPD gegen den Faschismus: Die "Rote Fahne" - Zentralorgan der KPD', in *Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie* 6. Frankfurt a.M., 1976, pp. 242–91.

Lowenthal, Richard. 'The Bolshevisation of the Spartacus League', in David Footman (ed.). *International Communism*. St. Antony's Papers, vol. 9. London, 1960, pp. 23–71.

Lucas, Erhard. *Märzrevolution im Ruhrgebiet. Vom Generalstreik gegen den Militärputsch zum bewaffneten Arbeiteraufstand. März–April 1920*. Frankfurt a.M., 1970.

Zwei Formen von Radikalismus in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Frankfurt a.M., 1976.

Martiny, Martin. 'Sozialdemokratie und junge Generation am Ende der Weimarer Republik', in Wolfgang Luthardt (ed.). *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterbewegung und Weimarer Republik*. 2 vols. Frankfurt a.M., 1978, vol. II, pp. 56–117.

Mason, Tim. 'The workers' opposition in Nazi Germany', *History Workshop*, XI (Spring 1981), 120–37.

Meister, R. and H. Voigt. 'Der Kampf der KPD für den Aufbau proletarischer Wehrorganisationen (Sommer 1921–Herbst 1923)', *Militärgeschichte*, XII (1973), 525–33.

Möbius, Hanno. 'Der Rote Eine-Mark-Roman', *AfS*, XIV (1974), 157–212.

Morgan, D.W. *The Socialist Left and the German Revolution: A History of the German Independent Social Democratic Party, 1917–1922*. Ithaca, New York, 1975.

Negt, Oskar and Alexander Kluge. *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung. Zur Organisationsanalyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Öffentlichkeit*. Frankfurt a.M., 1973.

Neuman, Robert. 'The sexual question and Social Democracy in Imperial Germany', *Journal of Social History*, VII (1974), 271–86.

Orlow, Dietrich. *The History of the Nazi Party*. Newton Abbot, 1971.

Osterroth, Franz and Dieter Schuster (eds.). *Chronik der deutschen Sozialdemokratie.* Bd. II: *Vom Beginn der Weimarer Republik bis zum Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges.* Berlin/Bonn, 1975.

Paucker, Arnold. 'Der jüdische Abwehrkampf', in W.E. Mosse (ed.). *Entscheidungsjahr 1932. Zur Judenfrage in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik. Ein Sammelband.* Schriftenreihe wissenschaftlicher Abhandlungen des Leo Baeck Instituts, vol. 13. Tübingen, 1965, pp. 405–88.

Peukert, Detlev. *Die KPD im Widerstand. Verfolgung und Untergrundarbeit an Rhein und Ruhr.* Düsseldorfer Schriften zur neueren Landesgeschichte und zur Geschichte Nordrhein-Westfalens, vol. 2. Wuppertal, 1980.

Pikarski, Margot. *Berliner Jugend im Widerstand. Herbert Baum und Kampfgefährten.* East Berlin, 1978.

Poulantzas, Nicos. *Fascism and Dictatorship. The Third International and the Problem of Fascism.* London, 1974.

Preller, Ludwig. *Sozialpolitik in der Weimarer Republik.* Reprint. Kornberg/Düsseldorf, 1978.

Ranke, Winfried. *Vom Milljöh ins Milieu. Heinrich Zille 1858–1929. Aufstieg in der Berliner Gesellschaft.* Hannover, 1979.

Riemer, Jeffrey W. *Hard Hats. The Work World of Construction Workers.* Beverly Hills/London, 1979.

Roberts, James S. 'Wirtshaus und Politik in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung', in Gerhard Huck (ed.). *Sozialgeschichte der Freizeit.* Wuppertal, 1980, pp. 123–39.

Rohe, Karl. *Das Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Struktur der politischen Kampfverbände zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik.* Beiträge zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien, vol. 34. Düsseldorf, 1966.

Rohrwasser, Michael. *Saubere Mädel – Starke Genossen.* Frankfurt a.M., 1975.

Rosenhaft, Eve. 'Organising the "lumpenproletariat": Cliques and Communists in Berlin during the Weimar Republic', in Richard J. Evans (ed.). *The German Working Class 1888–1933: The Politics of Everyday Life.* London, 1981, pp. 174–219.

'Working-class life and working-class politics: Communists, Nazis and the state in the battle for the streets, Berlin 1928–1932', in Richard Bessel and E.J. Feuchtwanger (eds.). *Social Change and Political Development in the Weimar Republic.* London, 1981, pp. 207–40.

Roth, Karl-Heinz. *Die 'andere' Arbeiterbewegung und die Entwicklung der kapitalistischen Repression von 1880 bis zur Gegenwart.* München, 1974.

Rühle, Otto. *Zur Psychologie des proletarischen Kindes.* Frankfurt a.M., 1975.

Illustrierte Kultur- und Sittengeschichte des Proletariats. Volume I. Reprint. Frankfurt a.M., 1971.

Ryder, A.J. *The German Revolution of 1918.* Cambridge, 1967.

Sauer, Wolfgang. 'Die Mobilmachung der Gewalt', in Karl Dietrich Bracher *et al. Die nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung.* 2nd edn. Köln/Opladen, 1962, pp. 685–966.

Schmidt, Wilhelm. 'Abriss der "Richardsburg". Richardstrasse 35 in Neukölln', *Britzer Heimatbote,* XXII (1971), 135–7.

Schöck, Eva Cornelia. *Arbeitslosigkeit und Rationalisierung. Die Lage der Arbeiter und die kommunistische Gewerkschaftspolitik 1920–1928.* Frankfurt a.M./New York, 1977.

Schorske, Carl. *German Social Democracy 1905–1917. The Origins of the Great Schism.* New York, 1972.

Schuster, Kurt G.P. *Der Rote Frontkämpferbund 1924–29. Beiträge zur Geschichte und Organisationsstruktur eines politischen Kampfbundes.* Beiträge zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien, vol. 55. Düsseldorf, 1975.

Sohl, K. 'Entstehung und Verbreitung des Braunbuchs über Reichstagsbrand und Hitlerterror 1933/1934', *Jahrbuch für Geschichte*, XXI (1979), 289–327.

Stephan, Bruno. *700 Jahre Wedding. Geschichte eines Berliner Bezirks.* Berlin, 1951.

Stolle, Uta. *Arbeiterpolitik im Betrieb.* Frankfurt a.M./New York, 1980.

Stolper, Gustav, *et al. The German economy, 1870 to the Present.* Trans. by Toni Stolper. London, 1967.

Ullmann, Peter, *Tarifverträge und Tarifpolitik in Deutschland bis 1914.* Frankfurt a.M., 1977.

Vierhaus, Rudolf. 'Auswirkungen der Krise um 1930 in Deutschland', in Werner Conze and Hans Raupach (eds.). *Die Staats- und Wirtschaftskrise des deutschen Reiches 1929/33.* Industrielle Welt, vol. 8. Stuttgart, 1967, pp. 155–75.

Vogelsang, Thilo. *Reichswehr, Staat und NSDAP. Beiträge zur deutschen Geschichte 1930–1932.* Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte, vol. 11. Stuttgart, 1962.

Weber, Hermann. *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus. Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik.* 2 vols. Frankfurt a.M., 1969.

Weingartner, Thomas. *Stalin und der Aufstieg Hitlers. Die Deutschlandpolitik der Sowjetunion und der Kommunistischen Internationale 1929–1934.* Beiträge zur auswärtigen und internationalen Politik, vol. 4. Berlin, 1970.

Wheeler, Robert. 'German labor and the Comintern: A question of generations?', *Journal of Social History*, VII (1973), 304–21.

'Organized sport and organized labour: The workers' sports movement', *Journal of Contemporary History*, XIII (1978), 191–210.

'Zur sozialen Struktur der Arbeiterbewegung am Anfang der Weimarer Republik. Einige methodologische Bemerkungen', in Hans Mommsen *et al.* (eds.). *Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik.* Düsseldorf, 1974, pp. 179–89.

Wickham, James. 'Social Fascism and the division of the working-class movement: Workers and political parties in the Frankfurt area 1929/30', *Capital and Class*, VII (1979), 1–65.

'Working-class movement and working-class life: Political organisation and everyday life in Frankfurt am Main during the Weimar Republic'. Unpublished MS, 1981.

Wunderer, Hartmann. 'Materialien zur Soziologie der Mitgliedschaft und Wählerschaft der KPD zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik', in *Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie* 5. Frankfurt a.M., 1975, pp. 257–81.

Zöllner, Christian W. 'Zur Problematik der kommunistischen Jugendbewegung in der Stadt Braunschweig während der Stalinisierungsphase der KPD vom 1924 bis 1929', *Braunschweigisches Jahrbuch*, LII (1971), 193–210.

'Zur Sozialgeschichte der Arbeiterbewegung in Hannover. Fragestellungen und erste Ergebnisse', *IWK*, XI (1975), 337–46.

Index

Alexanderplatz (Berlin), 14, 98, 111, 148
allotment gardens, 96, 114, 198, 215
  see also Felseneck
Anlauf, Paul, murder of, 76, 104, 106, 113f., 220
Antifaschistische Aktion, 3, 9, 54, 81, 97–9, 128
Antifaschistische Junge Garde, 3, 90
  in Berlin, 90, 135, 155, 157, 163, 165, 204
Antifascist action, *see* Antifaschistische Aktion
Apparat, 38, 40, 100, 103–8, 114, 124–6
authority and discipline within defence groups, 146–8

Baden, 72
Bavaria, 71
Berlin, 2, 9–23, 67f., 73f., 111–66
  history and social structure of, 9f.
  working-class neighbourhoods in, 10–15
  elections and election campaigns in, 13, 20, 70, 71
  1 May 1929 in, 33f.
  hunger marches 1929 in, 50
  political violence in, 19–23
  as a section of the KPD, 13, 44f., 83–5, 237
  see also separate entries for districts and streets, aspects of working-class life, strikes, individual organizations and parties
'Beusselkietz' (Berlin), 15
Bitterfeld, 50
Böwe, Heinrich, shooting of, 119–27, 220
Boys' and Girls' Detachments, 155
Brandenburg, 9, 200f.
Braun, Otto, 32
Braunschweig, 78, 80, 111, 121, 160, 200, 209f., 214
Breitscheid, Rudolf, 78
Bremen, 70, 72, 78, 200
Brüning, Heinrich, 5, 8, 44, 72, 76, 79f., 113
Bülow-Platz (Berlin), 14, 104, 113f.
Bukharin, Nikolai, 30, 32

'Cadre' (Kader), 124f.
  see also Parteiselbstschutz
casualties of political violence, 6f., 21
Centre Party, 4, 79
Charlottenburg (Berlin), 10, 15, 101, 120, 165, 169
  see also Little Wedding
Chemnitz, 54, 200
cliques, 16, 131–38, 214f.
Comintern, *see* Communist International
Communist International, 2, 40
  interventions of Executive in KPD affairs, 24, 58f., 79, 113
  Sixth Congress, 29–32
  conference on unemployment 1931, 48f.
  meetings of the Executive: 10th Plenum 1929, 35–7, 40, 89f.; Presidium February 1930, 39, 68f.; 11th Plenum 1931, 49, 75f.; 12th Plenum 1932, 51, 80, 83, 84f., 112
Communist Party of Great Britain, 230
Communist Youth, *see* Kommunistischer Jugendverband Deutschlands
crime and criminality, 202f.
  in Berlin, 16f., 244; organized crime (Ringvereine), 16, 23, 133f., 245
  among streetfighters, 203f.
  and politics, 245
  see also cliques

Dehn, Günther, 129
demonstrations, as a tactical problem, 36f., 37–41, 50f.
Depression, 5, 41f.

Depression (*cont.*)
social consequences of, 11, 116f.
see also unemployment, labour market
Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband, 178f., 185
Deutschnationale Volkspartei, 65, 69, 156
disease and sickness, 16, 204f.
Düsseldorf, 200

East Prussia, 86, 156, 200f.
Ebert, Freidrich, 1
Ehrt, Adolf, 217
Eiserne Front, *see* Iron Front
elections
Reichstag 1930, 6, 20, 70f., 92
Reichstag 1932, 8, 20
Reichstag 1933, 13
Landtag Hessen 1931, 78
Landtag Mecklenburg-Schwerin 1929, 65
Landtag Prussia 1921 and 1924, 13
Landtag Saxony 1929, 62
Municipal 1920, 13
Municipal 1929, 20
Municipal 1930, 72
Municipal 1931, 78
Presidential 1932, 80
KPD attitude and reactions to, 15, 70f., 92f.
emergency decrees, 5, 8f., 38, 43f., 69, 73, 76, 79
Erzberger, Matthias, 2

factories in KPD theory and practice, 15, 82, 92, 211f., 235
factory cells, 29, 45
fascism in KPD theory, 31f., 59
fascist regime, 73, 76
the NSDAP as a fascist party, 57, 69, 92
Italian, 80
resolutions on the fight against fascism: July 1930, 67f., 77, 91; November 1931, 77–9, 82–5, 96, 111, 163, 213
'Schlagt die Faschisten, wo Ihr sie trefft!', 64f., 67f., 72, 161
see also 'social fascism'
Felseneck (Berlin), 96, 112, 141, 142, 166, 198
Fighting Committee of Red Berlin against Fascism, 67f., 91, 104
Fighting League against Fascism, *see* Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus
Fischer, Georg, 104
'Fischerkietz' (Berlin), 14, 22, 61, 138f., 140, 143, 145, 147, 149, 150, 151, 162, 164, 200
Flieg, Leo, 83

fluctuation
of KPD membership, 29
of membership between Communist and Nazi organizations, 164–6
Freikorps, 2, 166
Friedrichshain (Berlin), 10, 13, 16, 20, 22, 54, 73, 101, 113, 116, 126f., 143f., 145, 147, 148, 149, 150, 169, 200, 215, 251
Fürsorgeerziehung, 130, 131, 204f.

German Communist Party, *see* Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
German Metalworkers' Union, *see* Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband
German National People's Party, *see* Deutschnationale Volkspartei
Glaser, Georg, 13, 214, 244
Goebbels, Joseph, 19, 73, 120
Groener, Wilhelm, 79, 160
Grzesinski, Albert, 21, 32, 142, 217
Gutsche, Joseph, 104

Haken, Bruno, 43
Halle, 63, 71, 200
Hamburg, 2, 7, 50, 74, 78, 131, 200
'Bloody Sunday' in Altona July 1932, 9
Hammerschaften, 96
Harzburg Front, 78f.
Heimannsburg, murder of, 21
Henning, Ernst, murder of, 7, 74
Hermannstrasse (Berlin), 14, 17, 33
Hessen, 78
Hiller, Alfred, 83
Hindenburg, Paul von, 5, 8f.
Hirsch, Werner, 57
Hitler, Adolf, 2, 7, 8f., 65, 74, 80, 81, 214f.
Hitler Youth, *see* Hitlerjugend
Hitlerjugend, 129, 165, 214
Höhler, Ali, 23
housing conditions, 10f., 12, 16, 129f., 198

illegality and illegal political activity by Communists
as a problem of KPD policy, 37–9
preparations for, 76, 114
and rejection of terror by KPD, 79
underground organizations, 100–8
see also Apparat
illegitimacy, 196
Independent Social Democratic Party, *see* Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
Iron Front, 96, 160

Jahnke, Paul, 118, 121–5, 127
Jews and antisemitism, 162, 199f., 215

Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus, 3, 72, 74, 77, 92–6, 97, 98, 99, 108f., 155
in Berlin, 94f., 135, 141, 147f., 163, 165, 166, 198
campaign against the SA-taverns, 115, 123–5
membership, 95
unemployment in, 95f., 193
and RFB, 102, 108f.
Kapp Putsch, 2, 102
Karl-Liebknecht-Haus (KPD headquarters, Berlin), 14, 76, 104, 114
Kautsky, Karl, 12
'*Kietz*', definition, 11
Kippenberger, Hans, 40, 104, 106, 126, 242
Kisch, Egon Erwin, 74
Klause, Michael, 104, 106, 118, 124
Klemke, killing of, 141, 142
Knorin, V.G., 80, 112
Köpenick (Berlin), 101, 145, 169
Kösliner Strasse (Berlin), 14, 17, 33, 114, 116
Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
self-definition and attitude to politics, 24, 211f.
membership and social basis, 29, 175, 186
unemployment in, 44–6, 193
in Reichstag, 69
Twelfth Congress 1929, 34, 36, 62f., 88
Central Committee meetings: October 1929, 65; July 1930, 69; January 1932, 79; February 1932, 96
see separate headings for particular aspects of policy and agitation
Kommunistischer Jugendverband Deutschlands, 45, 83f., 104, 130, 134, 135, 136, 146f., 157f., 162, 210
Kreuzberg (Berlin), 10, 14, 16, 22, 64, 101, 104, 111, 116, 131, 135, 136, 139, 140, 144f., 147, 166, 169, 200, 205
Künstler, Franz, 115
Kuetemeyer, Hans, death of, 182f.
Kuntz, Albert, 83, 96
Kuusinen, Otto, 39

labour exchanges and welfare bureaux, 43, 49–52, 142, 166
labour market, 4f., 15, 28, 185
see also unemployment
Leipzig, 200
Lenk, Franz, murder of, 76, 104, 106, 113f., 220
Leow, Willi, 100
Liang, Hsi-huey, 208
Lichtenberg (Berlin), 11, 14, 101, 131, 147, 149, 159
Lichterfelde-Ost Station (Berlin), fight at, 19, 165
Liebknecht, Karl, 13
Linienstrasse (Berlin), 14, 17, 114
Little Wedding (Berlin), 15f.
Losowski, Salomon, 48f.
Lucas, Erhard, 168
Luxemburg, Rosa, 13

M-Apparat, *see* Apparat
Manuilski, Dimitri, 35, 37, 39, 76
May Day 1929, 33f., 37, 60, 62f., 153, 159
Mecklenburg, 65, 71, 72
migration and migrants in Berlin, 10f., 15, 200–2, 204
'militarism', militarization and military language in Communist organizations, 99–101, 106–9, 159, 251
Mitte (Berlin), 10, 14, 16, 22, 101, 134, 145, 169, 200
see also Alexanderplatz, Bülow-Platz, 'Fischerkietz', Linienstrasse, Zentrum
Moabit (Berlin), 10, 11, 15, 16, 75, 101, 107, 114, 140, 143, 148, 160, 170, 198, 251
see also 'Beusselkietz'
Muchow, Reinhold, 18f.
Müller, Hermann, 5, 32
Müller, Kurt, 83
Munich, 2, 63, 200

names, cover-names and nicknames used in Communist defence organizations, 149
National Socialist Pary, *see* Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, 6, 8, 69, 71
in Berlin, 18–20
and unemployed, 18, 48, 52
factory organizations, 93, 115
Party Congress Nürnberg 1929, 63
and Young Plan campaign, 65
and Prussian plebiscite, 76, 113
and Harzburg Front, 78f.
Communist streetfighters' attitudes to, 161
see also fascism
neighbourhood, definitions and significance, 10f.
social divisions in, 17f.
and politics, 12, 15
identification of by streetfighters, 143–6
KPD attitude to, 15, 50, 82
Neukölln (Berlin), 10, 13f., 16, 18, 22, 33,

Neukölln (Berlin) (*cont.*)
47, 64, 101, 111–27, 131, 133, 141, 147, 148, 150, 164, 169, 198, 200, 205, 255
see also Hermannstrasse, Richardstrasse
Neumann, Heinz, 48f., 60, 64, 70, 72, 74, 79, 82f., 113f., 115, 154, 236, 242
Norkus, Herbert, killing of, 143, 148
Nowawes, 111, 209
Nürnberg, 63

occupational groups and political radicalism, 170–93
construction workers, 181–4
food trades, 179
metalworkers, 44, 72, 177–9, 184f., 186f., 189f.
transport workers and drivers, 183f., 185
occupational mobility, 187–91
Oktober, 102, 106f.
Ordnerdienst, 104
Organisations-, Schutz- und Nachrichtenabteilung, 103
Ossietzky, Carl von, 114

Pankow (Berlin), 85, 101
Papen, Franz von, 5, 8f., 80
'Papen coup', 9, 80
paramilitary organizations in the Weimar Republic, 3f.
Parteiselbstschutz, 104–6, 122, 124f.
Party Self Defence, *see* Parteiselbstschutz
'People's Revolution', 49, 73f.
'petty bourgeoisie' and small traders in politics
KPD view of, 31, 36, 82, 160
effects of Depression on, 116f.
among streetfighters, 179, 186f.
Pharus-Säle (Berlin), fight at, 19, 159, 203
Piatnitzki, Osip, 49, 50, 51
Pieck, Wilhelm, 79, 81
plundering, 53f.
police, 12, 204, 213, 216–20
political police in Berlin, 21, 114, 216
1 May 1929, role of, 33f.
popular hostility to, 53, 211
KPD and, 40, 60, 62
attacks on, 114
views of, 105
Gestapo, 136, 214, 220
see also Anlauf, Paul and Lenk, Franz
'policing' by Communist defence organizations, 143f.
Pomerania, 71, 200f.
Posen, 200f.
Potempa, 140, 162
Prenzlauer Berg (Berlin), 10, 101, 114, 139, 145, 169, 200
Proletarian Hundreds, 4, 54
Proletarian Self Defence, *see* Proletarischer Selbstschutz
Proletarischer Selbstschutz, 88–90, 92, 100
'PSS Mitte' (Berlin), 138f., 140, 143, 145, 147, 148, 149, 151
propaganda, style and content in KPD, 60f.
see also Die Rote Fahne
Prussia, 7–9, 200, 211, 217
plebiscite 1931, 76, 113f.
fighting in Landtag 1932, 80
see also elections, 'Papen coup'

radicalism, working-class, definitions and explanations of, 168f.
Rathenau, Walter, 2
rationalization in German industry, 4, 185
Red Aid, 6, 83, 150
Red Factory Guards, *see* Rote Betriebswehren
Red Front-fighters' League, *see* Roter Frontkämpferbund
Red Hiking Ring, *see* Roter Wanderring
Red League of Women and Girls, *see* Roter Frauen- und Mädchenbund
Red Mass Self Defence, *see* Roter Massenselbstschutz
Red Youth Front, *see* Rote Jungfront
Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, 3f., 62–4, 72, 78, 93, 121, 160, 162
in 'united front' activities, 82, 99, 165
Schutzformationen, 93
Reinickendorf (Berlin), 14, 96, 101, 169
see also Felseneck
religion of Communist streetfighters, 198–200
Remmele, Hermann, 37, 83
Renner, Rudolf, 65
resistance to National Socialism after 1933, 213
Revolutionäre Gewerkschafts-Opposition and KPD trade-union policy, 46f., 49, 112, 176, 178
Revolutionary Trade-union Opposition, *see* Revolutionäre Gewerkschafts-Opposition
Rhineland, 200
Richardstrasse (Berlin), 111–27
Ringvereine, *see* crime
Rote Betriebswehren, 91f., 102
Die Rote Fahne, 49, 60f., 63, 64, 65, 66, 70, 72, 74, 93, 112, 113, 137
bans and prosecutions, 34, 68, 114
Rote Hilfe, *see* Red Aid
Rote Insel (Berlin), 15, 170

Rote Jungfront, 34, 90, 157
underground, in Berlin, 100, 102, 126, 129f., 135, 136, 137, 144, 147, 255
Roter Frauen- und Mädchenbund, 154f.
Roter Frontkämpferbund, 3f., 33f., 88–90, 93, 157, 162
as underground organization, 90, 98, 99, 100–8, 129; internal structure, 103; reaction to November resolution, 84f.; in Berlin, 90, 139, 146, 148, 150, 165; locals, 101; campaign against the SA-taverns, 115, 123–5; and Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus, 109
Roter Massenselbstschutz, 96–9
in Berlin, 96, 98f., 139
Roter Wanderring, 134f., 166
Rück, Fritz, 64
Ruhr, 2, 41, 46

SA, 3
in Berlin, 19f., 64, 72, 81, 119f.
ban 1932, 8, 80, 107
Communist streetfighters' attitudes to, 161
see also terror
SA-taverns, 19f., 52, 116, 150, 249
campaign against 1931, 77, 111–27
SS, 8
Sagasser, Erich, killing of, 139f.
Saxony, 62, 90, 160
Scheidemann, Philipp, 1
Scheringer, Richard, 75
Schleicher, Kurt von, 5, 9
Schlesinger, Rudolf, 66, 106, 123
Schneller, Ernst, 106f.
Schöneberg (Berlin), 10, 15, 22, 64, 101, 111, 127, 136, 139, 142, 163, 169f., 248
see also Rote Insel
Schönstedt, Walter, 135f., 166
Schutzstaffel, *see* SS
Severing, Carl, 7, 32, 160
Silesia, 9, 140, 200f.
Social Democratic Party, *see* Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
Social Democratic Youth, *see* Sozialistische Arbeiter-Jugend
'social fascism', x, 8, 31f., 211
Soviet Union in KPD policy and propaganda, 30, 101
image of among Communists, 162
Communists escape to, 126, 162, 164
see also Communist International
Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
and Social Democrats, 1f., 69, 71f., 159, 160f.
in political violence, 6, 162
in Berlin, 12, 17
attitudes to women, 152
and 'united front', 78; former Social Democrats in Communist organizations, 96, 99, 138, 165; cooperation with Communists, 112; 'encouraging terror', 82
see also Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, 'social fascism'
Sozialistische Arbeiter-Jugend, 96, 129, 152
Spandau (Berlin), 11, 101, 169
sport and politics, 98, 129
Stahlhelm, 3, 6, 63, 113
Stalin, Joseph, 30, 113
Steglitz (Berlin), 11, 101, 131, 146, 169, 248
see also Lichterfelde-Ost Station
Steinberg, Hans, killing of, 143
Steinicke, Hans, 68
'street politics' of KPD, defined, 52
strikes, 46f.
Moabit 1910, 11f.
May 1929, 34, 112
Ruhr 1931, 41, 46
Berlin metalworkers 1930, 72
Berlin transport 1932, 47, 85, 153, 175–9
political strikes, 12, 112; in KPD theory, 36f., 73
Sturmabteilung, *see* SA
'Sturmabteilung Mitte', 23, 68, 150
Sturmlokale, *see* SA-taverns

taverns and politics, 12, 116f.
KPD taverns, 150f.
see also SA-taverns
Tempelhof (Berlin), 22, 101, 169
'tenant protection', 54, 97
territoriality
of cliques, 133
of Communist defence groups, 143–6
terror and violence
in National Socialism
Hitler on, 7; of NSDAP and SA, 19f., 64, 72, 74, 80, 210, 213, 214; KPD analysis of, 57f., 62–5, 75, 106f.; Communist streetfighters' view of, 160f., 163
in Communist theory and practice
KPD leadership on: 'individual terror' and 'mass terror' defined, 57f., 106f., 118; rejection of 'individual terror', 74, 77f., 105; controversy over anti-terror resolution, 82–7; explanations for

terror and violence (*cont.*)
'individual terror', 85, 156
of Communist defence groups, 142f.
'terror groups', 105, 142
Thälmann, Ernst, 47, 48, 65f., 68, 71f., 73, 75f., 81, 96, 104, 106, 114, 135
'Third Period', defined, 30
Thuringia, 71
Tiergarten (Berlin), 16, 22, 101, 145, 169f., 200
see also Moabit
trade unions and trade unionists, 4f., 32, 36, 46, 96, 138, 216
see also Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband, Revolutionäre Gewerkschafts-Opposition
Treptow (Berlin), 11, 101, 124–6, 169

Ulbricht, Walter, 39f., 50, 54, 62, 72, 73f., 112, 118, 126, 242
Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, 2, 13, 159
unemployed agitation, of KPD, 47–53
see also Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
Unemployed Detachments, 49, 96, 99
activities in Berlin, 143f., 146
unemployment, 4, 41f.
youth unemployment, 8, 43
social and psychological consequences, 43f., 51; and violence, 156, 191–3
see also Depression, labour market
unemployment insurance, 5, 42–4, 210
see also labour exchanges
uniforms, 90, 144, 149
'united front from below', 35f., 67, 82, 210, 237

weapons, 40, 166
in Communist defence groups, 105, 149f.
Wedding (Berlin), 10, 13f., 16f., 19, 22, 33, 101, 116, 131, 134, 143, 145, 146, 148, 169, 200, 215
see also Kösliner Strasse, Pharus-Säle
Der Weg zum Sieg, 76, 107
Wehner, Herbert, 106, 112
'*wehrhafter Kampf*', defined, 57f.
Weinert, Erich, 74
Weissensee (Berlin), 14, 101, 169
welfare and social services, 12, 16, 169, 204f., 255
as an object of KPD agitation, 210f.
see also Fürsorgeerziehung, labour exchanges, unemployed agitation, unemployment insurance
Wessel, Horst, 64, 142, 199, 215, 220
murder of, 22f., 68, 90, 150
West Prussia, 200f.
Wilmersdorf (Berlin), 101, 169
Wolfenbüttel, 80
Wollenberg, Erich, 101, 104
women and girls
working-class attitudes to, 132, 151–3
in Communist organizations, 154f.
arrests of, 153f.
in political violence, 153f.
in streetfighters' families, 197f.
political influence of, 165
works councils, elections 1930, 46
Württemberg, 70

Young Antifascist Guards, *see* Antifaschistische Junge Garde
Young Plan, referendum and plebiscite, 65, 160
KPD on, 65f.
youth, and political violence, 158, 164, 166, 193–7
see also unemployment
youth clubs, 129f., 132, 148
youth gangs, *see* cliques

Zehlendorf (Berlin), 101
Zentrum (KPD local), 14, 94, 45, 101
Zörgiebel, Karl, 33, 68
Zusammenstoss-violence, defined, 3

A note on sources

This is not intended as a bibliographical essay; the notes and bibliography themselves should be sufficient indicators of the range of published material available to the student of the KPD and the peculiar difficulties associated with it. Rather, my intention here is to discuss one particular archival source and my use of it, namely police records. Like most outspokenly subversive or revolutionary political organizations, the KPD was an object of considerable interest to the political arm of the police services in the Weimar Republic. Moreover, various of its auxiliary sections and activities were officially proscribed at various times during those years, so that members often participated or were seen as liable to participate in formally criminal acts. Finally, the kind of political activity that this book deals with – political violence – was itself an unequivocally criminal act, whose culpability could be mitigated only by a plausible plea of self-defence. For all these reasons, police and related records constitute an important window on the world of the Communist rank and file. But like any indirect source of information about people, attitudes and events – and more so than some others – they raise important problems of interpretation. I have tried to make clear throughout the book where we are dealing with a view of the authorities that seems questionable or is unsubstantiated. I have also attempted to explain in a general way in Chapters 1 and 7 what I think certain kinds of police records can and cannot tell us. But it is worth considering the character and prejudices of my sources more closely.

Two different kinds of police records have been used in this study. The first, reports by spies and informers to the political police (in Berlin, Department IA) about goings-on within the movement, ranging from 'unofficial minutes' of specific local meetings to more general 'situation reports', have been widely used by historians of the KPD (and of other political movements of the period). Their value must have varied with the reliability and sophistication of the individual informant, but there are also relatively independent checks on their plausibility. One of these is the literature of the KPD itself, which sometimes allows us to compare the police

report of a speech with the official text, and, more generally, affords an understanding of the Party against which to measure the conclusions of the police. The other is the judgment of the higher police authorities, manifested both in handwritten comments (marginalia) on the documents themselves, and in the ways in which various items of information originally appearing in informers' reports were processed through the various levels of the police bureaucracy. The appearance of a particular item in successive reports of IA or the Berlin Police (LKPA) suggests that it was assigned a certain credibility by the Berlin Police authorities. Under the leadership of Albert Grzesinski and the Social Democratic administration of Prussia the higher police authorities were strongly anti-Communist, but they can have had no personal or political interest in exaggerating or sensationalizing the excesses of the KPD. Indeed, independent sources, including the reports of contemporaries, agree that they hardly needed to.

A more problematic group of sources is that provided by prosecution files. Most of Chapters 5 through 7 of the present book is based on material in the files of the Generalstaatsanwalt beim Landgericht, Berlin, which are stored in Repertorium 58 of the Landesarchiv Berlin. The selection of incidents reported in Rep. 58 and discussed in this book is neither perfectly random nor entirely comprehensive. The file itself as it now stands was deliberately preserved by the National Socialist authorities after 1933 because of its 'historic importance'. It does not represent the totality of criminal cases prosecuted in Berlin during the period it covers (ca. 1900–35), nor does it include all cases of *Zusammenstoss*-violence. It does include the official records of most of the major incidents of political murder and violence as well as files on dozens of reported incidents that were either false or unsubstantiable, in addition to the documents relating to important political and criminal trials of twentieth-century Berlin. As early as 1933 these documents were used by Adolf Ehrt in the preparation of his 'Revelations about the Communist preparations for insurrection on the eve of the national awakening', in which whole documents and photographs from the files are reprinted. My own procedure in selecting cases for study was initially to choose cases in which Communists were named as the attackers. In a number of cases the records made clear that Communists had not in fact initiated the fighting, and in some cases this was even acknowledged by the investigating authorities; where it was evident – in spite of the rubric of the file – that Communists had been victims of attack, I did not include the case in my survey. In selecting the individual streetfighters, I applied the principle that all those actually prosecuted in the selected cases should be counted as streetfighters for the purpose of my study, subject to my own evaluation of the evidence presented in the file. The resulting sample represents a slightly larger number than were finally

convicted and a very much smaller number than were arrested and/or questioned in the course of the various investigations. My final selection of cases was also directed, as research progressed, by my interest in pursuing the careers of various individuals and the background to certain incidents. The names of all fighters and witnesses have been changed in the text and notes, with the exception of those who died before 1933 and leading members of the Communist movement mentioned in other sources.

The contents of the files are very varied and allow considerable scope for the researcher to exercise an independent judgment. A typical file opens with a copy of the entry in the police-station diary noting the report of a clash or attack in progress, followed by the reports of the police officers sent to the scene on their findings and measures taken and a final report from the local police precinct summing up their reconstruction of events. Copies of items of information from various sources, photographs, coroner's reports where appropriate and the signed statements of witnesses and suspects follow. Also included are the results of the Public Prosecutor's routine enquiries to other police authorities, yielding information about each suspect's previous convictions and about whether he has a record of political activity, and other items of correspondence relevant to the Prosecutor's final decision to bring the suspect or suspects to trial. This phase of the investigation is closed by the written indictment, in which the Prosecutor gives his own reconstruction of the incident and the case against the accused. The rest of the file is taken up with further statements, items of evidence, correspondence between the judicial authorities, the defendants, their defence attorneys, and the social services, short minutes of the trial (not a full transcript) the written judgment and documents relevant to any subsequent appeal or application for parole. It is thus possible to follow the course of an investigation more or less from its beginning and to evaluate piece by piece most of the evidence that it produced.

Could that evidence have been falsified? Like the question of whether other evidence could have been suppressed, this is a difficult one to answer. The most likely source of deliberate distortions in reporting was the local police, who had a personal stake in proving that their initial arrests, accounts and identifications had been correct. They might also have accounts to settle with individual Communists; Hsi-huey Liang has shown the extent of conservative and even National Socialist sentiment in the Berlin police force during the early 1930s. The political prejudice of the prosecutors, and especially the judges, is most explicit and expressed with the greatest self-confidence in these files; especially in their assessment of the relative credibility of witnesses, the higher judicial authorities very often gave National Socialists a benefit of the doubt that would have been inconceivable in the case of the Communists. It might well be expected that the prejudice of the individual police officer, though no weaker, would be

expressed in more furtive forms. On the other hand, we also know that the majority of police officers in Berlin were neither Communists nor Nazis, and the experience of fighting both radical parties might have inclined them to take a more even-handedly cynical view. In practice the prejudice and reliability of the police must have varied between individual officers and precincts. In many cases they showed themselves equally ready to arrest and question Communists and Nazis, and even where their inside knowledge of the local 'troublemakers' provided the starting-point for an investigation, the subsequent inquiries ordinarily ranged considerably more widely. In spite of the fact that I was interested in finding known Communist militants – notorious 'troublemakers' – the majority of the 318 streetfighters who appeared in my final sample were not apparently well known to the police locally. There is no record in these files of an official complaint that the police had lied or manufactured evidence. And in every case but one we have the statements of the accused themselves to balance those of the police.

This raises further questions, about the reliability of statements made to the police. Here there are two problems. First, none of the statements on which I have based many of my conclusions was written by the witness or accused himself, although all were signed by those making them (the exceptions here are the two personal letters cited). And it is impossible to be sure which, if any, were verbatim transcripts of verbal statements. The vocabulary and opinions they contain are nevertheless sufficiently colourful and varied that I think it possible to recognize in them a peculiar and 'authentic' voice of the streetfighters' milieu. Readers will have to judge for themselves whether this view carries conviction. A second, perhaps more serious problem, is that of the *credibility* of statements made to the police. Although many of the statements cited here were made voluntarily, others were made by young men under arrest and subject to all the pressures and persuasions that can be brought to bear on frightened people negotiating for their freedom. The Berlin police were no more and no less brutal in their treatment of prisoners in the precinct-house than most urban police forces, and although complaints about physical mistreatment of the accused rarely arise in these files (and were rarely raised against IA, into whose hands many people accused of political offences eventually fell), the defence attorney in the Richardstrasse case thought the 'remarkable number of self-accusations' by young, sick and inexperienced youths worthy of comment. But the fact that a statement is involuntary does not necessarily mean that it is false. In each case I have tried to consider the credibility of the statement in question in the light of other evidence and to ask what the speaker had to gain from lying and what the police had to gain from encouraging him to lie. Again, the kinds of statements, confessions, justifications and excuses offered by the people whom the police interrogated are so varied that it is

impossible to recognize a single pattern, either of mendacity or of police expectations.

It would be naïve to wish to suggest that police chicanery in the democratic Republic was inconsequential simply because the régime that succeeded it was both more efficient and more single-minded in its brutality. But on the question of the degree and effectiveness of police coercion and the related one of the political pressures under which the police themselves operated, the contrast between IA and the Gestapo is instructive. After 1933 the police was practically an arm of the central state administration and its aims were explicitly political; the conduct of investigations and interrogations was accordingly both more brutal and more deliberately biased than it had been before 1933, and the results were more unequivocal. If there are any cases where the evidence produced by police interrogations is *a priori* suspect, then they must include those that were reopened and/or 'solved' by the Gestapo between 1933 and 1935. In my accounts of the Anlauf and Lenk, Horst Wessel and Richardstrasse killings I have made use of post-1933 materials, but in each case I have accepted only that evidence that was supported by independent testimony (especially memoir material), or have made the provenance of the information clear in the text.