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THE REMSCHEID WORKERS' MOVEMENT

FROM 1914 TO 1945

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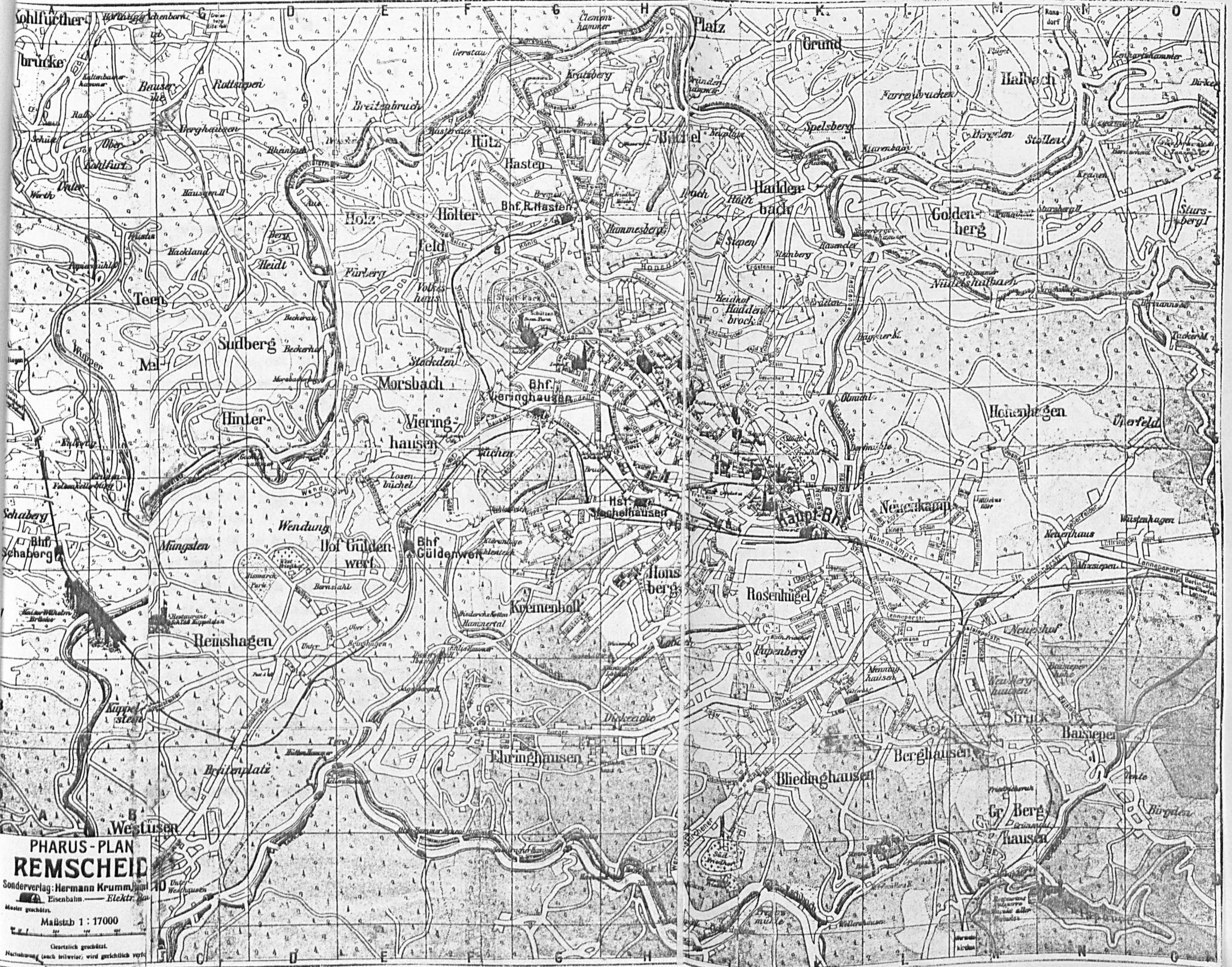
S U M M A R Y

This dissertation attempts to close a substantial gap in local historiography and simultaneously offer for comparison a study of a radical workers' movement over a turbulent period of German history, which experienced severe political ruptures. So far, the Remscheid Workers' Movement has been largely ignored, despite its significant role in the course of regional and national politics at various conjunctures. To my knowledge this is the first attempt to trace the movement's development over this particular period. The dissertation is based on mainly unpublished material gleaned from files, newspaper articles and interviews, and research was carried out in archives in Remscheid, Solingen, Wuppertal-Elberfeld (city library), Düsseldorf and Berlin.

The local workers' movement was already established as a radical force in local politics at the beginning of the period under scrutiny. This study, however, traces the movement's radical tradition, paying particular attention to the relationship between the institutions and the rank and file members in the working-class districts of the town. The social and economic situation of the local working class is analysed to explain, by way of Kocka's three-tier model of class conflict, how and why local workers repeatedly sought a radical solution to the question of political power.

The dissertation comprises of six chapters. Chapter I reveals the radicalising experience of war which led to polarisation in a period of intense class hostility within local society. Chapter II deals with the years 1918 to 1924, which was a period of intense class hostility punctuated by overt class conflict. Despite temporary victories in 1918 and 1920, and despite holding a majority on the town council, the local workers' movement was not able to seize and hold power, owing to lack of unity of aims and action amongst the three workers' parties, the failure to resolve the question of the ownership of production in the workers' favour, and the close cooperation between the local authorities, the employers and external counter-revolutionary forces. Chapter III analyses the process of bolshevisation and stalinisation in the local KPD group which had emerged between 1920 and 1924 to take control of the Remscheid workers' movement. This chapter also shows by several examples how members were recruited into and integrated in the movement by way of important institutions.

Chapter IV traces the development of the extreme right in the town, and a close analysis of the NSDAP and SA before 1933 demonstrates a very weak proletarian participation in the party and paramilitary group. Chapter V shows how during the period of depression from 1929 to 1933 the town was split into two opposing camps with the bulk of the workers supporting the KPD, and the middle classes supporting the NSDAP. Chapter VI reveals the considerable complicity of the middle classes in the Nazi seizure of power and shows how the Nazis succeeded in suppressing the local workers' movement by a combination of terror, propaganda and concessions.



**PHARUS-PLAN
REMSCHEID**
Sonderverlag: Hermann Krümmel
Eisenbahn — Elektr. Linie
Maßstab 1 : 17000
Gesetzlich geschützt.
Nachahmung (auch teilweise) wird gerichtlich verfolgt

I N T R O D U C T I O N

The following study is an attempt to trace the development of the working-class movement in Remscheid during the period under scrutiny and to explain how and why this radical left-wing tradition declined in the post-1945 years. The study is concerned also with the growth of class-consciousness amongst a large section of the town's workers, which led to a high degree of political mobilisation that affected the course of political events in Remscheid throughout the period in question.

It approaches the problem on two different but not unconnected levels, namely one which may be termed organised institutional life, comprising parties, trade unions, clubs and other institutions, and one which we may call the everyday common experience, which occurred inter alia at the place of work, the corner shop or the local pub. If we regard the second level as the 'experience', the first is to be seen as the expression and direction of that experience, and its translation into political terms. It is the close link between these two aspects of working class life which gave the Remscheid workers their political strength and depth, and enabled them or their chosen representatives to play a dominant role locally and sometimes nationally. Although this study is primarily concerned with the working class this should not be regarded as a group existing in a social, economic and political vacuum, thoroughly independent of all other classes of society. Indeed it is the interaction between classes which ultimately leads to their demarcation, as it determines the collective experience which in some circumstances sets one group against another.¹

A. Labour History

1. Methodological Problems.

The following study owes much to the tradition of British Labour History which has been interested not merely in working class political institutions, but also in culture as an expression as well as a strong determining factor of working class consciousness. A long line of historians, journalists and social investigators² have directed their attention to the working class in Britain, examining such varied aspects of working class life as diet, housing, education, family-life, pastimes and work, trade union and party life, and wider political activity, in an effort to understand their social, economic and political development as a class. Labour History however has not been restricted to Britain and has indeed been established in a number of other countries for a long time.³ One exception is Germany,⁴ where historiography has traditionally been dominated by conservative and nationalist schools which have been likened by their critics to a medieval guild, due to their highly organised character and jealously guarded exclusiveness.⁵ These historians who mostly tended to identify with the state gave pride of place to questions of foreign policy, diplomacy and military history. The role which they performed, that of helping to give their countrymen a national identity by instilling in them pride in Prussian and German achievements, was retained right up to the 1960s. In the wake of the 'Fischer debate' during the 1960s, German historiography has undergone a transformation, with younger historians taking a closer look at internal politics of the Bismarckian and Wilhelmine periods, in an effort to detect the roots of the Third Reich. They began to look to the social sciences for new concepts and methods and came to believe that social history would help them gain a better understanding of the internal structure and development of Imperial Germany. However the 'new orthodoxy'⁶, as they have been named, still continued to concern themselves with the commanding heights of politics, an approach which

Richard Evans terms 'history from above'⁷. This approach tends to regard the working class primarily as a passive instrument influenced and manipulated by elites at the top of society. When the working class has been the subject of study, much of the work has been concerned with working class political organisations rather than with working class culture and the everyday experience.

British historiography on the other hand has traditionally stressed the importance of the grass roots of politics and the everyday life of ordinary people. As Evans rightly points out, history from below' neither means 'history without theory' nor 'history with the politics left out'.⁸ It is an approach which combines theory with empirical study and extends the definition of politics to include areas of life which German historiography has traditionally regarded as 'unpolitical'.

A further point of consideration is that as the working class in modern industrial society has constituted such a large percentage of the population and may be regarded at least until the end of the Second World War as the largest single class, it follows that its contribution to the country's history has been so considerable that it warrants or rather demands, closer investigation.

That the working class tends to be inarticulate and thereby reluctant to commit interpretations of experience to paper, presents a challenge for the interested historian, but is no reason to ignore such a large section of society. The advent of Oral History constitutes one response to the challenge of articulating the inarticulate, and a number of exciting projects have uncovered material and pieced together working-class history which otherwise would have been lost for ever.⁹

Furthermore such projects have undoubtedly succeeded in awakening and extending the interest of working class people in their own history, and have helped to bring about the realisation that the everyday actions of ordinary men and women have relevance to the whole, ie. their everyday actions influence, as well as being influenced by, the course which that society takes.

Related considerations govern recent preoccupations with micro-history. The investigation of a restricted locality creates intensified relationships between the historian and his subject matter, between the historian and the local inhabitants or at least a section of these, and between the inhabitants and their history. Single community studies have an important advantage over investigations on a national scale in that they are more likely to reveal detailed knowledge of regional peculiarities and their interaction with other areas. It may be argued that microhistory presents a more detailed picture by focusing attention on a limited area, with the result that eventually a clearer understanding of the whole may be gained, by means of comparison with other areas.

There are however one or two pitfalls which need to be avoided by 'microhistorians'. The most important danger is a possible loss of perspective by focusing too closely on his subject community and ignoring or underestimating its interdependence with other areas. The unconscious attribution of autonomy to a single community leads to a distorted vision of reality and impairs the historian's work. For this reason it is imperative for the historian to be constantly aware of the relationship between his area and the rest of the country.

In recent years there have appeared a number of studies devoted to the worker's everyday experience both at work and at home, so that we may assume that the interest of some German historians may now be shifting to this sphere. Local and regional studies still appear to attract Anglo-American more than German historians, but this situation may also be changing. The most notable work for the purpose of this study is Erhard Lucas' comparison of two kinds of radicalism, expressed by the workers of Hamborn and Remscheid.¹⁰ Another recent local study by David Crew traced the development of industrialisation in Bochum between 1860 and 1914 and its effects on the workers.¹¹ This study also contains an analysis of workers' protest in the form of miners' strikes in the years 1889, 1905 and 1912. Other local and regional studies are those by Lawrence Schofer about Upper Silesia from 1865 to

1914,¹² M.Nolan's work on working class radicalism in Düsseldorf 1890 to 1920,¹³ Tenfelde's history of the Ruhr miners,¹⁴ S.H.F. Hickey's examination of the Ruhr miners,¹⁵ Roland Günther's examination of a coal miners' colony in the Ruhr based on information gathered from interviews,¹⁶ Dieter Lange-wiesche's essay on the home and family life of Vienna workers¹⁷ and William Sheridan Allen's book about the experience of a single town, Northeim, during the period immediately before and after the Nazi seizure of power¹⁸. The most notable recent studies devoted to workers' culture and everyday experience are: Jürgen Reulecke and Wolfhard Weber (edit.), Fabrik, Familie, Feier-abend,¹⁹ which contains a number of essays on such varied topics as children's diet, the development of consumer cooperative societies, lodgers in working class families, the club life of Ruhr miners, and workers' sport clubs; Lutz Niethammer (edit.), Wohnen im Wandel²⁰; Niethammer and Brüggemeier's article on workers' dwellings in Imperial Germany²¹; Gerhard Ritter (edit.), Arbeiterkultur²², which deals more with workers' clubs and institutions than with home life; Siegfried Reck's²³ and Martin Soder's²⁴ examinations of the family, club and pub life of workers.

Finally with regard to the local historiography of Remscheid, it is apparent that the field has traditionally been dominated by an interest in work processes and artefacts, with occasional portraits of outstanding local manufacturers and the odd idealised picture of artisans. The problem of social interaction between the various classes has been totally neglected. This is above all true with regard to the development of the working class and the working class movement. This fact necessarily raises the question as to whether this gross omission has been intentional, or whether it has been due to a disorientated lack of interest. Whatever the answer, the result at the local level is a widespread ignorance, particularly concerning the community's development over the last one hundred years, and a loss of identity or a disturbed relationship with

their class origins, above all amongst the workers themselves.

During the period covered by this study and before, Remscheid was a class society with a distinct divergence of interests. On the one hand there was a relatively small industrialist/manufacturer class supported by the state civil service apparatus, and on the other hand the mass of wage-earners. At two intervals, between 1918 and 1923 and from 1930 to 1933, Remscheid was the scene of open class conflict which was frequently marked by particularly violent clashes.

This dissertation will attempt to explain the development of class conflict in Remscheid by applying a model devised by Kocka to analyse German society during the First World War.²⁵

Essentially the model presents a three-phase development of class conflict based on the Marxist definition of class membership in terms of the individual's relationship to the means of production. The phases do not necessarily have a strict chronological order and even tend to run concurrently although it is understood that before open conflict occurs, a broad consensus of dissatisfaction and a level of political consciousness which explains the discrepancy between reality and what are felt to be justifiable aims, must already have been reached.

The three phases of the development of conflict identified by Kocka are:

1. The divergence of latent class interests (not necessarily conscious) according to one's position in society.

Here the dividing line is drawn between those owning the means of production, and wage- and salary earners. Class denomination does not merely dictate the production process, but also consumption, status and opportunity in education, career and political power etc. It follows therefore that the state constitutes an instrument in the service of the dominant economic class.

2. Class hostility.

At this level, divergent class interests determine individual hopes, desires, aims and attitudes, so that depending on the existence of certain pre-requisites these can develop into a

collective identity of shared experience. The salient prerequisites for the development of a conscious corporate identity are traditional values, ideas and attitudes. The more these become institutionalised, the more they are effective. The institutions in their turn reinforce the traditions by a process of regeneration. The essential factor governing class hostility is for the wage- or salary earner, the discrepancy between actual opportunity and the desires and aims which he recognises as being legitimate. The discrepancy can either be a result of diminishing opportunity or increased expectancy.

3. Class conflict.

Class conflict follows a maturation process, which has been exploited by individuals and representative institutions of class interest and when the state intervenes on behalf of the ruling economic class to quell growing discontent. The course of the maturation process is in no way automatic and is dependent on a number of factors such as the availability of effective leadership, an ideology which justifies conflict and a functioning communications system between individuals and institutions. The lack of these factors and the intensification of political suppression can lengthen the maturation process or even prevent the eruption of conflict. The point of eruption is always preceded by an extreme polarisation of society.

2. The Classes in Remscheid Society.

The structure of Remscheid's industry, a predominance of small and medium-sized workshops and factories owned by local families and in which the owner normally worked side by side with his employees, and relatively few large factories employing more than 500, strongly influenced the local bourgeoisie and the working class as did the type of industry, viz. work and machine tools, the manufacture of which required a high level of skill on the part of the workers.

The middle class of Remscheid during the Weimar period consisted of the owners and directors of the larger factories situated in the town, similarly the owners and directors of the larger and more successful exporting houses - Remscheid's dependence on overseas markets earned it the title of 'Seestadt auf dem Berge' - a small number of senior civil servants and academics, several bank managers and their families. Of these the manufacturing and exporting families formed a long established group which proved quite resilient preserving and renewing its identity by consistent intermarriage until approximately the end of the Weimar Republic. An account of this leading group around 1880 tells of Sunday afternoon meetings in the "Hotel zum Weinberg". The observer of this weekly ritual perceived a hierarchical seating arrangement roughly structured according to annual tax payments. The pinnacle was formed by a Kommerzienratstisch and another table seating twelve elderly gentlemen, "die zwölf Apostel"²⁶. The most influential families belonging to the town's leading group were inter alia: the Bokers, Mannesmanns, Hasenclevers, Arns, Hessenbruchs, von der Nahmers, Honsbergs, Peislers, Hentzens, the Hardts of Lennep and perhaps somewhat later, the Zieglers. Below this almost impenetrable group were several aspiring families, acolytes of the respected society, consisting of manufacturers and exporters, bank managers, higher civil servants and members of the professions, lawyers, doctors and

architects. There were no landowners in the sense of those who lived exclusively from land rents.

The lower-middle class consisted of two sub-categories, the traditional petty bourgeoisie and the new white-collar class.²⁷ The traditional petty bourgeoisie consisted of shopkeepers, independent artisans, publicans and small savers, the new white-collar class incorporated all the control and office work resulting from expanding industry and commerce. Whilst the traditional petty bourgeoisie tends to decline during the period under examination, the white-collar class is increasing.

The local working class consisted of manual workers in industry, transport and maintenance, eg. council workers. At the beginning of the period under examination and particularly prior to this, many workers were migratory seasonal workers coming from Hesse, East Prussia, Silesia and Vogtland/Erzgebirge, but also from Poland, Italy and Austria. During the war periods of course, there were also foreign workers residing in Remscheid who were not restricted in their movements as were prisoners of war. Migratory workers were either housed in barracks or else had lodgings in private families as Schlaf- or Kostgänger (lodgers).²⁸ The working class was also stratified according to status and earning potential. The upper stratum consisted of master craftsmen - formerly independent artisans - employed in the larger factories as overlookers and controllers, or else merely skilled producers (their loss of independent or semi-independent status was in many cases received as a welcome liberation from the worries and responsibilities connected with their station), skilled metal workers/toolmakers who had served apprenticeships and perhaps also as journeymen, and other skilled workers, employed in other industries, for instance bricklayers and masons. An intermediate position was occupied by semi-skilled workers who were competent in their particular production process without having served the statutory apprenticeship. Hence they did not possess all the skills required in their profession and did not hold the formal qualification. The lowest level was occupied by local unskilled workers in the factories and workshops.

The most subaltern category was that of the untrained seasonal workers employed as carriers on building sites, street cleaners, and refuse collectors etc. Another group of workers, the railway and postal workers, cannot adequately be integrated in the above structure, because of their different status. Technically workers with civil service status, this group occupied a position adjacent to the master craftsmen in the upper stratum of the working class, but with a tendency to transcend more frequently the divide between lower-middle and working class.²⁹

An analysis of the membership/sociology of the working class movement is concerned with that part of the working class which is actively engaged in the attempt to realise the economic, political and social aims of the class. The movement incorporates working class institutions, political parties, trade unions, sports and other recreational clubs and organisations, newspapers and class-conscious individuals. The working class movement is not restricted to the reservoir of the working class, but also draws members from the bourgeoisie. It consists of intellectuals, a cadre of leaders and functionaries and members of all the various institutions. The functions of the intellectuals is to observe and receive impulses from society, and to interpret these in such a way as to give direction to the movement. This can be achieved either directly, by writing books, pamphlets, newspaper articles etc, or else indirectly by creating works of art and literature not merely for the working class, but also for the whole society. The cadre of leaders and functionaries makes up the movement's bureaucracy which above a certain level is professional. The functionaries organise and conduct the business of the movement and take decisions. The members are engaged in implementing decisions taken by the leadership, recruiting new members, agitating, representing the movement externally and defending it.

The Remscheid working class movement consisted above all of

1. the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers employed in the large steel-producing and steel-processing factories like the

Bergische Stahlindustrie (BSI), Richard Lindenberg & Co. (later Deutsche Edelstahlwerke-DEW), Alexanderwerk, Luisenhütte, Mannesmann Motoren- und Röhrenwerke;

2. the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers employed in the many medium and small-sized tool-making factories scattered all over the town;

3. skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers engaged in other industries also represented in Remscheid, of these the building workers were particularly prominent, as were printing workers - if not quantitatively then certainly qualitatively.

In Lennep and Lüttringhausen skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers were also an integral part of the movement, despite the fact that textile workers were not very well organised. However, even in Lennep, where the largest factory was the textile mill Kammgarn-Spinnerei, the local textile workers' role in the movement as a whole was very much a subordinate one to that of metal and building workers;

4. railway, postal, gas and electricity workers of all grades and skill, although for reasons already stated above, these workers did not tend to excel in the workers movement;

5. a number of white-collar employees (Angestellte). Marx predicted that the majority of these would side with the working class movement in the class struggle as society moved increasingly towards polarisation. This clearly did not happen in Remscheid during the period in question. Nevertheless the local movement was supported by some white-collar employees. During economic crises, there appears to have been an increase in white-collar membership of the movement, but it was by no means a massive shift of allegiance.

A marked characteristic of the Remscheid workers' movement was the extremely tightly-knit community spirit which was particularly evident in the working class districts of, inter alia: Honsberg, Laspert, Neuenhaus, Bliedinghausen, Rosenhügel.

The idea of conducting a detailed investigation into the Remscheid workers' movement ensued from a short dissertation written in the course of my studies at the University of East Anglia. The dissertation which was written in German during my 'year abroad', was an analysis of Reichstag election results in Remscheid and the rest of the country during the Weimar Republic. Much of the groundwork for that study could not be fully exploited in an essay of such restricted size, and furthermore it could not attempt to answer most of the interesting questions during the initial research. I therefore returned to the town to extend my research for the purpose of this dissertation. I have lived in Remscheid for the best part of 13 years, and during that time have tried to immerse myself as much as possible in the community's customs, traditions and values, in an effort to gain a better understanding of the historical development of the town and its people during the last hundred years.

Remscheid, a relatively young town not very well known to foreigners unless they happen to be connected with either the machine-tool or ice-skates industries has tended to live socially and politically in the shadow of its neighbours Solingen and Wuppertal. Remscheid had by the turn of the century long been established as the world's largest supplier of ice-skates, and by the end of the first decade of this century had become the centre of Germany's machine-tool industry. The town had a long radical socialist tradition which during the Weimar Republic manifested itself in repeated electoral victories for the KPD. This fact and the crushing defeat inflicted on the Kappist Freikorps forces in March 1920³⁰, an event commemorated in a version of the Leuna-Lied "Bei Remscheid sind viele Kommunisten gefallen",³¹ earned Remscheid the title of 'Bergisch Moskau'.³²

Despite its remarkable strength and achievements the local working class movement had, until the appearance of Erhard Lucas' book, received scant notice, usually being mentioned as an adjunct to the Solingen workers' movement. In reality, there can have been few local movements which made more important contributions to the German workers' movement during the period covered by this study

than the one in Remscheid. On occasions its impact on the national level was considerable, and the movement either produced or absorbed a number of outstanding leaders whose influence was substantial on the national scale. It therefore seemed appropriate to attempt to redress the balance and undertake an examination of the Remscheid workers' movement, to try to explain the local radical socialist tradition and to trace its development through a stormy period of German history to its decline after a brief revival in the years following the end of the Second World War.

3. Sources and Structure.

The principal sources on which this dissertation is based are: official files, newspapers and interviews. In addition several other materials were consulted according to availability, these included address books from Remscheid and Lennep, Festschriften for important anniversaries, a register of all manufacturing companies in Remscheid, Lennep and Lüttringhausen, compiled in 1935, and a record of war production and employment for 1939-1945 for Remscheid industry. Furthermore a number of documents and photographs, made available by interviewees and other interested parties, were also used in the course of this study.

Research was carried out in the Stadtarchiv Remscheid, the Stadtarchiv Solingen, Landeshauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf and the Berlin Document Centre.

The dissertation is comprised of six chapters. Chapter I deals with the workers' movement during the First World War and traces the rise of class conflict within Remscheid society. Chapter II is concerned with the revolutionary period from 1918 to the defeat of the workers' movement in 1923. This chapter pays particular attention to the power struggle in the town after the end of the war. Chapter III gives a survey of the local workers' movement during the Weimar Republic. Chapter IV traces the development of the extreme right in Remscheid and contains a detailed analysis of NSDAP and SA membership prior to 1933. Chapter V is concerned with class conflict during the crisis period 1930 to 1933 and chapter VI deals above all with the Gleichschaltung, the SA's campaign of terror and working class resistance to the Nazis.

B. Historical Background.

1. Geographical Situation.

The town of Remscheid is situated in the northern part of the Bergische Land, in the rectangle bounded on three sides, West, North and East, by the Wupper river as it flows towards the Rhine. It lies almost equidistant between Wuppertal in the North and Solingen to the West, approximately 15 kilometres from Wuppertal and ten kilometres from Solingen. The original settlement was erected on the Holscheidsberg and today still forms the nucleus of the modern town. The area over which the town now sprawls, is criss-crossed by a considerable number of deep valleys and dells etched by streams which drain the formerly densely wooded hills. The Bergische hills which run from West to East reaching an altitude of 400 metres (Remscheid 378 metres) are the highest between this point and the coast. This phenomenon accounts for the notoriously high level of precipitation which makes Remscheid one of the wettest parts of Western Europe.³³

In earlier times it was the correlation of an abundant supply of iron ore, wood, and water power which predetermined the course of local industry and with this the venue of the original settlement. One other factor - the main trading route connecting Cologne with the Hansa-town of Lübeck on the Baltic traversed the region, running through Lennep and elevating this town to a position of dominance - was also important for the development of Remscheid's iron and tool industry.³⁴ Markets and fairs held at Lennep and other towns along the trading route became important outlets for Remscheid products, which by the 14th century were also finding their way overseas.³⁵ The mining of iron ore eventually became uneconomic, so that the mineral thenceforth had to be imported from other areas. Local craftsmen gradually began to concentrate on iron-, and later steel-processing, rather than iron- and steel-producing.

From the late Middle Ages the most important articles produced in

and around Remscheid were agricultural implements, eg. scythes and sickles and weapons like swords, halberds and knives.³⁶ In the 18th and 19th century the emphasis changed gradually towards work tools, eg. files, drilling tools, saws, pliers, etc., as well as fashionable articles for household use like waffle-irons and coffee grinders.³⁷ In Lennep, Lüttringhausen and towns along the Wupper to the East of Remscheid (as in Barmen and Elberfeld) it was the textile industry which predominated, and began to flourish in the first quarter of the 18th century.

In 1806 Remscheid and the Duchy of Berg passed under French administration and local industry suffered a sharp and bitter decline, as a result of the Continental Blockade of Britain, and the erection of tariffs along the Rhine by newly annexed territories which feared the economic power of the region.³⁸ However, French reforms swept away the feudal system and unshackled the economy, thus aiding the development of local capitalism. The period of French administration also marked the beginning of the ascendancy of Remscheid over Lennep. By the middle of the 19th century, the production of files and other work-tools had already been transferred to factories from the workshops of independent and semi-independent craftsmen. Some file-makers persistently clung to their traditional way of life into the 20th century, but faced with the better organisation and cheaper production of their competitors, theirs was a continuously uphill struggle for survival. On the other hand ribbon-making, centred in Lüttringhausen and Ronsdorf, began to thrive mainly as a cottage industry. This form of organisation was retained successfully for the rest of the century into the next.³⁹

2. The Industrial Structure of Remscheid.

As revealed in table 1, Remscheid industry by the second half of the 19th century was unequivocally dominated by iron- and steel-processing (tool-making), iron- and steel-producing and

machine construction. These three branches together accounted for around 72 % of all the industrial establishments operating in the town in 1913, and for 90 % of the total industrial workforce. Of the three main branches of the iron and steel industry, it was the iron- and steel-processing (tool-making) which was easily the most prominent in Remscheid with 573 of the iron and steel industry's total of 600 factories and workshops. However, in terms of workers, the eight establishments engaged in steel-producing as well as steel-processing in 1913, accounted for a quarter of the iron and steel industry's total.

An idea of the structure of Remscheid's iron and steel industry can be obtained from table 2 which demonstrates the development of the industry between 1900 and 1928 in terms of size, and numbers of workers employed in the various categories of establishments. The category with the greatest number of establishments was the workshop with between one and five workers, which with 565 made up 70 % of the industry's enterprises, employing however only 13 % of its workforce. At the other end of the scale were the four factories in the category employing over 200 workers with a total of 3.126 or 31 % of the industry's total workforce. The table shows a clear trend towards larger factories during the period between 1900 and 1928, but also testifies to the resilience of the small workshops employing fewer than ten workers.⁴⁰

The town's growth was a direct result of industrialisation. Whereas Remscheid had for centuries slumbered in the shadow of the walled market town of Lennep, it began its ascendancy with the introduction of steam locomotion both in the factories and as a means of transport. The advent of steam created two necessary preconditions for industrial development in that it encouraged the concentration of production in larger units, thus regulating the organisation more efficiently, and it made the town more accessible by facilitating the supply of raw materials from other areas, and the export of finished goods by railway. The construction of a rail link with Elberfeld was completed in 1868, and this factor more than any other was responsible for the acceleration of change in the for-

tunes of the town. Railway engines facilitated the supply of raw materials required for Remscheid factories, because they were better suited to overcome the difficult terrain. Prior to this date, iron ore and coal had been transported by horse and cart at a notoriously slow pace, with irksome irregularity and at prohibitive costs.⁴¹ The railway also doubtlessly aided local industry by conveying workers from other more distant areas to swell the ranks of those coming from the immediate hinterland to work in the factories. The rail network was extended in 1876 with the construction of the line from Lennep to Wermelskirchen and Hückeswagen; and a link with Cologne was established five years later by the continuation of this line via Opladen. A branch line from Remscheid to Hasten was opened in 1884 and the town's railway network was finally completed by the construction of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Brücke spanning the deep Wupper valley at Müngsten for an extension of the line to Solingen, thus making the connection with Düsseldorf and Cologne.

3. The Remscheid Working Class and its Institutions.

Table 3 showing the demographic development of Remscheid in the second half of the 19th century and the first decade of this, pinpoints the apogee of immigration during the years 1895 to 1900, when around 50 % of the total increase in population was due to the attraction of new workers from other areas. Table 4 shows that the substantial influx of labour also initiated a sizable increase in births in the ten years from 1895 to 1905. In contrast however to the last five years of the 19th century, immigration dropped abruptly, with the result that over 93 % of Remscheid's increase in population from 1900 to 1905 was attributable to a high birth rate, a fact which reflects the apparent readiness of newcomers to have children once the uncertain transition from the declining standards of life in the country to the seemingly improved prospects of urban existence had been effected.⁴² By recourse to tables relating

to the age structure and the ratio of men to women, Lucas demonstrates a relatively high percentage of married couples and relatively few single men amongst the immigrants in Remscheid between the ages of 25 and 40 years.⁴³ The principal reservoirs from which local industry drew its manpower were above all the Bergische Land and the areas mentioned above. The figures for religious denomination supplied in table 3 suggest both a higher incidence of catholic immigration (confirmed by the known catchment areas), and as might be expected, a higher birth-rate amongst these people. The ratio of Protestants to Catholics fell from ca. 7:1 in 1890 to ca. 5:1 in 1905, with the latter more than doubling their number in the same period. Other Christian denominations were weakly represented in Remscheid, as were Jews. Remscheid also attracted relatively few Poles as most Polish immigrants made for the coal mines of the Ruhr.⁴⁴

The rapid rise in Remscheid's population towards the end of the 19th century led to an acute accommodation problem which was to remain a constant feature for the greater part of the period under examination, despite the fact that ever more traditional Bergische slate-covered houses were being demolished to make way for the grey and dreary apartment blocks which were being erected throughout Germany's industrial towns and cities at this time. The concentration of large numbers of people in Mietskasernen was an example of the poor quality of life experienced by workers in industrial towns all over Germany in the last two decades of the 19th century. A further manifestation of this is the fall in the number of working class house owners and sitting tenants between 1890 and 1905 in Remscheid, and the increase in the number of lodgers.⁴⁵ The latter were usually single occupants of a room or more likely part of a room, ie. a bed, in a private house. The rooms were only used at night to sleep in, as the Schlafganger (lodger) was generally at work for most of the day. Another variation of this relationship, common in Remscheid, was the Kostganger who in addition to his bed also received breakfast (consisting of bread and margarine, and coffee) and a warm meal in the evening (very often soup or perhaps

potato cakes or else jacket potatoes and quark or herrings). Before the advent of works canteens (introduced during the 1914/18 War), the Kostgänger also took bread and soup to work in a container known locally as 'Elberfeld 'n Barmen'⁴⁶. During the first decade of this century the Kostgänger in Remscheid paid a rent of somewhere in the region of 12 marks a month, a sum which was considered rather unreasonable depending on the commonly poor board and lodgings offered. Schlaf- and Kostgänger were frequently married men engaged in seasonal employment, or else men endeavouring to establish themselves before sending for their families to join them. The majority, however, were probably young and single men who spent a considerable part of their lives, between the age of 14 and the time when they married, in this type of accommodation. Conditions in such houses varied, yet it was generally agreed that they tended to be unsatisfactory.⁴⁷ The houses were small and families large, even without the presence of Schlaf- and Kostgänger; the latter were frequently confined to an attic room which they shared with others, a practice which was widely condemned as a regrettable but necessary evil, owing to the chronic shortage of good housing. These conditions proved to be the source of much quarrelling and bickering, between lodgers and landlord and between lodgers themselves.

A significant consequence of poor and inadequate housing was the constant stream of criticism of the local authority's building programmes by the workers' political parties. The abject conditions in which many working-class families were compelled to live, provided ample propaganda material against a system which required manual labour, but was at best turgid, when it came to financing the construction of suitable dwellings. The failure to provide the required number of flats and to renovate other buildings was a powerful weapon in the hands of socialist and communist politicians. Left to themselves, perhaps many workers would have borne their misery stoically, but the working-class movement, always on the look-out for opportunities to attack, did not fail to exploit this serious lack.

Abuses of the unwritten contract between landlord and tenant were commonplace, with the former concerned about punctual payment, noise and adherence to rules of the house, and the latter criticizing the quality of food, the shabbiness of bedclothes, insufficient cleanliness and cramped conditions. It is difficult to comment on whether lodgers received fair treatment and value for money. Often the harassed landlady was not able to cope with her responsibilities, and it was not unknown for single lodgers to be drawn into family quarrels and problems, being apprized of intimate details of family relationships and difficulties in the process.⁴⁸ Insalubrious conditions and the lack of privacy were arguably the two most prosilient evils of this kind of tenancy and, together with the eternal search for a cheaper arrangement, were undoubtedly the reasons for the rapid turn-over of lodgers. The Schlaf- and Kostgänger's existence was not usually a happy one, even in clean and orderly houses, owing to the many restrictions. Often his life was downright miserable, brightened only by the knowledge that the season would pass and he would be able to return home again, or else his wife and children would soon be joining him. Young bachelors were most probably doomed to this arrangement until they took a wife and set up their own homes. The desire to escape, the deleterious accompaniments, the lack of privacy, the pilfering, bickering and danger of contagion were doubtless additional incentives for marriage amongst young males cut off from their families in other parts of the Reich, and compelled to suffer this type of accommodation.⁴⁹

Young immigrant girls on the other hand, engaged in some industrial establishments, possibly enjoyed greater security, from a materialistic point of view, than their male counterparts, if they were allocated rooms or beds in a works' hostel like the one provided by the Kammgarn-Spinnerei Johann Wülfing und Sohn in Lennep. Such hostels, however, which had the explicit aim of preserving young people from the evils of Kostgängertum⁵⁰ and the latent profligacy of unprotected domicile, appear to have been exceptions in Remscheid around the turn of the century. Conceived with benign in-

tention, such hostels were nevertheless a mixed blessing. Whilst they unmistakably offered security and the basis for an orderly routine existence, they also reflected the rigidly paternalistic attitude of the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie towards young workers. The register of house rules reads almost like those of penal institutions.⁵¹

The Madchenheim provided by the Wülfing mill accommodated 126 young women around 1895, in rooms/dormitories containing between three and eight beds. The hostel's capacity was later extended to furnish places for a further 48 girls in eight rooms. The inmates of this home were subject to constant supervision by hired staff charged not merely with the material well-being of their wards, but also and perhaps more importantly, with their moral welfare. The omnipresent hand of authority most likely contributed considerably to ensuring a disciplined and pliant workforce and tended to obviate the problem of worker solidarity which was already prevalent in the Remscheid iron and steel industry. Indeed, the Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband (DMV) and its local antecedent, the Feilenhauer-verein urged their members to eschew such aid and facilities offered on behalf of the industrialists, for the precise reason that acceptance would render them more dependent and less flexible.⁵² In the local textile industry there was no equivalent attempt by the workers to frustrate the recondite motives of the employers. Instead, by accepting extra facilities provided by the employer, the Kammgarn employees allowed themselves to be bound ever more inextricably to the company by feelings of implicit moral obligation, fear of ejection from a company-owned flat or of being deprived of the use of the accompanying allotment, and a growing sense of identity with the company.

Apart from the already mentioned hostel, works flats and allotments, the Kammgarn-Spinnerei Johann Wülfing & Sohn provided a whole range of facilities which possibly helped to enhance worker identity with the firm. These facilities included: a grocery store operating on a non-profit basis,⁵³ a library with a stock of 552 volumes, a social club with a billiard table, wash-houses and

baths on the workers' estate, baths on the works premises, a school for young children, sewing, darning and mending classes, as well as domestic science and first aid courses in the evenings, a compulsory sickness benefit scheme, a voluntary fire service and a hostel for young men, accommodating 43. Whereas it has been suggested that the practice of Kostgangertum in some cases actually furthered working class solidarity,⁵⁴ residence in a works hostel was perhaps more likely to encourage petty rivalries and jealousies, servility in the face of authority and dishonesty as a consequence of the fear of harsh punishment.

In the hope of alleviating the housing problem, a number of wealthy local industrialists formed a building society called the Gemeinnütziger Bauverein,⁵⁵ to help workers to acquire their own small flats or at least to provide these for rent. In a modest building programme the building society erected houses containing smaller units which workers could afford. Its main activity centred on Honsberg which over the next quarter of a century was gradually transformed from an old traditional settlement into a working-class estate comprising numerous austere edifices, the likes of which were present in all the industrial centres of Germany during the last ten years of the 19th century and the first 25 years of this. The Gemeinnütziger Bauverein, which also participated in joint ventures with the local authorities, provided a model which was later imitated by other building societies in Remscheid and surrounding towns.

Some of the larger companies like the BSI and Mannesmann Motoren- und Röhrenwerke also owned houses containing flats which were let to their employees.⁵⁶ These however were relatively few in number and made little impression on the calamitous shortage of suitable accommodation, which proved to be ^{the} cause of the departure of a number of workers and their families for other towns offering both jobs and flats.⁵⁷ The shortage of accommodation was a constant feature of Remscheid's development throughout the period in question. Indeed, it would be fair to suggest that the problem was not solved until well after the Second World War, although the effects

of the bombing raids were primarily responsible for the acute post-war shortage. An accommodation census held in May 1918 revealed a total of 13,718 occupied flats/dwellings for a total population of 67,393.⁵⁸ The size of the dwellings in the town ranged from one room to houses of eleven rooms and more. Well over half the dwellings (7,710) contained between one and three rooms with the most popular category being that of two rooms and a kitchen. With an average of 4.9 persons per flat/dwelling and the knowledge that numerous manufacturing families occupied large houses whilst over half of the occupied dwellings in Remscheid contained only three rooms and less, it is evident that there was widespread overcrowding.

The calamitous housing situation is, however, better illustrated by the results of an official survey made in 1911. 637 dwellings were inspected, and it was ascertained that excluding Kostganger, there was an average of 2.0 people per bed.⁵⁹

If interior living conditions of the workers were on the whole unsatisfactory, the decentralised nature of the town incorporating many scattered hamlets, ensured a much more tolerable environment than in most other industrial centres. Whilst areas like Honsberg, Kremenholz, Laspert, Rosenhügel and Bliedinghausen were gradually taking on the appearance of typical contemporary working-class colonies (the indigenous slate-covered Bergische Haus still persisted however, to dispel the danger of completely dreary uniformity), they were nevertheless separated by open fields and wooded slopes. A ten or fifteen-minute walk in almost any direction from the town centre would ensure a relatively secluded spot for those wishing to escape from the noise and fumes of a busy industrial community.

The working class estates, which were gradually taking shape around the turn of the century, developed a close-knit community spirit of a kind more usually associated with small villages than urban manufacturing centres. Areas like Honsberg provided at least a semblance of semi-autonomy, a self-contained community of several hundred people, still small enough to retain a sense of familiarity

and identity, yet large enough to incorporate multifarious facilities supporting an alternative system, which existed adjacent to, but also in opposition to, the ruling bourgeois culture. The harsh repression of Social Democracy, which attained new heights during the period of the Sozialistengesetze, played a significant part in moulding together a working class which created its own social infra-structure based on class solidarity and discipline. The exclusion of Social Democrats from participation in many aspects of political life, which persisted long after the Anti-Socialist Laws had lapsed, served if anything to strengthen the workers' endeavour to overthrow the capitalist system. The solidarity therefore which was manifested inwardly in a community like Honsberg, was balanced by suspicion and enmity displayed towards the outside. This kind of solidarity revealed itself whenever representatives of authority ventured into territory which to all intents and purposes was regarded by the residents as theirs. The intrusion of authority, be it in the form of police officers making enquiries, or bailiffs reclaiming furniture or appliances in lieu of unpaid debts, or else landlords assisted by police in enforcing evictions, was always likely to generate hostile feelings which, depending on the momentary political situation, might erupt into riots. At times these required the dispatch of reinforcements to rescue beleaguered companions being pelted with flower pots, refuse and other objects hurled from upstairs windows. As we shall see later, during the last phase of the Weimar Republic the police were lured into ambushes in Honsberg and more than once were warned to keep out on pain of death. The pattern of skirmishes with authority earned Honsberg and other working-class districts a reputation of some notoriety, which in turn served to establish a grudging respect on the part of the police and local authorities and a sense of security on the part of residents hostile to officialdom.

Working-class districts like Honsberg were equipped with their own schools, shops and public houses. Life was noisy and intimate owing above all to the many children and the close proximity of neigh-

bours. Overcrowded houses and busy narrow streets, which served the children instead of playgrounds, dominated the everyday scene. In the summer months in particular much time was spent out of doors, standing on street corners or sitting on doorsteps watching the comings and goings. Before the appearance of the motor car, the only traffic passing through the narrow streets were hand-carts and bogies (Bollerwagen) and carts drawn by horses. After 1893 tram cars referred to as the 'Lektrische' ran through Remscheid, a novelty seen only in one other town in the German Reich prior to that date.⁶⁰

Two institutions vied for the position of major communication centres in working-class districts. These were the public house and the corner shop, 'Schmerwenkel'⁶¹. The latter were mostly small overcrowded shops, sometimes converted living rooms, which tended to stock almost everything from groceries to kitchen utensils and clothing. If the pub was the domain of the working man, the corner shop was equally that of his wife. Apart from the shop's ostensible function of retail outlet, it served just as importantly as an exchange for local gossip and news, with the owner being one of the best informed individuals in the whole area, at least as far as small-talk was concerned.

The public house was the centre of both organised and unorganised social life in working-class districts, as it provided facilities for companionship, meetings, sporting activities, social games and the consumption of alcoholic beverages in warm and pleasantly familiar surroundings. For unorganised entertainment the public house offered the customer a place to exchange views with friends and acquaintances. In many pubs newspapers were provided for the use of customers, and most working-class public houses had Skat cards and dice for those wishing to use them. Skittle alleys were still a rarity in public houses, with only a few of the larger establishments being in a position to afford them. Board games like dominoes and chess were also played in some pubs.

If the public house was the centre of unorganised social life, it became - more importantly for the working-class movement - the

meeting place for the majority of social and political clubs, particularly after the lapse of the Anti-Socialist-Laws in 1890. During the twelve years when the Social Democratic Party was prohibited, members had been compelled to seek other venues for their meetings, frequently in private flats and houses, or else they quite commonly founded ostensibly non-political clubs (Tarnvereine) in the hope of outwitting the authorities and thus avoiding observation. Towards the end of the 1880s a whole spate of such clubs with dubious names and aims was founded in Remscheid, although few of these managed to escape the notice of the police. Between 1884 and 1900⁶², for example, there was a total of 50 recreational clubs, 25 of them dedicated to smoking and conversation. It is probable that many such clubs genuinely pursued their stated intention of providing a suitable meeting place where members could relax and enjoy a quiet smoke. A sizeable number however were secret Social Democratic organisations like the 'Raucherclub Einigkeit' at Siepen, which was founded in 1889 and had 29 members. Despite great caution this club was not able to evade the careful scrutiny of police spies. The same fate befell the 'Raucherclub Gute Hoffnung' of Heidhof, which was founded in 1890 and had 15 members. The well-informed police noted that the club's membership consisted almost exclusively of known Social Democrats. The Gesellschaft Thalia founded in 1886 existed ostensibly as a chess, domino and games club, but as over half of its members were Social Democrats, it was infiltrated by police spies and very soon ceased its activities. Many clubs of this kind put in only transient appearances before falling victim to police vigilance. Probably the two largest and most important Tarnvereine (camouflaged organisations) in Remscheid during this period were the Leservereine (reading circles) Hasten and Reinshagen. In 1886 these two clubs had together 105⁶³ members and virtually represented the aims of the party, organising and conducting elections in the absence of the official SPD and inviting speakers to illegal political meetings. Such gatherings were occasionally held in the open air on the town boundary. In the event of an unexpected visitation by the police, the participants

would cross over the boundary out of reach of local police jurisdiction.⁶⁴ The SPD's presence was also maintained in the various Fachvereine (craftsmen's clubs) like the Metallarbeiterverein (metal workers' club) and the Feilenhauerverein (file-makers' club), the latter were generally recognised as being the most militant workers in the area. It is also possible that some of the many Brieftauben- and Tierzuchtvereine (pigeon fanciers and livestock breeding clubs) were merely facades for the local SPD, but there appears to be no conclusive evidence to support this supposition. However, it is known that Social Democrats became members of bourgeois clubs and organisations in order to gain respectability by displaying their patriotism. Some Socialists were even to be found in the ranks of the belligerently anti-socialist Kriegervereine (ex-Servicemen's associations). At least three of these, the Morsbacher Landwehrverein, the Landwehrverein "Mit Gott für König und Vaterland" and the Landwehrverein Deutscher Kaiser unwittingly provided at least a temporary refuge for some SPD members. It is quite likely that some followers of the SPD pursued legitimate aims in bourgeois clubs, especially if they had already been members prior to the Anti-Socialist-Laws. It may also be assumed that they attempted to counter propaganda and opinions hostile to the SPD within their respective organisations.

Despite their repression, the authorities were unable to destroy the local party group, which needed to be particularly inventive in order to remain one step ahead of the police. It is evident that even at the risk of losing their licences some publicans were willing to accommodate illegal Social Democratic meetings when necessary. Such landlords were later rewarded by the continuous patronage of workers' clubs and organisations affiliated to the Social Democratic Party (SPD). From time to time the workers' political parties (Social Democratic Party - SPD -, Independent Social Democratic Party - USPD-, and the German Communist Party - KPD -) circulated their affiliated clubs and organisations with lists of approved public houses.⁶⁵ Landlords whose establishments were situated in predominantly working-class districts found themselves

placed in a dilemma by the introduction of the Anti-Socialist Laws. On the one hand they faced ruin if convicted of knowingly harbouring a proscribed organisation, on the other they could not easily ignore the fact that the majority of their clientele were local working-class residents, many of whom supported, or sympathised with, the SPD, and expected some kind of collusion, at least to the point of feigning ignorance of the real identity of the organisation in question.

The two decades following the lapse of the Anti-Socialist-Laws witnessed an energetic organisation and development of club life within the local working-class movement. The upsurge, which was encouraged by the fall of repressive legislation, coincided with the peak years of immigration. The Social Democratic party and its many affiliated organisations, which had emerged from the twelve-year ban unbroken, if not unscathed, were now able to operate legally, although the continued circulation of black lists⁶⁶ between the authorities and employers still inhibited many working-class sympathisers. A wide range of workers' clubs and societies were founded during these years, catering for almost every conceivable taste. Apart from following the substantive aims of the respective organisations, it was the intention of the working-class movement to create favourable conditions within the clubs and societies, in order to promote class consciousness. Several Arbeitergesangvereine (workers' choral societies) were founded during the last decade of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th. The male-voice choir had long been established in the Bergische Land as a traditional form of cultural expression. The local working-class movement recognised the importance of organising workers' choirs and employing these as representatives at concerts, festivals, demonstrations and funerals. Most districts had their own choirs and these were all later united under the umbrella organisation Arbeiter-Sanger-Kartell Remscheid. Some choirs like the Arbeitergesangverein "Einigkeit" in Reinshagen, founded in 1895, had an eminently respectable number of active singers, in this case 50, as well as 60 passive members.⁶⁷ Some of the workers' choirs reflected in

their names the hopes of the working class for a better future, like the "Morgenrot" (red dawn) of Großberghausen or the "Vorwärts" (onward) of Bliedinghausen. A female choir which was also a member of the Deutscher Arbeiter-Sängerbund was merely called "Zukunft" (future). Other choirs stressed their class solidarity and their determination to resist oppression. Names like "Freie Sanger" (free singers), "Freie Liederhalle" (free hall of song), "Proletaria" and "Gesellschaft Fidelio" (the last-named was a mixed choir founded in 1903) are examples of these. There were however many choirs with neutral names like "Sängerchor" of Stachelhausen, "Niegedacht", the "Allgemeiner Arbeiter Gesangverein" of Hasten, the "Liederkranz" of Kremenholz, and the "Frischauf" of Laspert. Some of these choirs may have also catered for women and children. A children's choir was, however, constituted on the initiative of SPD councillor Wilhelm Koch, a few years before the war. Whilst the workers' choirs naturally devoted much attention to the repertoire of Kampflieder and songs which described working and living conditions, they were by no means restricted to these, and also included operatic works in their concert programmes.

The local working class movement had other musical societies and clubs besides choirs. In 1910, a Zitherverein (zither club) was founded, and shortly afterwards a mandolin orchestra. The major problem for musical societies was the purchase of sufficient numbers of instruments. Before the 1914/18 War, the DMV (Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband) introduced interest free loans to interested members to enable them to acquire their own instruments. A modest amount was then paid weekly until the debt was settled.⁶⁸ The financing of working men's clubs and societies on the whole placed them in a disadvantageous position in comparison with their frequently more prosperous bourgeois counterparts, which existed collaterally in the same districts. Bourgeois clubs were often in a position to offer superior facilities for their members, and it is clear that they were able to tempt some workers into their ranks, but as the workers' movement gained momentum and also began to achieve success in these fields, the drain of talent diminished.

Before the war there were at least three local amateur theatrical groups which were members of the Deutscher Arbeiter-Theaterbund (German workers' theatrical society), these were: the "Freie Volksbühne"⁶⁹, the Arbeiter-Theaterverein "Bruderkette" of Hasten⁷⁰ and the "Frohsinn" of Goldenberg. These presented drama evenings and occasionally concert evenings in conjunction with various choirs and musical societies. On such occasions the theatrical groups presented one-act plays and short sketches.

For those workers interested in breeding livestock there were a number of prospects within the local working-class movement, although it is not clear whether this field was dominated by the working class in Remscheid. Between 1881 and 1910 there was a total of 20 new clubs founded for breeding and racing pigeons. In 1910 the pigeon fanciers had a total of 225 members and 5.800 birds.⁷¹ The popularity of this sport however did not transcend the war, which brought about an abrupt end with the confiscation of all racing pigeons on account of the security risk.

There were also a number of Kaninchenzuchtvereine (rabbit breeding clubs)⁷² with headquarters in working-class districts of the town, and a Ziegenzuchtverein (goat breeding club)⁷³ founded in 1894 which after the war boasted a total membership of 600, in three separate sections. Although such clubs were intent on breeding for aesthetic reasons, it is likely that some of their animals were designated for the cooking pot to supplement family rations. The number of workers keeping goats almost certainly increased during and after the war, when it became evident that these animals were a valuable asset considering the frequent milk shortages. The keeping of livestock was a long-established tradition in the Bergische Land reaching back to the Middle Ages and beyond, when crop farming was more or less abandoned on account of the unpropitious climate. The breeding of poultry was widespread in the area, with hens, ducks and geese being an almost compulsory part of the scene around the Kotten (small water-powered mills) scattered amongst the valleys and dells. For workers living in working-class districts, the only opportunity for keeping poultry was by renting an allot-

ment either from the local authorities, their employers or from private owners. Workers' Schrebergartenvereine (allotment clubs) do not appear to have made much impact until after the war, during the course of which the values of small allotments as a source of extra rations was amply demonstrated. After 1918 there were allotment clubs in: Blidinghausen, Struck, Neuenkamp, Hohenhagen, Laspert, Hölterfeld, Vieringhausen and Schüttendelle.⁷⁴ For those fortunate enough to acquire an allotment, there were several important advantages. An allotment enabled the family to fortify and enrich its diet by providing fresh vegetables, particularly potatoes, carrots, Kohlrabi, turnips, cabbage and salsify, which grow well in this area. Furthermore the family might also keep livestock, thus availing themselves^{of} milk and eggs on a regular basis. The allotment supplied outdoor exercise and a place to celebrate special occasions or else meet friends on long summer evenings. Above all an allotment provided a refuge from the problems of work and family, a place to which one could retreat in order to escape the crowded and noisy atmosphere of the working-class estates. The yearning for the peace and tranquillity of the countryside and the encounter with unspoiled nature far away from the smoking chimneys, was a powerful unifying force particularly amongst the youth of the pre-war era. Various movements like the "Naturfreunde" were still in their infancy⁷⁵ by the turn of the century. Spontaneous and semi-organised groups from all social classes and backgrounds headed for the countryside on weekends and public holidays. In Remscheid working-class youth was organised in the Freie Arbeiter Jugend which was officially founded in 1909.⁷⁶ Prior to this date local working-class youth most likely undertook hikes on an unorganised basis, but nevertheless with the awareness that they did not belong to bourgeois youth groups. The working-class youth organisation was active in six main areas: education, music, hiking, sports, trade union and party. Hiking excursions were designed to attract new members and infuse these with socialist values and tradition, if these were not already supplied in the home environment. A constant priority of all affiliated organisations to the

working-class movement was to prevent working-class youth from joining bourgeois groups. The socialist youth organisation became a vital link in the chain of working-class organisations, and in Remscheid boasted a considerable membership. It provided a convenient opportunity for meeting persons of the same age group and of the opposite sex in a society which was intent on separating them. Countless marriages ensued from friendships formed in the youth movement.⁷⁷ The Freie Arbeiter Jugend of Remscheid organised hikes to the Siebengebirge, the Eifel and Sauerland,⁷⁸ and it was on the latter outing in 1913 that they met up with several members of the "Naturfreunde" from Cologne. The contact was repeated at Müngsten later that year, and it was decided to found a local group of this organisation. The resonance was so strong that the following year Remscheid was chosen as the venue of the annual regional meeting (Gautag). Despite police repression⁷⁹ the meeting was an overwhelming success and the local movement was able to attract new members. The "Naturfreunde" - although open to all corners - established a close link with, and became one of the supporting pillars of, the working class movement in Remscheid, surviving to the present day, and thus constituting an important element of continuity throughout and beyond the period covered by this study. The "Naturfreunde" did not content themselves merely with hiking, after the war they also organised folk dance music groups, a natural history society, as well as a photographic society and a section catering for winter sports enthusiasts.⁸⁰ The "Naturfreunde" also attracted cyclists of all ages.⁸¹ Although the local terrain is not particularly conducive to cycling, the working-class movement constantly tried to accommodate bike enthusiasts. In Remscheid there were two workers' cycling clubs, both founded in 1898. The Arbeiter-Radfahrer-Bund "Solidarität"⁸² was the more durable, existing until the Nazi seizure of power in 1933. The Arbeiter-Radfahrer-Verein "Einigkeit"⁸³ did not survive long, most likely being absorbed either by the "Solidarität" or the "Naturfreunde".

Gymnastics and swimming were two sports which were later to capture the imagination of the workers. In the pre-war era, however, neither appears to have been well organised at the local level in Remscheid. The network of working-class organisations also extended to more practical areas than those mentioned so far, and three of these ventures launched during the first decade of the twentieth century were destined to play a major integrating role in the development of the local movement. These were: the Konsumgenossenschaft (cooperative society) "Einigkeit", founded in 1902, the local SPD newspaper "Remscheider Arbeiter Zeitung" (later "Bergische Volksstimme"), founded in 1904, and the Volkshaus founded in 1910.⁸⁴ The Konsumgenossenschaft's contribution to the local workers' movement was considerable in that it not only supplied workers and their families with groceries at equitable prices but also became an extraordinarily successful recruiting agency for the workers' cause by introducing individuals to the political ideals of the SPD. In this way the movement gained the support of some elements, who might otherwise have remained out of reach. On the other hand, the already politically aware would not consider making their purchase anywhere else other than at the Konsum (coop). The political aspects of shopping were grasped very early in Remscheid.⁸⁵ The Konsum arranged the catering at all galas and other functions held by the workers' movement, and gained valuable experience in buying and processing in bulk. This experience, as we shall see in the next chapter, was to benefit all the inhabitants of Remscheid on the outbreak of war in 1914, irrespective of their political convictions.

Regarding the political and trade union development of the local workers' movement down to 1914, one can already discern a radical tradition long before the turn of the century. As Lucas rightly indicates, the radicalism evident in Remscheid is that of the master craftsman, already declassé by mid-century, initially compelled to produce his goods on commission, although still as an independent artisan, but later being forced to renounce his independent status and seek employment in the factory. Remscheid workers first rebelled in 1848 when they destroyed a factory at Burg on the Wupper

which was producing cheap cutlery and scissors of poor quality.⁸⁶ From this time onwards the struggle to retain independent or at least semi-independent status demanded the introduction of a longer working day for smaller master craftsmen, their journeymen and apprentices, in order to compensate for lower prices by increased production. In such establishments a 16-hour day and six-day week were no exception. Lucas tells us that journeymen and apprentices were prepared to share this burden only as long as there was still any hope of qualifying in their trade and founding their own businesses. Not only were employees in small establishments required to work longer hours, but also their wages were less than those paid to factory workers. Furthermore the constant presence of the owner or members of his family exerted considerable pressure on these workers and afforded them little scope for temporary relief from their tasks, which in any case required a high degree of skill and concentration. As hope of attaining independent status receded, so too did the numbers of journeymen and apprentices seeking employment with small craftsmen. Faced with the fierce competition from the thriving factories, plagued by an eternal shortage of capital to finance the acquisition of machinery, and unable to attract workers into their establishments, many independent craftsmen had no other course but to join the influx of immigrants to the factories.⁸⁷ The years of unrewarded struggle and the inevitable elimination under the prevailing circumstances were radicalising factors which affected a large section of skilled craftsmen-cum-factory workers in the Remscheid iron and steel and tool industry. It is likely that the declassé master craftsmen and their families, resentful of a system which had deprived them of their traditional status and way of life, were particularly amenable to socialist ideas and began to organise and agitate for the overthrow of capitalism.

The file-makers were the most radical group of workers in and around Remscheid.⁸⁸ The reason for their radicalism is to be found in their prolonged struggle for independent status against encroaching capitalists, who, during the first half of the 19th

century operated a putting-out system which amounted to severe exploitation. The craftsmen were obliged to deliver the goods themselves to buyers frequently living as far distant as the Sauerland. Such journeys were undertaken on foot, transporting the files on their shoulders in a "Liewermangken" (a basket carried over the shoulder on a stick) supported by a "Dragstock",⁸⁹ and sometimes taking two or three days. On account of their skill, the versatility of their excellent products and the fact that they were able to survive longest as owners of their own means of production, the file-makers came to embody the spirit of the honest industrious workers resisting, not unsuccessfully, the capitalist system. The admiration in which he was held locally, and his experience of fierce exploitation which induced him to organise at an early stage,⁹⁰ elevated the file-maker to an elite-position in the workers' movement. A number of historians⁹¹ have suggested that metal workers were quite docile before the First World War in comparison with the coal miners of the Ruhr. Their findings which may be valid for that region⁹² should, however, be handled carefully, so as to avoid misleading generalisation. Barrington Moore⁹³ and Peter N. Stearn⁹⁴ appear to base their conclusions on the situation in large steel-making plants in the Ruhr, where disunity seems to be quite pronounced owing to compartmentalisation and specialisation, the wide range of pay differentials and the fear of dismissal which was normally accompanied by forfeiture of pension rights and tenancy of company-owned flats. David Crew points to the experience of large factories, but also suggests that solidarity, which is an important prerequisite for a radical movement, was more likely to develop in smaller workshops where workers were better integrated. Crew cites the case of file-makers in a small factory⁹⁵ to illustrate this point.

The situation in Remscheid with its predominance of small factories and workshops was very different; hence incoming workers could be better integrated. The fact that the Remscheid workers' movement was older and therefore more firmly established than its counter-

parts in the Ruhr also accounts in part for the qualitative difference in the radicalism of the workforces. A further significant difference however is to be found in the types of industry: in Remscheid tool-making. This industry requires a highly skilled workforce. Remscheid's toolmakers and metal workers were no exception. They displayed a considerable degree of professional pride and interest⁹⁶ and may be described as an 'occupational community' rather like Crew's coal miners of the Ruhr.⁹⁷

Whatever the real situation in the Ruhr before the First World War regarding the militancy or docility of the metal workers, the latter term can in no way be employed to describe the Remscheid workers. Following the repeal of the Combination Act in 1869,⁹⁸ the Remscheid file-makers fought their first industrial dispute to establish a uniform wage. Three years later they succeeded in forcing a wage increase by taking strike action. Yet a further dispute in the following year, 1873, was answered by a lock-out by the larger factories, whereupon the file-makers went on strike for a period of five months to force the outcome in their favour. In 1887 the Feilenhauer-Innung (file-makers guild) was abandoned in favour of a more modern form. The Feilenhauer-Verein (file-makers club) was founded with a membership of 700 and aimed at the principle of minimum prices to safeguard members and ensure the level of quality. The local employers also soon regarded this arrangement as advantageous and sanctioned its introduction. Furthermore, they agreed to employ or commission only members of the Feilenhauer-Verein, a decision which precipitated an increase in membership. The run of success was halted in 1890, following the organisation of file manufacturers, when the file-makers again tried to gain a wage increase by strike action. The action was unsuccessful and two of the strike leaders, one of them was Max König, later Regierungspräsident in Arnsberg, were exiled from Remscheid. In the same year manufacturers from all branches of the iron, steel and tool-making industry convened to form the Bergischer Fabrikanten-Verein (manufacturers' association) under the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of Reinhard Kotthaus and Moritz Böker respectively. With

Arnold Mannesmann, Oscar Hessenbruch and Emil Spennemann - all representatives of big business - also on the executive committee, it is apparent that policy was determined more by the larger establishments, although small companies were also represented.⁹⁹ The organisation of employers in the Fabrikantenverein may be regarded as a counter-measure to that of the file-makers and marked a turning point in industrial relations in Remscheid when the initiative began to swing back gradually in favour of the manufacturers. In 1903 the local employers extended their organisation, founding the Arbeitgeberverband von Remscheid und Umgebung e.V. (employers association),¹⁰⁰ which had the specific aim of representing the manufacturers in all questions relating to industrial disputes with the workers. Member companies were required to honour the agreement, that in times of strike they would refrain from employing strikers from member factories. The employers' association continued to make ample use of black lists. In 1910 they introduced the Zwangsarbeitsnachweis, a compulsory service record for workers engaged by member companies. The employee was supplied with a work book which was kept in the possession of his employer for the duration of his employment. On termination of employment, the worker was handed the book containing his up-dated record to be presented to his next employer, who could then consult this before making his decision. Employment without a work-book was not allowed, so that in the event of dismissal for reasons of trade union activity or party agitation, the worker was often left with no other choice but to leave Remscheid in search of a job.

The first attempt by Remscheid workers to form a trade union was in 1886¹⁰¹ when they founded a local group of the Hirsch-Dunkerscher Gewerkverein which was not prohibited by the Anti-Socialist Laws.¹⁰² However this organisation was too conciliatory for local workers who in 1891 founded a local branch of the DMV with 89 members. This move led to the disbanding of the Feilenhauerverein the following year. However, disaffected DMV-members later (1896) refounded the local organisation in preference

to the DMV. The quarrel with the DMV was one which remained unresolved throughout this trade union's lifetime. The relationship between the local branch and headquarters was rarely amicable. As we shall see in the next chapter, tension marked the relationship during the war years. In the immediate post-war period the situation deteriorated considerably until it ultimately came to a break, accompanied by ugly scenes and mutual recrimination. Attempts to patch up the quarrel were never really successful and the interim truce was always fragile.

The Feilenhauerverein finally ceased to exist in 1908 when members decided to return to the DMV. In 1906/07 local rasp-makers laid down their tools in support of a wage claim which they were able to force through. The strike lasted five and a half months and involved only 86 workers employed in 32 factories. The rasp-makers were partially successful in that the employers agreed to meet their minimum demand of a 7 1/2 % rise.¹⁰³ Up to the outbreak of war there was only one other strike of note in Remscheid, the great file-makers' strike of 1910/11, when the local file-makers went on strike to secure a piece-work rate for machine-produced files, a minimum hourly rate of 60 pfennigs for machine operators working on a day-labour basis, a reduction in working hours from ten or twelve to nine and a half per day and the introduction of the half-day holiday on Saturdays. The strike lasted six and a half months and was supported at its peak by 1.142 workers in 31 factories. The employers answered the strike with a lock-out which affected around 500 workers and was eagerly supported by the police and law-courts. In all, 90 workers were charged with various offences against § 153 of the Gewerbeordnung (trade regulations act) which carried a prison sentence of up to three months. The strike which earned the approval of the DMV was finally broken by the introduction of black-legs from outside. During the six and a half months, particularly during the winter months, the strikers and their families suffered tremendous hardships and misery. Strike pay, which was 15 marks per week for unmarried workers and 24 marks for married men plus one mark per child, constituted only inadequate

remuneration for lost earnings. In the face of great adversity the strikers showed remarkable courage and determination and thus gained the sympathy and admiration of fellow workers beyond the boundaries of Remscheid. The tactics used by the employers evoked a great deal of acrimony amongst the Remscheid working class, and did much to poison industrial relations locally for a considerable time to come. The great Feilenhauerstreik which ended in defeat for the strikers, became a milestone of the local workers' movement and was imbued with almost legendary qualities over the following decades and beyond. Instead of the calculated intimidatory effect of the introduction of the work-book during the course of the strike, the employers observed the undesirable swelling of local DMV-membership. Even unorganised workers perceived in the introduction of this measure a danger which could only be overcome by organised resistance. At the end of 1910 the local branch of the union numbered 4,199 members, roughly a fifth of the local workforce. The employers and the authorities won a temporary victory in 1910/11, but in so doing unwittingly strengthened the workers' resolve and helped to radicalise them further.

The interest of Remscheid workers for radical socialist ideas has a long tradition reaching back to 1863 and the founding of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein (ADAV). This party which already had considerable support in Remscheid and Ronsdorf put up a candidate for the election to the Constitutional Reichstag of the North German Federation in 1867,¹⁰⁴ and was successful on the second round when Dr. Reincke attracted almost 75 % of all votes. However, this candidate vacated his seat in the following year, thus necessitating a by-election, which was again won by the ADAV candidate Fritsche. The forward march of Social Democracy continued through the 1870s and 1880s until by the end of the period of the Anti-Socialist Laws Remscheid was already regarded as a 'Brutstätte der Umsturzpartei' (a breeding ground for revolutionaries).¹⁰⁵ A local branch of the SPD was eventually founded in 1891, and by 1909 had 1,090 members,¹⁰⁶ and included a women's organisation which was formed in 1908. The SPD won every Reichstag election from 1895 onwards in Remscheid and also enjoyed similar success in

Lennepe, although here they were not as consistent. In local elections to the town council, the SPD gained its first breakthrough in 1901, when despite the three-tier voting system, four of its candidates became councillors. Despite their considerable support anchored in the working class, the four SPD councillors constantly found themselves opposed by the entire council and mayor Nollau, who earned himself the title of 'Sozialistenfresser'. The Social Democrats were for instance precluded from participation in council commissions.

The SPD achieved its hitherto greatest success in Remscheid, as indeed elsewhere, in the 1912 Reichstag election, when Wilhelm Dittmann was elected in the second vote, having narrowly failed to gain the required over-all majority in the first round.¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile the SPD faction on the town council had expanded considerably and now comprised ten members: Wilhelm Koch, E. Benscheid, Cornelius Gohr, Friedrich Völler, Paul Schießmann, Artur Kanowski, Rudolf Grimpe, Karl Leverberg, August Markus and A. Hackenberg.¹⁰⁷ These men amongst others, such as: Julius Wetzel, Peter Stamm, Christian Lenz, Emil Barthel, August Feld, Wilhelm Mengel, Ernst Leverberg, Peter Wipperfürth, Karl Lobach, Otto Braß, Willi Grütz and Albert Gummersbach, formed the core of the working class movement's leading group in Remscheid prior to the First World War. Many of these men were master craftsmen (many of them file-makers) and veterans of the Anti-Socialist-Law period. Some of them had been obliged to flee from Remscheid during those years and others had been jailed. Almost all had suffered in some way because of their political persuasion, both during and after the twelve-year ban. Some of them were exceptionally well-read. Julius Wetzel, for example, who was born in 1867 in East Prussia and came to Remscheid in 1889¹⁰⁹, was an avid reader who over the years collected together a substantial library which he made available to his fellow Socialists. Julius Wetzel's influence in SPD and later KPD circles in Remscheid was enormous. His house was always open to young people from the Laspert area interested in discussing political questions.¹¹⁰ Wetzel married Anna Leverberg, daughter of

another of Remscheid's most influential Socialists, Karl Leverberg. The Wetzels had five children who all became members of the Freie Arbeiterjugend. These children used to bring their friends home regularly, so that there was a constant coming and going of working class youths. Wetzel who had a gardening business, employed Willi Grütz who also exercised influence on young visitors to the house. Like Wetzel, he too was exceptionally well-read. The group of working class leaders was not based in any way on privilege, but attained its position rather by ability, skill and selfless dedication to the cause. By way of marriage and friendship the leading group expanded, so that during the Weimar Republic Remscheid boasted a large party nucleus of talented, well-schooled and dedicated leaders, whose existence in turn attracted other gifted workers to the town.¹¹¹

A further important consideration concerning the solidarity expressed within the movement is that allegiance was frequently twofold, firstly to the movement/party and secondly, on account of the high level of inter-marriage between active families, to one's own kin.¹¹² As in all leading groups, family background was a principal recommendation for a movement which was frequently suppressed and therefore required above all loyalty and trustworthiness. In spite of this however, background was not enough - the movement needed and demanded devoted functionaries who were conscious of their class allegiance and the movement's aims, and the Remscheid workers' movement had a considerable amount of such versatile cadre material throughout the period covered by this study.

TABLE 1

Distribution of Workforce in Remscheid and Landkreis Lennep.

Branch of Industry	Year	REMSCHIED				Landkreis LENNAP			
		No. of factories	Total no. of workers			No. of factories	Total no. of workers		
			Men	women	total		Men	women	total
Mining, Iron & Steel production	1913	8	3922	-	3922	7	27	-	27
	1920	8	4911	110	5021	4	14	-	14
Quarrying, stone & slate	1913	5	136	-	136	9	245	-	245
	1920	1	38	-	38	6	139	1	140
Iron & Steel processing; toolmaking	1913	573	8888	281	9169	204	3655	130	3785
	1920	602	8586	454	9040	262	4340	426	4766
Mechanical engineering	1913	25	1991	119	2110	51	1228	37	1265
	1920	27	1775	234	2009	48	1173	214	1387
Chemicals	1913	-	-	-	-	4	25	11	36
	1920	-	-	-	-	6	19	28	47
Forestry; soap, oil, varnish	1913	2	79	11	90	6	47	-	47
	1920	2	56	11	67	6	62	-	62
Textiles	1913	8	111	109	220	474	3778	3381	7159
	1920	7	27	16	43	235	2204	2756	5010
Paper	1913	4	17	33	50	7	164	58	222
	1920	5	12	32	44	7	238	71	309
Leather	1913	2	11	-	11	4	12	3	15
	1920	3	9	-	9	3	9	-	9
Wood / carpentry	1913	66	312	5	317	68	507	11	518
	1920	60	210	12	222	64	411	42	453
Food and Confectionery	1913	98	359	11	370	173	267	58	325
	1920	36	114	18	132	116	237	23	260
Clothing / Tailoring	1913	46	15	203	218	67	534	526	1060
	1920	35	49	140	189	80	550	657	1207
Laundry	1913	6	19	22	41	3	1	9	10
	1920	7	35	25	60	1	1	3	4
Total	1913	843	15860	794	16654	1077	16490	4224	14714
	1920	795	15624	1552	17176	838	9447	4221	13668

TABLE 2

The Development of Reimscheid's Iron and Steel Industry between 1900 and 1928.

Size according to no. of workers	year	No. of Enterprises	Total workforce
1 - 5	1900	565	1,312
	1905	554	1,256
	1909	488	1,153
	1928	428	1,087
6 - 10	1900	94	718
	1905	84	629
	1909	112	828
	1928	101	823
11 - 20	1900	76	1,153
	1905	76	1,180
	1909	87	1,282
	1928	71	1,040
21 - 50	1900	45	1,464
	1905	57	1,681
	1909	75	2,408
	1928	87	2,815
51 - 100	1900	23	1,662
	1905	33	2,266
	1909	29	2,099
	1928	38	2,839
101 - 200	1900	2	342
	1905	7	948
	1909	11	1,596
	1928	13	1,729
over 200	1900	4	3,126
	1905	4	3,014
	1909	6	4,087
	1928	8	7,157

Source: Wilhelm Engels and Paul Legers, Aus der Geschichte der Reimscheider und Bergischen Werkzeug- und Eisenindustrie, Band II, Reimscheid 1928, p. 387.

Demographic Development of Remscheid 1816 to 1909

TABLE 3

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Year	Population			Religious Denomination					Births			Born in weBlock		Born out of weBlock		Number of Deaths excluding still-born infants			Marriages				
				Protestants	Catholics	Other Christians	Jews	Denom. unknown				living	still-born	living	still-born	M.	f.	total.					
	M.	f.	total							M.	f.	M.	f.	M.	f.	total.							
1816	-	-	7,147	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	312	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	188	69			
1860	-	-	15,654	-	-	-	-	-	370	268	638	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	401	152			
1880	5,841	14,188	30,029	26,844	3,089	41	8	47	653	637	1,290	543	588	44	31	14	16	2	2	371	306	677	280
1885	17,741	16,195	33,936	29,947	3,934	74	26	-	688	659	1,347	641	616	38	35	7	7	2	1	309	270	579	283
1890	21,326	19,28	40,371	35,233	5,031	53	50	87	781	773	1,554	729	718	38	32	14	22	-	1	415	306	721	384
1895	24,753	22,530	47,283	40,459	6,562	129	88	45	926	859	1,785	874	814	32	22	16	23	4	-	434	347	781	468
1900	35,335	27,788	58,103	48,545	9,211	156	136	55	1,138	1,049	2,187	1,079	991	41	35	17	21	1	2	533	385	918	629
1905	33,162	31,78	64,340	53,522	10,356	274	130	53	1,124	996	2,120	1,073	954	34	29	17	13	-	-	528	448	976	533
1909	-	-	69,700	-	-	-	-	-	946	931	1,877	902	890	30	22	14	16	-	3	383	313	696	554

Source: F.C. Ziegler, Die Tendenzen der Entwicklung zum Großbetrieb der Remscheider Kleineisenindustrie, Berlin 1910, p. 309.

TABLE 4

Increase of Population in Remscheid between 1895 and 1908.

Years	Live births	Difference between births and deaths	Total no. of deaths excluding still-born	Actual population increase	Increase in population due to immigration
1895-1900	9,927	+ 5,483	4,444	10,820	5,337
1900-1905	10,446	+ 5,875	4,571	6,237	362
1905-1908	6,124	+ 3,668	2,456	5,402	1,536

Source: F.C. Ziegler, Die Tendenz der Entwicklung zum Großbetrieb der Remscheider Kleineisenindustrie, Berlin 1910.

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

- 1 Cf., E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Harmondsworth 1963, p. 9 ff.
2. Important landmarks and examples of this tradition are, amongst others:
Friedrich Engels, Conditions of the Working Class in England in 1844, 1892,
Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, 1861/62,
Charles Booth, Life and Labour of the People in London, 1902/04,
Seebohm Rowntree, Poverty, 1901,
Beatrice Webb, The Co-operative Movement in Britain, 1891,
Sidney and Beatrice Webb, History of Trade Unionism, 1894,
J.L. and B. Hammond, The Village Labourer, 1911,
idem., The Town Labourer 1760 to 1832, 1911,
idem., The Skilled Labourer 1760 to 1832, 1919,
George Orwell, The Road to Wigan Pier, 1937,
Other important works appearing in more recent years are:
G.D.H. Cole, British Working Class Politics 1832 to 1914, 1941,
G.D.H. Cole and R. Postgate, The Common People 1746 to 1946, London 1949,
Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter, Coal is our Life, London 1956,
Richard Hoggart, The Uses of Literacy, Harmondsworth 1957,
E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, op. cit.
Brian Jackson, Working Class Community, Harmondsworth 1968,
Robert Roberts, The Classic Slum. Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century, Harmondsworth 1971.
- 3 Particularly the United States and France.

- 4 This is not to suggest that German historiography is devoid of labour history. Empirical studies like that of Paul Göhre, Lebensgeschichte eines modernen Industriearbeiters, the substantial number of memoirs like Ludwig Tureks, Ein Prolet erzählt, and descriptions of the everyday experience which are now being rediscovered, testify to the contrary. However, such works did not constitute an accepted tradition in the sense of British Labour History, and it may be argued that the German Workers' Movement tended to concern itself more with ideological questions and party organisation than examinations of life in working class colonies and factories.
- 5 Cf. Immanuel Geiss, "Restauration, Stagnation - produktive Krise", in: idem., and Rainer Tamchina (edit.), Ansichten einer künftigen Geschichtswissenschaft. Band I, Kritik, Theorie, Methode, München 1974, pp. 15-23;
Manfred Asendorf, "Deutsche Fachhistorie und Sozialgeschichte", in: ibid., pp. 24-42;
and Wilhelm Alff, Materialien zum Kontinuitätsproblem der deutschen Geschichte, Frankfurt a.M. 1976; especially chapter entitled "Immanuel Geiss und das Kontinuitätsproblem - eine kritische Anmerkung".
- 6 Cf. Richard John Evans (edit.), Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany, London 1978;
see Introduction: "Wilhelm II's Germany and the Historian", pp. 11-39.
- 7 Ibid.,
- 8 Ibid.,
- 9 Examples:
George Ewart Evans, Ask the Fellows who Cut the Hay, 1956;
idem., The Days That We Have Seen, 1975;
Ronald Blythe, Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village, 1969;
Ron Barnes, Coronation Cups and Jam Jars, 1976;
and A People's Biography of Hackney - Working Lives Vol. 1, 1905-45, no date,
Working Lives Vol. 2, 1945 - 1970s, 1976.

- 10 Erhard Lucas, Arbeiterradikalismus. Zwei Formen von Radikalismus in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, Frankfurt a.M. 1976.
- 11 David Crew, Bochum. Sozialgeschichte einer Industriestadt 1860 - 1914, Frankfurt a.M., Berlin, Wien 1980.
- 12 Lawrence Schofer, The Formation of a Modern Labour Force: Upper Silesia 1865 - 1914, London 1975.
- 13 M. Nolan, Social Democracy and Society. Working Class Radicalism in Düsseldorf, 1890 to 1920, Cambridge 1981.
- 14 Klaus Tenfelde, Sozialgeschichte der Bergarbeiterschaft an Rhein und Ruhr, Bonn, Bad Godesberg 1977.
- 15 S.H.F. Hickey, "The Shaping of the German Labour Movement: Miners in the Ruhr", in: Richard J. Evans (edit.), op. cit., pp. 215-240.
- 16 Roland Günther and others, "Eisenheim. Die Erfahrung einer Arbeiterkolonie", in: Lutz Niethammer (edit.) Wohnen im Wandel. Beiträge zur Geschichte des Alltags in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft, Wuppertal 1979, pp. 188-211.
- 17 Dieter Langewiesche, "Politische Orientierung und soziales Verhalten. Familienleben und Wohnverhältnisse von Arbeitern im 'roten' Wien der Ersten Republik", in: Lutz Niethammer (edit.), op. cit., pp. 171-188.
- 18 William Sheridan Allen, The Nazi Seizure of Power. The Experience of a single German Town 1930 - 1935, London 1965.
- 19 Jürgen Reulecke and Wolfhard Weber (edit.), Fabrik, Familie, Feierabend. Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte des Alltags im Industriezeitalter, Wuppertal 1978.
- 20 Lutz Niethammer (edit.), op. cit.
- 21 Lutz Niethammer and Franz Brüggemeier, "Wie wohnten die Arbeiter im Kaiserreich?" in: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte Band XVI, 1976.
- 22 Gerhard A. Ritter, (edit.), Arbeiterkultur, Königstein/Ts., 1979.
- 23 Siegfried Reck, Arbeiter nach der Arbeit. Sozialhistorische Studie zu den Wandlungen des Arbeiteralltags, Lahn-Gießen 1977.

- 24 Martin Soder, Hausarbeit und Stammtischsozialismus. Arbeiterfamilie und Alltag im deutschen Kaiserreich, Gießen 1980.
- 25 Jürgen Kocka, Klassengesellschaft im Krieg. Deutsche Sozialgeschichte 1914 - 1918, Göttingen 1973, pp. 3-6.
- 26 Cf. Gerhard A. Ritter and Jürgen Kocka (edit.), Deutsche Sozialgeschichte. Dokumente und Skizzen, Band II, München 1974, p. 325 f.,
taken from Bungeroth, "50 Jahre Mannesmannröhren 1884 - 1934".
- 27 For a differential examination of these two groups see Jürgen Kocka, "The First World War and the 'Mittelstand': German Artisans and White-Collar Workers", in: Journal of Contemporary History, No. 8, 1973, pp. 101-123.
- 28 Lodgers who rented a room, or part of a room, often only a bed, usually in a private house or flat. If the arrangement included meals, the lodgers were called Kostgänger.
Interesting studies in this phenomenon include:
Niethammer and Brüggemeier, "Wie wohnten die Arbeiter...", op.cit.
Josef Ehmer, "Wohnen ohne eigene Wohnung. Zur sozialen Stellung von Untermietern und Bettgehern", in: Niethammer (edit.), Wohnen im Wandel, op. cit.,
idem. and Brüggemeier, "Schlafgänger, Schnapskasinos und schwerindustrielle Kolonie. Aspekte der Arbeiterwohnungsfrage im Ruhrgebiet vor dem ersten Weltkrieg", in: Reulecke and Weber (edit.) Fabrik...., op. cit.
- 29 For an interesting study of differing attitudes to the NSDAP, see H.A. Winkler, "Mittelstandsbewegung oder Volkspartei? Die soziale Basis der NSDAP", in W. Schieder (edit.), Vergleichende Sozialgeschichte faschistischer Bewegungen, Hamburg 1976.
- 30 See Chapter II.
- 31 See Veröffentlichung der deutschen Akademie der Künste zu Berlin, Lieder der Partei, Leipzig 1971, p. 49 f;
and Wolfgang Steinitz, Deutsche Volkslieder demokratischen Charakters aus sechs Jahrhunderten, West Berlin 1979, pp. 424-429.

- 32 The town was also known by the epithet of 'Rotes Remscheid'.
- 33 See Erwin E. Stursberg, Remscheid und seine Gemeinden. Geschichte, Wirtschaft, Kultur, Remscheid 1969, p. 19.
The annual amount of rainfall in and around Cologne is given as approximately 600 mm. In contrast the annual level of precipitation in the rectangle bounded by the Wupper exceeds 1200 mm.
- 34 Ibid., p. 36/37.
- 35 Ibid., p. 56.
- 36 Ibid., p. 82-85
- 37 Ibid., p. 139.
- 38 Ibid., p. 162.
- 39 Ibid., p. 175.
- 40 Hermann Ringel, Bergische Wirtschaft zwischen 1790 und 1860. Probleme der Anpassung und Eingliederung einer frühindustriellen Landschaft, Remscheid 1966, pp. 39-40.
- 41 Lucas, op. cit., p. 31 f.
- 42 Ibid., pp. 31-33.
- 43 Ibid., pp. 46/47 and p. 53.
There was a yearly average of 4,000 lodgers in Remscheid in 1,000 families between 1907 and 1911.
- 44 For Polish immigration in the Ruhr, see Christoph Kleßmann, Polnische Bergarbeiter im Ruhrgebiet 1870 - 1945. Soziale Integration und nationale Subkultur einer Minderheit in der deutschen Industriegesellschaft, Göttingen 1978,
and idem., "Zur rechtlichen und sozialen Lage der Polen im Ruhrgebiet im Dritten Reich", in: Archiv für Sozialgeschichte. XVII, pp. 175-194.
- 45 Lucas, op. cit., p. 53.
- 46 Interview with Otto Rau. The 'Elberfeld 'n Barmen' was named after the twin towns which later together with several smaller towns and villages merged to form the city of Wuppertal. The container referred to here consisted of a cylindrical receptacle to hold the soup or coffee and a lid which served as a bowl or cup for drinking the contents, rather in the manner of the later vacuum flask, and is better known as a 'Henkelmann'.

- 47 Cf. Otto Rühle, Illustrierte Kultur- und Sittengeschichte des Proletariats, Berlin 1930.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Information from Otto Rau who was obliged to spend a considerable period of time after his arrival in Remscheid as a lodger in various houses. He complained of incessant quarrels over rent and the quality of board between lodgers and tenants. The turn-over in such houses was rapid, as lodgers constantly searched for more acceptable terms.
- 50 See Kubiak (no first name), Interessantes, Wissenswertes, Erstaunliches, Kurioses aus 300 Jahren Geschichte der Firma Johann Wülfing und Sohn, 1973, brochure commemorating the 300th anniversary of the founding of the company.
- 51 Ibid. An example extracted from the house rules concerning the daily routine, adequately reflects the paternalistic attitude of the owners to their workers:

'Früh 5 1/4 Uhr gibt der Nachtwachmann mit der Glocke das Zeichen zum Aufstehen. Jede macht hierauf ihr Bett, wäscht sich und geht zur Arbeit. Oberflüssige Kleidungsstücke sind vom Schlafsaal zu entfernen und in den verschliessbaren Schranken aufzuhängen; nur das Handtuch findet am Kleiderhalter jedes Bettes seinen Platz. Vormittags 8 - 8 1/2 Uhr Einnehmen des Frühstücks. Mittags 12 Uhr gemeinschaftliches Mittagessen und Aufenthalt bis 1 Uhr im Speisesaal. Nachmittags 4 - 4 1/2 Uhr Einnehmen der Vesper und abends 7 1/4 Uhr gemeinschaftliches Abendessen und Aufenthalt im Speisesaal bis zum Schlafengehen, welches im Sommer um 10 Uhr, im Winter um 9 1/2 Uhr erfolgt. Früheres Schlafengehen ist ohne ausdrückliche Erlaubnis der Vorsteherin verboten...'

- 52 See Will Rinne, Moritz Böker. Ein Bergischer Wirtschaftsführer. Nach Tagebüchern, Reden und Aufsätzen, Berlin 1940, pp. 112-117.

A significant example of resistance by the workers' movement to the paternalism of employers concerned an innovation of Moritz Böker's, namely a compulsory savings scheme which was ostensibly designed to create a firm, if modest financial base to

enable workers to marry and set up home at the age of 25 years. The scheme which aroused interest amongst other industrialists, both in Germany and abroad, was imitated in many establishments. In Remscheid, however, the scheme provoked plenty of criticism on the part of the SPD and trade unions. These argued that if workers received an adequate wage in the first place, they could take their own steps to secure savings and pensions. Whilst the merits of this and similar schemes ought not to be overlooked, neither should the undesirable (from the workers' point of view) ramifications stemming from the preconceived aims of the initiators, namely a greater dependence and reduced mobility of the workers. These were factors which tended to render the workforce more supine. The better organised metalworkers of Wilhelmine Germany were more successful in combating such schemes than the textile workers. This particular arrangement was successfully adopted by the Kammgarn mill.

53 Interview with Otto Rau.

A number of smaller firms in Remscheid ran grocery stores at which workers were expected to make their purchase. According to Rau, these shops tended to be expensive and therefore did not attract sufficient custom. In order to overcome the workers' reluctance, some employers issued threats of dismissal if employees continued to buy provisions elsewhere.

54 The theory that the practice of sub-letting to lodgers actually strengthened working class solidarity has been advanced by Niethammer and Brüggemeier in their joint essay, "Wie wohnten die Arbeiter im Kaiserreich?" (see note 21) and again in, "Schlafgänger, Schnapskasinos....", (see note 28). Josef Ehmer on the other hand (see *ibid.*), does not find any evidence to support this theory, although he does make the reservation that the discrepancy may be attributable to the differing work and living structures, in this case Vienna, and the Ruhr. In his conclusion Ehmer points to the high frequency of parallel work and dwelling relationships in the Ruhr, a phenomenon which was much less common in 19th-century Vienna, as a possible explanation for the discrepancy between his findings and those of Niethammer and Brüggemeier.

Heidi Rosenbaum in her book, Formen der Familie. Untersuchung zum Zusammenhang von Familienverhältnissen, Sozialstruktur und sozialem Wandel in der deutschen Gesellschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts, Frankfurt a.M. 1982, p. 428, stresses the disadvantages of sub-letting, for example the restrictions placed on family members ensuing from the lack of space and beds, the severely reduced opportunities for finding privacy in a small flats, above all the extra pressure placed on the housewife, and the forfeiture of free time with the family.

Information gleaned from interviewees in Remscheid and from local newspapers tends to stress the disadvantages, and arrives at the consensus that lodging was an evil for tenants and lodgers alike. Nevertheless, there is not enough local evidence to refute the argument for solidarity, and the case for solidarity is plausible when tenants and lodgers were in any way related, when they originated from the same area or when they worked side by side in the same factory.

55 Lucas, op. cit., p. 48;

and Rinne, op. cit., p. 124.

A census of dwellings in Remscheid in 1887 indicated a desperate accommodation problem. In 647 households consisting of 1,610 rooms, there were 3,303 occupants - an average of five persons per household in two and a half rooms, or two persons per room. In a further 121 households there was an average of three to a room. The alarming revelations of this census led directly to the founding of the Gemeinnütziger Bauverein.

56 Rinne, *ibid.*, p. 126.

Between 1897 and 1918 the Bergische Stahlindustrie erected 120 flats for its employees in Honsberg, Loborn and Schillerstraße. The initiator of this building project, like that of the Gemeinnütziger Bauverein was Moritz Boker.

57 Lucas, op. cit., p. 48.

58 Cf. Dr. Saenger (edit.), Zeitschrift des Preußischen Statistischen Landesamtes für 1918/19, Berlin 1919, p. 85.

59 Lucas, op. cit., p. 295.

60 Stursberg, op. cit., p. 205.

- 61 Gerd Courts, Remscheid, so wie es war, Vol. 1, Düsseldorf 1974.
- 62 StA Remscheid, VII M/11, Gesellige Vereine 1884 - 1900.
- 63 See file compiled by Fritz Söhnchen, Erinnerungen und Zeitpolitische Dokumente zur Geschichte der Sozialdemokratischen Partei in den Jahren 1880 - 1890 (Sozialisten-Gesetze).
- 64 Hans-Gerd Selbach, "100 Jahre Sozialistengesetz. Betrachtung seiner Bedeutung sowie Auswirkung in Remscheid", 2. Teil, in: Die Heimat spricht zu dir, Jahrgang 45, Nr. 11, November 1978.
- 65 StA Remscheid, IV L/5, ATVS, Remscheid, Empfehlenswerte Verkehrslokale.
- 66 See, SPD Remscheid. 1. Mai 1976 (brochure), Remscheid 1976.
- 67 StA Remscheid, Akte VII H/11.
- 68 Information from Otto Rau who himself made use of this scheme to purchase a mandolin.
- 69 See Remscheider Arbeiterzeitung (RAZ), 1/3/12.
- 70 RAZ, 11/3/12.
- 71 StA Remscheid, XI D/50-69.
- 72 StA Remscheid, XI D/33-41.
- 73 See Remscheider Zeitung (RZ), 15/1/1904.
and Bergische Volksstimme (BV), 9/5/19.
- 74 See BV, 24/12/19.
- 75 The Naturfreunde were founded in 1895 in Vienna.
- 76 See BV, 9/3/29, 20 Jahre proletarische Jugendbewegung in Remscheid.
- 77 According to Milli Hilbert a high percentage of later party activists met their husbands and wives in the socialist youth movement. Survivors of the original local workers' youth movement were still convening on a regular basis until the end of the 1970s. Their meetings were opened and closed with renderings of the songs they learned in their youth. See file Fritz Söhnchen, op. cit.
- 78 See, 60 Jahre Touristenverein "Die Naturfreunde", Ortsgruppe Remscheid, Remscheid 1973, p. 5.
- 79 The march from Müngsten to Remscheid was prohibited by the authorities.

- 80 60 Jahre Touristenverein..., *ibid.*, p. 6.
and interview with Hannah Quaas.
- 81 Information from Gerd Friele.
82. BV, 23/12/21, 23. Stiftungsfest.
- 83 See StA Remscheid, VII M/22.
- 84 For the development of these vital local institutions see later chapters.
- 85 According to Fritz Knapper, no self-respecting worker would dream of taking his custom anywhere else.
Interview with Fritz Knapper and Olga Jung.
- 86 Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
- 87 Lucas, *ibid.*, p. 38.
- 88 Fritz Knapper, whose father was a home-based filmmaker, recalls a wall-hanging decorating the family's living room, depicting the heads of Bebel, Wilhelm and Karl Liebknecht with the inscription beneath: 'Nicht betteln, nicht bitten, nur mutig gestritten, nie kampf es sich schlecht für Freiheit und Recht.'
Smiths and grinders also tended to be radical like the filmmakers, for much the same reasons. See Lucas, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
- 89 Lucas, *ibid.*, p. 121.
- 90 Lucas, *ibid.*, p. 120.
- 91 Notably, Barrington-Moore, Jr., in: Injustice, the Social Base of Obedience and Revolt, London 1979, pp. 227-274,
Peter N. Stearns in: Arbeiterleben. Industriearbeit und Alltag in Europa 1890 - 1914, Frankfurt a.M. 1980, pp. 293-329,
David Crew in: Bochum...., *op. cit.*, pp. 171-207.
- 92 See Dick Geary, "Radicalism and the Worker: Metalworkers and Revolution 1914 - 1923", in: Richard J. Evans, Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-283.
The author rejects the claim that metalworkers were docile, in the light of their militancy during the First World War and afterwards. Whilst recognising the radicalising experience of the war, Geary quite rightly indicates that metalworkers had begun to stir long before the outbreak of war, and that the period 1905-1914 was marked by an upsurge of militancy in the metallurgical industry. The author cites the twin bastions of skilled craft, Remscheid and Solingen, as examples of radical metalworker tradition.

- 93 Barrington-Moore, op. cit.
 94 Peter N. Stearns, op. cit., p. 293-329.
 95 David Crew, op. cit., p. 201.
 96 Lucas, op. cit., pp. 42-45.
 97 Crew, op. cit., p. 198.
 98 Lucas, op. cit., p.120.
 99 StA Remscheid, XB/46, Gesamtverband der deutschen Werkzeug-
 industrie, früher Bergischer Fabrikantenverein.
 100 Lucas, op. cit., p. 122.
 101 Ibid., p. 123.
 102 Ibid., p. 125.
 103 Ibid.
 104 Selbach, op. cit.
 105 Ibid., quote from a report from the Oberbürgermeister of Rem-
 scheid and the Landrat in Lennep.
 106 Lucas, op. cit., p. 131.
 107 See Karl-Heinz Trachte, Die politischen Strukturen und Aus-
 einandersetzungen zu Beginn der Weimarer Republik, Examens-
 arbeit für die Erste Staatsprüfung für das Lehramt an Grund-
 und Hauptschulen, Remscheid 1969.

<u>1st vote 12/1/12</u>	<u>Stadtkreis Remscheid</u>	<u>Düsseldorf Wahlbezirk 1</u>
Eickhoff, Liberal	5,946	15,992
Stuhrmann, Christsozial	1,801	14,788
Dittmann, SPD	8,536	27,120
Chociszewski, Polenpartei	70	1,155
gültige Stimmen	16,353	59,075
ungültige Stimmen	43	219
abgegebene Stimmen	16,396	58,294
<u>2nd vote (Stichwahl) 25/1/12</u>		
Eickhoff	7,275	25,963
Dittmann	8,946	28,760.

- 108 Fritz Sohnchen, op. cit.
 109 Information from Milli Hilbert, daughter of Julius Wetzel.
 Wetzel's library containing works of Marx, Engels, Bebel and
 many socialist thinkers was confiscated by the Nazis in 1933.
 110 Information from Erich Thieler.

111 According to Milli Hilbert the KPD had over 500 officials in Remscheid during the Weimar Republic.

112 The web of family ties amongst Remscheid workers links most of the socialist and communist activists of the Weimar period. Marriage amongst leading worker families did not, unlike those of many bourgeois elites, take place with the function of maintaining elite status. Here there was no elite status as such, but rather a party/trade union bureaucratic group which had no guarantee of preserving its own position within the movement. Marriage ensued naturally out of mutual attraction, convictions and shared interest in the fortunes of their class. The children of these families received a political education, initially in the home and then later in various sections of the movement, so that the chances of meeting accordant marriage partners here were exceptionally high, considering the lack of opportunity to meet young people from other backgrounds and other areas.

There are several examples of such marriage between activist families or at least between children of activist families and the children of other socialist families which did not play any leading role in the movement.

A few examples to illustrate the point:

Julius Wetzel married Anna Leverberg and had four daughters and one son. Three of the daughters married party activists. Lieschen married Albert Issel who was later destined to play a major role in the local KPD group. Lotte Wetzel married Ferdinand Thieler who later became chairman of the Arbeiterschwimmverein. Gretchen married Fritz Söhnchen who was on the staff of the Bergische Volksstimme. Milli married Leo Hilbert who was treasurer of the BV. She also played a significant role within the movement. She was employed in the local KPD office from 1923 to 1929 when she was elected to the town council. Fritz Wetzel was likewise a leading activist in the KPD in the 20s.

Another example of the pre-war leading group is the family of Peter Stamm who had two daughters and a son, who were all active in the movement. One of the daughters, Aline, married Eugen Röngen who came from a Lüttringhausen socialist family. Both Aline and her husband were KPD councillors. Aline's brother, Robert Stamm was an important link in the KPD network. After several years as leading functionary of the KJVD Remscheid he became secretary of the KPD district apparatus for Barmen-Elberfeld. Later he became political secretary for the Bezirksleitung Nordwest in Düsseldorf, and afterwards held the equivalent post in Niedersachsen and then Berlin-Brandenburg.

Three daughters of Ernst Leverberg, brother of Karl, also married the sons of activist families, these were: Ernst Klein, Heinrich Schafer and J. Weps. August Feld's daughter Ida married a son from the Kattwinkel family.

Otto Rau who played a substantial role in the Arbeiter Samariter Bund married Klara Krauskopf who hailed from an activist family from Radevormwald. One of Klara's brothers, Hermann, also played an active role in the KPD and DMV.

CHAPTER I

The Remscheid Workers' Movement, 1914 to October 1918

1. Social and Political Survey of the Workers' Situation in the German Reich in the Years prior to 1914.

The growth of membership and increased trade union activity as well as factory legislation had undoubtedly helped to bring the industrial workers of Germany some social and economic improvements during the last decade of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th century. These were principally concerned with increased earnings, the length of shifts and the fight against industrial accidents. In the period between 1890 and 1913 earnings increased in real terms but diminished proportionately and finally stagnated by 1913.¹ The German worker of 1913 was then financially better off than his father had been twenty years earlier.

Political pressure led to an extension of factory legislation which resulted in shorter working hours and a reduction in industrial accidents. The construction of larger factories and the benefits of modern technology resulted in improved working conditions in general. The reduction in working hours afforded the worker a slight increase in leisure-time, and the real growth of earnings provided him with a little more money to spend on entertainment. Sickness benefits and various saving schemes ensured at least minimal assistance for those participating.

Paradoxically the same period witnessed a growing impoverishment.² This was manifested by a trend to equalisation resulting from downward mobility which initiated an increased growth in the number of unskilled factory workers. Further manifestations of the equalising trend were diminishing wage differentials between skilled

and unskilled workers and the concentration of the workforce in larger factory units and working class colonies of large tenement blocks. Despite the modest improvements secured by the workers, life still remained hard and unrewarding for the majority. Families with many children were particularly vulnerable.³ Accidents and illness and the resulting loss of income brought severe restrictions of diet, clothing and heating etc. which in turn exacerbated the state of health. In such families infectious illnesses would pass from one child to another owing to cramped, insalubrious conditions. Long periods of illness suffered by the main breadwinner were particularly ruinous and could even lead to the separation of families, with the children being taken into care.

If there were social and economic improvements, no matter how modest, the working class and its institutions were still very much underprivileged. Despite the mounting support for the SPD and the free trade unions, the working class was still not able to translate this growing strength into real political power and remained at least formally without political influence at government level. As the strength of the SPD and the free trade unions increased, so too did the militant anti-Socialism of mass movements like the All-deutscher Verband,⁴ the Reichsverband gegen die Sozialdemokratie and the Deutscher Flottenverein. These organisations, which were above all supported by industrialists, land-owners, civil servants and professional people, commanded impressive financial resources and could conduct lengthy campaigns in an attempt to arrest the growth of Social Democracy.⁵ Social Democrats were portrayed as traitors of the national cause, as 'vaterlandslose Gesellen'.

Despite impressive successes by the Social Democrats, such as the landslide victory in the Reichstag elections of 1912 which made the SPD the largest faction in parliament, the bourgeois and agrarian forces were able to overcome their own differences and combine to block SPD-proposed legislation whenever this threatened to disrupt the existing power structure. In this way the ruling elites were able to parry the assault on the obnoxious Prussian three-tier voting system.

The police, public prosecutors and law-courts applied anti-socialist legislation like the Combination Act and the law applying to clubs and societies more stringently in an effort to arrest further democratisation. The authorities employed a varied range of tactics in order to limit or prevent workers' meetings, often prohibiting these at the last possible moment on technical grounds, if all else failed. It was on the industrial front where the workers felt the suppression of their movement most. Under the pressure of the spread of trade unionism through the Reich, the employers also began to organise in order to combat this. The employers still generally adhered to the 'Herr-im-Hause' approach to industrial relations and refused to recognise the free trade unions whilst at the same time trying to encourage the spread of 'yellow unions'.⁶ The 'yellow unions', which were numerically never strong, received generous financial backing from employers' organisations, but nevertheless failed to make a serious impact on the working class and did not effectively split the workers as the employers had hoped.

In the class conflict, which intensified in the years leading up to 1914, the balance of power swung back towards the employers. The incidence and length of industrial conflict reached a climax between 1906 and 1911 with the number of lock-outs increasing in absolute terms and relatively to the number of strikes.⁷

Another weapon used by the employers to combat free trade unions was the compiling of black-lists which were circulated amongst members of the employers' organisations. The keeping of black-lists was particularly effective the higher the degree of collusion between the employers and the authorities. A worker who had the misfortune to be listed, often had no other alternative but to leave for another area, when he realised that no local establishment would employ him. The introduction of work-books for employees was an even more effective weapon against trade unions than the black-lists. The work-books subjected the worker to more careful scrutiny, in that each new employer could check with his predecessor the reasons for the termination of employment. Dismissal for trade union activity would usually be reason enough not to give him employment.

In times of strike, when all other methods failed, the employers were able to resort to the employment of black-legs, normally brought in from another area, so that they would be unlikely to sympathise with their striking colleagues. Strike-breakers could count on police protection and were sometimes granted the reward denied to their antecedents.

However, by 1914, despite these setbacks, workers still had some reasons for modest optimism. Socially and economically they had made some headway and despite the blocking tactics of the bourgeois parties, it seemed only a matter of time before some of their more important political demands would have to be met. At the outbreak of war it was evident to some that the working-class movement stood to gain at best very little from the venture, and that the real advantages of a victorious conclusion to hostilities would be held by the existing monarchical order.⁸ A short successful war, it was believed by some conservatives, would rejuvenate German society and unite the people behind the existing system. German industry would profit by extending its influence over new territories and markets and German farmers would realise the dreams of rich fertile settlements in the East. In this atmosphere the workers' organisations would be in danger of falling into discredit with the masses. Furthermore the military victory would be bought at the expense of working-class lives lost on the battlefield.

2. Remscheid at the Outbreak of War.

In the middle of the July crisis, the SPD organ, the Remscheider Arbeiter Zeitung (RAZ) appealed to the local workers to demonstrate their unwillingness to fight. The appeal which appeared under the heading "Nieder mit dem Krieg", said,

'Arbeiter, Bürger, Männer und Frauen.
Die Kriegsbestie grinst seit Samstag die Völker
Europas aus ihren hohlen Augen an. Eine Panik hat
sich bereits in dem Wirtschaftsleben bemerkbar
gemacht. Leichtfertig will der wahnsinnige Imperia-
lismus die europäische Kultur niedertrampeln. Hier-

gegen gilt es, Front zu machen. Hier darf keiner, dem der Völkerfriede lieb ist, keiner, der den Krieg mit allen seinen Greueln und Elend verabscheut, fehlen. Arbeiterschaft von Remscheid, zeige, daß Du nicht gewillt bist, Deine Knochen für die wahnsinnigen Kriegshetzer zu Markte zu tragen. Erscheine zum Protest gegen den Krieg, gegen den Verwüster aller Kultur, am Donnerstag Abend in der Versammlung. Die Konzerthalle Germania muß überfüllt werden. Krieg dem Kriege!'⁹

This unequivocal statement of the local working-class movement's position was answered equally unequivocally by Remscheid's workers as they followed the call and appeared in their hundreds to demonstrate their desire for peace. We are told¹⁰ that not since the years 1910 and 1911 had Remscheid witnessed such a large gathering of people in its streets. The concert hall Germania was completely packed so that hundreds were left standing outside in the street. The speaker, Grumbach from Paris, was loudly applauded as he proclaimed that International Social Democracy would be the saviour of the peace. In contrast to the workers' demonstration for peace, the Remscheider General Anzeiger (RGA) reported the reception of the news of mobilisation in the following way on the 3rd August:

'Die glühende Begeisterung, mit der die kaiserliche Botschaft der Mobilmachung in unserer Stadt am Samstagnachmittag aufgenommen wurde, kam im weiteren Verlauf der Abend- und Nachtstunden in einer Weise zum Ausdruck, die nur mit der denkwürdigen Erhebung und dem ruhmreichen Befreiungswerk vor 100 Jahren zu vergleichen ist.'¹¹

Reports in the Arbeiterzeitung during the next few days refer to groups of middle-class youths parading through the streets, taunting workers and SPD members and singing patriotic songs.¹²

It is therefore highly unlikely that the euphoric mood and enthusiasm reported in the Generalanzeiger was shared by many workers. This dichotomy of attitudes amply illustrates a polarisation which manifests itself continually throughout the period under investigation. Remscheid society is split into two cultures with usually little or no intercourse between the two unless solely for business reasons.

A further initial reaction to the outbreak of war was the mass hysteria unleashed by warnings to be on the look-out for 'enemy agents'. Both the Remscheider Arbeiter Zeitung and the Remscheider Generalanzeiger published reports of ugly scenes on Remscheid's streets, where innocent people who had the misfortune either to be or to look foreign were attacked and dragged off to the police station, in some cases after having first received a beating. Both newspapers condemned this behaviour by Remscheid citizens but in quite different terms. Whereas the Generalanzeiger expressed the need for vigilance, relating the case of two Russians allegedly caught attempting to poison a reservoir in Chemnitz, almost apologetically condemning the action of over-zealous citizens, pleaded for caution as a case of mistaken identity could have serious consequences in the form of a charge of committing bodily harm, yet 'andererseits aber auch tatkräftig eingeschritten, wenn sich wirklich mal lichtscheues Gesindel verdächtig macht'¹³, the Remscheider Arbeiter Zeitung expressed its disgust in completely unambiguous terms:

'Es gibt Wesen beiderlei Geschlechts, bei deren Treiben man tatsächlich in Zweifel geraten muß, ob man sie zum Menschengeschlecht rechnen darf. Wie Irrsinnige stürzen sie durch Strassen, gedanken- und planlos, lachend und grölend, daß einem die Schamröte ins Gesicht steigt.'¹⁴

Quite clearly the Remscheider Generalanzeiger, the organ of the local bourgeoisie, was seized by the same kind of war hysteria which it purported to condemn. The Remscheider Arbeiterzeitung, on the other hand, despite the SPD's change in policy over the gran-

ting of war credits, could not hide its disappointment that war had not been averted.

On the 3rd August, it appealed for calm and reminded its readership that under the Emergency Laws governing a state of siege, the paper would soon be subjected to strict censorship.¹⁵ It followed this article with an explicit statement on the 29th August:

'Wie unsere Leser bereits wissen, untersteht die Presse scharfer Zensur. Meldungen des Wolf-Büros dürfen nur in unverändertem Wortlaut gebracht werden. Über die Zulässigkeit alles anderen Textes entscheidet die Zensurbehörde. Wir vertrauen auf die geistige und politische Schulung unserer Leser, daß sie in dieser Zeit alles das, was sie in jahrelanger Aufklärungsarbeit über die wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Ursachen der historischen Ereignisse gelernt haben, jetzt auch auf die Gegenwart anzuwenden wissen.'¹⁶

This statement together with the other articles written during the first weeks of war, reveal the scepticism of the local workers' movement towards the Burgfrieden policy and indicate the likelihood of future opposition to it.

What then were the considerations which induced the SPD and trade union leaders to consent to a war which until days before its outbreak they had condemned as a capitalist war, which would in no way benefit the workers? The SPD along with other European Socialist parties had repeatedly declared its intention of using all its influence to prevent the workers from taking part in the next war.¹⁷ A major reason was that the SPD and the trade union leadership glimpsed a chance of having some of their more radical demands like the abolition of the Prussian three-tier voting system and the recognition of trade unions together with the introduction of the eight-hour working day granted in return for their loyal support of the German war effort. The Remscheider Arbeiterzeitung also joined the debate with an article on the 10th August in which it stated categorically that the granting of war credits was intended in the interest of the German working class and of the ruling power elite. It went on to say:

'Die Abstimmung am 4. August muß weit hineinwirken in die innere wie die äußere Politik des Reiches. Sie will nicht sagen, dass die Arbeiterklasse auf ihre Forderungen verzichtet, sie sagt vielmehr, daß diese Forderungen zu geeigneter Zeit mit den geeigneten Mitteln und mit noch ganz anderer Wucht erhoben werden sollen als bisher.¹⁸

Support for the German war effort was justified by SPD and trade union leaders by the arguments that French and English workers had enthusiastically followed the call to arms and that German workers were defending Western European culture against Eastern barbarism and autocracy. With regard to the latter argument, the Remscheider Arbeiterzeitung stressed that German workers were fighting for their freedom against the Russian Tsar.¹⁹

The euphoria of Remscheid citizens subsided quite soon after the departure of the troops, but broke out again whenever German successes at the front were announced. The newspapers were constantly full of optimistic reports which tended to present events at the front as a kind of game which was totally divorced from life in Remscheid. There were reports of Remscheid troops in action and from time to time lists of local citizens who had been awarded medals for bravery. Until the end of the year the civilian population was still quite confident of the ultimate victory even if the troops would now no longer be home for Christmas, as had been promised during the late summer. Civilians, of course, had no idea of what conditions were really like at the front until they began gradually to be confronted by the horrors of war in the form of ever-increasing obituaries which started to appear in Remscheid newspapers as early as October 1914.²⁰ Troops coming home on leave also contributed to the enlightenment of local people as did the increasing number of casualties admitted to the local military hospital.

3. The Effects of the War on Remscheid's Industry.

Remscheid on the eve of the First World War was rapidly approaching the 80,000 population mark. The town had long been established as the centre of the German Werkzeug- und Kleineisenindustrie and depended to a great extent on overseas markets for its manufactured goods. For this reason it is hardly surprising that the outbreak of war had serious repercussions on its industry. The immediate ban on exports caused a sharp rise in the unemployment figures as men were laid off through lack of orders. This rise of unemployment occurred despite the call up of three and a half thousand men during the first days of hostilities.²¹ The fairly rapid transition to a war-based economy, however, changed this situation within the space of six months. The conversion of the town's larger factories to the production of munitions was effected during the first months of war and necessitated the reclamation of many skilled workers who had received their call-up papers during the first week of August.

The war transformed the system of production from a competitive to a cartel base. The creation of central bureaus like the Waffen- und Munitionsbeschaffungsamt - WUMBA (Office for the Procurement of Weapons and Munition) with regional sub-offices which influenced production enormously by the introduction of norms and standards in the manufacture of war materials, rescued or at least granted a reprieve for many small factories and workshops, which prior to the war faced bankruptcy, because of their inability to compete effectively. The war and the controlled production of weapons and war materials, which required a maximum use of all existing resources, meant that even the smaller firms had an important part to play in the production process. Small factories and workshops even had an advantage over large establishments, in that they were often able to effect the change to war production with a minimum of time and expense. Furthermore, for the duration of the war they did not worry about finding new orders, as these were more or less guaranteed. Although the large factories like the Bergische Stahl-Industrie and the Mannesmann Munitionsfabrik received the majority

of orders directly from the military, they were nevertheless obliged to subcontract, at least until they had completed their transition.

The war had a beneficial effect on Remscheid's industry as a whole, as it played a key role in the national war effort, not only as a top-priority supplier of arms and precision tools to the military, but also as an important supplier to support industries. The machine-tool industry quickly began to pick up again after the initial confusion by the onset of war. Remscheid tools were needed by the military for repairing and servicing vehicles and aeroplanes and were also required by the industries producing these vehicles.²² The war also helped those Remscheid firms specialising in the manufacture of agricultural tools and machinery. In the course of the war German agriculture, severely denuded^S of manpower, had to become highly mechanised in order to maintain efficiency, in view of the great responsibility it carried and considering the effectiveness of the British naval blockade. Such firms also received a boost following the German occupation of the Ukraine,²³ with the result that they could not keep up with orders, owing to the chronic shortage of labour which was by then already apparent.

By March 1915 the local unemployment situation had been dramatically reversed, so that there were now many more jobs vacant than men to fill them. This situation became increasingly more acute during the course of the war and after 1916 attained crisis proportions²⁴ as the army sustained horrendous losses in campaigns at the front, and was forced to utilise all available sources of manpower, regardless of whether these were considered to be essential to the war effort on the home front. After 1916 it became difficult for employers to secure the release of their skilled workers or postpone their call-up, although the practice did still continue through to the end of the war.

The war caused a number of significant changes in the production process, although most of these did not survive the duration of hostilities. Probably the most important change and one which proved to be of a permanent nature was the influx of women into areas of production, which had hitherto been considered unsuitable or else had been seen as the natural preserve of men. Quite apart from the munitions factories where women quickly found employment,²⁵ they were also recruited in increasing numbers in steelrolling mills and iron foundries. It was also during the war that women first began to appear in the uniforms of tram and railway conductors. By the end of the war, transport depended to a major extent on the employment of women.

A further result of the shortage of manpower in the production industries was the employment of youths²⁶ and of pensioners who were recalled from retirement, particularly those who were skilled. Another measure to combat the shortage of manpower was the policy of employing skilled foreign workers.²⁷ Remscheid industrialists recruited mainly from Belgium, which was under German occupation. Skilled foreign workers were paid top rates, enjoyed freedom of movement and were granted regular periods of leave. Prisoners of war, on the other hand, enjoyed no such privileges. For German industry they constituted a cheap source of labour to be exploited fully.²⁸ They held a status similar to that of slaves, working hard for the lowest rate of pay, but dishabilitated by restrictions of movement and contact with the local inhabitants. The official policy of prohibiting contact between prisoners and the German civilian population was primarily designed to maintain the image of the enemy disseminated in the newspapers, and to control the information passing to local civilians. Constant supervision of prisoners and their continual state of isolation were usually sufficiently effective measures to achieve these aims and perpetuate the hostile gulf separating these from the rest of the population.²⁹ Treatment of prisoners appears to have been strict yet correct, with no evidence of excesses towards them as was common during the Second World War. The rations which prisoners received

were only marginally worse than those of their fellow German workers, so that the former did not noticeably suffer more hunger than the latter.³⁰ However, prisoners were not able to supplement these rations in times of shortage as others were, viz. by foraging or by purchase on the black market. The acquisition of supplementary foodstuffs was prevented not only by the restriction of movement, but also by the fact that prisoners did not receive their pay in the form of money, but rather in the form of tokens which were convertible only in the camp or the factory where they were housed. This was a precautionary measure to frustrate escape attempts. Whilst this and the other measures undoubtedly impaired the chances of escape, they did not succeed in preventing it.³¹ The regularity of escape attempts would even indicate organised disruption, as the chances of completely evading recapture would have been extremely slim, and therefore would have ruled out any real possibility of getting home. Fugitives had to content themselves with the disruption they were causing the local police. Memoranda were occasionally circulated calling for vigilance on the part of civilians, accompanying guards and overlookers, as there was reason to suspect sabotage either of cornfields, following fires attributed to fugitive prisoners, or of machinery and manufactured supplies by POWs in the factories. However, it is not known whether these warnings justifiably resulted from events in Remscheid or whether they were based on experience elsewhere.

In Remscheid, POWs were accommodated in approximately ten different work camps.³² The large number of inmates would imply a constant lack of privacy which may also have been accountable for some attempted escapes. Regarding recreational activities, apart from obligatory physical exercise, consisting mainly of gymnastics, occasionally a game of football, the authorities arranged Sunday visits to a local cinema for well-behaved prisoners to see special propaganda films.³³ These were designed to show Germany as the paragon of cultural development and to make prisoners aware of the fact that the social and welfare institutions operating in their own countries were inferior, and that they had been misled by men-

dacious information into forming attitudes, which were hostile towards Germany. It was also hoped that enlightened POWs would later return home and force the introduction of similar conditions in their own countries, which would by then be much more amenable to German culture.

Despite the close supervision of, and considerable restriction on POWs, there were occasional demonstrations of individual sympathy and kindness by some class-conscious workers. On the whole, however, contact remained minimal, and the workers were also constantly occupied with their own problems, with the result that the official policy of isolation of POWs was in the main successful.

The war significantly changed the role of women from that of mother and housewife to breadwinner. If Remscheid women had taken up employment before the war, it was usually as either shopgirls or housemaids in the homes of local manufacturers and higher civil servants. Employment as a housemaid was commonly regarded as mutually beneficial to both, employer and employee, as the latter had an opportunity to acquire basic household skills prior to marriage. Although this traditional employment continued through the war, young girls either left this form of work to answer the call to engage in activities more relevant to the war effort, or else went directly from school into the factories. This fact prompted the wife of an industrialist to curse the war on the grounds that there were no longer any good housemaids available.³⁴

The changing role of women was accompanied by a number of problems. Firstly, married women were now burdened with extra responsibility and accompanying worries. They now had to go out to earn the family livelihood as well as keep the home running. The burdens increased as the war progressed, so that they did not usually have much opportunity for recreation and relaxation.

A particular problem was that of child care. The working mother had to find some kind of arrangement for the care of her children whilst she was out at work. Unless a grandmother or other suitable relative was near at hand, the choice would perhaps fall to a neighbour. Whatever the solution, however, the mother-child relationship was bound to suffer.

Young, unmarried girls who went straight into the factories from school, did not acquire tuition in the basic household skills of sewing, cooking, baby-care and hygiene. For this reason several organisations attempted to solve this problem by introducing evening courses. One such organisation was the Remscheider Frauenbund (women's league) which enjoyed the support of local firms.³⁵ The Remscheider Verein für das Gemeinwohl (society for general welfare) was also alerted to the problem.³⁶

The changing role of women from a primarily domestic life to occupying a key position in the production and service sectors, in such a short space of time, inevitably had a powerful effect on female consciousness. Over and above the responsibility on the domestic front, women in the role of 'Soldaten der Produktions-schlacht'³⁷ were burdened with the responsibilities of providing enough munitions and ensuring the smooth running of the country's transport facilities for the duration of the war. Women proved that they were just as able as men to cope with heavy responsibilities regarding family welfare; they showed that they were able to carry out employment in almost any area of production or service, and this at a time when industry was considerably undermanned and the authorities were anxious to increase output, when rations were usually woefully inadequate and the work tempo was extremely hectic. By their experience in the production process more and more women became aware of the discrepancy between their essential value to the national cause and their disproportionate remuneration.³⁸ Furthermore, they were now more inclined to question discrimination, and began to take more interest in trade union affairs in order to seek more satisfactory solutions to their problems. In addition, some women, particularly young, unmarried ones, began to translate their enforced emancipation in the production process into a bid to effect a change in their general social status. They began to attack long-standing social habits and taboos by visiting places of entertainment unaccompanied, or else - for example - by smoking in public places. The change in female consciousness was later also reflected in increased participation by

women in sports' clubs after the war, and a trend to more 'daring' clothing and make-up fashions. When hostilities ceased in 1918, many women working in factories were probably glad to be relieved of their burdens of war work by soldiers returning home from the front.³⁹ Nevertheless, many young women, particularly those who were still unmarried could not return to a role which they had never known. Having led a relatively independent existence for the duration of the war, they found themselves equipped and ready to compete with men on the labour market afterwards. Despite exhortations from the authorities and the trade unions to stand down and make way for returning soldiers, many elected to keep their jobs or seek alternative employment, thus aggravating the employment problem.⁴⁰

For another fairly large section of women, namely the war-widows, the enforced emancipation of war was more permanent. Many of these could now look forward to a life with little chance of finding a new partner considering the unfavourable ratio of women to men in Germany,⁴¹ and had no choice, but to continue the newer role of breadwinner and mother.

4. Growing Economic Deprivation and Social Tension.

The war, far from being the means of social integration on which the authorities had pinned their hopes, clearly emphasised the deep fissures in German society. After the failure to force an early military victory, the pressures weighing on the civilian population, and in particular on the urban industrial class, began to increase at an alarming rate. Against a background of rising prices, falling wages in real terms owing to the effects of inflation, an unequal and inconsistent distribution of food and an ever-increasing intensification of production, morale began to sag. Owing to the foresight of several members of the town council, in particular some Social Democrats, and the offer of the Konsumgenossenschaft 'Einigkeit' to make its expertise available to the local authori-

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class was of utmost importance. Here again it was two Social Democrats, councillors Wilhelm Koch and Otto Degen, who managed to locate and purchase sufficient quantities in the Priegnitz area and have these transported to Remscheid.⁴⁷ A further important measure in the early part of the war was the introduction of the Städtischer Lebensmittelmarkt which operated on the basis of customer lists with ration books. For this purpose the town was divided into seven districts with about 250 distribution points in the form of grocer's shops.⁴⁸ Later in the war, in an effort to make the distribution of foodstuffs fairer, the Lebensmittelmarkt operated on a four-tier price basis. Prices were fixed each week and published in the newspapers. The four different prices were calculated on the basis of taxable income.⁴⁹

A similar system was introduced for the sale of fish in 1915 and worked quite well for a time. However, owing to the increasing restrictions of war placed on fishing in northern waters, the supplies of fish reaching Remscheid dwindled and later in the war more or less disappeared. Another innovation introduced by the local town council during the war years was the town's Schuhbesolungsanstalt (shoe repair centre), which employed around 100 workers, the majority of whom were prisoners of war. This institution, occasionally working with smuggled leather, was concerned mainly with the repairing of footwear but did also produce new shoes. One of its notable achievements was the repairing of the shoes of all Remscheid's junior school pupils.⁵⁰ The Vaterländische Frauenverein also repaired shoes.

During the course of the war, the town of Remscheid set up a number of Volksküchen (soup kitchens), primarily for the feeding of families whose mother was employed full-time and could therefore not provide a warm meal. Furthermore, the town provided five kitchens offering food for special diets for patients undergoing medical treatment.⁵¹

With regard to the question of rent, the town of Remscheid undertook to pay the rent of soldiers' families up to the amount of 30 marks per month. Local industrialist and councillor, Moritz Böker,

gave the council 250,000 marks in trust, the interest of which was to be used to subsidise rents of large families existing on less than 3,000 marks a year.⁵² The town council also organised the purchase of a town dairy situated in the Sauerland to alleviate milk shortages. A herd of dairy cattle was bought to provide milk, primarily for young children and hospital patients. Despite these measures, however, inadequate rations of milk was the norm for many local families.⁵³

These measures could only postpone or at best alleviate the very severe problems of food supply and distribution which developed in the course of time. Industrial centres like Remscheid were totally dependent on agricultural areas for their food supply, despite the fact that everything was done to cultivate unused land within the town boundaries.⁵⁴ Local inhabitants were encouraged to grow as much food as possible on their allotments in order to supplement rations. The newspaper published gardening tips to improve harvests, yet although self-help certainly alleviated, it could not hope to solve the problems of food supply.

Whereas much thought had been given to the military conduct of war in Wilhelmine Germany, not very much attention had been paid to the organisation of the home front. Military theory was completely shackled by the idea of a short, successful campaign lasting at the most only a few months. Because of this fact, Germany was only prepared for a brief exchange when war did occur. As we have already seen, a system of rationing was introduced at the outbreak of hostilities, but this was preempted by panic buying and hoarding, which led to initial shortages and a startling rise in prices. The authorities needed several weeks before they were able to bring a halt to these misdemeanours. In order to control and direct food supply policy, a system of quotas was introduced whereby farmers were obliged to sell a certain proportion of their crops to provincial agencies, which then directed these purchases to waiting markets. This measure, which was adopted in order to prevent shortages and heavy price rises, at times actually promoted such evils. In the case of Remscheid it seems that as long as the authorities were

allowed to purchase on the open market, supplies were usually regular and prices were relatively equitable.⁵⁵ The major effect of the quota system was a flourishing black market as farmers made higher profits on their surplus produce. The quota, which was fixed on a certain percentage of produce irrespective of the size of the harvest, met with much criticism, particularly from the socialist press. Trade unions pleaded constantly for a change of policy, arguing that black market transactions could be stopped immediately, if the government agencies were to buy all stocks of produce, except those actually required by the farmer for his own personal needs.⁵⁶ The Bergische Volksstimme, in an article entitled "Zur Kartoffelversorgung", on 14th November 1917, bitterly attacked the quota system on potatoes when, owing to shortages of other vital foodstuffs, industrial workers were more dependent on this basic vegetable than ever before. Nevertheless, farmers were still only required to supply 60 hundredweights per acre despite an excellent harvest. The article warned that the farmer was literally induced to sell his surplus on the black market, with the result that this caused higher prices, further shortages and a further decline in morale amongst the industrial working-class population. At this stage, the weekly potato ration stood at seven pounds per person. One of the root causes of shortages in food and fuel was the badly coordinated transport policy which relied heavily on an overburdened and undermanned railway system. Firstly, owing to the involvement of German troops in military action over a very wide area, supply lines primarily served by the railways were extended far beyond the boundaries in which these had ever operated in peace time. This meant that a sizeable amount of rolling stock had to be earmarked for troop movements to and from the front and between different fronts. Further stock was needed to supply the troops at the front with provisions and equipment. Furthermore, domestic organisation and planning was subject to sudden disruption owing to the interference of military schedules. These often changed at short notice according to the location of the battles.⁵⁷ The problem was further aggravated by the fact that the railway network

was not sufficiently equipped to bear the increased volume of freight. Before the war, much of the country's coal, iron ore and, to a certain extent, imported food was delivered and distributed by way of rivers and canals. However, during the war with the need to speed up transportation, much of this traffic was transferred to the railways.

Undermanning on the railways was yet another problem which manifested itself particularly with regard to repairs and maintenance. As the railways became more and more overburdened, the frequency of breakdowns owing to engine failure or of the temporary closure of tracks owing to signal failure etc. increased. Organisational mistakes led to waggon loads of fresh vegetables being left to stand in sidings during hot weather, with the result that when they finally reached their destination, they were completely unfit for human consumption. The outcome of such problems was that often ration quotas for the industrial centres existed merely on paper. Rolling stock could not be sufficiently replenished because of the higher priority placed on the manufacture of munitions and military equipment. Later in the war following the coal crisis, a higher priority was given to the manufacture of tracks, locomotives and railway trucks and to the exemption from military service of more labour to ensure speedier repairs and maintenance. These measures mitigated the problems but did not solve them.

Remscheid, as an industrial centre, was particularly dependent on the efficiency of the transportation system, for almost all of its food had to be brought in from other areas. Although the bulk of the town's supplies came from surrounding country areas like the Oberbergische Land and Sauerland, nevertheless many commodities came from areas situated much further afield. Remscheid was particularly vulnerable because the surrounding terrain precluded or at least made other methods of delivery difficult, so that a smooth-running railway system was essential.

For people living in industrial centres like Remscheid, opportunities for supplementing rations were fairly limited. Those who were fortunate enough to rent an allotment and had enough spare time

to work it, were able to help themselves to some extent, although the amounts they could grow were limited by the smallness of their gardens. A further restriction ensued from the almost permanent shortage of fertilizers. Nevertheless, newspapers helped hobby gardeners to attain better results by featuring regular gardening reports and alternative tips. Remscheid's raw climate, however, tended to preclude notable successes and limited the variety of crops. From time to time the authorities appealed to allotment tenants to plant particular crops to help alleviate a nationwide shortage. On one such occasion the newspapers appealed for sunflowers, which were needed for oil.⁵⁸

Another way of supplementing rations was to make foraging trips into the surrounding countryside to gather nuts and berries. Each year, during the summer months, thousands of Remscheid citizens streamed into the Oberbergische Land in search of wild fruits. Whenever possible, special trains were made available.⁵⁹ The search for extra vitamins in the countryside was accompanied by the publication of country recipes in the local newspapers. Herbal soups, various jams and cordials were reintroduced to Remscheid palates by the exigencies of war, and doubtlessly benefited a part of the working class population suffering from vitamin deficiency. This form of foraging expedition was tolerated by the authorities because it was expedient. Another practice, however, was discouraged, namely begging from farmers. Despite possible punishment, whole families would wander from farm to farm in search of milk, eggs, butter and left-over vegetables.⁶⁰ Some town dwellers took articles with them to exchange for food, whilst others offered money. If these strategies failed, some resorted to theft.⁶¹ In order to deter this practice of begging and foraging, gendarmes on horseback used to tour the countryside, stopping groups of women and children and confiscating their provisions. Baggage checks at railway stations were another method employed by the authorities to discourage sorties into the countryside for food.⁶²

When the authorities finally became alerted to the black market problem, which was favoured and promoted by foraging trips, they

tried to enlist the aid of railway personnel in order to rule out the use of railways for illicit excursions. Furious Landrate from the Oberbergische Land plied the railway authorities with complaints about the lack of vigilance of railway personnel and even of collusion between these and foragers. Complaints from Gummersbach, Waldbröl, and Landkreis Mülheim induced the police president of Elberfeld to address a letter to the local railway authority headquarters.⁶³ The letter suggested the following measures to prevent miscreants from using the railways. Heavy bags and luggage, which were too large to fit into the luggage rack, were to be handed in as accompanying baggage to travel in the goods van and were therefore subject to inspection. Railway employees were also exhorted to help the police with baggage checks, particularly at Bergisch Born, Wipperfürth, Marienheide and Dieringhausen, as these were favourite destinations of racketeers. It is not clear whether the practice of foraging by railway was completely suppressed by these measures for the remainder of the war. It is likely that the authorities only temporarily succeeded in making any impact on the activities of those looking for extra food and a chance to make large profits. However, less than six months after the end of the war, the Landrat of Gummersbach was again complaining to the railway authorities in Elberfeld of the increased activity of foragers from the industrial towns. The Landrat reported that hotel owners from Barmen were paying the usurious price of 80 marks per hundred-weight of potatoes, with the result that farmers were gladly selling off all their stocks, even seed potatoes earmarked for next year's crop. In his opinion, the main culprits were not the needy and indigent, but above all racketeers exploiting a precarious situation.⁶⁴

As the war progressed and money gradually lost in value owing to inflation caused by the government's policy of financing the war by printing more banknotes, a practice became common which was indubitably harmful to the rationing policy. This practice was the provision of bonuses by larger factories in the form of foodstuffs. Although this practice was regarded by the authorities as unaccept-

able, most large companies incorporated it in their pay policy.⁶⁵ Company agents toured country areas purchasing ostensibly surplus stocks of food from farmers and transporting them back to the factories. This form of transaction was especially opprobrious because it encouraged the farmers to fill up their official quotas with produce of poorer quality or else to attempt to swindle the government agencies by giving short-weights etc. Industrial buyers were able to pay higher prices than most individuals and were often able to supply valuable fertilizers which could either be kept or resold to other farmers at a handsome profit. Some unscrupulous agents afterwards proceeded to swindle workers of their company out of their extra provisions by reselling at a profit to another buyer. Such practices occurred regularly throughout the war years, mainly to the detriment of the urban working class, which was dependent on others for the delivery of food.

There were also a number of illegal methods of supplementing rations which, as the war dragged on, were adopted by increasingly large numbers. Tauschhandel (the exchange of goods) was an indictable offence which became widespread. It was above all the more well-to-do sections of the population who indulged in this form of transaction. The rich had assets which could either be exchanged for food or else be converted into cash for purchases on the black market. Workers were less able to participate in this barter system, as they did not as a rule have very much of value to offer. Furthermore, the exchange system was a time-consuming affair which required sufficient spare time.⁶⁶ Other malpractices which supplied the black market were the illegal butchery of animals, indulged in by some farmers, a ruse invariably worked by supplying the authorities with inaccurate data, and the feeding of potatoes, maize and other cereal crop to livestock in order to achieve higher weights. The latter malpractice could only be effectively combatted by granting high price rises for these staple foods, with the result that the workers suffered once more as this was passed on to them in the form of higher bread and potato prices.

As we have seen, the local authorities, in particular, had been anxious to introduce a fair system of rationing and were initially quite successful apart from the first few weeks when panic buying led to high prices and unnecessary shortages. In order to be better able to control prices locally, the Lebensmittelausschuß set up a tribunal, the price control board, to fix prices and make inquiries into cases of complaint regarding prices, weights and measures. The tribunal was given the power to hand over offenders to the police and the local courts for trial. Reports on proceedings appeared regularly in the newspapers and these called for more assistance from the civilian population to help track down offenders. A favourite practice among dishonest shopkeepers was the watering-down of milk or other liquids or else mixing additives to other foods. Such offences were severely punished, especially towards the end of the war.⁶⁷

The introduction of the quota system, however, with its many accompanying evils, some of which we have already seen, facilitated and encouraged the setting up of a flourishing black market. Frequent price rises, introduced in the hope of placating irate farmers, actually induced the latter to withhold supplies until the new prices came into force, so that there were artificially caused shortages in times of relative plenty. The higher price on turnips was reason enough for farmers to switch to this crop in preference to potatoes in a year when the potato harvest was by no means poor.⁶⁸ The authorities, owing to undermanning, were sorely pressed to detect offenders against the official prices policy. For these reasons the chances of making rich profits and remaining unpunished were fairly high. Even detection normally only meant a fine which could quickly be made good again by further rackets.

As we saw earlier in this chapter, Remscheid workers were not enthusiastic about the war. Undoubtedly there were those who were seized by the patriotic urge to do their duty and volunteer in the hope that they would return home victorious within a few weeks or months, but the majority remained sceptical and resigned themselves

to the coming uncertainty. It is hardly surprising then that as soon as the effects of the blockade and the many shortages began to be felt, there was widespread dissatisfaction and resentment which, however, was not allowed to be dissipated by precipitate and uncoordinated action, but was instead skilfully channelled into a revolutionary movement. The process of attrition suffered by the German working class was unquestionably more severe in towns in the Ruhrgebiet than in Remscheid⁶⁹ where the majority of workers was engaged in war production, earning high wages. Despite this fact, however, Remscheid workers were subjected to frequent shortages of foodstuffs and fuel and suffered miserably in the harsh winters. The last three winters of the war were marked by a chronic shortage of manpower (a permanent condition in Remscheid throughout the war), fuel crises, shortage of potatoes, bread and meat, which also led to cuts in rations, although it was believed that these foods were in plentiful supply. In spite of dwindling rations the work rate was constantly accelerated to make up for the shortage of manpower. Shifts were lengthened and legislation protecting women and youths from long working hours was suspended. An obvious consequence of longer shifts and an accelerated work tempo, given the deteriorating standard of nutrition, was a higher incidence of industrial accidents, due to fatigue and loss of concentration. Workers were driven to exhaustion without the hope of respite. A further result of the hectic tempo was the temptation to produce inaccurate work which, in the case of munitions, could and did have fatal consequences. Piece-workers in particular resorted to shortcuts in the assembly process, which in turn led to dud ammunition or even sometimes to unsafe fuses. Sometimes whole sections of workers were initiated in this kind of practice in order to meet required schedules. One such affair was discovered early in 1918 at the Mannesmann munitions factory.⁷⁰ Handgrenades which had been inaccurately turned were then beaten into shape with a hammer. Furthermore, cartons of grenades which had been rejected by the official controllers were given a forged stamp of approval and duly delivered to the front.

Undernourishment gradually lowered the resistance to illness amongst the workers and their families.⁷¹ Children and old people were particularly vulnerable. Each winter the twin evils of tuberculosis and pneumonia took their toll. Influenza epidemics hit Remscheid exceptionally hard during the last two winters of the war. Between 1st October and the end of December 1918, 398 people died from this illness.⁷² Working women had to contend not only with the requirements of their jobs but also with the perpetual worry of providing enough food for their families. They were also continually worried about their husbands serving at the front. These worries were constantly reinforced by the steady stream of military obituaries in the local newspapers, and the horror stories related by troops on leave.⁷³

Almost as bad as deprivation itself was the knowledge that others were not having to make the same sacrifices. The flaunting of wealth in the face of hunger and poverty had a disastrous effect on the morale of the workers and played a significant role in the poisoning of relations between the classes towards the end of the war. As the war progressed it became apparent to the workers that it was they who were laden with obligations whilst others seemed to be enjoying the opportunities of making fortunes. From time to time, the authorities made appeals to the rich not to provoke the workers by ostentatiously brandishing their wealth.

5. The Economic Situation and Political Activities of the Remscheid Bourgeoisie.

In accordance with the predictions of socialist theory, the war paradoxically breathed new life into the capitalist system. Within months, formerly ailing factories and workshops had been revived and were again working to full capacity. In this respect Remscheid was no exception. Several struggling and nearly moribund establishments were reprieved and then saved by the transition to war economy. In general, it was the larger factories like the Bergische Stahl Industrie, Mannesmannwerke, Alexanderwerk and Richard Linden-

berg etc. which profited most from the war, but also middle and small-sized firms were able to participate in sub-contracting and specialisation.

The introduction of central purchasing bureaus for the military ensured a steady flow of contracts which were then redistributed locally. This system had the advantage of making local industry independent of uncertain foreign markets and the vicissitudes of production and trade cycles. Furthermore, the trade union support of the Burgfrieden and their undertaking not to support strikes, augured well for the smooth running of production and the generating of increased profits. If Germany could win the war and conquer new markets, industry would be able to expand prodigiously, as it had following the victory of 1871. In such a situation Remscheid, with its already well-developed world-wide network of contacts, considerable trading expertise and manufacture of special tools for a world becoming increasingly mechanised, would grow yet further in stature and prosper enormously. Juxtaposed to these important pre-conditions for the untrammelled prosperity of employers, were the presence of a highly skilled and traditionally militant workforce and a shortage of skilled manpower which in the course of the war increased to chronic proportions.

The Remscheid tool industry appears to have paid its skilled workers high wages and compared favourably with bigger towns like Berlin, Düsseldorf, Essen, Duisburg, etc.⁷⁴ Furthermore, a lower cost of living and an undoubtedly better quality of life in the smaller Bergische town made it infinitely more attractive. On the other hand, in order to earn top rates of payment, Remscheid workers had to produce on a piece-work basis which meant a higher intensity. At the flat rate Remscheid occupied a fairly low-to-middle position for most skilled jobs, although added bonuses tended to close the gap somewhat.⁷⁵ During the war however, when skilled labour was in short supply, local industry was compelled to offer wages in excess of the official rates, and, as we have already seen, bonuses in the form of provisions. Differentials between skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers also began to increase again during the war, after a period of stagnation.

The shortage of manpower, particularly skilled workers, during the war years was primarily compensated by longer shifts for all workers. On the whole it was the larger factories engaged in war production which were most successful in reclaiming skilled workers from their call-up duty. As the war progressed, however, and the military sustained heavier losses, even large factories like the BSI and Mannesmann found it increasingly difficult to hold on to those skilled workers who had been released from military duty.

Another method by which industrialists hoped to compensate for the shortage of manpower was by an increased work tempo, inevitably leading to a rise in the number of industrial accidents, as an undernourished, undermanned and exhausted workforce struggled to keep pace with requirements.⁷⁶ A further result of the faster work rate was the higher incidence of faulty products and the greater frequency of breakdowns as the demands on old machinery were extremely rigorous.

The high wages paid to German and foreign workers were to a certain extent neutralised by the increased exploitation of prisoners of war who were paid at the lowest rate, some of them for doing highly skilled work. Skilled foreign workers were attracted to Remscheid by high rates of pay, and by the end of the war accounted for a substantial section of local skilled labour.⁷⁷

High wages paid to skilled workers were also in part offset by the influx of women into local industry. Like POWs they were also exploited unashamedly, working long shifts for extremely low rates of pay.⁷⁸

A further consequence of the manpower shortage was the promulgation of the Vaterlandische Hilfsdienstgesetz (Auxiliary Law) in December 1916. As it was generally recognised that the well-to-do often needed to be coerced into doing their patriotic duty,⁷⁹ the authorities insisted on the drafting of all males between 17 and 60 years who were not serving in the armed forces into relevant areas of war production. Some wealthy people were able to profit from personal contacts to have themselves either exempted or else to secure easy desk jobs. On the other hand, many were drafted into

war production who had hitherto never worked in a factory. Very often such people were subjected to derision because of their physical stature or because they lacked the necessary strength to do the job properly. Nevertheless the law did succeed in mobilising hitherto untapped resources of manpower, which from then on helped to share the burden borne by the workers.⁸⁰ As opposition to the war became more and more vociferous the military authorities began to insist on the call-up of political activists who had been reclaimed from military service by their employers. This threat of reporting political troublemakers was used quite frequently and very probably contributed considerably to subduing opposition to the war and the status quo for so long. The fate of Wilhelm Dittmann was proof enough to local workers that the threats of release to the military authorities were genuine.⁸¹

At this point it would seem expedient to consider the prices of staple foods which formed the basis of the traditional diet of the local working class and of combustible fuels in order to demonstrate the loss of purchasing power experienced by the workers during the course of the war. Considering the failure to locate a more complete list of items from which an accurate index could be calculated, we must suffice with a rough estimate, which is arrived at by the correlation of basic wage rates and the prices of the most important food and fuel items. It must be remembered that the prices indicated in table 5 are those officially fixed by the Remscheid Prices Control Board as equitable to both producers and consumers. The information supplied in the table does not reflect black market prices which were, of course, much higher and would have constituted an index much nearer to reality had they been available instead. All the items listed in table 5 were rationed and sold in exchange for the indicated officially fixed amount and the appropriate coupon. Rations fluctuated according to the availability of individual items. Potatoes, for example, were rationed at 10 lbs (5,000 grams) per head per week, but after the first 12 months of war were reduced to seven pounds per person per week, and at one point slipped to three pounds plus extra turnips.⁸² The

fact that other vital foodstuffs were also in short supply or else completely unavailable poignantly illustrates the inadequacy of these rations, and gives a clear indication of the catastrophic standard of nutrition in both quantitative and qualitative terms of those who had no means of supplementing their diet in other ways. Fuel rations also fluctuated considerably. During the coal crisis, which unfortunately coincided with the miseries of the 'turnip winter', coal was rationed at a maximum of two buckets per household per week. Furthermore, those households which already had coal in their cellars were precluded from further purchase although it is not clear how the authorities meant to enforce this rule. The misery caused by the coal crisis and the coal decree was exacerbated by the knowledge that much of the coal which was available was earmarked for industrial use. The penalties for selling industrial coal to private households were particularly stiff: six months imprisonment or 10,000 marks fine.⁸³ The Rheinisch-Westfalische Elektrizitätswerk (RWE) also experienced difficulties in supplying electricity so that it became necessary to prohibit the lighting of shopwindows. In February certain schools were closed down because of the shortage of heating fuel.⁸⁴ The plundering of coal trucks in the railway goods yards became a perilous game for working-class children during the winter months.⁸⁵ The effects of the coal crisis, which was caused primarily by the lack of miners, the shortage of rolling stock and an increased demand from industry, persisted for most of the following year, so that an official coal report, written in Remscheid in September, stated that 19,000 households depended on coal supplies, and that a hundredweight per family per week would amount to 16 coal trucks per day and that the current supply stood at 11.⁸⁶ It was further calculated that something in the region of five to six thousand families were regularly receiving coal bonuses from their employers. In the same month (September 1917) the petroleum ration was reduced from eight litres to five and a half per month.⁸⁷ From this it should therefore be clear that the listing of priced items in table 5 indicates only the availability but not necessarily the correspond-

ing fixed rations. From this it follows that official rations very frequently only existed on paper. The blank squares in table 5 indicate the unavailability of the corresponding items. Other food-stuffs not listed, eg. fruit and fish, were only seldom available although frequently obtainable on the black market.

If one now considers the case of a highly skilled male worker over the age of 24 years employed in the Remscheid metal industry and earning the basic hourly rate as indicated in table 6 and assuming that this rate constitutes his net pay, one can roughly gauge his standard of living during the course of the war.

Table 7 shows the purchasing power of a skilled metalworker over the age of 24 years, a member of the cream of the Remscheid workforce. The table reveals a considerable loss of purchasing power during the eighteen months separating the two shopping days 24/5/16 and 25/11/17. It is also essential to recall that during this period supplies were erratic and in general tending to shortages in the most important items. On 25/2/18 the same worker was now earning 1 mark 20 per hour so that in theory, at least, the ratio of his wage to official prices had altered in his favour. However, the actual picture was far different. Although this worker's wages had risen considerably, supplies had become much worse and the most important items were only regularly available on the black market at prices which the individual in question most certainly could not afford. If one considers that this worker was married and had three or four dependent children and a wife who did not work, then his fortunes already appear gloomier, despite the various bonuses in extra rations which he may or may not have received. Although his net wage increased each year, it failed to keep pace with official prices until the end of 1917, and only in the final year of the war did his take-home pay leap above that of official prices. The fact that money had lost considerably in value owing to quickening inflation and that therefore the black market prices were a truer indicator than those fixed officially by the prices control board, reveals a picture of misery and hardship suffered not only by this individual but particularly by other categories of workers employed

in the highly paying Remscheid metal industry. If we consider the plight of an unskilled female worker employed by the Alexanderwerk in November and December 1917⁸⁸ the true extent of misery and hardship becomes clear, particularly if we assume that she is married or widowed and has two dependent children.⁸⁹

<u>date</u>	<u>hourly rate</u>	<u>time worked</u>	<u>to buy</u>
25/11/17	30 pfennigs	32 mins.	1 lb. carrots
		1 hr. 18 mins.	1 egg
		1 hr. 40 mins.	1 litre milk
		7 hrs. 30 mins.	1 cwt. coal
		6 hrs. 40 mins.	1 lb. margarine
		47 mins.	1 lb. war bread
		19 mins.	1 lb. potatoes.

It has already been established in this chapter that the bulk of local establishments became involved in war production and were very soon working at maximum capacity. The exploitation of female labour, prisoners of war and youths also considerably reduced overheads on production, so that it was clear that a great deal of wealth was being generated in Remscheid's iron and steel industry. The treasurers' annual reports of Remscheid's largest firms show an embarrassingly consistent increase in profits. The Alexanderwerk for instance announced an increased turnover for the year 1915/16 from 5.973.276 marks to 7.087.689 marks and an increase in profits from 1.703.522 to 1.922.688 marks.⁹⁰ The turnover of the Alexanderwerk continued to increase so that shareholders received handsome dividends throughout the whole of the war period.⁹¹ In November 1917 shareholders of Richard Lindenberg were consulted on the question of increasing share capital from three to four million marks by issuing new shares. The move was agreed and 1.200.000 marks were earmarked for this undertaking from the 1916/17 profits.⁹² It was presumably soaring profits which induced Richard Lindenberg to purchase a villa in Alsace, an investment which re-

mained inflationproof. In January 1918 the Mannesmann-Röhrenwerke increased its share capital by 14 million marks to a total of 86 million and this was only one of two Mannesmann factories based in Remscheid.⁹³ The Bergische Stahl-Industrie's turn-over increased in the following way:

1913/14	14.117.878 marks	
1914/15		17.379.238 marks
1915/16	32.099.394 marks	
1916/17		40.205.935 marks
1917/18	67.350.376 marks	
1918/19	44.293.944 marks.	⁹⁴

A table published by the Bergische Volksstimme in 1917 revealed the amount of wealth in Remscheid at the beginning of the war. Of the ten different towns and areas surveyed, Remscheid had the highest proportionate income.⁹⁵

The newspaper article featuring table 8 suggested that Remscheid had already usurped the title of 'land of unlimited opportunity' from America. This picture is confirmed by an article appearing in 1919, which announced that according to the Prussian tax commission Remscheid occupied first place in respect of payment of war taxes, which meant in fact that Remscheid had proportionately made the largest profits during the war.⁹⁶ In 1918, of the approximate 76,000 inhabitants, 21,400 were subject to income tax. Of these, 16,200 earned below 3,000 Marks p.a. and 5,200 earned more than 3,000 Marks p.a. Of these, 106 were taxed on an income of more than 100,000 Marks p.a. These figures help to show that Remscheid became a veritable gold-mine, particularly for the industrialists and manufacturers during the war years. The mayor in his annual report for 1918/19 was able to point to an increase of eleven million marks in the local savings bank's deposits which leapt from 38 to 49 million marks despite the economic depression which set in with military collapse.⁹⁷

So far, the profits examined were those which were officially presented for taxation and may be regarded as legally earned and de-

clared income. However, this was not the complete picture as a tax fraud scandal of gigantic proportions revealed during the course of the last year of war.⁹⁸ At the centre of the scandal was the general director of the Mannesmann Waffen- und Munitionswerke, Adels, who had been awarded the commendational medal (Verdienstkreuz) for meritorious service to the war effort. Adels had since 1914 consistently failed to declare considerable portions of his income. For the year 1916 he declared an income of 11,700 marks although inquiries subsequently revealed an actual income of 22,700 marks. For the year 1917 Adels declared 49,150 although his real income was in fact 412,590 marks. Together with an accomplice he smuggled a sum of 520,000 Swiss Francs out of the country and deposited this in a Zurich bank. When the scandal came to light the accomplice committed suicide. The factory manager, director Karl Egg⁹⁹, was also implicated in the scandal, as was one of the factory's main suppliers. The sentences were extremely lenient when compared to those meted out to opponents of the war and those found distributing anti-war leaflets. Director Adels was fined a sum of 1,552 marks or sentenced to one year and six weeks imprisonment, of which five months spent in custody whilst inquiries were being made, were deducted from the total. The public prosecutor's appeal for the suspension of civil rights for a period of five years was not granted, which effectively meant that director Adels was permitted to continue wearing his medal for exemplary service to the war effort.¹⁰⁰ The case considered above serves to illustrate the opportunities for making large profits both legally and illegally in Remscheid during the war. It appears to have been an exception as far as the amounts involved are concerned. The effects of this scandal and the announcement of legal profits were exceedingly damaging to the morale of war-weary workers struggling to secure even the most basic needs of their families.

The extent to which the local middle and upper-middle classes indulged in the pursuit of pleasure during the war years remains essentially speculative. Owing to stringent censorship reports on the recreation of the well-to-do were forbidden and therefore this

aspect was relegated to the status of gossip. Secret military reports, however, confirmed many of the rumours which circulated during the war years. The selfish hedonism of the idle rich had its worst excesses in the spas of the South and the seaside resorts of the North.¹⁰¹ It is doubtful whether members of the Remscheid elite engaged in such pursuits as they were traditionally fairly modest and reserved as well as discrete with regard to recreation.¹⁰² A traditional domain of the wives of local manufacturers was charity and welfare and it may be assumed that they regarded their 'work' as pleasurable. On the other hand, the ladies of wealthier manufacturers insisted on the employment of housemaids in order to be released from the burdens of housework for more satisfying pastimes. The war, however, did not alter their demand for housemaids although the supply was no longer as plentiful as in previous years. Despite this fact there were still opportunities for young girls to acquire the techniques which were necessary for employment in the better houses. An advertisement in the BV testifies to the persistent demand for assiduous housemaids with polished manners - the knowledge and manners could be acquired by attending Jenny Schumacher's "Tischdeck- und Servierkurs" (table setting and waitress course) costing 15 marks, three days a week, at the illustrious Hotel zum Weinberg.¹⁰³

Other forms of work which bourgeois ladies engaged in were the various collections for the war effort as, for example, the collection for submarines which, on three days in June, raised 30,509 marks. The committee which formed to organise this venture came exclusively from Remscheid's upper-middle class. Of the final total only 8,980 marks were collected on the streets, the larger amounts came from industry, eg. 20,000 marks from the BSI, 1,000 marks from Walter Hentzen & Co., which requested no publicity, and several other establishments.¹⁰⁴ Hindenburg collections produced a similar response and the willing cooperation of the local upper-middle class. As we have already established, the manufacturing, higher civil servant and professional middle class had set their sights on a successful conclusion to the war, which held the

prospect of new markets and sources of raw materials. This together with the fact that they did not suffer hardship and misery as did the working class and parts of the lower-middle class, ensured their support for the Durchhaltepolitik demanded by the nationalist-chauvinist Vaterlandspartei.

The year 1917 revealed more clearly the polarisation of German society than any other previously. The rigours of the 'turnip-winter', the increasingly vociferous and militant opposition to the war which resulted from the recognition of diverging interests and which finally destroyed the illusion of the Burgfrieden, the entry of the United States into the war on the side of the Western Allies, and the revolution in Russia on the one hand, the decision to unleash all-out submarine warfare, the annexationist demands of the Alldeutschen (Pan German League), and the victory on the eastern front on the other hand, were all facts which played a role in the organisation of pro-nationalist forces in a supra-party movement to disseminate chauvinist propaganda and attempt to encourage a final mighty effort which would finish the war before the Americans had time seriously to influence the course of events.

The local branch of the Vaterlandspartei was formed in November 1917,¹⁰⁵ and a few days later published a full-page manifesto and membership-list in the RGA.¹⁰⁶ The governing committee of seven was under the chairmanship of industrialist, Alfred Klingenberg, owner of a flourishing middle-sized firm engaged in war production, and his deputy Peter Hollender, headmaster. The remaining committee members were two more industrialists/manufacturers, an influential businessman representing the interests of export, a foreman (Werkmeister) and a warehouseman, Wilhelm Schroeder, who after the war became a leading member of the Deutsch-Nationale Volkspartei (DNVP).

The Activities Committee, which was the main decision-making body, consisted of five of Remscheid's most influential industrialists and the wives of two others, Dr. Alfred Ziegler, the owner of the

Remscheider General Anzeiger (RGA), Kommerzienrat (councillor of commerce), Hermann Hasenclever, several senior teachers, senior civil servants, two representatives from the church, a few lawyers and wealthier shop and warehouse owners and one bricklayer. Apart from these the local party had a further 275 ordinary members, consisting of at least 73 industrialists/manufacturers, at least 51 independent businessmen (Kaufmanner), 41 senior civil servants, six pastors/priests, five doctors, 17 Prokuristen and engineers (senior staff in industry), six lower civil servants, three bank directors, two architects, two chemists, one lieutenant of the army reserve, one pub landlord, 21 Werkmeister or master craftsmen (probably independent) and lower-middle class white-collar workers and 14 who could be positively identified as workers, and the rest were of indeterminate social origin. This composition means that at least 229 of the total of 275 definitely did not belong to the working class. This, as we shall see in the following chapters, was roughly the dividing line of class interests in the polarisation of Remscheid society throughout the Weimar Republic, less rigidly during the Nazi period and again after the demise of the Third Reich. The interests aligned on both sides constitute important elements of continuity throughout almost the whole period under examination in this study. More importantly, its appearance as a loosely-organised bourgeois coalition accentuated the polarisation in Remscheid society, which had been briefly obfuscated by the Burgfrieden, and which was to remain in evidence throughout the whole of the period with which this study is concerned.

In its statement of policy the Vaterlandspartei professed the intention of collecting together all the various patriotic groups and individuals in a supra-party structure in order to lend convincing support to the government and strengthen the resolve of the people to hold out and win the war. The manifesto explicitly eschewed competition with existing parties and promised to disband as soon as peace was signed. The essence of the manifesto was an appeal to postpone all social grievances and quarrels until hostilities had ceased.

Then, in a more direct address to local inhabitants, the local branch reminded Remscheid citizens of their obligation to a system which had granted them social benefits that were beyond comparison in the enemy states. It assured readers that since the inception of unrestricted submarine warfare, England was faced with a race against time which it could not win. Furthermore, Russia was in a state of collapse as was Italy, and the French had lost their will to fight. The appeal closed with a reminder of the implications of victory:

'Denkt an die Ausfuhr Eurer Erzeugnisse, Manner der Industrie: Arbeiter und Fabrikanten. Ude seht Ihr die groBen Gebaude der Ausfuhrfirmen, die ruhmlich den deutschen Namen in die fernsten Teile der Erde getragen, Euch Arbeitern lohnenden Verdienst gegeben haben. Die starke Beschaffung der Ristungsbetriebe bleibt nicht. Dann muB der Auslandsmarkt wieder offenstehen, um den Uberschuss der Erzeugung an Waren aller Art uiber den Inlandsbedarf nach dem Auslande abzusetzen. Geht's nach dem Willen Englands und seiner Trabanten, dann bleiben uns die Auslandsmarkte dauernd verschlossen. Was das bedeutet, durfte jedem Arbeiter, Fabrikanten und Handelsherrn klar sein. Nur ein siegreicher Friede buirgt uns fur eine Betatigung auf gleichberechtigter Grundlage im Wettbewerb mit dem Auslande.¹⁰⁷

The Vaterlandspartei held meetings regularly and organised patriotic evenings in order to raise funds for the war effort. Locally its impact was fairly limited. For obvious reasons it attracted support from the established middle class, but was not able to make significant inroads into the working class or the 'new' and lower-middle class for that matter.

6. The Development of Class Conflict in Remscheid during the War.

The following is an attempt to explain the development of class conflict in Remscheid during the last three years of war by means of the Kocka model as explained in the introduction.¹⁰⁸ The analysis will be continued in Chapter II for the period 1918 to 1923.

The essential fact to keep in mind when applying a model like this to a single community is that community's lack of autonomy and its subordination to a wider economic and political region (in this case the Land), and then the whole country.

Owing to the given situation in Remscheid society¹⁰⁹, there already existed a distinct divergence of class interests before the outbreak of war. On the one hand there was a relatively small industrialist/manufacturer class, supported by the state civil service apparatus, and on the other the mass of wage-earners. The allegiance of salary-earners is more problematic, as the demarcation line runs through this category.¹¹⁰

In class terms the lower-middle class or the 'new' middle class, consisting of those employed in industry, ie. in offices, typing pools etc., tended not to identify with the workers, and their vocational organisations were anxious to emphasise the difference separating the two classes although economically they were on the whole just as dependent as the proletariat. During the course of the war the new middle class suffered the same kind of impoverishment as the proletariat¹¹¹

During the course of the war there was a further divergence of class interests locally, as owing to the boom-like conditions in war production the industrialist/manufacturer class were making vast profits to the detriment of the health of workers and their families. The workers did not profit from the war, on the contrary they suffered accelerated impoverishment.

Class hostility had been a regular feature in Remscheid society over the preceding two or three decades but it intensified qualitatively and quantitatively during the war years, particularly from

1916 onwards. As the divergence of class interests became more acute, so did class hostility. Firstly, even at the politically unorganised level it became clear to Remscheid metal workers that they were vital to the war production programme and hence for the prosecution of war per se. However, instead of benefiting from their key position they were called upon to make even greater sacrifices, eg. to work longer hours, to speed up the production process, to tolerate frequent ration shortages, to make do with inadequate supplies of fuel and to go without, or content themselves with minimal opportunities of entertainment, etc. Wage increases did not keep pace with price rises so that the workers and the majority of industrialist white-collar workers were actually economically worse off than they had been before the war. Inflation and a flourishing black market rendered wage increases completely ineffective, so that by the time the workers did receive a real improvement in paid recompense for their labour, they were not able to acquire even the most basic foodstuffs as these were often only obtainable at black market prices. Despite ration shortages, the workers were further demoralised by the exhortations to hold out and make further sacrifices. On the other hand, they were aware of the profits being made by their employers and they also noticed that malnutrition did not occur in the ranks of the industrialists/manufacturers and senior civil servants. Many workers became conscious that manufacturers and senior civil servants were able to pay black market prices or at least exchange goods for foodstuffs and clothing.

Undoubtedly class hostility was intensified by the spread of rumours around the factory and proletarian districts, as it was by party agitation on the part of the socialist youth, the USPD and Spartakists.

As already noted, it was apparent from the very outbreak of hostilities that the majority of Remscheid's organised workers were against the war. Opposition to official Burgfrieden policy developed rapidly in the local branches of the SPD and DMV. At the national DMV conference in 1915, for instance, the Remscheid branch

tabled a motion condemning the Metallarbeiter-Zeitungs's pro-Burgfrieden stance.¹¹² Again at the 1917 conference held in Cologne, the Remscheid branch of the DMV condemned the national committee's war policy in general, and strongly rebuked those trade union leaders belonging to their organisation who had assisted in the formulation of the Vaterlandische Hilfsdienst law, which severely restricted the mobility of the workers.¹¹³ In March 1918 Remscheid officials of the union together with colleagues from Düsseldorf and Solingen reproached the DMV national committee for its publication of an appeal warning members of the dangers of civil war and 'Russian conditions', and asking them to ignore revolutionary leaflets and agitators. In April, the Remscheid branch again attacked the Metallarbeiter-Zeitung position on social and political questions.¹¹⁴ From this it is clear that at least the majority of local DMV officials were opposed to their trade union's official policy of supporting the war. It is also extremely likely that the DMV's local officials were supported in their opposition to DMV policy, although - as elsewhere - membership had slumped between 1914 and 1918 from around three and a half thousand to 900.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, local functionaries like Heinrich Schliestedt, Cornelius Gohr, etc. constantly advised the workers how to exploit the employment situation to their advantage.¹¹⁶ Likewise opposition within the local SPD branch was articulated more and more vociferously with the protraction of the war. The Reichstag deputy for Lennep, Wilhelm Dittmann, earned the criticism of the local cadre members for failing to vote against the war credits. He rectified this in March 1915.¹¹⁷ Again on 21/12/15 Dittmann voted against the credits and his action was warmly approved of by local functionaries who appealed to the SPD group in the Reichstag to abandon Burgfrieden in favour of socialist policies.¹¹⁸ Other prominent local party leaders like Otto Braß, Willi Grütz, Rudolf Bühler, also made their disapproval of official party policy known. The first two played very prominent roles in the organisation of the USPD which was formed in April 1917 at a congress in Gotha.

Whilst Dittmann became one of the new party's recognised leaders, Grütz was voted onto the Beirat (steering committee)¹¹⁹ and Braß was party chairman of the Lower Rhineland¹²⁰. The socialist youths were also active in protesting against the war by disseminating oppositional material in the factories and at the front. The illegal "Jugendinternationale" and "Spartakusbriefe" were distributed and read in Remscheid, and local delegates participated in the international youth conferences in 1916, 1917 and 1918.¹²¹ The RAZ/BV became less cautious, particularly after the winter of 1916/17, and played an important part in interpreting events and enlightening the workers.

With so much opposition present in the town, not merely to the war but to the capitalist system, it is likely that most workers were aware of the opposition's arguments and many were able to identify with these by relating them to their own experience. Local party and trade union representatives were highly respected figures whom the workers felt they could trust and the arguments they used were liberally interspersed with examples taken from their immediate surroundings. It is clear that in such dire circumstances many more workers were prepared to consider the arguments of radical Socialists than had been the case before the war.

The highly skilled metal workers of Remscheid who constituted the 'aristocracy of labour' became increasingly aware of the discrepancy between their actual declining economic position and the rewards which they considered their vital contribution to the country's war effort should have brought them. The consciousness of this argument plus the close proximity of a virulent opposition and the knowledge that their employers were reaping rich profits and not suffering any noticeable hardships, were the salient prerequisites for open conflict.¹²² This phase of class hostility became an almost permanent feature in Remscheid during the period 1916 to 1950 with the exception of the period of the Third Reich.¹²³

Open conflict in Remscheid followed a relatively long period of maturation. As protest became more overt, suppression on the part of the authorities became harsher. House searches and general

harassment by the police took on a more regular pattern.¹²⁴ The authorities, in collusion with the employers, became more willing to denounce agitators, so that these were then conscripted. Leafleteers were sentenced to terms of imprisonment and/or afterwards were drafted to the front. Despite these measures the police were unsuccessful in quelling the considerable discontent. As already noted, there was an extremely able opposition which skilfully channelled the workers' dissatisfaction. The local radical Socialists pointed out the injustices of the capitalist system and propagated the seizure of power by the workers in order to terminate the war and construct a socialist society. Moreover, the opposition had an excellently functioning system of communications, not merely in Remscheid where by now all the workers' institutions were exclusively in the hands of the USPD, but also between the Remscheid workers' institutions and those in other industrial towns. Otto Braß and Willi Grütz also maintained lines of communication with the USPD throughout the Reich, and Braß had links with the revolutionary workers' cells in the Berlin munitions factories.¹²⁵ In January 1918, at the beginning of another harsh winter, the conductresses on the Remscheid trams came out on strike and were joined soon after by the male drivers. In the press the dispute was portrayed as a purely economic affair with the conductresses and their colleagues demanding more pay.¹²⁶ The strike, however, reflected widespread discontent not merely amongst the strikers but also amongst the whole working population. There was concern that as the country entered the fifth winter of war, the end was nowhere in sight, and in addition the recent appeals of the Vaterlandspartei gave the impression that some who were profiting from the war did not really desire its conclusion. The Russian Revolution had shown that the workers were capable of bringing a sudden end to hostilities and seizing power. The previous summer had witnessed a successful strike by the ribbon workers of Ronsdorf and Luttringhausen and towns along the Wupper.¹²⁷ The period immediately before Christmas had been accompanied by the ubiquitous shortages, on this occasion potatoes¹²⁸, salt¹²⁹, and sugar¹³⁰.

Just before Christmas the workers of the BSI¹³¹ and Alexanderwerk¹³² demanded a reduction of working hours, improved rations and a pay increase. Workers also demanded changes in the rule which compelled them to remain at their place of work during break-downs and which accorded them payment only after a waiting period of four hours. The workers claimed that failure on the part of management to comply with these demands would be answered by a strike. The mood of the working population had changed over the previous twelve months from one of dejection and resignation to one of belligerence. The transport workers' strike ended after four or five days, but the settlement did little to allay the rising discontent. In July the total Remscheid workforce came out on strike demanding extra pay to combat price rises and the effects of inflation, and a reduction of shifts from 58-60 hours to 52 1/2.¹³³ The strike lasted from 2nd July to 25th July and ended favourably for the workers.

From the summer onwards demands for an end to the war were repeatedly heard in Remscheid. The failure of the July offensive had demoralised the military authorities and large sections of the bourgeoisie became resigned to defeat. As Remscheid workers were planning to seize control locally, the sailors revolted in Kiel and triggered off the revolution.¹³⁴

The war had clearly radicalised the working class of Remscheid, particularly from 1916 onwards. The ever-increasing share of the war burden which fell to the manual and clerical workers, the diminishing remuneration in real terms and the monumental decline in the quality of life which accompanied this, combined to promote widespread dissatisfaction amongst these sections of society. The manual workers in particular began to understand the vital nature of their role in the war effort and did not fail to perceive the glaring discrepancy between performance and reward. Woefully inadequate and irregular rations, the increased production tempo plus the longer hours of work demanded of them over prolonged, seemingly endless periods of time, sapped the workers' strength and heightened

their desire for peace. On the other hand the repeated calls for the workers to redouble their efforts and hold on until a military victory could be achieved, the growing chorus of vehement remonstrations by the Alldeutschen, the Vaterlandspartei and other right-wing groups against those who wanted an end to the war without military gains, the conspicuous dealings of a flourishing black market patronised above all by the rich, war-profiteering and corruption, all combined to infuriate the war-weary working class. The presence of an active workers' movement which by way of its various institutions was amply able to expose the inequality of suffering and reveal the many malpractices of profiteers, was an essential factor in the transformation of workers' resignation into positive revolutionary action. The suppression of criticism, the authorities' apparent eagerness to mete out often disproportionately harsh punishment to those engaged in oppositional activity and the growing desperation of an antiquated ruling order tottering on the point of collapse, were the factors which elevated existing class hostility to the level of open conflict which broke out at the end of 1918. The period between 1918 and 1923, as will be seen in the following chapter, was characterised by intense class hostility punctuated by situations of open conflict, but which ended in a serious setback for the Remscheid workers' movement, bringing the revolutionary period to a close.

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TABLE 5 : Retail prices of basic foods and fuel in Remscheid¹

	1910 ⁴ -12	25/10/15	24/5/16	10/10/16	5/12/16	30/2/17	8/8/17	25/11/17	25/2/18	17/8/18	25/12/18									
Potatoes / 500 gms	0,22 ^c	0,04	0,16 ^{1/2}	0,07	0,07	0,06	0,06	0,05	0,05	0,05 ^{1/2}	0,07 ^{1/2}	0,25	0,25	0,59 ^{1/2}	0,09 ^{1/2}					
Bread, war loaf / 500 gms		0,65	0,65	0,21	0,21	0,21	0,21	0,21	0,21	0,21	0,21	0,21	0,21	0,23 ^{1/3}	0,23 ^{1/3}	0,23 ^{1/3}	0,23 ^{1/3}	0,25	0,23 ^{1/3}	0,23 ^{1/3}
flour / 500 gms	0,18 ^d			0,26	0,26	0,26	0,26	0,26	0,26	0,26	0,26	0,26	0,26	0,23	0,23	0,23	0,23	0,29	0,23	0,23
Full-fat milk / litre	0,22 ^d	0,25	0,29	0,30	0,30	0,32	0,35	0,32	0,35	0,38	0,40	0,40	0,40	0,50	0,50	0,54	0,56		0,54	0,56
Dairy butter / 500 gms ^{1a}	1,50 ^d	2,75	2,80	2,55	2,55	2,55	2,55	2,55	2,55	3,10	3,10	3,20	3,20			3,20	3,20		3,20	3,20
Country butter / 500 gms ^{1b}		-	-	4,40 ^{5/}	4,50 ^{5/}	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,20	3,20	5,52 ^{5/}	5,52 ^{5/}		-	-
Margarine / 500 gms		1,60	1,40	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00		2,00	2,00
Pork dripping / 500 gms		2,20	2,60	2,60	2,60					4,80 ^{5/}	4,80 ^{5/}									
Bacon / Speck / 500 gms	0,95 ^c	2,00	2,60	2,30	2,30															
Meat / beef / 500 gms	0,85 ^c	1,20	1,30	2,05	2,10	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,75	2,70	2,70	2,40	2,40	2,20	2,20		2,40	2,40
Meat / pork / 500 gms	0,80 ^c	2,20	2,30	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00	2,00									
Fresh eggs / each	0,10 ^c	0,20	0,23	0,24	0,25	0,32	0,37	0,32	0,32			0,34	0,34	0,39 ^{6/}	0,39 ^{6/}	0,48 ^{6/}	0,48 ^{6/}		0,48	0,48
Peas / 500 gms																				
Beans / 500 gms		0,60	0,70	0,64	0,65							1,60 ^{5/}	1,60							
Turnips / 500 gms		0,06	0,10	0,10	0,15			0,08	0,13	0,06 ^{1/2}	0,06 ^{1/2}			0,08	0,08	0,09	0,09		0,08	0,08
Carrots / 500 gms			0,15	0,28	0,20	0,25	0,13	0,25	0,38	0,40				0,16	0,16	0,16	0,18		0,13	0,13
Graupen / 500 gms			0,45	0,49	0,40	0,40			0,30	0,30	0,30	0,30	0,30	0,30	0,30	0,36	0,36			
Dutch cheese / 500 gms			2,00	2,00	1,60	1,60														
Cabbage / white / 500 gms			0,10	0,10	0,06	0,12	0,06	0,12	0,30	0,40				0,12	0,12	0,25	0,25		0,12	0,12
Coal / hundredweight			1,40	1,40	1,45	1,45	1,45	1,45	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	1,75	2,25	2,25	2,45	2,45		2,25	2,25

1 Unless otherwise stated taken from Remscheid, price control board. Where blanks occur it can be taken that these items were not officially available in Remscheid.

1a This does not suggest that butter formed part of the local working-class staple diet.

2 7/20 litre = normal glass sold in a pub.

3 Usually a mixture of coffee beans and substitute.

4c prices for 1910

4d prices for 1912 taken from Statistik des Deutschen Reich Berlin 1913, foreign produce

5 Kühlhaus und

6 Kalkeier each

TABLE 6 : Hourly rate of pay in Remscheid industry from 1914 to 1922, workers over 24 years of age.

Year	skilled	semi-skilled	unskilled
31/07/14	0,45	0,40	0,35
01/01/15	0,59	0,45	0,40
01/01/16	0,73	0,60	0,50
01/01/17	0,80	0,70	0,50
01/01/18	1,20	0,92	0,60
01/01/19	1,50	1,38	1,20
17/03/19	2,40	2,20	2,00
01/09/19	3,40	3,20	2,80
01/11/19	3,60	3,30	2,95
15/01/20	4,00	3,40	3,10
24/03/20	5,20	4,55	4,25
03/06/20	5,90	5,05	4,70
13/01/21	6,30	5,65	5,30
24/02/21	6,55	5,95	5,80
08/09/21	7,55	6,80	6,55
03/11/21	9,50	8,65	8,30
15/12/21	12,00	11,00	10,50
15/02/22	13,90	12,70	12,00
16/03/22	15,50	14,10	13,55
06/04/22	18,30	16,60	16,05
04/05/22	21,25	19,40	18,80

Source: see note 75.

TABLE 7 : Purchasing power of a skilled worker in Remscheid¹
1916 to 1918.

<u>Date</u>	<u>hourly rate</u>	<u>time worked²</u>	<u>to buy</u>
24/05/16	0,73 marks	1 hr.	1 lb ³ beans
		20 mins.	1 egg
		23 mins.	1 litre milk
		3 1/4 hrs.	1 lb cheese
		2 hrs.	1 cwt coal
		2 3/4 hrs.	1 lb margerine
		18 mins.	1 lb war bread
		6 mins.	1 lb potatoes
		12 mins.	1 lb carrots
		30 mins.	1 egg
25/11/17	0,80 marks	36 mins.	1 litre milk
		2 hrs.50 mins.	1 cwt coal
		2 1/2 hrs.	1 lb. margerine
		17 mins.	1 lb war bread
		6 1/2 mins.	1 lb potatoes
		9 mins.	1 lb carrots
25/02/18	1,20 marks	24 mins.	1 egg
		27 mins.	1 litre milk
		1 hr. 22 1/2 mins.	1 cwt coal
		1 hr. 40 mins.	1 lb margerine
		10 mins.	1 lb war bread
		4 1/2 mins.	1 lb potatoes
		2 hrs.40 mins.	1 lb dairy butter
		19 1/2 hrs.	rent of 22,55 marks ⁴
		14 hrs.	1 lb butter ⁵

1 Skilled worker over age of 24 years

2 approximate time worked

3 1 lb = 500 gms

4 two-room flat with kitchen - the most abundant form of accommodation in Remscheid at that time.

5 black market price in Remscheid.

TABLE 8 : Comparison of total strength of various income brackets for the year 1914.

<u>Town area</u>	<u>a</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>c</u>	<u>d</u>	<u>e</u>	<u>f</u>	<u>g</u>
Remscheid	76.577	32.000	5.150	23.460	2.140	740	510
Lennepe (Kreis)	86.717	37.000	13.060	21.680	1.520	440	300
Solingen (Stadt)	51.570	21.000	2.670	15.900	1.660	480	290
Solingen (Land)	169.396	70.000	17.710	47.810	3.150	840	490
Neuss (Stadt)	41.156	16.000	3.410	10.880	1.200	320	190
Neuss (Land)	35.146	13.000	5.470	7.030	380	80	40
Grevenbroich	51.469	20.000	9.320	9.640	760	180	100
Moenchengladbach (Stadt)	68.518	30.000	9.960	16.680	2.070	780	510
Rheydt	45.672	19.000	5.510	11.550	1.200	440	300
Moenchengladbach (Land)	127.290	50.000	22.200	26.050	1.250	300	200

- a) total population
- b) subject to income tax
- c) income below 900 marks p.a.
- d) between 900 and 3,000 marks p.a.
- e) between 3,000 and 6,500 marks p.a.
- f) between 6,500 and 8,500 marks p.a.
- g) income above 9.500 marks p.a.

CHAPTER I

NOTES

- 1 Kocka, Klassengesellschaft...., op. cit., p. 8
- 2 Ibid.,
- 3 Ibid., p. 9:
'Insbesondere wenn mehrere Kinder zu ernahren waren, konnte die Arbeiterfamilie auf die Mitarbeit der Frau nicht verzichten; solche Doppelbelastung hatte häufig bedrückende Konsequenzen für Familienleben und Kindererziehung. Bei Unfall und Krankheit drohte weiterhin Not.'
- 4 Kurt Hirsch, Die heimatlose Rechte. Die Konservativen und Franz Josef Strauß, München 1979.
The Alldeutsche Verband was founded in 1886, the Reichsverband gegen die Sozialdemokratie in 1904 and the Deutscher Flottenverein in 1898. All three interest groups were anti-socialist and anti-democratic.
- 5 See Geoff Eley, "The Wilhelmine Right. How it changed", in: Richard J. Evans (edit.), Society and politics in Wilhelmine Germany, op cit., pp. 112-136.
- 6 Yellow unions were essentially patriotic and favourable to the status quo. Consequently they were strongly encouraged by employers.
- 7 Kocka, Klassengesellschaft...., op. cit., p. 11.
- 8 Lucas, op. cit., p. 125, for an account of the filmmakers' strike.
- 9 Remscheider Arbeiter Zeitung (RAZ), 30/7/14, Nieder mit dem Kriege.
- 10 RAZ, 31/7/14, Krieg dem Kriege! Für den Volkerfrieden!
- 11 Remscheider General Anzeiger (RGA), 3/8/14, Hurra Germania.
- 12 RAZ, 31/7/14, Nieder mit dem Kriege,
and 3/8/14, Der Krieg ist da.

- 13 RGA, 4/8/14.
- 14 RAZ, 4/8/14, Spione in Remscheid.
- 15 RAZ, 3/8/14, Der Krieg ist da.
- 16 RAZ, 29/8/14, Die Zensur.
- 17 For accounts of the Second International's intention of preventing a war by persuading the workers not to fight, see George Lichtheim, A Short History of Socialism, Glasgow 1970, pp. 239-254;
and Peter Gay, The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism. Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx, New York 1970, p. 271 f..
- 18 RAZ, 10/8/14, Dafür kämpfen wir.
- 19 Ibid.,
- 20 The RGA attempted to dispel the fears and mutterings of discontent of the local population with an article Übertriebene Besorgnis on 18/11/14. The article described life in the trenches as comradely and relatively comfortable with warm dug-outs lined with hay and moss provided for the troops. Mothers and wives were assured that their menfolk spent only short periods in combat, being frequently withdrawn to rest areas where they could recuperate.
- 21 RAZ, 8/9/14.
- 22 As well as producing hand-grenades, rifle barrels and steel for guns, the BSI also produced components for locomotives, motor vehicles and aeroplanes.
See Wilhelm Rinne, Die Bergische Stahlindustrie 1854 - 1939, Band II, op. cit., Ch. 8 (unpublished history in two volumes).
- 23 Lucas, op. cit., p. 138.
- 24 The Remscheid Kleineisenindustrie was particularly hit by the shortage of qualified toolmakers caused by conscription. A report entitled Aus der Remscheider Kleineisenindustrie appearing in the RGA on 27/3/16 indicated some of the problems facing local industry. Because of the shortages of manpower many companies could only supply half their orders. Supply could not keep pace with demand. Other companies were experiencing long delays in deliveries of materials owing to the shortage of

steel and foundry workers. The report also pointed out that attempts to quickly train unskilled workers in the production of tools were largely unsuccessful, as there was no effective substitute for years of patient practice.

See StA Remscheid, W II/4, Kriegswirtschaftliche Maßnahmen der Stadt Remscheid, November 1915 - August 1916.

25 Rinne, op. cit.

On 20/8/17 the BSI had 163 female workers employed in its Remscheid factory and this number had risen to 226 by June 1918. The total workforce of the BSI rose from 2,501 in 1914 to 3,646 in 1918, and for figures of women employed in Remscheid factories, see Lucas, op. cit., p. 140.

	<u>1913</u>	<u>1917</u>	<u>1918</u>
metal workers over 16 years	8,389	7,412	7,951
female workers over 16 years,			
16 to 21 years	162	1,436	1,090
over 21 years	49	1,424	1,590
young people 14 to 16 years,			
males	499	929	823
females	70	377	310.

26 Rinne, op. cit.

On 20/8/17 the BSI had 207 youths working in its Remscheid factory.

27 Ibid.

In 1915 the BSI employed 187 Belgians, 88 Poles, 29 Italians and 21 other foreigners. This total had risen to 863 by June 1918.

28 Ibid.

The BSI had 142 prisoners of war in its books in June 1918.

29 Erich Thieler relates an experience which occurred when a column of marching school children passed a group of French POWs who were being escorted from the railway station. Erich was beaten by the schoolteacher for waving to enemy prisoners.

30 StA Remscheid, W VIII/3, Kriegsgefangene im allgemeinen.

A memorandum from the Ministry of War listed inter alia the following weekly rations for POWs:

bread	1610 gms	plus supplementary allowance for strenuous work
<u>Wurst</u>	150 gms	
meat	350 gms	
potatoes	2800 gms	
salted fish/sea blubber/whale meat	400 gms	
herrings	150 gms	
margerine	70 gms	
cheese	75 gms	
sugar	133 gms	
low fat milk	250 gms	
marmalade/jam	75 gms	
fresh vegetables	1600 gms	etc.

The above rations were subject to availability and sometimes existed only on paper.

31 StA Remscheid, W VIII/3, ibid.

It is not known whether any POWs actually managed to evade recapture and finally escaped, but the large number of warrants in the file indicate frequent attempts to break out. In such cases local inhabitants were warned by the authorities to contact the police in the event of suspicion. On one occasion two Remscheid workers received a reward of 5 marks and 3 marks respectively, for information leading to the recapture of three French POWs who had escaped from the BSI Areitskommando (17/11/15).

32 StA Remscheid, W IIa/52, Brotversorgung der Anstalten und Kriegsgefangenen-Arbeitskommandos.

In 1916 POWs were accommodated in the following work camps in Remscheid:

09/04/16	Arbeitslager August Dohrmann	75 POWs
03/16	Arbeitskommando Salemstraße	18 POWs
08/04/16	Arbeitskommando Bliedinghausen	55 POWs
16/08/16	Arbeitskommando BSI	115 POWs
16/08/16	Gebrüder Busch	54 POWs
16/08/16	Alexanderwerk	155 POWs
16/08/16	Stadtverwaltung	19 POWs
16/08/16	Schöne Aussicht	95 POWs
16/08/16	H. Dohrmann	93 POWs

- 33 StA Remscheid, W VIII/3, op. cit.,
see memorandum circulated by military authorities.
- 34 Lucas, op. cit., p. 140.
- 35 Bergische Volksstimme (BV), November 1917.
- 36 RAZ, 22/5/16:
'Die Zahl der Flickschulen hat sich nicht vermehrt; diese Schulen konnten ihre Aufgaben nicht ganz vollführen, weil es an Material und auch an Leiterinnen und Helferinnen fehlte. Mit Bedauern wird festgestellt, daß es sich gezeigt hat, daß gar manche Kriegersfrau mit Nadel, Zwirn und Schere nicht umgehen kann, die einfachsten Flickarbeiten nicht ausführen kann...'
- 37 Silvia Kontos, Die Partei kämpft wie ein Mann: Frauenpolitik der KPD in der Weimarer Republik, Frankfurt a.M., 19/9, p. 27.
- 38 Lucas, op. cit., p. 139.
Women were paid considerably less than men for the same work.
- 39 Kontos, op. cit., pp.28-29.
- 40 See StA Remscheid, W II/9, Wirtschaftliche Demobilmachung, p. 128.
The unemployment and vacancy figures for Remscheid in January 1919:
- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| male vacancies | 33 |
| female vacancies | 0 |
| unemployed men | 1,065 |
| unemployed women | 426. |
- 41 Kontos, op. cit., p. 29.
In 1913 for every 1,000 men between the ages of 18 and 45 in Germany there were 1,005 women. By 1919, however, this surplus of women had risen to 1,000 : 1,180.
- 42 BV, 12/2/19, Wie hat sich die Remscheider Kommunalverwaltung seit Kriegsbeginn auf kriegswirtschaftlichem Gebiet betätigt ?
- 43 Lucas, op. cit., p. 144.
- 44 BV, 12/2/19.
- 45 Lucas, op. cit., p. 144.

46 BV, 12/2/19, op. cit.

'...und zu welchen Preisen ! Proletarier staunen. Öl, das Liter zu 1 Mark 70 Pf., Schinken, das Pfund zu 1 Mark 50 Pf., und Salamiwurst, das Pfund zu 1 Mark 80 Pf. Im Vorbeigehen wurden noch einige Waggon echte Reisstarke, das Pfund zu 50 Pf. mitgenommen.'

47 Ibid.

At this time there was still no shortage of potatoes and the price of 4 marks per hundredweight was regarded as fairly reasonable.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.:

'Es zahlen den Grundpreis abzüglich eines Rabattes von 25 % alle Bürger mit einem steuerpflichtigen Einkommen unter 3.000 Mark. Es kommen hierbei in Frage 56.000 bis 57.000 Personen. Den Grundpreis ohne Rabatt und ohne Aufschlag bezahlen alle Bürger mit einem steuerpflichtigen Einkommen von 3.001 bis 6.000 Mark. Es kommen in Frage ca. 13.700 Personen. Den Grundpreis zuzüglich 25 % Aufschlag zahlen alle Bürger mit einem steuerpflichtigen Einkommen von 6.001 bis 10.500 Mark. Es kommen in Frage ca. 1.500 Personen. Den Grundpreis zuzüglich eines Aufschlages von 50 % zahlen alle Bürger mit einem steuerpflichtigen Einkommen von über 10.500 Mark. Es kommen in Frage ca. 3.250 Personen.'

From the report it is not clear when this progressive price system was introduced and to which years the indicated income brackets pertain.

50 Lucas, op. cit., pp. 144-145;

and StA Remscheid, W II/6, Kriegswirtschaftliche Maßnahmen der Stadt Remscheid 1917/18.

Owing to the shortage of leather the shoe repair centre experimented with other materials in the production of footwear. The common alternative - a thin wooden sole with reinforced paper uppers - was unsuitable for the wet Remscheid climate, with the result that this model had to be discarded. Instead employees designed and developed a sturdier shoe of wood and waste leather which retailed at a lower price than the standard war-shoe available on the market. Furthermore poor families were granted a price reduction.

- 51 Balthasar Becker, Kriegswirkungen im Bergischen Land, Düsseldorf 1918, p. 40.

Meal tickets were sold in weekly blocks of 6 costing 2 marks 10 pfennigs for adults and 1 mark 5 pfennigs for children. Special diet meal tickets were also sold in blocks of six, costing 3 marks 60 pfennigs for full portions and 1 mark 80 pfennigs for halves.

- 52 Ibid., p. 63.

- 53 BV, 12/2/19, op. cit.:

'Doch ist dieses nur ein Tropfen auf den heißen Stein. Derjenige, der Gelegenheit nimmt, seine Schritte in die Proletarieryegend zu lenken, kann sehen, wie sehr unsere heranwachsende Jugend an Unterernährung leidet.'

In contrast to the Socialists' interpretation of the milk supply situation in Remscheid during the war is deputy-mayor Georg zur Hellen's somewhat complacent report written on 15/8/18, although in fairness it must be said that it was predominantly concerned with supplies of milk in the second quarter of that year, a period which witnessed a transient improvement. We are told that all children under the age of 14 years, all invalids and all those over 70 years had received their full rations of milk. A comparison with other industrial towns in the Niederrhein area for July 1918 reveals quite a favourable balance for Remscheid.

See StA Remscheid, W IIa/10, Milchversorgung.

- 54 See StA Remscheid, W IIa/42, Kleingarten und Privatgrundstücke. Waste land owned by local factories was let out to the town council, in the majority of cases gratuitously for the use of allotments and the large-scale planting of potatoes. The Gemeinnütziger Bauverein eg. put its square land at the disposal of the local authorities for the duration of the war, seeing all building activity had ceased. In 1918 the local authorities were granted the use of a total of 75 3/4 acres of land by private owners. The council was also using 13 acres of its own land for allotments and was managing a further 18 1/4 acres on behalf of others.
- 55 See BV, 12/2/19, op. cit.
- 56 For trade union criticism of the official food policy, see Dr. C. Melchior and colleagues (edit.), Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte des Weltkrieges, Stuttgart, Berlin und Leipzig 1928, pp. 89-109.
- 57 Gerald D. Feldman, Army, Industry and Labour in Germany 1914 - 1918, Princeton 1966, p. 255.
Feldman argues that there was a lack of cooperation between the military and industrialists on the one side, and the railway authorities on the other.
- 58 BV, 14/4/16, Bekanntmachung ! Dringend notwendig !
- 59 BV, 4/7/17, Waldbeerenernte, Völkerwanderung.
The article reports thousands of men, women and children combing the forests for berries. Two special trains were organised to carry passengers into the Oberbergische.
- 60 Interview with Olga Juny.
Her parents rented rooms in a farmhouse and she frequently witnessed children and adults from the towns begging for milk.
- 61 E.R. Greulich, "...und nicht auf den Knien", Berlin-Ost 1964, p. 91 f
The author relates the episode when gendarmes on horseback cut open sacks of potatoes and vegetables which the women and children had either bought or begged from farmers.

62 Interview with Fritz Knapper.

He relates an incident at Bergisch Born railway station where he alighted from a train and had to argue adamantly to prevent a policeman from confiscating some butter which he had acquired.

63 See StA Remscheid, W II/16 I, Preistreibereien, Schleichhandel, Wucheramt, letter of 7/11/17.

64 See StA Remscheid, W II/16 II, letter from Landrat in Gummersbach of 11/3/19.

65 See StA Remscheid, W II/16 I, op. cit.,

letter penned by the mayor of Remscheid and circulated to all local companies threatening action by the authorities to stamp out this common practice;

and *ibid.*, reply from Gebr. Arns on 1/3/18 indicating their belief that the reason why the recent wave of strike in the West German industrial region had not been severer, was precisely because local firms had been able to feed their workers extra rations. This opinion was reinforced four days later by a letter addressed to police inspector Christian, by one of Remscheid's most powerful and respected industrialists, Moritz Böker, on behalf of the Bergische Stahl Industrie. He says:

'Wir müssen in vollem Maße anerkennen, daß unsere Arbeiterschaft trotz der starken Beeinflussung durch die radikale Partei - der unabhängige Sozialist Dittmann ist bekanntlich der Abgeordnete des hiesigen Kreises - ihr letztes bei der Arbeit hergibt, um die Heeresverwaltung zu befriedigen. Diese Stimmung ist indes nur zu erhalten, wenn von Seiten der Arbeitgeber dem Verlangen nach einer Unterstützung bei der Ernährung Rechnung getragen werden kann...' *Ibid.*

With such illustrious figures as Böker defying the official decrees it is highly unlikely that the local authorities considered taking serious steps to prevent companies from purchasing stocks of extra rations for their workers and to punish offenders.

- 66 Prostitution for extra rations or exchangeable goods was almost certainly practised, particularly given the close proximity of soldiers. An increase in prostitution locally was noted by the authorities although no figures could be found.
See HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 8148, Kriegs-Gesundheitsbericht für den Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf 1914 - 1918.
- 67 See Lennep Kreisblatt (LK), 7/2/18, eg.:

'Mit 1.000 Mark Geldstrafe soll die Ehefrau des Landwirtes R. aus dem Kreise Lennep dafür bußen, daß sie die Milch, die sie abzuliefern hatte, in ganz erheblicher Weise mit Wasser "streckte". Wahrscheinlich wollte sie mit der Milch, die sie sich dadurch ersparte, unter der Hand ein besseres Geschäft machen. Da die Milch nur alleine für Wochnerinnen, Kinder und Kranke bestimmt ist, mußte ihr Treiben als besonders verwerflich und strafwürdig bezeichnet werden...'

A short selection of offences published in local newspapers reveals a varied spectrum of illegal practices stretching from the failure to display prices correctly to the more serious acts of usury, illegal butchery, smuggling, giving incorrect weights, the illegal distillation of spirits, racketeering and black marketeering. Here are a few examples:

1. Grocer Frau B. received a warning in October 1917 for selling carrots at 20 to 25 pfennigs per 500 grams, at a time when the official price was 9 pfennigs.
2. Milkman B. was given a warning for allegedly selling greater quantities of milk to favoured families than these were entitled to.
3. Shoemaker Johann F. had his licence withdrawn and his shop closed permanently for overcharging and receiving stolen goods. He had made and sold shoe-soles from stolen fan-belt leather at a price of 14 marks 50 pfennigs each. Oct. 1917.
4. The wife of butcher Robert K. was fined 100 marks and her shop was closed for a period of one month, as she had knowingly overcharged for bacon. May 1917.
5. Frau Heinrich W. of Honsberg was fined 150 marks for charging exorbitant prices and selling soap without ration cards. The authorities were tipped off by an anonymous letter that Frau W. was charging 8 marks for half a pound (250 grams) of butter and five to six marks for a piece of soap. May 1918.

Nos. 1, 2 and 3 in: StA Remscheid, W II/6, Kriegswirtschaftliche Maßnahmen der Stadt Remscheid 1917 - 1918.

Nos. 4 and 5 in: StA Remscheid, W II/7, Handelsuntersagungen im allgemeinen.

6. Grocer Robert K. of Lindenhofstraße had his licence permanently withdrawn on 9/5/16 for charging exorbitant prices. He had been selling an egg-substitute called "Frauenstolz" at the price of two packets for 25 pfennigs. An inspection showed that a fair price would be no more than 2 1/2 pfennigs per packet. Similarly, a salad-oil-substitute called "Hertol" was sold by K. at 2 marks 10 pfennigs per litre when the fair price was not more than 20 pfennigs. See StA Remscheid, W II/18, Höchstpreise.
7. A dealer named Pommerenke was hauled before the local prices control board for what was described as one of the worst cases of Kettenhandel. P. had acquired four hundredweight of peas for 480 marks and sold them at the extremely high price of 1 mark 35 pfennigs per 500 grams. The peas had first been purchased by a dealer in Graudenz for 40 marks per hundredweight, and he sold them to a dealer in Leipzig for 95 marks per hundredweight, who in turn sold them to Pommerenke. 15/9/16.
See StA Remscheid, W II/10, Tätigkeit der Preisprüfungsstelle.

The most frequent offenders appear to have been milkmen, butchers and grocers. In 1918 the local authorities tightened up considerably with regard to milk. A large number of local milk producers were ordered to hand over their surplus milk to designated distribution centres or face charges carrying a maximum penalty of 10,000 marks. This was one more example of the authorities taking action far too late to make much difference to the war effort.

See StA Remscheid, W II/10, Milchversorgung.

Butchers often appeared before the prices control board for illegal butchery and overcharging. Grocers were frequently charged with usury, giving short weights and mixing additives.

68 BV, 12/2/19, op. cit.:

'Ohne den Landwirt in Bausch und Bogen zu verurteilen, wird der Proletarier nie vergessen können, auch nie begreifen können, wo im Jahre 1916 all die Steckrüben herkamen. Das Gros der Agrarier hat sich da in seiner wahren patriotischen Gestalt gezeigt. Die Steckrüben mit ihren ungesunden Begleiterscheinungen für das Volk. Es brachte mehr Profit...'

69 Lucas, op. cit., pp. 140-144.

70 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/1187.

71 For pernicious effects on health owing to employment of women see RAZ, 2/6/1916, Der Jahresbericht der Allgemeinen Ortskrankenkasse Remscheid.

72 BV, 28/2/19, Bericht des Oberbürgermeisters Dr. Hartmann über die Verwaltung und den Stand der Gemeindeangelegenheiten im Jahre 1918.

On the other hand Remscheid was spared the worst of the dysentery epidemic which hit Solingen, Barmen and Elberfeld during the years 1916 to 1918 inclusive.

See HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 8148, Kriegs-Gesundheitsbericht für den Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf 1914-1918.

73 War losses, soldiers killed and injured. Remscheid lost over 2,000 dead; Lennep lost 350 killed, 210 wounded, 46 invalids (more than 50 % incapacitated).

74 See Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich 1920, Berlin 1920, p. 132.

75 StA Remscheid, X J 14, Arbeitgeberverbände in Remscheid und Umgebung/Arbeitgeberverband der Eisen- und Metallindustrie von Remscheid und Umgebung e.V.,

also see note qualifying wage table:

'Unter Facharbeiter (skilled worker) verstand man zwischen 31/7/14 und 16/3/19 nur die besten Arbeiter, z.B. Ofenarbeiter, Schleifer usw.'

- 76 Erich Thieler tells of a fatal accident he witnessed in the BSI rolling mill and which was attributed to tiredness and lack of concentration due to hunger on the part of the victim. In this case the young apprentice failed to grasp a molten steel rod emerging from the rollers with his tongs, and was impaled before anyone could react.
- 77 See Rinne, op. cit., chapter 8.
On 30/6/18 there were 863 foreign workers (excluding POWs) in a total workforce of 3,646 at the BSI.
- 78 For women's rates of pay see BV, 4/12/1/, Eine Versammlung der Arbeiter des Alexanderwerks.
In this factory women were paid 30, 35 or 40 pfennigs per hour according to their degree of skill. On the basis of a ten-hour day this gave them a weekly wage of between 18 and 24 marks.
- 79 Feldman, op. cit., p. 304.
- 80 Rinne, op. cit.
628 of the BSI's 3,646-strong workforce on 30/6/18 were people mobilised by the Auxiliary Law.
- 81 Jürgen Reulacke, "Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Arbeiterbewegung im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet", in: idem (edit.), Arbeiterbewegung an Rhein und Ruhr, Wuppertal 1974, p. 226.
Wilhelm Dittmann was the Reichstag deputy for Lennep as well as editor of the Solingen-based Bergische Arbeiterstimme.
- 82 On 23/12/16, in the notorious 'turnip-winter' the local prices control board fixed the weekly ration of potatoes at 3 lbs (x 500 grams) per head plus extra turnips. Turnips were in plentiful supply, because they fetched a higher price whereas potatoes had been officially pegged back to 5 pfennigs per 500 grams.
See StA Remscheid, W II/5, Kriegswirtschaftliche Maßnahmen September 1916 - April 1917, p. 43.
- 83 See StA Remscheid, W II/5, *ibid.*, p. 41.
- 84 *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 85 Greuling, op. cit., p. 72 f.
Also interview with Erich Thieler.

- 86 StA Remscheid, W II/6, Kriegswirtschaftliche Maßnahmen der Stadt Remscheid 1917/18, taken from RGA 22/9/17.
- 87 Ibid., 22/9/17.
- 88 See note 78.
- 89 In this case she would be entitled to benefits but these were woefully inadequate.
- 90 StA Remscheid, W II/5, op. cit., p. 22.
- 91 See also Lennep Kreisblatt, 1/2/18.
- 92 BV, 28/11/17, Stahlwerk Richard Lindenberg; and BV, 28/9/17, 3 Millionen Mark Aktienkapital - 3.180.000 Mark Gewinn. Richard Lindenberg AG.
The Mannesmann-Werke made a clear profit in the previous year of 24,748,617 marks and over the previous three years together 49,86 million marks.
Also see BV, 12/12/17, Wenn das Glück hold ist, wird Gutsbesitzer.
- 93 RGA, 21/12/17.
- 94 Rinne, op. cit.
- 95 See BV, 12/7/17, Die armen und reichen Leute in den Kreisen Remscheid, Lennep, Solingen Stadt und Land, Neuß Stadt und Land, Grevenbroich, Monchengladbach Stadt und Land und Rheydt.
- 96 See BV, Remscheid, die Stadt mit den größten Kriegsgewinnen.
- 97 BV, 28/2/19, Aus unserem Wahlkreis. Bericht des Oberbürgermeisters Dr. Hartmann über die Verwaltung und den Stand der Gemeindeangelegenheiten im Jahre 1918:

'...Diese Zunahme ist die größte, die seit Bestehen der Sparkasse in einem Jahr erzielt worden ist. Diese ist einmal auf die Gewinne und Löhne während der Kriegszeit zurückzuführen, zum anderen auch darauf, daß das Geld vor allem bei den Gewerbetreibenden flüssig war...'

- 98 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/840, op. cit.
- 99 See BV, 20/8/18, Noch ein Steuerhinterziehungsprozeß, and HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/840, op. cit.

- 100 See BV, 17/8/18.
- 101 Kocka, Klassengesellschaft..., op. cit., pp.32-33.
- 102 The relatively strong local support of small Christian sects extolling puritanical virtues is a major factor determining the traditionally modest life-style of Remscheid's manufacturers.
- 103 BV, 10/11/17:
 'Für jüngere und ältere Damen, Frauen und Töchter, welche eigenen Haushalt führen, oder als Hausdamen, Stütze oder besseres Hausmädchen sich ausbilden wollen, beginnt Dienstag, 13. November im Saale des Hotel zum Weinberg, Elberfelder Str. 25, unter bewahrter Leitung ein Tischdeck- und Servierkurs verbunden mit Anstandslehre.
 Lehrstoff: Feines Tafeldecken, Tafelschmuck, Servieren, Servietten brechen (theoretisch und praktisch), Speisenfolge, Anrichten und Ausschmücken der Speisen.
 Honorar 15 Mark. Wöchentlich drei Unterrichtstage...
 Die Unterrichtsleitung: Jenny Schumacher.
- 104 StA Remscheid, IV/14, U-Boot-Spende.
- 105 BV, 17/11/17, Auch Remscheid hat jetzt seine "Vaterlands-
partei".
- 106 RGA, 9/12/17, Aufruf der Deutschen Vaterlandspartei.
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Kocka, Klassengesellschaft..., op. cit., pp.1-6.
- 109 See introductory chapter of this dissertation.

Briefly, in the course of the industrial revolution a class of capitalist entrepreneurs had formed and were concentrating the ownership of the means of production in their hands to the disadvantage of small craftsmen. The latter were gradually squeezed out of the market so that they and their sons joined the stream of immigrants from the country areas looking for work in the factories of the entrepreneurs. However, not all the local craftsmen were driven out. By various methods and owing to the high degree of skill and know-how required in the production of tools, a number of small independent and semi-independent establishments were able to survive into the 20th century and through to the present day.

- 110 A comparison of wage and salary tables for local industry actually reveals a faster growth of income for a skilled male worker over 24 years than for a 28-year old commercial/industrial employee, with the former actually overtaking the latter by the end of 1917. The skilled worker however still had to work longer hours and did not enjoy the same privileges as the clerk elsewhere. Eg. even before the war the industrial white-collar worker was entitled to much longer paid holidays (usually two, sometimes three weeks) than the factory worker (three to six days).
- 111 See Ludwig Preller, Sozialpolitik in der Weimarer Republik, Düsseldorf 1978, p. 150.
For white-collar workers during the war see Jürgen Kocka, "The First World War and the 'Mittelstand'...", op. cit.
- 112 Lucas, op. cit., p. 146.
- 113 Ibid., p. 147.
- 114 Ibid.
- 115 See, Buchdruckerei des deutschen Metallarbeitervverbandes (no author), Remscheid. Ein Kapitel kommunistischer Gewerkschaftsarbeit im Deutschen Metallarbeiterverband, Stuttgart 1924.
- 116 Lucas, op. cit., p. 147.
- 117 Ibid., p. 149;
and Jürgen Reulecke, Der Erste Weltkrieg..., op. cit., p. 217.
- 118 Ibid., p. 224.
- 119 Lucas, op. cit., p. 151.
- 120 Ibid., p. 124.
- 121 See BV, 9/3/29, 20 Jahre proletarische Jugendbewegung in Remscheid.
- 122 The fact that Remscheid's metal workers who were amongst the highest paid in Germany developed such a radical tradition and were frequently in the forefront, albeit in an orderly fashion behind their leaders, in situations of conflict would at least seem to question Lenin's theory of a workers' aristocracy which was handed out morsels of the profits of imperialist exploitation and thus constituted a privileged group which kept itself apart from the masses of the poor, and not only rejected revolution but actively supported capitalism.

- 123 In nearby Barmen conflict broke out in February 1917 when a crowd of around 10,000 people demonstrated in front of the town hall and smashed windows after their demands for more food had been ignored. Subsequently, the crowd plundered several grocery shops including SPD-owned cooperatives and vandalised a residential area. Soldiers were drafted in to quell the riots.
See Hans-Ulrich Knies, "Arbeiterbewegung und Revolution in Wuppertal. Entwicklung und Tätigkeit der Arbeiter- und Soldatenrate in Elberfeld und Barmen", in: Reinhard Rürup (edit.), Arbeiter- und Soldatenrate im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet. Studien zur Geschichte der Revolution 1918/19, Wuppertal 1975, p. 88;
and Reulecke, Der Erste Weltkrieg..., op. cit., p. 228.
- 124 BV, 2/11/18, Das neue Deutschland und die Remscheider Polizei;
and BV, 4/11/18, Nochmals die Verhaftung des Genossen Courts.
- 125 Lucas, op. cit., p. 152.
- 126 See Lennep Kreisblatt (LK), 9/1/18.
- 127 BV, 20/7/17, Erfolgreiche Lohnbewegung der Seidenbandwirker.
- 128 BV, 14/11/17, Zur Kartoffelversorgung;
and BV, 16/11/17, Wo bleiben die Kartoffeln ?
- 129 BV, 12/17, shortage of salt.
- 130 BV, 31/10/17, Zwei Millionen Zentner Zucker auf Lager.
- 131 BV, 27/11/17, Massenversammlung in der BSI.
- 132 BV, 4/12/17, Versammlung Alexanderwerk.
- 133 Lucas, op. cit., p. 147.
- 134 Ibid., p. 152.

CHAPTER II

The Struggle for Power in Remscheid 1918 to 1923

1. Remscheid during the 1918/19 Revolution.

The transfer of executive power from the local authorities to the Remscheid workers' and soldiers' council was effected smoothly and peacefully on the 9th November.¹ The policy-making committee (Vollzugsausschuß) consisted of five members: Heinrich Schliestedt, Otto Braß, Willi Grütz, Paul Schießmann and Otto Schmidt. The workers' and soldiers' council had 45 members consisting of mainly Independent Socialists and about ten Spartakists. Unlike the Wuppertal towns of Elberfeld and Barmen the MSPD (Majority Social Democrats) had no influence on the council, so that from the very beginning the latter worked exclusively for the introduction of the dictatorship of the proletariat, based on the council system. The local council suspended the police inspector and took on responsibility for the maintenance of law and order. Auxiliary police wearing white armbands were chosen by the council to assist the regular police on patrol. The auxiliaries had full power and were armed. The workers' and soldiers' council formed a number of sub-committees to handle administrative affairs. One of the committees - for propaganda, under the leadership of Willi Grütz - was correctly regarded as vital to the success of the revolution. It was seen as a necessary link between the workers' and soldiers' council and the local inhabitants, explaining policies and countering anti-revolutionary propaganda circulated by the industrialists and military. Remscheid quickly acquired the reputation of a 'bastion of bolshevism', owing to the united and radical actions of its workers and their leaders. Soldiers prior to demobilisation were told by their commanders that law and order had completely broken down and that they would be attacked, beaten and robbed by anarchist gangs. False

rumours of murder, rape and robbery were spread by local industrialists and manufacturers in the hope of incensing the returning soldiers, so that these would eliminate the workers' and soldiers' council.² When troops did enter the town they found a completely peaceful scene with the law meticulously observed by a disciplined and resolute workers' and soldiers' council. They also noted that the executive apparently enjoyed the full support of the local workforce. In Lennep, however, the local workers' and soldiers' council was disbanded by occupying troops, and leading members were imprisoned. The red flag flying above the town hall was replaced by the old colours: black, white and red. Braß, Schliestedt and a small group of armed workers and soldiers attempting to intercede, were disarmed and also imprisoned. The news of this incident unleashed a wave of anger amongst Remscheid workers and a strong and heavily armed detachment hurried to Lennep with the intention of fighting, if needs be, in order to free their leaders and restore control. In the face of such determined opposition the troops surrendered without a fight. The occupation of Remscheid and Lennep by the military was greeted by a general strike, signalled by the sounding of factory sirens. It was decided that the employers would be compelled to pay lost wages for their complicity in the counter-revolutionary plan.

Braß and Grütz seized every opportunity to inform revolutionary councils and important conferences of the existence of detailed plans to overthrow the revolution and restore the old order. At the congress of revolutionary councils in Berlin on 17th December, Braß revealed the existence of counter-revolutionary plans and demanded the removal of all those military personnel responsible. The speech contained strictures on the peoples' deputies' sluggish reaction to the overwhelming proof that the revolution was in peril.³ Braß, who rejected cooperation with the MSPD and warned Dittmann that the revolutionary councils in the West would oppose any collusion between USPD and MSPD in the formation of a temporary government, agitated incessantly throughout the Niederrhein for the Soviet system and against the parliamentary system which the MSPD pre-

ferred. In this policy he found the complete sympathy of the workers of Remscheid and Solingen.⁴ At the Barmen conference on 20th November Willi Grütz introduced a resolution condemning the attempts by the MSPD to usurp control and exploit its position to force through the parliamentary system. He went on to state the aims of the revolution as understood by himself and his Remscheid colleagues:

'Das Ziel der Revolution ist die Sozialisierung der Gesellschaft, die Überführung der Produktionsmittel aus den Händen weniger in den Besitz der Gesamtheit zu erwirken.'

He went on to warn of the dangers of counter-revolution:

'Die Arbeiter- und Soldatenrate haben die Pflicht, auf diese große Gefahr aufmerksam zu machen und die Volksmassen zum rücksichtslosen Kampf gegen diese Gegenrevolution aufzurufen...Den gegenrevolutionären Plan, die kapitalistische Gesellschaftsordnung vor der Sicherstellung der Ziele der Revolution durch eine (verfassungsgebende) Nationalversammlung zu retten, lehnen die Arbeiter- und Soldatenrate des Bezirks Niederrhein auf das bestimmteste ab...'⁵

Events elsewhere eventually overtook the Remscheid workers' leaders, who reluctantly agreed to propose candidates for the election of the assembly to draw up the new constitution. The newly-formed KPD on the other hand decided not to participate in the election. Apart from this and one or two minor disagreements the two parties were still very close, and were able to present a fairly united front against the counter-revolution.⁶ Braß, Grütz and comrades were careful to point out the dangers of splitting the revolutionary movement and stressed the will on both sides to cooperate. Later events were to prove that the Remscheid workers did not desert their leaders, on the contrary, they repeatedly demonstrated their approbation.

By the end of January the DMV's local branch under Schliestedt and Freitag had a membership of 9,166⁷ (926 women and 441 youths), a fact which reflected the confidence which local workers had in their leaders. Over the next twelve months this figure was to increase further to a total of nearly 19,000⁸. Likewise the USPD received an avalanche of applications for membership during the first half of 1919.⁹ This pattern was repeated in all the major working-class institutions and clubs. The socialist youth movement was reorganised in the Arbeiter-Jugendausschuß, on which there were three representatives from the USPD, three from the TU cartel, one from the Freier Turn- und Sportbund, one swimmer, one Naturfreund, one cyclist, one Samariter (workers' ambulance corps) and one representative from the workers' teetotallers' club. The youth organisation was also flooded with applications from individuals and new clubs.¹⁰ The Spartakist uprising in Berlin was not supported by action in Remscheid. The news of the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, however, again brought forth a mighty demonstration by the united forces of the USPD and KPD. A one-day protest strike completely paralysed production and transport. A procession of demonstrators which marched from the Volks- haus to the 'Spiesser-Republik Hasten'¹¹ carried banners demanding, 'Down with the Scheidemann government'. Remscheid workers demonstrated their loyalty to their leaders on 6th June when government troops occupied the town and arrested all the prominent figures. As soon as news of the occupation and arrests became known, local metalworkers laid down their tools and began to congregate outside the Volkshaus. They were soon joined by the printers with the result that no papers were published, and by the railway workers who brought local rail transport to a standstill. The hatred felt by the workers for the troops and factory owners was manifested by outbreaks of violence, particularly against industrialists and manufacturers,¹² but also against government troops¹³. Remscheid workers were joined in the strike by colleagues in Lennep, Radevormwald, and other towns of the region. An article appearing in the BV held the Scheidemann government

responsible for this act and reported that a deputation sent to Werl to inquire into the reasons behind the arrests returned with feeble explanations which it found unacceptable.¹⁴ A spokesman for the military occupation forces shed light on the matter by pointing out that government orders had been repeatedly ignored in Remscheid and that there was concern that local Spartakists were about to proclaim a Soviet republic, as well-known national leaders like Eichhorn, Hammer, Lüttgen and Merges had been spending considerable time in the town during the preceding weeks.¹⁵ The spokesman went on to disclaim any knowledge of the pending pay dispute in the Remscheid metal industry and suggested that the timing of the occupation was a mere coincidence. A meeting of the workers voted to continue the strike. On the 11th June and the following day, the Reichskommissar, Severing, hurried to a meeting in the town hall. He spoke of the need to restore order and promised that the prisoners would be released soon. The reception for the Reichskommissar was particularly hostile.¹⁶ Those local functionaries present at the meeting promised to persuade the workers to return to the factories, but the following morning the strikers were joined by their colleagues in both Mannesmann factories, who proposed a general protest strike for the funeral of Rosa Luxemburg, whose body had only recently been recovered from the Teltow canal. In view of the explosive situation the trade union conveners deprecated further strike action and succeeded in persuading their workmates to return to work. Soldiers began to withdraw from the town on the 18th, but the emergency powers remained in effect.¹⁷ The workers expressed their solidarity with their imprisoned leaders by regular collections for their families.¹⁸

The overwhelming support which the USPD received can best be gauged by its performance in the series of elections which took place during the first three months of 1919. Elections for the National Assembly were the first to be held after the revolution¹⁹, by which universal suffrage was introduced. The recently-formed KPD declined to participate and called instead for the establishment of the council system. The turn-out in Remscheid was higher than Reich

average with 86 % of the eligible voters going to the polls (in Lennep 89.8 %).²⁰ Six parties nominated candidates for the election, two of which - the DVP (Deutsche Volkspartei) and DNVP (Deutsch-Nationale Volkspartei) - formed an alliance. The USPD ran out winners, and the votes were cast as follows:

USPD	16,891 (41.8 %)
SPD	5,633 (13.9 %)
DDP (<u>Deutsche Demokratische Partei</u>)	10,154 (24.7 %)
DVP/DNVP	4,612 (11.4 %)
Zentrum	3,050 (7.5 %) ²¹

In 22 of the 29 voting wards in Remscheid the USPD received the most votes winning more than 50 % in eight wards, all of which were situated in working-class districts. The party's best results were achieved in the following wards:

Ward 13	Honsberg I	74 %
Ward 16	Kremenholz	66 %
Ward 14	Honsberg II	62.8 %
Ward 5	Struck	61 %
Ward 24	Laspert II	60 %.

The SPD on the other hand achieved its best result in ward 19, Güldenwerth/Reinshagen, 26 %. This area on the west side of the town contained numerous small family businesses employing fewer than ten workers, and this result might indicate that workers employed in small factories where the style of management was still persistently patriarchal were more amenable to the less radical SPD than the USPD. Whatever the case, Güldenwerth/Reinshagen cannot be regarded as a predominantly working-class district like Honsberg, Kremenholz, Laspert, Struck, Papenberg and Rosenhugel. The SPD's next best result (19 %) was gained in ward 3, Fichtenhöhe which was also not a working-class district. This area was populated by a strong minority of lower civil servants, dwelling in houses owned by the Beamten-Bauverein in Spichern-, Wörth- and Sedanstraße. The USPD, however, gained more than twice the number of votes polled by the SPD in this ward, 586 (approx. 42 %). In the Elberfelder Straße/Waldstraße area, ward 22, the SPD gained 17 % of the votes.

This district incorporated Villenstraße, one of Remscheid's most exclusive and fashionable residential streets. This area, as can be seen from appendix 1 (ward 31 for 1929) reveals a stronger than average contingent of lower-middle class white-collar workers, clerks and shop assistants. In 1929 the roughly corresponding voting ward 31 was inhabited by approx. 36.5 % workers not including widows that belonged to this category. This area, too, therefore, cannot be regarded as a working-class district. In ward 23, Laspert I, which does rate as a working-class district, the SPD gained 16 % of the votes compared with 46 % won by the USPD. A similar situation occurred in ward 6, Rosenhügel/Burger Straße, which also counts as a working-class district. Here the SPD gained 15 % compared with the USPD's 48 %. In ward 13, Honsberg I, the SPD only managed 9 %, scoring even less than the DDP.

The above results, therefore, show overwhelming support in Remscheid - and particularly in the working-class districts - for the USPD and its commitment to the council system. By the same token they reveal much less sympathy for the SPD locally.

Of the bourgeois parties, the DDP was by far the strongest, winning the remaining seven wards, three of them quite handsomely. This party did particularly well in wards: 12, Alleestraße/town centre; 20, Polizei-Prasidium/Lindenstraße - a residential area housing predominantly professional people, Beamte (civil servants), businessmen and clerks; and in ward 21, Scheiderstraße/Schützenstraße which was an area housing many lower-middle class white-collar workers and shop assistants, as well as professional people and Beamte.

The picture in Lennep is a little different, in that here in the Kreisstadt (district administrative capital), inhabited by a relatively large percentage of Beamte,²² the DDP managed to poll a handful of votes more than the USPD. The Zentrum's result with 15.6 % (more than double its share in Remscheid) reveals a stronger contingent of Catholics in Lennep.

Lüttringhausen presents a very different picture with the DDP just beating the DVP/DNVP alliance into second place. Lüttringhausen,

situated on the north-eastern side of Remscheid and bordering on Ronsdorf and Wuppertal, and an open country area to the East, was a dispersed community with small workshops and factories, some of which were engaged in the textile industry. This town was situated off the main thoroughfare of the Bergische Land, so that its contact with cosmopolitan influences was quite negligible. Lüttringhausen, unlike Lennep, was almost exclusively protestant and had a higher percentage of inhabitants employed in agriculture than either Remscheid or Lennep.

On 26/1/19 on a lower turn-out (78.2 %) the USPD was again winner, this time in the Landtag election.²³ Of the 37,482 votes polled it received 14,638, this time winning 20 of the 29 wards. Its closest rival, the DDP, won all the other wards receiving a total of 9,378 votes. This result demonstrates the readiness of DDP supporters to turn out for Landtag elections and also reveals a greater reluctance on the part of some workers, who possibly regarded this type of election as being less important.

Council elections, which were held six weeks after the USPD's impressive victory in the elections for the National Assembly, revealed a different tactical approach by the bourgeois parties. Enervated by the overwhelming support amongst local working people for the radical policies of the USPD and KPD, and fearing the consequences of a repeat victory at the municipal level, they embarked on a four-party alliance between the DDP, DVP, DNVP and Zentrum, which was organised by these parties together with the Remscheid civic associations (Bürgervereine).²⁴ With this alliance the bourgeois parties were to set a pattern for the whole of the Weimar period, because they quickly recognised that there was no other way of preventing a socialist-communist majority on the town council. Despite the alliance, however, the bourgeois parties failed to achieve their aim in this poll. The KPD made its first appearance in the local election and took 4.1 % in a fairly high 72.8 % turn-out.²⁵ The Bürgerblock gained 40.5 %, the USPD 38.5 % and the SPD 16.9 % of the votes so that the distribution of seats on the council was as follows:

Bürgerblock	22 seats	=	13,830 votes
USPD	21 seats	=	13,073 votes
SPD	9 seats	=	5,770 votes
KPD	2 seats	=	1,408 votes.

This result meant that the balance of power on the town council for the period 1919 to 1924 was exercised by the SPD. On 28/1/21 the USPD and KPD coalition dissolved to form the VKPD (Vereinigte Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands), which now had 22 seats in the Remscheid town hall, as two USPD councillors, Rudolf Bübler and Gustav Eckhardt, declined to join the KPD, and for the time being continued to represent the by now tiny USPD. They later joined the SPD. Louis Barrn, who had been elected to represent the SPD, changed in mid-term to the KPD.²⁶

Throughout the next twelve months the situation in Remscheid oscillated between intense hostility and open conflict. The leaders of the local workers correctly assessed events in the Reich and observed the creeping encroachment of the counter-revolution in the West. Braß and Grütz saw their warning against cooperation with the SPD confirmed, but were not powerful enough to recreate in other revolutionary councils the kind of united front that was present in Remscheid and Solingen. In opting to put up candidates for the National Constitutional Assembly they acted to try to prevent the other parties, particularly the SPD, DDP and Zentrum, from completely dominating the proceedings. At the same time they realised that the pro-revolutionary forces had lost the initiative and would have to await the next favourable opportunity to seize power again.

At this point it would seem appropriate to consider to what extent the local leaders actually prevented the revolution from spreading out from Remscheid and Solingen to connect with the more spontaneous, less disciplined workers in some of the Ruhr towns.²⁷ On the one hand it is evident that the Remscheid leaders were among the most active of German revolutionaries, not only at home but also in the Ruhr and Rhine areas, helping to organise councils,

agitating, speaking at conferences both in the Niederrhein area and Berlin. In addition, they had a representative, Heinrich Schliestedt, on the commission elected to draw up proposals for the nationalisation of the coal industry. The Remscheid leaders also took great care to explain their actions to the workers, but this usually happened afterwards. Thus the workers were constantly presented with a fait-accompli, and were not actively involved in the formulation of revolutionary action. Time and time again local workers demonstrated their readiness to aid the progress of the revolution, either by facing up to government troops, as in Lénnepe, or else by strike action, as in February 1919 when Remscheid metalworkers called a strike in solidarity with the striking Ruhr miners. Again during the occupation of Remscheid in June, they showed their determination to resist armed troops. Their resistance met with the disapproval of their leaders and they were persuaded to return to work, rather than risk bloodshed, in what was by now regarded as a lost cause. The question as to why such revolutionary enthusiasm was not given free rein at an earlier stage would certainly appear valid.

In defence of the local leadership it must be said that they were well placed to judge the actual situation, and were aware of events in the rest of Germany which took a different course from those in the West. The fact that Remscheid and Solingen fell within the neutral zone inhibited armed interference on the part of the government, but at the same time there was no reason to suspect that the Allies would tolerate the existence of a Soviet Republic in the West. In addition, the problem of food supplies alone would have doomed unilateral action in the Bergische Land and the Ruhr to failure. The blockade was still in operation and with foodstocks badly depleted, both areas were more dependent on the surrounding hinterland than ever before. Furthermore, although the workers of Remscheid and Solingen presented a united front, this was far from being the case in the Ruhr, Wuppertal and Hagen, where the SPD gradually gained control of the revolutionary councils and worked to douse the flame. Had Remscheid and Solingen been in any way autonomous regions, the chances of success might have been greater.

2. The Kapp-Putsch in Remscheid.

The opportunity for the Remscheid workers' leaders to again seize the initiative presented itself quite soon. There were several attempts by government troops in the autumn of 1919 and the spring of the following year to bring local workers under control²⁸. The provocative behaviour of the troops and their display of the old colours of the empire brought the workers to seething point. The occupation of Remscheid by troops of the Freikorps Lützow²⁹ and the supporting action of the citizens' guard (Bürgerwehr) under the leadership of Dr. Ewald Weisemann, and consisting largely of the sons of local industrialists/manufacturers and civil servants³⁰ again intensified class hostility in the town. When workers' leaders and the workers' newspaper tried to protest, Lützow arrested the former and banned the latter. The appeal by the government to strike was answered by loyalty in Remscheid, although the workers were fully aware that their action was not to bail out an administration, which they considered had betrayed the revolution, but rather to bring the revolution to a successful conclusion. The Freikorps troops proceeded to seal off the centre of the town around the town hall and the post office by erecting barriers of barbed wire, with the warning that anyone passing the barriers would be shot. On the evening of the 17th March a large, angry crowd of workers protested at the barriers, and the troops - feeling themselves threatened - fired into the midst killing one and seriously injuring a second worker. This incident triggered off unequivocal action and again overstepped the threshold from class hostility to class conflict. Local workers brought out their weapons and went onto the offensive, almost as soon as the first shells rained in on the town hall from the canons of the 'Red Army' which were positioned on the heights above Lennep, Lüttringhausen and at Hohenhagen. The heavy fighting in Remscheid involved women and youths as well as the men. Youths were mainly engaged in courier duties and delivering supplies.³¹ When it became clear that the government troops, by now consisting of Lützow's detachment,

the Zeitfreiwilligen (citizens' militia) of Remscheid, the remainder of Gillhausen's troops falling back from Elberfeld, together with the decimated Freikorps Hacketau and a group of security police, in all roughly 1,700 men, could not hold the town, they began to retreat towards the occupied zone, the border of which separated Remscheid and Solingen at Müngsten. It was on this retreat that the government troops suffered their heaviest losses, being caught in the crossfire of a machine-gun company. The survivors, something over 1,000 men, surrendered to the British troops in Solingen.³²

Needless to say it was again the local leaders of the USPD who organised and directed the assault on the Freikorps troops.³³ The dramatist and poet, Friedrich Wolf, who was employed by the local medical centre played an important role in directing the workers' assault on the Freikorps troops. Losses on the workers' side were lower than those of the government troops. From Remscheid there were 21 killed, including three women and two youths,³⁴ the latter being killed by an exploding shell which had been misdirected into Honsberg. Twelve workers from other towns also died in the fighting.

This action which again freed Remscheid and the southern part of the Ruhr of government troops was once more to prove to have been in vain, as the initiative slipped away from the workers, and was finally lost with the signing of the Bielefeld treaty.³⁵ The government could not risk the occupation of Remscheid and the area south of the Ruhr, ^{because this was a demilitarised zone,} and relied on the discipline of the workers and the respect for their leaders to bring about a peaceful conclusion. The workers complied with these wishes, but criticism of Braß, one of the signatories of the Bielefeld treaty, and claims of betrayal became increasingly audible, particularly among younger communist workers. From now on the allegiance of the Remscheid workers began to move towards the communist party, which propagated an uncompromising policy of class conflict to bring the revolution to a successful end.

Government troops in the form of security police under Oberst Graf von Pominski finally occupied Remscheid on 27th May. The threatened general strike did not materialise.³⁶

3. The Emergence of the KPD in Remscheid.

The KPD which was officially founded at the end of December 1918 had its first regional branch outside Berlin in Remscheid.³⁷ The Remscheid branch's inaugural meeting was convened by Spartakists, who had constantly criticised the USPD policy of sharing government responsibility with the SPD in the provisional council of deputies. The founding members of the local branch of the new party were inter alia: Christoph Herzog, Albert Issel, Paul Schroder, Karl Pütz, Emil Voss, Fritz Schiffler, Otto Braun, Wilhelm Courts, Emil Merten, August Kallweit and Fr. Gretel Wetzel, and were mostly members of the Remscheid workers' and soldiers' council. They are known to have been particularly censorious of Wilhelm Dittmann, claiming that he and Haase would achieve absolutely nothing.³⁸ As already noted, the founders of the local branch of the KPD also disagreed with the USPD decision to put up candidates for the election to the National Assembly.³⁹ On the other hand, local leaders, conscious of the dangers of splitting the workers' movement, were anxious to adduce points of agreement between the two representative parties of the workers in Remscheid.⁴⁰ The unification which Remscheid workers felt sure would take place occurred in the autumn of 1920 when the USPD split and by far the majority of the Independents opted for the KPD,⁴¹ which now became the largest workers' party in the town, whilst the USPD degenerated into near oblivion. The VKPD had between 5,000 and 5,200 signed-up members by July 1921.⁴² Similarly, the unification between the left-wing of the USPD and the KPD clarified the position regarding the youth movement, with the merger of the Kommunistischer Jugendverband (KJV) and the Sozialistische Proletarierjugend (SPJ). Eventually this union again split into the much stronger KJVD and the Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend (SAJ), which became attached to the left wing of the SPD.⁴³ The chairman of the SAJ was Kurt Braß who did not follow his father into the VKPD. Over the next three years the VKPD set about organising its members in a revolutionary party, in preparation for seizing power at the

earliest opportunity. Communist activity now concentrated on the trade unions and the working-class housing estates. The local VKPD branch true to its Spartakist origins, now set about activating its members, stressing the need for total devotion to the cause, drawing them in to an omnipresent system, which was organised from party committees down to the family via factory councils, street cells⁴⁴, newspaper, sports clubs, youth and children's groups, cooperative society and many others. This rigid organisation demanded by the VKPD taxed even the disciplined Remscheid workers and many, particularly older ones, veterans of the former SPD organisations, began to complain about the inflexibility of the party.

A measure of the party's inflexibility was its intolerance of individualistic expression within its own ranks, and the apparent alacrity with which it expelled dissenters. Unfortunately, by its authoritarian style, the party managed to stifle useful debate and criticism. Some of the local party's most talented leaders were to fall victim to the absurdly common practice of expulsion. The purgative method of quelling dissent was to become even more frequent in the latter years of the Weimar Republic, so that by the time the Nazis came to power a sizeable number of leading functionaries of the KPD had at some stage been ejected from the party. Furthermore, the BV's commentaries on expulsions were often couched in hostile language, the harshness of which seemed to bear little relation to the extent of the quarrel.⁴⁵

The older Remscheid workers were used to the SPD/USPD style of leadership which had tended to act on their behalf rather than demand their constant participation, only calling upon their aid at elections or when a show of force seemed necessary. It is also possible that the new leadership in the VKPD did not display enough tolerance and patience with their members, and too often resorted to constraint by reprimanding and cajoling⁴⁶. Braß and Grütz who both joined the VKPD, gradually began to lose influence in the new party although for the time being they were still active.⁴⁷ Following the failure of the importunate March offensive and the subsequent inner-party bickering, many members turned their backs

on the VKPD although the Remscheid branch appears not to have suffered as much as others.⁴⁸ Although not many members in the town resorted to resignation from the party, they revealed their disaffection with the party's methods in other ways, for instance - unusual for Remscheid - poor turn-outs for meetings, sluggish payment and collection of subscription etc. and general criticism of party policy.⁴⁹

The unusually harsh censorship of leadership and policy forced the party to concentrate more on achieving a united front within the workers' movement - a policy which plunged the authorities and bourgeois parties into deep despair.⁵⁰ A leaflet campaign was enthusiastically supported, and pointed to the need for united action against the Orgesch and citizens' vigilante squads, and argued the case for the formation of proletarian protection squads. The first successful united action was the setting up of a committee consisting of members of all three socialist parties to consider the problems of unemployment and inflationary prices. The number of unemployed in Remscheid currently stood at 750 plus a further 400 who had been sacked for their part in the March offensive, and who received no benefits whatsoever and therefore had to be supported by the party and the trade union.⁵¹ The VKPD, seeing the revolutionary potential of unemployed workers, also began to reorganise these by forming a committee of unemployed KPD members to discuss their problems and plan action campaigns and demonstrations against the employers and local authorities.

The year 1921 offered further opportunities for united action in Remscheid, and again manifested the extent of polarisation. The first occasion was in the summer when under the leadership of Wilhelm Schuy the bourgeois parties agreed to form an anti-socialist coalition on the town council. They advertised the unity of bourgeois groups by organising a gala day (Bürgerfest) with an impressive procession of right-wing and centre organisations, consisting of the right-wing political parties and the DDP, Jungdeutscher Orden, Deutsch-Völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund, Verein der Waldecker, non-socialist employees' trade unions, guilds, protestant

and catholic youth groups, military veterans' and ex-Servicemen's associations and non-socialist sports- and recreational clubs. The festival was ostensibly called to demonstrate support for the Republic. The involvement of groups like the DNVP, Deutsch-Völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund, the Alldeutscher Verband and Kriegervereine testify to Schuy's ignorance of his allies' aims and intentions. The procession and gala appear to have mobilised between 20,000 and 24,000 people, and the march past lasted 73 minutes.⁵² The gala took two months to organise and was bitterly criticised in the BV which called on all socialist parties to boycott the event and organise their own festival on the same day. This tactic had been successfully employed by the old SPD organisation towards the end of the 19th century and during the first decade of this. The traditional Remscheid gala week always witnessed parallel Volkstfeste, in order that the workers and their families would avoid contact with their employers and their organisations at recreational events. On the 31st July two processions passed through Remscheid, the bourgeois coalition towards Küppelstein and the socialist/trade union march to the reservoir. The route taken by the former was abundantly lined with black, white and red flags. The Volkshaus, Konsum and workers' houses displayed red flags. The event was such that the town was literally split into two opposing camps. The workers were so angered by the rival event that names of shopkeepers taking part in the procession were noted with the intention of introducing a boycott.⁵³ The BV in its familiarly belligerent style described the events as a 'klare Scheidung der Geister':

'Auf der einen Seite das Krauter- und Spießbürgertum, auf der anderen Seite das machtvoll und vernehmlich seine Rechte heischende Proletariat. Hier alte, dort neue Zeit. Hier nationalistischer Kriegsrummel der Kriegsgewinnler und Plusmacher, dort Kampftentschlossenheit für die Erringung des Weltfriedens durch die Macht-ergreifung des internationalen Proletariats.'⁵⁴

The failure to form a united front, consisting of the three socialist parties in 1921, revealed a weakness which became a permanent feature of political affairs in Remscheid throughout the Weimar Republic. This was a reversal of the roles at the Reich level, with the local SPD holding a decidedly subordinate position, in comparison with firstly the USPD and afterwards the KPD. The relationship was unmistakably marked on the one side by a desire to delineate interests and preserve a separate identity, and on the other side by bitter enmity towards the small party, derisively referred to by local Communists as the 'Remscheider Acht-Familien-Partei'⁵⁵, which in their eyes was intent on preventing unity in the Remscheid workers' movement. The local SPD leaders constantly found themselves charged with the unenviable task of defending the actions and rulings of governments, whose hostility to the workers' cause was abundantly demonstrated. Their tolerance of unpopular government coalitions for the sake of preserving an illusory democratic republic which was consistently being undermined and subverted by judiciary, military, civil service and industrialists, earned them the title of traitors of the workers' movement, and sometimes even exasperated their most loyal rank and file members. In addition to the desire by local SPD leaders to maintain a separate identity there was undoubtedly a strong element of personal enmity and petty jealousy between the local leaders of both sides. These factors therefore were time and again decisive in the failure to form a united workers' front in Remscheid, throughout the Weimar years, despite a strong desire at the grass roots level. In the early summer of 1921 the three socialist parties exploring various channels for joint action, set up a committee together with the ADGB (Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund), and the local board of factory councils for the mobilisation of the unemployed. This council of unemployed workers (Arbeitslosenrat) was chaired by KPD-member Seidel⁵⁶, and was intended to conduct the interests of the local unemployed workers. It very quickly became dominated by KPD members, so that the SPD felt itself to have been outmanoeuvred.

The assassination of Matthias Erzberger at the end of August signalled another opportunity for joint cooperation between the three different socialist parties. This time the initiative was taken by the SPD and USPD, which together approached the KPD and the christian trade unions with the aim of presenting a broad workers' front in protest to this and the series of political murders perpetrated by right-wing extremists. Whilst the KPD readily accepted, the christian trade unions declined, so that the action was a predominantly socialist affair. The demonstration which took place on the 2nd September on the Rathausplatz (town hall square) was attended by about 4,000⁵⁷. The crowd was addressed by representatives of the three parties, Sauerbrey and Olk from Elberfeld and Leitner from Essen. All three speakers recalled the sacrifices and the mistakes made by the workers' movement since 1918:

'Ludendorff, Kapp, pp. wollten im März 1920 die Monarchie wieder aufrichten, aber wir standen gewappnet da und hatten die Macht haben können, wenn wir nicht so viele Fehler gemacht hatten... Wie oft waren wir schon versammelt! Wie oft haben wir Resolutionen abgefaßt! Es hat alles nichts genutzt. Nehmt die Herausforderung der Rechtsparteien an, dann werden die 20,000 Bedrücker auseinandergejagt. Denkt an März 1920, an das Bielefelder Abkommen, an die acht Punkte, nicht ein Punkt ist erfüllt worden. Man versprach uns Bildung von Einwohnerwehren, bestehend aus Proletariern. Sie wurden wieder aufgelöst. Wir verlangten Auflösung sämtlicher verfassungsuntreu gewesener militärischer Formationen. Nichts ist geschehen.'

The assembled protesters endorsed a four-point resolution demanding the immediate disarming of all right-wing paramilitary groups like Orgesch, Stahlhelm, Rossbach, etc., the removal of all recon-dite monarchists from the Reichswehr, civil service and judiciary, and the election of army^{and} police officers and judges,⁵⁸ and the abrogation of the state of emergency in Bavaria, East Prussia, Halle and Merseburg, together with the release of all political prisoners. Despite the recurrent calls for the establishment of a united front, the three parties were not able to reach agreement.

The local SPD leadership found itself on the one side subjected to pressure for unification by its ordinary rank and file, and on the other side severely reprimanded by the Freie Presse of Eiberfeld for acceding to the wishes of the former on the instance of the protest demonstration following the murder of Erzberger.⁵⁹ Yet another attempt to create a coalition of the three workers' parties occurred in October immediately following the USPD decision to merge with the KPD. This time the three parties⁶⁰ discussed the formation of a working committee because

'der festgeschlossenen Front des gesamten Bürgertums eine festgefügte einheitliche Kampfstellung des Proletariats entgegengesetzt werden müsse.'⁶¹

The already extant working committee of KPD, SPD and USPD factions on the town council, which had been created to counter the apparently unproblematic coalition of bourgeois parties, was to try to present a united front on every possible occasion, in order to gain the maximum benefit for the workers. The working committee, however, failed its very first test, when the SPD refused to participate in a planned demonstration against inflated prices and for wage increases.⁶² The ultimate demise of the transient working committee was signalled by the proposal to erect a monument to the workers who died during the Kapp-Putsch in Remscheid. The bourgeois councillors boycotted the council meeting so that it was inquorate - a circumstance aided by the absence of several SPD members. The SPD faction later proposed the erection of the monument in the cemetery, instead of in the Stadtpark as had originally been intended. The KPD faction was angered by the SPD's willingness to compromise so readily. The final comment was left to the BV:

'Es muß oft ausgesprochen werden, daß mit solchen Leuten ein Zusammenarbeiten im Sinne der organisierten Arbeiterschaft unmöglich sei. Die kommunistische Fraktion hat es schon oft versucht, eine geschlossene Front im Stadtrat herzustellen, aber immer scheiterte ihr Bemühen an diesen politischen Weichtieren. Die Rechtssozialisten hatten nunmehr das Recht, sich Arbeitervertreter zu nennen, endgültig verscherzt.'⁶³

At this stage the question must be raised as to just how seriously the KPD desired a united front in 1921, and on what terms. According to police reports and newspaper articles, the KPD genuinely desired a united front with the USPD and SPD, but not as a parliamentary coalition in the form of an inter-factional working committee, but rather as a joint force prepared to seize power and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat.⁶⁴

4. Conflict with the Trade Union Movement.

The revolution brought the workers important gains in the economic and social as well as the political sphere. Along with the demand for universal suffrage went the introduction of the eight-hour day, recognition by the employers of the trade unions as the representatives of labour and their right to negotiate wage deals on behalf of their members. These points were all hurriedly conceded by representatives of the employers' organisations and the Zentralarbeitsgemeinschaft - ZAG (central working committee) which had been formed soon after the outbreak of revolution.⁶⁵ Whilst the agreement undoubtedly benefited the workers socially and economically, and was therefore celebrated as a victory in SPD and trade union circles, it was nevertheless unmistakably an implicit acceptance of the capitalist system, and was to have far-reaching consequences with regard to the question of a united front in the workers' movement. The agreement also made provision for factory councils to assist and represent the workforce in disputes with the management or owner. Proponents of the council system advocated the transformation of factory councils into organs of workers' executive power. In this way workers would be able to control production, and industry would be nationalised. The debate about the form and powers of factory councils ran parallel to that concerned with the system of government viz. parliamentarianism or workers' councils. Whilst the SPD and the right wing of the USPD together with the trade union leaders concentrated on legalising the existence

and function of factory councils, the left wing of the USPD and the Communists began to organise independent revolutionary factory councils at the national level.

The Remscheid branch of the DMV in opposition to union headquarters was one of the radical union bodies which supported the decision taken at Halle in July 1919. After months of stormy debate the factory council law was passed at the beginning of 1920,⁶⁶ however in a form which ensured the continued existence of capitalism and which severely limited the rights of the workers. Rather than an organ of workers' executive power, the factory council was assigned the function of representative, a bridge between management and workforce. The promulgation of the factory council law effectively signalled the end of the debate councils vs. parliamentarianism.

The five years between 1920 and 1924 witnessed a struggle for control of the unions in Remscheid, which developed parallel to, and as part of, the struggle for political leadership of the local working-class movement. The unions, of which the DMV was the most important, were dominated first by the USPD and after 1920 by the KPD. Dissension ensued mainly from the question of what type of organisation the trade union should be. Whilst the Communists were intent on using the unions as a political weapon in the class conflict, the SPD minority wanted to limit its function to the economic and social sphere.⁶⁷ The truculent mood of the KPD-led DMV local committee under Karl Pütz, Christian Herzog, Adolf Benschaid and Willi Grütz, its readiness to take strike action as part of a wider KPD strategy, alienated many members with the result that some joined other unions in protest.⁶⁸ The loss of membership corresponded to a fall in KPD membership and reflected a temporary disaffection with the party's trade union strategy. This assessment was further born out by the results of the election of delegates to the DMV general meeting at Jena. The communist list, headed by Karl Pütz, Alois Kreven and Otto Braß, received - by Remscheid standards - a fairly low 7.5 %, whilst the SPD/USPD list led by Rudolf Pommer, Josua Heimbrock and Oskar Koch, received a respectable 24 %.⁶⁹ The position was redressed somewhat in January 1922 when at the

annual general meeting of the local branch an all-communist general committee was elected.⁷⁰ Attending members were also informed that local membership was again on the increase.

The struggle for control of the DMV continued unabated with a shift in emphasis, to a quarrel between the communist-led local branch leadership and DMV headquarters in Stuttgart which took up the cause of the minority SPD faction. During 1922 Karl Pütz became a casualty of the dispute. The KPD exacted swift retribution for his failure to uphold party policy towards the DMV and expelled him from the party. His expulsion was rapidly followed by his removal from office in the trade union, despite his enjoying continued support of DMV headquarters. Pütz' removal was sanctioned by the local general meeting so that headquarters was unable to intervene on his behalf. On the other side, district secretary Walter Freytay suspended Otto Weber, Alois Kieven and Adolf Benschaid, pending the outcome of an inquiry into their conducting of trade union business.⁷¹ Against this background, the communist general committee was returned to office minus those suspended officers. These were replaced by other party members, and the first secretary was now Ernst Crone.

The extent of support for the local branch leadership was considerable, as the flood of resolutions taken by town district committees testify.⁷² The election of representatives, which preceded the annual general meeting, also brought a resounding victory for the KPD. In Laspert, which was considered the main SPD stronghold, the Communists ran out winners by 200 votes to 25. The victory was followed by the election of communist district committees in Honsberg, Stachelhausen, Laspert, Rosenhügel, Hasten (formerly SPD), and Scheid. Considering the tenacity of opposition from the Remscheid branch, DMV headquarters decided to re-assert their authority by making an example of the three suspended Communists. When Weber, Kieven and Benschaid ignored the recommendation of the arbiters, namely a one-year ban from speaking at DMV-meetings, with a public warning for Weber, the central committee decided to expel them all.⁷³ This act released a burst of protest from district

committees and factory workforces in Remscheid⁷⁴, expressing solidarity with their elected officials.

Against a background of bellicose nationalist sentiment kindled by the French occupation of the Ruhr⁷⁵ and the coincidental assault by employers on local factory councils, the majority of local workers once again sought a plausible explanation for the latest course of events from the KPD. Whilst the social democratic group of trade unionists around Gustav Haddenbrock, police chief Paul Frügel, Wilhelm Kliemt, Lorenz Ridders and Wilhelm Allendorf elected to aid the coalition of christian and Hirsch-Dunkersche trade unions, employers and civil service/local authorities in the financing of the Ruhr Aid Programme, the KPD-led local branch committee of the DMV adopted a stance from, and opposed to, both the invaders and the national defence movement with the slogan "Schlagt Poincare an der Ruhr und Cuno an der Spree!"⁷⁶ The local SPD leadership angered local workers who were themselves already experiencing serious financial problems, by their support for the Ruhr Aid Programme which required every worker to forego one hour's wage per week to help finance passive resistance against the French. The occupation of the Ruhr was answered by the ringing of church bells which proclaimed the beginning of a half-hour strike called by the SPD and employers' associations. Where factory workforces did participate in the protest, the KPD-led councils were able to turn the occasion to their advantage by holding meetings to explain the party's point of view.⁷⁷ Many workforces, however, ignored the call to strike completely, so that in the end the protest had a decidedly bourgeois flavour with marches held by choral societies, fire-service, ex-Servicemen's associations and other right-wing organisations.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the majority of Remscheid factory workforce refused to participate in the Ruhr Aid Programme which the BV had condemned as fraud:

'Wiederum versucht man, den ausgebeuteten Schichten der Bevölkerung, der Arbeiterschaft, den Angestellten, kleinen Bauern, dem sogenannten kleinen Mittelstand begreiflich zu machen, daß das "Schicksal" sie mit dem Großunternehmertum verbinde. Und doch zeigt dieses Großunternehmertum schon jetzt, wie es dieses "Schicksal" auffaßt. Deutsche und französische Vertreter dieses Großunternehmertums haben sich bereits geeinigt, "kaufmannisch miteinander zu verkehren", d.h. auch unter den jetzigen Verhältnissen einträgliche Geschäfte miteinander zu machen.'⁷⁹

The same article went on to attack the SPD for its support of the national defence movement, however, completely ignoring the fact that the SPD regarded the alliance as a defence of the Republic:

'Die Sozialdemokraten haben sich mit ihrer "Streik"-Parole dem Gespött aller Arbeiter ausgesetzt. Trotz (oder wegen) ihrer "Schicksalsgemeinschaft" mit dem Unternehmertum konnten sie die Arbeiterschaft nicht davon abhalten, den Weisungen des Remscheider Ortskartells wie der Kommunistischen Partei zu folgen. Die Arbeiterschaft hat aus dem Krieg und seinen Folgen gelernt, die Sozialdemokratie nicht. Ihr Einfluß verschwindet trotz der radikalen Verbrämung ihrer Politik. Der gestrige Tag hat das auch in Remscheid bewiesen.'

The KPD, with its consistent stand against both the employers and the French, appears to have impressed the local workers, so that these rallied around the local DMV committee, with the result that the small group of SPD trade unionists became increasingly isolated. The dismissal of Schulz at the BSI was interpreted by the workers as chicanery on the part of the firm's director Dr. Steinberg, a young ex-cavalry officer, who had taken up the post at the BSI promising 'to sever the red thread running through the factory'⁸⁰. Throughout the preceding months the factory council, under the chairmanship of Otto Fröhlich, had won a number of skirmishes with the BSI management,⁸¹ so that the suspicion arose that Steinberg wanted to remove a particularly troublesome council. The dismissal of Schulz was answered by a strike in the smelting works.⁸² In a compromise worked out by the arbitration committee, led by deputy mayor Zur Hellen, Fröhlich and Schulz were removed from their council posts, but reinstated in their jobs.⁸³ The removal of Fröhlich and Schulz was followed a few weeks later by the instant dismissal of Emil Pagel, another communist member of the factory council.⁸⁴ This and similar moves in other factories suggested the possibility of a systematic assault by the local employers' association on the communist-led factory councils.⁸⁵

Instead of supporting their communist colleagues in the DMV, the SPD and USPD trade unionists seized every opportunity to attack their policies and methods. This criticism was interpreted by the workers as a tacit endorsement of the employers' assault on the communist-led factory councils, which many regarded as their chosen representatives. In a number of factories in Remscheid, including the Mannesmann Röhrenwerke, Gottlieb Peiseler and F.W. Arnz, the management attempted to persuade the workers to work an hour overtime to help finance the welfare system, as public money was being re-routed to support resistance in the Ruhr. The Mannesmann Arbeiterrat refused the extra hour's work because the free trade unions had not agreed to this measure, and the responsibility for welfare, it argued, was the town council's and the government's, not the workers' whose earnings had already been reduced to a third of the peace-time rate. The management of the Mannesmann Röhrenwerke accused the Arbeiterrat of having overstepped its powers and applied for the removal of the chairman of the workers' council.⁸⁶ The rejection of the extra hour was enthusiastically supported by both organised and unorganised workers, so that here again the KPD was able to capitalise on the situation, whilst the SPD found itself outmanoeuvred by both sides.

By its repeated warnings of fascist activity the KPD also proved itself alert to the dangers facing the working class. In the atmosphere of intense nationalism, which accompanied the French occupation of the town, it was the KPD which initiated the defence of working-class districts against the attacks of groups of young right-wing extremists, furious at the unwillingness of the workers to assist their resistance against the invaders. The KPD called for the formation of proletarian defence groups to patrol the streets of the town as the attacks by right-wing bands increased. The demand for action was taken up by the committee of factory councils which passed the following resolution:

'Unter den lügnerischen Schlagworten "Notgemeinschaft" und "Schicksalsgemeinschaft" versucht die besitzende Klasse die klaffenden Gegensätze zu übertünchen, die zwischen ihr und der von ihr ausgebeuteten Arbeiterklasse bestehen. Sie will wiederum die wachsende Empörung eindämmen, die die Arbeiterschaft angesichts der immer rücksichtsloser betriebenen Ausbeutung ergreift. Gleichzeitig versucht die Bourgeoisie, diese gegen sich gerichtete Empörung der Arbeiterschaft durch Entfaltung nationalistischer Leidenschaften von sich abzulenken, um auf diese Weise ihre Herrschaft nochmals zu sichern...'⁸⁷

The resolution ended with a condemnation of the SPD, christian and Hirsch-Dunkersche unions because of their alliance with the employers:

'Die Remscheider Betriebsrate fordern deshalb die Arbeiterschaft auf, jede Gemeinschaft mit den deutschen Kapitalisten welcher Art sie immer sein mögen, entschieden abzulehnen und alle deren Verschleierungsversuche mit der Ansage scharfsten Klassenkampfes zu beantworten.'

The ADGB Ortskartell under KPD-leadership voted unanimously⁸⁸ to support the demand for armed proletarian guards to assist the police against excesses by right-wing extremists. The local SPD leadership, however, found itself isolated once more, as it leant its support to the local police chief and SPD member Paul Frungel's outlawing of such proletarian groups, a decision which was later sanctioned by the Prussian Minister of the Interior, SPD member Severing.

Throughout the year 1923 the KPD was able to consolidate its hold on the local DMV organisation as it consistently championed the workers' cause against the onslaught from the employers, the police authorities, right-wing extremists and the French. The SPD challenge collapsed completely, as the result of the election of delegates to the annual general meeting of the DMV in Kassel reveal. In Remscheid the KPD list received 2,999 votes or 94.5 % of the total votes, with the remainder falling to the SPD.⁸⁹ Despite repeated efforts by DMV headquarters to prise the communist-led local

committee out of its position, the local workers continued to support their elected representatives. The dispute finally led to a split when the local DMV committee was expelled by headquarters for its refusal to submit. The majority (all but a small group of around 180) complied with the local committee and formed the DMV opposition with the following aims:

- 1) the reunification of all metalworkers,
- 2) the improvement of wages and working conditions,
- 3) return to the eight-hour working day, .
- 4) the destruction of capitalism, and
- 5) the introduction of a communist/socialist system of production under the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁹⁰

5. Working Class Resistance in the Crisis of 1923.

The desire for a united workers' front was voiced throughout the years 1923 and 1924, as the counter-revolution launched another attack on the achievements of the workers' movement.

The occupation of the town by the French and the broad front of bourgeois resistance incorporating the employers, the local authorities including the police, shopkeepers and artisan organisations as well as christian and Hirsch-Dunkersche trade unions and the SPD, presented the extreme right wing with an opportunity to operate more openly than had been possible during the months following the murder of Rathenau in the summer of 1922.⁹¹ The right-wing extremists now lined up locally under such names as: Bund der schaffenden Stände, Roemryke Berye, Schierenklub, and during the course of the year, Nationalsozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (NSDAP). The groups were largely an outgrowth of the banned Deutsch-Völkischer Schutz- und Irutzbund and were also assisted by the more radical elements of the numerically strong Jungdeutscher Orden. There was most probably a certain amount of overlap either overtly or covertly between the militant right-wing groups and the Jungdo.⁹² The militant groups engaged in anti-French resistance

and smuggling, as well as punishing all fraternisation with the enemy and attacking workers for their refusal to support the nationalist campaign. Many members of the extremist groups were the sons of Remscheid manufacturers⁹³, and judging by their propayanda, which appeared in the form of leaflets, posters and stickers,⁹⁴ it seems that one of their highest priorities was to settle accounts with the Communists. This was most probably the motive behind the fire which was deliberately started in one of the Volksstimm buildings on the night of 12th March, although no proof was found to link the incident with any particular group.⁹⁵ The fire completely gutted the building although it was not the one containing the printing works. The BV appeared the following day as usual with a commentary suggesting the complicity between the local bourgeois press, certain manufacturers who financed such actions, and right-wing extremists who carried them out.⁹⁶

In February and March there were a number of attacks on workers in Remscheid⁹⁷ and Lennep, and these prompted the call for the formation of armed Proletarian Hundreds to patrol the streets. The ADGB local cartel accepted the leadership of the Proletarian Hundreds and appealed to the police to grant them the status of auxiliaries. The ADGB announcement of the formation of the Proletarian Hundreds also accused the police of sympathising with the extremists and turning a blind eye to their antics. The aims of the Hundreds were to protect workers and their institutions, like trade union buildings and offices, the Volkshaus and the BV printing works, as well as their political and trade union meetings, from attacks by right-wing extremists, and to ensure public safety both on the streets and in factories. Furthermore they aimed at protecting the Republic from attacks by reactionaries. The Proletarian Hundreds were organised in groups of individuals and factory workers and consisted of Social Democrats and unorganised workers as well as Communists.⁹⁸ Despite continued attacks⁹⁹ the Prussian Minister of the Interior proclaimed a ban on the Proletarian Hundreds because they were interpreted as an instrument for the KPD to seize power.¹⁰⁰

In the light of the evidence, Severing's reason for the ban on the Proletarian Hundreds was not completely convincing. Whilst the KPD's avowed intention was to overthrow the Republic and replace it by a dictatorship of the proletariat, it was not yet in a position to do so in the spring of 1923. In Remscheid, which was under French occupation, the Proletarian Hundreds were essentially defence formations although it is likely that their continued existence might have led to their transformation into assault troops later in the year. The ban definitely facilitated the operations of the right-wing extremists although it by no means emasculated the workers' movement.

In August, a clash between members of the right-wing extremist group Roemryke Berge and Communists at Kreckersweg near Dabringhausen led to the shooting of a Wermelskirchen KPD member, Walter Lumpe. Many of the participants on both sides were from Remscheid. The right-wing group, disguised as hikers, had been observed regularly holding military manoeuvres in the area. On this occasion the Communists, reinforced by a contingent from Remscheid, surrounded the right-wing group in a barn. During the ensuing skirmish which took place in darkness, Lumpe was shot dead. By the time the police arrived, all the weapons had been disposed of with the exception of a pistol found inside the building. At the time the incident was never satisfactorily clarified, and the claims of the bourgeois press and certain policemen that the Communists had shot Lumpe themselves would appear to imply complicity between the police and the beleaguered right-wingers.¹⁰¹

The incident provoked an outcry against the right-wing extremists and the police, and Lumpe's funeral drew thousands of mourners from the surrounding area. The funeral procession, which brought local industry to a temporary standstill, was turned into an impressive show of strength by the workers' movement with support from workers of all political persuasions. The bourgeois press and the authorities for their part demanded more rigorous control of Communists by the police. During the course of the investigation, 22 Communists were charged with disturbing the peace, and 15 received total sen-

tences of 150 months prison and 39 months penitentiary. There were no charges brought against the other side.¹⁰²

The controversy surrounding the incident stemmed from the fact that the Communists indisputably ambushed what the bourgeois press spuriously claimed was a group of hikers. The Communists for their part had repeatedly warned the police about this group's participation in military manoeuvres in the Dabringhausen area. The police ignored these warnings and after the event denied any knowledge of them. When police arrived to free the captives, they found no weapons as these had obviously been disposed of under cover of darkness. One bourgeois newspaper, the Lenneper Kreisblatt, on 30/5/24 published a contradictory article claiming that the unarmed youths of the Roemryke Berge were surrounded by Communists and a shoot-out (Feuergefecht) took place, during which Lumpe was shot dead by the Communists! The police also arrived at this conclusion, possibly on account of finding the members of the Roemryke Berge unarmed. The Communists, for their part, insisted that Lumpe was hit in the chest by one of the first shots fired from the barn. On the other hand, as the incident occurred in darkness, a stray bullet from a communist pistol might just be a feasible explanation although the position of the body and the hole made by the projectile would surely have shed light on the matter. Local workers were particularly incensed by the apparent lack of suspicion by the police of the Roemryke Berge and their allies. The incident was clarified somewhat ten years later after the Nazi seizure of power, when several newspaper articles corroborated KPD claims that the Roemryke Berge had indeed been engaged in manoeuvres and had been armed.

The workers' movement also engaged in resistance against the French occupation, but was careful to differentiate between imperialists and 'Arbeiter im Waffenrock'.¹⁰³ The KJVD, led by Artur Becker, was particularly active printing and distributing leaflets, news-sheets and posting stickers. Emil Kortmann relates an incident when a young Communist arrived at the works' gate with a wad of leaflets to be distributed inside. The way was barred by patrolling French

soldiers and German police. The leaflets were, however, smuggled inside the factory in a soup container (Henkelmann).¹⁰⁴ This method was so successful that it became standard practice and helped to reduce the number of arrests. The KJVD also attempted to enlighten French and Belgian soldiers as to the reasons behind their occupation of the Ruhr. Contact was made with a number of soldiers who agreed to smuggle leaflets and copies of the Junge Garde into the barracks. On another occasion a group of young Communists aided by French sympathisers entered the projection room of the French cinema and wrote slogans against French and German capitalists on the bottom of the reel so that when it was directed onto the screen it caused uproar amongst the audience.

The subversion was so successful that many French soldiers actually refused to break up workers' demonstrations and remove Communist posters. Some troops were even sent back to France for disobeying orders.¹⁰⁵

The assault by the counter-revolution also met with stern resistance in local factories. The attempt to dismiss pertinacious and troublesome factory council members was answered by solidarity strikes which at least prevented their termination of employment, if not their removal from office. Also, during a period of extreme hardship for the workers, the majority refused to join the national defence movement and support the Ruhr Aid Programme which was ostensibly to provide for the old and poor. A report in the BV from Remscheid's most significant plants reveals a determined stand by the workers who argued that they were being compelled to finance a programme opposed to their own interests whilst the employers were benefiting from government aid and inflation.¹⁰⁶ At the Glockenstahlwerk Lindenberg the workers refused to participate in both the overtime plan and the collection, although several Christian and Hirsch-Dunker unionists contributed to the latter. At the Alexanderwerk only around 70 Christian and Hirsch-Dunker members agreed to overtime out of a total workforce of over 900. At the Mannesmann Motorenwerk, Luisenhütte, Ernst-August-Werk in Hasten, Vereinigte Beckersche Werke, Firma Mühlhoff and Albert Hermanns the

workers refused to cooperate outright. In the BSI resistance to the plan was only partly successful owing to pressure from the management and the christian/Hirsch-Dunker factory council which had been commissarially charged with that office, following the suspension of Fröhlich, Schulz and Pagel, and the resignation of other members in protest. Despite this fact, the majority of workers declined to work overtime and support the collection. At a work's meeting of the Mannesmann Röhrenwerke a resolution was passed claiming that the whole question of occupation was a swindle as the real dispute was to see who would control French ore and German coal, Stjennes or Loucheur. The resolution predicted hardship for the workers due to the resultant devaluation of the mark.¹⁰⁷

The authoritarian attitude of local employers and the police, and the vanishing purchasing power of the mark, which by the end of May stood at 60,000 to the dollar, combined to provoke strike action by the workers. The strike initially broke out at Friedrich August Mühlhoff and the Mannesmann Röhrenwerke, and these were joined the following day by the BSI.¹⁰⁸ By the 28th May these factories had the support of over 40 others, including all the town's large iron and steel factories.¹⁰⁹ Owing to the onset of hyperinflation, which severely reduced their earnings, the workers demanded a 70 % pay rise back-dated to the 16th, and full pay for the days on strike, as well as an inflation subsidy of 150 thousand marks. The workers presented a totally united front from Communists to Christians. At a mass strike meeting on the Jahn sportstfield, the workers were addressed by August Benner and August Lipken, both communist factory council members from Mannesmann. They warned against individual negotiations, encouraged solidarity and advised their fellow workers to avoid alcohol at all costs. The employers had already increased their offer from 15 % to 21 1/2 % and owing to the wide range of support the workers were confident of success. Reporting of the strike in the RGA provoked an angry response from the workers, and normally reserved Hirsch-Dunker representative Schnitzler advised subscribers to cancel their orders for this paper forthwith. The BV seconded the attack on its arch rival with

the caustic remark:

'Der RGA ist der geschworene Feind der Arbeiterklasse und wird sein Gift stets gegen sie verspritzen. Er lebt eben davon und kann es leider tun infolge des Indifferen-tismus weiter Schichten der Arbeiterschaft.'¹¹⁰

On the same day the arbitration committee under the chairmanship of SPD member Schöbel set the hourly rate for group B1 at 2,400 marks from the 16th to 30th May and at 3,000 thereafter. The dollar stood at 67,000 marks. With this ruling local employers claimed to be paying the highest wages in the Ruhr.¹¹¹ A meeting of factory councils rejected the ruling but agreed to consult their members. Dr. Legers, the legal advisor of the employers' association, at this stage rebuked the DMV headquarters for not quelling the KPD opposition within the trade union in Remscheid. It is likely that faced with stubborn and united opposition, Legers was searching for a moderate ally to help him defeat the strike movement. In order to compel the DMV to take action he maintained that all trade union policy in Remscheid was decided by the Bergische Volksstimme and not by Stuttgart.¹¹² The subsequent vote in the factories revealed an overwhelming majority in favour of continuation.¹¹³ Of 11,799 votes polled, 10,571 rejected the arbitration committee's recommendations. The employer's intransigence¹¹⁴ failed to impress the workers, who were by now receiving financial support from fellow workers in other factories and towns in lieu of strike pay which had been refused by DMV headquarters.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the first contribution of flour from the Soviet Union - which had been sent to Remscheid workers as a gift of solidarity - had just arrived in the town.¹¹⁶ Finally, on 7th June the employers gave way and agreed to pay an hourly rate of 3,900 marks (class B1) and an immediate inflation subsidy of 100,000 marks.¹¹⁷ The gains made by the successful conclusion of the strike were soon swallowed by rampant inflation. On the 1st August the dollar was worth 1.1 million marks and the price of a three and a half pound loaf of bread was 15,000 marks whilst a litre of milk delivered to the house cost 17,000 marks.¹¹⁸ The continuing downward plunge of the mark can be seen from table 9.

By the beginning of August Remscheid's workers were demanding a further increase to keep pace with inflation. The tactics of the employers was to prolong negotiations, on the one hand in order to maximise their profits and on the other to constrict their adversaries. Some local employers also began to provoke the workers by purposely paying too little. On the 7th September, workers at the BSI were handed pay packets by Dr. Steinberg containing sums with as little as half a million marks. The same occurred at the Glockenstahlwerk, and when the workers complained, both Steinberg and Eilender called in the Schupo.¹¹⁹ Despite warnings by assistants, Steinberg insisted on handing over the grossly inadequate pay packets. The conflict was finally resolved when other senior directors at the company instructed him to pay out the full entitlement - between ten and twenty million marks. A few days later, Dr. Scheid of the Alexanderwerk refused to pay the workers demanding their wages for that day (Tuesday) and told them they would be paid on the Friday. By now prices were being increased twice daily so that the workers were particularly hard pressed to feed their families and meet other obligations. When part of the workforce demonstrated in front of the offices, the director called a detachment of Schupos to disperse them.¹²⁰ The director gave the workers an ultimatum to return to work immediately or else they would be locked out. The SPD council under chairman Hermann Meiswinkel tried to interpose with an appeal to comply with the ultimatum to avoid a lock-out. After an angry exchange, the majority of workers walked out.

Similar disputes arose at Klingelberg Sohne and Kotthaus & Busch over pay. In the latter case, Kotthaus junior informed the workers that he was complying with instructions from the local employers' association and that he was not prepared to work out the rapidly changing exchange rates and wage tables all day long. He ended the negotiations with the comment that it was time the workers made sacrifices for once.¹²¹

The sacrifices already made by the workers and their families, albeit involuntarily, were considerable. The deteriorating state of

health of large sections of the local population bears testimony to this fact.' A report published in May 1923¹²² linked the worsening state of health to the political and economic situation. The generally poor state of health was becoming noticeable by the pale and shabby appearance of passengers on trams and buses. Increasing numbers of townsfolk looked thin, weary and hungry. A different survey held around this time ascertained that 32 % of Remscheid children were undernourished.¹²³ It was also discovered that the development of children's lungs was frequently retarded and in many cases did not correspond to the individual's age. There were also many cases of skeletal structural weakness particularly in the spinal column due to undernourishment.¹²⁴ Tuberculosis was still regarded locally as the most dangerous disease, particularly because of the danger of contagion in cramped living quarters. Despite the perceptible progress already made in Remscheid in the fight to control this 'poor man's disease'¹²⁵, it still accounted for around 100 deaths per year.

The accuracy of the IB mortality rate was however questioned by the author of the health report of 1923 himself. He postulated a higher death rate due to the fact that only the immediate cause of death, for instance heart attack, was reflected in the monthly demographic tables and not the frequently real cause, namely IB. An annual report made by the local health authority put the number of patients treated for tuberculosis in Remscheid in 1923 at 1,302, about 1/65 of the total population. Out of these, 532 were children under 14 years. The report pointed out that 930 of these patients did not have a bed of their own and were forced to share with at least one other family member.¹²⁶ The health report of 1923 also noted an alarming rise in the incidence of rickets. The Vaterlandischer Frauenverein - aware of this problem - opened a treatment clinic in 1922 which catered for 25 patients.¹²⁷

A further reflection of the grave political and economic situation was the falling birth-rate.¹²⁸ The 1923 health report, using different figures to those shown in table 13, observed that infant mortality stood at 9.5 % in Remscheid (125 babies). There was also

an alarming number of premature births which pointed to a corresponding number of attempted abortions. A further report written two months later mentioned a disturbing upswing in the number of abortions amongst 16 and 17 year-old girls.¹²⁹ Venereal diseases were apparently on the increase in Remscheid in 1923,¹³⁰ which would indicate an increase in prostitution.¹³¹ This was doubtlessly resorted to by some young women trying to escape from poverty. The French occupation obviously ensured an enthusiastic clientele, which could pay either with inflation-proof foreign currency or provisions which could be sold profitably on the black market. The health report also pointed to the spread of parasitic skin diseases which were attributed to the increase in the price of soap and poor bathing facilities¹³² in proletarian homes.

Misery and suffering were, of course, nothing new in proletarian districts, but during the course of 1923 a large section of the traditional middle class was becoming acquainted with poverty, as inflation voraciously consumed pensions and savings. In many ways this section of the population was less able to cope with the situation than were the workers. Whereas many working-class families were constantly aware of the diminutive margin separating their usual state from complete destitution, and the perpetual struggle against poverty had traditionally encouraged forms of collective action and strengthened working-class solidarity, the older middle class, with its conservative values acquired in - by comparison - an economically less volatile era, was suddenly engulfed by the effects of the collapse of the German mark. The traditional middle class ethically orientated towards individualism and a well-guarded private sphere, had no social device for cushioning the blows, so that many were left isolated and bewildered. According to the report some of the worst cases of hardship were revealed in families too ashamed openly to admit their poverty.¹³³ Many old people who had hitherto never known want, tried to hide their need by staying at home in unheated rooms, badly nourished and alone. For some people the obloquy of applying to the welfare was unbearable and they chose to commit suicide or succumb to disease aggravated by hunger and cold.¹³⁴

It was of course in homes stricken by illness or where a widow was left with several children to care for, where the worst hardship occurred. The file of the Deutsche Notgemeinschaft¹³⁵ testifies to the widespread misery in Remscheid during 1923.

The building sector also reflected the hardship and the sacrifices made by the workers. As already stated, the shortage of suitable accommodation was a permanent feature in Remscheid throughout the whole of the period covered by this study. After the war the local authorities, together with the Gemeinnützige Aktiengesellschaft, embarked on a building programme which aimed above all to provide small flats which workers could afford to rent. There were several different sites, amongst these: Honsberg, Neuenhaus, Düppel- and Fichtenstraße. Owing to the growing expense of building materials, the authorities began to experiment with clay walls but this practice had to be abandoned because of the unsuitability of clay in such an inclement climate.¹³⁶ Whilst the immediate post-war years witnessed a proliferation of self-help settlement groups working according to the ideas of Adolf Damaschke, creating whole estates like the one at Bokerhöhe,¹³⁷ the private building sector remained almost non-existent with only 16 houses and 32 flats before 1922. Some of the larger companies, like the BSI, also erected houses for their workers but these were few in number. The 1923 health report, however, established that the accommodation problem was still catastrophic,¹³⁸ despite the erection of 226 new flats in that year. The report claimed that Remscheid was short of roughly three and a half thousand flats and that on 1/1/22 5,098 citizens of the town were looking for accommodation. During the course of 1922 health inspectors had noted that 344 occupied flats were in near dilapidated state, 745 flats were too small for the families occupying them, 121 flats were damp, while 183 cases of inadequate sleeping arrangements, due to a lack of space, were regarded as a moral hazard. The report added that owing to the economic situation the health inspectors had found it necessary to relax their standards in order to prevent undue alarm. The lodgings' situation for Schlafgänger was thought to be extremely grave.

Resistance in the factories did not, however, merely consist of strike action, although this was the ultimate weapon. During the October crisis the KPD and BV called for the setting up of factory newsheets to enlighten unorganised workers and discuss industrial problems. In quick succession newsheets appeared in the Mannesmann Rohrenwerke, the BSI and the Glockenstahlwerke.¹³⁹

With the collapse of passive resistance towards the end of September and inflation advancing at a rate hitherto unknown in the world, the industrialists now began to demand the introduction of the ten-hour working day to help meet the reparations bill. The abolition of the eight-hour day, one of the last and most prized gains of the revolution, which coincided with the overthrow of the legal SPD/KPD Land-government in Saxony and Thuringia, signalled the triumph of the counter-revolution in Germany. In Remscheid the board of factory councils appealed to the workers to defend the eight-hour day. This was answered by the following resolution passed by the workforce of the Mannesmann Motorenwerke:

'Die am 8. Okt. im Volkshaus tagende Betriebsvollversammlung der Mannesmann Motorenwerke erhebt scharfsten Einspruch gegen das immer mehr auf eine Provokation hini zielende Unternehmertum und gegen die versuchte Beseitigung des Achtstundentages. Zur Verteidigung wird die Arbeiterschaft alle Kampfmittel anwenden. Um die uns noch gebliebenen Rechte genügend zu schützen, ist der gemeinsame Kampf aller Arbeiter notwendig. Wir verlangen deshalb von den Gewerkschaften und den proletarischen Parteien, sofort zusammenzutreten zwecks Bildung eines Aktionsausschusses. 140

A few days later a works meeting at the BSI passed a resolution which condemned the attempt by the employers and authorities to make the workers bear the costs of passive resistance in the Ruhr. The workers of the BSI were aware of the connection between the question of the eight-hour day and the balance of power, and were prepared to fight for their rights. They demanded an end to the state of emergency and the formation of workers' militia to prevent separatist-secessionists. The resolution called on all workers to join the united front against the capitalist offensive.¹⁴¹

It was against this background that open class conflict broke out for the second time within four years in Remscheid. It occurred as the result of the frequent resort to violent suppression on the part of the police. By 1923 there was clearly a feeling of deep-seated rancour towards the local workers' movement amongst large sections of the police force. This was further intensified, during the course of the French occupation, when the police found themselves playing a subordinate role and were themselves subjected to harassment from the one side¹⁴² and constant abuse from the other. The inability to strike at the invader generated an accumulation of aggression which was released in the direction of what the bourgeoisie regarded as a treacherous working-class movement. It is also evident that a bond was forged during the course of the year between some members of the local police force and right-wing extremists, engaged in resistance activity against the French.¹⁴³

In accordance with the state of emergency the police now banned all large gatherings, and the BV offices were searched on several occasions. A meeting of unemployed for which nobody accepted responsibility was dispersed by a police charge. On the Markt a gathering of people was attacked by police using truncheons and sabres. In this latter incident a worker, Wilhelm Emmerich, was hit by a sabre blow and died later in hospital. During this period the local police used particularly harsh measures. Their lack of self-control and their readiness to make use of their weapons was hitherto unprecedented in Remscheid.¹⁴⁴ On the 24th November during a workers' demonstration at the BSI, director Steinberg called in a troop of police who opened fire killing a number of workers.¹⁴⁵ The mood of the workers was by now extremely belligerent. The situation was particularly tense. The police most probably anticipated an armed uprising as in Hamburg, but there is no concrete evidence of the existence of such plans in Remscheid. The local SPD leadership rejected the KPD's appeal for a united front with the aim of establishing a workers' government.¹⁴⁶ As factories had been working at reduced capacity and there had been a

large number of redundancies there was a great deal of hunger and misery in evidence everywhere in the town. Dr. Legers of the employers' association refused to re-employ those who were redundant because local firms were allegedly experiencing difficulty selling their products. The employers took the opportunity to implement a policy of rationalisation by investment in modern machinery. On the 4th December local food shops were broken into and plundered by hungry workers who were now receiving no unemployment benefit owing to the collapse of welfare. The management of the Mannesmann Rohrenwerke, who had completely closed the factory making all their workers redundant, now sent a circular to all their married workers with the exception of those over 60:

'Wir sind in der Lage, unseren Betrieb in beschränktem Maße versuchsweise mit der Vorkriegsabeitszeit und Vorkriegsarbeitsweise wiederaufzunehmen. Falls Sie bei uns wieder eingestellt werden wollen, können Sie sich mit Ihren Papieren bei Ihrem Herrn Betriebsführer bis Freitag, d. 14/12/23 abends 6 Uhr melden, wo Sie alles Weitere erfahren werden.'¹⁴⁷

At this point Remscheid workers demanded strike action despite the approach of Christmas. The SPD had been punished recently for its equivocal handling of the situation. At the council elections in the Alexanderwerk, the only SPD bastion in Remscheid, the SPD trade unions were ousted in favour of Communists, so that the new council now had seven KPD members, three christian and Hirsch-Dunkersche (liberal unions) and only two SPD members.¹⁴⁸ This setback for the SPD was repeated at the election of DMV representatives in Laspert where the complete KPD list was chosen.¹⁴⁹ This loss of confidence amongst their already negligible reservoir of supporters probably compelled the local SPD leadership to support the strike, although some of their comments and actions would suggest resignation and a lack of commitment.

On 9/1/24, following the workers' rejection of a wage reduction and the introduction of the ten-hour working day, the management of the

BSI dismissed the whole workforce and locked the gates. This action was emulated by other local employers.¹⁵⁰ There now developed a general strike, as transport workers joined their colleagues from the factories. The employers' use of strike breakers, a tried and tested method in Remscheid, poisoned the atmosphere further. On the 13th January a young policeman was shot dead.¹⁵¹ This act provoked immediate retaliation by the police, who now appeared ready to punish any resistance by the use of weapons. On the 17th January an illegal meeting on the sportsfield in Honsberg, which was attended by several hundred unemployed and strikers, was broken up by a large detachment of police. The police officers armed with rifles escorted the strikers along the narrow street (Honsberger Straße) towards the town centre. When one of the workers tried to enter his home he was pursued by police, dragged out of the house and beaten up, as was a young visitor of the family. This act was accompanied by boos and whistles, and other skirmishes broke out. At this point a policeman fired into a group of workers, hitting a young man in the leg.¹⁵²

Violence flared yet again when early one morning a strong group of policemen, almost certainly acting on a tip-off, raided the working-class estate of Neuenhaus.¹⁵³ On this occasion, too, the police made ample use of their truncheons even beating women who offered resistance. The police discovered a small arms cache in one of the houses. It was later understood that the arms, which originated from the Kapp-Putsch, had been hidden by bricklayers working on the house.¹⁵⁴ The BV reproached the workers of Neuenhaus for leaving the resistance to the women, who the paper reported as asking: 'Sind unsere Männer Memmen, daß sie sich so etwas gefallen lassen?'

With the strike front already beginning to crumble in Düsseldorf and other towns and DMV headquarters ready to discontinue their support for the strike in the Ruhr, a group of Remscheid anarcho-syndicalists hurled a bomb through the window of Mannesmann Röhrenwerk director Albert's house. Although the house was considerably damaged, none of the occupants were injured.¹⁵⁵ The incident

may well have been a final desperate act to revitalise the sagging strike front as some workers were already drifting back to the Röhrenwerke. The strike ended in defeat for the workers, and the employers introduced the ten-hour day in Remscheid as in the whole of the Ruhr.

The year 1923 represented a resounding defeat for the workers' movement although this fact was not immediately grasped. Despite the existence of concrete plans to seize power in the Reich, the KPD leadership, under Brandler, failed to act decisively, judging the moment to be unpropitious.¹⁵⁶ In Remscheid the KPD had managed over the preceding three years to occupy all the important positions within the local workers' movement and it had succeeded in organising a factory-based workers' militia mainly under its own leadership.¹⁵⁷ However, it is not known whether any concerted plans existed during 1923 to seize power in Remscheid by force of arms. The aim of the KPD also in Remscheid, was to conclude the revolution by seizing power and establishing a workers' dictatorship. Despite its near monopoly of power within the local workers' movement the KPD, however, was not able to mobilise large groups of factory workers who remained under the influence of christian and yellow trade unions or were unorganised. The SPD trade unionists, as we have already seen, shrank to an insignificant group of less than 200. Considering the failure to reach and activate a large section of workers and the absence of adequate quantities of arms¹⁵⁸, together with the presence of a strong contingent of police housed in the new barracks in Remscheid, and the French occupation, an armed communist-led uprising like the one in Hamburg was extremely unlikely despite obvious sympathy for this policy amongst local KPD members.

6. The Increasing Radicalisation of the Remscheid Working Class as Reflected in the Elections 1920 to 1924.

The development of the KPD from a small fringe party to the strongest political organisation in Remscheid can be seen most lucidly by a brief study of the election results during this period. Afterwards, a more accurate reflection of electoral behaviour is revealed by the correlation of Reichstag election results and a detailed study of the social structure of the town's 40 voting wards after 1920.¹⁵⁹

The Reichstag election on 6th June 1920¹⁶⁰ took place in the wake of the Kapp-Putsch and the occupation of the Ruhr by the Reichswehr and Freikorps troops following the Bielefeld treaty. The situation in Remscheid, as we have already seen, was extremely volatile. The emerging polarisation of Remscheid society is reflected in the election results. The turn-out for this election was 93 % (Reich average 79.4 %).¹⁶¹ This time voting was in 30 wards of which the USPD won 23, gaining a total of 17,059 votes = 40.1 %. The DVP's defection from the former alliance with the DNVP and its more tolerant attitude to the Republic, and locally its leading role in the alliance against the Socialist parties, attracted an avalanche of votes away from the putatively compromising DDP¹⁶², so that it now usurped the role of leading bourgeois party with 10,501 votes = 24.7 %, winning the remaining seven wards. Despite this lurch to the right by so many of its former supporters, the DDP held up quite well with 5,521 votes = 13 %. The Zentrum received 2,740 votes = 6.4 %, the KPD 2,310 votes = 5.4 %, the DNVP 2,286 = 5.4 % and the SPD 1,997 = 4.7 %. The Polen party gained a mere 124 votes (0,3 %).

Again the USPD's best results were in the predominantly working-class districts of Honsberg, Laspert, Kremenholz, Struck, Bliedinghausen (location of the Mannesmann works), Papenberg/Rosenhügel and Neuenhof/Wüstenhagen. In ward 13, Honsberg I, the USPD gained 62.5% = 751 votes. In the other Honsberg ward, 14, the USPD won 61.4 % or 799 votes. In ward 25, Laspert II, the USPD's share was 59.2 %

or 711. In Kremenholz/Kippdorf, ward 16, it had 57 % or 741 votes. The Independent Socialists received 56.5 % or 848 votes in ward 5, Intzestraße/Struck; 50.3 % or 654 votes in Papenberg/Rosenhügel and 50 % (600 votes) in Neuenhof/Wüstenhagen.

Compared with the election to the National Assembly the Radical Socialist vote was boosted this time by the participation of the KPD which achieved its best result in ward 5, Intzestraße/Struck, 14.2 % = 213 votes. The KPD also attracted higher than average votes in wards: 13 Honsberg I, 9.1 % (109); 16, Kremenholz, 7.6 % (99); 24, Laspert I, 7.9 % (103); 25, Laspert II, 7.9 % (90); and 11, Osterbusch, 7.8 % (110). The SPD challenge collapsed dramatically in this election and this party slithered to seventh position in Remscheid. It is noticeable that the SPD lost ground in the working-class districts in particular, and this fact can only reflect strong dissatisfaction with that party's policies amongst local workers. This time the SPD achieved its best result in ward 21, Hindenburgstraße, 10.5 % (168), which was a respectable area populated by civil servants, professional people like doctors, teachers, chemists and architects and lower-middle class white-collar workers, clerks, shop-assistants, shopkeepers and independent artisans (Handwerker). The SPD's next best result was again in ward 19, Guldenwerth/Reinshagen, but this time the share of the vote had fallen from 26 % to only 8.5 % (128 votes). The same was true of ward 3, Fichtenhöhe, where the SPD share fell from 19 % to a mere 7 % (105 votes). In ward 23, Elberfelder Straße/Waldstraße, it attracted only 6.1 % (99 votes) compared with 17 % in 1919. In the working-class districts the SPD scored badly. Three examples suffice to illustrate the workers' rejection of the SPD's policies. In ward 5, Intzestraße/Struck, the SPD managed only 2.2 % (34 votes), in ward 13, Honsberg I, 3.3 % (40 votes) and in ward 25, Laspert II, 3.5 % (42 votes).

The DVP's usurpation of the leadership role of the bourgeoisie from the DDP can be clearly seen by the fact that the former overhauled the latter in 29 out of 30 wards, failing only in Hasten III, ward 30. Furthermore, five of the wards won by the DDP in 1919 were

taken by the DVP, these were: wards 10, Blumenstraße/Palmstraße; 12, Alleestraße/town centre; 15, Brüderstraße/Schüttendelle; 20, Polizeiprasidium/Lindenstraße; and 21, Hindenburgstraße which was a rearranged voting ward corresponding to ward 21, Scheiderstraße/Schützenstraße in 1919. The remaining two wards won by the DVP this time were wards 1, Markt/town centre; and 23, Elberfelder Straße/Waldstraße. The DVP's best results were achieved in wards: 12, Alleestraße/town centre, 41.7 % (584 votes); 21, Hindenburgstraße, 36.8 % (590 votes); and 23, Elberfelder Straße/Waldstraße, 33.9 % (543 votes). The corresponding figures for the USPD's performance in these wards will serve as a guide: ward 12, 21.6 % (303); ward 21, 18 % (288) and ward 23; 25.6 % (411).

The DDP's best result was in ward 30, Hasten III, where it pushed the DVP into third place (ward 30 was won by the USPD). In this ward the DDP gained 25.5 % (383 votes). The Democratic Party also did quite well in wards 28, Stockderstraße/Hasten I, 20.8 % (313); 21, Hindenburgstraße, 20.5 % (328) and 20, Polizeiprasidium/Lindenstraße, 18.5 % (296).

The results in Remscheid reflect mutatis mutandis the trend in the country as a whole, with the exception that here the DNVP did not achieve the success which it had in the Reich. The vote in Remscheid may also be seen as a rejection of the Weimar Republic, as indeed was the election result in the Reich. In Remscheid, however, the rejection was of the parliamentary and in favour of the council system propagated by the USPD and KPD:

'Die Reichstagswahl von 1920 steht somit am Beginn der permanenten Krise des Weimarer Staates, in dem von nun an das normale Wechselspiel zwischen einer arbeitsfähigen Regierung und einer konstruktiven Opposition nicht mehr zustande kommen konnte, weil die größte staatstragende Partei sich versagte und zudem die Stärke der äußersten Linken, dann aber auch vor allem die wachsende radikale Rechte, jede positive Majoritätsbildung unmöglich machten.¹⁶³

In Lennep the USPD (2,115 votes) and the KPD (344 votes) together polled 2,459 votes, which was a significant increase over the USPD's share in 1919 (1,845 votes).

The other parties scored:

DVP	1,591 votes	
Zentrum	1,060 votes	(1919 = 1,120)
DDP	994 votes	(1919 = 1,860)
DNVP	894 votes	
SPD	300 votes	(1919 = 1,241)
Polenpartei	76 votes.	

The Reichstag election of 4/5/24, which took place in the wake of the Cuno government's self-induced inflation, the collapse of passive resistance against the French and the defeat of the radical working-class movement by the combined forces of the counter-revolution, the introduction of the nine- and ten-hour working day, and in Remscheid the quarrel between the local DMV branch and headquarters. A completely rearranged electoral structure, consisting of 40 wards of approximately 1,000 voters each, was in operation. Whilst in most wards the core remained after 1920, they nevertheless cannot be regarded as identical with the voting wards for the elections in 1919 and 1920. Henceforth, the information regarding social composition presented in appendix 1 applies¹⁶⁴ up to and including March 1933. In the May election of 1924, 15 parties and interest groups put up candidates in Remscheid. This time the turnout was 10 % less than in 1920, standing nevertheless at a very respectable 83.1 %.¹⁶⁵ The Reich average was 77.4 %.¹⁶⁶ The overall result for Remscheid was as follows:

KPD	13,209 votes = 32.4 %	
SPD	2,980 votes = 7.3 %	(1920: 1,997 = 4.7%)
DDP	3,730 votes = 9.2 %	(1920: 5,521 = 13 %)
DNVP	4,740 votes = 11.7 %	(1920: 2,286 = 5.4%)
Häußer Bund	53 votes = 0.1 %	
Freiwirtschaftspartei	63 votes = 0.1 %	
Christlich-soziale Volksgemeinschaft	100 votes = 0.2 %	
DVP	11,237 votes = 27.8 %	(1920: 10,501 = 24.7%)
Polenpartei	61 votes = 0.1 %	
Völkisch-sozialer Block	626 votes = 1.5 %	
USPD	273 votes = 0.8 %	
Zentrum	2,851 votes = 7.0 %	(1920: 2,740 = 6.4 %)
Republikanische Partei	36 votes = 0.1 %	
Rheinische Wirtschaftspartei des Mittelstandes	669 votes = 1.6 %	
Nationale Freiheitspartei	23 votes = 0.1 %	

The first point to notice from the election results is that the KPD, owing to the unification with the majority of the USPD, is now the sole representative of the radical workers' movement in Remscheid. The remainder of the USPD now has more in common with the SPD although, for the time being, it continues to exist independently, albeit as a completely insignificant group.

A glance at the above table also reveals the loss of around five and a half thousand votes for the radical left which would correspond roughly with the reduced turn-out of 10 % (disregarding the new voters) = 4,990 plus the extra 1,000 votes picked up by the SPD. This would possibly indicate a certain loss of sympathy by some workers with the radical left (KPD). The reason for this may have been the dispute in the DMV. Nevertheless, the KPD won 23 of the 40 wards in Remscheid, the remaining 17 all falling to the DVP. The KPD's popularity is once again reflected in the results achieved in the working-class districts, although only in two wards did this party attain percentages considerably above average.¹⁶⁷ In ward 19, Honsberg III, the KPD polled 507 = 63.4%, and in ward 7, Intzestraße/Struck, 549 votes = 58.2 %. The party's success in other wards was more modest: in 18, Honsberg II, 415 = 52.5 %; 5, Neuenhaus, 403 = 47.9 %; Honsberg I, 437 = 47.5 %; 14, Osterbusch, 457 = 46.1 %; 6, Neuenhof, 505 = 45.9 %; 34, Struck, 475 = 43.2 %; and 32, Laspert I, 420 = 42.4 %. Although the SPD was undoubtedly able to improve its position slightly in these areas, only in one of these wards did it achieve 9 % (ward 17, Honsberg I, 89 votes = 9 %). Its best results were achieved in wards: 33, Laspert II, 143 votes = 13 %; 28, Hindenburgstraße, 128 votes = 10.6 %; 35, Heidhof, 100 votes = 9.7 %; 23, Schüttendelle, 98 votes = 9.8 %; and 38, Hasten II/Stockderstraße, 102 votes = 9.3 %. A glance at appendix 1 reveals that of these wards only Laspert II and Schüttendelle can be described as working-class districts, and even these rated as better working-class areas than, say Laspert I or Honsberg, containing a higher middle-class element. The party's modest success in Hindenburgstraße and Heidhof would suggest either the SPD's appeal to lower-middle class white-collar workers/clerks and junior Beamte or else to some workers dwelling in this milieu.

The DVP was again the champion of the middle classes and the local establishment, even picking up a few extra votes from disaffected former DDP voters whose switch reflected quite lucidly the general swing by the bourgeoisie to the right. It must be remembered that particularly lower-middle class pensioners and small savers had suffered badly during the previous years and were apt to blame their misfortune on the consequences of the Versailles Peace Treaty and the Weimar Republic which they identified with submission to the arch-enemy France which, incidentally, was still in occupation locally. By their upbringing, cultural milieu, education and inclination these people were generally out of reach of Marxist arguments and their contact with the proletariat was usually transient, perfunctory and superficial. Their move to the right was a continuation of the process of polarisation which could be observed during the war and particularly following the Kapp-Putsch.

The DVP's best performances were in wards: 27, Polizeiprasidium/Lindenstraße, unmistakably a pleasant and prosperous middle-class residential area with tree-lined streets and detached houses with large gardens, where it achieved 41.3 % (496 votes); 16, Alleestraße/town centre, 40.3 % (524 votes); Elberfelderstraße/Waldstraße, 37.1 % (446 votes); 28, Hindenburgstraße, 36.1 % (434); Brüderstraße/Amtsgericht, another pleasant residential area, 36 % (432 votes); 30, Schützenstraße, a lower-middle class area populated by white-collar workers, shop assistants, civil servants, professional people and independent businessmen, 35.3 % (424); and 13, Blumenstraße/Palmstraße, an area situated in the centre of town around the catholic church. This area was a cheerful residential area inhabited by middle-class families with a strong catholic element.¹⁶⁸ In ward 13 the DVP won 34.8 % (418 votes).

A further manifestation of the swing to the right is the prodigious leap in the votes in favour of the DNVP, from 2,286 (5.4 %) to 4,740 (11.7 %). The party's spectacular performance locally, as indeed throughout the Reich, is to a great extent directly attributable to the intensely chauvinist atmosphere (which was more acutely in evidence in occupied border areas like Remscheid than else-

where), in which this election took place. This election, however, marked the DNVP's apogee in Remscheid. From the mid-20s, it fell victim to the splintering of the bourgeois vote, although it did prove more resilient than the DVP, the party of the local establishment. The DNVP's most remarkable success was in ward 40, Hasten IV, 19.1 % (166 votes), roughly corresponding to ward 30, Hasten III in 1920 in which the DDP beat the DVP into third place and in which the DNVP only managed 81 votes. This area (Hasten) was the location of numerous small family businesses manufacturing and exporting tools. The tentative comparison also illustrates the swing to the right, some of the reasons for which have already been adduced.¹⁶⁹ The DNVP's other notable successes were in wards: 31, Elberfelderstraße/Waldstraße, 16.5% (198 votes); 27, Polizeiprasidium/Lindenstraße, 16.2 % (195 votes); 29, Wilhelmstraße, 15.1 % (150 votes) - this ward also rated as a fashionable middle-class area inhabited by executives, civil servants, professional people and independent businessmen as well as a large contingent of lower-middle class white-collar workers; 28; Hindenburgstraße, 14.9 % (179 votes); and 10, Bürger Straße, 14.8 % (163 votes), which encompassed the town's most exclusive residential area. The Bürger Straße/Ehringhausen area was the neighbourhood housing the town's most important industrialists, senior executives and civil servants. Amongst this ward's residents were the Mannesmann family and Director Hilger of the BSI.

The other interesting feature in this election is the candidature of the Völkisch-Sozialer Block which was a loose confederation of extreme right-wing anti-semitic groups with one of their strongholds in nearby Elberfeld. In Remscheid, the supporters of the Völkisch-Sozialer Block in this election are the former members of the Deutsch-Völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund which was prohibited in 1922 and had a local membership of around 600.¹⁷⁰ After the ban on this organisation several members formed right-wing groups like the Roemryke Berge and Scherenklub, others joined the NSDAP, the Orgesch and Organisation Consul. After the ban on the NSDAP many continued their membership unofficially in local camou-

flagged organisations like the Bund der Schaffenden Stände and Bund der Gerechten. It is known that these activists were mostly young, very many of them coming from shopkeeper, white-collar employee, small manufacturer and artisan families. Many of them were in the process of becoming declassé workers owing to the inability of their parents to support their sons in the ailing family businesses. Völkische ideas were also propagated by a large group of youths at the Ernst-Mortiz-Arndt-Gymnasium, which drew the majority of its scholars from wealthy homes. The majority of the supporters of the Völkischer Block were new voters born after 1900.

For comparison purposes, the results in Lennep and Lüttringhausen were as follows:

	<u>Lennep</u>	<u>Lüttringhausen</u>
DDP	614	4/3
Haußer Bund	-	-
SPD	487	712
DNVP	1,306	1,743
Freiwirtschaftsbund	17	281
Christlich soziale Volksgemeinschaft	42	74
KPD	1,796	1,105
DVP	1,229	797
Polenpartei	43	3
Völkisch-sozialer Block	98	191
USPD	53	34
Zentrum	1,061	942
Republikanische Partei	8	2
Rheinischer Wirtschaftsbund	327	238
Nationale Freiheitspartei	18	11

In Lennep results reflect a similar trend to Remscheid although there the DNVP presents the main bourgeois challenge to the workers' movement. The strong showing of the DNVP in Lennep and Lüttringhausen reveals the monarchist sympathies of clergy, senior civil servants, small town academics and farmers as well as industrialist families. In Lüttringhausen, the DNVP is by far the most

popular party, thus underlining the comments already made regarding the DNVP's supporters.¹⁷¹ In addition to this the DNVP's greater appeal in Lüttringhausen than in Lennep would corroborate the claim that this party was primarily protestant.¹⁷² The relatively high number of votes polled by the Völkisch-Sozialer Block in Lüttringhausen (191) already indicates the amenability of small-town protestants to anti-semitic propaganda. This point finds confirmation in later elections, when results reveal the establis^bment of an early NSDAP stronghold here. [^]

The town council election on 4/5/24 was held on the same day as the Reichstag election and was therefore assured of a high turn-out (11 % higher than 2/3/19). It was a resounding victory for the bourgeois parties, despite the KPD's confirmation as the largest individual faction, owing to the already long-established bourgeois party alliance. The Bürgerblock was able to overturn a socialist-communist majority of ten seats to a majority of six in its favour. The results for Remscheid were as follows:

	<u>votes</u>	<u>seats</u>	
		1924	1919
Bürgerblock Alliance	23,035	24	22
DDP	4,563		
DNVP	3,368		
DVP	10,792		
Zentrum	3,020		
Kriegs- und Sozialrentner	1,272		
KPD	13,140	15	23
			with USPD,
SPD	3,126	3	9.

This election set a precedent for the remainder of the Weimar period, bringing to an end the years of socialist-communist predominance on the town council. The left-wing parties would never again hold a majority in the town hall.

One of the first acts of the new council was the symbolic restoration of the old monarchist tradition to accompany the actual

triumph of the counter-revolution. A number of street names¹⁷³ associated with the monarchy had been changed by the communist-socialist council following the murder of Erzberger and Rathenau by right-wing extremists of the Organisation Consul. The DDP's and Zentrum's complicity in this and similar spurious ventures such as the official order to decorate the town with the old monarchist colours black, white and red,¹⁷⁴ which remained in force up to the Nazi seizure of power, was an ominous indication of the real affinity of these local parties with the pre-war anti-democratic and above all anti-socialist tradition.

The defeat of the workers' movement also brought an end to a period of cooperation, no matter how tenuous, between the KPD, USPD and SPD in Remscheid. During the course of the year 1924 the term Sozialfaschisten for Social Democrats made its appearance in the pages of the Volksstimme and was henceforth incorporated in the local communist vernacular.

In Lennep and Lüttringhausen the bourgeois party alliance was unassailable. In Lennep the bourgeois parties won 16 seats, the KPD 6, the SPD 1 and Kriegsbeschädigte 1. The result in Lüttringhausen was similar, with the bourgeois parties gaining 17 seats, the KPD 4 and the SPD 3.

The stormy years between 1918 and 1923 in Remscheid mark a period of intense class hostility in which the polarisation of local society continued to gain momentum. The first part of the period until March/April 1920 was dominated by the outbreak and consolidation of the revolution, culminating in what was possibly the last realistic opportunity for the workers to seize power and determine the course of the revolution. Conversely, the second part of the period reached its climax with the defeat of the workers' movement in the crisis of 1923 and its aftermath, the municipal elections which sealed the triumph of the bourgeoisie. Both crises, ie. the Kapp-Putsch and the collapse of resistance in the Ruhr and the re-introduction of the ten-hour working day were decisive moments preceded by overt class conflict. On the first occasion, the Remscheid

workers' movement achieved its immediate purpose, but the town remained a fairly isolated enclave for lack of coordinated action in other parts of the country. On the second occasion the local workers' movement was unable to present the solid and resolute unity needed to resolve the conflict in its favour. The reason for the defeat at the local level was the gradual disintegration of the tentative alliance of the three workers' parties, the free trade unions and occasionally, the christian and yellow unions. The break-up of the alliance was due to ideological differences which proved to be insurmountable during the crucial year of 1923. The KPD, which emerged to take over the leadership of the local workers' movement, aimed at a dictatorship of the proletariat whilst the SPD, which lacked effective influence in Remscheid, advocated a policy of defence whilst the christian and yellow unions remained true to their policy of cooperation with the employers. We shall see that these three positions hardened in the following years thus preventing further effective cooperation of lasting duration.

TABLE 9: Exchange Rate Mark : Dollar on the Berlin Stock Exchange¹⁷⁵

30/05/23	1 Dollar	=	67,000 Marks
01/08/23	1 Dollar	=	1.1 million Marks
09/08/23	1 Dollar	=	6 million Marks
31/08/23	1 Dollar	=	11 million Marks
06/09/23	1 Dollar	=	27 1/2 million Marks
12/09/23	1 Dollar	=	90 million Marks
20/09/23	1 Dollar	=	242 million Marks
06/10/23	1 Dollar	=	601 1/2 million Marks
20/10/23	1 Dollar	=	12,080,000,000 Marks
05/11/23	1 Dollar	=	421,050,000,000 Marks

TABLE 10 : List of Local Retail Prices.

Source: 1 = BV,
2 = RGA.

1

04/08/23	<u>Graubrot</u> , three and a half pounds	=	15,000 Marks
07/08/23	litre milk	=	3,800 Marks
17/08/23	<u>Graubrot</u> , three and a half pounds	=	112,000 Marks
31/08/23	potatoes, one pound	=	60,000 Marks
08/09/23	<u>Graubrot</u> , three and a half pounds	=	520,000 Marks
	lignite bricketts, 1 cwt	=	4,300,000 Marks

2

04/09/23	1 litre milk	=	430,000 Marks
07/09/23	1 litre milk	=	600,000 Marks
11/09/23	1 litre milk	=	1,700,000 Marks
14/09/23	1 litre milk	=	2,500,000 Marks
10/09/23	<u>Kostganger</u> (lodger with breakfast), attic room with bedding, rent per month ¹⁷⁶	=	4,850,000 Marks

TABLE 11: Deaths in Remscheid due to TB.

Year	Deaths	Source:
1913	92	Years 1913-1918: HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 8148
1915	98	
1916	99	Years 1921/1922: HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 38945
1917	169	
1918	146	Years 1923-1926: HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 53952
1921	125	
1922	103	Years 1932-1945: HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 54332 I.
1923	105	
1924	107	
1925	74	
1926	74	
1932	69	
1933	61	
1934	53	
1938	65	
1942	55	
1944	58	
1945	88	

TABLE 12: Population Figures Lennep, 1914 to 1921.¹

Year	Total population	Marriages	Births incl. still-born infants	Deaths incl. still-born infants ²	Deaths due to war causes ³
1914	13,893	100	254	155	4
1915	13,851	33	196	259	74
1916	13,507	37	122	336	98
1917	13,581	65	96	417	58
1918	12,975	56	120	429	73
1919	13,218	133	162	248	8
1920	13,290	186	257	240	9
1921	13,386	150	227	201	-

No. of combattants from Lennep: 2,400

No. of soldiers killed : 350

1 taken from Statistisches Amt Remscheid, Band I Nr. 10

2 total 3 part of 2.

TABLE 13: Population figures for Remscheid 1913-1932.¹

Year	Total Population	Marriages	B i r t h s			D e a t h s			
			live births male	female	still-born infants	total	in Remscheid	in the war	total
1913	77,002	614	904	895	74	1,873	825	-	825
1914	78,447		824	780	71	1,675	816	326	1,142
1915	77,013		663	562	47	1,272	753	586	1,339
1916	77,416		458	445	31	934	756	416	1,172
1917	77,391		382	362	35	779	791	298	1,089
1918	76,766		442	423	36	901	995	336	1,331
1919	75,632	939	608	595	32	1,235	990	132	1,122
1920	75,332	1,076	809	737	55	1,601	1,125	-	1,125
1921	75,875	881	789	716	57	1,562	803	-	803
1922	77,052	925	642	675	61	1,378	928	-	928
1923	77,634	853	650	592	44	1,286	734	-	734
1924	77,906	595	559	588	45	1,192	760	-	760
1925	76,989	678	621	569	40	1,190	750	-	750
1926	77,098	584	575	560	47	1,182	734	-	734
1927	77,774	689	527	516	36	1,079	749	-	749
1928	78,772	757	586	546	37	1,171	776	-	776
1929	79,098		591	526	39	1,156	844	-	844
1930		932	554	555			859 ²		
1931		848	511	442			848 ²		
1932		893	426	407					

Figures compiled from Band I Nr. 10, Statistisches Amt Remscheid, StA Remscheid IH/68, Bevölkerungsbewegung in Remscheid 1913-24, StA Remscheid, IIA/41a, Einwohnerzahl der Stadt Remscheid aus Bergischem Abendblatt Nr. 162 and 13/7/32. HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 53952.

Notes.

1 Figures for Remscheid without Lennep and Lüttringhausen
2 with Lennep and Lüttringhausen

Total no. of war deaths 2,094.

CHAPTER II

NOTES

- 1 For detailed account of the ceremonial inauguration of the workers' and soldiers' transition to power, see Lucas, op. cit. pp. 193-195.
- 2 Ibid., p. 198;
and BV, 28/11/18.
- 3 See Enthüllungen über gegenrevolutionäre Umtriebe - Rede des Vorsitzenden des Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates Remscheid, Otto Braß, auf dem Ratekongreß am 17/12/1918 (extract), in: Gerhard A. Ritter and Susanne Miller, Die deutsche Revolution 1918-1919 - Dokumente, Hamburg 1975, pp. 148-153.
- 4 Lucas, op. cit., pp. 202-203.
- 5 Ibid., p. 204.
- 6 See BV, 9/1/19, Eine Versammlung in der Konzerthalle;
and BV, 31/1/19, Eine bedeutsame Parteimitgliederversammlung.
- 7 BV, 8/2/19, Metallarbeiterversammlung.
- 8 Buchdruckerei des Deutschen Metallarbeiterverbandes, Remscheid. Ein Kapitel kommunistischer Gesellschaftsarbeit..., op. cit., p. 2.
- 9 BV, 21///19, Ober 1.000 neue Mitglieder für die USPD;
BV, 13/8/19, In einer einzigen Abteilung der BSI 35 Anmeldungen für die USPD;
BV, 5/7/19, 'Im Bezirk Rosenhügel wurden bei einer Agitationstour 55 neue Mitglieder für die USPD und 36 neue Abonnenten für die BV gewonnen';
- 10 BV, 11/8/19, Der große Arbeiter-Jugendausschuß.
- 11 BV, 21/1/19, Zu einer wuchtigen Massendemonstration
The article refers to Hasten as the 'Spießler-Republik' because this district was inhabited by many long-established small manufacturers who demonstrated their support for the monarchy by hanging the old colours from their windows. Hasten and Lüttringhausen were the two districts of Remscheid where Anti-Socialism was most intense.

- 12 Lüttringhauser Taglicher Anzeiger (LTA), 6/6/19, Belagerungs-
zustand über Remscheid.
Factory owner Heinrich Hentzen, brother of the Lennep Landrat
was attacked and beaten up by strikers. Another group of in-
sensed workers broke into the factory of Albert Urbahn & Co.
and manhandled the owner's three sons. Another factory owner
who received a beating during this time was Hugo Usenberg.
See HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/841.
- 13 RGA, 17//19, Angriffe auf Regierungssoldaten.
- 14 BV, 11/6/19, Remscheid unter Belagerungszustand
- 15 LTA, 11/6/19
- 16 LTA, 13/6/19
- 17 LTA, 19/6/19
- 18 BV, 17//19, Gesammelte Gelder für die in Schutzhaft befind-
lichen Genossen.
- 19 StA Remscheid, I B/21, Sonderakte betreffend Wahlen zur ver-
fassunggebenden deutschen Nationalversammlung vom 19/1/19
- 20 The Reich average was 83 %. See Lucas, op. cit., p. 133.
- 21 The corresponding figures for Lennep are:
- | | | |
|----------|-------|--------|
| DDP | 1,860 | 25.9 % |
| USPD | 1,845 | 25.7 % |
| SPD | 1,241 | 17.3 % |
| Zentrum | 1,120 | 15.6 % |
| DVP/DNVP | 1,115 | 15.5 % |
- and for Lüttringhausen:
- | | |
|----------|-------|
| DDP | 1,677 |
| DVP/DNVP | 1,649 |
| SPD | 1,393 |
| USPD | 1,041 |
| Zentrum | 925. |
- 22 Lennep is the most important railway junction in Remscheid,
serving Cologne, Düsseldorf, Wuppertal and the Oberbergischer
Kreis. For this reason there has traditionally been a large
number of railway personnel with Beamten status resident in
this town.
- 23 BV, 2//1/19, Landtagswahlergebnisse.

- 24 StA Remscheid, VII M/15, Akten der Bürgervereinigung Remscheid-Süd 1928-1933.

See letter from chairman Hermann Pflanz dated 4/9/29 explaining the election strategy of the bourgeois parties and the civic association during the Weimar Republic.

- 25 BV, 3/3/19, Kommunalwahl.
26 StA Remscheid, II A/85, 28/1/21, Vereinigte Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands.

The full list of KPD town-councillors was now, Ewald Benschaid, Walter Bornefeld, Ernst Brautigam, Louis Barrn, Martha Bottcher, Eugen Ebel, Heinrich Fischer, Cornelius Gohr, Rudolf Geldsetzer, Hugo Heier, Albert Issel, Wilhelm Koch, Artur Karnowski, Ida Kattwinkel, Ernst Leithoff, Christian Lenz, Carl Leverberg, Gustav Müller, Paul Schießmann, Paul Schroder, Hans Sünzel and Jakob Wolf.

- 27 Lucas, op. cit., pp. 228-234.

Briefly, Lucas argues that there were two salient reasons for the failure of the November revolution. Firstly, there was not enough spontaneous action of the kind which occurred in Hamborn, and secondly the highly disciplined radicalism of the Remscheid workers and the subjective spontaneous radicalism of Hamborn workers failed to complement each other. Lucas criticises the Remscheid leaders for preventing the revolutionary fervour of the workers from being carried over into other areas and translated into energetic belligerent action, which would have ensured constant momentum.

- 28 See BV, 20/9/19, Neue militärische Übergriffe;
LTA, 29/1/29;
LTA, 11/2/20.

- 29 For an account of events and the battle of Remscheid see:
Georg Eliasberg, Der Ruhrkrieg von 1920, Bonn, Bad Godesberg 1974, pp. 89-91;
Hans Peter Heise (Bund deutscher Pfadfinder, edit.), Generalstreik für Freiheit und Demokratie, März 1920, pp. 31-33;
also Ewald Weisemann (Zeitfreiwilligenkorps Remscheid e.V., edit.), Die Remscheider Marztkämpfe im Jahre 1920, Remscheid 1934.

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- 40 BV, 31/1/19, Eine bedeutsame Parteimitgliederversammlung.
Willi Grütz was of the opinion that the two parties would soon be reunited. The report went on to say:

'Mit allem Nachdruck hob Schröder auch hervor, daß man in Remscheid gegenüber der USPD keinerlei Vorwürfe erheben könne, sondern feststellen müsse, daß in Remscheid ganz gute Arbeit geleistet worden sei. Die kommunistische Partei bestehe aber für ganz Deutschland und da könne man örtlich keine Ausnahme machen, sondern müsse auch hier eine Ortsgruppe des Spartakusbundes bilden, von den Genossen, die sich dazu bekennen. Er hoffe jedoch, daß recht bald wieder eine einheitliche und geschlossene Organisation aller ehrlichen revolutionären Kreise geschaffen werde.'

The USPD's position was stated in an article in the Volkstribüne on 19/1/21, entitled, Unabhängige Sozialdemokratie:

'Die Kommunisten beliebten es immer so darzustellen, als ob sie links von uns standen. Wir aber behaupten, daß links von uns nichts mehr steht. Auch der Name ist es nicht, der uns trennt. Denn das Kommunistische Manifest ist es, das die Begründer der Arbeiterbewegung uns geschaffen und das auch wir anerkennen...'

- 41 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., 15445, 22/12/20, Staatliche Sicherheitspolizei, Lagenbericht.
- 42 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., 15446, 12/7/21, Wochenbericht über Nachrichtendienst.
- 43 BV, 6/2/29, Aus den Kampfjahren des kommunistischen Jugendverbandes Ortsgruppe Remscheid.
- 44 BV, 2/7/21, Der Zehnerführer.
The street cell called Zehnergruppe was the last link in the chain which stretched from the local party branch headquarters to district headquarters (almost always housed in pubs) down to the street level. The Zehnergruppe was responsible for doorstep contact, distributing leaflets, canvassing, recruiting new members as well as sticking posters and reporting on the activities of oppositional groups.
- 45 BV, 10/2/23, Ausschluß aus der Partei, comment on the expulsion of Resch;
also RGA, 15/11/22, reporting on an article about Resch in the BV.

46 BV, 2/7/21, Hinein in die kommunistischen Kindergruppen.

The tone of this article penned by a 14-year old official of the children's group was offensively admonitory, to say the least:

'Was die kommunistische Kindergruppe wirklich ist, scheinen bisher noch wenige Kommunisten zu wissen, sonst würden uns nicht immer bei unserer Agitation ungefähr folgende Sätze begegnen: Ich will es mir noch einmal überlegen. - Ich muß erst mit meinem Mann darüber sprechen - ... Wenn ein Kommunist es sich nochmal überlegen will, sein Kind in die kommunistische Kindergruppe zu schicken, dann kann er richtigen Herzens sagen: Jetzt habe ich unserem Pastor einen guten Dienst getan, für den er mir dankbar sein wird...'

Also BV, 4/1/21, Genosse, du bist Zehnergruppenführer.

This article explaining the duties of street-cell leaders was written in an exceedingly paternalistic tone and may have given rise to resentment amongst members.

4/ Lucas, op. cit., p. 124.

Otto Braß, who in December became secretary in the VKPD national headquarters, was evidently too much of an individualist for the party's strict code of discipline. He very quickly found himself at odds with the party line and after resigning his post, was later expelled for his criticism of the party leadership's handling of the March uprising in 1921.

48 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 15446, Wochenbericht über den Nachrichtendienst, Remscheid 21/9/21.

Düsseldorf, which had 10,000 members before the attempted insurrection, had only 3,500 afterwards. Membership in Solingen slumped from 12,000 to 4,000, and in Remscheid district from 11,500 to 8,000. The Remscheid branch, however, held up best of all, at 5,000.

- 49 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., 15446, Wochenbericht über den Nachrichtendienst, Remscheid 14/10/21:

'Es wird jetzt bekannt, daß die Neuorganisation nach Zehnerschaften und die Aufstellung einer Kampftruppe bereits in den Aktionsmonaten Juli und August auf den stärksten Widerstand eines großen Teils der Parteimitglieder gestoßen ist.'

The report goes on to say that party headquarters, alerted to the problem in Remscheid, quickly dispatched Comrade Leuthner from Essen to manage the tricky situation. However, his presence failed to placate angry members. He was given a stormy reception at a meeting on 22nd September. Local party chairman, Schröder, also incurred the wrath of his members and was accused of incompetence in the handling of party policy. There was also widespread anger over the indiscreet behaviour of certain other leaders in their private lives. There also appeared to be a strong yearning for united action with the other socialist parties. The report indicated the decreasing membership but doubted that this would result in a defection to the other socialist parties:

'Dieser Zerfall darf aber nicht optimistisch stimmen, da nach hiesiger Ansicht der augenblickliche Zersetzungsprozeß nur eine vorübergehende Erscheinung ist, bedingt besonders durch die gegenwärtige Wirtschaftslage. Sobald in dieser Hinsicht ein Umschwung eintritt, ist mit Sicherheit anzunehmen, daß der Kampfcharakter der Partei wieder zum Vorschein kommen wird.'

- 50 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., 15446, Lagenbericht, Remscheid 13/6/21.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., 15446, Wochenbericht über Nachrichtenwesen, Remscheid, 5/8/21.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Bv, 1/8/21, Remscheid im Zeichen von Demonstrationen. Klare Scheidung der Geister.

- 55 BV, 26/1/23, Katzenjammer der Remscheider Gewerkschaftssaboteure.

The name 'Remscheider Acht-Familien-Partei' refers almost certainly to the cliquish nature of the local SPD branch. Some of the families holding important functions in the party were the: Haddenbrocks, Blanks, Winniarskis, Fleischmanns, Iserlohs and Gesenbergs. The lack of resonance for the SPD locally can be seen from membership figures published at the Party's Area Conference held at Elberfeld in 1919. According to the report, SPD membership in the Lennep/Remscheid/Mettmann district stood at only 1,273, less than a quarter of the KPD's membership in Remscheid alone.

See, Bezirksparteitag zu Elberfeld, den 1. und 2. Juni 1919, p. 17.

- 56 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., 15446, Lagenbericht. Bericht über den Stand der Arbeitslosbewegung, Remscheid 1/7/21.
- 57 Ibid., Wochenbericht über den Nachrichtendienst, Remscheid 8/9/21, p. 34.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Ibid., p. 30.

The article referred to in the police report appeared in the Freie Presse on the 5th September 1921 and warned Social Democrats against taking part in similar demonstrations with Communists in future. The article went on to say:

'Und wenn man die Vorfälle in Remscheid, Lennep und besonders in Ronsdorf, wo sich die Anhänger der Sozialdemokratischen und Unabhängigen Partei aus einer kaum verständlichen Art von Friedensliebe heraus dazu hergegeben haben, eine Resolution anzunehmen, die die Bewaffnung des Proletariats forderte, überlegt, muß gesagt werden, die Kommunisten verfolgten durch ihre Beteiligung an den Demonstrationen den Zweck, durch Hineintragen besonderer Parteiideen den Eindruck unserer Demonstrationen zu schwachen. Das ging so weit, daß die kommunistischen Redner am Tage, der der Sicherheit und dem Schutz der Republik galt, gegen die Republik aussprachen. Was vom kommunistischen Standpunkt nur natürlich ist, was sich aber Anhänger der Sozialdemokratie in Zukunft unter keinen Umständen mehr gefallen lassen dürfen. So können wir keine Eroberungen für die Republik machen.'

- 60 Ibid., Bericht über den Nachrichtendienst, Remscheid, November 1921.

As in most constituencies, the majority of USPD members elected to merge with the KPD. A handful of Remscheid members continued to maintain a USPD presence in the town.

- 61 Ibid., p. 63.

- 62 Ibid.:

'So wurde in der gleichen Sitzung die Veranstaltung einer großen gemeinsamen Demonstration gegen die Teuerung und für Lohnerhöhungen geplant, die jedoch von der SPD abgelehnt wurde, weil sie nicht das dritte Rad am Wagen sein wollte, und die deshalb unterblieben ist.'

- 63 Ibid., p. 64.

- 64 Ibid., p. 30 ff.

- 65 For an account of the negotiations between the ZAG and the employers' association see Arno Klunne, Die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung. Geschichte - Ziele - Wirkungen, 2nd edition, Düsseldorf, Köln 1981, pp. 192-195.

- 66 See Preller, op. cit., pp. 249-252.

- 67 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 15446, Wochenbericht über Nachrichtendienst, Remscheid, 19/7/21.

At a meeting of DMV representatives on 17/7/21 tempers began to fray when a USPD member accused the KPD of being responsible for falling membership figures. A KPD colleague countered by charging the USPD with sabotaging the workers' movement, and added: 'Jetzt sei der Zeitpunkt gekommen, wo aus den Gewerkschaften eine Kampforganisation gemacht werden muß.'

- 68 Ibid., Wochenbericht über den Nachrichtendienst, Remscheid 14/10/21.

The police spy reported widespread disaffection with the local DMV leadership following the failure of the March offensive:

'Allein im Kalendervierteljahr sind etwa 700 Austritte erfolgt. Die Allgemeine Arbeiterunion, die früher in Remscheid ohne nennenswerten Einfluß war, ist in der letzten Zeit an Zahl der Mitglieder ziemlich angewachsen. Sie beträgt zur Zeit ca. 2,000.'

During the period 1/4/21 to 1/7/21, membership in the local branch of the DMV fell from 14,977 to 12,769.

Ibid., Remscheid 19/7/21.

69 BV, 26/7/21, Die Metallarbeiterwahlen.

'Zwar zeigt das Ergebnis das starke Überwiegen der Kommunisten, mehr als 75 % der abgegebenen Stimmen, andererseits spornt das Resultat an zu fleißiger, zäher und geschickter Aufklärungsarbeit in den Reihen der noch Indifferenten. Die verhältnismaßig hohe Stimmzahl, die die Gegner erhalten haben, stammen aus diesem Massenreservoir.'

In an exceptionally low turn-out the KPD list received 2,422 votes and the SPD/USPD 773. The result in Solingen was similar: KPD 2,330 and SPD/USPD 626.

70 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg Düss. 15446, op. cit., Sonderbericht betreffend Nachrichtenwesen, Remscheid 25/1/22.

The new committee consisted of: first secretary Karl Putz, second secretary Otto Weber, Alois Kieven, Ewald Knieling, Richard Kottmann, Rudolf Schleutermann, Emil Voss, Max Weidig, Walter Krauskopf, Wilhelm Kurtz, Karl Groll and Otto Klein.

/1 BV, 22/1/23, Hauptgeneralversammlung der DMV, Remscheid.

72 BV, 18/1/23, Weitere Stimmen zur Lage im Metallarbeiterverband.

A well-attended meeting in the Rosenhügel district passed the following resolution:

'Die Mitglieder des DMV Bezirk Rosenhügel erblicken in dem Vorgehen des Hauptvorstandes gegen die hiesige Ortsgruppe im allgemeinen und im Falle Putz im besonderen eine Provokation des überaus größten Teils der im DMV, Ortsgruppe Remscheid organisierten Mitglieder. Die Versammlung protestiert auf das Scharfste gegen die diktatorische Handlungsweise des Hauptvorstandes und der Bezirksleitung und verlangt, daß die vorgeannten Instanzen nicht den Willen einiger Nörgler, sondern den der Gesamtmitgliedschaft ausführen. Um ein gedeihliches Arbeiten und eine Stärkung der Ortsgruppe zu gewährleisten, verlangen die Versammelten, daß die eingeleiteten Ausschlußverfahren gegen die Kollegen Kieven, Benschaid und Weber schnell zurückgenommen werden und daß der Kollege Putz, weil er das Vertrauen der Mitglieder der Ortsgruppe nicht mehr besitzt, als Angestellter verschwindet.'

This resolution was echoed in the following days by the districts of Goldenberg, Stachelhausen, Scheid, Laspert, and the workforce of the Luisenhütte.

See BV, 20/1/23, Gegen die Verbandszerstörer.

- 73 BV, 6/3/23, Schliestedts Rache.
Schliestedt, who had been popular with Remscheid workers during the revolution, joined the DMV headquarters in 1919 as secretary. During the dispute he was regarded by his former colleagues in Remscheid as being the main architect of a plan to wrest control of the local branch of the DMV from the KPD.
- 74 BV, 7/3/23, Gegen die Willkür des Hauptvorstandes des DMV.
BV, 10/3/23, Gegen die Willkür der Schliestedt und Genossen.
BV, 13/3/23, Weiterführung des Kampfes gegen Schliestedts Gewaltakte.
- 75 The French began their occupation of the Ruhr in January 1923. Lennep was the first part of Groß-Remscheid to be occupied. The occupation was then extended to incorporate Remscheid proper on 1/3/23.
HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16536, Remscheid 7/3/23.
- 76 Kortmann, op. cit. , p. 49.
- 77 BV, 17/1/23, Fristlose Entlassung des Genossen Schulz in der Bergischen Stahlindustrie.
BSI factory council chairman, Otto Fröhlich and council member, Emil Schulz, were dismissed for holding a workers' meeting to explain the KPD's stance during the half-hour strike in protest against the French occupation of the Ruhr.
- 78 Ibid., Lennep. Ablehnung des Frühstückstreiks:
'Die Lenneper Arbeiterschaft hat am Montag durch ihre Handlung klar zum Ausdruck gebracht, daß sie nicht gewillt ist, die gemeinsame Front mit dem Unternehmertum herzustellen, wie es der ADGB und die SPD wollen. In allen Lenneper Betrieben der Metallindustrie ist am Montag restlos gearbeitet worden. Die Arbeiterschaft hat eben keinen Sinn für solche Kindereien; sie ist bereit, ernstlich zu kämpfen. Der ADGB ist mit seinen Parolen jämmerlich abgefallen.'
- 79 BV, 16/1/23, Der Generalstreik der 'Schicksalsgemeinschaft'.
For a list of factories refusing to participate in the Ruhr Aid Programme collection see BV, 10/2/23, "Ruhrspende" und "Notopfer" in den Remscheider Betrieben.

- 80 BV, 25/5/23, Die Betriebsrate für einheitlichen Kampf.
81 BV, 1/2/23, Die Scharfmachermethoden der Bergischen Stahlindustrie in Remscheid.
82 BV, 18/1/23, Zum Solidaritätsstreik der Schmelzereiarbeiter in der Stahlindustrie.
83 BV, 22/1/23, Hauptgeneralversammlung des DMV, Remscheid.

The newly elected committee passed a resolution roundly condemning what they regarded as an impartial judgement. The report went on to say:

'Die Versammlung weist die Öffentlichkeit darauf hin, daß die Werksleitung der Bergischen Stahlindustrie seit vielen Monaten einen Vorwand gesucht hat, um sich des ihr unbequemen Betriebsrates zu entledigen.'

- 84 BV, 15/2/23, Unternehmerbrutalität.
85 BV, 2/2/23, Die Scharfmachermethoden der Bergischen Stahlindustrie Remscheid, Fortsetzung.

'Der Schleier lüftet sich. Der Arbeitgeberverband hatte das Verhalten der Direktion der Bergischen Stahlindustrie nicht nur gedeckt, sondern geschürt. Die Hetze gegen die Betriebsrate war sorgfältig vorbereitet, und immer wieder mußte Dr. Steinberg beweisen, daß die Bergische Stahlindustrie einen Betriebsrat hat, welcher statt Arbeitsgemeinschaft den Klassenkampf führt.'

And BV, 20/1/23, Unerhörte Brutalität der Unternehmer. Ein Scharfmacherspruch des Schlichtungsausschusses:

'Der Schlichtungsausschuß ist damit einem langgehegten und mit allen Mitteln verfolgten Wunsch der Stahlindustrie entgegengekommen. Der Betriebsrat der Bergischen Stahlindustrie sollte schon längst entfernt werden, weil er gegen verschiedene Direktoren Strafverfahren wegen Übertretung der Bestimmungen über den Achtstundentag anhängig gemacht, weil infolge seiner Wachsamkeit eine Anzahl von Differenzen im Betrieb zugunsten der Arbeiterschaft entschieden wurden. Dreimal hat die Werksleitung vergeblich auf Amtsenthebung dieses Betriebsrates geklagt, bis sie bzw. der Schlichtungsausschuß jetzt den nötigen Vorwand gefunden hat.'

And BV, 7/3/23, Beilegung des Streiks im Glockenstahlwerk.
The workers of the Glockenstahlwerk went on strike to force the reinstatement of factory council member Hardenbruch (KPD). The Gewerbegericht ruled in his favour.

- 86 BV, 9/2/23, Der Kampf der Unternehmer gegen die Betriebsrate.
87 BV, 1/2/23, Proletarische Abwehrhundertschaften.
88 BV, 16/2/23, Der ADGB Remscheid baut den proletarischen Selbstschutz aus.
89 BV, 25/7/23, Die Metallarbeiterwahlen in Remscheid.
90 BV, 28/5/24, Generalversammlung der DMV Opposition.

The governing committee comprised of: first secretary Otto Weber, second secretary Rudolf Schleutermann, first treasurer Emil Schulz, second treasurer Ewald Petermann, assistant manager Ernst Crone; ordinary committee members: Wilhelm Hageboker, Heumann, Söhngen, Diederichs, Alois Kieven, Hahne, Adolf Bemscheid and Artur Becker as the youth representative.

- 91 For the development of the extreme right in Remscheid see Chapter IV.
92 Information from Ernst Giesecke, who was a member of the Jungdo prior to joining the NSDAP.
93 Information from Wilhelm Schlechtriem.
94 BV, 13/3/23, Helden des "teutschen" Vaterlandes.
95 BV, 13/3/23, Ein Faschisten-Attentat auf die Bergische Volksstimme.
96 Ibid., and Ein faschistisches Bubenstück.
97 BV, 13/3/23, Landfriedensbruch der Hakenkreuzler in Remscheid.

In one incident a young girl, who had been observed talking to French soldiers at the railway station in Lennep, was attacked as she alighted from the train in Remscheid, by a gang of young hot-heads, some of whom were later identified by witnesses and named in the article. She was then pulled by her hair and kicked all the way to the Markt where, according to the article, a policeman suggested to the young men that they should shave the girl's head. She was dragged into one of the pubs where she was further abused before a squad of policemen arrived and arrested her. The girl's reputation was further damaged by a report in the RGA, which interpreted the incidence as the chastisement of a prostitute. The BV article contained a sharp attack on the police:

'Aber die ganze Geschichte muß von uns von der rein politischen Seite betrachtet werden. Alle diese Exzesse richten sich letzten Endes gegen die Arbeiterschaft. Die Polizei versagt dabei nicht nur völlig, sie erweist sich als willfähriges Hilfsorgan der nationalen Horden.'

The same article reported another incident when three young hikers were beaten up by a group of right-wing extremists for talking to French soldiers. The article went on to implicate the police:

'Die zur Hilfe gerufene Schupo lehnte auch hier ein Eingreifen ab mit der Bemerkung: Gut, daß ihr eure Schläge bekommen habt.'

Another similar incident was reported in the BV on 15/2/23 in an article entitled Die Unsicherheit der Straße. The article reported groups of youths sporting swastikas and black, white and red colours congregating each evening on the market square and then molesting passers-by, without the police taking any action.

A further BV article on 12/2/23, Proletarischer Selbstschutz reported an incident in Papenberger Straße when a young Communist was shot at. The article commented: 'Von der Polizei ist eine Hilfe gegen die Hakenkreuz-, Stahlhelm- und Jungdo-Leute nicht zu erwarten.'

98 Information from Willi Krell.

99 BV, 24/5/23, Der Mob "entrüstet sich".

This article gives an account of the beating of a man by National Socialists because he was seen conversing with a French officer in a coffee house.

100 BV, 19/5/23, Severing verbietet die proletarischen Hundertschaften.

101 BV, 14/8/23, Die Beerdigung des ermordeten Genossen Lumpe. Aufruf zur Beteiligung an der Beerdigung des durch die Orgesch- und Jungdo-Banditen ermordeten Genossen Lumpe in Dabringhausen. And ibid., Die Mordtat der Orgesch-Männer in Dabringhausen.

Also information from Willi Krell, Olga Jung and Wilhelm Schlechtriem. Krell and Schlechtriem were both participants in the skirmish, on opposing sides.

- 102 BV, 31/5/24, Der Klassenrichterspruch im Dabringhauser Landfriedensbruchprozeß.

The case is an example of an unmistakable trend in Weimar justice, namely the tendency to punish harshly misdemeanours committed by the left and to show remarkable understanding for offenders of the right who, as a rule, received absurdly light sentences, if they were not acquitted.

At a meeting of the newly-formed Remscheid History Workshop Arthur Windgassen recalled the incident which led to Lumpe's death. Windgassen related, that he was standing next to the unfortunate Lumpe when he was hit by a bullet fired from the barn. According to Windgassen British soldiers arrived on the scene first and took statements of witnesses. When court proceedings opened the statements made to the British could not be found.

For studies dealing with political justice in the Weimar Republic cf. Kurt Kreiler (edit.), Traditionen deutscher Justiz. Politische Prozesse 1914 - 1932. Ein Lesebuch zur Geschichte der Weimarer Republik, Berlin 1978;

and E.J. Gumbel, Vier Jahre Politischer Mord, Berlin 1922.

- 103 K.H. Jahnke, Atze - so nannten wir dich. Aus dem Leben und Kampf Artur Beckers, Berlin-Ost 1964, p. 11.

104 Kortmann, op. cit., p. 45.

105 Ibid., pp. 46-48.

- 106 BV, 10/2/23, "Ruhrspende" und "Notopfer" in den Remscheider Betrieben.

- 107 BV, 29/1/23, Die Belegschaft der Mannesmann Röhrenwerke gegen die "nationale Einheitsfront".

108 BV, 24/5/23, Streik in der BSI.

109 BV, 28/5/23, Der Kampf in der Metallindustrie in Remscheid.

110 BV, 29/5/23, Der Lohnkampf in der Remscheider Metallindustrie.

111 BV, 30/5/23, Der Lohnkampf in der Remscheider Metallindustrie.

This claim was rejected by the BV which said that bakery workers had been granted an hourly rate of 3,520 marks and gas and water board employees were currently negotiating a rate of 3,400 marks.

112 BV, 31/5/23, Die Streiktage in Remscheid.

113 BV, 31/5/23, Ergebnis der Urabstimmung in den Betrieben.

A selection of some of the more important factories:

<u>Factory</u>	<u>Total Workforce</u>	<u>Acceptance</u>	<u>Rejection</u>
Glockenstahlwerk	539	77	459
BSI	2,229	196	2,033
Mannesmann Motorenwerk	273	26	246
Mannesmann Röhrenwerk	895	37	803
Alexanderwerk	933	133	785
Luisenhütte	279	32	242
Walter Hentzen & Co.	131	8	121
Spiralbohrerfabrik	98	2	96
Klingelberg Sohne	101	22	79
Gebrüder Arns	103	5	98
Ernst-August-Werk	81	3	78
Hessenbruch	127	25	102.

114 The employers had repeatedly stated they would not negotiate until the strikers returned to work and that they would reserve the right to punish strike leaders. Town councillor Walter Eilender, director of the Glockenstahlwerk, regarded the strike leaders as criminals, an opinion which was shared by the majority of works' directors in Remscheid.

See BV, 5/6/23, Der Lohnkampf der Remscheider Metallarbeiter vor dem Stadtparlament.

115 BV, 6/6/23 and 7/6/23, lists of contributions to the strike fund.

Local railway workers, for example, donated 1,104,000 marks, and a collection in Hückeswgen brought 3,307,000 marks.

BV, 12/6/23, Solidarität der Remscheider Eisenbahner.

116 'Dat Russenbrot' as it became known, was a gift from the Soviet Union in return for work tools collected by local workers and dispatched the previous year.

The flour which arrived in five or six separate loads throughout the summer, was used to bake loaves of bread at the Konsum bakery. These were distributed gratuitously to striking families, pensioners, dependents of political prisoners and the poor.

See BV, 6/4/23, Die Russische Brotspende;
5/6/23 and 30/7/23, Russenbrot.

Grete Salz recalls that non-party members were given preference in the distribution of bread (interview with Grete Salz)

117 BV, 8/6/23, Siegreicher Abschluß des Kampfes.

118 BV, 4/8/23, Brotpreise;
and *ibid.*, Kleinverkaufspreis für Milch.

On 7/8/23, a litre of milk cost 38,000 marks and the dollar stood at six million marks.

On 17/8/23, a three and a half pound loaf of bread (Graubrot) was retailing at 112,000 marks.

119 BV, 10/9/23, Provokateur Steinberg in der Stahlindustrie.

120 BV, 20/9/23, Schwere Differenzen im Alexanderwerk.

121 BV, 24/9/23, Dummes Volk.

122 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 38945, Remscheid 9/5/23, Gesundheitszustand der Bevölkerung.

123 Rühle, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

Equivalent figures for other towns were: Breslau 33 %, Elberfeld 25 %, Barmen 50 % and Berlin Schöneberg 24 %.

124 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 38945, *op. cit.*

125 Rühle, *op. cit.*, p. 496.

According to Rühle, of the 65,376 deaths due to TB in Germany in 1925, by far the majority were in the proletariat:

'Die Tuberkulose ist die Krankheit der chronischen Unterernährung, der stauberfüllten, dunstigen, schlecht ventilierten Werkstätten, der gesundheitswidrigen Körperhaltung bei der Arbeit, der Überanstrengung und dauernden Übermüdung der Körperkräfte, der ungesunden, lichtlosen, engen und schmutzigen Wohnungen, der bettenarmen Haushaltungen, der überfüllten Räume.'

126 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 38945, 9/5/23, Gesundheitszustand der Bevölkerung.

- 127 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 38945, op. cit.
- 128 See table 13.
- 129 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 38944, 12/1/23, Verschlechterung des Gesundheitszustandes.
- 130 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 38945, op. cit.
- 131 See increase in convictions by the local assizes (Schoffengericht),
eg. RGA, 12/10/23;
RGA, 29/10/23;
RGA, 6/11/23;
RGA, 5/12/23;
RGA, 8/12/23.
- 132 The report explained that the town swimming baths had been closed for about a year owing to lack of funds.
- 133 Ibid.
- 134 Ibid.
The report notes that five citizens of Remscheid had committed suicide because of economic hardship. This figure would seem to be far too low considering the circumstances. Unfortunately, no reliable suicide statistics could be located from which the social origin of the perpetrators could be ascertained.
- 135 StA Remscheid, NK II/4, Deutsche Notgemeinschaft.
The file is full of applications for small grants to purchase clothing for children, medicine for ailing relatives and artificial limbs for amputees.
- 136 Stadtbauinspektor John, "Die Stadt Remscheid und ihre bauliche Entwicklung unter Berücksichtigung der neuesten Zeit", in: Wilhelm Rees, Remscheid, Berlin-Halensee 1922, p. 42.
- 137 60 Jahre Bökerhöhe 1982. Remscheids erste Standtrandsiedlung einst und jetzt.
- 138 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 38945, op. cit.
- 139 BV, 27/10/23, Schafft heute noch Betriebszeitungen;
BV, 30/10/23, Betriebszeitung des Glockenstahlwerks;
and Kortmann, op. cit., p. 66.

- 140 BV, 13/10/23, Mannesmann Motorenwerk unter Polizeischutz! Die Arbeiter wollen den Kampf.
- 141 BV, 16/10/23, Belegschaftsversammlung der BSI.
Despite the reference to separatist-secessionists, no evidence could be found by the author of this kind of activity in Remscheid.
- 142 A number of policemen were arrested during the course of the year by French troops. Several were detained and questioned in connection with the organisation of passive resistance. Several detainees were afterwards expelled from the occupation zone.
- 143 Some policemen were suspected by the French of participating in smuggling ventures, or of turning a blind eye to crimes perpetrated by right-wing extremists. The frequent incidence of attacks by fascists on people accused of fraternisation with the enemy, and the failure to take action against miscreants as well as tip-offs enabling suspects to make their getaway before they could be arrested, indicates a certain amount of collusion between sections of the police and right-wing extremists. A bond which was strengthened during the occupation was between some Remscheid manufacturers and the fascists who smuggled their products across the zonal boundary.
- 144 Information from Hanni Schafer.
BV, 8/12/23, Ein weiteres Todesopfer in der BSI.
- 145 The reason for the long delay between the incident and the appearance of the report is due to the fact that the BV was undergoing one of its frequent bans at the time.
- 146 BV, 1/11/23, Die SPD-Instanzen wollen nicht den Abwehrkampf.
- 147 BV, 13/12/23, Vorkriegsarbeitszeit und -arbeitsbedingungen.
- 148 BV, 16/10/23, Betriebsratswahl im Alexanderwerk.
- 149 BV, 23/11/23, Metallarbeiterwahl im Bezirk Laspert.
- 150 BV, 9/1/24, Aussperrung in der Bergischen Stahlindustrie.
- 151 BV, 14/1/24, Generalstreik geht weiter. Ein Schupobeamter angeschossen.

- 152 BV/18/1/24, Ein neues Blutbad der Schupo;
and interview with Erich Thieler - the young man who was shot
in the leg. He tells of how an Arbeitersamariter, accompanied
by Professor Resch, tried to carry him into a public house,
and these were then attacked by policemen who beat them over
the head with their rifles butts.
- 153 Neuenhaus was commonly known in Remscheid as 'Neu-Moskau'
owing to its many communist residents. The estate was built
between 1921 and 1923 by the town council to house primarily
working-class families from slum dwellings in older parts of
the town.
- 154 BV, 2/2/24, Polizei oder Banditentum ?
BV, 6/2/24, Zu dem Schupoüberfall im Neuenhaus;
and HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16945, Remscheid 10/2/24.
A list of arms confiscated by the police.
- 155 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16945, ibid., Bombenattentat auf
das Haus des Fabrikdirektors Albert.
Police investigations soon established that prior to the bomb
attack a meeting of strikers at the Röhrenwerk had been held
at the house of locksmith Wilhelm Göbert. When questioned by
the police, one of the participants, locksmith Otto Schmidt,
told of a plan to distribute hand grenades but did not say for
what reason. Furthermore, it became clear that the weapons to
be distributed were those discovered by police at Neuenhaus.
Schmidt agreed to act as informant and to tell the police the
names of those involved in the attack. In return Schmidt was
probably granted immunity and did not stand trial. In the end,
five workers were charged and four convicted. Two received a
sentence of six years penitentiary, one was given four years
and the other three years. They were also deprived of their
civil rights for a duration of five years.
- 156 Ossip K. Flechtheim, Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik, Frank-
furt a.M. 1976, pp. 182-190.

157 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16953, op. cit., Remscheid 20/4/23.

According to a police report the KPD had a 2/3 majority in the local trade union cartel and its members occupied all the salaried posts in the trade unions and most of the unsalaried in the trade unions and Konsum cooperative society. Eight of the ten local militia leaders were also KPD members. The militia leaders were:

Albin Pantzer	KPD secretary,
Willi Grütz	editor of the BV, KPD member,
Christian Leisten	KPD member and bricklayer,
Albert Issel	KPD town council, printer,
Karl Jannack	KPD member and trade union secretary,
Paul Schießmann	KPD member and editor of the BV,
Jakob Wolf	chairman of the KPD district Remscheid,
Friedrich Schiffler	KPD member,
Kurt Braß	SAJ chairman,
Wilhelm Horst	syndicalist trade unionist.

158 Despite rumours of large arms caches in and around Remscheid, these never materialised apart from isolated finds as in Neuenhaus, which proved to be small quantities and of inferior quality. The Proletarian Hundreds appear to have been partly armed with revolvers, although the majority of members were equipped with the usual assortment of chains, coshes and knives. Hanni Schafer informed the author that some workers sold Dutch tobacco in Germany and bought pistols in Belgium with the proceeds, but these were only sporadic cases of individual initiative and may well have been at a later date, as inflation would have rendered the purchase of foreign goods almost impossible.

159 The basis for the study of electoral behaviour in Remscheid is an essay written by the author in 1975, entitled "Die Entwicklung der Parteien in Remscheid im Vergleich zur gesamten Weimarer Republik anhand der Wahlergebnisse von 1920 bis 1932". The essay presents the findings of a reasonably accurate sur-

vey of the town's voting wards made on the basis of information obtained from the Remscheid residents' address book 1929, and the correlation of these findings with the Reichstag election results during the period 1920-1932. The main problem for our present purposes is the fact that the physical composition of the individual wards was changed and the number of wards was increased from 29 (1919) to 30 (1920) and 40 after the Reichstag election of 6/6/1920, thus altering the electoral structure of the town radically. This means that for the elections to the constitutional assembly 19/1/19 and the Reichstag 6/6/20 only a rough description of the various wards can be supplied. Thereafter, until May 1933, the information contained in appendix 1 can be taken as being accurate.

160 StA Remscheid, IB/22, Sonderakte betreffend Reichstagswahlen vom 6/6/20.

161 Cf. C.D. Thompson, op. cit., p. 34.

162 Cf. Alfred Milatz, Wähler und Wahlen in der Weimarer Republik, Bonn 1965, p. 114:

'Viele Wähler, die sie (DDP) 1919 als letztes Bollwerk gegen eine sozialistische Alleinherrschaft betrachtet hatten, waren nun, nachdem sie mit der Mehrheitssozialdemokratie zusammengegangen war und für die in bürgerlichen Kreisen unpopulären Notopfer- und Betriebsratengesetze die Mitverantwortung trug, wieder abgesprungen und weiter nach rechts gerückt.'

163 Ibid., p. 116.

164 Appendix 1 gives a fairly accurate survey of the social composition of the 40 voting wards in Alt-Remscheid based on information taken from the Remscheid address book 1929. Although individual mobility between these areas continued normally during the years 1924 to 1933, this is not to say that the composition of the wards changed significantly. In fact, owing to the relative economic stability between 1924 and 1929, the general tradition of voluntary immobility and preference of settling in familiar surroundings which changed only after the

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amongst the various classes and should therefore not be overlooked when calculating the social composition.

Category G manufacturers (Fabrikanten), industrialists (Unternehmer), export and import-Kaufmann.

Category H artists and freelancers.

The address book only lists households and not individual family members unless these are employed adults.

Although the degree of precision regarding this categorisation remains necessarily uncertain, the groupings do nevertheless give us a sufficiently accurate working model.

The same system was used to analyse the social composition of Lennep and Luttringhausen which kept their independent status until the municipal reorganisation of 1929, when they were incorporated into the town of Remscheid which then achieved the status of Großstadt (town with over 100,000 inhabitants).

Alt-Remscheid was structured in the following way:

Category A	13,330 households = 52.1 %
Category B	2,839 households = 11.1 %
Category C	1,132 households = 4.4 %
Category D	1,616 households = 6.3 %
Category E	1,818 households = 7.1 %
Category E1	89 households = 0.4 %
Category F	2,942 households = 11.6 % (in reality dispersed among the other categories)
Category G	1,694 households = 6.6 %
Category H	102 households = 0.4 %.

Lennep:

Category A	2,121 households = 49.0 %
Category B	250 households = 5.8 %
Category C	157 households = 3.6 %
Category D	569 households = 13.2 %
Category E	361 households = 8.3 %
Category E1	129 households = 3.0 %

Category F	570 households = 13.2 %
Category G	161 households = 3.7 %
Category H	7 households = 0.2 %

Lüttringhausen:

Category A	2,000 households = 52.9 %
Category B	165 households = 4.3 %
Category C	78 households = 2.1 %
Category D	279 households = 7.3 %
Category E	276 households = 7.3 %
Category E1	230 households = 6.1 %
Category F	440 households = 11.6 %
Category G	319 households = 8.4 %
Category H	0 households = 0.0 %

165 Cf. C.D. Thompson, op. cit., p. 35.

166 Lucas, op. cit., p. 133.

167 Owing to the electoral reform a direct comparison is no longer possible as can be seen from the example of ward 7, Intze-straße/Struck, which roughly corresponds to the 1920 voting ward 5. In 1920, 1,464 voters out of the 1,574 who were eligible, went to the polls. In 1924, 965 votes were cast (500 fewer). The reduction in the size of the wards would account for most of the missing votes which were then distributed over other wards, viz. Bezirke 6 and 8.

168 Ward 13 consistently produced the highest number of votes for the Zentrum in Remscheid. The area centering on the catholic church also contained a catholic clubhouse, the Kolpinghaus, and a catholic school. The presence of a larger than average catholic population in this ward, however, did not mean an automatic preference for the Zentrum which came third in this election behind the DVP and KPD, whose supporters undoubtedly lived in the Papenberger Straße/Freiheitstraße part of the ward, further away from the centre of town.

- 169 To these must be added the difficulties experienced particularly by small firms during the French occupation. Small firms like those which proliferate in Hasten suffered a temporary loss of export outlets and trade owing to the prohibitive taxes and other restrictions imposed by the French occupation. Small businesses also habitually suffered from a negative cash flow, a condition which made them extremely vulnerable in times of crisis. Whereas large companies were in a position to turn inflation to their own advantage, small family businesses of the Hasten-type were compelled to struggle for their survival.
- 170 Cf. Chapter IV, The Extreme Right in Remscheid.
- 171 For a short analysis of the DNVP's reservoir of voters see Anneliese Thimme, Flucht in den Mythos. Die deutschnationale Volkspartei und die Niederlage von 1918, Göttingen 1969, pp. 26-32.
- 172 Ibid., p. 30.
Lüttringhausen was overwhelmingly protestant whereas Lennep had a large catholic minority, approximately 33 %.
Cf. Prof. Dr. Erich Keyser (edit.), Deutsches Stadtebuch. Band III.3. Landschaftsverband Rheinland, Stuttgart 1956, p. 358.
- 173 The following streets were renamed:
- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Bismarckstraße | Birgderkamper Straße |
| Hindenburgstraße | Neuscheider Straße |
| Sedanstraße | Karl-Marx-Straße |
| Königstraße | August-Bebel-Straße |
| Kaiserplatz | Rathausplatz |
| Hindenburgpark | Stadtpark, |
- see BV, 14/6/24, Monarchistenclub im Remscheider Rathaus.
- 174 The mayor of Remscheid, DVP member Walter Hartmann, was later to boast to a Nazi tribunal that he had always insisted on the old colours and had expressly forbidden the official use of black, red and gold flags for decoration purposes on special occasions: 'Jedenfalls habe ich, solange ich in Remscheid bin, und zwar seit 1918 als einziger Bürgermeister, niemals schwarz-rot-gold geflaggt.'
- HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/879.

175 All information taken from BV.

176 For Kostgänger rents see BV, 10/9/23, Grenzenlose Ausbeutung überall.

Attic room with bed linen provided	4,850,000 marks.
Attic room without bed linen	3,200,000 marks.
<u>Etagenzimmer</u> with bed linen provided	6,200,000 marks.
<u>Etagenzimmer</u> without bed linen	4,400,000 marks.
A better room with bed linen provided	7,700,000 marks.
A better room without bed linen	5,900,000 marks.

The article described conditions in a house in Wilhelmstraße. In a four by four metre room there were four people sleeping in two beds. One of the occupants was suffering from a pulmonary disease. The bed clothes were old and tattered and were washed only every three to four months. The room was never cleaned.

C H A P T E R III

The Remscheid Workers' Movement 1924 to 1933

The defeat of the workers' movement in October 1923 and the introduction of the nine and ten-hour working day brought to an end the revolutionary period in Remscheid as in the rest of Germany. The following years until 1929 witnessed a partial stabilisation of the capitalist system, and this period was used by the workers' movement to regroup and prepare for the next revolutionary situation to develop. The defeat of 1923 also had far-reaching consequences for the local workers' movement in Remscheid. The KPD had developed into the strongest workers' party in the town and had taken over the leadership of the workers' movement. The cost of this success, however, was a temporary reduction in party and trade union membership, which was also in part a result of demoralisation and personal hardship. The disaffection of local workers was reflected in the Reichstag elections of 1924¹, rather by the low turn-out than by the switching of allegiance.

The defeat of 1923 showed that the active base of the workers' movement needed to be widened and that different and more varied strategies would have to be devised, if the movement was to succeed in its aims. During the revolutionary period the KPD had been split by right- and left-wing groups so that at crucial moments it was not always able to provide clear and effective leadership. A new line of policy needed to be established to enable the party to concentrate on winning over the bulk of the workers and to develop into a mass-movement. The new course was finally established with the elevation of Ernst Thalmann to the position of party chairman in 1925. This change was paralleled in Remscheid by the emergence of a more energetic style of leadership provided by a radical and younger group of leaders. The change in policy and leadership injected a new sense of determination into the local movement.

1. The Stalinisation of the KPD in Remscheid.

The new course which was referred to by the Communists themselves as the 'bolshevisation' of the party, has since been termed 'stalinisation' by critics in the West.²

The essential characteristics of this policy³ were the complete subordination of the party to the Communist International and the leadership of the Soviet Union, the suppression of internal opposition by increasing resort to expulsion, the acceptance of Soviet revolutionary theory, which amounted^{to} a rejection of the very tradition of the KPD⁴ and the constant mobilisation of party members and the workers in extra-parliamentary activities.

The enthusiasm and conviction with which the new line was received by Remscheid communist leaders can be gauged by the comments made by their delegate, Adolf Benscheid, at the 12th party congress in 1929,

'In den verschiedenen Situationen haben die russischen Genossen...die deutsche Zentrale korrigieren müssen. Und hier muß man erklären, daß der Parteitag geschlossen die Hegemonie der russischen Partei anerkennen muß. Unsere russischen Genossen haben größere Erfahrungen auf dem Gebiet der revolutionären Politik und Taktik. Wir müssen diese Hegemonie aufs vollste anerkennen und fordern... Wir werden mit den russischen Genossen, die große revolutionäre Erfahrungen haben, gemeinsam auch die Revolution in Deutschland weiter fortsetzen und in der Tat siegreich durchführen.'⁵

In Remscheid the major institutions of the working-class movement were still intact, although it was recognised that new organisations would have to be founded if the movement was to expand along the lines dictated by KPD policy. The Communists intended to mobilise the whole of the working-class population by the creation of new sub-organisations, incorporating specific target groups such as women, children, youths, unemployed workers, war-disabled and pensioners. Once these groups had been attached to the movement, they were to be kept in a state of perpetual agitation, carrying out the directives handed down to them from the local party leadership. It

was widely agreed that one of the most serious shortcomings of the old street cells - a legacy from the former SPD organisation - was the sporadic nature of their work. As a rule they would remain dormant for months, only becoming active prior to elections or on occasions when residents were directly affected, for instance, when evictions were being carried out. Furthermore activities tended to be uncoordinated and frequently dependent on the initiative and ability of individuals. If such figures were absent or in any way hindered, local organisation tended to suffer considerably. In addition, younger activists complained that the work of street cells was often hampered by the drinking habits of party members. Whilst youths were on the street either recruiting or agitating, older party comrades were sitting in the pub consuming large quantities of alcohol, discussing the prospects of a better life after the revolution.⁶

In order to take full advantage of the next revolutionary situation the KPD did not intend to rely merely on the spontaneity of the masses, but instead wanted to build a coherent, well-schooled and disciplined mass organisation whose members fully grasped the reasons for, and the consequences of, their actions.

It was decided, however, that the main channel for expansion was the factory cell which had been neglected too often in the past. In agreement with Leninist theory, factory workers were to form the vanguard of the proletariat.

It was here then, that the KPD planned its main offensive, thus inducing a shift of emphasis away from the housing estates to the place of work. It was hoped that this strategy would prove more fruitful in attracting activists into the movement,⁷ as it was in the factories where class hostility was consistently present. Experience had shown that works council meetings attracted a far higher percentage of workers than street cell meetings in the housing estates or even party gatherings. Experience in Remscheid had already indicated that this shift in emphasis would bring the desired results, but even here much work had to be done in the majority of - by Remscheid standards - middle-sized factories and workshops,

employing between 25 and 100 workers. In the bulk of Remscheid establishments, ie. the small family businesses employing less than ten workers, the outlook for the successful execution of this strategy was believed to be bleak, and for this reason these did not receive as much attention from the local party organisation. The workers in the smaller establishments were, however, encouraged to join trade unions and the party, and indeed some of them did so, but in general the party's influence remained limited in the small workshops.

In the large factories like the BSI, Richard Lindenberg, Alexanderwerk and Mannesmann, members of factory cells were better able to spread their influence amongst the workers whilst enjoying the protection of numbers. It was calculated that the factory cell would be compelled to discuss problems of immediate significance to the workforce, and not become side-tracked by, and entangled in, abstractions which often frustrated or else demoralised workers who only had their own experience and little or no schooling to rely on. The successful conclusion of the factory cell strategy demanded rigid self-discipline on the part of functionaries; the need to be well-informed and constantly available to give advice left little time for private interests.

The leadership of the KPD had changed over the revolutionary period not only at the national level but also in Remscheid. The changes reflected a loss of sympathy amongst local workers for their leaders⁸, many of whom were adjudged to have adopted an independent line and thereby to have jeopardised the achievements made by the workers' movement.

As we have already seen, Otto Braß, Heinrich Schliestedt, Walter Freytag, Wilhelm Dittmann, Rudolf Bühler and Friedrich Wolf, who had led Remscheid workers very ably during the revolution, and had organised the strike and ensuing armed resistance during the Kapp-Putsch in March 1920, had all returned to the MSPD and/or moved away from Remscheid. Willi Grütz, the former editor of the Bergische Volksstimme (BV), became involved in an inner-party dispute which resulted in his summary expulsion from the KPD, after which

he took no further part in the movement. A similar fate met Johannes Resch when he accused the KPD of intolerance and inflexibility in its attitude towards the Freie Volkshochschule. Resch who came neither from Remscheid nor the working class was regarded by some local workers with distrust and suspicion, and therefore faced considerable prejudice, despite his prodigious achievements locally. He maintained, however, an uneasy truce with the KPD - which eventually led to his reinstatement - and continued to take part in various affiliated organisations up to his departure from Remscheid. The cases of Grütz and Resch illustrate the drastic and inflexible sanctions which the party employed to quell deviations from the party line.

Wilhelm Koch, another very able and popular leader of the working-class movement in Remscheid during the revolutionary period, was also expelled.

Yet another member of the old leadership, Cornelius Gohr, joined the KPD but was already too advanced in age to play a decisive role in the movement after 1923.

Gradually another generation of leaders superseded the old one. The majority of these younger men were born between 1895 and 1905. These were representatives of the war generation, those who had been called up early in the war and spent years in the trenches. Their experiences at the front coupled with their already partly formed socialist ideas left a deep impression on them. They returned to Remscheid as trained soldiers who were not afraid to take up arms to fight against the forces of restoration. These were the people who during the Kapp-Putsch immediately rallied to the Rote Armee (Red Army of the Ruhr) and took part in the fierce street fighting against the Freikorps troops. This was a generation of young men prepared literally to die for their ideals. They had witnessed at first hand the demise of the Wilhelmine Reich, but then felt cheated of victory by the apparent willingness of their own leaders to compromise with the representatives of the old order. This generation of highly motivated and dedicated leaders had seen

the chances of establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat slip away, partly due to what they regarded as betrayal by the SPD, and partly due to the failure to widen the base of the movement in time to sustain the spirit of the revolution. They had also recently witnessed the successful seizure of power by the Russian workers, which reinforced their belief in their ultimate victory. For these reasons they were all the more determined to succeed at the next suitable opportunity, and set about preparing the ground for the next revolutionary situation to occur. They tended to base their strategy more and more on the Russian experience and were committed to the Leninist theory of a rigidly disciplined and totally politicised industrial proletariat forming the vanguard of the revolution. This generation looked increasingly towards Moscow, for guidance and inspiration, and their leaders, anxious to instil their fellow-workers with the same kind of fervour that they themselves felt for the cause. This enthusiasm for the Soviet Union manifested itself on many occasions outwardly during the middle years of the Weimar Republic in Remscheid, as for example when a delegation of local workers led by Albert Issel returned from Moscow wearing Russian peasant-style shirts in bright red.⁹

The most prominent leaders of the Remscheid workers movement during the middle and later years of the Weimar Republic were: Peter Leyendecker - a KPD town councillor who taught at the party school in Leichlingen and was one of the few real intellectuals at the local level. Leyendecker was a passionate proponent of non-denominational schools¹⁰, and together with Johannes Resch played a dominant role in the Arbeiterkulturkartell (workers' cultural organisation) as did Karl Sothmann, another teacher, who was also in charge of the Jung-Spartakus group which made its appearance in Remscheid in 1925. Another important member of the local leadership was Adolf Benschaid who belonged to the older generation, yet remained active as a member of the Landtag throughout the Weimar years. Benschaid was a talented speaker with a quick and alert mind which helped him to deal effectively with hecklers whenever necessary. Benschaid was a favourite of the local workers and constitu-

ted something of an exception in the local movement in that he was a small manufacturer. It was a grave blow to the KPD when after the Second World War he abandoned the official party line in favour of Titoism. His expulsion from the KPD weakened the local movement, as a number of other members followed his example and were either ejected from, or else left the party voluntarily.¹¹

An important figure in the Remscheid workers' movement during the mid- and late-20s was Bernhard Bastlein who was later destined to play a significant role in the resistance movement in Hamburg and Berlin, where he led a group of KPD members and sympathisers together with Anton Saefkow. Bernhard Bastlein came to Remscheid to take up the post of editor-in-chief of the BV, but also took charge of the Remscheid RFB-group. He also appeared regularly as a propaganda speaker of the KPD and was sadly missed when he moved on to take over the post of chief editor of the party newspaper "Freiheit" in Düsseldorf. Ernst Zulauf held the post of editor of the BV for many years, and enjoyed great popularity with the workers and a certain notoriety with bourgeois circles in Remscheid, because of the papers' frequent polemic attacks on the Remscheider General-Anzeiger, the local authorities and local manufacturers. Other important local leaders were: Gustav Eckardt, one of the founder-members of the Remscheid local group of the Naturfreunde and former USPD member; Max Guschinski who was a KPD councillor as well as the political instructor of the KPD's trade union organisation Revolutionäre Gewerkschaftsopposition (RGO) for the Remscheid district towards the end of the twenties, Walter Küster, chairman of the Ortsgruppe Lennep; Gustav Flohr, leader of the Remscheid Ortsgruppe of the RFB, who was appointed as mayor in 1946 by the British; Otto Weber and Jakob Wolf who were both KPD-Reichstagsabgeordnete. Alwin Panzer, Alois Kieven, Paul Brozulat, Paul Orbach, Albert Pardon and Karl Zülch were other notable local functionaries of the KPD. Alfred Oelsner¹² spent several years in the town and founded the local group of the Rotfront-Madchenbund (the Red Front Girls' League). Albert Norden¹³ who lived in nearby Elberfeld belonged to the editorial committee of the Bergische Volksstimme in Rem-

scheid in 1924. Willi Adams¹⁴ who also came from Elberfeld worked for a time in the Remscheid KPD headquarters; and Theodor Neubauer¹⁵ from Düsseldorf was a frequent visitor to the town throughout the Weimar years.

A further group of leaders were products of the local KJVD which, as we shall see, was particularly strong and active. The best-known of these was Artur Becker, born in 1905 and leader of the Remscheid Ortsgruppe of the KJVD in the mid-20s before moving on to Düsseldorf where he became chairman of the KJVD Bezirk Niederrhein (Lower Rhineland region). Becker who became a close friend of Thalmann's, was voted onto the central committee of the KJVD in 1929 and led the committee from 1931 onwards.¹⁶ Becker was extremely popular in Remscheid and particularly admired for his courage and sense of humour. His friend Emil Kortmann¹⁷ recalls that Becker was particularly influenced by Sothmann, Leyendecker and Resch.¹⁸ Friedrich Wolf who was a doctor in Remscheid for a time after the war and who taught at the Freie Volkshochschule also played a major role during Becker's formative years. Artur Becker became the youngest member ever to sit in the Reichstag when he was elected to represent the KPD in 1930.¹⁹

Another prominent member of the younger generation of workers' leaders was Hugo Paul²⁰, born in the same year as Becker. He was a fitter-mechanic by profession and came to the KPD in 1923 via the local branch of the DMV and Freie Sozialistische Jugend. After Artur Becker's departure for Düsseldorf, Hugo Paul succeeded to the leadership of the local group of the KJVD, and in 1928 himself became a member of the Bezirksleitung Niederrhein. Hugo Paul also represented the KPD in the Reichstag from July to November 1932. In contrast to Becker, however, Paul remained in the Niederrhein more or less all his life, and this fact particularly endeared him to the local workers. According to Kortmann²¹ there were those who accused Becker of trying to secure a comfortable career for himself in the upper echelons of the party apparatus.²² His career proved to be anything but comfortable, ending abruptly at the age of 33 at the hands of Spanish fascists in Burgos in 1938 whilst fighting for the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War.²³

Another leading figure belonging to the younger generation of workers' leaders in Remscheid was Robert Stamm, born in 1900, who was a fitter-mechanic by trade, but who after his discharge from the army in 1918 successfully completed a course of study to become a technician. Stamm joined the SPD youth movement in 1914 and became a sympathiser of the Spartakists as a result of his experiences at the front. He joined the local KPD group in 1920 and took part in the battle of Remscheid during the Kapp-Putsch. In 1924 he moved to Barmen to become secretary of the KPD Unterbezirk Barmen/Elberfeld. Although Stamm's sphere of activity was from now on primarily outside Remscheid, he was nevertheless a frequent visitor and was particularly well-known for his work as trade union secretary and editor of the Düsseldorf KPD newspaper "Freiheit".²⁴ Stamm like Becker was a victim of the Nazi regime. He was executed in Berlin Plötzensee in 1937 for his part in the resistance to the Nazis.

Other important members of the group of younger leaders were Ewald Funke, Hans Katzenberger, Karl Giersiepen and Kurt Braß. This list by no means exhausts the leadership cadre of the workers' movement which succeeded the old SPD cadre after the defeat of 1923, but it does contain the most prominent figures who were actively engaged locally in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeois order. Apart from those already mentioned there were other important figures in the workers' movement who spent periods working in Remscheid. Best known amongst these is Dr. Richard Sorge who taught at the Volks-hochschule as well as assisting the BV in an editorial capacity. This group of young leaders was supported by an equally determined cadre of KPD, trade union and workers' sports and recreational club functionaries.

2. The Deteriorating Relationship between the KPD and SPD in Remscheid.

As we have already seen the relationship between the KPD and SPD was at best strained and at worst exceedingly hostile. In Remscheid, the positions of the parties were the reverse of those at the Reich level, with the SPD enjoying only exiguous local support. As already noted, there were frequent disagreements on the town council between the KPD and SPD councillors. The bitter internecine quarrel between the two parties was a constant feature of political life in Remscheid throughout the Weimar period. Particularly during the 20s it enabled the weaker bourgeois parties to play a political role far in excess of their proportional support, by virtue of the fact that locally they were able to enter and sustain a coalition whose raison d'etre was largely to prevent the workers' movement from taking control. The rancorous relationship between the KPD and SPD was aired in the BV and the SPD's closest newspaper, the "Freie Presse" published in Elberfeld. These two newspapers carried on a vehement war of words with daily columns devoted to the slander of the opposing party, its local leaders and its rival newspaper and to the denial of accusations emanating from the other side. This situation furnished bourgeois papers like the RGA with a similar advantage over the socialist press as the one exploited by the bourgeois parties at the expense of the SPD and KPD on the town council. Thus the RGA was able to imply that it was a more serious journal which did not willingly involve itself in petty squabbles like its socialist counterparts. In reality the RGA was not above participating in such feuds, and indeed did so regularly. The tone of its attacks on the BV tended to be disdainful, endeavouring to suggest that the communist newspaper could not be taken seriously. The claim to seriousness stemmed principally from the fact that it enjoyed a good relationship with the mayor and his local government administration and was therefore accorded a quasi-official status. The BV which was evidently read by both KPD and SPD supporters appealed incessantly to the latter to abandon their party in favour

of the former. At the individual level, it would appear there was little evidence of the hostility which dominated the official relationship between the two workers' parties. In the factories members and sympathisers of both parties worked side by side and in the evening frequented the same pubs, so that they had ample opportunity to discuss the political situation and the quarrel between their two parties. Workmates were often able to attain the broad agreement which their respective party organisations at times rejected.²⁵

Despite disagreements between the two parties, RFB/KgDF and Reichsbanner groups were always ready to help and protect each other in skirmishes with a clearly identifiable enemy such as the Stahlhelm or the Nazis.²⁶ At the individual level there was contact between members and sympathisers of both parties, despite the official disapproval of fraternisation particularly on the side of the SPD. It is possibly a measure of the SPD's weakness that at the local level during the 20s it often tended to cooperate more willingly with the Bürgerblock than with the KPD. The SPD obviously felt threatened by its more powerful Bruderpartei, and was therefore anxious to keep a clear distance between itself and the KPD. The overwhelming strength of the KPD in numerical terms, its intolerance towards independent ideas, and the fact that the local SPD leadership identified with the government and the Republic's institutions, were the main reasons for the abysmal relationship between the two workers' parties in Remscheid. The fact that prominent SPD leaders held important positions in the local government administration, the police and the workers' sickness insurance offices, was interpreted by younger Communists as careerism (Postchensjagerei).²⁷ In an official capacity they frequently came into conflict with the KPD and were branded as traitors. Firstly, these SPD leaders were on average older than the majority of communist activists who were now proceeding to occupy positions of leadership in the party and its affiliated organisations. Secondly, their mode of dress, directed by the requirements of their jobs, tended to set them off from the majority of workers. In addition, job security

and responsibility to higher (ie. not working-class) authority were other factors separating these people from the mass of workers. In some cases there was also at least a suspicion of nepotism in the way other family members were given employment, either in the same office or else in other departments.²⁸

Finally, the question of personal antipathy was constantly present in Remscheid, as indeed elsewhere, and both parties had their favourite targets in the opposite camp. Criticism of the other party's policy was often couched in particularly invidious personal attacks and gave the impression that often the root of the conflict between the two parties lay in the question of personalities rather than issues.

Although the term Sozialfaschist (Social Fascist) was coined as early as 1924 it was not in general use until much later. The acceptance and increasing employment of this obnoxious term in the KPD towards the end of the 20s reflected the growing exasperation of the Communists with the SPD leadership. The Social Fascist theory expounded by Ernst Thälmann so forcefully at the party's 12th congress in 1929, in the aftermath of the shooting of workers in Berlin on 1st May by Zörgiebel's police, was an extension of the Leninist theory of the worker aristocracy. In this version the aristocrats of labour, who dominated the SPD and trade union bureaucracy had penetrated and become part of the state apparatus. Their function in this merger of party, trade union and state was to form the front line in the defence of capitalism in its fascist phase.²⁹ The Social Fascist theory was finally abandoned by the Communist International in 1934/35 as erroneous. With the propagation of this theory the KPD had hoped to strengthen its grass-roots united front policy (Einheitsfront von unten). The effect of the Social Fascist theory, however, proved damaging as it contributed substantially to exacerbating the split in the workers' movement during the crucial period leading up to the Nazi seizure of power.³⁰ Social Democrats retaliated over the same period with the epithet Kozi (Communist-Nazi), after joint ^c actions between the KPD and the NSDAP.³¹

The already strained relationship deteriorated further in Remscheid during the course of 1929 following the expulsion of the majority of the local branch of the Arbeiter Turn- und Sportbund the previous year³² which led to the founding of a local group of the Roter Sportbund. After the May-Day shootings in Berlin and the founding of a revolutionary trade union organisation (RGU) in Remscheid, relations between the two socialist parties reached an all-time low. The temporary ban on the Rote Fahne and the outlawing of the RFB³³ appeared to offer ample confirmation that the Social Fascist theory was correct.

Recriminations were hurled back and forth between the BV and Freie Presse and at public meetings by representatives of the KPD and SPD, until on 17th August leading members of the local party organisations came to blows outside the Volkshaus.³⁴ The brawl followed an SPD meeting addressed by local chairman Max Blank. The meeting ended with a heated exchange of words between SPD and KPD members which was continued downstairs in the pub and then outside, where two policemen also became involved. The upshot of the brawl was the conviction of two KPD members for slander, and of two other KPD members for resisting arrest and committing grievous bodily harm.³⁵ The extent to which personal animosities as well as party differences counted, is amply reflected in the BV's report of the incident,³⁶ which was concerned with apportioning blame without adequately explaining the issues behind the affair.

Relations between the parties continued to deteriorate, so that similar clashes began to occur more frequently. On ^{one} such occasion the band of the Remscheid Reichsbanner was stoned by intensely hostile inhabitants of a working-class district whilst taking part in a recruitment drive.³⁷ The KPD regarded the SPD leadership as traitors, in the pay of the bourgeoisie. Symptomatic of this belief was the reaction of the BV to the town council's decision in July 1930 to withdraw the use of sports facilities by the Rotsport organisation which the council claimed to be an enemy of the state. Local workers could not understand how the SPD could bring itself to employ a ban which had for many years been implemented against

its own organisations during the Kaiserreich. The BV, in an article entitled "Büttel der Bourgeoisie - die Sozialfaschisten"³⁸ accused the SPD of constituting the driving force against the revolutionary workers' organisations and suggested that in Remscheid there was close collusion between the chairman of the SPD-led ATSB (Arbeiter Turn- und Sportbund), Heinrich Schäfer, and the town's Turnrat (Physical Education Inspector), Dr. Bergmann, a passionate anti-Communist and former Baltikumkämpfer. A few days later the BV reported on a Rotsport demonstration march through Lüttringhausen in protest at the withdrawal of facilities. KPD councillor Rongen addressed the protesters and accused social democrat functionaries of the ATSB of being the true initiators of the ban in answer to their loss of influence in the local workers' sports association.³⁹ Whereas in the earlier years of the Weimar Republic, despite considerable differences of opinion, the KPD and SPD were able to establish common ground and work together against the middle-class parties, after 1929 cooperation was no longer possible. With the onset of the economic crisis and the ensuing depression, the SPD in Remscheid became increasingly isolated in its role as the sole defender of the Republic. By its tolerance of the 'lesser evil', namely the Brüning government, it succeeded in alienating former supporters from the ranks of the working class without making substantial gains on the right. In a town like Remscheid with a strong tradition of radical socialism, local SPD leaders were unable to effectively counter the arguments of the Communists. With modest active support at the grass-roots level and only a tentative foothold in local workers' institutions, the SPD lacked the required muscle to assert itself against its powerful rival.

3. Organisations and Institutions of the Workers' Movement in Remscheid.

At the climax of polarisation the KPD is still the strongest party in Remscheid and still expanding. This success was in some measure due to the intensive recruitment and propaganda campaigns, in which the expansion of recreational facilities and political education played an important role. The sheer depth and variety of organisations and institutions were both a result of, and a reason for, the strength and vitality of the local workers' movement during the Weimar Republic. These organisations constantly demonstrated the strong presence of working-class culture to the workers and in this way served a self-perpetuating function, in that they encouraged workers to play an active role. They provided a system in which members of this class could operate, without resorting to bourgeois organisations and institutions, which Socialists argued would morally and politically corrupt them. Socialist mass culture was an attempt to involve as many working-class members as possible in socially meaningful pursuits, providing enormous scope to develop interests and improve on limited education. By the mid 20s the idea of socialist mass culture was already wide spread with the majority of workers' organisations being able to look back on an illustrious past.

The most important workers' organisations in Remscheid during the last years of the Weimar Republic were as follows.⁴⁰

The KPD completely dominated the working-class districts of Honsberg, Laspert, Struck, Neuenhaus, Kremenhol, Rosenhügel, Stachelhausen and Bliedinghausen and also had strong groups in Lennep and Lüttringhausen. The KPD's headquarters were in the Volkshaus, one of the most important institutions of the workers' movement in Remscheid. The Volkshaus was a cooperative venture and provided a central meeting place for all its various organisations. This meant that the workers did not have to depend any longer on the favour of landlords or other proprietors in finding a home for clubs and societies. The Volkshaus was a large building accommodating many of

the workers' organisations in the upper rooms, which were divided into offices and meeting halls. Downstairs there was a public bar which served drinks and food. The location of the Volkshaus was particularly propitious. It was easily accessible to most parts of Remscheid. Its close proximity to the station was ideal for communications purposes, and it was an ideal starting point for demonstration marches. Behind the Volkshaus in a building which belonged to the cooperative, the editorial offices and printing shop of the Bergische Volksstimme was housed. Like the Volkshaus the BV was also a cooperative undertaking. The publication of a local party newspaper was a significant factor regarding the strength of the KPD during the Weimar years. The decision not to continue local publication after the Second World War was possibly a grave error with serious consequences for the KPD in a town which despite the experiences of the Third Reich provided a membership of over two and a half thousand.⁴¹

The newspaper played a central role in the social, cultural and political life of hundreds of Remscheid families. The paper was a powerful integrating force in the workers' movement informing workers about international and national events, but probably most importantly about local events. The immediate presence of the newspaper accelerated the process of evaluation of local issues, and in this way contributed to the dynamism of the movement. The Bergische Volksstimme attracted energetic and young journalists like Bernhard Bastlein and Albert Norden, and in this way demonstrated to the local workers its considerable importance in the party organisation. It should be remembered that most KPD groups in towns of the size of Remscheid could not boast their own party press. The existence of the local party press was a constant threat to opponents of the KPD, whether authorities, manufacturers or members of the other parties. The ability to attack the system by access to the press undoubtedly enhanced the confidence of Remscheid workers, for the authorities and political opponents could not ignore the BV's criticism.⁴² The presence of the newspaper constantly placed opponents under pressure. Although opponents customarily derided

the style and content of the newspaper, they nevertheless felt compelled to provide counter-arguments in the Remscheider General Anzeiger. The authorities employed a series of different strategies against the BV, ranging from frequent libel actions to temporary bans. In 1930 a new ploy was attempted in order to discredit the irritating champion of the workers. The authorities began to withhold information which had hitherto been available to all newspapers, from the BV.⁴³ The BV, for all its faults, supplied the working class of Remscheid with information which could otherwise not have been forthcoming. It campaigned unceasingly for the rights of the workers and was forever ready to attack the numerous excesses and discrepancies of the capitalist system. The newspaper was indubitably one of the KPD's strongest and most effective weapons in Remscheid and was instrumental in integrating the local movement.

A further powerful support of the workers' movement was the Konsumgenossenschaft "Einigkeit" which by 1925 served 14 thousand families in Remscheid from 36 shops and one warehouse.⁴⁴ The Konsum (coop) had one major advantage over all the other local organisations of the workers' movement in that it was able to reach even those members of the working class who were politically less enlightened, indifferent or who avoided all overtly political advances. The Konsum's main ideological task was to demonstrate to its members the fact that shopping was a political act, which strengthened the movement and weakened its opponents. In order to achieve these aims the Konsum held fairly frequent meetings dealing with various aspects of the cooperative movement. Both the KPD and SPD were represented in the consumer coop "Einigkeit", although once again overall control lay in the hands of the former.⁴⁵ There were annual elections for the managing committee in which all members over the age of 21 were eligible to vote. The Konsum's image was carefully cultivated as the ubiquitous friend of the family which could be relied upon to give a fair deal. Many of the Konsum's shops still retained the corner shop atmosphere which encouraged customers to shop and exchange news and gossip, so that it

also functioned as a kind of communication centre for its clientele. The Konsum always supplied food and drink at local functions of the workers' movement. Here again, the Konsumgenossenschaft could look back on a long and illustrious tradition so that it too was both a result of, and a stimulus for, the continued strength of the local workers' movement. Whenever possible at Christmas time the Konsumgenossenschaft used to deliver a food hamper free of charge to its unemployed members.⁴⁶ Such demonstrations of solidarity were impressive examples of practical Socialism and contributed much to winning support for the movement. The Konsum was, of course, cheap, its only major rivals in Remscheid were the chain of shops owned by Schürmann and the Jewish-owned department store Leonhard Tietz in Alleestraße which offered certain products at a marginally cheaper price, yet after deduction of the Konsum's dividend, there was little difference.⁴⁷ The Konsumgenossenschaft "Einigkeit" was therefore an important link in the chain. Its contribution to the local workers' movement in terms of arousing class consciousness whilst at the same time providing a vital service for Remscheid's workers and their families, was impressive.

In many ways one of the most interesting institutions of the workers' movement in Remscheid was the Freie Volkshochschule which was founded in 1922.⁴⁸ This institute was an offshoot of the municipal adult evening school inaugurated in September 1919⁴⁹ on the suggestion of Professor Johannes Resch, a senior teacher at the Girls' High School. Resch, who was a member of the DDP, became its first director.

Resch was born on 13th December 1875 in Zeulenroda⁵⁰, Thuringia, and was the youngest son of a consistorian of the Lutheran church. Following in the footsteps of his authoritarian father, Resch studied theology in Leipzig and Halle, before returning to his home-town not as a parson, to the displeasure of his father, but as a school teacher.⁵¹ However, in an attempt to achieve reconciliation, Resch accepted the post of village parson in Eckstedt near Weimar, but continued to pursue his interests in education, eventually taking a post at the Girls' High School in Sondershausen

In 1912 he moved to the Girls' High School in Remscheid. He enlisted as a volunteer in the army in 1915 and served as an officer until the end of the war. The disturbed relationship with his father^{b2} and the experience of the war followed by the revolution, were most likely the reasons which induced Resch to break with the church. He resumed his work at the Girls' High School after demobilisation, but already convinced of the need for change, appears to have devoted much time and energy to the development of the municipal evening school. In his memoirs^{b3} Resch enthusiastically relates the influences at work at this vital conjuncture of his life. A close relationship with Friedrich Wolf, the seemingly boundless energy and enthusiasm of local workers, their determination to create a better and fairer society, which led to his 'discovery' of the works of Karl Marx, and the intense hostility of the local middle classes to the Volkshochschul(e) venture were all crucial factors which influenced the course of Resch's life from this point onwards. Impressed by the workers' thirst for knowledge and their desire to play an active role in the running of the school, Resch encouraged the establishment of student committees to decide issues pertaining to specific courses, as well as general policy for the institute. Despite reservations on the part of the municipal administration, Resch was allowed to continue with his experiment in democracy. He himself taught a seminar on Goethe's Faust which attracted large numbers of participants from all classes of local society, but particularly from the working class. Discussions of the text with class-conscious workers opened new perspectives for Resch, and it is possible that his first encounter with marxist ideas ensued directly from this seminar. Disappointed with the policies of his own party and enraged by the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, Resch found himself unequivocally on the side of local workers during the defeat of Kappist forces in Remscheid. He recalled the events in the following way:

'Die Remscheider Arbeiterschaft war an dem schnellen Sieg über die Kapp-Clique entscheidend beteiligt. Die Reichswehr unter Führung des Generals Lüttwitz (the general in question was Lützow.DI.), verstärkt durch die 'Bürgerwehr', hatte im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet starke Truppenverbände zusammengezogen und alle öffentlichen Gebäude besetzt. Aber sehr schnell wendete sich das Blatt. Mit einer Bravour sondergleichen warfen sich die Arbeitermassen den Truppen entgegen und lieferten ihnen in einer Talsohle zwischen Remscheid und Solingen eine Schlacht, die auf beiden Seiten große Opfer forderte, in der aber Lüttwitz(Lützow.DI.)-Truppen völlig aufgerieben wurden. Ich aber erlebte mit tiefer Erschütterung die Kraft und den opferbereiten Mut einer vereinigten Arbeiterklasse. Jetzt verstand ich, was Klassenkampf hieß! Aber ich wußte auch, wohin ich gehörte, ich schwankte keinen Augenblick und trat auf die Seite der Arbeiterklasse.'⁵⁴

Immediately following this victory Resch joined the KPD and announced his membership to bewildered colleagues at the Girls' High School. At the next Faust-seminar, the discussion centred around the experience of recent events, which clearly disturbed some of the middle-class students. Resch, however, recalls that others began to view the situation in a different light:

'Vor dieser drängenden Gegenwart mußte selbst Goethe an diesem Abend schweigen. Einige bürgerliche Hörer, die das, was da vor sich gegangen war, nicht recht begriffen, machten betretene Gesichter. Manchen aber ist dabei, wie sie mir später sagten, ein Licht aufgegangen: es war eben ein Anderes, die Dinge vom Standpunkt der Arbeiterklasse betrachtet zu sehen als durch die reaktionäre "Generalanzeiger"-Presse.'⁵⁵

The summer of 1920 saw the first of the annual solstice festivals organised by the participants of the Remscheid Volkshochschule, which attracted many thousands of visitors from other evening schools in Germany and workers from towns throughout the Ruhr and Rhineland who were accommodated by local families free of charge. The festivals were held in the open air on a large meadow at "Dicke Eiche". Plays were performed, both by evening school students and visiting professional theatrical groups. Folk dances and communal songs enjoyed a prominent place in the proceedings, as well as puppet shows and various games for children. The first evening was brought to a close with the lighting of a huge bonfire which symbolised the destruction of the old and the dawning of a new age⁵⁶

This act was accompanied by speeches, poetry readings, folk songs and songs of the workers' movement. The festivals were wholly financed by the participants of the evening school and their families, and by proceeds from the festivals themselves.

At this point in time (1920) Resch appears to have been aiming at the creation of a new form of egalitarian society (neue Lebensgemeinschaft) cutting across established class lines to incorporate individuals from all walks of life. The only list of participants of the Volkshochschule still known to exist, containing around 350 names, would seem to indicate a certain measure of success, as it reveals a fairly equal balance between workers and white-collar employees, with a considerable number of civil servants, shopkeepers and small manufacturers also taking part.⁵⁸ This was probably the only instance during the Weimar years when such a broad consensus of opinion was achieved in an institution which was rapidly developing in the direction of the workers' movement. The experiment, however, soon began to attract criticism from both the employers and local authorities as well as the KPD. Parents of Resch's pupils at the Girls' High School, alarmed by his conversion to marxism, threatened to send their children to other schools, unless Resch was removed from his post. The local authorities and leading bourgeois circles were also perturbed by the increasing numbers of youngsters flocking to evening classes taught by people like Resch, Friedrich Wolf and Richard Sorge. The children of middle-class parents joined the bands of "Resch Indianer"⁵⁹ for weekend hikes into the surrounding countryside, and thereby came into contact with working-class culture and formed relationships which only a few years earlier had been unthinkable. The wrangle over Resch's position at the Girls' High School continued throughout the following years until he was finally suspended. His position at the municipal evening school also became increasingly untenable for the same reason, with the result that he was finally dismissed. Resch's dismissal was answered by the decision of the majority of participants to found their own independent evening school⁶⁰ under Resch's leadership. The impact of Resch's ideas and teaching methods can be gauged by the considerable number of

middle-class students who elected to follow him.⁶¹ It was above all young middle-class women who proved most receptive to the ideas and aims propagated by Resch and his colleagues as they experienced personal emancipation from the narrow confines of their traditional roles.⁶²

The members of the Freie Volkshochschule, now organised in a cooperative society, began to build their own school and club house on the wooded slope behind the working-class district of Honsberg. Large numbers of unemployed workers enthusiastically seized the opportunity to demonstrate their considerable skills in an undertaking which drew an impressive response from local residents. Collections were held and a soup-kitchen was organised to feed those engaged in the construction of the "Reschhutte". Having quickly erected the outer shell of the building, the workers were faced with the seemingly insurmountable problem of providing suitable material for the roof. The problem was solved by the discovery of a large quantity of corned beef tins on a refuse tip. These were collected, hammered out and stapled together to form a weatherproof roofing, of which the only disadvantage was the noise made by the beating of rain.⁶³ The school used mainly by adults in the evening, housed a day-nursery for children. Grete Busch, who on completion of her training was charged with the responsibility for the nursery, would collect the children every morning and march with these through the streets of Honsberg. Local women supervised the provision of meals which were financed by collections of money and food. In the afternoon the children returned by the same route marching in formation and singing songs.⁶⁴ Despite the appalling deprivation suffered by the majority of Honsberg families during the period of hyper-inflation, efforts were made to continue to provide nutritious meals for the children at the nursery. At times this was only possible by direct contribution from the teachers' own pockets. This was a considerable sacrifice as they received little or no remuneration for their work and were forced to rely on earnings accruing from their day-time jobs. The local authorities provided no assistance whatsoever, despite a socialist majority on the town council. Eventually meals for the children had to be discontinued owing to lack of funds, and at some stage, possibly in 1926, the nursery was abandoned.

Although the Freie Volkshochschule provoked hostile reactions from the middle-class circles and the local authorities, it was the opposition of the KPD which inflicted most damage on this institution. Criticism of the independent school was voiced immediately by local Communists who derisively referred to the venture as Volks-tanzsozialismus (folk dance socialism), and claimed that it distracted the workers from class conflict.

Disturbed by the massive support for Resch by workers, the KPD dispatched Edwin Hoernle⁶⁵ to Remscheid to reiterate party policy towards independent and municipal evening institutes. Hoernle publicly admonished Resch for encouraging the spread of empty illusions amongst the working class with a 'return to nature' which amounted to mere reverie.⁶⁶ Instead, the party wanted class-conscious workers who were ready to fight when the time came to seize power. Resch countered this attack by pointing to the failure of 1918 and forcefully argued that the party needed to prepare the workers more completely if it was to succeed in its aims. When the working class took power it had to be in a position to retain it, and this would only be possible if the workers were in a position to form their own opinions and rely on their own judgements. Furthermore, Resch discounted the theory that the German workers' revolution would follow the example of the Soviet model, as the prevailing conditions were incomparable. Finally, Resch maintained that the attempt to gain decisive influence in the municipal evening schools was itself illusory as the bureaucracy was far too powerful. Despite this altercation, Resch regarded his position as being akin to that of the party, and hoped for better cooperation in the future. Resch's pleas, however, went unheeded and the party called a boycott of all independent evening schools, which, according to Artur Rosenberg⁶⁷, only spread confusion amongst the workers and distracted them from politics.⁶⁸ In September 1922 the KPD reinforced its attack on Resch and the Freie Volkshochschule at a conference held in Düsseldorf. One of the speakers, Werner, of the KPD-branch Düsseldorf, started:

'Auch die Freien Volkshochschulen von Remscheid und Bochum können nicht als proletarische Kampforganisationen angesehen werden. Ihre Bestrebungen völliger Unabhängigkeit der Schüler und Lehrer öffnen nicht nur freideutschen Schwärmern, sondern auch ausgesprochenen Konterrevolutionären ihre Tore und wirken somit arbeiterfeindlich. Wir dürfen daher den Proletariern nur solche Kurse empfehlen, die das Wissensgebiet des Marxismus betreffen und von kommunistischen Lehrern abgehalten werden.'⁶⁹

The dispute now developed into a serious quarrel which resulted in Resch's expulsion from the party.⁷⁰ Reporting the incident, the RGA quoted the Bergische Volksstimme:

'Resch befindet sich bei seiner Tätigkeit in seiner sogenannten "Freien Volkshochschule" in einem dauernden, bewußten und betonten Gegensatz zu den Richtlinien der Partei über Arbeiterbildungsfragen. Seine gleich plumpen wie maßlosen und völlig unbegründeten Angriffe gegen die Partei in einer bürgerlichen Zeitschrift ("Die Tat") bedeuten eine so schwere und gewollte Schädigung der Partei, daß das Verbleiben Resch in der Partei nicht länger geduldet werden konnte.'

Although the KPD remained adamant with regard to its boycott of the school, Resch appears to have remained close to the party. At some point after 1923, he himself does not fix the date, Resch recanted, and was accepted back into the KPD, where he continued to play a significant role, particularly in the Kulturkartell, organizing and delivering lectures. The Freie Volkshochschule continued its work for a number of years although it appears to have deteriorated into a workers' discussion club. The building was eventually turned over to the Internationale Arbeiter Hilfe (IAH)⁷¹ and was used amongst other things as a weekend hostel for children's groups. The decision by Resch to return to the fold was not shared by all of his followers, some drifted away disappointed and disillusioned, others continued to meet for hiking excursions, but many did find their way into the workers' movement, if not into the KPD.

In his memoirs⁷² Resch blamed his own ignorance of Marxist theory for the dispute with the party and praised the KPD for its guidance, although he firmly rejected the criticism that the school distracted from the class struggle:

'Nein, zu einer "Ablenkung vom Klassenkampf" war unsere Betätigung nicht geworden. Eine Gefahr sehen, heißt auch, ihr begegnen zu können. Und so war es bei uns oberstes Gesetz, daß, wenn die Partei rief, wir alle zur Stelle waren. Zu unserem Kreis gehörten Genossen, die lange Kampferfahrung hatten, sie haben nach wie vor der Partei mit der gleichen Hingabe gedient und ihre Funktionen in Partei und Massenorganisationen mit der gleichen Treue erfüllt. Und wenn es galt zu agitieren, oder bei Nacht und Nebel hinter dem Rücken der Polizei Parolen zu malen, waren unsere Genossen stets dabei.'⁷³

Resch left Remscheid in 1928 to take up a post in Berlin. His departure was undoubtedly an irreplaceable loss to the local workers' movement. A small number of his closest friends actually followed him. Despite Resch's readiness to admit his 'mistakes', this by no means adequately explains which of the parties in the dispute really erred. One cannot easily discount the suspicion that by its intolerance and lack of vision the Communist Party ignored a vital opportunity to extend its influence to sections of the middle classes and thus widen the base of socialism. In the interests of short-term goals the KPD neglected Resch's progressive strategy which might have been developed further to provide a working model for the whole of Germany. The substantial numbers of white-collar workers who participated in Resch's seminars, both at the municipal evening institute and at the Freie Volkshochschule, at the very least indicates a potential reservoir of support for an alternative system to capitalism. As we shall see in the following chapters, the workers' movement failed completely to make an impact on the lower-middle class, whose distaste for capitalism was then fully exploited by the National Socialists. The case of Max Benscheid, although only an individual yet nonetheless revealing example, serves to illustrate the development of certain sections of the lower-middle class from a potential alliance with the workers' movement in the early years of the Weimar Republic, to fervent adherence of National Socialism in the thirties. Benscheid was one of the original participants of the Goethe seminars who in July 1920 (after Resch's conversion to communism) affixed their signatures to a declaration of support for the director and for the retention of the democratic constitution of the Volkshochschule. This declara-

tion furthermore considered the possibility of a break-away independent institution, if participants' demands were not upheld. Benschaid was later to join the NSDAP and became deputy mayor of Remscheid in 1936.

Resch retained a strong feeling of admiration for the workers of Remscheid, about whom he once wrote:

'Nie wider bin ich in meinem Leben auf einen so bildungshungrigen und bildungsfähigen, auf einen so geistig beweglichen, aufgeschlossenen, durch und durch positiv eingestellten, zum kulturellen Aufbau bereiten und für ihn sich kraftvoll und wagemutig einsetzenden Kreis von Arbeitern gestoßen, wie ich ihn damals in Remscheid in der Volkshochschule zusammenfassen durfte.⁷⁴

Reviewing the years in Remscheid, Resch emphasised the bond which lasted throughout his lifetime, and still remained convinced that his experiment proved fruitful:

'Die große Freiwilligkeitsleistung wurde ununterbrochen, auch nachdem ich 1928 Remscheid verlassen mußte, bis 1933 fortgesetzt. Nein, es war kein Strohfeuer gewesen! Unsere Freunde und Genossen vertraten und betreuten hier ihre eigene Sache - ihr Werk, das ihnen in den kampf- und entbehrungsreichen Jahren einen Halt gab. Daß man im Klubhaus immer einen Kreis von Genossen und Freunden traf, mit denen man durch Not und Kampf verbunden war, mit denen man sich aussprechen und - allem Elend zum Trotz - auch mal ordentlich lachen konnte, gab ihnen Kraft. Es hat mich tief erschüttert, als vor ein paar Jahren eine alte Genossin zu mir sagte, die "Kinderheimjahre" waren die schönsten ihres Lebens gewesen.⁷⁵

The question as to the possible extent of the success for the German workers' movement, had Resch been able to count on the support of the KPD instead of its short-sighted opposition, remains one of the imponderables emanating from that particular conjuncture of the workers' movement.

Yet another important organisation within the workers' movement was the Workers' Sports Organisation which in Remscheid was represented by nine districts with an active membership of several hundred men, women and children. As we have already seen, the Workers' Sports Organisation had a twofold function, namely to encourage the pursuit of good health by way of physical exercise, and to educate its members politically, above all children and youth.¹⁶ Arbeitersport rejected the preoccupation with records and medals which bourgeois sports idealised, and regarded sport as a healthy pastime for everyone, no matter how skilled or unskilled the individual might be. Whereas bourgeois sport tended to focus on the most successful and on the sensational and encouraged the image of the sportsman as the 'Träger der sportlichen Höchstleistung'¹⁷, Arbeitersport stressed 'die körperliche Ertüchtigung der Sporttreibenden im Rahmen der gegebenen gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse und in der Richtung der vorhandenen körperlichen Anforderungen'¹⁸. The Workers' Sports Organisation constantly stipulated the necessity of a healthy mind and body in the class struggle, which contrary to bourgeois ideology was also present on the sports field. In Remscheid, the most important clubs in the Arbeitersport organisation were: the Freie Turnervereinigung (Gymnastics Association) under the chairmanship of Ernst Zimmermann and Gustav Iesche; the Arbeiterschwimmverein, led at different times by Emil Fechner, Walter Piller, Ferdinand Thieler and Hermann Haddenbrock; the touristenverein Naturfreunde and the Arbeiterradfahrerbund (Cyclists Association) "Solidarität".

The Freie Turnervereinigung was represented by eight districts: Stadt, Honsberg, Vieringhausen, Hasten, Dicke Eiche, Struck, Lennep and Lüttringhausen. There was another strong club in Pohlhausen¹⁹ which, although bordering on Remscheid Ähringhausen, belonged to Wermelskirchen, which also had a strong workers' sports movement. The Remscheid Workers' Swimming Club also had eight different groups and specialised in water polo and handball as well as swimming.

Arbeitersport was particularly strong both in numerical terms and in quality in the Lower Rhineland. Düsseldorf, Solingen and Wuppertal also had a large network of clubs, so that Remscheid clubs were never short of opposition.

As was the case elsewhere in Germany the Remscheid workers' organisation was permanently plagued by a shortage of funds. This fact severely restricted the movement's potential, and was a serious disadvantage compared with middle-class sports clubs, which usually had generous financial support from local manufacturers. During the middle years of the Weimar Republic some help was forthcoming from the town council, depending on the strength of the KPD/SPD on the necessary committees. In 1927 for example, the Struck/Neuenhof sports club applied for a loan from the Remscheid savings bank to help finance the building of a club house and gymnasium. The loan was granted and the town council also agreed to provide 2,250 work-days for unemployed workers. Help was also forthcoming from the Jugendpflegerfond (youth activities fund) of the Düsseldorf Landtag government as well as from the welfare minister's fund. Nevertheless much of the work and fund raising was done by the club members themselves. In this instance the workers' sports movement was successful in obtaining support from the town council.⁸⁰ However, after the split within the movement, council grants were no longer available. Instead, existing facilities were withdrawn and the workers' Rotsport organisation was banned from Remscheid gymnasiums and swimming baths.⁸¹ This measure urged by the Social Democratic Landtag government was eagerly implemented in Remscheid, where the Rotsport organisation outnumbered its SPD orientated rival, despite indignant protests from the strong KPD faction on the council. The SPD councillors who were petitioned by Heinrich Schafer, chairman of the Kartell für Sport- und Körperpflege (cartel for sport and physical recreation), and of the Sportlerheim (club house) Neuenhof, voted with the bourgeois parties to deprive the Rotsport members of existing public facilities. A workers' commission pleaded in vain with the town's physical education inspector Dr. Bergmann to rescind the ban, on the grounds that even mayor Adenauer of Cologne had seen fit to restore the facilities to workers there. An article in the BV referred to the SPD as "Büttel der Bourgeoisie - die Sozialfaschisten" (catchpoll of the bourgeoisie - the Social Fascists), and bitterly condemned the collusion between

Schäfer and Bergmann.⁸² Numerous protests in Remscheid, Lennep and Lüttringhausen were to no avail, so that the sportsmen had to search for alternative venues. The workers' swimming club was particularly hard hit by the ban, so a number of members gathered together to formulate a plan of self-help, in order to finance and carry out the construction, or rather the conversion of the "Teufelsteich" at Hagener Mühle. The group received financial assistance from one or two sympathisers, so that it could take a lease on the land, buy building materials and make a start. The construction work extended over two summers and was finally completed in the summer of 1933, although the unfinished pool was open for bathers in the summers of 1931 and 1932. Altogether about 100 members of the club, the majority of them already unemployed for a substantial period, took part in the construction work.⁸³ Most of the necessary skills were already present in the shape of eager members, so that the group was able to complete the project without outside help.⁸⁴ The town council refused, however, to give any assistance, despite the fact that the town was to benefit from this added facility for many years to come. Photos taken at the "Teufelsteich"'s inauguration on 7th August 1932 bear testimony to its popularity. The workers' swimming club which by 1932 was already organised in armed groups of ten⁸⁵, in preparation for the approaching conflict with the Nazis, was soon to be denied the fruits of its labour, as by the summer of 1933 the majority of members had already been arrested and interned in the notorious concentration camp at Kemna.

The workers' sports movement and particularly the Rotsportbund was accustomed to relying on self-help, as applications for grants and the use of facilities were frequently refused by an obdurately hostile council. In January 1928, Mayor Hartmann had written:

'Die Erziehung unseres Volkes zu körperlicher und geistiger Tüchtigkeit ist gerade in unserer wirtschaftlich so außerordentlich schweren Zeit ein Gebot der Stunde. Staat und Gemeinden müssen deshalb alle verfügbaren Mittel aufwenden, um diese hohen Ziele zu erreichen...'⁸⁶

Yet he and his fellow party members supported by the other bourgeois parties making up the Burgerblock continued to discriminate against the workers' sports' movement. The one-sided extension of grants from which the workers' sports clubs were generally excluded, served to strengthen their resolve, and bound the members tighter together, making them more sympathetic to the KPD. This was even frequently the case with individual sportsmen, who themselves were not Communists. In June 1928 the Ballspielvereinigung "Einigkeit" of Kremenhoil (football club) applied for 250 marks to send a youth group to the Workers' Sports Academy in Leipzig to take part in a course. The application was turned down on the grounds that there was no more money available.⁸⁷ In the summer of 1932 the Interessengemeinschaft fur Arbeiterkultur, Bezirk Niederrhein (Association for working-class culture of the Lower Rhineland) applied to the Remscheid town council for the use of the Reinshagen stadium for a mass meeting of the local branch. The programme which envisaged marches by workers' bands and male voice and mixed choirs, gymnastic demonstrations presented by members of the Rotsport gymnastics clubs, as well as games for children, and which according to experience was expected to attract at least 15,000 spectators, was refused on the grounds of the Prussian Innenminister's decrees of the 27/12/30 and 27/11/31.⁸⁸ Between these two refusals were countless others, whereas the DTV (Deutsche Turner Vereinigung - National German Gymnastics Association) and other bourgeois sports organisations usually enjoyed the support of the well-disposed authorities. Thus bourgeois sports clubs were able to put on elaborate public demonstrations on a regular basis, without, however, enjoying the kind of support from spectators which was usually evident at Arbeitersport functions. Football matches in Honsberg regularly attracted large crowds. In August 1930, for example, an Austrian international team which belonged to the Luzern Sports International⁸⁹ competed against a Remscheid selection from the Rotsport-affiliated teams, which had been expelled the previous year. Over 2,000 spectators turned out to see this game.⁹⁰

After the split in the workers' sports movement the local Rotsport organisation grew rapidly as more and more clubs joined those already expelled. A report in the BV proclaimed a positive development in the Bergische Land which had 150 teams for the season of 1930/31⁹¹. In March 1932 the BV listed 30 Rotsport teams from the Bergische Land, including from Remscheid: Dicke Eiche, Laspert, Lennep, Luttringhausen, Feld, Struck and Remscheid-Stadt, competing for the football title.⁹² In the men's handball section there were three Remscheid teams: Dicke Eiche and the Remscheid workers' swimming club teams 1 and 2 competing in a pool of 14 in the highest division. The BV reporting on the game between ASpV Wald and Remscheid Dicke Eiche mentioned that the money taken at the turnstiles would be donated to the KPD's election fund. Three women's teams from Remscheid were also involved in fixtures in the highest division. The BV had a weekly report on the coming fixtures stating time and venue and constantly encouraging support of the local Rotsport fixtures. It also frequently reiterated the principles of workers' sport, so that its readers understood the importance of their attendance. In June 1932 the local Rotsport organisation achieved what it claimed to be an important breakthrough, when the middle class Remscheid Metzgerinnung (butchers' guild) which was duly reinforced by talent from leading local bourgeois clubs such as the Wuppertaler Sportverein, VfB Remscheid, BV IU and Goldenberg, agreed to meet the local Rotsport champions BV Einigkeit at Honsberg. The BV called for strong support for the BV Einigkeit to show the bourgeoisie that the workers produced the better footballers as well as the better all-round sportsmen. The newspaper noted that this was hopefully to be the first of many meetings between Rotsport and bourgeois clubs in Remscheid.⁹³ The game was not reported in the local press, therefore it must be assumed that it did not take place. The strict segregation of sport in the Weimar Republic was a further manifestation of class hostility, in this case extending to the football field. It would appear from the build-up of the fixture in the communist press that the Rotsport organisation was anxious to break out of its isolation and demonstrate its own considerable talent.

The Arbeiterradfahrerbund "Solidaritat" under the chairmanship of Alfred Merten was another affiliation to the local workers' movement with a significant role to play. "Solidaritat" which numbered almost a quarter of a million members in Germany at the peak of its success⁹⁴, was relatively small in Remscheid, possibly owing to the hilly terrain. The small number of active participants, however, in no way diminished the significance of the club which because of its cheaper mobility was in great demand as a supporting group for Landpropaganda in the approach to elections.⁹⁵ Local worker cyclists were constantly aware of their propaganda value even on club excursions; and on weekends and summer evenings columns of cyclists, their bicycles sporting red flags, could be seen heading out of working class districts of the town. In August 1930 the BV described a journey made by eight Remscheid Communists to the IAH demonstration "Verteidigung der Sowjetunion" (defence of the Soviet Union) at Stollberg on the Dutch and Belgian border. The report states that the cyclists attracted a lot of attention in towns they passed through, and were greeted by red flags and shouts of 'Rotfront'.⁹⁶

The Arbeitersamariterbund (Workers' First Aid Association) which was likewise numerically not very strong in Remscheid, was also an organisation with an important role to play. The organisation was founded in 1909 as a self-help organisation for the workers, because the German Red Cross organisation allegedly refused first aid to the SPD, trade unions and workers' sports clubs.⁹⁷ The local group with its headquarters behind the Volkshaus held regular courses in first aid for men, women and youth. The BV reported on the final examination of the winter course on Sunday 28th February 1932. All 19 candidates were successful, but the article bemoaned the lack of interest shown by Remscheid workers, and announced that according to demand, the ASB would consider running courses in different districts of Remscheid as it had done in former years.⁹⁸ The ASB, led by Hugo Paffrath, Karl Picard, Hans Gruber, Karl Scheer, Otto Rau and Eugen Becker, was required to provide assistance at all demonstrations and functions of the workers' movement

including meetings, football matches and festivals. The Remscheid group which after 1929 belonged to the Westdeutscher Arbeitersamariter Verband e.V.⁹⁹ and referred to itself as the 'ausgeschlossene Mehrheit (expelled majority) des 5. Kreises des Arbeitersamariterbundes e.V., Sitz Chemnitz', played an important role in the new organisation which had its headquarters in nearby Solingen.¹⁰⁰ It described itself in the following way:

'Der Verband steht auf dem Boden des Klassenkampfes und unterstützt um seiner Ziele Willen alle Bestrebungen zur Überwindung der kapitalistischen Wirtschaft als des Hindernisses einer wirklichen Volksgesundheitspolitik.'

A monthly subscription of 30 pfennigs for members over 20, and of 10 pfennigs for those under 20 was exacted by the organisation. The new organisation also had a youth section split into two groups, 12 to 14-year olds and 14 to 20-year olds, for boys and girls. Only active members of the Westdeutscher Arbeitersamariter Verband were required to pass first aid examinations and volunteer for duty, whereas passive members, who were not eligible for office, constituted a kind of fee paying supporters club.

The Touristenverein Naturfreunde was an important arm of the workers' movement and occupied a somewhat unique position posed between the sports organisations and cultural organisations in the narrower sense. The local group - as we have already seen¹⁰¹ - was founded in 1913 but experienced a real upsurge only after the First World War when already existing hiking clubs like "Frühaut", "Wanderblut" and "Stachelhauser Wanderverein" joined the Naturfreunde. Interest was further boosted in 1920 when the Naturfreunde erected their own club house on land acquired from the town council near the Remscheid reservoir. The project was largely financed by the local trade unions and these also provided some of the necessary expertise in construction, although the major part of the work was done by the Naturfreunde themselves.¹⁰² Apart from walking and hiking the Naturfreunde provided facilities for cycling, folk-dancing, winter sports, music, photography and for the study

of botany, natural and local history. From 1931 onwards the Naturfreunde shared the same building as the Arbeitersamariter behind the Volkshaus. The Touristenverein under the chairmanship of Max Rontgen had a youth group of 113 in 1926¹⁰³, and a total membership of possibly 500 adults in the period immediately preceding the Nazi seizure of power. The Touristenverein appealed very strongly to families as it was able to provide such varied facilities. As well as holding its own functions and outdoor festivals, the Touristenverein took part in concerts and festivals promoted by other workers' organisations, canvassed for the KPD in elections, and worked closely with Resch's Freie Volkshochschule. Utto Rau who was a member of the Naturfreunde had a selection of indigenous reptiles which were housed in the buildings behind the Volkshaus and which he displayed in schools in the area.¹⁰⁴

The local workers' sports movement was an impressive force. Sportsmen and sportswomen from Reimscheid took part in all the major national and international festivals like the Workers' Olympics in Frankfurt in 1925, to which they sent a team of 130, and the AISB National Festival in Nurnberg in 1929, the "Tag der roten Sport-einheit" in Erfurt in 1930 as well as regional meetings in Dusseldorf. Because of the permanent shortage of funds, Reimscheid sportsmen and women used to combine the great sports festivals with three or four-day hikes, depending on the distance. A contemporary photo shows a group of Reimscheid sportsmen resting in the Harz mountains on the return hike from the First Workers' Gymnastics Tournament in Leipzig in 1922. Apart from participation in sports festivals, Reimscheid worker-sportsmen were always present at May-Day demonstrations and other important workers' festivals. They also provided protection groups¹⁰⁵ for working-class districts in periods of increasing tension, which were wont to occur shortly before elections, and as we have already seen, Arbeitersportler participated in election propaganda, handing out leaflets, painting slogans and collecting for the party election campaign. After 1933 some Arbeitersportler who had never been members of either the KPD or SPD participated in the resistance against the Nazis.

The workers' movement was so broad as to contain many other diverse clubs and organisations which had local groups in Remscheid. The Arbeiter-Photographen-Vereinigung (workers' photographic society), for instance, was founded in August 1927 at a meeting held in the Volkshaus. The chairman of the club was Hermann Michel, a member of the KPD. The group held technical courses on Monday evenings in the Volkshaus. Apart from teaching photographic techniques, the Photographen-Vereinigung's most significant task was to document the history of the local workers in their struggle for power. The groups's work was displayed on occasions in the Volkshaus¹⁰⁶ and some contributions even appeared in journals like the Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung.¹⁰⁷

The Arbeiterschachbund (workers' chess club) also made its appearance in Remscheid during the middle years of the Weimar Republic. There were teams in Remscheid, Lennep and Radevormwald. The major aims of the chess club were to teach young workers to improve their concentration and their capacity for strategic thinking by means of a game which hitherto had been the preserve of the bourgeoisie, to encourage workers to meet and discuss their problems in a non-verbal environment, and to occupy the minds, of unemployed workers in particular, in a positive and meaningful way. As was the case with all workers' clubs and organisations, the chess club tried to give its members a political education which stressed the need for co-operation and class solidarity. Tournaments and team matches were an effective medium for the exchange of ideas and experience with workers from other towns and areas, as not all time was devoted to playing chess.¹⁰⁸ In Remscheid and Lennep the workers' chess club faced little competition from bourgeois clubs, so that it was not troubled by attempts to tempt away good players with the promise of money or a job.

In 1926 a group of young Remscheid workers began to attend Esperanto classes given by Prof. Breden, a senior teacher at the Girls' High School. This group formed the basis of the local branch of the Arbeiter Esperanto Verein (workers' Esperanto club).¹⁰⁹ In accordance with the widespread belief in the working class movement

during the late-20s that Esperanto would become a powerful medium for the dissemination of socialist ideas and the demonstration of workers' solidarity throughout the world, the BV tried to encourage local workers to join the club and learn the language. In an appeal to local workers in 1930 the BV said:

'Esperanto ist ein sehr wichtiges Hilfsmittel für den internationalen Klassenkampf. Die Arbeiter der verschiedenen Länder stehen sich heute nicht mehr fremd gegenüber, sondern durch Esperanto ist jedem die Möglichkeit gegeben, mit seinen Klassengenossen in allen Ländern der Welt, schriftlich oder mündlich, in Gedankenaustausch zu treten...Proletarier aller Länder vereinigt euch, und wir setzen hinzu: und verstandigt euch durch Esperanto!'

Members were also encouraged to read the illustrated "Arbeiter-Esperantist"-journal which contained articles, reviews and addresses from all over the world. Correspondence with Soviet Esperantists was particularly encouraged, but relationships were struck up with all parts of the globe. In June 1928 the central committee of the KJVD circulated a document encouraging the establishment of international connections between German factory cells and Soviet workers by correspondence. The Remscheid area was designated the area around Lugansk.¹¹¹

During the middle and late-20s there were one or two 'cultural' groups affiliated to the KPD which were interested in promoting solidarity with the Soviet Union. One such group, the Vereinigung der Freunde Sowjetrusslands (Friends of Soviet Russia) was founded on 21st May 1929¹¹² at a meeting called by Albert Issel and Ernst Zulaut. Remscheid workers had enjoyed close relations with the Soviet Union for several years and the meeting had been called to found a local organisation, which would place the relationship on a more official basis. The organisation statutes stated its aim,

'den wirtschaftlichen Aufbau, den kulturellen Fortschritt und die Rechte der Arbeiterschaft in der Sowjetunion zu studieren und den höheren Wert des sozialen Fortschritts unter der Sowjetmacht gegenüber dem kapitalistischen Regime der Arbeiterschaft darzustellen',

and

'um bei den Feststellungen über die Verhältnisse in der Sowjetunion nicht nur auf theoretische und statistische Unterlagen allein angewiesen zu sein, erstrebt die Vereinigung die Möglichkeit an, Delegationen zum Studium der politischen, kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse nach der Sowjetunion zu entsenden.¹¹³

During the discussion concerning the subscription charge, the accusation was raised that the group was being formed in order to provide cheap visits to the Soviet Union for committee members. The subscription fee which was fixed at 20 pfennigs per week, was indeed quite substantial, considering the fact that many members were at the same time paying subscriptions to various other organisations. The Vereinigung der Freunde Sowjetrusslands had a founder membership of 70 and had local groups in eight different Remscheid districts. The chairman of the Remscheid committee was Otto Weber. The Kulturkartell under the chairmanship of KPD town councillor Walter Kaiser was another local organisation which regularly concerned itself with different aspects of Soviet life. This organisation held numerous functions which were addressed by delegates recently returned from the East, who related their experiences and generally extolled the communist system. In connection with the Kulturkartell in 1926 Resch held a series of lectures and invited different speakers to Remscheid to expound on the subject "Erwachen des Ostens" (The Awakening of the East). The first lecture which was held in the "Alter Ratskeller" on 14th October 1926 was attended by 250 people, and was addressed by KPD member Thieme from Krefeld who had recently returned from the Soviet Union. Resch also spoke about the situation in China in preparation for the next meeting. The meeting closed with the singing of the "Rotgardistenmarsch"¹¹⁴. Eleven days later the second lecture in the series was addressed by a member of the Canton army and Kuomintang named Tscheng I'ai Po who was on his way back to China having spent some time studying in Göttingen.¹¹⁵ The guest speaker was received at the railway station by two bands and a troop of RFB men who escorted him to the Stadtpark. Over 500 people turned out to listen to the speaker who, after stammering a few sentences in broken

German, launched into a speech in Chinese which was elucidated by the inimitable Resch, reading from a prepared paper. The exotic guest ended his speech again in German with the slogan "keinen Pfennig für die Fürsten" alluding to the imminent plebiscite. The speaker was then presented with a medal bearing the emblems of the RFB by Bernhard Bastlein, and the gathering sang the "Internationale". Tscheng was then hoisted onto the shoulders of RFB men and carried out of the hall amidst enthusiastic cheers whilst the band played. The escort made its way to the station where, after speeches by Resch and Bastlein, the speaker received gifts of socialist literature for members of the Chinese youth organisation from Karl Sothmann, representing the Jungspartakusbund. This kind of function was enthusiastically received by local workers. In arranging for such an exotic speaker to address the meeting, Resch was actually creating a piece of communist tradition in Remscheid. The visits of Chinese and Russians to Remscheid enhanced the local party organisation's reputation.

The dispatching of KPD delegates to the Soviet Union was often criticised by those affiliated members of workers organisations who were not party members. Some SPD and unorganised workers were sceptical of the often one-sided superficial reports. In an effort to combat the criticism and appear more credible the local IAH committee under Peter Leyendecker asked for a non-party member to be the next delegate from Remscheid. The BV reported the matter in an article on the 18th February 1932.¹¹⁶

Organisations like the Kulturkartell and Freunde der Sowjetunion helped to inform local workers about conditions elsewhere and to make them more outward-looking in their attitudes. Remscheid witnessed many demonstrations of sympathy and solidarity with oppressed foreign workers throughout the Weimar years.¹¹⁷ In this way local workers came to understand the permanent and ubiquitous nature of the struggle against capitalism. It was clear to many families that Russian workers for example were fighting the same battle as they themselves. And this realisation made them more sympathetic to pleas for help.

In 1921, following long periods of draught along the Wolga, the Soviet Union, beset by already massive problems of reconstruction and simultaneously racked by civil war, had directed a plea for help to workers of the world and as a consequence of this appeal the IAH Internationale Arbeiter Hilfe was founded.¹¹¹ The IAH which had groups in most towns including Remscheid, held regular collections particularly to finance meals for children of poor and striking families. In time, the IAH became an extensive organisation primarily providing support for strikes, although by no means exclusively. Towards the end of the Twenties, the Rote Hilfe organisation became increasingly more important, as workers were imprisoned as a result of more frequent clashes with police and political opponents. The Rote Hilfe organisation provided aid for the families of internees. Here again the BV provided regular information and incentive, publishing the results of collections by different district sub-groups and praising extraordinary efforts wherever appropriate.¹¹⁹ In 1927 the IAH organised a tour of Germany by the "Blaue Blusen", a famous Agitproptruppe from the Soviet Union. The tour which visited all the major towns and cities of Germany also came to Remscheid.¹²⁰ The "Blaue Blusen" fired the imagination of enthusiastic audiences with their songs and sketches in the form of proletarian cabaret. Over night German Agitproptruppen appeared on the scene following the Russian example. Remscheid workers formed a group called the "Rote Raketen" after the more illustrious troop from Berlin which gained fame in the late-20s with their theme-song of the same name. Agitprop with its songs, satirical sketches and unflagging energy appealed strongly to the workers' sense of humour. With songs by Eisler, Brecht and Weinert, like "Roter Wedding", "Das Lied der Latscher", "Gustav Kuhke" and "Vorwärts, und nicht vergessen", various Agitprop troops visited Remscheid raising money for the IAH. In 1930 the Berlin Agitprop troop "Alarm" came to Remscheid after successful performances in Elbertfeld and Solingen.¹²¹ The group finished its act with the message 'Prolet, du mußt mithelfen, tritt ein in die proletarischen Organisationen'.¹²²

Apart from public performances, Agitprop groups like the "Rote Raketen" were also involved in Landpropaganda work, particularly during the approach of elections. They used to tour outlying districts sometimes on the back of a rented lorry or on bicycles. In the summer of 1930, Remscheid's "Rote Raketen" challenged the "Rote Lanzen" of Solingen to a competition to recruit 50 new KPD members and gain 75 subscriptions for the communist press.¹²³ In this way the KPD constantly gained new members and badly needed subscription towards the end of the Weimar Republic. This strategy was employed constantly by the KPD at all levels. The BV regularly reported on recruitment campaigns like the one in March 1932 when the party succeeded in gaining 35 new members as well as 100 new readers for the communist press, and 205 marks for the election fund.¹²⁴ Another success was recorded a few days later when a street cell in Rosenhügel/Blüdinghausen reported the completion of a year's work which had raised the membership from seven to 83, with extra membership for the Rote Hilfe and the Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus (KgdF). Success in this case was all the more remarkable because at the beginning of the campaign it had generally been believed that local residents were indifferent. The result of concerted effort, patient canvassing and a deteriorating economic situation revealed the extent of progress which could be achieved.¹²⁵ The same issue reported the result of the recruitment effort of the women's group of district 2. They obtained 12 new members for the KPD and 55 subscriptions to the "Rote Kämpferin".¹²⁶ According to these figures it is evident that the KPD was experiencing an upward surge in membership in the late winter and early spring of 1931/32, as the BV had reported further successes a week before in the February campaign, which had brought 139 new KPD members (35 of which were employed), 25 new members for the Rote Hilfe, 25 members for the KgdF, five for the RGU, two members of the Mieterschutzbund (tenants' association) and two new KJVD members. In addition to this there were 75 new subscriptions to the communist press and 25 marks for the election fund.¹²⁷ The Volkschor also played its part in recruitment drives, on one

occasion managing to sell newspapers to farmers in Hackenberg.¹²⁸ Rote Helfer played their part with winter aid campaigns supplying the NSDAP with an idea which it later made repeated use of. In the February of 1932 a Rote Hilfe conference announced that more attention had to be paid to the recruitment of members in the factories. It was suggested that the organisation could be made more dynamic by the formation of Zehnergruppen (groups of ten). It was also announced that in the Winterhilfskampagne (winter aid campaign) the Reimscheid section had achieved 68 % of its target and that both Lennep and Wermelskirchen had fulfilled their goals, and indeed collected more. Winter aid in Honsberg yielded 120 marks and a large amount of clothing and paper, but a better result could not be achieved owing to the fact that most of the small shops were already bankrupt and unable to contribute.¹²⁹ A further article by the BV at the end of February 1932 claimed that 330 new KPD members had been recruited in the previous three weeks in the Reimscheid area and it added tersely that amongst these were some former SPD supporters.¹³⁰

These figures clearly show a new radical trend which set in during the winter 1931/32 and was to continue throughout the year.

Apart from the events mentioned above there were also cultural functions organised by the Kulturkartell, IAH, and the Rote Hilfe. The workers' movement also began to make use of new media like the cinema, although access and supply were restricted by a lack of funds and perhaps a failure to realise the full potential of the film as an important medium for propayanda. Nevertheless, on occasions the workers' movement rented cinemas in Reimscheid in order to show at least a few films to its members. Sports meetings like the Workers' Olympics in Frankfurt and Vienna were particular favourites, as well as certain Russian films. In 1930 "Tempo 2" opened its First Film Festival with the Soviet film, Der Mann, der sein Gedächtnis verlor.¹³¹ This success was followed the next month by a double billing of the Reichstreffen der Roten Arbeitersportler in Erfurt and the Westdeutsches Treffen in Dusseldorf, followed by another Soviet film "Turksib".¹³²

Yet another pillar of the workers' movement with a strong following in Remscheid was the Freidenkerverband which argued the case for socialism against the 'mysticism' of Christianity. Although large sections of Remscheid's working class were hostile towards the church, many still continued to pay church taxes and attend services. The Freidenker provided parallel services to those offered by the church.¹³³ The Secular Confirmation became popular during the Weimar Republic as an alternative to confirmation ceremonies performed by the church. There were sometimes violent disputes in working class families where fathers insisted on their children attending Secular Confirmation and wives pleaded for the Christian ceremony. In some cases wives arranged for their children to be secretly confirmed in church, which at times led to beating when husbands learned the truth.¹³⁴ The Freidenker also provided funeral orators and held regular meetings explaining the procedure of secession from the church. At the beginning of 1929 the local group split with the majority of members opting for the KPD-led movement. The BV warned members of an attempt by SPD supporters who were trying to collect subscriptions without the authority of the committee. A Frankfurt court had ruled that expulsions of individual members by the Freidenker's governing body and the withdrawal of powers from regional and local committees were illegal. The local newspaper also published a list of collectors who were authorised by the local committee, together with the names of the SPD collectors.¹³⁵ During the late summer of 1930 the Freidenker found it necessary to move to larger premises in the Volks-haus. According to the BV the reason for the move was a growing membership and an increasing number of people leaving the church.¹³⁶

Male voice and mixed choirs were traditionally a popular form of cultural expression amongst Germany's workers, and many Remscheid workers continued this old tradition. Some of the larger local factories like the BSI had their own male voice choirs and there were also a large number of bourgeois choirs, but class-conscious workers joined the Volkschor which had male, female, children's and

mixed choirs.¹³⁷ The Volkschor had weekly practice sessions in the Volkshaus and had a large repertoire including Arbeiterlieder, Kampflieder, but also classical pieces. The local workers' movement had several Tambour- and Schalmeienkorps and a very good mandolin ensemble as well as the many bands representing individual organisations like the RFB, Reichsbanner and workers' sports movement. Bands were used constantly during the Weimar Republic both for propaganda and entertainment value, so it was a common sight to see brass bands marching through the town.

An old workers' tradition with its roots in the 19th century was the practice of receiving 'martyrs of class justice' at the railway station on their release from prison. After speeches of welcome by prominent local leaders of the movement, the 'returning hero' would be lifted onto the shoulders of comrades and marched through the town to his home.¹³⁸

As already shown in the previous chapter, during the period of escalating violence in 1923 workers' leaders had decided to form Proletarian Hundreds to protect the working-class districts from attacks by right-wing extremists. Shortly after the formation of these armed groups which existed all over Germany, the KPD, recently restored to legality, created a permanent protective force, the Rotfrontkämpferbund (RFB) which - like the Reichsbanner - was a supra-party organisation.¹³⁹ The RFB in Remscheid was represented by seven district sub-groups and in the spring of 1928 had one of the strongest contingents in the area, numbering 540, and the Rote Jungfront, the youth wing, provided a further 25.¹⁴⁰ Not only was the Remscheid Ortsgruppe strong in numbers but also in influence and provided the regional leader of the Lower Rhineland, Alwin Panzer. Remscheid's RFB was regarded as an exemplary unit, renowned for its energy and fighting spirit.¹⁴¹ The local Ortsgruppe was led by plumber Gustav Flohr, Karl Gortz, Karl Gorny, Emil Illigmann, Wilhelm Kremershoff, August Kuhne, Ewald Motzkat, Hugo Paul (RKF-group leader), Ernst Tuckmantel and August Wahl. The RFB had an office in the Volkshaus and held evening courses twice a week for new members on the aims and combat methods of the organi-

sation. In addition to these there were also regular courses for officials on such topics as "Kriegstechnik gegnerischer Verbände" (combat strategy of enemy formations) and "Imperialismus und Kriegsgefahr" (imperialism and the danger of war).¹⁴²

Apart from its function of protecting working-class districts, providing protection squads for meetings and constituting the nucleus of a future 'Red Army', the RFB was regarded by the KPD as an organisation which would attract new recruits who would eventually opt to join the party.¹⁴³ In the five years of its existence until the ban in 1929 the RFB ruled the streets of Remscheid. The list of activities drawn up by the regional policy committee for 1929 with nine major functions as well as the many local ones until the ban, amply demonstrates the active part played by the RFB.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, a police report of September 1928 shows that Remscheid's RFB also took part in military manoeuvres at weekends near Leichlingen.¹⁴⁵ After the ban, the RFB appears to have continued as a loosely connected formation despite the existence of the quasi-legal Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus (KydF). On the 28th February 1930 there was a KPD demonstration in which members of the KJVD and RFB marched through the working-class districts of Honsberg, Stachelhausen and Kremenholz in uniform.¹⁴⁶ When the police arrived on the scene, they merely found empty streets.

From the point of view of continuity the KJVD was an extremely important organisation within the workers' movement. By the beginning of 1926 the district organisation of the KJVD Remscheid had over 200 members organised in six local groups and three factory cells.¹⁴⁷ Here again the Remscheid local group played an important role in the region, and the town provided the venue for important meetings of the organisation as for example the International Day of Youth staged by the KJVD's Lower Rhineland section in 1929. On this occasion regional leader Ernst Bertram pointed to the increasing danger of war, saying:

'das Jugendproletariat soll wieder das Kanonentutter werden. In den bürgerlichen Vereinen wird die militärische Erziehung der Jugend emsig betrieben und die Sozialdemokratie leistet hierbei Handlangerdienste. Es ist Pflicht eines jeden proletarischen Arbeiters, seine Söhne von diesen Organisationen fernzuhalten.'¹⁴⁸

The event attracted large numbers of KJVD members and sympathisers. The KJVD was a particularly active wing of the local KPD, and held regular weekly meetings, participated in recruitment and propaganda campaigns and provided fund raisers and leaflet distributors. KJVD members who in the main were single and had more time to devote to political work than fathers of families, and at work were subject to less pressure in that the consequences of losing their jobs were perhaps not quite as tragic as in the cases of those who had large families to support. On the other hand many of the KJVD members were apprentices and suffered daily humiliation and at times even maltreatment at the hands of their bosses or foremen.¹⁴⁹

The Jungspartakusbund which was the children's group of the KPD, was founded in July 1925 in Remscheid and was regarded as an important link in the chain. It offered children a wide range of activities and tried to counter the influence of teachers and an authoritarian school system. When the group was founded it numbered 62 and elected representatives to recruit new members and develop propaganda campaigns in their schools. The high priority given to the political organisation of children and youths in the local workers' movement can be gauged by the fact that the children received their own club house in Honsberg, the newly-constructed wing of the Resch-Hütte. The opening ceremony in 1926 was attended by roughly 1,000 children and 500 adults and was addressed by Resch who said:

'Das Heim, das ein Werkzeug proletarischer Solidarität ist, soll stets eine Pflegestätte proletarisch-revolutionären Denkens sein.'¹⁵⁰

The club house solved the problem of shortage of space in the Jugendhaus behind the Volkshaus which the children's group had hitherto shared with the KJVD.

This survey by no means exhausts the range of organisations and institutions affiliated to the local workers' movement but it does comprise the most effective ones. The formidable combination of the Bergische Volksstimme, the Volkshaus and the Freie Volkshochschule together with the many sports and recreational clubs, which benefited from the experience of a long-standing radical tradition, was to a large measure responsible for the development of a well-integrated and cohesive movement in Remscheid during the Weimar Republic. The dynamic inter-play of tradition and institutions was constantly visible in the local workers' movement and was reinforced and intensified by the influx of talented individuals from other areas who perceived in Remscheid a promising arena for their ideas and skills. Both, politically and culturally, the workers' movement in Remscheid provided exciting and stimulating opportunities for journalists, writers and artists to strike up a mutual rapport with an interested and appreciative public who did not merely consume but also actively contributed. In cultural terms, Remscheid experienced a heyday during the first half of the twenties which contrasts sharply with what the town has known at any time since. Whilst the Freie Volkshochschule was the principal catalyst, as Resch himself testifies, it was indeed the Remscheid workers who by their enthusiastic reception and involvement supplied the impulses for further activity. The annual festivals held by the Volkshochschule and later the Freie Volkshochschule attracted amongst others, Ernst Toller, Georg Kaiser, Franz Wertel¹⁵¹, the Haberkow and Schurmann-Horster theatrical groups, Heinrich Vogler of the Barkenhoff colony, Kathe Kollwitz, George Grosz and Otto Dix. Open-air productions of "Masse Mensch", "Spiegelmensch", "Thomas Munzer" amongst others, were seen by thousands of workers during the Volkshochschul(e) festivals and a stage was provided for local workers' own plays. The effect of such experiences was a reinforcement of the political institutions, despite the dispute between the KPD and Resch.

CHAPTER IV

NOTES

1 See Chapter II for the Reichstag election of 4/5/24.

Result of the Reichstag election of 7/12/24 for Remscheid:

Turn-out 81.5 %.

KPD	12,891	=	31.6 %
SPD	3,308	=	8.1 %
Zentrum	3,108	=	8.1 %
DNVP	4,102	=	10.1 %
DVP	10,543	=	25.8 %
DDP	4,207	=	10.3 %
Völkisch-sozialer Block	248	=	0.6 %
Wirtschaftspartei	817	=	2.0 %
USPD	165	=	0.4 %
Aufwertpartei	1,121	=	2.8 %
Polenpartei	61	=	0.1 %
Christ.-soz. Volksgemeinschaft	57	=	0.1 %

See C.D. Thompson, op. cit., p. 36.

2 Cf. Hermann Weber, "Die KPD und die linke Opposition in der Sowjetunion. Zur Problematik der Verflechtung des Stalinisierungsprozesses der KPD, der Komintern und der KPdSU" in: Ulf Wolter (edit.): Sozialismusdebatte, Berlin 1978, pp. 160-180; also idem., Der deutsche Kommunismus, 2 volumes, Köln 1973; idem., Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus, 2 volumes, Frankfurt a.M. 1969; especially Volume 1 with the sub-title Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik.

3 Weber, "Die KPD und die linke Opposition...", op. cit. pp. 170-173.

4 Ibid., p. 163.

5 Flechtheim, op. cit., p. 262 f.

6 Interview with Otto Rau.

7 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Duss. 30642a, Org.-Instruktion Nr. 1, 7/2/1927;

also Flechtheim, op. cit., p. 216.

8 Otto Braß, co-signatory of the Bielefelder Abkommen (Treaty of Bielefeld) was branded by local workers as a traitor. He eventually returned to the SPD in Berlin. H. Schliestedt and W. Freytag represented the DMV headquarters in the dispute with the Remscheid Ortsgruppe of the DMV in 1924. Rudolf Buhler returned to the SPD in Remscheid.

- 9 Interview with Grete Salz 11/1/81.
Albert Issel and his comrades were the envy of many KPD members
- 10 Leyendecker taught at one of the town's non-denominational schools.
- 11 Interview with Erich Ihlieler, May 1980.
- 12 Information from Milli Hilbert who was herself a member of the Red Front Girls' League.
- 13 See Albert Norden, Ereignisse und Erlebnisse, Berlin 1981, pp. 29-4/.
- 14 Information from Milli Hilbert who worked with Adams in the party office in Remscheid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Biographisches Lexikon, Berlin-Ost 1970, pp. 31/32.
- 17 Emil Kortmann, op. cit.
- 18 Ibid., p. 56.
- 19 Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, Lexikon, op. cit.
- 20 Ibid., pp. 361/362. Hugo Paul played a leading role in Düsseldorf and Remscheid in the resistance movement against the Nazis during the Third Reich. After the war he was the Minister for Reconstruction in the Landtag in Düsseldorf.
- 21 Kortmann, op. cit.
- 22 According to Otto and Linnie Alders, Kortmann's opinion was unfounded, on the contrary, local workers were proud of Becker's success.
- 23 To this day the town of Remscheid has refused to acknowledge Artur Becker's contribution to the resistance against the Nazi dictatorship, as indeed it has that of all anti-fascists. Becker is the patron of the East German youth movement, and throughout the country there are streets and schools named after him.
- 24 Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, op. cit., pp. 440/441.

- 25 Interview with Paul Schneider, Willi Krell, Otto and Linnie Alders, Otto Rau and Erich Thieler. All confirm that there was more often than not broad agreement between workmates irrespective of party affiliation. All of them evoke the mutual assistance against Stahlhelm, Jungdos and Nazis.
- 26 Interview with Willi Krell: 'Es ist oft vorgekommen, daß Reichsbannerleute in letzter Minute von Rotkämpferyruppen gerettet wurden.'
- Also HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 17192, Wuppertal-Eibertfeld 4/11/31, report concerning Politische Zusammenstöße in Remscheid in der Zeit vom 24. bis 28. Oktober dieses Jahres.
- 27 Interview with Erich Thieler, Willi Krell, Olga Jung and Fritz Knapper.
- 28 Eg. the son and daughter-in-law of deputy mayor Franz Iserloh were both given work in the Remscheid employment office.
See RGA, 2/5/33, Entlassungen am Arbeitsamt.
There were reputedly other examples of alleged nepotism, but the author was not able to substantiate such claims.
- 29 Flechtheim, op. cit., pp. 256-260.
- 30 See Chapter VI. Nearly all the former KPD members whom the author interviewed, readily agreed that the theory was both erroneous and damaging to the workers' movement.
- 31 Examples of joint ventures between the KPD and NSDAP were the referendum against the Prussian government and the Berlin transport workers' strike.
- 32 The expulsion followed a weekend festival in which Remscheid teams competed with the already expelled Düsseldorf-Gerresheim group. Information from Erich Thieler who participated in the handball game. According to Thieler the Remscheid sportsmen and women were aware of the possible consequences of their decision to play against a proscribed club.
- 33 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30652b.
- 34 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/805.
- 35 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/805, *ibid.*

- 36 BV, 18/8/29, Provokateure im Volkshaus - sozialfaschistischer Überfall auf kommunistische Arbeiter.

The report gives the impression that a strong detachment of policemen had been requested by the SPD members prior to the meeting, as they were expecting trouble. The report goes on to say that it was the SPD contingent which tried to provoke a brawl. The SPD members were, however, heavily outnumbered, according to evidence given at the trial, so that the BV's report would seem to be inaccurate. An incident appears to have been provoked by a meeting of the SPD called by chairman Max Blank to consider a boycott of the Volkshaus. Blank is referred to in the BV as "Lügen-Blank", and another speaker, Heimbacher, a representative of the building workers' union, is called a follower of the "Berliner Blutsozialisten".

- 37 BV, 3/1/30, Meine Herren, bleiben Sie doch stehen...Reichsbanner flüchtet vor Arbeiterfausten.

- 38 BV, 10/1/30 Büttel der Bourgeoisie - die Sozialfaschisten.

- 39 BV, 18/1/30, Nicht locker lassen.

- 40 Owing to the lack of documentary evidence, membership figures of individual organisations are rough estimates based on recollections of interviewees, unless otherwise stated.

- 41 From 1946 onwards publication continued in Dusseldorf. The KPD-daily Freiheit contained a single page for local news in Remscheid.

The figure of two and a half thousand is a rough estimate confirmed by several interviewees. The author was permitted to inspect files of application forms in the possession of Fritz Beinersdorf, former chairman of the DKP branch in Remscheid. From these files alone it would seem that the above estimate is by no means an exaggeration. Furthermore the above estimate is supported by the proportion of votes to party members (in the Landtag election of April 1947 the KPD won 13,292 votes, again becoming the strongest party in Remscheid. See Freiheit, 22/4/47, Die KPD errang den Sieg). The relationship between votes and members appears to be roughly consistent with documented evidence for the Weimar Republic.

- 42 The BV had a circulation of around 20,000.
- 43 An instance of the withholding of information by the authorities occurred on 18/9/30. The employment office refused to supply the BV with that month's unemployment figures, so that the latter had to wait for this information in the RGA before being able to comment. Needless to say the figures for September 1930 were particularly unpleasant with over five and a half thousand receiving unemployment benefit in the Remscheid area, and a further two and a half thousand receiving no benefit whatsoever.

See BV, 19/9/30.

- 44 See report BV, 6/7/25.
- 45 In February 1925, for example, in a poor turn-out of only 1730, the Communists received 1,241 and the SPD 464 votes.

See Reg. Düss. 16945, 10/2/25.

- 46 See RGA, 22/12/25.

- 47 Comparison of prices, Tietz, Schurmann and Konsum.

- 48 It is intended to give only a brief summary of some of the activities which were carried out by this important workers' institution which was the first of its kind in Germany. Until now, the Freie Volkshochschule in Remscheid has received only scant attention, but this situation ought to be redressed with the appearance of a dissertation now being written by Wolfgang Fey, to whom the author is deeply indebted for providing a considerable amount of material on which this survey is based. For other works concerned inter alia with the Remscheid school see:

Thomas ferber, Sozialistische Arbeiterbildung: Zur Auseinandersetzung zwischen Marxisten und Revisionisten um die Konzeption der Arbeiterbildung und ihre Verwirklichung in der Betriebsrateschulung nach der Novemberrevolution 1918-1923, Wuppertal 1980;

Johannes Resch, "Die Freie proletarische Volkshochschule in Remscheid", in: Josef Ulbrich (edit.), Arbeiterbildung in der Weimarer Zeit. Konzeption und Praxis, Braunschweig 1977, pp. 279-293.

Hans Peter Veraguth, Erwachsenenbildung zwischen Religion und Politik: Die protestantische Erwachsenenbildungsarbeit in und außerhalb der freien Volksbildung in Deutschland von 1919 bis 1948, Stuttgart 1971.

Artur Meier, Proletarische Erwachsenenbildung. Die Bestrebungen der revolutionären deutschen Arbeiterbewegung zur systematischen sozialistischen Bildung und Erziehung erwachsener Werktätiger (1918 - 1933), Hamburg 1971.

49 StA Remscheid, IV M/3.

50 StA Remscheid, IV M/3, Abschrift. Friedrich Lorenz Schmidt, Zeulenroda 5/9/78.

51 Ibid.

52 Ibid.

For his own account of his childhood years and of his disturbed relationship with his father see Johannes Resch, "Erinnerungen", copy in StA Remscheid, IV M/3.

53 Johannes Resch, Vom Pietismus zum Kommunismus - Eine Entwicklung, chapter 12, pp. 1-32, unfinished manuscript, op. cit. Copy provided by Wolfgang Fey.

54 Ibid., p. 10.

55 Ibid., p. 11.

56 Ibid., pp. 12-15;

and Resch, "Das Sonnwend-Volkstfest der Remscheider Volkshochschule", copy in StA Remscheid, IV M/3.

57 Resch, Vom Pietismus zum Kommunismus..., op. cit., p. 16.

58 StA Remscheid, IV M/3, An das Stadtverordnetenkollegium Remscheid, 16/7/20.

59 Interview with Hertha Glas, Otto Rau, Emmi Leyendecker, Grete Busch and Hannah Quaas. The term "Indianer" referred to the practice of young girls of wearing sweat-bands round the forehead.

60 Thomas Ferber, Sozialistische Arbeiterbildung, op. cit., p. 204f and Resch, Vom Pietismus zum Kommunismus, op. cit., p. 22f.

At a meeting held on 20th January 1922, 128 participants voted to found an independent school against four who were not in

agreement and ten abstentions. The meeting issued a declaration in which it protested against the dictatorial methods of mayor Dr. Hartmann who had ignored the Volkshochschul(e) constitution and appointed another director without consulting the students. Paragraph 2 of the declaration reflected the anger of the participants:

'Wir legen sodann ausdrücklich Verwahrung ein gegen die Übertragung des Amtes eines Volkshochschullehrers an einen Dozenten durch den städtischen Bildungs- (Verwaltungs-) Ausschuß sowie gegen die Ankündigung einer vom Bildungsausschuß vorzulegenden Satzung - unter völliger Ausschaltung der Hörerschaft. Wir erblicken darin eine Anmassung von Rechten, die seit Bestehen der Volkshochschule dem Bildungsausschuß nie zugestanden worden sind, und die die ganze bisherige Grundlage der Remscheider Volkshochschule zerstören. Diese Handlungsweise bedeutet nach unserer Ansicht eine völlige Entrechtung der Hörerschaft, die wie kaum eine zweite in Deutschland ihre ganze Kraft mit beispielloser Hingabe für ihre Volkshochschule eingesetzt hat. Sie bedeutet die Auslieferung der bisher ausserordentlich lebendig entwickelten Volkshochschule an eine bürokratische Bevormundung reaktionärster Art. Damit wird der Selbstverwaltung, d.h. der charakteristischen Eigenart der Remscheider Volkshochschule, die wie wenige ihresgleichen im Volk und insbesondere in der Arbeiterschaft wurzelte, das Rückgrat gebrochen: Die Volkshochschule hat aufgehört, eine Hochschule des Volkes zu sein. Für alle Folgen, die aus diesem bitteren Unrecht fließen, das hier der Hörerschaft angetan worden ist, machen wir alle die verantwortlich, die an ihm mitgewirkt haben...'

61 Ibid., p. 133;

and Artur Meier, op. cit., p. 204 f.

62 Hertha Glas, Emmi Leyendecker and Grete Busch are examples of young women who came from middle- and lower-middle class families. Grete Busch, who came from a local manufacturing family, experienced considerable personal conflict when she decided to terminate her employment at the telephone exchange in order to commence training for the post of Kindergarten teacher at the Freie Volkshochschule day nursery. Interview with Grete Busch, 29//82 in East Berlin.

Hertha Glas recalled the hopes and promises awakened during the early Weimar years, which were experienced by her and many of her friends as the beginning of a new era. According to her, there was a widely-held belief that here in Remscheid the foundations of a new and more just society were being laid which would eventually overcome the divergence of class interests.

- 63 Information from Grete Busch;
and Resch, Vom Pietismus zum Kommunismus, op. cit., pp. 24-26.
- 64 Information from Grete Busch.
- 65 Edwin Hoernle, born 11th December 1883 in Canstatt, Württemberg, was a member of the executive of the Communist International and was one of the KPD's experts on education who led the central department of Bildung und Propaganda. Cf. Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, Biographisches Lexikon, op. cit., pp. 213-216;
and Die Rote Fahne, 8/8/22, Die erste Reichskonferenz der Bildungsobleute.
- 66 BV, 21/1/22, Die Bildungsbestrebungen des Proletariats und die Kommunistische Partei.
- 67 Cf. Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus beim ZK der SED, Biographisches Lexikon, op. cit., p. 383 f.
Artur Rosenberg, born 19th December 1889 in Berlin, was a KPD Reichstag deputy and city councillor. In 1923 he became a member of the regional committee of the KPD for Berlin-Brandenburg and in 1924 was a member of the party's central committee as well as the political office. In the same year he was coopted onto the executive of the Communist International. Rosenberg was closely associated with the ultra-left wing of the KPD. He left the party in 1927.
- 68 Die Rote Fahne, 8/8/22, op. cit.
- 69 Bergische Arbeiterstimme, 14/9/22, Kommunistische Erziehungs- und Bildungsarbeit.
- 70 RGA, 15/11/22, Johannes Resch wegen "unkommunistischer Anschauungen und parteischadigenden Verhaltens" aus der Partei ausgeschlossen.
- 71 The Volkshochschul(e) cooperative built an extension in 1926 to house dormitories for visiting children. This was partly financed from IAH funds, but the remainder was raised in a number of novel ways by members themselves. Several unemployed shoemakers, for instance, produced ballet and gym-shoes which were sold to clubs and theatrical groups. Some of the women made

baskets and ornaments which were sold to souvenir shops in Cologne and Düsseldorf, and a substantial amount of money was raised by tombolas and sales of coffee and cakes at annual festivals.

Resch, Vom Pietismus zum Kommunismus, op. cit., p. 27.

72 Written about 1955 as a member of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED) and as an important functionary in the Kultusministerium in the German Democratic Republic.

73 Resch, Vom Pietismus zum Kommunismus, op. cit., p. 26.

74 See Berlin Document Centre (BUC), Personal File Johannes Resch. Excerpt from Resch's application for membership in the Reichsschrifttumskammer 1936. Extract kindly provided by Wolfgang Fey.

75 Resch, Vom Pietismus zum Kommunismus, op. cit., p. 29.

76 See Helmut Wagner, Sport und Arbeitersport, reprint. Köln 1973, p. 132.

'Der Arbeitersport steht in zweifacher Hinsicht im Dienste des Klassenkampfes der Arbeiter. Er greift einmal an im eigentlichen Sport, in seiner Durchführung, in seiner Auffassung. Er greift mit seinem Sport den kapitalistischen Sportbetrieb an. Zum zweiten aber bekennt er sich entgegen den "Neutralitäts"behauptungen aller bürgerlichen Sportverbände als politische Bewegung. Er nimmt Stellung für den proletarischen Klassenkampf. Er stellt sich unter das rote Banner des proletarischen Sozialismus. Er greift die kapitalistische Gedankenwelt an.'

77 Ibid., p. 133.

78 Ibid., p. 133.

79 The Pohlhausen club which had around 100 members, male and female, specialised in gymnastics and football.

See interview with Fritz Knapper and Ulga Jung, 12/8/80.

80 StA Remscheid, Sonderakte betr. Sport- und Spielplätze, IV L 11, 1919-1938.

81 BV, 2/7/30, Rote Arbeitersportler heraus zur Protestdemonstration.

82 BV, 10/7/30, Sportler, verschärft den Abwehrkampf!

83 Interview with Erich Ihliel 1978, 1979 and 1980.

- 84 BV, 25/6/32, Der Teufelsteich wird zur Stätte der Erholung.
- 85 Interview with Erich Ihler.
- 86 StA Remscheid, Sonderakte betr. Sportvereine im Allgemeinen,
VII M 22.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 StA Remscheid, Sonderakte betr. Sport- und Spielplätze, op.
cit.
- 89 The SPD orientated international organisation which forbade its
members to play against the communist Moskauer Internationale
The Austrians were an exception in that they still continued to
play against the Russians.
- 90 BV, 4/8/30.
- 91 BV, 4/1/30, Roter Sport im Bergischen. Geht es vorwärts ?
- 92 BV, 4/3/32, Rotsport Fußball.
- 93 BV, 8/6/32, Die Schranken fallen: Bürgerliche Fußballer spielen
gegen rote Arbeitersportler.
The author was unable to determine whether this wish was final-
ly justified in what was to be the Rotsport organisations' last
season.
- 94 Die Neue, 25/3/80, Als der deutsche Meister noch Lorbeer Ob
hieß, by Werner Skrentny.
- 95 See BV, 14/8/30.
- 96 BV, 9/8/30, Rote Kavallerie mit Rot Front von Remscheid nach
Stollberg.
- 97 Kunstant Kreuzberg und das Institut für Theaterwissenschaften
der Universität Köln (edit.), Weimarer Republik, Berlin und
Hamburg 1977, p. 614.
- 98 BV, 9/3/32, Abschlußprüfung der Arbeitersamariter.
- 99 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Duss. 30649f, Satzungen des Westdeutschen
Arbeiter-Samariter-Bundes e.V..
- 100 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Duss. 30649f, Polizeiprasidium Wuppertal,
18/6/1930.

The report states that the Westdeutscher Arbeiter-Samariter-
Verband Remscheid e.V. numbered 60 members. The governing body
was completely KPD orientated. The ASB Lennep which had 40 ac-

tive members was still loyal to the Chemnitz organisation, but 50 % of the members belonged to the opposition. Radevormwald had 15 members consisting of 10 SPD followers, the rest KPD, and the organisation still in the hands of the Chemnitz group. Hückeswagen and Wermelskirchen both went over to the Solingen Verband.

- 101 See Introduction.
- 102 Festschrift, 60 Jahre Touristenverein die Naturfreunde, Ortsgruppe Remscheid, op. cit.
- 103 StA Remscheid, Sonderakte betr. Ortsausschuß für Jugendpflege Stadt Remscheid, IV L 8, 1911-1933.
- 104 Interview with Otto Rau;
and Festschrift, op. cit.
- 105 BV, 28/6/32, Arbeiterturner im Roten Massenselbstschutz.
- 106 Interview with Otto Rau;
and HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30649f, Arbeiterphotographen.
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Interview with Karl Engels, 8/1/81.
- 109 Interview with Karl Engels, 8/1/81.
- 110 BV, 25/9/30, Klassengenossen, lernt Esperanto.
- 111 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30646b. Internationale Verbindung Nr. 1.
- 112 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30469a, 11/6/29, Vereinigung der Freunde Sowjetrußlands.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16945, 19/10/26, Öffentlicher Vortrag der KPD über das Thema "Erwachen des Ostens" am 14/10/26 in Remscheid.
- 115 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16945, 28/10/26, Vortragsabend veranstaltet vom Einheitskomitee der KPD Remscheid über das Thema "Erwachen des Ostens" am 25/10/26 in der Stadtparkhalle von Remscheid
- 116 BV, 18/2/32, Katholische, indifferente Arbeiterfrau als Delegierte nach Sowjetunion.
- 117 See, for example, HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., 16945, 21/10/26 Sympathiekundgebung der KPD für die englischen Bergarbeiter am 23/10/26.

- 118 Weimarer Republik, op. cit., p. 5/0.
- 119 BV, 7/7/30, Sammelt für die Rote Hilfe. Die Genossin Hottges liefert ab.
The above-named member had collected a total of 42.50 marks in a weekly collection.
- 120 Willi Munzenberg, "Solidarität", in: Weimarer Republik, op. cit., pp. 600/601.
- 121 BV, 3/7/30, Agitproptruppe Alarm der Roten Hilfe aus Berlin in der Stadtparkhalle.
- 122 BV, 4/7/30, Alarm in Remscheid.
- 123 BV, 5/8/30.
- 124 BV, 7/3/32, Wo stehen wir im Arbeitsgebiet.
- 125 BV, 10/3/32, Jahresbilanz einer Straßenzelle: von 7 auf 83 Mitglieder gestiegen.
- 126 BV, 10/3/32, Frauengruppe des Stadtteils 2 in der Werbetront.
- 127 BV, 29/2/32.
- 128 BV, 2/3/32, Volkschor auf Landpropaganda.
- 129 BV, 13/2/32, Die roten Helfer sind auf dem Posten.
- 130 BV, 21/2/32, Remscheid muß mithelfen, das Thälmann Aufgebot erfüllen.
- 131 BV, 19/7/30, Die erste proletarische Filmveranstaltung - ein voller Erfolg.
- 132 BV, 15/8/30, Roter Sport.
- 133 BV, 18/2/32, Proletarische Jugendweihe.
In this article the author criticises the form of the ceremony which he calls an "Abklatsch der bürgerlichen Konfirmation" with the strains of Handel's Largo preceding the entry of little girls dressed like angels in white dresses. The author of the article called for an end to this kind of ceremony, as the only important aim should be to make it clear to the children that they have to take their places in the organisations of the revolutionary workers' movement and fight for their freedom.
- 134 Interview with Hannah Quaas, 18/8/80.
- 135 BV, 4/1/29, Die Spaltung im Freidenkerverband von den "Ausbauern" vollzogen.

- 136 BV, 26/9/30, Freidenker ziehen um.
- 137 StA Remscheid, Sonderakte betr. Ortsausschuß für Jugendpflege,
IV L 8, 1911-1933.
In 1926 the children's choir section of the Volkschor under the leadership of Karl Pientka and Adam Schäfer had 170 members.
- 138 Karl-Heinz Jahnke, Atze - so nannten wir dich..., op. cit., p. 13 for the description of Artur Becker's return from prison, and HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16945, 29/7/25, betr. Rückkehr des Kommunisten Max Voss aus dem Gefängnis;
and ibid., 5/1/26, a report on the arrival of Artur Seidler on his release from prison.
- 139 For details of the founding of the RFB and events leading up to this, cf. Kurt G.P. Schuster, Der Rote-Front-Kämpferbund 1924 - 1929, Düsseldorf 1975, p. 19-39.
- 140 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30646a, 21/4/28 betr. Verhältnisse beim RFB and RfJ.

The report gave the following figures showing the strength of various important Ortsgruppen in the area:

	<u>RFB</u>	<u>RfJ</u>
Eibertfeld	280	50
Barmen	500	150
Ronsdorf	80	-
Remscheid	500	25
Lennepe	40	-
Lüttringhausen	-	-
Cronenberg	128	-
Solingen	350	60
Vohwinkel	12	11.

In the light of Werner Jurr's criticism of the organisation there is no guarantee that the membership figures are accurate, as there were discrepancies in the official statistics. On the other hand the police had a very widespread network of informers.

- 141 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30646a, 20/12/1928, Generalversammlung der Ortsgruppe Solingen des RFB und der Rdt am 16/12/1928 im Gewerkschaftshaus in Solingen.
At this meeting Gauführer Panzer rebuked the policy committee and functionaries of the Solingen group for their lethargy in recent months which had led to the loss of nearly half of its members. In contrast, Panzer praised the recruitment drive of neighbouring Remscheid which had gained a membership increase of 17 %.
- 142 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., 30646f, 16/1/29, Schulungsarbeit des RFB.
- 143 Schuster, op. cit., p. 73.
- 144 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30646a, RFB Gauführung Niederrhein, Jahresprogramm 1929.
- 145 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30646a, Elbertfeld, 12/9/28.
- 146 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30649a, Wuppertal-Elbertfeld, 6/3/30, RFB Demonstrationen in Remscheid und Elbertfeld.
- 147 Kortmann, op. cit., p. 74.
- 148 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30647a, Elbertfeld, 3/9/1929.
- 149 Interviews with Erich Ihlieler and Otto Rau. Both testify that it was still usual to see overlookers and foremen striking apprentices.
- 150 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., 16945, 28/1/26.
- 151 The first three, Joller, Kaiser and Wertel, are mentioned by Adolf Stephan in an unpublished essay, Erinnerungen an die Volkshochschule in Remscheid, copy in StA Remscheid, IV M/3, as having been guests at the school, however, there is no confirmation of this in Resch's memoirs.

CHAPTER IV

The Extreme Right in Remscheid

A further question to be considered in relation to the class solidarity of Remscheid's workers is that of the workers who actively supported anti-socialist parties and in particular those who became Nazis in a Communist stronghold, at a time when the NSDAP was still insignificant. One aim of this chapter is to trace the development of the NSDAP at the local level, and its relationship to various other right-wing groups and parties operating in Remscheid during the Weimar period.

The other right-wing groups are examined for two reasons. Firstly, they must be seen in the context of polarisation of Remscheid society from 1917 onwards, and the combined strength of forces ranged primarily against the KPD, trade unions and to a lesser extent the SPD. Secondly, it is important to remember that the Nazis did not appear suddenly from nowhere, but that many active Nazis had already been involved with other groups before finding their way into the NSDAP, and many of the other right-wing groups proved to be temporary lay-bys for Remscheid Nazis, with the effect that many of them became known to, and, in some cases, accepted and respected by, the local Bürgertum (middle classes).

It was also decided to make a close study of local Alte Kämpfer¹ with the aim of determining the social composition of this group, in order to shed light on the question of industrial worker participation in the SA and NSDAP² during the Kampfzeit. It is hoped that such a close study will show what kind of people risked life and limb daily for a party which lacked significant tradition and following in the area, and will reveal differences of background and attitude between those workers who became Nazis and those who joined either the SPD or KPD. It is also hoped that these findings

will make a useful contribution to the recent Fischer-Bessel debate concerning the social composition of the SA rank and file. The disagreement between those two historians revolves around the question as to whether the SA was a movement consisting mainly of 'workers' in the sense of proletarian blue-collar operatives, or whether it was essentially a lower-middle class organisation whose aim was to oppress the workers' movement, a thesis which has been advanced by Jim Mason.³ Conan Fischer⁴ bases his conclusion that the SA was, to all intents and purposes, a mainly proletarian organisation for the penetration of the working class, on contemporary reports and samples from many different parts of the Reich and on an analysis of census statistics. Because of its supra-regional nature this study relies heavily on the subjective notions of the term 'worker' held by the responsible SA local leaders and NSDAP officials, as well as the acceptance of membership lists taken at face value. There is no evidence of closer research into the case history of individuals contained in such lists, with the result that essential aspects determining class adherence have almost certainly been overlooked, so that what emerges is a misleading picture based solely on the situational economic status of those concerned. Upbringing, education, values and attitudes, which are significant factors in the formation of class consciousness, cannot be considered in an examination like that carried out by Fischer. The author implicitly rejects the definition of a Klasse für sich (class for itself) on the grounds that this excludes those elements of the working class who did not identify with the common aims of the movement. Whilst he is right in suggesting that the Klasse für sich definition is too narrow, his acceptance of all individuals engaged in proletarian-type occupations as belonging to the working class is erroneous, as this admits not only those who did not identify with the aims of the working-class movement but also those who by upbringing and attitude did not identify with their fellow workers, namely the declassé who, as a result of the massive social changes occurring in the wake of the defeat in the First World War and the ensuing economic difficulties, very likely constituted a substantially numerous group, hidden from the statistician.⁵

The following study of the Remscheid SA and local NSDAP group attempts to take account of the declassé phenomenon of lower-middle class elements in proletarian-type occupations. The results suggest a picture much more in line with Richard Bessel's⁶ and Michael Kater's⁷ conclusion, namely, that the SA consisted over-proportionately of the sons of the Mittelstand (middle classes)⁸, and a strongly under-represented number of workers. The following study will show that much more detailed work at the local level needs to be undertaken before one is able to judge sufficiently the social composition of the SA or the NSDAP.

So far there have been relatively few attempts to analyse NSDAP and SA groups at a local level.⁹ With the exception of Stoke's investigation of the NSDAP Ortsgruppe Eutin, all of the analyses are of a regional or supra-regional nature, which, whilst giving us an overall impression of the kind of elements that joined the party and its affiliated organisations, cannot supply us with the local nuances, which give us the more fundamental grasp of the reasons which motivated people to join.

The information on which this chapter is based was obtained mainly from archive material whilst a study of Remscheid newspapers provided the background knowledge of events of local importance. Files of the Hauptstaatsarchiv in Dusseldorf supplied information on the structure and development of the local NSDAP, and denazification questionnaires aided the compilation of a list of Remscheid's pre-1930 SA and NSDAP groups. Fortunately, there still exists a nearly complete NSDAP membership list for the town dating from the last eighteen months or so of the war. The list¹⁰ appears to have been removed from the NSDAP headquarters by Communists immediately prior to the entry of American forces into the town in April 1945. It consists of 69 typewritten sheets containing 3,650 names, and incorporates all ten Remscheid Ortsgruppen with the exception of a few outlying cells situated mainly in Lennep and Luttringhausen. The membership list is set out in six columns giving surname, first name, address, date of birth and sometimes occupation and function in the party. Unfortunately, all but a few cells neglected to sup-

ply all the required information, so that a great deal of work was necessary to fill in the missing details. With the aid of the available address books it was possible in most cases to establish the occupation of the members. There must, however, be a certain margin of error owing to the fact that in cases where only the surname is supplied, it is not always clear whether father or son is meant. In cases where father and son have the same Christian name - and this was frequently the case - there is also confusion as to who is meant. In the case of sons under the age of 21 it is not possible to ascertain the occupation as they are not listed in the address books. However, the researcher does have some idea of the family background from the father's occupation and the area of residence, and whether or not the family owned the house it occupied. After the name, the single most important item of information is the date of birth, which, in many cases was unfortunately not supplied. The Berlin Document Centre, which contains something like 12 million personal files and index cards and from which information on the individuals was obtained, normally requires the name and date of birth before a search can be authorised. The date of birth could not be traced from the index of registered citizens, because this is arranged according to the date of removal or decease, so that one must firstly determine the date of death before one can trace the date of birth. As a result of the recent data protection law, the author was not granted access to the data contained in the index of registered citizens. Therefore, only in specific cases could the index be resorted to. In the end it was decided to use the list only as an aid to tracing the Alte Kämpfer because it is questionable whether a thorough examination of a list compiled during the last years of the Third Reich would really tell us anything about the early Nazis. Furthermore, the list cannot even tell us who was and who was not a convinced Nazi. People who joined the party after 1933 did so for various reasons, some, like civil servants, were strongly encouraged to join the party, some joined for opportunistic reasons and others entered in the hope that it would guarantee a quiet life.

Finally, a thorough analysis of a list containing over 3,500 names would be too time-consuming for a project of this kind. In order to acquire a more complete picture of events in Remscheid during this period, the author also interviewed several people who were involved, two of them Alte Kampfer, as well as the former Kreisleiter, Alfred Straßweg.

The researcher, trying to reconstruct the social composition and structure of local NSDAP party groups, is faced with particular problems. Firstly, there is the unfortunate but nevertheless understandable tendency to deny former sympathy for, or membership of, the party, and a mistrust of anyone showing more than superficial interest. Secondly, the recent data protection law makes the researcher's task infinitely more difficult, to the extent that even when access to files has been granted by the Kultusminister, the researcher is left to rely on the help and cooperation of individual archive personnel. And lastly, the greatest difficulty of all is the lack of documentary material concerning the Nazis both in the Kampfzeit and after the seizure of power. In various newspaper articles after 1933, there are reports of the existence of an SA archive relating to the Kampfzeit, which was later used in an exhibition in the Remscheid museum. It is not known what became of this material afterwards, whether it was kept in private hands or whether it was destroyed in the heavy bombing raids on Remscheid in 1943/44 or whether the Nazis themselves destroyed it along with all the other documentary material on the eve of American occupation.

The starting point in the search for Remscheid's Alte Kampfer was an article in the local press and a photo bearing the caption "Remscheid's SA. Treue Gefolgsmänner hinter Führer und Fahne. Alte Kampfer, die alle vor dem 30.9.1930 unter der Fahne Adolf Hitlers marschierten".¹¹ The photograph shows 51 Remscheid Alte Kampfer with Standartenführer Frowein from Wuppertal and Paula Lüttkemeyer ("Tante Paula"), landlady of the SA-pub Zum alten Ratskeller in Alleestraße. Despite the fact that in most cases only surnames are supplied beneath the photo, and not all of these are spelt correct-

ly, it was possible to trace almost all of those depicted. From other sources it was possible to trace a further 56 who were either members of the NSDAP and/or SA, or else active sympathisers before 1932 at the Ia test. By far the majority of those examined were active supporters of the party before September 1930 although in some cases they did not officially join the NSDAP until later. The same article claims the strength of the NSDAP Ortsgruppe Remscheid to be 42 at the beginning of 1929, but also states that a contingent of 70 or 80 could usually be counted on when needed. It would seem from this information, therefore, that almost all Remscheid's Alte Kämpfer have been incorporated in this study. Furthermore, it is likely that not all of the 70 or 80 referred to in the article came from Remscheid. Many were brought in from other towns in the area like Radevormwald, Wermelskirchen, Dabringhausen, Dhunn and Solingen to strengthen the numerically weak Remscheid SA when they were needed to protect meetings. The drafting of SA groups from outside offered protection and swelled the attendance at meetings, giving the impression that the party was stronger than it actually was, and also, in the event of a brawl, made identification and hence prosecution more unlikely.

1. Early Extreme Right-Wing Groups.

Unfortunately, there appears to be no record of the founding of the local NSDAP Ortsgruppe in Remscheid.¹² Evidence, however, points to the end of 1922 or the beginning of 1923. The appearance of the NSDAP in Remscheid seems to be linked closely with the banning of the Deutsch-Völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund in the summer of 1922. There are also other points of comparison which seem to link the Schutz- und Trutzbund with the NSDAP and would point to the former as being a forerunner of the latter, as Uwe Lohalm claims in his book¹³. However, the leaders of the local Ortsgruppe of the Deutsch-Völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund were not identical with the early Nazis and some of them, like Dr. Ewald Weisemann, never joined the NSDAP.¹⁴

The Schutz- und Trutzbund in Remscheid was very much a middle-class movement and was very strong. Estimates of membership in Remscheid range from around 350¹⁵ to 6,000 in a secret police report of 19.7.1921; the latter figure is doubtlessly a typing error and should read "600", which would be more in the line with Lohalm's information.¹⁶ A circular dated 21.8.20¹⁷ refers to an increase in membership to about 300, so it is quite conceivable that the movement gained a further 300 members in the following 12 months. The Schutz- und Trutzbund was led by the afore-mentioned Studienrat, Ewald Weisemann, who was a member of the Landtag and chairman of the local branch of the DNVP, Alldeutscher Verband (Pan German League) and leader of the Zeitfreiwilligenkorps (bourgeois citizens' militia), which fought alongside the Freikorps Lützow against the workers during the Kapp-Putsch. Other leaders of the Schutz- und Trutzbund were Karl Linder, who had a wholesale and retail trade in tobacco and kept a shop and two or three kiosks in the town. Linder, like Weisemann, was also a chairman of the DNVP Ortsgruppe Remscheid. The dentist Dr. Ewald Schnautz was also chairman for a time. He tried to organise a local group of the Ireubund even before the Schutz- und Trutzbund was banned.¹⁸ According to the police report, the Ireubund

'soll in seinen Zielen weitergehen wie (sic.) der deutsch-völkische Schutz- und Trutzbund. Er will im Falle der Störung der öffentlichen Ordnung sich aktiv gegen die Ordnungstörer zur Wehr setzen.'¹⁹

The Ireubund, however, did not play a major role in local politics. Schnautz remained a member of the Schutz- und Trutzbund and other right-wing groups until he left Remscheid in 1929. He joined the NSDAP on 1.5.1933 in Bad Pyrmont.²⁰

Two further committee members of the local Schutz- und Trutzbund were shop assistant, Hermann Schmidt, from Hasten and the leader of the youth group, Karl Röder, who, after the dissolution of the Schutz- und Trutzbund led the Remscheid Wikingbund and was later chairman of the Stahlhelm Ortsgruppe Remscheid.²¹ Yet another respected member of Remscheid society was Gustav Hermann Halbach,

shop assistant and local poet, who was simultaneously a member of the DVP and the Kreis-committee of the Alldeutscher Verband (as were many of his Schutz- und Trutzbund comrades) and a leading member.

The Remscheid Schutz- und Trutzbund was formed in 1920 following the attendance of Remscheid anti-Semites at a meeting of the Ortsgruppe Elberfeld, which was one the Schutz- und Trutzbund's strongest groups. The Elberfeld group, led by Alfred Gunther²², Hans Hustert²³, Karl Kaufmann²⁴ and Willi Rabenschlag established ties with the Organisation Consul when about 40 members volunteered for Freikorps duties in Upper Silesia.²⁵ There is no evidence of any members of the Remscheid Ortsgruppe fighting in Upper Silesia.²⁶ The local Ortsgruppe grew fairly rapidly and was particularly strong in the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Gymnasium where Ewald Weisemann was a senior teacher, and in the Hindenburg-Schule. The Schutz- und Trutzbund Ortsgruppe Remscheid was by and large a middle-class organisation with relatively few workers. Its headquarters, which also housed a library for members, was at Baustr. 8, and the group used to meet once a month at the very respectable public house and restaurant Zur Borse. The youth group met once a month but on a different night at the same address.²⁷ The Schutz- und Trutzbund also had a brass band, led by Wilhelm Gossing with between 30 and 40 musicians. The Remscheid Ortsgruppe appears to have been quite active; apart from monthly political meetings at the Borse they organised patriotic events like the Hindenburgfeier on 2nd October 1920²⁸ or 'German evenings' like the one held on 21st January 1921²⁹ at the "Concordia", tickets price 6 marks. Festivals commemorating the founding of the Empire were also organised by the local group. The importance of the Remscheid organisation can be seen from the fact that it was the host for the last regional conference held on 1st and 2nd July 1922, shortly before the Schutz- und Trutzbund was disbanded. The regional conference was the biggest function ever staged by the Schutz- und Trutzbund in Remscheid and, in terms of visitors, proved quite successful.³⁰ A few months earlier, in January, the local group had

held a 'German evening' at the "Concordia" at which Jurgen von Ramin, Bismarck's grandson, spoke. Apart from the singing of patriotic songs and poetry recitals - often given by Halbach - there were sometimes satirical sketches like the one written by Ewald Schnautz entitled Über den Parteien, ein Stimmungsbild aus der Gegenwart (Above parties, an impression of our times), presented for the amusement of von Ramin and other guests. Other members who helped with the organisation and presentation of cultural and patriotic festivals were Dr. Karl Bischoff, dramatist, employed by the Remscheid theatre company, and Richard Mobius. The Schutz- und Irutzbund also held hikes and excursions, particularly for the youth group.

Its more respectable parent organisation the Alldeutscher Verband (Pan German League) was also quite strong in Remscheid with over 300 members³¹, led by Studienrat Dr. Ewald Weisemann, who was also chairman of the Gauvorstand (regional committee), Dr. Martin Ludecke, honorary chairman of the Flottenverein Ortsgruppe Remscheid, Heinrich Bellingrath, full-time secretary of the local branch of the DVP, and Dr. Ing. Theodor Geilenkirchen who was also chairman of the DVP Ortsgruppe Remscheid until December 1922 when he moved to Düsseldorf. Unfortunately, no membership list of the local Ortsgruppe of the Alldeutscher Verband could be located. The same is true of the Schutz- und Irutzbund, but it would seem that both groups strongly appealed to the volkisch orientated middle class of Remscheid with members coming from all the bourgeois parties, but primarily from the DNVP and DVP.³² Although Anti-Semitism was an important ingredient in the Alldeutsche and Schutz- und Irutzbund propaganda, it was only of secondary importance in Remscheid. The ideas which united members and sympathisers of these groups with each other and with other bourgeois parties and groups, were a fervent nationalism and a rejection of democracy combined with a fear of Socialism.

When the Deutsch-Volkischer Schutz- und Irutzbund was banned, its members either joined other groups or else continued in the cover organisation Roemryke Berge, which existed until 1925. Some members formed the local group of the NSDAP.

However, there was another right-wing nationalist group in Remscheid which was able to build up a huge following. This was the Jungdeutscher Orden³³, led locally by Großmeister Dr. August Scholz, a dentist, whose practice was in Allestraße not far from the group's headquarters "Zum Alten Ratskeller" which was later to become the home of Remscheid's SA. During the early years of the Weimar Republic it was the Jungdeutscher Orden which became the focal point of bourgeois opposition in Remscheid. Occasionally, high-spirited youths belonging to the Jungdo became involved in skirmishes with Communists and groups of workers, and more often than not tended to come off second best.³⁴ Ideologically, the Jungdo was near the DDP of which Scholz was a leading member, but also drew adherents from the other middle-class parties, particularly the DVP, which was the strongest representative of the local bourgeoisie. The Jungdo reflected a similar schizophrenic attitude to the Weimar Republic as the DVP, on the whole supporting or merely tolerating it for the time being, while remaining loyal to the traditions of the Kaiserreich. Both groups had strong factions which were anti-republican and in time these gained the upper hand. The Jungdeutscher Orden claimed to be above political parties and to be striving for the unification of German society against class hatred.³⁵ Although the Jungdo in Remscheid had more working class members than the Schutz- und Trutzbund, it was still overwhelmingly middle-class, and as such can be counted alongside the Schutz- und Trutzbund, the bourgeois parties and affiliated organisations as being essentially anti-socialist and anti-communist. The question of the Jungdeutscher Orden's loyalty to the Republic was never firmly resolved. The local group was founded on 16.6.1921³⁶ by a group of 20 to 25 participants in a rally at Elbertfeld. Membership rose rapidly to approximately 300, thanks to a sustained recruitment drive during the Bürgerfest (citizens' festival) week at the end of July.³⁷ By October over 400 local members and many more sympathisers listened to a speech given by Hochmeister Artur Mahraun³⁸ in the Stadtparkhalle. By April 1922, membership in Remscheid stood at over 700.³⁹

The local Jungdo council consisted of, amongst others, chairman Georg Krause, who was an engineer; deputy chairman Erwin Arnz from Vieringhausen and Karl Hermann Röntgen from Hasten, both manufacturers. Other prominent members of the Jungdeutscher Orden were: Stadtobersekretar Artur Paffrath, who was also chairman of the Flottenverein Ortsgruppe Remscheid Hasten; deputy mayor Georg zur Hellen, who was a leading figure in the Landwehrverein "Aus Liebe"; Eisenbahnobersekretar Hermann Lemme, who was leader of the Jungdo band; Studienrat Fritz Karcher; businessman Alfred Platte, who was secretary and treasurer of the band; manufacturer Hermann Pick, chairman of the band; full-time business manager and treasurer of the Jungdeutscher Orden Ortsgruppe Remscheid, Artur Boosteld; salesman Erich Block, who later became chairman of the Ortsgruppe; and Prokurist Walter Krollmann. The Jungdeutsche Schwesternschaft was led by a teacher, Luise Lemmer, from Hasten.⁴⁰ The Jungdo, like the Schutz- und Irutzbund, was an anti-semitic organisation⁴¹ which used the volkisch names of months in its correspondence and retained the old colours of the Empire, black, white and red. Jungdo members participated every year in the DVP's 'Empire Day', Hindenburg's birthday celebrations, Bismarck commemorations and numerous 'German evenings'. From time to time, Remscheid's Jungdos held their own functions, usually at the most exclusive restaurant in town "Zum Weinberg".

Captain Erhardt's Wikingbund was also represented in Remscheid, but was a small group which had little influence on local politics, despite the fact that the chairman of the Landesverband, manufacturer Rafflenbeul, lived in Hückeswagen, and the Gauleiter (chairman of the regional organisation) lived in Remscheid - the already-mentioned Karl Röder.⁴² In Lennep, there were only six known members in 1925.⁴³ Probably the climax of the Wikingbund's development in the Bergische Land was the rally held at Beyenburg - between Wuppertal, Radevormwald and Lennep - on 21st March 1926. Erhardt⁴⁴ himself, who, it appears, was no stranger to the Bergische Land, took the salute of the Wikingbund and Wehrwolf forma-

tions from Remscheid, Hagen, Barmen, Essen, Witten and Langendrehe.⁴⁵ Erhardt assured something like 1,000 members that they were not to think that war was a thing of the past, there had always been wars, and there always would be in the future. He accused all those pacifists who used the slogan "Nie wieder Krieg" (no more war) of cowardice.⁴⁶ The Wikingbund was very probably a stop-off for some Nazis during the ban and also a breeding ground for later Nazis. Unfortunately, not very much is known of this paramilitary group's activities in the Remscheid area. The Bergische Volksstimme, which was forever observant of paramilitary manoeuvres held by right-wing groups, failed to discriminate between individual formations and tended to refer to them all as Hakenkreuzler, Stahlhelmer or Urgesch. The RGA on the other hand conspicuously refrained from any mention of such groups, or else tended to portray them as harmless hiking clubs.

The Stahlhelm was never strong in Remscheid. Membership ranged from about 40⁴⁷ to approximately 110 in 1928⁴⁸, and a further 20 members in Lennep. The reason for the relatively weak membership was the lack of sympathy amongst local manufacturers and civil servants for the aims of the DNVP, the political parent party of the Stahlhelm. During the more stable, middle years of the Republic, the sons of Remscheid middle-class families found their way into ostensibly non-paramilitary formations like the Jungdo, and only after the onset of the economic crisis and disintegration of the bourgeois parties in the radicalised political climate, did they find their way into the Stahlhelm, which nevertheless remained small in numbers. Once again there exist no membership lists of the local formations, so we must make do with the leadership, consisting of the ubiquitous Studienrat Weisemann; manufacturer Alfred Erlinghagen, who was also Kreisleiter (district chairman); Studienrat Dr. Walter Küpper, chairman of the Jung-Stahlhelm; businessman Fritz Böker, who was simultaneously chairman of the Kavallerie-Verein; senior tax-inspector and former Oberleutnant Aloys Witte; Dr. Lippe, who was a lawyer and business manager of Stahlhelm

affairs in Remscheid and also an active member of the Bürgerverein (civic association) Remscheid-Süd; businessman Hans Franke; and Franz Thoma, treasurer. Two shop assistants, Karl Roder and Friedrich Huber, were the other officials in Remscheid. In Lennep, the Stahlhelm was led by Wilhelm Schindewolf, the district surveyor. Various police reports point to the inactivity and apathy in the Remscheid formation and a widespread attitude of resignation in such a strongly communist-dominated town. The youth group organised marches through the woods most weekends and participated in sporting activities on the sportsfield belonging to the Reinshagen Turnerbund (gymnastics club).⁴⁹ The Remscheid Stahlhelm was furthermore weakened by disunity caused by promises of positions in the leadership to officials of the Reichsflagge, should they agree to the re-organisation of their formation in the ranks of the Stahlhelm. A police report tells of an attempt by former military officers in the Stahlhelm trying to induce the election of fellow officer members of the Reichsflagge onto the local committee, and this attempt being foiled by non-officer members.⁵⁰ The dispute escalated into a walk-out by non-officers at a meeting held at the Bürgerhaus at the beginning of May 1928. Post office inspector, Fritz Jansen, led the walk-out of about 80 members who, being by far the stronger group, continued to consider themselves as the rightful Ortsgruppe. The dispute ended in the defeat of the much stronger non-officer group, obviously with the blessing of the Gau (regional) leadership, as one by one members deserted Jansen. In order to make the return to the fold more palatable, shop assistant Karl Roder was made chairman of the Ortsgruppe in preference to the former officer, Grundmann.

Following repeated reports of secret manoeuvres in the Rhineland by Stahlhelm units, the Minister for Home Affairs banned the Stahlhelm and all its affiliated organisations on 9th October 1929. The ban was valid for the whole of the Rhineland and Westphalia.⁵¹ House-searches were carried out simultaneously in Barmen, Elberfeld, Vohwinkel, Velbert, Langenberg, Mettmann, Remscheid, Solingen, Ohligs and Wald. The ban and house-searches obviously came unexpect-

tedly, because a great deal of material was found and confiscated.⁵² At the house of Dr. Kupper, Kreisleiter of the Stahlhelm, the police found a manual entitled "Getechtsausbildung" (preparation for combat) which had been used in connection with military manoeuvres in Velbert and Neviges in the previous months. At the houses of all Remscheid Stahlhelm leaders police confiscated various pamphlets, brochures and parts of uniforms, but there is no mention of any weapons being found.

In Remscheid there also existed over a dozen Kriegervereine (ex-Servicemen's associations) during the Weimar Republic. These existed ostensibly to keep alive the comradeship of the front and to further the welfare of members. The Kriegervereine each had their own local pubs and met there on a regular basis. On patriotic occasions they would don their medals and march through the streets carrying their regimental flags. The loyalty of the Kriegervereine to the Republic was highly questionable. On the one hand, members longed for the wartime discipline and the glorious days of the Empire, and continued to send the Ex-Kaiser birthday telegrams, whilst on the other many felt that if Hindenburg supported the Republic it must be acceptable. It would seem that the Kriegervereine were not breeding grounds for Nazi Alte Kämpfer. Instead they were much nearer to the conservative Stahlhelm, as the membership list of the "Ehemalige Iber-Hacketäuer Remscheid" reveals names like Ewald Weisemann, Fritz Boker and Walter Kupper, amongst others.⁵³

2. The Rise of the NSDAP.

Remscheid's first Nazis appear to have met in the Deutsch-Völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund and then joined the NSDAP after this was banned in 1922. Whether - as the Nazi press claimed after the seizure of power - the Nazis had their own officially recognised Ortsgruppe in 1923 in Remscheid, or whether the Ortsgruppe was not

established until February 1925, is to all intents and purposes immaterial. What is certain is that Karl Hulle⁵⁴, who actually joined the NSDAP Ortsgruppe Munchen in 1920, Walter Gobert⁵⁵ who joined the NSDAP in 1921, Wilhelm Kratz⁵⁶, headmaster of the Neuenkamp Volksschule, Werner Herberts⁵⁷, a small manufacturer from Hasten, Otto Kupferberg a Schlosser (fitter-mechanic) whose NSDAP membership number was under 508, and businessman Ernst Schweikart came together in 1922/23 in order to organise a local group of the NSDAP. Of these six co-founders of the local group, Wilhelm Kratz was the oldest, born in 1875. Gobert who, owing to his age was nick-named Papa Gobert, was born in 1881. The others were 20 years younger: Schweikart was born in 1899, Kupferberg in 1901, Hulle in 1904 and Herberts in 1905. All of them were born in Remscheid with the exception of Schweikart who came from Schwabenheim, Kreis Bingen. Kratz, Gobert, Hulle, Kupferberg and Herberts were all former members of the Schutz- und Trutzbund Ortsgruppe Remscheid.⁵⁹ It is likely that Schweikart was also a former member, or at least had sympathised with the aims of that group. Of these six it is Gobert who seems to have carried most influence in the beginning, but later both Karl Hulle and Ernst Schweikart became the most popular SA leaders amongst the local group. Kratz probably needed to keep a lower profile because of his civil-service status; in any case, there is hardly any mention of his involvement with the NSDAP in the local press until after 1933. Schweikart and Kupferberg were brothers-in-law and lived in the same house. Both Gobert and Kupferberg were notorious drinkers and were often involved in pub-brawls, which were not always of a political nature. Kupferberg in particular had a fiery temper and was described as a man the townspeople preferred to see leaving than arriving.⁶⁰ Even Kupferberg's brother-in-law, Schweikart, condemned his behaviour in front of an SA-tribunal in 1934, describing one of his exploits together with Gobert in the following way:

'Göbert und Kupferberg hatten bei einer Fastnachtsveranstaltung eine Schlägerei mit einem gewissen Grein aus Remscheid. Grein hat hierbei ganz erhebliche Verletzungen davongetragen. Das Strafverfahren ist von der Staatsanwaltschaft eingestellt worden, weil zwischen dem Verletzten und den Beschuldigten ein außergerichtlicher Vergleich zustande gekommen war. Die Remscheider Bürgerschaft ist und war ausnahmslos sehr emport über die Mißhandlungen, die dem Grein widerfahren sind. Man hat in der hiesigen Bürgerschaft überhaupt kein Verständnis dafür, daß die SA-Führer weder strafrechtlich noch disziplinarisch bestrast wurden.'

Schweikart went on to tell of another brawl in which Kupferberg played a major role and which, in reality, was nothing more than a cowardly act of bullying:

'Außerdem waren der Sturmführer Kupferberg, der Oberscharführer Dahlhaus, der Sturmführer Pieper, der Scharführer Butzbach und der SA-Mann Lütthgart in ein Strafverfahren Lange verwickelt. Auch der Ausgang dieses Strafverfahrens hat in der Remscheider Bürgerschaft eine gewisse Beunruhigung hervorgerufen.'⁶¹

The incident described by Schweikart happened at the Talsperren-restaurant in July 1933. For his part in the affair Kupferberg was jailed for six months for causing grievous bodily harm⁶², Obertführer Habenichts, in his report to the SA-group Niederrhein, said:

'Es war sehr peinlich hören zu müssen, daß der Vorsitzende und auch der Staatsanwalt das Verhalten des Obersturmführers Kupferberg während der Vorkommnisse als feige bezeichneten. Es muß also wirklich zugegeben werden, daß Kupferberg sich an dem betreffenden Abend nicht so verhalten hat, wie es eines SA-Führers würdig gewesen wäre. Es ist an der Tatsache nicht vorbeizukommen, daß Kupferberg den Lange in geradezu trivialer Weise, als dieser gänzlich kampfunfähig war, behandelte. Es ist auch wirklich nicht als geschmackvoll zu bezeichnen, wenn man bedenkt, daß Kupferberg den Lange hochhob und wieder hintallen ließ mit den Worten: Guckt euch das Schwein mal an, wir sollten es durch den Saal schleifen.'⁶³

Göbert, too, was suspended from duty for drinking and brawling but in a different incident.⁶⁴ Both Göbert and Kupferberg, however, were of great use to the party during the Kampfzeit, in that they could always be relied upon to give a good account of themselves in street-fights with the RFB and Reichsbanner. Both men appear to have been admired by their comrades.

Two further members of the first group of Nazis in Remscheid were Karl Böker, a dental technician, and Willi Corts who was a white-collar worker. Others who belonged to the earliest local group were Hermann Hof, Hans Joch, Albert and Berthold Schemann. Hermann Hof, born in 1904, was a printer by trade; Hans Joch, born in 1906, was a window-decorator; Albert Schemann, born in 1905, was a carter, later a lorry-driver; and his brother Benno was a butcher, born in 1908.

The most striking point about the Nazis before the ban was their age. Very few were older than 20, and the majority of the known members cannot be regarded as factory workers. Unfortunately, we do not know how many members the NSDAP-group had in Remscheid before the ban on the party which followed the Hitler-Putsch. It could, however, not have been more than 20. It is also not completely clear whether the Nazis operated alone or in conjunction with other right-wing groups like the Stahlhelm, Reichsflagge, Treibund, Wehrwolf and Wikingbund. Events which later led to the Schlacht bei Dabringhausen (battle of Dabringhausen) would seem to point to co-operation between the Nazis and other right-wing groups, above all with the Roemryke Berge⁶⁵. During the period of French occupation in Remscheid the Nazis appear to have continued their joint operations with other right-wing groups. Their activities included the smuggling of goods into the unoccupied part of Germany. The border ran between Lüttringhausen and Ronsdorf. On one such occasion a smuggler by the name of Danneberg was shot dead by French soldiers in Clarenbach, and this incident gave the resistance movement a local martyr.⁶⁶ Other activities of right-wing groups during the period of occupation were sabotage-acts against shopkeepers who traded with French soldiers⁶⁷ and punishing any fraternisation with the enemy⁶⁸.

According to the local Nazi press after the seizure of power, there was close cooperation between the extreme right-wing groups during the period 1919 to 1924. One article refers to the presence in Remscheid of the Organisation Consul, which is credible, as this organisation maintained one of its clandestine groups in nearby Elberfeld.

The carrying of membership-cards for the purpose of identification, particularly on occasions of joint activities with other right-wing groups, was potentially dangerous. We are told of one such occasion by a former Alte Kämpfer. On the day of the Schlacht bei Uabringhausen a group of Nazis, on their way from Remscheid, were warned by comrades that groups of Communists and British soldiers were in the area, and that all NSDAP membership-cards and correspondence had to be destroyed. The Alte Kämpfer proceeded to swallow their membership-cards, an act which was later to cost some of them the right to wear the party-badge in gold, as they were afterwards unable to give adequate proof of their long-serving membership.⁶⁹ During the period of the ban, Remscheid Nazis adopted the practice of founding cover organisations, just as the Schutz- und Trutzbund members before them had founded the Roemryke Berge. The name of the Nazi cover organisation in Remscheid was Bund der schaffenden Stände, but not all members of the NSDAP joined this formation. Some of them found their way into the Reichstlagge, Treibund and Wehrwolf. During the period of French occupation some Nazis had to flee from the occupied zone to avoid arrest. Some like Walter Gobert, went to prison⁷⁰, and many had their homes searched both by French troops and German police.

At the end of 1924 or the beginning of 1925 the ban on the NSDAP was lifted and old and new members began to join the party again. By the beginning of the summer, the party was again strong enough to hold public meetings. On Saturday, 6th June 1925, Remscheid's SA celebrated its Fahnenweihe (inauguration) at the Gaststätte Wirths in Elberfelder Straße with Josef Goebbels from nearby Elberfeld as guest of honour. For the occasion Remscheid's small band of Nazis was swelled by groups of SA men from Barrien, Elberfeld, Opladen and

Wermelskirchen. These packed the room to watch Pfarrer Pitschke from Remscheid perform the ceremony and listen to speeches. The celebration continued late into the night. Afterwards, in keeping with the usual practice in those days, the groups of SA-men coming from outside Remscheid marched home together in formation, taking with them Remscheid comrades who lived along the route, in order to give them protection. On this occasion both Wuppertal groups and the one from Wermelskirchen, together with a few Remscheid comrades, marched down Bismarckstraße past the Volkshaus, and there found themselves faced by a hostile crowd of Communists. The Nazis headed for the railway underpass at the junction of Bismarckstraße/Neuenkamper Straße/Haddenbacher Straße where they were to separate. At the pedestrian underpass, however, they were met by another large group of Rote Frontkämpfer and Jungsturm members. Very soon tempers boiled over and it came to a violent brawl which raged for more than half an hour, during which time shots were fired without anyone being hit; bicycle chains, walking sticks and knives were used. The Nazis, numbering between 50 and 60⁷¹, were outnumbered by over 2 to 1⁷². The fight was eventually brought to an end by the intervention of a large contingent of Schupos (police) who proceeded to make arrests on both sides. Amongst those arrested was Goebbels who spent the rest of the night in a police cell. The brother of one of the Communists claimed that the Nazis had publicly boasted, during the weeks preceding the inauguration, that they would attack the Volkshaus and hoist their black, white and red flag.⁷³ Whether this claim reflects the true reason for Remscheid's first major street battle between Communists and Nazis, or whether the Communists merely wished to demonstrate their superior strength, particularly to Goebbels, we cannot say. Despite extensive efforts by the police, no charges were brought against the offenders.

During the next two or three years the NSDAP Ortsgruppe Remscheid seems permanently to have been in danger of folding up completely. The local group was isolated, plagued by a shortage of cash and members and by internal disagreement. The leadership of the local

group appears to have changed hands more than once. In a report to the Regierungspräsident in Dusseldorf on 4/9/25, the police commissioner notes that bookkeeper, Karl Lamottke, and manufacturer, Walter Göbert, the two leading functionaries of the Ortsgruppe had resigned and that a manufacturer Albert Rudolf Müller from Remscheid-Hasten had become chairman of the local group.⁷⁴ 16 months later, however, at another meeting of the local Ortsgruppe⁷⁵, attended by about 45 members and addressed by Alfred Straßweg from Wermelskirchen, strong dissatisfaction was expressed with the present leadership of Ewald Lamm, a bricklayer; Arno Jasper, a white-collar worker; Karl Plenge, a fitter-mechanic; and Ernst Schweikart. At this meeting it was decided to dissolve the local group and join the Ortsgruppe Barmen as a sub-group, once again under the leadership of the apparently popular Albert Rudolf Müller. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the reasons for this step.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the local leadership succeeded in fighting off the challenge to its authority and remained in office.⁷⁷ There was not to be any real improvement in the organisation of the Ortsgruppe, however, until the senior civil servant, Ernst Kuhlbars, took over in 1929. Kuhlbars, who possessed organisational ability and abundant energy, appears to have given the Remscheid Ortsgruppe some direction and guidance.

During the period 1925 to 1929 there were sporadic bursts from the local NSDAP, but most of the time there was very little organised activity. Various attempts to found a local branch in Lennep came to nothing. On one such occasion the NSDAP held a recruitment evening at the Gaststätte Neveling.⁷⁸ The meeting was attended by something like 300 people and the speaker was Gauleiter Karl Kaufmann from Elberfeld.⁷⁹ He explained the aims of National Socialism as being the destruction of International Capitalism. He pointed out that Hitler was particularly concerned for the well-being of the German workers and would not betray them as the SPD leaders had done after the November revolution. The Jews, of course, carried much of the blame for Germany's misery. Kaufmann also went on to attack the Locarno treaty. During the ensuing dis-

cussion voices were raised against the speaker. Railway worker Heidepeter, who was a member of the SPD Ortsgruppe Lennep, said that it was unthinkable that members of the left-wing parties should cooperate with the Nazis. Regarding the Jews, Heidepeter pointed out that many of them had also died fighting for the fatherland during the war. The meeting ended peacefully despite bitter disagreements, perhaps because of the presence of strong troops of SA men on Saalschutz duties from Remscheid, Langertfeld, Hattingen and Barmen.

Another attempt to win support for the movement in Lennep took place on Sunday 7th November when the Nazis held a 'German Day'. Detachments of SA men from Remscheid, Eibertfeld, Mettmann, Hattingen and Wermelskirchen assembled in uniform on the Jahnplatz to march in formation to the cemetery in order to lay wreaths at the memorial. Solemn march music was provided by the band of the Ortsgruppe Eibertfeld, and the occasion was lent an air of great importance by the appearance of Viktor Lutze⁸⁰, Gauleiter Kaufmann and district leader Erich Koch⁸¹ from Wuppertal. The police report of the march to the cemetery notes chants of "Nieder mit der Judenrepublik" (down with the Jew Republic) from the Nazis, but only one arrest was made. Lutze made a short speech at the cemetery in honour of those who had died for the fatherland. He called on those present to carry on with the task of unifying Germany in the spirit of those fallen heroes. The Nazis then marched back through the town. Later, a 'German evening' was held at the Gaststätte Hogard at Tocksiepen. The guest-speaker, district leader Koch, attacked the Profitwirtschaft der Banken- und Borsenwelt before going on to explain that marxism was a system for deceiving the workers. This was a favourite theme of Nazi speakers in the marxist strongholds of Remscheid and Solingen, where the NSDAP hoped to recruit industrial workers who, it was calculated, might be persuaded to abandon their allegiance to the KPD. Whilst Eibertfeld appears to have been something of a stronghold of the 'left-wing' Strasser group during these middle years - Goebbels, Kaufmann and Koch were already recognised as being anti-capitalist - it is not

clear to what extent they were able to influence the Remscheid local group. There seems to be some justification for the claim that during the period 1925 to 1930 the Remscheid SA and NSDAP were attached ideologically to this group.⁸² Despite the above mentioned line of argument the Nazis made no impression on the workers of Remscheid, and Lennep was to remain without its own NSDAP Ortsgruppe until 1931. The evening at locksiepen was spent singing Nazi favourites like "Ich habe mich ergeben" and "Wir sind das Heer vom Hakenkreuz" and listening to military marches played by the Wuppertal band. The Ortsgruppe Wermelskirchen presented a short play and there were also poems. The movement, however, does not appear to have benefited very much from this effort; Nazi speakers had a thankless task at open meetings in Remscheid, because the majority of the audience was hostile. Sometimes, the speakers were not even allowed to finish their speech, they were shouted down by strong Communist contingents and SPD workers, other times particularly when the Nazi speaker was not very gifted, a KPD speaker would take over, and try to turn the meeting into a propaganda evening for his party. The discussion hour, after the speeches, tended to end in pandemonium with Communists breaking into the Internationale and the Nazis rendering the Horst-Wessel-Lied or other favourites. One such occasion was an open meeting of the NSDAP Ortsgruppe Remscheid held on 26th February 1927⁸³. The speaker, Pg. Stier from Frankfurt, described International Capitalism as a secret power which controlled politics. He called for the introduction of interest-free money which was equal in value to the goods it would buy. During the middle of this speech the audience of around 80 was doubled by the appearance of a large contingent of Communists. The speaker accused all the political parties, with the exception of the NSDAP, of being either unable or unwilling to smash this secret power. At this point the Communists began to heckle the speaker who, obviously angered by these tactics, launched into a vehement attack on the leaders of the KPD who, he claimed, were working hand in hand with the 'secret power'. Stier wound up his speech with a call for a national revolution, maintaining that afterwards there

would be time to consider the next step. In the discussion Bernhard Bastlein, editor of the Bergische Volksstimme, began to criticise the speaker and the Nazis, but was also interrupted by hecklers from the other side. Both sides began to shout until in the end no one could hear the speaker, whereupon the Communists marched out of the hall singing the Internationale. On this occasion the meeting ended peacefully, unlike the meeting held the previous August in the "Alter Ratskeller"⁸⁴. Leaflets which the Nazis had distributed during the previous few days invited Arbeiter der Stirn und Faust (workers of brain and hand) to listen to district leader Koch talk about the Betrug am deutschen Arbeiter, 75 Jahre vergeblicher marxistischer Kampf (betrayal of the German worker, 75 years of wasted marxist struggle). This time the local Nazis were strengthened by SA groups from Elberfeld, Barmen and Solingen. The audience was calculated to be about 260 including the Saalschutz groups and the KPD and Reichsbanner. Koch's speech lasted for two hours and despite much heckling he was able to finish. However, tempers were already beginning to get out of hand when the first discussion speaker, Reichsbanner man Paul Kleinen, got onto the stage to speak. Hardly had he begun to speak when he was dragged from the stage by Nazis and beaten up. Chairs and beer mugs started flying through the room⁸⁵, and fighting spilled out into the street. Policemen posted outside the pub finally managed to restore order, but not before a number of people on both sides had received head wounds which required hospital attention. The police report blamed the Nazis for the incident. It noted that the Nazis were an unruly, undisciplined mob inclined to use their Knotenstocke als Diskussionsmittel (coshes as a means of persuasion). The report pointed out that the Nazi leaders had tried to keep their supporters under control but they would not listen. The police arrested a number of participants for drunkenness and insulting behaviour. After the meeting those Nazis who had come from outside Remscheid needed a police escort to the railway station and to the town boundaries, in order to prevent an attack by angry Communists and Reichsbanner men.

In the mid-20s Remscheid's small band of Nazis was often called upon to send protection squads to meetings all over the Bergische Land. As the local Ortsgruppe possessed no transport of its own, the SA would either march to their destination, travel by train or else rent a lorry, sometimes together with a driver from a sympathetic manufacturer. An article in the RGA⁸⁶ describes Remscheid's SA during the Kampfzeit as small, but one of the best fighting contingents in the Bergische Land, which made them much sought after whenever there was a likelihood of trouble. Elbertfeld and Barmen could be easily reached on foot within two hours, Solingen would take a little longer depending on the exact destination, Wermelskirchen would take about an hour and Radevormwald and Huckeswagen two and a half to three hours.

In April 1926 the Remscheid SA, together with detachments from Barmen and Dhünn, were called upon to carry out Saalschutz duty at an open meeting organised by the NSDAP Ortsgruppe Wermelskirchen at which guest-speaker Hermann Esser was to deliver a speech entitled "Enteignet die Fürsten, der Jude braucht Geld" (expropriate the princes , the Jew needs money). The five or six hundred people in the audience were disappointed, however, when they were informed that Esser would not after all be speaking. Instead, an unknown by the name of Lange, from Meschede, made an inarticulate attempt at Esser's chosen topic, and succeeded in annoying both Nazis and their enemies alike. In the audience there were very strong groups of RFB men from Remscheid, Lennep and other towns in the area, as well as RFB and Reichsbanner men from Wermelskirchen. The meeting got out of hand very quickly with heckling. The first discussion speaker, Klein, from Remscheid, began apparently quite convincingly, to take apart the speaker's incoherent ideas, whereupon the chairman of the meeting sprang to his feet and called for the next speaker, and Klein was pushed off the stage. At this point the SA men who had been standing at the front of the hall climbed onto the stage, ostensibly to protect the chairman and other committee members, but in reality to give cover to more of their comrades who proceeded to enter the pub by a window behind the stage.⁸⁷ A

further two or three speakers challenged Lange's arguments before he was again called upon to make a few closing comments. At this point the leaders of the Wermelskirchen RfB jumped up and declared the meeting closed. The Communists began to sing the Internationale, as usual, and the audience was moving to the door, when a beerglass was hurled into the middle of the SA men standing on the stage, soon chair-legs, chairs, tables and bricks were flying through the hall. In the uproar there were casualties on both sides. Finally the police were able to restore order by forcing the Rotfront and Reichsbanner men out of the hall.⁸⁸

During the late-20s the NSDAP Ortsgruppe Remscheid had its headquarters on the corner of Scheiderstraße, but the SA found their home at Paula Luttkemeyer's "Zum Alten Ratskeller". After the seizure of power, the landlady was regarded as something of a heroine and the Nazis were fond of relating how she was the only licensee in the whole of Remscheid who would accommodate them. Paula Luttkemeyer, herself an early member of the movement⁸⁹, was rewarded after the seizure of power with the sole right to advertise her pub as the 'Verkehrslokal der Remscheider SA' (the local pub of the Remscheid SA). A sentimental newspaper article in the Bergischer Beobachter told how the small detachment of SA men used to prepare the party's propaganda in the form of leaflets and posters, boil glue and mix paint at "Tante Paula"'s before slipping out into the night to stick them on walls and lamp posts and paint slogans on pavements and houses.⁹⁰ This operation was of course extremely dangerous, particularly in the red districts of Honsberg, Laspert, Neuenhaus, etc. Very often the Nazis would run into groups of Communists also sticking posters, and this would sometimes lead to a brawl, more often than not the Nazis would be hopelessly outnumbered and would have to make their escape.

3. The Social Composition of the NSDAP before 1933.

An analysis of Remscheid's Alte Kämpfer before September 1930 shows a slight worker bias, with the majority being skilled or semi-skilled. Many or even most of these skilled and semi-skilled worker members of the Remscheid SA were out of work during the years before the seizure of power. Many of them had served their apprenticeship in small factories and workshops during the pre-crisis years, and had then been laid off as soon as orders became scarce. Some of these were victims of the widespread practice of firing apprentices after they had qualified, in order to make way for new apprentices who did the same work for a good deal less money. Many of these Alte Kämpfer had never had regular work after qualifying, and had to be content with temporary labouring jobs on a daily basis. Some like Ernst Giesecke and Heinz Schmitz chose to take to the road, doing odd jobs here and there and seeing something of the world at the same time.⁹¹ Others stayed at home and tried to exist on the pitiful dole allowance, and some tried to relieve their misery by theft and petty crime. There was a similar situation to workers who joined the KPD and SPD with one significant difference, they were isolated and lacked the security of tradition and solidarity which, even in the bitterest poverty, tended to bring at least some comfort in working-class districts.

Undoubtedly, many of Remscheid's Alte Kämpfer came from patriotic homes, from a milieu which regarded itself as being, in social terms, superior to the proletariat. Here there is a pattern which is repeated quite frequently. The fathers of some Alte Kämpfer had achieved a measure of independence, holding a fairly humble yet nevertheless respectable position in society. They had been successful and regarded the system under which they had achieved their success favourably. They had clearly profited from the relative security of pre-war society, and were sufficiently successful to purchase their own shops and businesses and in this way achieve a rise in social status. Some of them had even been able to earn enough to buy their own houses. The war and its aftermath halted

the progress of these families; their hopes of further success and even prosperity, which perhaps the fathers could no longer achieve but would be continued by their sons, received a shattering blow. In the changed economic climate after the war small businesses suffered from a chronic shortage of cash, infrequent orders and a shortage of material. Small businesses which had comfortably supported a family before the war, were no longer able to offer sufficient income, so that grown up children had to supplement the family earnings. These children, who in different circumstances would have learned the trade in their fathers' shops and businesses, now had to look for work in factories and workshops. In social terms, this constituted a falling back or proletarianisation which must have caused disappointment and bitter resentment towards the system which clearly was not bringing them the kind of success the Empire had brought their fathers. Furthermore, their efforts to learn a trade in many cases proved frustrating and did not bring them regular work. Having been brought up to respect bourgeois ideals, diligence, energy, ambition and thrift, and unquestionably accepting the theory that these qualities should bring just rewards, they began to search for reasons for their 'failure'. Their bourgeois upbringing, which caused them to regard the proletariat as inferior made them reject the socialist doctrine, particularly in Remscheid where the KPD was militantly Moscow-orientated and tended to exaggerate Soviet achievement, even inventing stories praising the merits of that system in its desire to convince fellow workers of the superiority of communism. Very often their arguments, which extolled the virtues of the Soviet system and pointed to discrepancies within Weimar society, were presented in a way which offended the patriotism of their fellow countrymen and at the same time failed to convince, because the Soviet Union was often described in naively utopian terms, which usually bore not the slightest resemblance to reality. The declassé's rejection of Marxist doctrine and at the same time his own experience and lack of success, made him amenable to National Socialist propaganda. Some Alte Kämpfer inherited businesses from their fathers and these failed, others like

painters and decorators tried to gain a measure of independence or at least supplement their income by offering their services in their spare time, but their plans frequently came to nothing in an economic climate in which people were afraid to spend what little they had for fear of worse to come. Furthermore, the barrage of anti-semitic propaganda disseminated by many extremist right-wing groups and even moderate organisations during and after the war, provided an apparently plausible explanation for the present misfortune of the lower-middle class and their declassé offshoots. Various conspiracy theories linking World Jewry with International Socialism attracted a good deal of attention in the bourgeois press, and found strong support far beyond the bounds of the contemporary extreme right. The result was that even moderately inclined and influential members of ostensibly democratic parties like the DVP and the DUP, in Remscheid for instance people like Gustav Hermann Halbach and Dr. Geilenkirchen⁹³, in subscribing to such theories, while rejecting violent solutions, nevertheless contributed considerably to the wider appeal of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Socialism and in the end to a repudiation of parliamentary democracy. Their particular service to the extreme right was a sharing of common ground which had the effect of helping the latter to attain a certain amount of respectability, eventually paving the way for the rise of the NSDAP. Halbach himself testifies to a powerful völkisch base in the Remscheid middle and lower-middle classes, which was distributed over the whole of the political party spectrum to the right of the SPD.⁹⁴

The Alte Kämpfer found comradeship and self-respect in the SA. Particularly as the Remscheid SA was so small, comradeship was all the more intense. Here they found the kind of solidarity which was evident in Arbeitersiedlungen (working-class housing districts). By joining the SA they brought their own isolation to an end and had an attainable aim in life once more. Newspaper reports tell of the camaraderie amongst the Alte Kämpfer. For instance, whenever an SA man was charged with an offence and punished with a fine, this would be paid by a collection held amongst the SA group.⁹⁵

Those fellow SA men who were temporarily employed would buy their less fortunate colleagues a round, as did Paul Lüttkemeyer⁹⁶. Later, sympathisers and factory owning members of the SA used to equip their unemployed colleagues with uniforms, and train fares to Parteitage, for instance, were often paid by those who could afford them.⁹⁷

An interesting point about the Remscheid SA in the Kampfzeit is the number of brothers, and father and son members, or other family relationships. This sheds light on the way the movement developed in the early years, and at the same time emphasises just how small the movement was in Remscheid before 1932/33. There were at least 14 brother or father-son relationships in the Remscheid SA before 1932, and also several other relationships by marriage. The known family relationships account for over a quarter of the total number of SA Alte Kämpfer before 1930/31.

Of the 51 Alte Kämpfer⁹⁸ appearing on the photo with Paula Lüttkemeyer (who also wore the party badge in gold), in another RGA article entitled "Remscheids SA. Treue Gefolgsleute hinter Führer und Fahne" dated 29/30th January 1938, 27 were wage-earning workers, the majority being factory workers.⁹⁹ The most common occupation represented by the factory-worker type is smith, of which there were seven. There are four bricklayers, three fitter-mechanics and two grinders. The rest of the factory workers were made up of: one file-maker, one joiner, one printer, one electrician, one carter (later lorry-driver), four unskilled factory hands, one Werkmeister and one whose precise occupation could not be established, but was nevertheless identified as being a factory worker.¹⁰⁰ The genuine proletarians in the ranks of Remscheid's Alte Kämpfer constituted a relatively small unit which, however, performed the dangerous functions of providing protection for party meetings, street fighting and selling party literature in public places.¹⁰¹ Their value for the NSDAP was primarily as brawlers¹⁰² during the end phase of the Weimar Republic, and as auxiliary policemen in the months immediately following the seizure of power. For those who joined the NSDAP and SA for oppor

tunistic reasons, the establishment of the Hitler regime proved disappointing, as they very quickly found themselves pushed aside in the stampede for responsible positions by more capable men who joined the party after March 1933. Unfortunately, it is not known how many of the proletarian group had formally been associated with sub-organisations of the workers' movement. It is, however, likely that some Nazi proletarians had, at some stage in their development, at least been members of workers' sports clubs, if only temporarily. Only two individuals, Lamm and Weißgerber, are known to have belonged to the KPD and KJVD respectively. Owing to the lack of documentation and the demise of this generation, the reasons which induced them to leave the workers' movement and join the Nazis will remain speculative. It is possible that they found themselves isolated ideologically in the KPD and were not able to accept the rigid discipline imposed by that party. In this case personal rejection would almost certainly have been a prime motivating force.

Seven members portrayed in the photo were Handwerker (artisans).¹⁰³ Of these two were painters and decorators, two were independent fitter-mechanics, one was a butcher, one was a gardener who also worked as a waiter in a pub at times, and the last one was a motor-mechanic. The remaining 17 persons in the photo were not blue-collar workers. They almost all came from shopkeeper, white-collar worker¹⁰⁴ or small family business backgrounds or else, owing to their education, had succeeded in moving upwards. Nine SA men on the photo belong to the lower-middle class either owing to background, as in the cases of Fritz Bender and Alfred Kimmel, the former's father had his own milk and grocery round, whilst the latter's father owned a textile/clothing shop in the main shopping area. Both of these also had a business-orientated education, and were described in the Remscheid address book as Kaufmann (businessman)¹⁰⁵. One was a window-dresser, six others probably came from similar backgrounds to Bender and Kimmel, but quite independent of this factor, qualify for lower-middle class/middle class status by virtue of education, which was in most

cases business-orientated. Of these, two were shop assistants, one was a student and one an office worker employed by a lawyer. Then there were Carl Hülle who, despite his occupation of turner, seems to have had a business education of some kind¹⁰⁶, and Hans Rischko who, because of his employment by the post office, had civil-service status and irrespective of his background would not be likely to identify with the workers. The two remaining SA men on the photo are by virtue of background and education middle class and as such are exceptions in the early Remscheid SA; Wilhelm Kratz, headmaster of the Volksschule Neuenkamp, and Werner Willmeroth, who was still a grammar school boy at the time of joining the NSDAP and SA. Willmeroth joined against the wishes of, and unknown to his family which was highly respected in Remscheid society. He used to keep his uniform at the house of his friend Fritz Bender, and would change there after school. After his membership in the SA became known, he was expelled from school.¹⁰⁷

Apart from the Alte Kämpfer appearing on the above-mentioned photo, it was possible to trace a further 56 NSDAP and/or SA members, or at least known sympathisers, prior to the end of 1931.¹⁰⁸ Many of these clearly should have been included in the photo with Paula Lüttkemeyer as they belonged to the movement before September 1930, but for various reasons are absent. Some of these had already left Remscheid by the time the photo was taken, but nevertheless figure in this study of the social composition. Of this group, only 17 can be regarded as factory workers, and of these nearly all were employed in small workshops. This group contains seven skilled or semi-skilled fitter-mechanics, one of whom - at some stage together with his father - owned a small workshop in Nudelshalbach, the so-called 'Hitler-Dorf'¹⁰⁹. The business, however, fell victim to the economic crisis and eventually folded up, robbing the family of its independence. There were also three lorry-drivers in this group, one being employed by the Kipper brewery. There was also a grinder and another worker who was a co-founder of the Remscheid NSBU in 1931, but whose precise occupation could not be determined. This group of factory workers is completed by three untrained fac-

tory hands. Six further early party members, of whom only two were definitely members of the SA, were lower-middle class and independent. Otto Dowidat is the only one owning a factory of notable size, although at that time it was still quite small compared with its size after the Second World War. Albert Rudolf Müller, who was chairman of the local party group between 1925 and 1927, is described in the Remscheid address book as a manufacturer, but his factory was still quite small. The same is true of Werner Herberts from Hasten, who, as we have already seen, was one of Remscheid's earliest Nazis. Hans Vogt, a talented speaker, had his own plumbing business in Hochstraße, and August Grimm had a grocery business in Scheiderstraße. The last member of this group of six independents was Karl Tappe who was a publican. Three more members of the Remscheid NSDAP, two of whom were definitely SA members, had either artisan or service occupations: of these one was a baker and one was a barber who, however, was mostly employed in the depression years,¹¹⁰ and the other was a cinema attendant who had formerly been a policeman. A further 19 NSDAP members of whom eight definitely belonged to the SA, constitute a group which can be classified as lower-middle class, either by the type of occupation (in almost all cases salaried employees), employment in small family businesses led by the father, or else by education, which was in most cases business-orientated. 11 of these 18 (six SA members) had jobs varying from salesman (1), bookkeeper (1), dispatch manager (1), to export manager (1) with the rest describing themselves as merely businessmen (Kaufmann) (7). There were three technicians and one dental technician. The remaining five came from families with their own businesses, which were all quite small. One whose father owned a shoe shop in Alleestraße¹¹¹, and Hans Scharwachter, who was also a member of the SA, worked in the family's transport and removal business. Two others were almost certainly engaged in family manufacturing businesses in a managerial capacity, but cannot, however, be regarded as belonging to the managerial middle class, as the businesses were too small. The final member of the group was a student of law whose father owned a small road con-

struction firm. Of the remaining 11, of whom only two were SA members, one was a Junior School teacher, one a minister of religion, one a student whose father had a small workshop, one a policeman who left the service to take over directorship of his father-in-law's business, one a post-office inspector - Ernst Kuhlbars who was the Urtsgruppenleiter and also an SA member. One was a pharmacist, one a production manager of the Deutsche Spiralbohrer company, Kaufmann Alois Krajewski, who was an NSDAP councillor for the duration of the Third Reich, and Dr. Wilhelm Laubach, whom the address book describes as a chemist/metallurgist, who owned his own laboratory. These people constituted the middle-class element amongst Remscheid's Alte Kampfer. It is clear from these figures, therefore, that the educated middle-class element amongst Remscheid's Alte Kampfer was very small, a total of 13 from 107. Only four SA members belonged to this class. Finally, the remaining two Alte Kampfer were farmers (father and son) Karl and Paul Kaiser, who were both SA men. The fact that there were only two farmers in the Remscheid SA suggests how tiny the Remscheid farming community was.

With regard to age¹¹², over a quarter of those whose date of birth could be established, were born in 1904, 1905 and 1906.¹¹³ Half of Remscheid's Alte Kampfer, whose date of birth could be determined, were born between 1904 and 1910. At the time of joining the NSDAP, of 65¹¹⁴ Alte Kampfer, in whose cases data was available, 28 were married and 37 were not. The gap between the married and unmarried was almost certainly greater, as many of those Alte Kampfer whose marital status could not be determined, were either too young or else constantly unemployed and therefore unlikely to marry under such circumstances. Nevertheless, even if all the remainder were unmarried at the time of joining the NSDAP, we should still have over 25 % who were settled. Many of these already had families.

In Lennep and Lüttringhausen, despite several attempts, the NSDAP did not succeed in founding a local group until 1931.¹¹⁵ During the years 1925 and 1931, Lennep and Lüttringhausen Nazis had

to join the Remscheid SA, because they were too few in number to warrant the formation and upkeep of local groups. The man charged with the founding of the local SA group for Lennep and Lüttringhausen and a local branch of the NSDAP in Lennep, was senior tax inspector Rudolf Feick from Wuppertal. He was assisted for a time by dentist Dr. Rudolf Heukenkamp who had come to Lennep from his home town Greifswald. Later, after Feick had returned to Wuppertal, businessman Fritz Thönes took over leadership of the local Ortsgruppe, but by that time most of the organisation work had been completed. The social composition of the Lennep/Lüttringhausen¹¹⁶ NSDAP and SA reveals a significant difference in comparison with Remscheid.¹¹⁷ Lennep in particular reveals a high percentage of civil servants, professions, businessmen and the like, and only few manual workers. Of the sample of 25 Nazis in Lennep, there were only five who can be termed factory workers. There are three tax inspectors, four Kaufleute (businessmen), one architect, one dentist, one bank employee, one student, two white-collar salaried employees (Angestellte), two self-employed bakers, one painter and decorator, who was also self-employed, two self-employed whose line of business could not be determined. The occupation of the remaining Nazis likewise could not be established. Of the eight Lüttringhausen Nazis, who incidentally were all either party members or active sympathisers before 1930, three were factory workers, two were small factory owners, one was a senior salaried employee (Prokurist), and one was a farmer. Details of the remaining Nazis were not available.

The above figures should not be taken as constituting the total membership of either the NSDAP or SA Ortsgruppe Lennep/Lüttringhausen. They represent merely those early members for whom data was available. On the evidence of election results there is reason to believe that the NSDAP was stronger in Lüttringhausen than in Lennep before 1931.

In Remscheid the Reichstag election of September 1930 brought the same kind of breakthrough for the Nazis as elsewhere in Germany. They were able to win 11,495 votes (23.2 %)¹¹⁸ and became the second strongest party behind the KPD, whereas the previous year in the council elections they had managed only 1,000 votes. In Lennep, the Nazis won 20 % of the votes cast and in Lüttringhausen they had already become the strongest party with 41.7 % of the electorate behind them. Party recruitment began to be more successful, yet the party still remained chronically short of cash. During the years 1930 to 1932 uniformed SA men became more prominent on the streets of Remscheid, and were seen more often in cafés like the "Blaue Wolke" and in restaurants like the "Salamander", and this gave the impression that they were becoming more active. Sellers of the Völkischer Beobachter began to appear regularly around the Markt opposite the Hesseninsel¹¹⁹. Other SA men would stand on the traffic island or mix with the crowds of unemployed, trying to sell pictures of the Führer or collecting for the combat fund.¹²⁰ For the majority of SA men, however, little changed. Their days were spent aimlessly standing on street corners or in dole queues, playing cards in the party office or else sitting in pubs such as "Max und Moritz" and the "Alter Ratskeller" where, if they were lucky, they might get a drink paid by a financially more fortunate sympathiser, or else be given a round by the landlady.

The wives and mothers of Remscheid's SA men also began to organise in the years between 1930 and 1932, although the NS Frauenschaft (women's section) remained a small group until after the seizure of power. In September 1931 the group was led by Dr. med. Christ of the Tannenhof clinic in Lüttringhausen and had a membership of 35¹²¹. Six months later the group which had attracted only a further five members, was led by Erna Kuhlbars, wife of the Ortsgruppenleiter (local group leader) Ernst Kuhlbars.¹²² The Frauenschaft had an ostensibly social function, mainly involved in the organisation and running of the SA soup kitchen in the SA barracks, and keeping the rooms tidy, washing and repairing bed linen, towels, uniforms, etc. Most members, however, sold party literature

on a door-to-door basis and agitated on behalf of the party. By 1932 the SA had other barracks in Lüttringhausen and Bliedinghausen, and the Hitler Youth also had its own headquarters in Hasten. The NS Frauenschaft also helped with the cleaning of these rooms, as the party could not afford to employ cleaners.

Remscheid had a small Hitler Youth of 15 in September 1931, led by Werner Herberts. This group had doubled in size by March 1932 but was totally insignificant until after March 1933. Likewise, Remscheid's SS contingent, led by Max Luchtenberg in 1931¹²³, was small, numbering only 12 members. By March 1932, the group was led by Richard Wiegand and still had only 20 members. The SA, however, began to make steady progress. By 15/3/32, Sturmbann II/1/2 Remscheid numbered 431 including the section from Dhunn (70 men) which would not normally be classed as belonging to Remscheid. The Sturmbann was divided into the following sections: Remscheid-Mitte, led by Ernst Schweikart (69 men), Remscheid-Hasten, led by Ewald Lamm (64 men), Remscheid-Bliedinghausen, led by Erich von Bergen (50 men), and the SA reserve led by Walter Göbert (178 men).¹²⁴ The Lennep and Lüttringhausen SA groups, which separated during 1931, belonged to Sturmbann III/171 Wuppertal-Barmen-Land, and numbered 50 (led by Dr. Heukenkamp) and 52 (led by Peter Komor) respectively.¹²⁵ At the time, the SA Ortsgruppe Remscheid had 750 members and was the second largest group in the Bergische industrial region.¹²⁶

We can be fairly certain that the Nazis made little impression on factory workers before the seizure of power. Until 1931 any efforts to recruit new members for the party or SA were made on personal initiative, and as such were quite insignificant. However, in 1931¹²⁷ a group of seven factory workers formed the Remscheid Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellen Organisation - NSBU (Nazi Trade Union) and began to hold meetings on a regular basis. Unfortunately we do not have any material pertaining to this group apart from a police report dated 19/3/31¹²⁸, which, however, gives us an insight into the problems of the Remscheid NSBU, not least of which were caused by lack of support from the party and

the general hostility to the Nazis of the workers, particularly in the larger factories. The meeting in question was called on 9th March to discuss the reasons for the NSBU's failure to set up an effective organisation. Representatives of the NSBU Remscheid complained bitterly to the Ortsgruppenleiter that they had so far only been supplied with three brochures of instructions regarding the organisation of factory cells. The conclusion reached by the participants was that, for the time being rather than waste their efforts on the workers, who were anyway unsympathetic to the Nazis and well-organised in free trade unions, they should concentrate on building street cells, 'in den Straßenzellen könne man jedoch die Geschäftsleute zusammenfassen; diese seien dafür leichter zu haben'.¹²⁹ The core of the NSBU members all lived in the Sudbezirk, in the working-class districts of Loborn, Rosenhügel, Handweiser, situated behind the BSI, DEW (Deutsche Edelstahlwerke) and the main railway station. Leading figures of the NSBU were¹³⁰ Karl Metz, Wilhelm Freitel, Helmut Meurer, Hans and Paul Rottger, Gustav Wehner, Gustav Busenbecker, Peter Simon, Albert and Benno Schemann. Almost all of these were at the same time members of the SA, and all without exception were members of the party.

Whilst it might well be argued that the aims of every one of the right-wing groups dealt with in this chapter were not identical with those of the NSDAP, it cannot be denied that many points in their political manifestos were very similar to those of the Nazis. Seen in the context of the Reich as a whole, some of the right-wing parties and groups were reluctant supporters of the Weimar Constitution, some regarded the Republic unfavourably whilst purporting to support or at least tolerate it, others of course were outright opponents, and on occasions made this fact known, although the most common practice was to tolerate the system, providing there was no further power shift towards the working classes. In Remscheid, however, owing to the strength of the workers' movement, these parties and groups combined their strength in an effort to deny the KPD and trade unions victory. Experience had taught the bourgeois parties

in Remscheid that in democratically held elections the radical socialist parties would be most likely to gain a comfortable majority on the town council. The Bürgerfest of 1921, organised by Wilhelm Schuy of the Zentrum, marked the beginning of joint cooperation with the sole aim of preventing a socialist majority on the local town council. Democratic parties like the DVP and UDP, and supposedly pro-republican groups like the Jungdeutscher Orden were only too willing in Remscheid to assist enemies of the Weimar Republic, as long as the workers could be prevented from winning power. A nearly hysterical fear of bolshevism made them ready to compromise with shady elements whose methods and practices even disgusted them, but were nevertheless preferable to the chaos which they were sure would reign if the Communists succeeded in creating a Soviet state. As the democratic bourgeois parties failed one by one, their supporters, in the belief that the only choice left to them was either Fascism or Communism, chose the former. Doubtless, at the local level, there were bourgeois leaders like Ewald Weisemann and Wilhelm Schuy who thought it would be possible to keep the Nazis in check, as did von Papen at the Reich level. Such people, and they were to be found in all the bourgeois parties, made a grave mistake and must bear much of the responsibility for the Nazi seizure of power, as it was they who, in some sense, paved the way for the Nazis by making them 'respectable'. As will be seen in the following chapter, as long as things went well for them personally, few of them mourned the passing of democracy and most breathed a sigh of relief when the workers' movement was destroyed. In this respect the right-wing parties and groups constitute an element of continuity in the history of Remscheid from 1914 through to 1950. With regard to the NSDAP in Remscheid before 1930, and indeed up to January 1933, we can say that it was numerically weak in terms of active members. Before September 1930, local Nazis were hardly noticeable in a communist stronghold like Remscheid. After 1930 a number of Remscheid manufacturers such as Otto Dowidat, Johann Peter Schmidt of the Riloga Werk; August Dohrmann, who had his own building company; Welp, Piepersberg and Richard Pick of Lüttring-

hausen, began to support the party by paying for SA uniforms and journeys to Parteitage in Nürnberg. It is quite likely that the local NSDAP also received gifts of money from local manufacturers and industrialists for the combat fund, but there is no documentary evidence to support this supposition. Whatever the case, it is clear that the Remscheid NSDAP was not financed by big business, but rather by small manufacturers and by members' own efforts.¹³¹ As for the active members of the SA before 1930 in Remscheid, it is clear from the above analysis that this organisation was only superficially working class, although this categorisation depends on the definition of that class, particularly when comparing the findings in Remscheid with those in other parts of Germany. It is quite possible that owing to the peculiar structure of Remscheid's industry, ie. well over half of the establishments employed fewer than ten workers/personnel, other historians elsewhere would classify those employed in small firms as being Handwerker (artisans). The most important fact pertaining to the Nazi employees of small establishments in Remscheid is that so many of them were skilled or semi-skilled. This fact is, however, hardly surprising when one considers the nature of Remscheid industry, highly skilled and highly specialised. By the same token there are relatively few unskilled workers in the ranks of the SA at the local level, as such workers were more likely to find employment in the larger factories like the BSI, Richard Lindenberg, Alexanderwerk and Mannesmann which were firmly controlled by the KPD-dominated free trade unions. These workers would therefore be more likely to sympathise with, or else join the KPD or SPD, which traditionally enjoyed great influence in such establishments.

Clearly, however, the most important point in determining the worker component in the social composition of the NSDAP and SA is the definition of the problematic term 'worker'. The economic factor, on which Conan Fischer bases his findings, is not sufficient, as this alone plainly obscures and even ignores more fundamental aspects like upbringing, education and values, which are at least as important, if not more so than the functional and situational

economic ones. Research for this project has revealed an inadequacy of terse information, perfunctorily registered in official address books and NSDAP membership lists. Working with such lists at face value, without penetrating background research, fails to take account of subjective determinants needed to form a more complete and accurate picture. Furthermore, caution is required even in interviews when the researcher is confronted with the interviewee's subjective impression of his own social status. The case of Ernst Giesecke is a pertinent example of a declassé, raised in a conservative lower-middle class family which suffered economic decline in the aftermath of the First World War. The family business was constantly in difficulties, so that it was no longer able to support the family, as it had done comfortably during the pre-war years. Consequently, the sons, instead of inheriting a healthy retail trade, were compelled to seek employment in factories, where they served apprenticeships, before once again becoming victims of economic crisis, finding themselves discarded by their employer in favour of cheaper unqualified labour. Redundancy was followed by short periods of employment and long periods without steady work. The individuals in question did not seek the company of class-conscious workers during these years, but continued to maintain longer-standing relationships originating from the pre-crisis years. Membership in a bourgeois sports club and the Jungdeutscher Orden testify to this. The interviewee provided invaluable information on the background of several former comrades in the Reimscheid SA which the author was able to follow up in further research.¹³²

The conclusion to be drawn from this information is that whilst many Reimscheid Alte Kämpfer were engaged in proletarian-type occupations, they nevertheless regarded themselves as different from the genuine working class, which as we have already seen, was consciously immersed in a collective culture with its own identifiable aims. Whilst the author would not deny the presence of some genuine proletarians in the local SA and NSDAP, the evidence points to a strong lower-middle class and declassé lower-middle class bias.

CHAPTER IV

NOTES

- 1 Alte Kampfer - Nazis who joined the party before the seizure of power. Those who joined after 1933 were referred to somewhat derisively by Alte Kampfer as 'Marzveilchen' (March violets). See Richard Grunberger, A Social History of the Third Reich, London 1971, p. 82.
- 2 Membership of the NSDAP and SA is almost identical in Remscheid before September 1930.
- 3 See T.W. Mason, "Labour in the Third Reich 1933 - 1939", in: Past and Present, 1966.
- 4 Conan Fischer, "The Occupational Background of the SA's Rank and File during the Depression Years, 1929 to mid-1934", in: Peter D. Stachura (edit.), The Shaping of the Nazi State, London, Croom Helm 1978, pp. 131-159.
- 5 For consideration of the declassé, see Peter H. Merkl, Political Violence under the Swastika. 581 Early Nazis, Princeton 1975, pp. 66-76.
- 6 Richard Bessel, "Militarismus im innenpolitischen Leben der Weimarer Republik: Von den Freikorps zur SA", in: Klaus Jürgen Müller and Eckehard Opitz (edit.), Militar und Militarismus in der Weimarer Republik, Düsseldorf 1978, p. 193-235.
- 7 Michael H. Kater, "Ansätze zu einer Soziologie der SA bis zur Röhm Krise", in Ulrich Engelhardt, Volker Selliny and Horst Stucke (edit.), Soziale Bewegung und politische Verfassung, Festschrift für Werner Conze, Stuttgart 1976;
and Michael H. Kater, "Sozialer Wandel in der NSDAP im Zuge der nationalsozialistischen Machtergreifung", in: Wolfgang Schieder (edit.), Faschismus als soziale Bewegung - Deutschland und Italien im Vergleich, Hamburg 1976, pp. 25-67.

- 8 The author regards the term Mittelstand as a general category consisting of the middle and lower-middle classes. In a town like Remscheid the middle class consisted primarily of: manufacturers, exporters, doctors, architects, lawyers and senior civil servants. The lower-middle class is made up of two groups: the traditional petty bourgeoisie consisting of shopkeepers, small savers, publicans and independent artisans, and the white-collar class of industrial administrative personnel, junior civil servants and shop salesmen and saleswomen.
See Introduction.
- 9 Undoubtedly the most comprehensive social analysis of NSDAP members is Peter H. Merkl's Political Violence under the Swastika..., op. cit. This work is based on the unique collection of essays obtained in 1933 by Theodor Abel, who himself wrote an interesting analysis, Why Hitler came to Power, New York 1938. A more recent attempt to analyse the social composition of the NSDAP on the local level is Lawrence D. Stokes' "The Social Composition of the Nazi Party in Eutin, 1925-32", in: International Review of Social History, Vol. XXIII 1978, Part 1.
Wilfried Böhnke in Die NSDAP im Ruhrgebiet 1920 - 33, Bad-Godesberg 1974, bases much of his examination on about 100 biographies of members of the party cadre, the Parteistatistik for the Gaue Essen, WestfalenNord and Westfalen-Süd, and a report of the Regierungspräsident from 6/12/30 pertaining to the composition of the NSDAP in parts of Gaue Düsseldorf and Essen.
Also Conan Fischer, op. cit.;
and Richard Bessel, op. cit..
- 10 This information and a copy of the list was supplied by the former DKP secretary for Remscheid.
- 11 See RGA, 29/1/38.
- 12 An article in the RGA dated 13/6/33, entitled Der Siegeslauf der NSDAP in Remscheid claims that the local Ortsgruppe was founded in 1922/23.

'Nach dem Verbot des deutsch-völkischen Schutz- und Trutzbundes entstanden auch hier in Westdeutschland die ersten Ortsgruppen der NSDAP. Eine (sic.) der ersten waren Remscheid und Elberfeld.'

However, Wilhelm Schlechtriem, former member of the Deutsch-völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund Ortsgruppe Remscheid, assured the author that despite these claims there was not Ortsgruppe Remscheid until after the ban on the NSDAP was lifted. Technically, Schlechtriem is correct in so far as NSDAP members before 1925 were all registered as members of the Ortsgruppe München. This, however, does not alter the fact that there was a small group of Nazis operating in Remscheid at the end of 1922 or the beginning of 1923.

- 13 See Uwe Lohalm, Völkischer Radikalismus. Die Geschichte des Deutsch-völkischen Schutz- und Trutzbundes 1919 - 1923, Hamburg 1970.
- 14 Interview with Wilhelm Schlechtriem.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Lohalm, op. cit., p. 3/6.
Remscheid's Ortsgruppe had ca. 350 youth members.
- 17 StA Remscheid, Akte VII H/27, Rundschreiben Nr. 1, 21/8/1920.
- 18 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 15814, Treibund.
See police report 27/10/21:

'Der Verein Treibund besteht zur Zeit hier noch nicht. Es sind jedoch seit einigen Wochen Bestrebungen im Gange, einen solchen Bund hier zu gründen. Als Organisator wird Zahnarzt Schnautz, wohnhaft Alleestraße, genannt.'

- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Berlin Document Centre (BDC), NSDAP membership card index.
- 21 See HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30641a, police report concerning Stahlhelm in Remscheid, dated 27/12/28.

- 22 Lohalm, op. cit., p. 219.
At the same time leader of the Organisation Consul in Elberfeld.
- 23 One of the two who attempted to assassinate Philip Scheidemann in Kassel.
See E.J. Gumbel, Verschwörer. Zur Geschichte und Soziologie der deutsch-nationalen Geheimbünde 1918 - 1924, Heidelberg 1979, pp. 45-48.
- 24 Was later to become NSDAP Gauleiter and Reichsstatthalter of Hamburg.
- 25 See Lohalm, op. cit., p. 219.
- 26 The author was assured by Schleichtrien that no one from Remscheid fought in Upper Silesia.
- 27 See StA Remscheid, Akte VII H/27, Deutsch-völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund, Rundschreiben Nr. 1, dated Remscheid 21/8/20.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 The function began on Friday 30th June with a reception at the "Börse". The next day there was the Gauvorstandssitzung (regional committee meeting) and a speech given by Regierungsbau-meister Carl Wilhelm Schleicher from Düsseldorf entitled "Der jüdische Einfluß im modernen Kirchenbau" (the Jewish influence in modern church architecture). This was followed by a 'German evening' held at the Stadtparkhalle, Remscheid's largest hall. On Sunday, 2nd July there were speeches in the Stadtparkhalle by Dr. Artur Dinter who spoke on "Das Christentum als heroisch-arianische Religion und Grundlage der deutschen Erinnerung" (Christianity as a heroic-arian religion and basis of the German memory); by Hermann Esser on "Der deutsche Arbeiter im Deutschland der Zukunft" (the German worker in the future Germany), - a portent of things to come -; by Frau Martha Voß-Zietz entitled "Deutschland wird auferstehen" (Germany will rise again); and as a climax Alfred Roth's "Kundgebungen an das deutsche Volk und Weihespruch" (proclamation to the German people and commemorative address). Dinter, born 21/6/1876 in

Mulhouse/Alsace, was a writer mainly concerned with volkisch and religious themes, and was a co-founder and chairman of the Schutz- und Trutzbund. Hermann Esser was a co-founder of the NSDAP and close companion of Hitler. He rose rapidly in the movement to become editor of the Völkischer Beobachter. Esser was a talented speaker and particularly noted for his virulent attacks on Jews. His scandalous articles in the VB were rivalled only by those of Julius Streicher for their pornographic content. (See Karl-Dietrich Bracher, The German Dictatorship. The Origins, Structure and Effect of National Socialism, Harmondsworth 1971, p. 121). Alfred Roth, born 27/4/1879, was a writer and journalist and a co-founder and chairman of the Deutsch-Völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund.

In the afternoon the many guests made their way to the exclusive Schloß Kuppelstein, overlooking the wooded valley of the Wupper and the Müngsten Bridge, for coffee, cake and a lecture on "Charakter and Wesen des Bergischen Volksstammes" (character and essence of the Bergische people) delivered by Pastor Hermann Bäcker from Cologne. That evening the guests again gathered at the "Börse" for the farewell address which was to prove the last, at least under the name of Schutz- und Trutzbund.

- 31 Nachlaß Gustav Hermann Halbach, Bericht über die Sitzung des Bergischen Gauvorstandes vom Alldeutschen Verbands zu Elberfeld am Sonntag, d. 2. Lenzing (March) 1924".
- 32 Ibid., letter of 24/4/23 to Erich Scholz, treasurer of the Germanenhort e.V.; and interview with Wilhelm Schlechtriem.
- 33 For the aims and structure of this organisation, see Klaus Hornung, Der Jungdeutsche Orden, Düsseldorf 1958.
- 34 Interview with Erich Thieler: 'Although the Jungdos were strong numerically we did not take them very seriously, they were noisy louts, mostly sons of local manufacturers who used to summon up courage in the pub before daring to venture onto the streets.'

- This impression of the Jungdos was confirmed by Ernst Giesecke who had himself been a member of that organisation before joining the NSDAP and SA. In answer to the question 'what did the Jungdo members do most of the time?' he replied, 'We were silly boys who sat around getting drunk and singing songs.'
- 35 RGA, 14//22, August Scholz's speech at the Jungdo Bruderabend held at the "Concordia" following the assassination of Rathenau. See also Karl-Dietrich Bracher, Die Auflosung der Weimarer Republik: Eine Studie zum Problem des Machtverfalls in der Demokratie, Villingen 1971, p. 126:

'Mit der Gründung seines Freikorps in Kassel erstrebte Artur Mahraun vor allem eine Fortbildung der "Grabenwerte", die Wirkung von Persönlichkeit und Korpsgeist auf das politische Leben und die staatliche Gemeinschaft, die politische Verwirklichung des über Stand, Klasse, Interesse hinwegreichenden bündischen Gemeinschaftsgedankens.'

- 36 StA Remscheid, Akte VII H/25, Jungdeutscher Orden.
- 37 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 15446, Wochenbericht, Remscheid 8/9/21.
- 38 Artur Mahraun, born in 1890, was the founder and leader of the Jungdeutscher Orden.
- 39 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 15446, op. cit., 13/4/22.
- 40 It is clear from the names of members mentioned in newspaper reports etc. that the Jungdeutscher Orden was overwhelmingly middle and lower-middle class with very few workers. In Lennep an early membership list shows seven commercial apprentices, two white-collar employees (kaufmannische Angestellte), two schoolboys and one worker.
- See StA Remscheid, Akte VII H/25, op. cit.
- Four other members in Lennep were teacher Friedrich Loer, businessmen Albert Jacobs and Emil Hasselbach, and bank cashier Ernst Kluthe.

- 41 Jews were not accepted as members.
The Jungdos regarded themselves as 'Ein nationales Kraftzentrum gegen jedes Weltbürgertum (Internationale)...Ein Iempel deutscher Sitte, deutschen Glaubens und deutscher Treue...', quoted in E.J. Gumbel, Verschwörer..., op. cit., pp. 66-67.
- 42 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16/41, Wikinger Bund, report concerning activities of the Wikingerbund Radevormwald, 8/10/1925, and statement made by Heinrich Kanter dated 22/10/25.
- 43 HStA Düsseldorf, *ibid.*, report from the Landrat in Lennep to the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf.
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., *ibid.*, police report 27/3/1926 concerning Versammlung des Wikingerbundes und des Wehrwolf am 21.3.1926 in Beyenburg.
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 15446, Wochenbericht, 8/9/1921.
- 48 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30641e, police report concerning Stahlhelm, 7/11/1928;
and *ibid.*, police report 10/1/1931.
Following the lifting of the ban, the Ortsgruppe Remscheid was re-founded with 80 members, and the Jungstahlhelm had 15. The Ortsgruppen Remscheid and Radevormwald (30 members) constituted the Kreisformation, led by Kreisführer Alfred Erlinghagen.
- 49 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., *ibid.*, police report concerning Stahlhelm, 1/5/1929.
- 50 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30641a, police report concerning Spaltung im Stahlhelm-Bund, Ortsgruppe Remscheid, Elberfeld 30/5/28.
- 51 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30641b, see order for ban on Stahlhelm, Berlin 8/10/29;
also Volker R. Berghahn, Der Stahlhelm, Bund der Frontsoldaten, Düsseldorf 1967.
- 52 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30641b, report concerning Auflösung des Stahlhelm, Barmen/Elberfeld, 11/10/1929.

- 53 This is the only Kriegerverein membership list the author was able to locate. It contains the names of 140 regular members and a list of the honorary committee members (42). The majority of these were prominent Remscheid citizens. Nowhere in the local press could a link be found between Kriegerverein members and Nazi Alte Kämpfer.
- 54 Carl Hülle is described in the Remscheid address book as a turner, but his background is lower-middle class. His father Emil was a bookkeeper and his mother Margarete worked in an office. In the 1929 address book, Sebastian-Bach-Straße, the home of the Hülle-family, is still given as the official information centre for NSDAP business.
- 55 Walter Göbert is described in the address book as a fitter-mechanic, but on account of his independent status he sometimes refers to himself as a Fabrikant (manufacturer). Göbert owned his own workshop, Schlosserei, Maschinenbau- und Reparaturwerkstatt, at Intzestraße 17.
- 56 Wilhelm Kratz's membership card shows his date of joining the NSDAP as being 1/4/1925, but he almost certainly joined long before the Verbotszeit. It would seem that his original membership card for which he regularly paid his subscription was never returned to him, or else it was probably lost between 1923 and 1925. Personal files in the Berlin Document Centre are full of complaints to the party treasurer in Munich about careless mistakes in the collection and recording of subscriptions. From this it appears that such mistakes occurred frequently. Much of the correspondence with the party treasurer concerns the application for a membership number below 100,000 by Nazis claiming to have been members before 1925. Kratz claimed to have joined the NSDAP in 1921.
- 57 Werner Herberts is listed in the Remscheid address book as Fabrikant (manufacturer). As we have already seen from the structure of Remscheid's industry, the majority of businesses were really small workshops rarely employing more than ten to fifteen workers. This was particularly the case in Hasten.

- 59 Interview with Ernst Giesecke.
60 See assessment made by Standartenführer Kretschmar on 18/1/1935:

'Sein Benehmen außerdienstlich, er war meistens arbeitslos, soll nicht einwandfrei gewesen sein. Er hat sich in den Wirtschaften in schwer ange-trunkenem Zustand mit harmlosen Bürgern herumge-schlagen, so daß ihn die Einwohner Remscheids lieber gehen wie kommen sahen. Es haben aufgrund seines Benehmens viele, die der Bewegung damals schon nahestanden, einen Beitritt zur NSDAP ab-gelehnt.'

- 61 Testimony made by Obersturmführer Ernst Schweikart on 5/10/34 in front of an SA tribunal.
62 Urteil vom 19.4.1934, Amtsgericht Remscheid.
63 Oberführer Habenichts' report to the SA Gruppe Niederrhein, p. 17. The verdict in the disciplinary proceedings against Kupfer-berg reads:

'Dem Sturmführer Otto Kupferberg, Gruppe Niederrhein die Entlassung auf eigenen Wunsch nahezu legen. Bei Nichtannahme wurde beschlossen, ihn unter Enthebung von Dienstgrad und Dienststellung aus der SA zu ent-lassen', München, 29/5/1935.

- 64 Testimony given by Truppführer Hans Fey in the disciplinary proceedings Remscheider Vorfälle on 5/10/34.
65 See Chapter III.

As already mentioned, "Roemryke Berge" was the cover-organisa-tion for the banned Schutz- und Trutzbund in Remscheid. The group was about 50 strong, the oldest members being about 25 years of age, the majority, however, were younger, between 18 and 20.

Interview with Wilhelm Schlechtriem 24/7/80.

- 66 Walter Dannenberg was buried on the spot where he was killed. After the seizure of power, wreaths were laid on the grave by representatives of the NSDAP and town-council every year.
- 67 See Bergischer Beobachter, Weihnachten 1933, Remscheider Alte Kämpfer, Albert Schemann.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 See letter written by Max Hesse on 4/12/1940 in support of Hermann Hof's application for the party badge in gold, Berlin Document Centre, Personal File Hermann Hof.
- 70 See, Bergischer Beobachter, Remscheider Alte Kämpfer, Sturmführer Papa Göbert, 4/9/33.
- 71 See statement made by Karl Lamottke on 7/6/1925 in Remscheid, HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 4 J 552/25 ./. Artur Becker und Genossen.
- 72 Ibid., statement by Walter Gobert on 1/6/1925 in Remscheid.
- 73 The Ortsgruppe Remscheid of the NSDAP numbered only 42 at the beginning of 1929.
See RGA, 29/1/1938, Remscheids SA.
- 74 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16/38.
- 75 Ibid., report 13/1/21.
- 76 The recommendation to dissolve the local group was, however, never followed.
- 77 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16/38, op. cit., 26/2/21.
- 78 The meeting was held on 28/11/1925, see report, ibid., 5/12/1925.
- 79 Karl Kaufmann was a leading figure in the left-wing Strasser/Goebbels group which enjoyed considerable influence within the NSDAP in the North-West of Germany. This revolutionary wing was fervently anti-capitalist and intent on winning the support of industrial workers. For accounts of this group's activities, see Joseph L. Nyomarkay, "Factionalism in the National Socialist German Workers' Party, 1925-26. The Myth and Reality of the 'Northern Faction'", in Henry A. Turner jr. (edit.), Nazism and the Third Reich, op. cit., pp. 21-45;
and Reinhard Kühnl, Die nationalsozialistische Linke 1925 - 1930, Meisenheim am Glan, 1966.
Kaufmann was later to become Gauleiter of Hamburg.

80 Viktor Lutze later played an important role intriguing against Ernst Röhm in the period immediately preceding the 'night of the long knives'. Lutze was rewarded by Hitler for his loyalty by being elevated to the rank of Commander of the SA, as Röhm's successor.

See Bernt Engelmann, Einig gegen Recht und Freiheit. Deutsches Anti-Geschichtsbuch. 2. Teil, München 1975, pp. 320-330.

81 Erich Koch later became Gauleiter of East Prussia and the Reich Commissar for the occupied Ukraine, and was executed as a war criminal by the Poles in 1947.

See William L. Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, London 1959, p. 118.

82 Inge Linke-MarBolek in her PhD-dissertation for the Technische Universität Berlin, Arbeiterbewegung in der Nachkriegszeit 1945 - 1948. Eine Studie zur Rekonstruktion von SPD, KPD und Gewerkschaften im Bergischen Land, Remscheid, Solingen, Wuppertal, attributes the Remscheid Nazis to the left-wing of the party without, however, offering any evidence to support her claim.

83 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16738, op. cit., 26/2/1927.

84 Ibid., police report 18/8/1926.

85 Report in the Bergische Volksstimme, 16/8/1926.

86 RGA, 13/6/1933, Der Siegeslauf der NSDAP in Remscheid.

87 See Bergischer Beobachter, Remscheider Alte Kämpfer, Albert Schemann, Weihnachten 1933.

70 or 80 Nazis were able to gain entry unobserved through the window. For an account of the ritualistic behaviour in meeting-hall brawls see, Karl Rohe, Das Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, Düsseldorf 1966, p. 114.

88 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 16738, Bericht über die am 17/4/1926 abends 8 Uhr, stattgefunde öffentliche Versammlung im Lokale von Hugo Wilms.

89 Interviews with Ernst Giesecke and Robert Führer. The latter had no connections with any political group.

90 Bergischer Beobachter, 23/8/1933.

91 Interview with Ernst Giesecke on 21/7/1980.

Giesecke and Schmitz spent three months in the summer of 1931 in Bavaria.

92 See correspondence of Gustav Hermann Halbach in StA Remscheid, Nachlaß Gustav Hermann Halbach, eg. letter of 24th April 1923 to the treasurer of the Germanenhort e.V., Erich Scholz. This letter contains an assessment of the political situation in Remscheid as well as Halbach's own personal political standpoint. With regard to the local political situation Halbach says:

'Der Name Bergisch Moskau, den unsere Stadt besonders seit den blutigen Marztagen von 1920 erhalten hat, besteht längst nicht mehr als zu Recht, denn so grundstürzend für auf der einen Seite irrefeleitete Volksgenossen sein mogen, so entschieden volkiy (volkisch) eingestellt ist andererseits der größte Teil der Bürgerschaft. Als politische Partei führend ist hier selbst die Deutsche Volkspartei, die bei den letzten Preußischen Landtagswahlen etwa 12,000 Stimmen aufbrachte und zur Zeit rund 3,000 eingeschriebene Mitglieder aufweist. Sie hält gute Nachbarschaft mit der Deutschnationalen Volkspartei. Beide Ortsgruppen zahlen bisher keine Fremdrassigen in ihren Reihen. Unter den jetzigen Leitern ist auch an die Aufnahme solcher nicht zu denken...'

Of the Deutsch-völkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund Halbach says:

'So deutsch-völkisch ich selbst eingestellt bin, wie ich auch Mitglied des aufgelösten Deutsch-völkischen Schutz- und Trutzbundes war, so muß ich doch sagen, daß ich mich in dessen Kreisen nicht recht wohlgeföhlt habe. In der Mehrzahl bestanden diese Kreise aus unreifen, übervölkischen und kollerigen Hitzköpfen, die aber wahrlich nicht das Zeug zur Rettung des Vaterlandes besitzen. Ein stolz zur Schau getragenes Hakenkreuz tut es nicht allein, kraft dessen sich sogar mancher Trager berechtigt glaubte, einen ihm begegnenden Judenjüngling zu verprügeln. Auch löst man die Judenfrage nicht mit dem Revolver. Die Tat, einen wehrlosen Juden wie Rathenau meuchlings niederzuzuknallen, halte ich nicht für heldisch sondern für feige...'

Halbach's espousal of the Jewish-Marxist conspiracy theory is also articulated in this letter:

'Der rote, goldene und schwarze Weltring (Internationale) hat uns diese Weltanschauung genommen: wir sind dem englisch-amerikanisch-jüdisch-kapitalistischen Weltbund unterlegen. Dadurch kommt unser Niederyang...'

- 93 Ibid.
- 94 See RGA, 29/1/38.
- 95 Interview with Ernst Giesecke.
Karl Breßler, Karl Remmel and Karl Schürmann were particularly generous to their unemployed comrades, but these were by no means alone.
Eg. Ernst Giesecke's father, Otto, paid the fare for his son and another SA member to the Parteitag in Brunswick.
- 97 There are 52 men on the photo, but only 51 have been included in the analysis, as Frowein, the Standartenführer, was from Wuppertal and did not figure in Remscheid affairs.
- 98 The majority of these factory workers were employed in, or had served apprenticeships in small factories which - as we have already seen - were typical for Remscheid's industry. Very few of these worked in factories employing more than 25 men.
- 99 Identified by Ernst Giesecke.
- 100 See Tim Mason, Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich, Upladen 1977, p. 74.
- 101 See BDC, Akte Otto Kupferberg, SA Disciplinary Court "Remscheider Vorfälle".
The Sturmabführer's assessment of Willi Butzbach dated 18/1/35 states:

'Scharführer Butzbach ist einer von den vielen SA'm, die in der Kampfzeit zu uns gestoßen sind, die als Schlager sehr gut zu gebrauchen waren, und aufgrund dessen sich für die Bewegung verdient gemacht haben, doch als Vorbilder für die Bewegung untauglich sind.'
- 102 Handwerker - artisan, not necessarily independent.
- 103 Angestellter - salaried white-collar employee usually in industry.
- 104 Kaufmann - person with a business orientated education who often but not always had his own business.
- 105 According to Ernst Giesecke, Carl Hülle was a qualified Kaufmann. The author, however, was unable to find any evidence to support this statement.
- 106 Interview with Ernst Giesecke on 28/7/1980.
- 107 Names appearing in the local press or police reports.

- 108 Frau Giesecke lived in Nüdelshalbach which was also referred to as the 'Nazi-Dorf' on account of the many NSDAP members and sympathisers who lived there.
- 109 Interview with Ernst Giesecke on 28/7/1980.
The person in question is Max Luchtenberg, who did not originate from Remscheid, a former Baltikumkämpfer. 'Ich weiß nicht, was der Max von Beruf war, ich habe ihn eigentlich in den Jahren nie arbeiten sehen.'
- 110 It is not clear whether the person in question was employed by his father or not. According to Ernst Giesecke, Kurt Meyer had studied business. It is quite likely that he helped his father temporarily in the shop.
- 111 Age could be established in 70 cases.
- 112 1904 = 7; 1905 = 8; 1906 = 6.
- 113 Marital status was established in 65 cases. NSDAP index cards in the BDC do not always contain this information.
- 114 See RGA, 13/6/1933.
- 115 This information is based on 33 Nazis who were members or active sympathisers before the end of 1931.
- 116 The difference in social composition is, however, to be expected, as Lennep, the former Kreisstadt, had a high percentage of civil servants and better placed professional people. Lüttringhausen had the highest percentage of farmers of the three towns and also attracted well-situated residents of the upper classes.
- 117 C.D. Thompson, op. cit., p. 40, unpublished essay 1975.
- 118 The Hesseninsel was a triangular traffic island on the old Markt where around the turn of the century migrant workers from Hesse used to meet on Sunday mornings for discussions. This practice was continued up to the Nazi seizure of power.
- 119 Collecting for the party's combat fund or selling party literature was, of course, a dangerous business and required a great deal of courage.

Interview with Robert Führer, June 1980:

Da war einer, der kam von auswärts und wohnte im SA-Heim in der Freiheitstraße. Der hatte so viel Schläge bekommen, daß er hinterher ein ganz vermatstes und verblodetes Gesicht hatte. Aber Tag für Tag stand er da am Markt und verkaufte den Beobachter.'

- 120 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30654, Übersicht über die Entwicklung der NSDAP im Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf nach dem Stande vom 15/9/31.
- 121 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss., ibid., Übersicht über die Entwicklung der NSDAP im Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf nach dem Stande vom 15/3/32.
- 122 Ibid.
- 123 Ibid.
- 124 Ibid.
- Sturmbann III/171, Wuppertal-Barmen, Land numbered 336 men:
- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Sturm 21, Lennep | 50 |
| Sturm 22, Lüttringhausen | 52 |
| Sturm 23, Radevormwald | 70 |
| Sturm 24, Wuppertal-Neuenhaus | 18 |
| Sturm 25, Hahnerberg | 16 |
| Sturm 26, Wermelskirchen | 50 |
| Sturm 27, Hückeswagen | 30. |
- 125 The district 'Bergisches Industrie-Gebiet' consisted of the following groups:
- | | |
|---|-----|
| Ortsgruppe Radevormwald, led by Erich Veit | 260 |
| Ortsgruppe Dhünn, led by Erich Hahn | 90 |
| Ortsgruppe Dabringhausen, led by Hugo Lohner jr. | 20 |
| Ortsgruppe Wermelskirchen, led by Max Fautel | 250 |
| Ortsgruppe Hückeswagen, led by Karl Lange | 100 |
| Ortsgruppe Groß-Solingen, led by Hermann Brouwers | 800 |
| Ortsgruppe Remscheid, led by Ernst Kuhlbars | 750 |
- 126 Bergischer Beobachter, 11/12/1933, Zwei Jahre Kampf um die Betriebe.
- 127 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 1/253, Wuppertal-Elberfeld, 19/3/1931, concerning Naziführerbesprechung.
- 128 Ibid.
- 129 Bergischer Beobachter, 11/12/1933, op. cit.
- 130 Cf. Henry A. Turner jr. "Big Business and the Rise of Hitler", in: idem. (edit.), Nazism and the Third Reich, op. cit.

In this essay Turner argues that there is no conclusive evidence linking substantial big business finance with the NSDAP and that figures like Fritz Thyssen, Emil Kirdorff and Friedrich Flick were exceptions rather than the rule. Together with Horst Matzerath, Turner supports this thesis with an examination of the Gau Rheinland's financial situation between 1930 and 1932, which seems to indicate the non-existence of substantial financial gifts from industry, and stresses the importance of the party's self-financing fund raising activities.

See Horst Matzerath and Henry A. Turner jr. "Die Selbstfinanzierung der NSDAP 1930 bis 1932", in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Jg. 3, No. 1, 1977, p. 59-92.

At this point it should however be remembered that with regard to Remscheid the lack of financial support for the NSDAP from big business is hardly surprising, owing to the latter's absence or only limited presence in the town.

- 131 Examples of the declassé SA members engaged in proletarian-type occupations and hence appearing in party membership lists as 'workers' are: Carl Hülle, Heinz Schmitz, Karl Schurmann, Richard Wiegand, Walter Göbert, Daniel Schürmann jr., Rudolf Behre, Erich Braunschweig, Arnold Paffenhoff, Karl Markstelle, Wilhelm Budde, August Grimm and the Giesecke brothers.

CHAPTER V

The Remscheid Workers' Movement and the Economic Crisis 1930 to 1933

The world economic crisis which dominated the economic and social development of Germany from 1930 to 1933 led to a rapid fall in industrial output¹ and mass unemployment² which reached proportions hitherto unknown. The depression resulted in the impoverishment of large³ sections of the population, above all manual and white-collar workers and their families, who found themselves compelled to absorb the shock of mass unemployment without the assurance of continued security in the form of stable benefits, as these were periodically subject to review and suffered repeated reductions. It was, however, not only the unemployed who experienced hardship as a result of the unfavourable economic situation. Those still fortunate enough to hold down a job were forced to accept cuts in their real wages as dictated by the central government's emergency measures.⁴ Although it was the manual workers who bore the brunt of the economic crisis, they were by no means alone. The middle classes, too, were strongly affected by the depression, and many small and medium-sized businesses were forced into liquidation. House owners who were themselves in difficulty, attempted to compensate their losses by demanding higher rents wherever possible. As in 1923, the most vulnerable section of the bourgeoisie was the old traditional middle class consisting of small savers, pensioners, small investors, shopkeepers and independent craftsmen. The new middle class, the expanding army of industrial white-collar workers, was particularly hard hit by the contracted employment market, so that this section of society appears to have suffered more than during the 1923 inflation, a factor which doubtless has a bearing on the meteoric rise of the NSDAP.⁵ In 1932 only approxi

mately one third of the country's manual and white-collar workers were fully employed⁶ and the majority of these were subdued to the extent that they meekly accepted further extensive encroachments on their rights. Wage negotiation laws were gradually undermined until they were more or less discarded under the Papen government in September 1932.⁷

1. Effects of the Crisis on Remscheid.

Remscheid, because it was above all dependent on exports, was so ravaged by the effects of the crisis that the town was declared an area of extensive deprivation (Notstandsgebiet) by the Prussian government on 15/12/32.⁸ At the height of the crisis, a third of the town's population was calculated to be in receipt of some form of security benefit.⁹ The protracted length of the depression, prolonged high unemployment and the steady increase in the number of citizens dependent on the town's welfare office - by the beginning of February 1933, 7,238¹⁰ individuals together with their dependents, in all between 15 and 20 thousand, constituting between one fifth and one sixth of the total population - drained the council's financial reserves, leaving a budgetary deficit for the year 1932¹¹ of two and three quarter million marks, an increased deficit over the previous year 1931 of over a million marks.¹²

During the recession of 1926 Remscheid's industry had suffered high unemployment, averaging around six and a half thousand. This state of affairs, however, only lasted from March to October.¹³ In the depression of 1930 to 1933 this figure was more than doubled for long periods. By October 1932 the local employers' association of the iron and steel industry had dismissed 7,246¹⁴ workers, just under half of its normal workforce (15,402) which constituted roughly a quarter of the town's total workforce of circa 27,500¹⁵. During the second half of June 1930 the number of registered unemployed for the town as a whole, stood at 10,296¹⁶. This figure continued to rise reaching 13,123 by the second half of

February 1932.¹⁷ It is not clear whether this number increased further, as no statistics could be traced until the end of the year. Whatever the case, the total of unemployed did not fall significantly for the remainder of 1932, so that by December the local employers' association of the iron and steel industry still showed 7,042 dismissals compared with the last period of full employment in 1928. The overall figures for the second half of December 1932 reveal a tentative improvement with a total of 10,614 registered unemployed in Remscheid.¹⁸ The statistics circulated by the employers' association of the local iron and steel industry appear to substantiate the claim that the peak of unemployment had been passed in the autumn and that from December onwards there was a very gradual decline in the number of redundancies.¹⁹ The general employment figures would have been worse but for recourse to short-time working. In October 1932, of the 8,156 still employed by the association of Remscheid's iron and steel industry, well over a quarter (2,206) were working fewer than 35 hours a week, almost all of them in toolmaking. Although the introduction of short-time prevented the loss of still more jobs, it also entailed great hardship for the workers concerned, as this measure constituted a substantial fall in their earnings. The majority of those now working a 35-hour week and less had averaged 48 hours in 1929. The transition to short-time working was abrupt, so that most workers had no time to readjust to the new situation. As prices generally decreased at a slower rate and with substantial delays, many workers could not meet their commitments on current wages. Consequently, even employed workers began to fall behind with payments on furniture, clothing and rent, and in many cases goods were reclaimed and evictions carried out.²⁰

The reduced circulation of money manifested itself in many ways apart from the general fall in the purchase of consumer goods. Public transport was severely affected by the necessary economisations of so many private households. The municipal tram service not only lost custom as a result of the many redundancies, but also because of a greater reluctance by those still in employment to

undertake journeys by public transport unless absolutely necessary. Between 1929 and the end of 1932 the local tram service had suffered a reduction of 22.4 %²¹ of passengers, and by the end of 1932 this had risen further to 44.4 %²². Despite lowering of prices particularly in the category of weekly tickets for manual and white-collar workers, the municipal works committee was compelled to make cuts in services in an effort to minimise losses. Local railway services experienced similar difficulties. According to the number of tickets sold at the four Remscheid stations, the railway suffered a comparable loss of custom to that of the tram service amounting to a fall of 36.2 % between 1930 and 1932.²³ There were also significant reductions in the units of gas and electricity used by private households. The town council's annual report for 1931 noted a 24.5 % fall in the consumption of electricity over the previous year, despite the deferment of price rises which other towns in the area had introduced following the increase of coal prices.²⁴

2. Impoverishment of the Working Class.

The Brüning government's answer to the financial crisis was a policy of deflation which envisaged a significant reduction in wages and prices and huge savings in public expenditure, particularly in the social sector. Although the central government managed to secure modest decreases in the prices of agricultural and industrial consumer products, it did not have the same success with regard to rents, gas and electricity.²⁵ Furthermore, the government was unable to achieve simultaneous reductions in wages and prices, so that the latter constantly lagged behind the former, both in time and degree.²⁶ These discrepancies combined with the protracted length of the depression and periods of unemployment as well as the progressive dismantling of the social security system were the essential factors responsible for the impoverishment of the local working class.

Unfortunately owing to a number of factors, tables 14 and 15 can only give a rough indication of the reduction of wages and prices in Remscheid between 1930 and 1933.²⁷ The tables are included because they reveal general trends.

Table 14 shows the hourly wage rate for A = fully qualified master craftsmen, C = semi-skilled workers, and E = ordinary labourers, apprentices and women engaged in the Remscheid iron and steel industry at a fixed rate, ie. not piece-work, which differed according to the specific tasks and was paid at a higher rate. A comparison between wage rates of the 1/5/29 and 1/1/32 reveals a significant decrease in earnings, for example those of a fully qualified master craftsman over 24, who lost 17.1 % of his wage on a 48-hour week. In reality, however, the percentage fall in income was significantly higher owing to the introduction of short-time. The same individual working a 28-hour week from the 1st January 1932 lost 42.5 % of his previous earnings, more than three times the fall in the cost of living index calculated by the Bergische Kaufmannschaft des Einzelhandels e.V. in Lennep at the end of October 1931.²⁸ This survey showed, amongst other things, that rents had actually risen between July 1929 and 1931 by 4.4 %. These were subsequently decreased by 10 % according to the emergency decree of 8/12/31. This measure made little difference in Remscheid as it was introduced too late to prevent unemployed workers and those on short-time from falling into arrears.

A correlation²⁹ of the information in tables 14 and 15 is only relevant between 1/1/31 and March 1932. From table 14 it can be seen that a qualified master craftsman over 24 years of age suffered a decrease in earnings during the twelve months from January 1931 to January 1932 of 15 %. Providing that he still worked a full 48-hour week his position would not be impossible because of the accompanying fall in the cost of living. If, however, the individual spent those twelve months working a 28-hour week then his position became exceedingly precarious. Whereas on a 48-hour week the master craftsman would have earned 38 marks 40 pfennigs plus bonus per week, his earnings for a 28-hour week would

have fallen to 22 marks 40 pfennigs. In households where this was the only income, the family would undoubtedly have been in dire straits. The decrease in food prices calculated as a percentage did not take into consideration a reduction in the number of hours worked. For this reason the burden can be said to have been unequally distributed. It is evident that a 15 % reduction in salary between January 1931 and January 1932 would not normally have harmed the family of a civil servant as much as that of a worker because the civil servant would have earned much more in the first place and he would not have been subject to a reduction in working hours following the cut in salary. Furthermore, the middle classes, be it through life-style, contacts, education and other factors had been in a more advantageous position to acquire and accumulate resources in pre-crisis years which gave them a better chance of surviving the depression when it arrived. Civil servants always, and intermediate and senior white-collar workers normally, had security of tenure, so that they did not face the prospect of long-term unemployment. Junior white-collar workers on the other hand, like the bulk of manual workers, did not enjoy such security and tended to be early casualties of the crisis, particularly young office workers and shop salesmen.

Not only were wages reduced, but also unemployment benefits, which were curtailed both in real terms and in view of the drastically shortened period of entitlement. Moreover, employed workers were compelled to pay more in the form of increased subscriptions for significantly reduced security benefits. A redundant worker with no prospects of employment now experienced a reduction in his period of entitlement from 26 weeks to 20 weeks, and, after the summer of 1932, to six weeks. When his period of entitlement ended, he took a further reduction when receiving crisis benefit, which constituted an intermediate phase between employment and social welfare paid by the local authorities, which was the final stage for over 7,000 unemployed workers at the end of 1932.³⁰ From this it is clear that the local welfare was overburdened and consequently could not guarantee adequate aid to those in need. The welfare budget rose

from 2.3 million to 4.8 million marks between 1931 and 1932³¹, although the number of claimants had increased more than threefold. Benefit payments were supplemented by receipts from winter aid collections, as in October 1931 when 130,000 marks accrued.³² Cast-off clothing was also distributed to needy families and the shoes of schoolchildren were repaired free of charge. During the winter months welfare recipients were granted a free coal allowance of three hundredweights per family per month and two hundredweights for single persons.³³

Commenting on the latest rates of unemployment benefit on 18th June 1932, the BV³⁴ complained that these were now effectively half the payments made in 1927. The paper argued that whereas an unemployed worker who had earned a weekly wage between 18 and 36 marks in 1927 had received an unemployment benefit of 13 marks 20 pfennigs, he now received only 8 marks 40 pfennigs per week. Whilst the period of entitlement in 1927 was 26 weeks, and there were still prospects of reemployment, it was now a mere six weeks, after which the individual was removed to a lower category with a corresponding reduction in benefit. The unfortunate victim of the depression was reduced to poverty within a remarkably short space of time and could find himself unemployed for years at a stretch.³⁵ Such families suffered extreme hardship and despite the modest fall in food prices were unable to feed their children adequately. The BV's report of a child begging in the street in February 1932³⁶ was not an isolated incident, but rather an everyday occurrence as shabbily dressed children roamed the streets constantly in search of extra food. A further indication of the effects of hunger was provided in a newspaper article which reported the death of an invalid who died from injuries sustained from a fall down the stairs of his home, caused by an attack of dizziness which doctors ascribed to undernourishment.³⁷

The depression had an exceptionally adverse effect on the fortunes of the building and construction industry which in Remscheid accounted for the employment of around 1,400 workers. In February 1930 nearly 35 % or 480 of these were unemployed³⁸ and a large

percentage of the remainder worked on an irregular basis.³⁹ During the following year - 1931 - only 96 houses were erected in Remscheid as well as 66 other buildings. Of the 96 houses constructed during 1931, 57 were partly financed by public funds.⁴⁰ The accent continued to be placed on the construction of houses containing small units consisting of either two or three rooms, not merely because these flats were traditionally popular, but more importantly because a conspicuous effect of the crisis was the clamour for smaller, cheaper flats by unemployed families who could not afford the rent of their original dwellings and therefore needed to lower their expectations.⁴¹ The BV in one of its customary attacks on the authorities and representatives of the capitalist system bitterly criticised the failure to provide adequate housing and suggested that the revenue from the Hauszinssteuer was not being employed in the way the authorities had promised, namely to finance new building projects, but rather to pay the salaries of bureaucrats, police and Reichswehr personnel. The article also pointed to the fact that the proportion of private houses, constructed with the aid of public funds, to council houses and those built by cooperatives, had recently rocketed. The number of privately built houses in 1931 was 54, ie. over half the total. The BV's comment on the current situation was not altogether inaccurate, despite its polemical style:

'Wir haben in der letzten Zeit mehrfach die Gelegenheit gehabt, Einblicke in das ungeheure Wohnungselend in Groß-Remscheid zu bekommen. Unter diesem Gesichtspunkt gesehen ist der vorliegende Bericht über die Bautätigkeit im Jahre 1931 das Eingeständnis des vollkommenen Bankrotts der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft. Die herrschende Klasse kann das Proletariat weder ernähren, noch für gesunde Wohnungen sorgen, die Voraussetzung für die Gesundheit sind.'⁴²

The housing question was an area of bitter contention between the KPD, its local mouthpiece the BV, and the authorities. The BV devoted considerable energy to investigating housing conditions in a town which never managed to resolve the problem satisfactorily throughout the whole of the period covered by this study. The fact that the communist press used its material for propaganda purposes does not invalidate its findings.

During the summer of 1930 the BV carried out an investigation into some of the worst examples of privately owned slum dwellings situated in the town. The investigation revealed appalling sanitary conditions, houses long fallen into disrepair, for which landlords were imputed to be collecting unfair rents. In many cases the owner of the house resided in another town and relied on an appointee for the collection of rents. It would also appear that the worst excesses occurred in properties owned by single small manufacturers, small savers and investors and not by the various housing organisations like the Gemeinnütziger Bauverein.

One flat visited by a BV journalist in Osterbusch was in one of four houses owned by a man who lived in Dusseldorf.⁴³ The houses had open drains which served neighbourhood children as a play area. The yard behind the house contained four lean-to toilets situated over a cess-pit and served between 60 and 80 residents. The stench of excrement was reported to be unbearable, and in the summer months swarms of flies provided an extra health hazard. The flat itself had damp walls which caused the paper to peel. A flat in the house next⁴⁴ door consisted of two rooms separated by a wall constructed out of boards, cardboard and sacking. The roof leaked so badly that a tub was used to catch the drops of water, and the reporter was informed that the kitchen ceiling had recently collapsed during a storm. The sanitary installations in this flat were defective so that excrement was flushed out into the street in an open drain. The rent for this flat was 20 marks per month and the owner was a renowned manufacturer in Hasten. In the front portion of this particular house dwelt several residents of over 17 years standing who testified that during that time no repairs had ever been undertaken. The house was also reputed to be infested with fleas, cockroaches and other vermin.

A house in Alexanderstraße which was also described by the newspaper as being in a poor state of repair and plagued by rats, mice and cockroaches, was the subject of a BV report in September 1930. The house had neither washroom nor attic and the walls were damp. The owner lived in Barmen and arranged for the rent to be collected

by a janitor who lived in a neighbouring house. The rent for the three-roomed flat in this particular house was 34 marks per month.⁴⁵ Similar conditions prevailed in other houses featured in the series. In some cases tenants were evicted after falling into arrears with rents. A family living in Honsberger Straße consisted of six persons.⁴⁶ The father had been almost uninterruptedly unemployed since 1925 (five and a half years), the wife had recently borne her seventh child which, like two others previously, had died. Whilst the wife was sent away to a convalescent home, the husband was evicted by the landlord and was designated a two-roomed attic flat in Stachelhauser Straße which had only a small skylight window and leaking walls and roof. The plight of this family was such that a visiting doctor paid for a large quantity of milk for the children out of his own pocket on hearing that the local welfare office had refused their request for aid.

The communist press consistently exploited such graphic material to discredit the capitalist system, the bourgeoisie and the SPD in the eyes of the workers. Articles devoted to the injustices of the system invariably concluded with an exhortation to join the KPD and affiliated organisations in order to construct a fairer society. Particularly during the crisis years of 1930 to 1933 the BV contrived to demonstrate the grossly unequal distribution of wealth and seized every possible opportunity to expose attempts to encumber the working class with the costs of the depression. One such instance was the introduction of the Bürgersteuer (head tax) in 1930. The BV regarded this exaction as the most odious and most unjust of all taxes, as the main burden was carried by the financially weaker sections of society.⁴⁷ The imposition was paid by everyone over the age of 20 at a rate of six marks on an annual income of up to 8,000 marks. Earnings of between 8,000 and 25,000 marks per annum were taxable at the rate of 12 marks. The progression was such that those earning 1,000 marks per week contributed only 50 marks to the Bürgersteuer. The unemployed and welfare recipients were not exempted, although they were not subject to the full rate. Instead they were taxed at a rate of 3 marks plus 1 mark

50 pfennigs for their wives. From this the BV calculated that Remscheid's ten thousand unemployed would together raise 45,000 of the 150,000-mark target set by the town council. Furthermore, as around 15,000 citizens were still employed and earning an average of 35 marks per week (including those on short-time), these would inevitably raise the bulk of the remainder, leaving the wealthy local manufacturers with a ludicrously disproportionate share to pay. The newspaper suggested that it would be fairer if the revenue from the Bürgersteuer were supplied by mayor Dr. Hartmann who, it was noted, received an annual salary of 22,000 marks, and by the mayors of Lennep and Lüttringhausen who, after the incorporation of those towns into Remscheid, were still in receipt of their previous salaries. This theme had already been introduced a few days earlier when the KPD councillors criticised the proposed increase in beer tax to help offset the 1.2 million mark deficit in the municipal budget.⁴⁸ The communist councillors regarded the continued payment of full salaries to the redundant mayors as scandalous and called for a general reduction of the highest salaries in the municipal administration.

So, the impoverishment of the working class and the middle class was not only due to unemployment and reduced social benefits, but was also a result of their being subjected to additional financial pressure by the imposition of various taxes, so that suicide often seemed to offer the only means of escape from economic crisis and poverty. The connection between suicide and poverty was suggested by the local communist press on several different occasions.⁴⁹ Depending on the accuracy of local statistics it would seem that there was no significant rise in the number of suicides in the crisis years (table 16).⁵⁰ Several interviewees, however, testify to the resort to suicide by disconsolate workers.⁵¹ Apparently the Teufelsteich held a morbid attraction for suicide candidates who, having consumed large quantities of alcohol, attached weights to their clothing before plunging into the water. From table 16, however, the theory that hungry and despondent workers chose to escape from their responsibilities by way of

suicide is not corroborated by the evidence available. Conversely, resort to suicide may have been an act more readily chosen by members of the middle class, particularly businessmen and manufacturers trying to escape their debtors after bankruptcy, or by old people who were unable to break out of the rigid behavioural patterns which condemned them to loneliness after the death of a husband or wife. Working-class life did not place the same kind of behavioural constraint on individuals as did bourgeois moral codes. The workers' immersion in collective forms tended to preclude the isolation suffered by members of the middle class in certain circumstances. The various forms of solidarity practised daily in working-class areas constituted a protective shield against isolation, the feeling of hopelessness and failure. By means of politicisation, individual problems were absorbed by the collective whole, so that the despondent individual was provided with an explanation of his plight which indicated a shared experience and not personal inadequacy.⁵²

3. Compensatory Action by the Working Class Movement.

The working class movement developed forms of collective action which obviated some of the worst psychological effects of the crisis so that both the individual and community were not abandoned to face the crushing force of long periods of unemployment and inactivity alone. It was recognised that during prolonged periods of unemployment, an individual left to his own resources has enormous difficulty coping with boredom, disillusionment and the accompanying loss of self-esteem. The collective forms devised to combat social fragmentation and apathy operated at two different levels. These were: the formal, organised plain where official institutions participated to assuage anxieties, to awaken and channel discontent; and the informal, collective interaction of the working-class neighbourhood which constantly tended to avert the problems of segregation either self-inflicted or otherwise.

An equally important function of the BV, together with the dissemination of news, was its forming of public opinion and its organising compensatory collective action. During the depression between 1930 and 1933 its constant attacks on the shortcomings of the capitalist system had a beneficial side-effect on the working class. The newspaper's criticism offered unemployed workers an explanation of their situation, which portrayed them as victims of an unjust order. Furthermore, the newspaper gave its readers hope for the future by offering a solution to their problems, namely the overthrow of capitalism. This side-effect reinforced the efforts of other working class institutions which were constantly trying to integrate the unemployed and involve them in social and political work. Collections of various kinds like the KPD's winter aid campaigns or collections for affiliated organisations gave inactive and unemployed workers positive assignments.

Another collective response to the prolonged depression was the Arbeiterschwimmverein's construction of a swimming pool at the Teufelsteich. This project involved a large number of unemployed men with creative work for almost two years. This kind of action bound the participants ever-closer together. Although the project did not bring the workers any financial rewards, it gave them the satisfaction of demonstrating their individual and collective talents to a hostile bourgeoisie. The construction of the Teufelsteich swimming pool was a further example together with the building of the meeting house of the Naturfreunde and the Freie Volkshochschule (Resch-Hütte) of the Remscheid workers' initiative and ability to create from restricted funds and cheap materials.

Other working class clubs and institutions also catered for the unemployed by running seminars and meetings for this section of the movement. The KPD constantly tried to involve the unemployed by organising them in their own committee or in the work of the tenants' association. The Arbeitersamariter gave lectures and ran first aid courses on weekday afternoons as did the Arbeiter-Schachverein.

4. Tensions in Local Industry.

The protracted length of the depression and the resultant social and economic pressures caused a heightening of tension in the production process. However, the general mood of fear and uncertainty which was a consequence of the policies of retrenchment, and the disunity of the trade union movement diminished the likelihood of effective and concerted action against the dismantling of the social security system. For these reasons, the nature of the conflict in the factories was to a large extent subterranean so as not to provoke punitive reactions from nervous and irascible employers. Despite genuine grievances on the part of the majority of workers, they could not create the momentum required to resist successfully the removal of rights and of former achievements in the factories. When strike action did occur, it tended to be sporadic and above all defensive, and was thus easier to contain by the joint cooperation of the employers and the police. The KPD, which advocated an aggressive strategy against the massive cuts in wages and social benefits, had lost a great deal of influence in the factories as a result of its sectarian trade union policy and the loss of support through redundancy. In place of communist-dominated factory councils there were now more heterogeneous committees consisting of Social Democrats, Christians, ~~Hirsch-Dunker~~ Unionists, Independents and substantially fewer Communists. The divergence of aims and strategy among the various unions tended to cause indecision and confusion in the ranks of the employed who had traditionally been united in Remscheid behind either the SPD (pre-1918) or the KPD-oriented DMV. The inability to take effective action led to an accumulation of frustration on the part of the workers, which in the absence of other outlets was released on the streets.

Conditions and practices in local factories did not escape the attention of the local communist press. In August 1930 information supplied by a worker in the firm led to an article exposing alleged malpractices at the important Remscheid factory of Klingelberg & Söhne. Apparently the company had reduced the workforce and then

required some workers to work overtime. Furthermore, it was alleged that the workers employed by Klingelberg had been compelled to do the same amount of work in five days as they had previously done in six. The company then proposed the introduction of a four-day week. The article concluded that there were few local firms that had visibly profited in recent years as much as Klingelberg which had recently been in a position to buy a second plant in Preyersmuhle, which it had initially rented.

The death of a worker at the BSI prompted the BV to devote an article to that company.⁵⁴ The article disclosed a spate of accidents following the latest wage-reductions. The investigation revealed that workers were neglecting time-consuming safety precautions in their endeavour to make good the reduction in their piece-work wages. The article noted a tangible increase in the work-tempo for which, it was alleged, some overlookers and managers would not accept responsibility.

At a factory in Reinshagen part of the workforce was female and engaged in the manufacture of brackets for windows and doors.⁵⁵ The BV remarked that women over the age of 20 years were already too costly for the employer, with the result that all but two of the females in the factory were between 15 and 18 years of age. The former wage rate in operation for women at the factory had been 35 pfennigs per hour for 15 to 18-year olds, 38 pfennigs per hour for 18 to 20-year olds and 51 pfennigs per hour for 20 to 22-year olds. By producing 4,800 brackets and hinges per day, the employees could manage to earn 5 marks. There had recently been a 50 % reduction in the wage rate so that now girls under 18 years only earned between 2 marks and 2 marks 50 pfennigs per day. The article reported the case of a 22-year old female worker who had been employed in the factory for four years. On realizing that her daily earnings no longer exceeded 3 marks, she demanded payment at the old rate and, according to the BV, was summarily dismissed. Although her appeal before the industrial tribunal was upheld, the employer withheld her dismissal notice together with her holiday money so that she was unable to draw unemployment benefit for four weeks.

Employers were able to dictate terms to their own advantage, primarily because of the already huge army of unemployed waiting to seize every opportunity for work which presented itself. Secondly, the employed workforce was afraid of dismissal, redundancy and shutdowns, so that workers were more inclined to tolerate practices which they would have rejected in other circumstances. In such a climate solidarity was apt to break down, as workmates were consciously set against each other to compete for the reduced number of jobs when the next redundancies were announced. Furthermore, the trade unions were largely impotent in the smaller factories, particularly during a depression of the current magnitude. Known communist agitators were candidates for instant dismissal even if they were highly skilled and more difficult to replace than ordinary factory hands.⁵⁶ In this prevailing climate of fear and uncertainty attempts to organise the work-forces of small factories usually ended in failure. In many cases where employees of small firms did join the trade unions and the KPD, they preferred to keep a low profile at their work place for the sake of their own continued employment and the well-being of their families.

The cases discussed so far represent fairly common employer practice in times of economic crisis. During the depression of 1930 to 1933, however, a number of Remscheid employers introduced one or two innovations designed to render their workforces more pliant. In some cases, manufacturers who sympathised with the Nazis or were themselves already members began to expect a 'positive attitude' on the part of their employees to this party.⁵⁷ The Riloga factory owned by Johann Peter Schmidt, who was a member of the NSDAP, employed around 150 workers. An article in the BV concerning this factory informed its readers that the owner had succeeded in preventing the operation of a factory council, despite the requirement of the law which provided for a council in all factories employing more than 20 workers.⁵⁸ The article in question, which was entitled Schufften für Hungerlohn⁵⁹ (slaving for a pittance), told how the owner had introduced 'American methods', ie. a psychological ruse aimed at disciplining the work-force and placating those

who were apt to complain about the low wages. Each employee was provided with an album which had spaces for 52 pictures, one of which was collected in the wage packet every week. Those workers who collected all 52 pictures and stuck them in their albums received a bonus of two marks at the end of the year. The pictures were provided by an imaginary character by the name of Karl who was introduced as a friend and advisor and supplied tips, proverbs and maxims printed on the picture cards. The intended result was gradually to bring about a change in behavioural patterns by lowering the threshold of acceptable practice without evoking conflict. According to the article, the owner hoped to be able to appease angry workers who, after 'slaving' for 48 hours per week, found only 8 marks 50 pfennigs in their wage packets. The article described one of the picture cards as portraying two faces, one crying and the other smiling. The sad face was deleted and supported by Karl's advice, 'Anybody can be miserable, but often it takes courage to smile!' The communist press condemned this novelty which it regarded as sheer cynicism and called on the Kiloja workers to organise. This factory, which employed a large percentage of young workers, developed into a Nazi show-piece during the Third Reich and was awarded the title of NS Musterbetrieb⁶⁰ (National Socialist exemplary production unit).

5. Class Conflict During the Depression.

Class conflict which broke out intermittently during the course of 1931 and 1932, had a different quality from that which Remscheid had witnessed in 1918 and 1923/24. Firstly, although it developed along the lines of the three-stage model applied in earlier chapters, it failed to carry with it the decisive unity of a suppressed working class.⁶¹ Secondly, despite the dire predicament of the capitalist system, it was the workers who were forced onto the defensive and had no chance of deploying their most effective weapon, the strike. Thirdly, the internecine quarrel between the

KPD and SPD, which absorbed considerable time and energy, distracted from the real class conflict. Fourthly, despite claims to the contrary, the ruling order was able to rely on the intervention of a strong and militant street army of Nazis to engage and disrupt the working-class movement by means of a terror campaign. Fifthly, the conflict revealed a change in the quality of violence with which it was waged.

From 1930 onwards the divergence of class interests in Remscheid became increasingly more pronounced. After a brief period of full or nearly full employment and a substantial rise in earnings, the workers soon found their social and economic gains under attack by the employers' association, the Mittelstandskartell, civic associations, guilds and the political parties representing these interests. The Brüning government's policy of deflation with its many discrepancies combined frequently with the local employers' own offensive against the achievements of the workers, carried out against a background of soaring unemployment, as we have already shown, plunged the town's manual and white-collar workers into hardship and poverty. Simultaneously, large sections of the bourgeoisie, which still had the bitter memory of inflation in their minds, were abandoning their traditional political parties convinced, that compromise within the system of parliamentary democracy could only lead to similar disaster, and were beginning to seek a more radical alternative beyond the constellation of liberal capitalism, Social Democracy and marxism.⁶² Increasing numbers of small manufacturers⁶³ like those that abounded in Remscheid, joined the NSDAP, which they came to regard as the last bastion against communism. These elements in particular felt threatened by big business and eventually arrived at the conclusion that the National Socialists would provide the best protection of their interests.

Class hostility was evident most prominently amongst the unemployed workers and their families, as well as those forced to accept short-time working. The complete system of unemployment benefit down to the welfare appeared to be imbued with an aura of retribu-

tion for the claimant's lack of self-reliance. In his contact with civil servants the recipient was often subjected to arbitrariness and lack of sympathy and understanding. Hours of waiting around in queues were followed by infuriatingly pedantic insistence on correct procedures and an unwillingness to offer provision for those who in any way deviated from the norm. Similar experience emanating from contact with other officials, at the post office, the town hall, railway station or welfare, not to mention the police station, emphasised the widening gulf between the unemployed worker and authority, in this case in the guise of civil servant.

In the factories the assault on the workers' standard of living and the truculent attitude of employers, compounded with the lack of respect accorded them by foremen and factory managers, led to anger and frustration amongst the workers who were constantly reminded by the communist press of the phenomenal discrepancy between their wages and the salaries of works' directors and senior civil servants. The compulsion of giving up or foregoing legitimate rewards through no fault of their own, the lack of opportunity to improve their situation and the inexorable slide into poverty and hunger, because the liberalist/capitalist system had failed, were factors which encouraged class hostility amongst the working class.

The failure of Weimar society to balance more equally the aspirations of different classes was in large measure responsible for violence becoming endemic.⁶⁴ A consequence of this fact is that whenever conflict arose it was usually accompanied by violence. When conflict erupted during the last two years of the Weimar Republic in Remscheid, it tended to do so, however with an almost unprecedented (at least in local terms) intensity of violence. The class conflict waged during the economic depression differed from that in the early twenties by the less inhibited use of lethal weapons and above all, the greater frequency of clashes evoked by increased political activity, as was the case in 1932.⁶⁵

The greater availability of lethal weapons was not the only important factor in their more extensive use. Despite an increased readiness to carry and use a pistol, the relatively small number of

resulting casualties suggests a lack of intention to kill and seriously injure opponents. The two main reasons for the restrained use of lethal weapons, which were used rather to warn or intimidate opponents, were most likely the high frequency of clashes in which the antagonists of both sides were personally known to each other, together with accountability before the law.⁶⁶

Although members of both sides felt a strong desire to settle accounts with their opponents, they still chose to do this by beating them up or else by attempting to make them look ridiculous.⁶⁷ However, as soon as outsiders became involved in political disputes, the inhibitory threshold for serious injury sank considerably. Another important factor linking the two main reasons for the restrained use of lethal weapons was the greater chance of detection and identification in cases where the perpetrator was an insider. Accountability before the law was clearly a crucial factor inhibiting the use of lethal weapons with the intention of causing serious injury. Communists had no illusions regarding equal and fair treatment before the law⁶⁸, and even National Socialists, who, as a rule, were granted a more sympathetic hearing in the courts, could not afford to risk their lives, particularly after the verdict in the Potempa murder.⁶⁹

Despite these considerations, however, it is nevertheless evident that lethal weapons found more frequent use, if not primarily with the intention of causing serious injury; and personal attacks on opponents tended to be more brutal during the period of economic depression. Furthermore, as a result of prolonged mass unemployment there were now more people prepared to take to the streets and release their pent-up aggression in acts of violence against opponents. Long periods of unemployment eroded the inhibitory social controls of police arrest, disciplinary punishment by employers, and ostracism.

The paramilitary formations, particularly the SA and the Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus, but also the Reichsbanner, were numerically stronger than in the middle years of the Weimar Republic. Consequently, there were more uniformed young men roaming the narrow

streets of a small town-centre, so that the opportunity for clashes multiplied considerably. A further factor which warrants consideration in connection with the intensification of violence is the campaign of terror waged by the SA and - though less well documented - by the formations of the left. Whereas the SA's raison d'être was to wrest control of the streets for the NSDAP by physical violence, the RFB and its successor, the KgdF, had a more ambiguous understanding of terror, and regarded themselves as continuations of the proletarian protection formations of 1923.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the KPD eventually came to disavow individual terror.⁷¹ The Reichsbanner also regarded itself as a protection formation, as the defender of the Republic. However, despite their official rejection of terror, both left-wing paramilitary groups indulged in unprovoked acts of intimidation,⁷² which were essential hallmarks of SA strategy. In Remscheid, the KgdF and its predecessor, the RFB, which continued to exist as a clandestine formation, had controlled the streets for the major part of the Weimar Republic almost unchallenged, but from the end of 1930 onwards a growing local SA began to encroach on this previously incontestable territory.

Both the SA and the RFB/KgdF had a stock of firearms at their disposal and trained members in their use.⁷³ Firearms experts gave instruction in target practice. Access to small arms appears to have been easier in the last years of the Republic, so that it is likely that a great many members of paramilitary groups on both sides carried revolvers.⁷⁴

The intensification of violence in Remscheid during the final years of the Weimar Republic was also a consequence of the greater political activation of unemployed youth. The change of leadership of the local KPD in the mid-20s was marked by a significant lowering of age amongst the leading group. The change which signified a swing to the left, resulted from a widespread disaffection amongst the more active and younger elements in the local party with the methods and style of the former leaders.

The removal of Zulauf, Wolf and Bornefeld from the party in 1929/30 marks a further move to the left and a reinforcement of younger

elements in the local party leadership. The change of leadership was accompanied by a change of tactics to more energetic and aggressive political action, a fact which was duly noted by the local police in their situational reports.⁷⁵ The younger and more radical leadership appealed particularly to the youth who were hard hit by the depression. Therefore at a time when the KPD's influence in local factories was at its weakest, at least in terms of the active determination of workers' policy, the local party had already surpassed its pre-1924 numerical strength.⁷⁶ This probably meant that a greater percentage of unemployed youth was now organised in the ranks of the party than at any other time, and the party's support at the polls was attaining new heights. By the same token the NSDAP's appeal to youth is also well established.⁷⁷ In this respect Reimscheid was no exception both with regard to the earliest Nazi activists and those who joined the party during the depression.⁷⁸

If we now consider several specific instances where violent clashes broke out, we can identify the individual elements present. Street violence, when it occurred, often had an air of retribution about it, where one side was concerned to punish the other for a previous act of aggression. As a rule, this new act of aggression, namely the punishment of opponents for a previous one, was then seized upon by the other side as an excuse to gain its revenge. This dynamism of violence led to a whole concatenation of incidents whereby not only were there more clashes, but also the clashes tended to intensify in degree, with the result that the series frequently ended with calamitous consequences. This chain of blow and counter-blow did not necessarily involve the same participants, although this was frequently the case. In such clashes, where the same individuals were involved, the personal motive of revenge for a directly connected injury or insult, was probably uppermost in the minds of the perpetrators. A series of clashes developed along these lines in Reimscheid during the summer of 1931. On a number of occasions, several Nazis living in the working-class district of Laspert, had been attacked and beaten up on their way home after

NSDAP meetings.⁷⁹ At the end of July one of the Communists who lived in Laspert and was believed to have been involved in the attacks on Nazis was involved in a dispute with SA members Hülle, Pieper and Seyferth in a café. During the dispute, which on this occasion did not come to blows, the Communist was alleged to have threatened to kill Pieper's brother who lived in Laspert.⁸⁰ Although this particular incident was settled without resort to violence, it had a sequel a few days later in which the same Communist, Scher, together with a handful of his friends, were attacked and beaten by a large contingent of Nazi stormtroopers.⁸¹ In the ensuing fight Scher was shot in the back. The Nazis charged with this offence were Werner Tesch, resident of Laspert who had suffered attacks at the hands of Communists, Erwin Laubach, a notoriously violent roughian who excelled in streetfights, as did Otto Kupferberg and Ernst Pieper, the brother of Hans Pieper, who was involved in the initial dispute, and was himself a well-known brawler. In their defence the culprits alluded to the attacks to which they had been subjected. Scher who spent months in hospital in a grave condition, could only positively identify Laubach as one of his attackers. In his delivery of the verdict the judge maintained that this kind of street brawl was beginning to get out of hand and an example had to be made. The defendants were sentenced to prison terms of between four and six months. These sentences were later annulled after an appeal hearing at which the victim could not appear owing to illness resulting from his injuries. Three of the defendants were under the age of 25 at the time of the incident; Tesch was 18, Pieper 19 and Laubach 23, Kupferberg was 30 at the time. Most of the workers/Communists involved in the incident were described as 'young'. Other Nazis involved in the attack were Friedrich Strippel, 20 years of age; Helmut Hosbach, 21 years; Richard Mühlhoff, 26 years; Hans Pieper, 28 years; Karl Hülle, 27; Hermann Flüs, 40; Alfred Obst, 31; and Karl Metz, 30.

On the two occasions during the depression when Remscheid Communists and Nazis clashed and from which fatalities resulted, evidence strongly suggests that the perpetrator and victim were not

known to each other. This fact might well indicate that the ensuing deaths were not intended, although conversely it may be argued that the non-acquaintance factor in a brawl actually facilitated the lowering of inhibitions thus enabling the perpetrator to aim to kill or at least injure seriously. It may also have been owing to chance that not more fatal injuries were sustained in clashes between the two sides, but considering the countless occasions when firearms were used in Remscheid it would seem that the intention to kill or seriously maim was either totally absent on both sides, or else neither side could boast a single accurate marksman.

On the first occasion when a victim lost his life, death was due to a blow on the head with a pick-axe handle.⁸² The incident occurred in October 1931 and appears to have been a brawl provoked by a group of between 15 and 20 Communists who came from Barmen to help Remscheid KgdF colleagues prevent a number of evictions in Honsberg and Osterbusch. The object of the dispute was a party emblem which frequently triggered off violent incidents in periods of extreme tension. Party badges and uniforms tended to have a provocative effect on political opponents and thus made the wearer a potential target for abuse and violent attack.⁸³ According to evidence given by one of the Remscheid suspects, Heinrich Siesenop, on their arrival the group from Barmen had noticed a young man engaged in road works in front of the main station wearing an NSDAP badge. On the way back, the Communists demanded that the young man, who was the son of Albert Müller, owner of a small company carrying out the road repairs, should remove the badge. A fight ensued and several of the workmen and Albert Müller went to the aid of the latter's son. One of the workmen wielding an iron bar was allegedly the target for a blow which struck Müller senior on the head as he came between the perpetrator and the workman. When the police arrived on the scene, the Barmen Communists had already scattered. The case was never successfully concluded although several Remscheid Communists were arrested and questioned but later released. The ^{blow} death which led to the death of Müller was an isolated incident motivated by the wearing of a Nazi party emblem. The attack on

Müller and his workmen, however, appears to have been a compensatory action, because the planned eviction had been cancelled without the 'required' resistance of the KgdF. The group of Communists from Barmen had arrived in Remscheid expecting some kind of conflict and when this did not materialise, it is likely that they remembered Müller junior and his party badge outside the railway station. In many other instances where uniforms and political party emblems were involved, the motivation of the attackers was primarily to dispossess the opponent and in this way insult both the individual directly, and the party vicariously. Such confrontations generally ended with little more than a brief struggle during which the badge or insignia was snatched away from the wearer. On this particular occasion, however, the situation was made potentially more dangerous by the numbers of opponents who were not acquainted with each other, the frustrated expectations of the Communists from Barmen, and the unexpectedly violent reaction of Müller and his workmen, who set about defending themselves with the tools they were using.

The only other occasion during the 1930-33 depression when Remscheid roughians were involved in a conflict which ended in the loss of life was on the day of the presidential elections in March 1932.⁸⁴ The incident occurred in nearby Hückeswagen when a strong detachment of Nazis from Lennep dispatched to help their comrades in the neighbouring town, was confronted by a larger contingent of local Communists. The clash was typical of those repeated throughout the whole of Germany on polling days during the year 1932⁸⁵, and must be seen as a climactic release of tension following a build-up of blow / counter-blow which increased in frequency and intensity as election-day approached. On this particular occasion, three Communists were shot dead; one of them by a Lennep SA ^aman named Willmund.⁸⁶ The other two were shot by a Hückeswagen Nazi named Marx who, it was alleged, had received threats on his life during the previous two years.⁸⁷ Apparently Marx was so afraid that a few days prior to the presidential election he applied for police protection and was constantly accompanied by a

policeman whenever he left the house. On the morning of the election the local SA and SS allegedly stayed at home to avoid the impending clash. Three lorries full of SA men from Lennep were sent as reinforcements. A small group of Lennep SA men found themselves surrounded by 70 to 80 Communists. A fight then broke out in which coshes, sticks and chains were used. Willmund, who was in the band of Nazis, possibly panicked in this precarious situation and pulled out a pistol, firing several shots, one of which hit an opponent, killing him outright. Willmund then fled into the nearby house of Marx and was pursued by an insensed band of Communists who proceeded to storm the house. Whilst Willmund escaped through the back door, Marx shot two of the attackers, one of whom was well-known to him and who, it was alleged, had made repeated threats on his life. In both cases the marksmen found themselves in a hazardous position, surrounded by angry adversaries. It would seem that resort to the use of firearms was a result of fear, and the motive was to keep the opponents at bay. Whilst the case of Marx is relatively unproblematic, that of Willmund is not. Willmund already had a reputation for wielding his pistol, although there is no concrete evidence to suggest that he had ever aimed it at an opponent prior to the incident described above. What remains unclear are the instructions given to an SA marksman like Willmund when finding himself in a precarious situation.

A further consideration regarding the qualitative escalation of violence concerns the tone in which election campaigns were waged. Above all, towards the end of the Weimar Republic, these were fought with extremely venomous slogans and posters designed to portray opponents as sinister and inhuman forces who threatened either ethnic or class values.⁸⁸ The Nazis in particular employed the strategy first developed successfully by the Alldeutschen and various völkisch groups, of depicting Communists and Socialists as foreign sub-humans in the pay of an evil Russian-Jewish conspiracy striving to destroy German culture. The Nazis revived the centuries-old fear of the 'mongol-hordes' sweeping across Europe, burning, raping and pillaging a superior civilisation. Such emotio-

nally-charged speeches and posters implicitly encouraged the physical extermination of this enemy which was not accredited human status. The imagery employed in election posters and speeches was designed to invoke feelings of terror, loathing and revulsion, whereby the actual object of these sentiments was purposely left unanalysed. In all probability, the suggestive comments and symbolism had the desired effect, at least on the less intelligent members of paramilitary organisations and parties, and in this way contributed substantially to the escalation of violence. The Communists, too, played their part in poisoning the atmosphere. Repeated references to the "braune Mordpest", "Nazibañditen", "Arbeitermörder", "Nazistrolche", and "Nazijünglinge"⁸⁹ in the communist press helped create stereotype images which could be kept in mind and instill hatred for later confrontations with the Nazis. Heinz Neumann's slogan "Schlagt die Faschisten wo immer ihr sie trefft!" (Beat up the fascists wherever you meet them!) was a further example of incitement to, and condonement of, individual and organised violence, which did not pass unheeded. The encouragement of violence against political opponents was by no means restricted to the extreme right and left. Towards the end of the Weimar Republic more or less all parties participated in this activity. Even the SPD, which had traditionally rejected violence, gradually began to succumb, albeit reluctantly, to non-peaceful forms of agitation. At the same time, however, the SPD emphasised the defensive nature of its tactics. After 1930 the Reichsbanner saw itself compelled to submit to the Zeitgeist and began to adopt practices which were traditionally identified with the political right.⁹⁰ One such practice was the incitement of, and resort to, violence on the streets.

The escalation of violence in the period immediately preceding an election was a constant feature of the year 1932 with its five different polls. As the first round of the presidential election failed to elect an outright winner, the contest went to a second bout a month later. With the memory of the Huckschwagen incident still fresh, there was little or no respite from violence in the whole area.

The build-up to the second round of voting witnessed countless brawls between Communists and Nazis in Remscheid, as well as acts of individual terror. On the 20th April a street battle developed outside the labour exchange in which around 50 people were involved. The conflict was sparked off by a woman seizing a wad of election leaflets from the hands of an opposing distributor who reacted violently, striking her in the face.⁹¹ The brawl was broken up by an overworked police-commando which employed its truncheons with customary brutality. The remainder of the day and the whole of the next were spent dispersing opposing forces. The hospital also had extra work setting broken limbs and bandaging gashed heads.⁹²

The renewed election campaign for the presidency was accompanied by a further qualitative escalation of violence which must be regarded in connection with the Hückeswagen affair, but also as an attempt by Rotfront⁹³ fighters to destabilise local society in an attempt to create revolutionary conditions. The method chosen for this plan was a bombing campaign against local Nazis and their sympathisers. The pattern of escalation in 1932 was a parallel to that of 1923/4 when the deaths of workers was answered with bombs.⁹⁴ The first bomb was hurled against the house front of a local manufacturer who had leased and equipped the SA barracks in Freiheitstraße. This attack on 7th April⁹⁵ had been preceded by a retaliatory action on the SA barracks on the 18th March, five days after the shootings in Hückeswagen. A shot was fired through the window, hitting an SA man in the chest.⁹⁶ The series of bombings was continued in June when an explosive device was detonated in front of the villa of BSI director Hülyer whose affinity for the NSDAP was not beyond dispute.⁹⁷ The next target was the Riloga factory Johann Peter Schmidt on the following evening.⁹⁸ The series of bombings ended on 21st June with another attack on the SA barracks in Freiheitstraße.⁹⁹ The bombings which all took place at night, did not cause any casualties, although the assailants could not have ruled out accidental injuries. Nevertheless the RFB men who carried out the raid seem to have tried to diminish the

risk to life by the position of detonation, ie. bombs were thrown in front of the houses and not through windows. The devices were home-made constructions consisting of a length of iron piping stuffed with explosive material and a fuse. It is apparent from Gestapo reports that the Remscheid RFB and KgdF had amassed a sizeable store of explosives.¹⁰⁰

The Gestapo only succeeded in reconstructing the bomb attacks in 1939, during the course of enquiries into a different matter. In 1933 the police were able to arrest only one man named Hardenbruch, at whose home a search revealed two bottles of explosives. The squads of five or six men participating in the bombing raids were armed with pistols and took up positions at various vantage points whilst the appointed bomber threw the explosive device at the target. The spate of bombings succeeded in alarming the police who were constantly harassed by both sides.

The police themselves contributed enormously to the escalation of violence during the last two years of the Republic by their intransigent attitude and insistence on breaking up all left-wing gatherings in the open air with baton charges, frequently injuring innocent by-standers in the process.¹⁰¹ The consequence of such tactics was to isolate themselves as a body from large sections of Remscheid society. Their action appeared arbitrary owing to the fact that they, too, as individual citizens, were affected by the political polarisation which was so evident during this period. Gradually large sections of the local police began to favour the extreme right¹⁰², which they regarded as an ally against the Communists, whom they considered to be the main threat to law and order. Ideologically, many Remscheid policemen identified strongly from the very outset with the authoritarian aims of the right, and this trend was augmented by the stationing of several hundred armed security police in the town after the First World War. Considerable numbers of these policemen were recruited from the ranks of the Baltikumkämpfer¹⁰³ and other free-corps units. The pro-republican element appears to have been in a minority despite the leadership of Social Democratic police chiefs Frungel and later

Schrader. The criminal investigation department in particular appears to have been exceptionally sympathetic to the Nazis and willing to turn a blind eye in their direction. When the NSDAP came to power in 1933, they apparently saw no reason to purge this section of the police force as it was already manned by friendly elements.

Ordinary policemen were frequently targets for abuse. At the beginning of 1932 they were the object of a communist propaganda campaign. A series of leaflets entitled "Roter Schupo Bazillus" (red police bacillus) were distributed in Remscheid and Solingen¹⁰⁴. Copies were deposited in the letter boxes of policemen or in the hallways of their houses. The leaflets, which attempted to cause unrest and foment opposition within the ranks of the police, continued to appear throughout the first six months of the year. In June, local Communists tried a different ploy. A leaflet threatening direct action against the police manning the Honsberg station was slipped under the door.¹⁰⁵ The leaflet signed by 'the Honsberg workers' warned the police to refrain from further brutality against the working class.

On one occasion police were lured into an ambush in Honsberg by a group of demonstrators who then vanished as the police came under fire.¹⁰⁶ Although one policeman was hit in the hand, it appears that the snipers merely intended to give warning of the danger of carrying out raids in Honsberg and did not aim to cause serious injury. Such incidents clearly disturbed the police and tended to exacerbate their nervousness, so that this was reflected in their clashes with the workers. Police were also intimidated by the circulation of the Polizeibeamte; Zeitung der revolutionären Polizeibeamten Preußens¹⁰⁷ (police officer: newspaper for the revolutionary police officers of Prussia). The April 1932 issue carried an article entitled: "What will the Communists do with the police when they come to power?" It promised no mercy for those who distinguished themselves by their brutality. In May 1932, the Honsberger Beobachter¹⁰⁸ resumed its circulation and carried an article giving practical tips for guerrilla-type combat against

the police. The article which, according to police research, was based on a manual originating from pre-revolutionary Russia, recommended small groups of two or three men and discussed the procurement of weapons. The author urged attacks on single policemen in order to seize weapons and on small groups in the act of arresting workers. Instruction was given in the use of guns, bombs, petrol-soaked rags, and nails against police cavalry. The pouring of boiling water from rooftops and upper floors was also suggested as a suitable method of defence against police officers forcing entry. Police were also intimidated by the other side, if only individually. Not only did individual policemen receive threats, but were also aware of the NSDAP intelligence group's activities which included the collection of data on all those officers who either sympathised with the republican parties or were antagonistic towards the Nazis.¹⁰⁹

A further example of the qualitative escalation of violence in the depression years was the Strafexpedition (punitive expedition) into working-class districts. This strategy became firm practice in the SA's campaign of terror all over Germany.¹¹⁰

The incident in Laspert in August 1931 falls into this category, as the motivation was clearly to punish residents for attacks on Nazis. In January 1932, on two consecutive evenings, large gangs of SA men attacked the working-class district of Flurweg in Lennep¹¹¹. The punitive expedition carried out by Remscheid, Lennep and Luttringhausen SA groups under the leadership of dental surgeon Dr. Heukenkamp, were of a retaliatory nature, on behalf of two of their colleagues who themselves were residents of this estate Flurweg. The main attack was planned on the second evening to coincide with an NSDAP rally in Luttringhausen, which was attended by communist residents of the workers' estate. The SA proceeded to smash windows and shutters of houses of known Communists, and a number of shots were fired before police arrived on the scene to arrest several of the miscreants, including Heukenkamp and Willmund. A number of pistols, axes, coshes and a rifle were confiscated, but the police refrained from bringing charges.

The failure by the authorities to punish Nazi offenders both angered and demoralised¹¹² socialist and communist workers, so that some groups undoubtedly^h decided to administer 'justice' of their own accord. Communists, in particular, expected an unfavourable outcome of proceedings whenever their members were suspected of carrying firearms or, as in the above-mentioned case, were actually found in possession of lethal weapons. Of the many incidents involving Remscheid Nazis, only a small number of these were hauled before the courts. The number of sentences passed and upheld against local Nazis was very few and contrasts conspicuously with those passed against Communists.¹¹³ The leniency accorded to the Nazis by local police and judiciary was interpreted by the Socialists and Communists as collusion. The major consequences of police and judicial partiality was on the one side a sense of desperation and an increasing feeling of hatred for the 'system', and on the other a contempt for justice which was aptly demonstrated when the Nazis eventually came to power.¹¹⁴ The lack of confidence in the authorities and the blatant disregard for the law was undoubtedly an additional cause of violence, particularly towards the end of the Weimar Republic.

The crucial factors responsible for the escalation of violence during the last two years of the Republic, in Remscheid appear to have been: increased political activity and incitement to violence; the considerably increased strength of local paramilitary formations which tended to attract the young and unemployed in large numbers; the wider availability of firearms and instruction in their use; the NSDAP's campaign of destabilisation and individual terror, which was countered by similar activities by the Communists; and the frequently harsh and seemingly arbitrary police action towards offenders, and sometimes innocent by-standers alike. Behind these factors was the widespread dissatisfaction with, and resentment against, an economic and political system which was perceived to be in grave difficulties. The potential for violence which ensued from Weimar society's manifold contradictions was exploited by the parties to further their own aims, and thus it was

accorded a quasi-legitimate function, particularly as a protective measure whenever the parties' institutions were considered to be under threat of attack.¹¹⁵ The violence potential, which had been carefully cultivated by political parties and interest groups since 1918, had developed an aura of normality by the time the depression set in¹¹⁶, so that during this period of extensive unemployment and dissatisfaction brutal attacks by Nazi stormtroopers did not unduly alarm 'respectable' citizens, especially if these were aimed against Communists.¹¹⁷

6. Polarisation reflected in the Reichstag Election Results 1928, 1930 and 1932.

The social and political polarisation of Remscheid society towards the end of the Weimar Republic is manifested most clearly by the voting behaviour of the electorate. In order to illustrate this observation, there now follows a detailed analysis of the Reichstag election results of 1928, 1930 and 1932.

These election results lucidly continue to reflect the high level of politicisation of Remscheid citizens. In these, as indeed in all Reichstag elections during the Weimar Republic, the local turn-out far exceeded the Reich average.¹¹⁸ This was a traditional phenomenon locally which had its origins in the pre-First World War era. Broadly speaking, the Reichstag election results in Remscheid over this period followed the pattern established in the Reich as a whole. From 1928 onwards the traditional middle-class parties DVP, DNVP and DDP began to decline in electoral terms, and after 1930 collapsed, as their former supporters switched their allegiance to the NSDAP, which rose meteorically from less than one percent of votes cast in Remscheid in 1928 to become the second strongest party with 36.6 % at the peak of its development during the Weimar Republic, in July 1932. Furthermore, owing to the incorporation of Lennep and Luttringhausen into Remscheid in 1929, which resulted in the creation of a Großstadt with a total population in excess of 100,000, the NSDAP actually became the strongest party in the new

metropolis in July 1932, claiming 24,854 votes to the 21,176 polled by the KPD. As elsewhere, the NSDAP was unable to sustain this performance in the Reichstag elections held in November of that year, as four and a half thousand voters (7.3 % of votes cast) deserted them mainly to the advantage of the badly depleted middle-class parties. A further similarity with electoral behaviour throughout the Reich was the steady progression of votes cast in favour of the KPD. Although the broad trend reflected voting patterns in the Reich as a whole, the extent of the KPD's support made Remscheid something of an exception. There were extremely few towns in the rest of Germany where the KPD was able continually to emulate its performance in Remscheid.¹¹⁹

The Reichstag election on the 20th May 1928 was the last parliamentary poll fought on the basis of the former municipal boundaries under which Remscheid constituted a separate entity as did the towns Lennep and Luttringhausen. It was also the last Reichstag election campaign in the Weimar Republic which was conducted in a crisis-free atmosphere. In Remscheid the turn-out fell a further 0.5 % to 81 %.¹²⁰ The corresponding average turn-out for the Reich was 75.6 %.¹²¹ Whereas 15 parties put up candidates for election in December 1924, this time there were 20 parties. The major effect of the emergence of still more interest groups and splinter parties was the weakening of the traditional middle-class parties of the centre and right.¹²² In Remscheid, the clear winner in the 1928 election was the KPD which increased its share of the vote from 12,891 (31.6 %) to 15,469 (35.5 %). The SPD also made gains amounting to almost 2,000 votes claiming 5,251 (12.1 %). The main casualties were the DVP whose share fell from 10,543 (25.8 %) to 7,526 (17.2 %); the DDP whose vote was reduced from 4,207 (10.3 %) to 2,458 (5.7 %); and the DNVP which dropped from 4,102 (10.1 %) to 2,569 (5.9 %).¹²³ The Zentrum remained stable with 3,046 (7.0 %). Substantial gains from 817 (2.0 %) to 3,649 (8.4 %) were made by the Wirtschaftspartei. The Volksrechtspartei which did not stand in 1924 also claimed a respectable 2,730 votes (5.4 %). This party was particularly successful in Lennep where it gained a formidable 10.5 %. The social structure of the

Kreisstadt Lennep with its relatively high percentage of civil servants and academics (= 13.2 % of all households), and shopkeepers and small traders (= 8.3 % of the town's households), would suggest that the Volksrechtspartei and the Wirtschaftspartei attracted votes above all from these groups and possibly also from small manufacturers. In Luttringhausen which was a traditionally protestant-monarchist stronghold, the DNVP was the strongest party with 20.5%. The splinter parties and interest groups were also strongly represented in this town, together claiming 21.6 %.¹²⁴ Here the relatively high percentages of small manufacturers (= 8.4 %), shopkeepers and small traders (= 7.3 %), civil servants and academics (= 7.3 %) and farmers (= 6.1 %), would appear to account for the performance of the DNVP and the various interest groups of the centre and the centre-right.

With regard to voting behaviour in Remscheid (without Lennep and Luttringhausen) between 1928 and 1932, as in Chapter II various wards revealing different social structures were examined in order to correlate the electoral development of the major parties with class attachments of the inhabitants. This information is shown in tabular form in tables 17, 18 and 19, Reichstag elections 1928-32, and in appendix 1, showing the social composition of 40 electoral wards of Alt-Remscheid based on the Remscheid address book 1929. In all, nine separate wards were chosen according to party performance and a wide variety of class structures. The names of the different wards are not in all cases identical with those given in Chapter II and appendix 1 owing to changes of venue for polling stations. The numbers of the wards, however, are the same.

In 1928, the KPD's best performance in the nine wards examined were in the predominantly working-class districts of Honsberg 3 (ward 19) and Intzestraße (ward 7). In an 89.2 % turn-out in Honsberg 3, this party attracted 68.8 % = 729 votes, and with a turn-out of 83.5 % in Intzestraße 56.6 % = 692 votes. In Remscheid proper, the KPD gained the most votes of any party in 31 out of 40 wards, also winning ward 10a which was for hospital patients. The remaining ten wards were all won by the DVP. This party's best result was

attained in ward 27, Schillerstraße, where it gained 30.7 % = 432 votes. The DVP also received 403 votes = 33.4 % in ward 16, Alleestraße in the town centre. Both wards were overwhelmingly middle class in composition. Ward 27 had a high percentage of civil servants and academics (= 23.8 % of households), white-collar workers in shops and industry (= 14.7 % of households) and professional people (= 14.4 %). Alleestraße (ward 16) had a high percentage of shopkeepers (= 17.2 % of households), white-collar workers (13.7%), professional people (12.4 %), and civil servants and academics (11.4 %).

The SPD's best performance was also in Schillerstraße where it attracted 238 votes = 16.9 %. The Social Democrats claimed 12.3 % = 130 votes in Honsberg 3 (ward 19) and 11.6 % = 142 votes in Intzestraße (ward 7).

The DNVP's best result was as usual achieved in ward 10, Bürgerstraße, where it took 181 votes = 15.1 %. This ward contained the residences of the Mannesmann family and various other local industrialists and manufacturers. Of the nine wards examined more closely, the DNVP's highest share of votes was achieved in ward 16, Alleestraße (8.8 % = 106 votes) and in ward 27, Schillerstraße (7.4 % = 104 votes. The Nationalists also scored an above average 7.8 % (63 votes) in Hasten 4 (ward 40), a district containing a high 18.6 % manufacturers.

The DDP was most successful in wards 27, Schillerstraße, and 29, Wilhelmstraße. In the former the Democrats gained 152 votes (10.8%) and in the latter 123 = 12.1 %. They also claimed 9.1 % (110 votes) in Alleestraße (ward 16).

The Wirtschaftspartei did extremely well in all four wards in Remscheid-Hasten. Its best result was achieved in ward 39, Hasten 3, where it was the second strongest party with 162 votes = 17.4 %. This ward, like Hasten 4, shows a high percentage of small manufacturers, shopkeepers, industrial white-collar workers and shop assistants. This party, which was also referred to as the Mittelstandspartei¹²⁵, likewise did well in ward 26, Reinshagen, scoring 157 votes (16.2 %). This ward also had a strong contingent of small manufacturers (20.8 % of the total households).

The Volksrechtspartei achieved a respectable 8.7 % = 123 votes in ward 27, Schillerstraße; 9.3 % = 75 votes in ward 40, Hasten 4; and 8.9 % = 108 votes in ward 22, Am Bruch. A likely explanation for the success of both the last-named parties in areas with a strong middle-class representation would be the increasing dissatisfaction with the DVP and DDP's continual and the DNVP's recent involvement in the Weimar coalition government.

The Zentrum's best results were as usual in wards 13, Palmstraße, and 15, Blumentalstraße, taking 16.1 % = 189 votes in the former and 16.1 % = 147 votes in the latter.

With regard to the turn-out, in the nine wards which were examined more closely, it is evident that areas containing a high percentage of industrial workers, particularly wards 19, Honsberg 3, and 7, Intzestraße, reveal a greater willingness to exercise the right to vote. This fact strongly underlines the degree of politicisation amongst the Remscheid working class even in the relatively quiet and stable years of the Weimar Republic.

The Reichstag election held on 14th September 1930 took place against a background of rising unemployment and widespread dissatisfaction with the Weimar system of parliamentary democracy. Rosenberg speaks of a revolutionary wave sweeping the country, which the Social Democrats, as the most unequivocal proponents of the Republic, failed to comprehend. Behind the grumbles and complaints about the 'system' there was an unmistakable dislike of capitalism which was exploited by the right-wing opposition.¹²⁶ The lurch to the right in the DNVP with the appointment of Hugenberg as chairman, and the consequent split which was brought about by the departure of the conservative group around Treviranus, was symptomatic of the trend in all three established middle-class parties. The DVP moved further to the right in the wake of Stresemann's death, as did the DDP after its fusion with the Jungdeutscher Orden

in the Staatspartei¹²⁷. The referendum against the Young Plan and the formation of a Nationale Opposition which may be seen amongst other things as an attempt to amass

popular support by Hugenberg, had the effect of benefiting the NSDAP enormously¹²⁸, particularly by the considerable publicity accorded them by his huge press empire. Although the referendum was an unqualified failure for the DNVP, it doubtlessly helped to make the Nazis 'respectable'. Whereas many middle and lower-middle class groups who had lost faith in capitalism doubted Hugenberg's motives in forming a movement of national opposition, many began to regard Hitler and his party as a genuine alternative to restore Germany to its former position of greatness.¹²⁹ Having broken into the DNVP's traditional reservoir of votes, particularly in country areas in North Germany, Thuringia and Baden in the course of the 1929 provincial elections¹³⁰, the NSDAP determined the tone of the 1930 Reichstag election¹³¹ with unrelenting attacks against the pro-republican parties, the SPD, DDP and Zentrum. The Nazis made much of the scandals involving members of these parties, suggesting that the Barmat and Sklarek affairs were proof of extensive corruptive practices of the Bonzen (leading functionaries) in the 'system' parties.¹³² In the country areas the NSDAP successfully agitated against the parties of the centre and right for their failure to protect the 'honest and hard-working farmers' who now faced economic ruin through no fault of their own. In the towns the main thrust was aimed at the middle and lower-middle classes which had hitherto supported the established and 'respectable' liberal and conservative parties. The turn-out in the 1930 Reichstag election in Germany was an extremely high 82 %. Since 1928 the number of eligible voters had risen by 1.7 million, but over four million more votes were registered.¹³³

The Nazis who were confident of making considerable gains were the perceptible beneficiaries of the greatly increased turn-out and registered gains far in excess of their most optimistic predictions. A large proportion of previous non-voters in country areas of the North and a sizeable contingent of first-time voters in the towns declared their support for this party¹³⁴, so that the NSDAP's share leapt to 18.2 % = 6.38 million votes, making it the second strongest party in the Reichstag.

The only other party which succeeded in making significant gains was the KPD. This party increased its tally to 13.1 % or 4.59 million votes, a rise of 1.3 million. These events clearly underline the Bracher thesis, that in times of crisis desperate elements of the middle and lower-middle class gravitate towards fascism and those of the working class towards the communist pole.¹³⁵ With this election result the NSDAP had become the largest middle-class party in Germany.

The turn-out in Remscheid on 14th September 1930 was 90.1 % with 6,892 more votes registered than in 1928. The number of eligible voters had increased over the same period by 2,279 in the town of Remscheid excluding Lennep and Luttringhausen. The number of parties standing for election fell back to 15. The KPD increased its share in Remscheid from 15,469 = 35.5 % to 17,657 = 35.7 %. The SPD on the other hand lost 924 votes, falling from 5,251 = 12.1 % to 4,327 = 8.4 %. Almost all of the SPD losses went to the KPD, as well as 300 votes which were cast in favour of two splinter groups, Left-wing Communists = 193 (0.4 %) and ASPD = 108 (0.2 %) in 1928. From this it is therefore clearly evident that the KPD also succeeded in securing the votes of around a thousand new or previous non-voters. The NSDAP which received only 372 votes = 0.9 % in 1928, registered 11,495 = 23.2 % in September 1930, ousting the DVP from its traditional role as leading representative of middle and lower-middle class interests. The latter was the principal victim of the NSDAP's rapid ascendancy, forfeiting well over 50 % of its support in the previous Reichstag elections. The DVP saw its share of the votes slashed from 17.2 % = 7,526 votes to 6.2 % = 3,083. The other major victim in Remscheid, as indeed elsewhere, was Hugenberg's DNVP which received only 3.1 % = 1,526 votes. The Staatspartei held up remarkably well with 2,450 votes (4.9 %), as did the Zentrum with 3,093 votes (6.2 %). The Wirtschafts- or Mittelstandspartei also remained stable with 3,021 votes (6.1 %). The Volksrechtspartei on the other hand appears to have lost votes to the NSDAP, slipping from 5.4 % (2,370 votes) to 2.8 % (1,385 votes). The total loss of the traditional middle-class parties and interest groups like the Volksrechtspartei, however, do not alone account for the massive

increase in the NSDAP vote. Considering the votes picked up by the NSDAP in 1928 and the total of votes lost to the NSDAP in 1930 by the DVP, DNVP, Mittelstandspartei, Volksrechtspartei and Völkisch-Nationaler Block, we arrive at a total of 7,564. The Christlicher Volksdienst, standing for the first time in 1930, achieved 1.9 % or 926 votes. When these votes are deducted from the total losses of the middle-class parties and interest groups, we are left with a fairly accurate assessment of where Nazi gains were made. 6,638 votes flowed from these parties to the NSDAP. This means that the Nazis picked up something in the region of 4,800 votes from young or previous non-voters. This observation clearly underlines the Bracher thesis with regard to Remscheid.¹³⁶ We can see that of the increase of 6,892 votes cast in 1930, at least 6,000 were given to the NSDAP and the KPD, roughly in the ratio of 5:1. If we now turn our attention to the actual voting wards of Remscheid, we find these trends confirmed in detail. In the KPD stronghold of Honsberg 3 (ward 19), there was a turn-out of 93.7 %. On this occasion, of the 1,426 eligible voters, 1,337 went to the polls. The increase in the size of the electorate was 225, whilst the increase in the number of votes cast over the 1928 Reichstag election was 226. The KPD took 67.7 % (897 votes), dropping 1.1 percentage points but actually raising its number of votes by 168. The NSDAP was the only other party to make gains in this ward, improving its tally of 6 (0.56 %) in 1928 to 115 (8.7 %). None of the middle-class parties, which anyway were weakly represented in this ward, lost more than a handful of votes to the Nazis, in total around 30 votes. It is therefore evident that the majority of the NSDAP's votes came from new and former non-voters and a minimal switching, a mere handful, from the KPD to the NSDAP.

This trend is also mirrored in the results of ward 18, Honsberg 2, where the KPD improved its position slightly to the detriment of the SPD, and the NSDAP took around 60 votes from the middle-class parties as well as almost all the votes from the 52 new or former non-voters.¹³⁷ In ward 7, Intzestraße, the turn-out rose by 158 votes to 91.9 % with a corresponding rise in those eligible to

vote of 30. Here the KPD improved its share by 78, whilst the SPD lost 20 votes. The NSDAP leapt from 0.2 % = 3 votes in 1928 to 13 % = 179 votes. The DVP lost 53 votes in the main to the NSDAP, whilst the Staatspartei lost 15, the Wirtschaftspartei 13 and the DNVP 10. Considering that the Zentrum gained 10 votes and the Volksrechtspartei 4, it is clear that a similar trend is also evident in this ward. We can say that the NSDAP's net gain from middle-class parties is about 75, and the rest - roughly 100 votes - were received from new and non-voters. Once again vote switching from the KPD to the Nazis is negligible, probably not amounting to more than 10.

In Alleestraße (ward 16) the electorate shrank by 57, although 88 more votes were registered. The turn-out was 92.7 %. Even in this ward the KPD succeeded in improving its total from 165 (13.7 %) to 222 (17 %), a net gain of 57 votes. By the same token the SPD slipped from 91 (7.5 %) to 66 (5.1 %), a net loss of 25 votes which most likely switched to the Communists. The NSDAP made a huge net gain of 288 votes from 21 (1.7 %) in 1928 to 309 (23.7 %). The main casualty here was once again the DVP which plummeted from 33.4 % (403) to 11.7 % (153), a net loss of 250 votes. The Volksrechtspartei was also a casualty, losing 36 votes, as was the Zentrum with a loss of 17 and the DNVP with a loss of 9 votes. On the other hand, the Staatspartei actually increased its total from 9.1 % (110) to 12.1 % (158), a gain of 48, and the Wirtschaftspartei gained 12. From this it can be seen that the Nazis gained mainly at the expense of the DVP and picking up a few votes from the DNVP and the Volksrechtspartei. Once again the Nazis claimed the bulk of the new and former non-voters.

The same trend is discernible in ward 27, Schillerstraße, where the NSDAP increased from 0.9 % (13) to 23.5 % (359 votes), a gain of 346 votes in a 91.7 % turn-out. Although here, too, the size of the electorate diminished by 77, 106 more votes were polled. The Nazi gains were again principally supplied by the desertion of former DVP supporters. This party shrank from 432 votes (30.7 %) to 233 (15.3 %), a loss of 199. The other major casualties were the Volksrechtspartei which lost 76 votes, the Staatspartei which forfeited 13, and the Wirtschaftspartei 14. The KPD made a net gain of 26

votes attracting a total of 191 (12.5 %), and the SPD added 15 to reach 253 (16.6 %). From this it may be concluded that the Nazis profited from the losses of the middle-class parties and interest groups and from the new and former non-voters.

Ward 40, Hasten 4, quickly developed into a Nazi-stronghold in 1930. The turn-out rose to 86.2 % = 996 votes cast. Whereas the number of eligible voters increased by 42 between 1928 and 1930, the total of votes cast went up by 177. Here the Nazis shot up from 7 (0.8 %) to 412 (41.7 %), whilst the DVP slumped from 194 (24.1 %) to 59 (6 %), the Volksrechtspartei from 75 (9.3 %) to 36 (3.6 %), the Wirtschaftspartei from 89 (11 %) to 57 (5.8 %), the DNVP from 63 (7.8 %) to 47 (4.8 %), the SPD from 73 (9.1 %) to 55 (5.5 %), and the Zentrum from 41 (5.1 %) to 31 (3.1 %). The KPD was the only other party apart from the Nazis to increase its vote, this time from 193 (23.9 %) to 210 (21.3 %). It is most likely that the KPD took its gains from the SPD. This means that the NSDAP took almost all the new and former non-voters plus the net losses of the above-mentioned parties.

The radicalisation of the middle class, particularly the protestant small manufacturers, is most lucidly revealed by the result in Luttringhausen, where the DNVP suffered decimation, claiming only 3.3 %, whilst the NSDAP dominated with 41.7 %.¹³⁸ In Lennep the Nazis won 20 % of the total votes at the expense of the DVP and DNVP and with the aid of most of the new and former non-voters.¹³⁹

In an analysis of the Reichstag election result in Remscheid the BV arrived at the same conclusion, namely that the NSDAP had succeeded in securing the votes of small manufacturers, house owners, businessmen and shopkeepers mainly in wards situated in the town centre.¹⁴⁰

The Reichstag election of 31/7/32 at the national level witnessed a further radicalisation towards both the right and left, and brought the Nazis to the peak of their development during the Weimar Republic. The NSDAP doubled its percentage total of 1930 from 18.2 % to 37.3 %, actually capturing 330,000 more votes over the second

ballot of the presidential election in April 1932.¹⁴¹ Whilst the DNVP suffered only slight losses (7 % to 5.9 %), the bourgeois liberal centre was completely annihilated, the DVP lost 73 % of its 1930 vote, the Staatspartei 72 %, the Wirtschaftspartei 89 % and the Christlich-Sozialer Volksdienst 58 %.¹⁴² Whilst the bourgeois centre forfeited 17.1 % of its votes, the Nazis gained 19 %, an observation which offers plain evidence of the bourgeoisie's apostasy to National Socialism. The Zentrum's gain of 0.7% to 15.7% reveals the stability of the catholic centre. The SPD lost around 600,000 votes mainly to the KPD, particularly in industrial centres. The KPD secured a further 700,000 votes bringing its total to 5.3 million.¹⁴³

In Remscheid (town) 15 parties competed for the votes of the electors in an 87.4 %¹⁴⁴ turn-out. The electorate had fallen by 422 since 1930, and a total of 1,817 fewer votes was recorded. Despite the fall in votes, Remscheid's turn-out was still a long way above the 84.1 % Reich average.¹⁴⁵ In Remscheid proper, the KPD just managed to hold on to its predominant position, although it was also able to improve its tally by 627 to reach 18,284 (37.4 %). The NSDAP again secured impressive gains advancing from 11,495 (23.2 %) to 17,920 (36.6 %), an increase of 6,425 votes. The DVP's vote was more than halved from 3,083 (6.2 %) to 1,302 (2.7%). The Staatspartei completely collapsed, receiving only 395 votes (0.8 %). A similar fate befell the Wirtschaftspartei which was reduced from 3,021 (6.1 %) to 350 (0.7 %). The Volksrechtspartei also plummeted from 1,385 (2.8 %) to 220 (0.4 %). The SPD continued its slide from 4,327 (8.7 %) to 3,700 (7.6 %). The Zentrum improved slightly, climbing to 3,409 (7 %), and the DNVP recovered 862 votes to reach a total of 2,388 (4.9 %). None of the remaining splinter parties and interest groups was able to achieve significant results. The existence of these groups only served to weaken the traditional middle-class parties still further.

The polarisation in Remscheid society was now more evident than ever before with 74 % of the registered votes being cast in favour of the KPD and NSDAP, and a further 4.9 % for the DNVP which had also developed into an extremist party.

A brief examination of specific voting wards graphically illustrates the progressive polarisation in Remscheid and unequivocally demonstrates that the bulk of Nazi votes came from the middle and lower-middle classes. In a 90.7 % turn-out in ward 27, Schillerstraße, where the number of eligible voters had fallen by 41, 54 votes fewer were registered on this occasion, and the NSDAP was able to extend its influence, winning 39.7 % (538 votes). The DVP's total was once again halved, from 233 (15.3 %) to 103 (7 %). The Staatspartei was also abandoned by most of its former supporters, plunging from 9.1 % (139) to 2.3 % (33 votes). The Wirtschaftspartei almost disappeared, polling a mere 6 votes, and the same is true of the Volksrechtspartei which received 9 votes. The DNVP gained a further 80 votes, and the Zentrum 40. The KPD lost 3 votes, and the SPD gained 2. Considering that the NSDAP made a net gain of 224 in this ward and the DVP, Staatspartei, Wirtschaftspartei and Volksrechtspartei together lost a total of 351, by subtracting the gains of the DNVP and Zentrum (120 votes) we may conclude that the Nazi gains were wholly due to a further radicalisation of the middle and lower-middle classes.

The picture is repeated in all middle and lower-middle class districts. The Nazis achieved an absolute majority of 56.3 % in ward 40, Hasten 4, benefiting completely from the collapse of the Staatspartei, Wirtschaftspartei and Volksrechtspartei.

In ward 16, Alleestraße, the Nazis won a further 275, whilst the Staatspartei, the Wirtschaftspartei, the Volksrechtspartei and DVP together lost 347, and the Zentrum and DNVP together gained 39.

In Honsberg 3, ward 19, the KPD improved its position at the expense of the SPD, taking 75.2 % = 980 of the total votes, a net gain of 83. The SPD lost 40 votes here, and the Nazis gained a further 20, whilst the Staatspartei, Wirtschaftspartei, DVP and Volksrechtspartei all lost votes. The Zentrum vote remained exactly the same as in 1930. It is quite conceivable that in this ward despite making a few gains at the expense of the middle-class parties and splinter groups, the Nazis actually lost voters who had supported them in 1930 and who now switched to the KPD. Although the NSDAP's continuing success was primarily due to support from

the middle and lower-middle classes, it is also evident that they were able to attract votes from the working class, particularly in districts like Hasten and Reinshagen which did not contain working-class estates, as was the case in Honsberg, Neuenhaus, Laspert and Kremenholz, for instance. By comparison, Hasten and Reinshagen were old manufacturing districts where the traditionally paternalistic employer-employee relationship in the small family-owned factories and workshops still persisted. The houses occupied by workers in these areas were predominantly owned by small manufacturers and members of the old middle class. It has already been established that the SPD, USPD and KPD never succeeded in significantly extending their influence to those workers employed in the type of factory which abounded in Hasten and Reinshagen¹⁴⁶, precisely because of the close dependence of workers on their employers. The same is true for many workers in Luttringhausen which - like Hasten - also developed into a Nazi stronghold. Here the NSDAP won every single ward comfortably, receiving 61.6 % of the votes. The principal casualties in Luttringhausen were, as indeed everywhere, the interest groups and splinter parties of the middle and right. In Lennep the NSDAP was the clear winner with 42.2 %. The Nazi success in the two recently incorporated satellite towns were sufficient to alter radically the complexion of the election results for Remscheid as a whole, so that for the first time since 1914 the leading party of the local workers failed to dominate the political scene.¹⁴⁷

The Reichstag elections held on 6th November 1932 was the fifth time during that year that voters were called to the polls. Despite a further increase in the size of the electorate (163,000), 1.4 million votes fewer were recorded.¹⁴⁸ The turn-out sank from 84.1 % to 80.6 %, demonstrating disillusionment and election-weariness. The most prominent outcome of this poll was the NSDAP's loss of around two million votes, reflecting a percentage fall from 37.3 % to 33.1 %. Nazi losses particularly benefited the DNVP which, after years of decline, increased its share from 5.9 % to 8.3 %. The DVP was also able to recoup some of its losses as parts of the

bourgeoisie became alarmed at the extent of SA terror.¹⁴⁹ The remainder of Nazi losses were to the KPD which made additional gains of 700,000 to become the third largest party in the Reichstag. This party now had the support of 5.98 million voters (16.9%), whilst the SPD lost a further 712,000 to register 7.25 million (20.4 %). The bulk of the KPD's additional votes came from former SPD supporters and unemployed youth voting for the first time.¹⁵⁰

The election result in Remscheid again reflected the general trend in the country as a whole. The turn-out in Remscheid town fell to 85.1 % which was, however, still well above the national average. Once again the KPD was able to improve its share of the vote, polling 19,324 (40.6 %). The SPD remained constant at 3,681 votes (7.7 %). The NSDAP lost 3,348 votes but still constituted the second strongest party on the local scene with 14,572 (30.6 %). The DVP and DNVP were able to win back votes from the NSDAP, but there were still no signs that they might recover the influence they had enjoyed in the pre-1930 years. The Staatspartei continued its slide into obscurity taking only 377 votes (0.8 %). The Zentrum lost a few votes but by and large remained firm, as indeed it had done throughout the crisis years. The KPD was now the only party still capable of expansion in electoral terms in Remscheid. A glance at the nine separate voting wards in tables 17, 18 and 19 underlines a general trend. From there it can be seen that the NSDAP lost more heavily in middle and lower-middle class areas than in working-class districts. On the other hand the KPD made gains everywhere even in Lennep and Luttringhausen.¹⁵¹

In ward 27, Schillerstraße, the NSDAP lost 9.3 % (145 votes) whilst the DVP picked up 70 votes (+ 5 %), and the DNVP gained a further 59 votes (+ 4.4 %). In ward 16, Alleestraße, the NSDAP vote fell from 584 to 465 (- 8.1 %) whilst the DVP gained 56 votes rising from 6.8 % to 11.8 %. In ward 22, Am Bruch, which was also a middle-class district, the NSDAP's share of the vote fell from 593 to 484 (42.6 % to 36.1 %). In Eibertelder Straße (ward 31) NSDAP losses amounted to 119, a percentage fall from 47.2 % to 38.9 %.

In working-class areas NSDAP losses did not attain the same proportions as in middle-class districts, and as a rule did not amount substantially to KPD gains. In ward 7, Intzestraße, for example, the Nazis lost 50 votes whilst the KPD gained 6, the SPD 5 and the Wirtschaftspartei 8. From this result it is evident that the bulk of NSDAP losses were due, above all, to disillusionment, lack of interest or election weariness, particularly amongst that section of voters which the Nazis had succeeded in mobilising for the first time in 1930. This section of the electorate was that of former non-voters, the politically disinterested who had been stirred momentarily, but now showed signs of slipping back into their former state of inertia. The same trend is visible in Honsberg 3 (ward 19) where the NSDAP lost 56 votes whilst the Communists gained 19, the SPD 4 and the DNVP 7. Ward 33, Laspert 2, offers further evidence of this trend. Here the NSDAP lost 72 votes whilst the Communists gained 5 and the SPD 1. The DVP won a further 28 votes, the Zentrum 4 and the DNVP 5. The electorate in this ward expanded by only 6 whilst the number of registered votes fell by 34. The gains of the DVP, DNVP and Zentrum and the lower turn-out therefore account totally for the NSDAP losses. Ward, 5 Neuenhaus/Lenneper Straße, proved something of an exception as the bulk of NSDAP losses quite clearly benefited the KPD. In this ward the electorate increased by 32 whilst the number of registered votes remained the same. Here the Nazis lost 73 votes whilst the KPD gained 81, the DNVP 17 and the DVP 12. The discrepancy between voting behaviour in this ward and the majority of other working-class districts may have been due to the changing status of working-class house owners on the Bokerhohe estate.¹⁵²

In Lennep and Luttrighausen voting followed the same general pattern with the NSDAP losing votes (in Lennep more than 800, and in Luttrighausen 350) to the DVP, DNVP and KPD, although in both towns the Nazis were still comfortably in the lead.

The conclusions drawn from these results therefore are:

- that the NSDAP was not only unable to sustain its remarkable growth-rate over the preceding three years, but was now witnessing a marked decline of its potential support, particularly to

the advantage of the DVP and DNVP, but also in some cases to the Communists. It seems that the first groups to desert the Nazis were indeed those elements who had been mainly responsible for this party's extraordinary success in the 1930 election, namely the former non-voters who, be it through election weariness, disillusionment or lack of interest, returned to their former ways.

- The NSDAP was furthermore unable to retain the support of that section of the working class which had switched its allegiance in the 1930 and July 1932 elections. The analysis above testifies fairly conclusively to the theory that the Nazis had only a very limited appeal to the workers in industrial centres like Remscheid, and that most of those workers who had wavered in 1930 and July 1932 either returned to the KPD or else stayed at home in November 1932.
- The massive backing from the middle and lower-middle classes was also beginning to dissipate, particularly amongst the traditionally independent sections of the bourgeoisie, alarmed at the antics of SA roughians, the failure of the party's leadership to curb such practices and the apparent encouragement of terror in the upper echelons of the party hierarchy, both on the national and local level. For many independent middle-class voters desiring a return to an authoritarian nationalist style of government, Papen's 'cabinet of Barons' appeared to offer an acceptable alternative to the 'unpredictable rowdies' grouped around Hitler, many of whom seemed intent on enforcing a revolution couched in highly suspicious socialist slogans.

The desertion of voters from the NSDAP can in no way be interpreted as a move towards moderation, because the position of the DVP and DNVP had shifted continually to the right whilst the local working class movement had gone the other way, as more and more abandoned the SPD, pinning their hopes on a communist victory. The KPD, despite its increasing support, had failed to widen its appeal to non-working class sections of society and made almost no impact on industrial white-collar workers and shop salesmen. A comparison of election results at the beginning of the Weimar Republic and at the end shows that the parties of the working class were not able to

add substantially to the support they enjoyed after the inception of the new system.¹⁵³ Within the scope of the workers' parties, however, there had been a clear radicalisation which was again boosted by the experience of depression. The middle group occupied at the beginning of the 20s by the Zentrum, DDP and parts of the DVP was almost totally erased after 1930, so that by the end of 1932, Remscheid was firmly split into two radically opposed camps.

TABLE 14 : Wages in the Remscheid Iron and Steel Industry
in Pfennigs per hour.

1/5/29	1/1/31
Male, 24 years, A = 85	Male, 24 years, A = 80
24 years, C = 78	24 years, C = 73
24 years, E = 69	24 years, E = 65
20 years, A = 66	20 years, A = 62
20 years, C = 61	20 years, C = 57
20 years, E = 53	20 years, E = 50
Apprentice, 1st year = 22	Apprentice, 1st year = 21
2nd year = 24	2nd year = 23
3rd year = 30	3rd year = 28
4th year = 44	4th year = 41
Female, 14 years = 20	Female, 14 years, = 19
20 years = 38	20 years = 36
22 years = 51	22 years = 48

Wages valid for the Bergisch Land

9/11/31	1/1/32
Male, 24 years, A = 73	Male, 24 years, A = 69
24 years, C = 67	24 years, C = 63
24 years, E = 60	24 years, E = 57
20 years, A = 67	20 years, A = 63
20 years, C = 62	20 years, C = 58
20 years, E = 54	20 years, E = 50
Apprentice, 1st year, 1st half = 14	= 13
1st year, 2nd half = 17	= 15
2nd year = 23	= 21
3rd year = 29	= 26
4th year = 39	= 35
Female, 14 years = 17	= 15
20 years and above = 45	= 41

Key:

A = fully qualified master craftsman
 C = semi-skilled worker of more than three years experience
 E = ordinary labourer

Source: HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 33694

TABLE 15: Food Prices in Remscheid, 1930-1933

	Sept. Oct 1930	Nov. 1930	Sept. & Schürmann (S) April 1931	Sept. & June July 1931	Sept. (T) & Einigkeit (E) October 1931	Nov-Dec 1931	Sept. (T) & Einigkeit (E) March 1932	Sept. (T) & Schürmann May & June 1932	Sept. 7/8/32	Sept. 3/1/35
Wurst	0.45	0.40, 0.50	0.35, 0.42	0.33	0.33 (E) 0.32 (T)	0.33	0.28 (E)	0.27		
Speck	1.52, 1.95	1.60	1.44	1.46, 1.55	1.28 (T)	1.20, 1.22	1.52 (E) 1.60 (E)	1.45 (T)	1.38	1.18
Speck	0.72		0.58	0.53, 0.56	0.60 (E)	0.50, 0.54		0.38		
Speck	0.75	0.70	0.45 ^s	0.43, 0.52	0.40 (T) 0.76 (E)		0.46 (E)	0.42 (T)		
4 lbs	1.20	1.25	1.30		1.00 (T) (4 1/2 lbs)	1.00	1.35 (E)	1.15 (T) 0.25 (1lb) (T)		
2 1/2 - 3 lbs				0.95			0.50 (E)			
Wurst				0.25	0.45 (T) (5 lbs)	0.48 (2 lbs)	0.25 (T)			
Speck cheese	0.80, 0.90	0.85	1.20	0.76	0.70 (T)	0.66, 0.68	0.70 (T)	0.58, 0.65 (T)	0.65	0.68
Speck cheese		1.25	1.25 ^s	1.25, 1.40		1.00	0.90 (T)	0.98	0.85	0.95
Speckwurst	1.50, 1.75	1.40, 1.45	1.40	1.40	1.40 (E)	1.00, 1.10	0.95 (T)	0.92, 0.95 (T)		
Speckwurst	1.55, 1.75	1.45	1.45	1.50		1.20	1.10 (T)	1.10 (T) 1.25 (T)		
Speckwurst	1.00	1.00	0.85	0.80		0.75, 0.78	0.90 (E)	0.78 (T)		0.78
Speckwurst					0.60 (E) 0.80 (E)		0.45 (E)	0.35 (T)		
Speckwurst					0.60 (E) 0.90 (E)		0.45 (E)	0.35 (T) 0.50 (T)		
Speck	1.40, 2.40, 3.00, 3.40		2.00 - 3.80	1.95, 2.40, 2.80, 3.00	1.95 (T) 2.20 (E) 3.00 (E) 3.60 (E)	1.95 - 3.60	2.00 (E) 3.20 (E)	2.00 (T) 2.10 (T)	2.00	2.25, 2.50
Speckwurst	0.45		0.40	0.45		0.35		0.28 (T)		
Speck	0.38	0.40	0.46			0.30		0.45 (T)		
4 lbs Speckwurst	0.95				0.95 (T)			0.25 (T) (1lb)		

TABLE 16: Suicide Figures for Remscheid

year	male	female	total
1923	4 ^{a)}	4	8 ^{b)}
1924	13	4	17
1925	13	3	16
1926	13	3	16
1932	-	-	19 ⁵³
1943	-	-	12
1944	-	-	11
1945	-	-	27
1946	-	-	15
1947	-	-	7.

a) possibly 14, therefore b) possibly 18.

Source: HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 53952, 54332 T,

and for 1932, RGA, 12/1/33, Leben und Tod in Remscheid
im Jahre 1932.

Table 17

Reichstag elections 1920 - 1932

PARTIES & TURN-OUT	BISMARCKSTR. 1/				BISMARCKSTR. 2/				Eichestr. 4/			
	1928	1930	31/7/32	6/11/32	1928	1930	31/7/32	6/11/32	1928	1930	31/7/32	6/11/32
	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes
Eligible	1318	1287	1257	1296	1347	1339	1526	1575	1411	1421	1535	1564
Votes cast	1057	1143	1095	1086	1067	1212	1342	1316	1138	1255	1309	1281
Turn-out & Valid votes	80.19 1037	88.8 1132	87.1 1091	83.8 1082	79.2 1050	90.5 1203	87.9 1334	83.5 1305	80.6 1109	88.3 1249	85.3 1296	81.9 1268
KPD	23.0 239	24.3 275	26.8 292	30.2 327	28.0 294	27.9 336	34.3 458	36.8 506	32.4 359	29.8 373	32.0 415	34.6 439
NSDAP	1.1 11	31.4 355	46.9 512	40.8 442	1.5 16	24.3 293	37.3 498	30.5 398	2.2 24	21.2 265	36.3 471	30.6 388
SPD	9.6 100	5.2 59	5.9 65	6.4 69	10.8 113	9.9 119	8.5 113	8.9 116	15.8 175	10.6 132	8.0 104	4.0 114
DVP	29.3 304	8.6 97	3.5 38	5.4 58	20.0 210	6.9 83	3.6 48	5.2 68	18.0 200	8.7 109	3.1 40	5.8 74
Zentrum	9.0 93	8.8 100	7.3 80	7.5 81	10.0 105	11.2 135	10.4 139	9.6 125	12.4 137	10.7 134	12.4 161	11.3 143
DNVP	6.5 68	3.3 38	7.0 76	7.4 80	6.0 63	2.4 29	2.8 38	3.8 50	5.4 60	3.8 47	3.7 48	5.8 74
DDP / Staatspartei	6.1 63	5.5 62	0.5 6	0.7 8	7.7 81	3.2 39	0.3 4	0.5 7	4.1 45	6.3 60	1.5 19	0.8 11
Wirtschaftspartei	8.4 87	8.6 98	0.2 2	1.0 11	8.8 93	7.2 87	0.4 5	0.5 7	4.9 55	3.1 39	0.4 5	0.6 8
Vollrechtspartei	5.8 60	1.9 22	0.09 1	0.18 2	5.0 53	2.3 28	0.5 7	1.1 15	3.7 41	2.4 30	0.2 3	0.23 3

Table 18
Intzeshape 7/

Reichstag elections 1928-1932
Honsberg 3, 17/

Sülbenwerte 25/

Listes and Turn-Out	Table 18				Reichstag elections 1928-1932				Sülbenwerte 25/				
	1928	1930	31/7/32	6/11/32	1928	1930	31/7/32	6/11/32	1928	1930	31/7/32	6/11/32	
	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes	% votes					
Eligible	1477	1507	1510	-	1201	1426	1431	1411	1270	1459	1522	1571	
Votes cast	1274	1386	1326	1274	1071	1337	1318	1294	1024	1378	1382	1310	
Turn-out and valid votes	83.5 1223	91.9 1381	87.8 1312	84.5 1264	89.2 1060	93.7 1324	92.1 1304	91.7 1274	80.6 1003	94.4 1372	90.8 1378	83.4 1305	
K P D	56.6 692	55.7 770	62.1 815	65.0 821	68.8 729	67.7 897	75.2 980	78.4 999	30.7 308	34.9 479	36.6 504	39.6 517	
NSDAP	0.2 3	13.0 179	16.1 212	12.8 162	0.56 6	8.7 115	10.4 135	6.2 79	0.7 7	31.8 436	45.4 625	39.2 512	
SPD	11.6 142	8.8 122	7.5 98	8.1 103	12.3 130	10.0 132	7.1 92	7.5 96	9.0 90	6.8 93	6.2 85	5.8 76	
DVP	7.8 96	3.1 43	1.9 25	1.1 14	4.0 42	1.9 25	0.46 6	0.7 9	14.5 146	6.4 88	2.2 30	5.3 69	
Zentrum	5.7 70	5.8 80	6.3 83	6.3 79	5.8 62	4.7 62	4.8 62	4.2 53	2.4 24	1.7 24	1.4 19	1.6 21	
DINVP	1.6 20	0.7 10	2.0 25	2.2 28	1.7 18	1.0 13	0.7 9	1.3 16	4.9 49	3.4 46	5.5 76	5.6 73	
DP / Staatspartei	4.4 54	2.8 39	0.3 4	0.15 2	3.2 34	2.3 30	0.34 5	0.3 4	8.2 82	4.8 66	0.4 6	0.38 5	
Wirtschaftspartei	7.9 97	6.1 84	0.45 6	1.1 14	1.3 14	0.8 11	-	-	0.15 2	13.0 130	5.4 74	0.4 6	0.5 7
Volksrechtspartei	1.5 18	1.6 22	0.38 5	0.5 6	0.7 8	0.37 5	-	-	-	9.9 99	5.0 69	0.7 10	0.9 13
Christlich Sozialer Volksdienst			2.1 28	2.6 33									

Alleestrabe 16/

Schillerstrabe 27/

Hasten 4, 40/

Parties and Turn-Out	Alleestrabe 16/				Schillerstrabe 27/				Hasten 4, 40/			
	1928 % votes	1930 % votes	31/7/32 % votes	6/11/32 % votes	1928 % votes	1930 % votes	31/7/32 % votes	6/11/32 % votes	1928 % votes	1930 % votes	31/7/32 % votes	6/11/32 % votes
Eligible	1472	1415	1377	1397	1752	1675	1634	1695	1114	1156	1140	1156
Votes cast	1224	1312	1255	1217	1430	1536	1482	1455	819	996	958	914
in-out and valid votes	83.2 1207	92.7 1304	91.1 1252	87.1 1208	81.6 1408	91.7 1525	90.7 1466	85.8 1441	73.5 806	86.2 988	84.0 951	79.1 904
KPD	13.7 165	17.0 222	16.8 210	18.0 218	11.7 165	12.5 191	12.8 188	13.9 200	23.9 193	21.3 210	22.2 211	25.2 228
NSDAP	1.7 21	23.7 309	46.6 584	38.5 465	0.9 13	23.5 359	39.7 583	30.4 438	0.8 7	41.7 412	56.3 535	50.3 455
SPD	7.5 91	5.1 66	5.6 70	6.2 75	16.9 238	16.6 253	17.4 255	16.2 233	9.1 73	5.5 55	4.5 43	4.3 39
DVP	33.4 403	11.7 153	6.8 86	11.8 142	30.7 432	15.3 233	7.0 103	12.0 173	24.1 194	6.0 59	3.8 36	4.4 40
Zentrum	8.9 107	6.4 90	7.8 98	7.2 87	4.5 64	3.9 59	6.5 95	5.2 75	5.1 41	3.1 31	4.2 40	3.6 33
DNVP	8.8 106	7.4 97	10.2 128	12.0 145	7.4 104	6.4 98	12.1 178	16.5 237	7.8 63	4.8 47	6.4 61	8.9 81
DP/Staatspartei	9.1 110	12.1 158	1.5 19	1.3 16	10.8 152	9.1 139	2.3 33	2.5 36	7.1 57	5.5 54	0.63 6	0.2 2
Wirtschaftspartei	8.1 98	8.4 110	0.5 6	1.15 14	6.9 97	5.4 83	0.4 6	0.3 4	11.0 89	5.8 57	1.3 12	1.3 12
Volksrechtspartei	6.9 83	3.6 47	0.63 8	2.1 25	8.7 123	3.6 47	0.6 9	2.0 29	9.3 75	3.6 36	0.3 3	0.7 7

CHAPITRE V

NOTES

- 1 Between 1927/28 and 1932/33 total production in Germany fell by 31 % and industrial production by 43 %.
Fünfundsiebzig Jahre Industriegewerkschaft 1891 bis 1966. Vom Deutschen Metallarbeiter-Verband zur Industriegewerkschaft Metall, Frankfurt a.M. 1966, p. 2/1.
- 2 Ibid. Between February 1929 and February 1932 unemployment rose in Germany from 2.6 million to 6.1 million.
47.4 % of the DMV's members were unemployed in 1932 and 29.1 % were on short time. Only 23.5 % of the DMV's members were fully employed.
- 3 Klonne, op. cit.
- 4 Fünfundsiebzig Jahre Industriegewerkschaft..., op. cit., p. 276f.
Employed workers in the DMV for instance suffered, in all, four wage reductions between November 1930 and September 1932, which amounted to more than a 25 % loss of earnings over the 1930 figure.
- 5 Cf. Reinhard Kühnl, Der deutsche Faschismus in Quellen und Dokumenten, Köln 1977, pp. 13-21;
and Timothy W. Mason, Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich..., op. cit., pp. 10-12.
- 6 Klonne, op. cit., p. 231.
- 7 Ibid., p. 232.
- 8 RGA, 1/1/33, Das Jahr 1932 in Zahlen.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 StA Remscheid, II A/35, Verwaltungsbericht 1932/33.
- 11 StA Remscheid, II A/36, Verwaltungsbericht 1933.
- 12 StA Remscheid, II A/35, op. cit., p. 5.
- 13 StA Remscheid, X Ca/1, Geschäftsbericht des Städtischen Arbeitsamtes vom 1/4/26 bis 31/3/27.

The report contains a comparison of unemployment figures of ten Rhineland towns. Remscheid followed by Lennep was top of the list with the highest unemployment rate of 81.3 per thousand inhabitants.

14 StA Remscheid, X R/14, Argever Remscheid (1 Nr. 40), Februar 1933, bulletin of the employers' association of iron and steel manufacturers.

15 This figure is a calculation based on the returns of a questionnaire distributed by the local chamber of commerce in 1935. The census was only aimed at the production sector, ie. privately owned industry. Of the town's large factories only the two Mannesmann plants failed to respond. Together, these two factories had a total workforce of around 2,000. The census revealed a total factory workforce in Remscheid, Lennep and Luttringhausen of around 21,700 to which must be added the 2,000 from Mannesmann, plus the employees of the railway, post office, the council workforce, shop assistants and self-employed, in all perhaps between four and five thousand. This would give a total of around 27 to 28 thousand.

Source: Bergische Industrie- und Handelskammer Wuppertal-Remscheid in Wuppertal-Elberfeld.

16 BV, 7/7/30.

17 BV, 11/3/32.

18 RGA, 9/1/33.

19 StA Remscheid, X R/14, Argever Remscheid (1 Nr. 40), op. cit., and 1 Nr. 46, December 1933.

The statistics show that the reemployment of approximately 160 workers between December 1932 and February 1933 was balanced by an increase of over 300 workers on a less than 28-hour week.

20 See various articles in the BV during these months.

21 StA Remscheid, II A/34, op. cit., p. 37.

The actual number of tram-car passengers fell between 1929 and 1931 from 8,244,725 to 5,885,033.

22 StA Remscheid, II A/35, op. cit., p. 36.

23 StA Remscheid, II A/34, op. cit., p. 21;
and StA Remscheid, II A/35, ibid., p. 19.

24 StA Remscheid, II A/34, op. cit., p. 36 f.

25 Klönne, op. cit., p. 232.

26 Preller, op. cit., p. 410.

27 The major factor preventing an accurate correlation of the two tables is their incompleteness due to the lack of regular and reliable statistical material either in the Remscheid or Dusseldorf archives. The only wage tables pertaining to the Remscheid iron and steel industry for manual workers for the period 1929 to 1933, which could be traced, are given in table 14, and even so the wage rates for 9/11/31 and 1/1/32 are those valid for the Bergische Land and not specifically for Remscheid. It was not possible to ascertain whether different rates were paid in Remscheid for this period or whether those operating in the Bergische Land were also binding for Remscheid. Whatever the case, it is not assumed that the rates between Remscheid and the Bergische Land as a whole would differ by very much.

Owing to the lack of statistics showing prices, recourse had to be taken to prices advertised in newspapers. These appeared irregularly and were interspersed with special offers to attract customers. Furthermore, different qualities of the same product were as a rule not indicated, so that it is not clear whether a seemingly incongruous price was the result of a higher quality or of a sudden price increase due to other factors.

Because of the irregularity of price lists in the newspapers and the absence of regular statistical material pertaining to other prices such as rents, gas, electricity and coal, it was decided to restrict the price survey to food. Even here there is a lack of continuity in the advertising of specific items, so that it was not possible to complete the prices table.

28 StA Remscheid, X C/45.

The survey presented by the Bergische Kaufmannschaft des Einzelhandels e.V. Lennep showed an overall decrease in the cost of living index between July 1929 and October 1931 of 13.8 %.

29 Owing to the difficulties noted in note 27, an accurate correlation is not possible, so that the tables can only serve as an approximate guide to the prevailing trend.

- 30 StA Remscheid, II A/35, op. cit., p. 19.
The number of unemployed workers dependent on welfare benefit rose from 1,963 in January 1931 to 7,113 at the end of 1932, and 7.238 on February 1st, 1933.
- 31 BV, 4/6/32, Früchte des kleineren Übels.
- 32 StA Remscheid, II A/34, op. cit., p. 22.
- 33 StA Remscheid, II A/35, op. cit., p. 23.
- 34 BV, 18/6/32.
- 35 See HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo and denazification files which contain information on employment, earnings and periods without work.
- 36 BV, 15/2/32, Kinder betteln auf der Straße;
see also Die Freie Presse, 1/12/32, Der grausame Mensch.
This article reported the common practice of children and mothers at the Ostbahnhof goods yard in Remscheid, scraping up handfuls of coal which fell between railway trucks during unloading, so that they would have some fuel to burn at home.
- 37 BV, 20/2/32, Infolge Unterernährung zu Tode gestürzt.
- 38 StA Remscheid, X R/14, Arbeitgeberverband der Eisen- und Metallindustrie von Remscheid und Umgebung e.V., April 10, 1930, containing Erwerbslosenziffer im alten Stadtkreis Remscheid am 24.2.30.
- 39 The building industry customarily lays off workers during the harsh winter months in Remscheid so that a higher unemployment rate amongst building workers would not normally be so alarming. During the 1930-33 depression, however, the fluctuation was in no way as great as in the pre-crisis years, so we can assume that the high unemployment rate in February 1930 was due less to the weather than the crisis. Furthermore, the continuing depressed state of the housing construction market, see BV 16/3/32, Das Wohnungselend bleibt bestehen, and RGA, 3/1/33, 1932 in Zahlen, would tend to support this argument.
- 40 BV, 16/3/32, Das Wohnungselend bleibt bestehen.
- 41 RGA, 3/1/33, 1932 in Zahlen.
- 42 BV, 16/3/32, Wo bleiben die Hauszinssteuergelder ?

- 43 BV, 8/7/30, Eine "Blüte" des Remscheider Wohnungselends.
- 44 BV, 8/7/30, Jedem Deutschen eine gesunde Wohnung: Wie die Wirklichkeit direkt aussieht.
- 45 BV, 30/9/30, Ratten, Mause und Wanzen, und dafür müssen 34 Mark monatlich bezahlt werden. Wohnungsskandale in den Stadtvierteln Honsberg - Stachelhausen. - Nur Sowjetdeutschland schafft andere Zustände.
- 46 BV, 23/9/30, Zustände, die zum Himmel schreien.
- 47 BV, 23/9/30, Besteuerung der Arbeitslosen.
- 48 BV, 20/9/30, Neue Massenausplunderung geplant.
- 49 BV, 20/8/30, Durch Hunger in den Tod getrieben.

'Bei vielen ist dann der Strick oder der Gashahn der letzte Ausweg. tausende von Menschen werfen jährlich ihr Leben, durch Hunger und Not getrieben, von sich. Dieser Weg ist falsch - dadurch wird an dem kapitalistischen Mordsystem nichts geändert.'

And *ibid.*, report about an attempted suicide.

ibid., 1/32, report about an attempted suicide in Unterholterfelder Straße.

- 50 Furthermore, the suicide statistics which do exist reveal little or nothing of the social background of the victims, and newspaper reports dealing with this particular taboo provide little in the way of information which would enable the researcher to reconstruct a more accurate picture. From the figures available, the only certain conclusion to be drawn is that women were significantly less prone to successful suicide than men.
- 51 Erich Thieler recalling a number of suicides during the Weimar period at the Leufelsteich espoused the theory that the victims were predominantly working class, unemployed, and fathers of large families. Both Otto Rau and Hannah Quaas also related cases of suicide which they attributed to despair owing to long periods of unemployment.

- 52 This is not to deny that workers, in some cases politically conscious workers, committed suicide, but it is the author's contention that such suicides would tend to be for other reasons, eg. long periods of mental depression or incurable pathological illness or for political reasons, as was the case in 1933.
- 53 For purposes of comparison, the number of deaths in Remscheid in 1932 due to other causes, inter alia 18 (69), pneumonia (90), heart disease (105), cancer (153), bronchitis (21), strokes (83), accidents (26).
- 54 BV, 5/8/30, Arbeitermord in der BSI.
- 55 BV, 22/8/30, 50 % Akkordabzug für Arbeiterinnen.
- 56 Cf. HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo-Akte 25518, Adolf Sohngen.
An example of employer reaction to KPD agitation is furnished by the case of Adolf Sohngen who was a qualified metal turner and locksmith. In addition to these skills, he was also versed in several other work processes which made him an attractive prospect for employers. However, owing to his widely known sympathy for the KPD, he spent approximately 6 years unemployed between 1923 and 1933. In 1931 he was sacked by Vaillant, a medium-sized Remscheid firm, for strike agitation.
- 57 BV, 15/9/30, Firma Halbach, eine faschistische Hochburg.
This article based on information received by correspondence claimed,

'Wer in diesem Betrieb nicht Mitglied des bürgerlichen Turnvereins oder der in diesem Betrieb faschistisch verseuchten Feuerwehr ist, hat keine Nummer und bekommt Arbeiten zugewiesen, woran er weniger verdient.'

- BV, 16/3/32, Rund um die Hastener Nazi-Kaserne.

The article gave a list of such local firms who openly sympathised with the aims of the NSDAP. The information on which this report was based was allegedly supplied by former SA members. The author erred with his allegation that manufacturer Fritz Kneipper from Hasten had supplied furniture for the barracks and was obliged to print an apology. However, the

close identification of this firm with the NSDAP was common knowledge throughout Remscheid. Even after the collapse of the Third Reich this company was regarded as a haven for former NSDAP members.

The above-mentioned article further alleged that in return for support, the SA had offered to provide strike-breakers when necessary.

BV, 9/6/32, Hungerlöhne und langes Schufften.

The subject of this article was a laundry in Remscheid. The owner was said to be a firm supporter of the NSDAP. He is alleged to have sacked a young messenger boy because of his membership of the KJVD.

Bv, 8/1/32 Rote Fahne über Betrieb Piepersberg - Nazi-Dowidat entläßt gesamte Belegschaft.

The owners of both Luttringhausen factories were NSDAP members and allegedly gave preference to NSDAP sympathisers.

58 Preller, op. cit., p. 250.

59 BV, 11/4/32, Schufften für Hungerlohn.

60 Interview with Artur Bevernick, cf. Bergischer Beobachter.

61 Arthur Rosenberg, Entstehung und Geschichte der Weimarer Republik, Frankfurt a.M. 1955, p. 4/0.

The author detected a 'revolutionary wave' sweeping through the country between 1929 and 1933 and concluded that the workers' movement, in particular the SPD and free trade unions, were unable to exploit the popular hatred of the capitalist state and turn it to their own advantage. Instead, the workers' movement expended too much time and energy on its own internal disputes.

62 Klönne, op. cit., p. 235.

63 Henry A. Turner jr., "Big Business and the Rise of Hitler", in: idem. (edit.), Nazism and the Third Reich, op. cit., p. 98.

64 Eve Rosenhaft, "Gewalt in der Politik: Zum Problem des sozialen Militarismus", in: K.-J. Müller und R. Opitz (edit.), Militar und Militarismus..., op. cit.

65 Peter H. Merkl, The Making of the Stormtrooper, op. cit., p. 95.

Merkel cites the Berlin police chief Grzesinski who claimed that by the autumn of 1930 violence between Communists and Nazis had escalated to a point that 'knives, blackjacks and revolvers had replaced political argument.'

- 66 Alan Bullock, Hitler, A Study in Tyranny, Harmondsworth 1952, p. 218.

In August 1932 the von Papen government announced the death penalty for clashes which resulted in the loss of life.

- 67 Gustav Flohr, Tagebuch und Erinnerungen, (unpublished manuscript), p. 13.

The author relates an incident in which Remscheid stormtroopers were lured into a trap and then overwhelmed by superior odds. The workers then forced the Nazis to remove their clothes before sending them home almost naked.

- 68 BV, January 1932.

- 69 Bullock, op. cit., p. 223-224.

In this particular incident, a communist miner living in the Silesian village of Potempa was attacked by five stormtroopers and kicked to death. The von Papen government, alarmed by the frequent outbreaks of violence prior to and during the July elections, was anxious to curb such excesses and introduced the death penalty (see note 66). The five defendants were sentenced to death, but this was later commuted to life imprisonment as a result of massive pressure from influential national and National Socialist circles.

- 70 Karl Rohe, Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold..., op. cit., p. 224.

- 71 Merkel, op. cit., p. 96;
and Rosenhaft, op. cit., p. 254.

- 72 Rohe, op. cit., p. 223 f.

- 73 BV, 16/3/32, Wer sind die Führer der SA ?

This article identified former policeman Alfred Obst as the local SA weapons instructor.

See also HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo-Akte 15931, Karl Kleinjung.

According to a Gestapo report and a statement by Kleinjung, Remscheid Communists held target practice sessions on a colleague's chicken farm.

- 74 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/649, ./. Schweikart und Genossen.
See police report on SA arsenal dated 28/9/31, Solingen.
According to the report the main procurer of weapons for the Remscheid SA was Adolf Thiele, an employee of the Rheinisch Westfälische Elektrizitätswerke in Lennepe. It was further alleged that the director of the RWE in Lennepe, who was a Nazi sympathiser, helped to finance the purchase of weapons. The report listed a number of Nazis who were in possession of arms. These included the Willmund brothers of Lennepe and the Dingel brothers of Remscheid. The Communists also appear to have had a good stock of pistols. According to Erich Thieler the Arbeiterschwimmverein was organised in armed Zehnergruppen during the years 1931 and 1932. There were ten such groups with around 100 pistols. The RFB and its successor, the KgdF and Roter Massenschutz was supplied with weapons by the stepbrother of a Remscheid RFB member who was a gunsmith in Dillenburg. It is, however, unlikely that this was the only source of supply.
See HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 18552, Erich Wenz.
The Remscheid RFB/KgdF also had a cache of 13 rifles which originated from the Kapp-Putsch. The butts of these weapons were renewed by joiner Wilhelm Eppels. The rifles were numbered 1 to 13, with number 13 being signified as the last. In 1933 the Nazis gained possession of the rifle number 13 and hence knew of the existence of the other remaining weapons. This careless indiscretion was to cause the inmates of the concentration camp at Kemna much suffering during the summer of 1933, as the Nazis tried to discover the whereabouts of the remaining weapons.
Information: Erich Thieler and HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 17704, Wilhelm Eppels.
- 75 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30643, 17/1/30, 11/4/30 and 17/7/30.
- 76 BV, 10/4/29, Bezirksparteitag der KPD Niederrhein. - Bericht der Bezirksleitung.

77 Merkl, op. cit, p. 60.

The author includes a table showing the age distribution in the SPD; KPD and NSDAP. The table reveals that in 1933, 42.7 % of the NSDAP's members were below the age of 30 years. Unfortunately, no corresponding figure for the KPD is given, probably owing to the unavailability of statistics for 1932/33. Instead, we are told that in 1927, 31.8 % of the KPD's membership were under the age of 30, compared with 18.1 % of the SPD's membership for 1930.

78 See Chapter IV, The Extreme Right in Remscheid.

79 RGA, 10/8/31, Das Freie Wort - Schüsse in der Nacht.

80 RGA, 10/8/31, ibid.

81 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/938, ././ Tesch und Genossen.

A contingent of 60 SA men attacked a group of four or five Communists including Scher.

82 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/659, ././ Siesenop und Genossen.

83 Rosenhaff, op. cit., p. 247.

84 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/1200, ././ Willmund und Genossen.

85 For similar clashes see William Sheridan Allen, The Nazi Seizure of Power..., op. cit. , pp. 84-100.

86 see note 74.

87 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/1200, op. cit.

See evidence collected by the Nazi lawyer Schroer and handed to the public prosecutor in Elberfeld.

88 Friedrich Arnold (edit.), Anschlage. Deutsche Politik an der Litfaßsaule 1900 - 19/1, Ebenhausen, München 1972, pp. 59, 64, 67, 68, 72, 74, 75, 77, 79, 81, 86 and 87.

89 Examples of pejorative appellatives for Nazis taken from the BV during the winter and spring of 1932.

90 Rohe, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

91 RGA, 21/4/32, Unruhige Tage.

92 ibid., and RGA, 22/4/32, Wieder Politische Schlagereien.

93 The Rotfrontkämpferbund continued to exist as a clandestine group after the ban in May 1929. The leading figure of the Remscheid RFB was Gustav Flohr. Whilst the RFB operated underground, the Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus and Roter Massenselbstschutz functioned more or less overtly.

- 94 See Chapter II.
- 95 HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo-Akte 31374, Ernst Holken.
- 96 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Duss. 17193,
Wuppertal, 21/3/32, Beschießung eines SA-Heims und Verletzung
des Nationalsozialisten Ernst Kelle in Remscheid.
- 97 Ibid., Remscheid 28/10/33, Sprengstoffanschlage in Remscheid im
Jahre 1932.
- 98 Ibid., and RGA.
- 99 Ibid.
- 100 According to the evidence given by Wilhelm Paulowski, a KgdM
member named Mösmer had large quantities of explosives which he
kept in a cardboard carton underneath his bed. Also a quantity
of dynamite left over from work on the leufelsteich swimming
pool was buried in an iron box together with an assortment of
rifles and smaller weapons by Erich Thieler shortly before his
arrest in the summer of 1933.
Information from Erich Thieler.
- 101 Interview with Robert Fuhrer,

'Towards the end of the Weimar Republic the police
did not hesitate to use their truncheons. One evening
I was in the Stadtpark with a friend when a punch-up
started after a Nazi rally. Suddenly a Black Maria
came screeching to a halt and out jumped a lot of
policemen and began hitting everybody in sight - they
did not stop to ask whether you were involved or not,
they just got stuck in. My friend and I got the hell
out of there as fast as we could. We managed to scrape
up a few pfennigs between us so that we could get off
the streets and into a pub.'

Interview with Hannah Quaas:

'I was standing on the Hesseninsel (traffic island)
watching a demonstration. All of a sudden a lorry full
of police comes tearing into the middle of the crowd,
the police jump out and start smashing people over the
head with their truncheons. I could not believe my eyes,
here were all these big strong workers running for their
lives from a few rabid policemen.'

- 102 See Otto Buchwitz, "Naziterror in Schlesien", in: Wolfgang Emmerich (edit.), Proletarische Lebenslaufe. Autobiographische Dokumente zur Entstehung der Zweiten Kultur in Deutschland. Band 2, 1914 bis 1945, Hamburg 1975, pp. 283-286.

'Die Zeit der Gleichschaltung war gekommen. Ehrlicherweise muß ich zugeben, daß die Polizei ja unsicher werden mußte, denn die Regierung Braun-Severing ging zwar forsch gegen die Kommunisten vor, ja oftmals auch gegen das Reichsbanner, aber war von unsaybarer Langmut gegen die Nazis.'

The author argues that the Gleichschaltung of the police took place long before the Nazis came to power.

- 103 Information from Ernst Giesecke (former Alter Kämpfer).
- 104 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 17193.
Wuppertal, 21/1/32, Verbreitung illegaler kommunistischer Druckschriften.
- 105 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 17193.
- 106 RGA, 21/5/32.
- 107 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 17193, Der Polizeibeamte. April 1932.
- 108 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30662d, 8/1/32, Honsberger Beobachter Nr. 25. Mai 1932.
- 109 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30653a, Wuppertal 3/2/33, Nachrichtendienst der NSDAP.
- 110 See Heinz Brudigam, Das Jahr 1933. Terrorismus an der Macht. Eine Dokumentation über die Errichtung der faschistischen Diktatur, Frankfurt a.M. 1978, p. 69;
Jan Petersen, Unsere Straße. Eine Chronik. Geschrieben im Herzen des faschistischen Deutschlands 1933/34, Berlin-Ost 1963.
- 111 BV, 21/1/32. Nazis überfallen Arbeiterviertel;
BV, 23/1/32, Der Naziüberfall am Flurweg.
- 112 Cf. Artur Rosenberg, "Der Faschismus als Massenbewegung", in: Wolfgang Abendroth (edit.), Faschismus und Kapitalismus. Theorien über die sozialen Ursprünge und die Funktion des Faschismus, Edition 2001, Kleine Bibliothek des Wissens und des Fortschritts, Band 3, Frankfurt a.M. 1967, pp. 138-139.

113 The author was able to find only one instance when a Reimscheid Nazi was actually condemned and served a prison sentence. Hermann Willmund was convicted of a violent crime, manslaughter, for which he received a prison term of three and a half years, of which he actually served less than one year, being granted an amnesty when the Nazis seized power (see HStA Dusseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/1201).

A number of other Nazis stood trial and were sentenced in the first instance for violent crime or for being found in possession of firearms (see HStA Dusseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/938 ./. Tesch, Kupferberg, Laubach und Pieper; HStA Dusseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/649 ./. Schweikart und Genossen) and were subsequently acquitted before a court of appeal. On another occasion, eg. against Karl Hulle (see BV, 30/1/32, Du machst in vier Wochen Bekanntschaft mit der Schippe; and BV, 2/1/32, Erneut bewaffneter Nazi freigesprochen), the court did not see it necessary to sentence the Sturmführer for being caught in possession of a pistol, despite conclusive evidence. Hulle's testimony to the effect that at the time of his arrest he was merely taking the weapon home after having dispossessed a member of his own SA troop, was considered sufficient proof of his lack of intention to use the firearm. In June 1932 SA man Werner Tesch who had been one of the defendants in the Laspert incident when a young worker was shot in the back, was again involved in a violent dispute. On this occasion he shot a worker in the chest. After the arrival of the police, residents living nearby jumped into the police vehicle and beat up the culprit before they could be restrained. The legal outcome of this incident is unclear owing to the fact that no newspapers exist in the local archives for the period July to December 1932.

See BV, 23/6/32, Die Boxheimer Dokumente in Laspert verwirklicht.

In March 1932 a young worker named Oswald Boyer was shot whilst he and some of his colleagues congregated outside the SA headquarters in Alleestraße. According to the BV report,

12/3/32, Jungarbeiter von Nazis niedergeschossen, when the police arrived on the scene, they first proceeded to search the furious workers outside, some of whom were then arrested, before carrying out a search of the premises from which the shot was fired. Predictably, the search revealed no firearms. On other occasions Nazi roughians were let off with a warning by the police. In June 1932, three notorious SA toughs, Weißgerber, Pieper and Heger attacked a Communist as he passed by the SA pub in Alleestraße. The assailants ran away when passers-by stepped in to prevent more damage to the already injured victim. Despite abundant witnesses the police took no action against the perpetrators. See BV, 11/6/32.

A few days prior to this incident, the most feared and hated of Remscheid's SA leaders, Kupferberg, attacked a worker with a walking stick. The victim suffered a badly gashed face and a broken nose. Although witnesses were at hand, the police declined to arrest the Nazi. See BV, 6/6/32, Gemeiner Überfall auf einen Arbeiter durch den SA Führer Kupferberg.

This familiar pattern was repeated on many occasions. In contrast to the leniency extended to Nazi offenders by the police and judiciary was the harsh justice meted out to communist delinquents. In April 1932, for instance, a Communist fired four shots at a group of Nazis who, he claimed, were pursuing him. Police were able to arrest the Communist who was sentenced to two months, later two years, imprisonment, although the prosecutor had merely demanded eight months. See RGA, 8/4/32, Politischer Überfall, and BV, 4/6/32, Ein Schreckensurteil. 2 Jahre Gefängnis für einen Schreckenschuß zur Abwehr von Naziprovokateuren.

On 17th July 1932 following an NSDAP rally in Remscheid, a lorry carrying SA men back to Wuppertal passed by the communist youth building. According to the testimony of a policeman on duty in the immediate vicinity, several shots were fired from the passing vehicle and these were returned from inside the building. Another policeman in civilian clothes observed the incident and saw one of the Communists open fire, where-

upon he dispossessed the man and was about to arrest him when a group of young Communists caught sight of the policeman holding the pistol. The Communists allegedly mistook the policeman for a Nazi and beat him up. One of the assailants, Dehnert, was later identified and arrested. He was sentenced to one month imprisonment for committing grievous bodily harm. See HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 5/940, ./ Adolf Dehnert.

In January 1932 a Nazi was arrested in Remscheid-Vieringhausen for distributing leaflets which contained defamatory statements against the state. In the ensuing proceedings, the author of the leaflet, Ernst Kuhlbars, was sentenced to one month imprisonment, and three accomplices to three weeks, in the first instance. A court of appeal later overruled the sentences. Two of the accused, both distributors, were acquitted, whilst the author and printer were fined 40 marks each. See HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 29/206 and 29/207 ./ Wiegand, Thobe, Kuhlbars und Pieper.

114 Cf. Franz Neumann, Behemoth. Struktur und Praxis des Nationalsozialismus 1933 - 1944, Köln, Frankfurt a.M. 1977, p. 44f. For a further contemporary discussion concerning the impartiality of German judiciary, see Erich Fromm, Arbeiter und Angestellte am Vorabend des Dritten Reiches. Eine sozialpsychologische Untersuchung, München 1980, pp. 102-104.

In answer to the question "What do you think of the German judiciary?", 37 % of SPD supporters, 66 % of Left-wing Socialist supporters, 74 % of KPD supporters and 58 % of Nazi supporters to whom this question was addressed, were of the opinion that German judges were on the whole politically prejudiced.

On yet another occasion in Remscheid, two workers were prosecuted for pasting propaganda posters. The state prosecutor recommended a sentence of six months imprisonment in order to set an example. The judge eventually reduced this term to four months imprisonment. See BV, Vor dem Gericht ist jeder gleich. Wie sieht die Praxis aus ?

- 115 Rosenhaft, op. cit., p. 239.
- 116 James M. Diehl, Paramilitary Politics in Weimar Germany, Bloomington and London 1977, p. 22.
- 117 Cf. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, "1933: Die Flucht in den Führerstaat", in: Carola Stern und Heinrich A. Winkler (edit.), Wendepunkte deutscher Geschichte 1848-1945, Frankfurt a.M. 1979, p. 118.
- 118 See C.D. Thompson, op. cit.;
and Lucas, op. cit., pp. 133 and 245.
- 119 See Chapter II.
- 120 The result of the Reichstag election on 1/12/24 in Remscheid were as follows:

KPD	12,891 = 31.6 %
SPD	3,308 = 8.1 %
USPD	165 = 0.4 %
DVP	10,543 = 25.8 %
DNVP	4,102 = 10.1 %
Zentrum	3,108 = 8.1 %
DDP	4,207 = 10.3 %
Aufwartspartei	1,121 = 2.8 %
Wirtschaftspartei	817 = 2.0 %
Völkisch-sozialer Block	248 = 0.6 %

- 121 Lucas, op. cit., p. 135.
- 122 See Milatz, op. cit., p. 122.
- 123 C.D. Thompson, op. cit., p. 31.
- 124 Ibid., p. 39.
- 125 See RGA, 21/5/28, Reichstagswahlergebnisse.
- 126 Arthur Rosenberg, Entstehung und Geschichte der Weimarer Republik, Frankfurt a.M. 1955, p. 4/0.

'Nur weil die Sozialisten nicht fähig waren, sich an die Spitze der verzweifelten Massen zu stellen, konnte die Gegenrevolution diese Bewegung ausnutzen.'

- 127 Milatz, op. cit., pp. 127-131.
- 128 Ibid., pp. 123-125.
- 129 Cf. Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 4/1.
- 130 See Bullock, op. cit., p. 150.
- 131 Milatz, op. cit., p. 126.

- 132 For a shorter account of these scandals see Walter Iormin (edit.), Die Weimarer Republik, Hannover 1973, p. 181.
- 133 Milatz, op. cit., p. 127.
- 134 Ibid., p. 135.
Cf. also Erich Eyck, Geschichte der Weimarer Republik, volume 2, Erlenbach-Zürich 1956, p. 350.
- 135 Karl-Dietrich Bracher, Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik, Villingen 1955, p. 153.
- 136 See note 134.
- 137 Cf. RGA, 21/5/28, Reichstagswahl 1928;
and RGA, 15/9/30, Reichstagswahl 1930.
- 138 C.D. Thompson, op. cit., p. 41.
- 139 Ibid., p. 41.
- 140 BV, 25/9/30, Wo kommen die NSDAP-Stimmen her ?
- 141 Milatz, op. cit., p. 142.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 Ibid., p. 143.
- 144 C.D. Thompson, op. cit., p. 41.
- 145 See Lucas, op. cit., p. 245.
The discrepancy between Lucas' turn-out for Remscheid (89.1 %) and that of the author (87.4 %) presumably results from the fact that the former has indicated the turn-out for Greater Remscheid, ie. including Lennep and Luttringhausen, whereas the latter has restricted himself to Remscheid (town).
- 146 See Introduction and Chapter I.
- 147 The only exception was the Landtag election earlier in the year when the Nazis polled 17,501 votes to the KPD's 16,546 in Alt-Remscheid (in greater Remscheid 24,415 to 19,263). See RGA, 25/4/32, Landtagswahl Remscheid.
- 148 Milatz, op. cit., p. 145.
- 149 Hitler's refusal to accept the vice-chancellorship for himself and relatively minor government posts for his party clearly revealed his intention not to allow his movement to become harnessed by the representatives of the Junker and the Reichswehr. The President's rejection of Hitler's demands and the campaign of SA terror of which the Potempa murder was a much

publicised example, were all factors which combined to alarm certain sectors of the bourgeoisie.

Cf. Wolfgang J. Mommsen, op. cit., pp. 120-124.

150 Ibid., p. 14/.

151 For Lennep and Lüttringhausen see RGA, 7/11/32, Ergebnisse der Reichstagswahl vom 6. Nov. 1932 aus Groß-Remscheid.

152 The estate was built between 1921 and 1929 by the owners organised in a cooperative society.

See 60 Jahre Bokerhöhe 1982. Remscheids erste Stadtrandsiedlung einst und jetzt. Festschrift anlaßlich des 60jährigen Bestehens der Bokerhöhe, Remscheid 1982.

153 See election results in Chapter II. By the end of 1932 there were signs in other parts of Germany that the KPD was beginning to break out of its traditional industrial working-class base by securing the votes in some areas of agricultural labourers and a modest number of white-collar workers. Whether this development would have continued had the Nazis not been handed power is impossible to predict.

CHAPTER VI

Remscheid in the Third Reich

Local studies focusing on the Third Reich present the researcher with additional problems to those he faces when investigating periods like the Weimar Republic for example, in which public opinion was formed by open discussion, readily accessible information, and criticism which found coverage in a pluralistic media. Furthermore, democratic systems like that of Weimar commend records to posterity which considerably facilitate the historian's work. Research into the Third Reich is infinitely more difficult, particularly at the local level, because of the Gleichschaltung of the media and virtually the whole of public life, together with an extremely efficient monitoring system which pervaded society from the highest echelons down to the individual, thus limiting the appearance of reliable documentation. The totalitarian system established by the Nazis penetrated every level of public and private life, allowing no refuge from which opposition might form and expand. In addition to the measures which prevented the open debate of contemporary political, social and economic problems, the Nazis systematically destroyed as much documentary material as possible as the allied armies converged on the crumbling Reich.¹ The stock of archive material pertaining to the Third Reich was also depleted by the effects of bombing raids on German cities. Since so much material relevant to the local level was destroyed, microstudies, in particular, tend to suffer from a scarcity of documentary evidence.² The dearth of documentation which survived the Third Reich and the Second World War necessarily restricts the local historian's choice of topics. In this particular study the author was able to supplement his written material by information supplied in a number of interviews with Remscheid citizens who kindly related their experiences during the years of Nazi rule.³

1. Reaction to the Seizure of Power by the Nazis in Remscheid.

The appointment of Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor on 30th January 1933 was yet another example of how political events at the national level overtook the course of events in Remscheid. But for the intervention of external forces, it would seem that, left to their own devices, local Nazis might never have attained power in this communist stronghold. Despite their impressive electoral success over the preceding four years, Remscheid Nazis were still a very long way from gaining the upper hand. Even allowing for the growth of the party and the SA at the local level, by January 1933 the party membership in Greater Remscheid probably still fell far short of 1,500, the streets and factories remained firmly under the control of the workers' movement. As has already been demonstrated, attempts to form an effective National Socialist Trade Union in the town had proven unsuccessful, despite the active support of several local employers. There can be little doubt that the majority of local workers were hostile to the NSDAP. It is no surprise therefore, that Hitler's appointment as Chancellor caught the local party group totally unprepared for their elevation to power. As was the case in many towns and cities all over Germany, the local SA and Stahlhelm hastily organised a torchlight parade through the streets of Remscheid. The improvised demonstration which owing to lack of time, for once could not be augmented by outside units, ran into difficulties in Bismarckstraße, as opponents began to pelt the marchers with stones. Furthermore, a number of shots were fired without anyone being hit. The procession was only able to continue after a police escort arrived on the scene.⁴ Four days later the Nazis and Stahlhelm organised a more impressive parade with around six hundred participants through the working-class district of Laspert. On this occasion, they were extended a strong police escort from the outset. This precaution, however, did not deter resident workers from demonstrating their opposition, and large groups of Communists had to be dispersed by the police. In Nordstraße, a number of gas lamps were extinguished, and the Nazis found the roadway barricaded with tree trunks, iron rails and telegraph poles

It is not known whether the Communists intended to ambush the procession or whether they were content merely to impede the progress of the march, yet the erection of barriers in a narrow, dark street would seem to indicate the former intention, which for some reason, perhaps the unexpectedly strong police escort, had to be aborted.⁵ The Nazis held yet another torchlight parade two days later to mark the first anniversary of the opening of the SA barracks in Hasten. Although this district was not recognised as a predominantly working-class area, like Honsberg and Laspert, the streets surrounding the Lindenberg steelworks were populated primarily by metalworkers. The Nazis who were anxious to demonstrate their supremacy in Hasten, were reinforced by 250 to 300 SA men from Wuppertal.⁶ The route chosen by the Nazis along Hammesberger Straße, past the steelworks, was regarded by worker residents as a deliberate provocation. The marchers were again pelted with stones, and a furious brawl ensued, in which hundreds of political adversaries participated. A number of shots were fired from nearby houses, and these were returned by the Nazis without anyone being hit. The police escorting the parade succeeded in parting the belligerents without serious injuries being sustained by either side.⁷ The Nazis continued on their way to the Gaststätte Sauer, their local pub, where they held a recruitment evening. The SA contingent from Wuppertal again came under fire on the return march, this time suffering two light casualties.⁸ From these examples it is clear that the pattern of violent confrontation had still not undergone any major transformation, despite the rapidly changing political situation. Local Communists were still prepared to engage the Nazis, according to the code of unwritten rules which had been established over the previous four or five years. Despite the SA's obstreperous demonstration of its sudden ascendancy, boosted by the knowledge that the police were now obliged to assist the NSDAP, the Communists still remained confident of the workers' ability to combat the menace. The Nazi's reluctance to venture into Honsberg, Rosenhugel, Osterbusch and Kremenholz seemed to strengthen the belief that, at least in Remscheid, the political situation was still far from being beyond retrieval, despite the ban imposed on KPD demonstrations⁹,

and the ransacking of the BV's printing works.¹⁰ The KPD had suffered temporary set-backs of this type before, and had subsequently managed to recover. Furthermore, the party had been reckoning with the possibility of a ban over the previous two years and had made plans for this contingency. High hopes were also pinned on the proclamation of a general strike if all else failed, and there were doubtlessly many workers who believed that reason would eventually triumph, and the Red and Iron Fronts would unite to prevent a Nazi take-over, as the consolidated forces of the working-class movement had halted the progress of the reactionary Kapp-government in the spring of 1920. After all, despite the intense rivalry between the KPD and SPD leadership, at the base there was a willingness to forget their differences and fight the Nazis.¹¹ On a number of occasions during the previous four years, Rotfront and Reichsbanner had fought side by side on the streets of Remscheid against the common enemy. Local workers were secure in the knowledge that negotiations between the parties and the ADGB were in progress, and that the word would eventually be given for joint action. The fact that the KPD and SPD-controlled newspapers continued to abuse each other with customary trenchancy - articles decrying the policies of "Kozis" and "Sozialfaschisten" still found preferential treatment in the BV and Freie Presse - did nothing to suggest grounds for optimism. The workers' movement in Germany was by now so hopelessly split between the SPD, KPD and the trade unions that a united front, which might have succeeded in halting the Nazis, was no longer a realistic proposition. The SPD's policy of tolerating the 'lesser evil' and strict adherence to the constitution had rendered its organisations inert. The SPD still appeared to be more alarmed by communist election gains and the danger of losing influence in the working class to the KPD than by the immediate threat posed by the NSDAP. The Social Democrats therefore adopted a waiting stance and rejected offers of a united front by the KPD, the last of which was made on the 30th January, in a call for a general strike. In the light of their experience over the previous five years, the SPD had grounds to believe that the latest KPD offer was another attempt to seize the leadership of

the German workers' movement from them. Despite their suspicions the SPD could still at this late stage have entered into an alliance with the Communists and proclaimed a general strike, which as the Berlin transport workers' strike in the autumn of 1932, had already demonstrated, was not necessarily doomed to failure. In reality, however, the SPD leadership was incapable of envisaging any kind of joint action with the KPD¹², and allowed the opportunity to slip away. After Hitler's dissolution of the Reichstag and announcement of a new election, the SPD appears to have pinned its hopes on gains at the polls. The ADGB similarly eschewed joint action with the Communists, in the hope of at least being able to preserve the workers' trade unions, even in a fascist state. The effect of the SPD's and ADGB's attitude at the local level was a further demoralisation of the workers' movement which may in part account for the fact that during the Third Reich in Remscheid there was almost no SPD-led resistance, although Social Democrats did participate in KPD-organised groups. On the other hand, it must be remembered that in Remscheid the SPD was in any case much the junior party of the workers' movement and enjoyed only limited influence in the local working class, so that in numerical terms, willingness to take up arms would not have strengthened workers' resistance significantly. Against this must be held considerations of the effect on the working class as a whole, if the SPD and ADGB had in any way been inclined to enter a united front with the KPD. It remains essentially speculative as to whether a joint effort would have induced an upsurge of resistance similar to that experienced in the Kapp Putsch. The Communists for their part had consistently proposed a united front at the grass-roots level. The KPD was not interested in concerted action with the SPD before the Nazi seizure of power, as this party was regarded as the main buttress of the capitalist system. Instead, the Communists aimed their pleas for joint action at individual SPD members and unorganised workers in the hope of persuading these to abandon their party and/or join the KPD.¹³ The 'Social Fascist theory' which was later acknowledged as a disastrous mistake¹⁴, and the constant references to the Brüning and Papen governments as open fascist dictatorships

tolerated by the SPD and trade unions, served to isolate the KPD from all other parties and groups which wanted to prevent the Nazis from coming to power.

As the SPD and ADGB¹⁵ leadership searched for ways of integrating themselves temporarily in the Nazi state, the burden of resistance fell first and foremost on the Communists who were more immediately threatened by the Nazi seizure of power. KPD intolerance of divergent opinion must also share the responsibility for the debacle which was now taking place. Even in a stronghold like Remscheid the local party's willing subservience to Moscow had succeeded in alienating particularly able sections of its own supporters. The local party's expeditious ejection of capable dissenters with proven organisational ability and popularity, men like Jakob Wolf, Ernst Zulauf, Albert Bornefeld and Willi Grütz, had the calamitous consequence, that these elements and many of their supporters were so disillusioned with their own party, that they took no further significant part in political events. At a time when the party could well have profited from their enormous experience and popularity, these former leaders were branded as traitors, and their services were neither requested nor offered. With its monolithic structure the KPD unwittingly contributed to the later success of the NSDAP. The establishment and maintenance of a mass movement like the one in Remscheid which ruthlessly suppressed independent thought within its own ranks, doubtlessly helped to prepare the ground for the Nazi totalitarian society. Although there appears to be no evidence of substantial conversions to National Socialism from within the ranks of active Communists in Remscheid, it would seem that large numbers of former KPD voters eventually settled down to at least passively accept the National Socialist state, and some who had formerly felt secure in the mass organisations of the socialist parties, were comfortably able to make the transition to those of the Nazis. Particularly the inactive elements of the working class, who indeed constituted the majority, at the very least, tolerated the new state, despite the numerous disadvantages which accompanied it. The dictation of policy from above and the incessant demands for sacrifices by the KPD, had now been replaced

by another monolithic structure, which was unquestionably more brutal in its methods of suppressing dissent, but which nevertheless bore points of similarity. Just as many individuals had learned to pay lip service to the Communists, they now superficially demonstrated their willingness to support the Nazis. Whilst noting this phenomenon, it must be stressed that the transition only occurred very gradually and, as will be shown below, was closely connected with the effects of the Nazi campaign of terror and the ensuing atomisation of society.

Whilst the workers for the time being remained loyal to the KPD and SPD in Remscheid, the middle and lower middle classes enthusiastically greeted the advent of the Third Reich. The weekly parades earned a jubilant response from the residents of middle-class districts like Hindenburgstraße and Alleestraße, where black, white and red swastika flags were hung from the majority of houses, and townfolk gathered on the pavement to cheer the marching columns of Nazis and Stahlhelm, which enjoyed a minor if only transient revival. In the weeks following the March elections, the mood swelled almost palpably to coincide with the warmer weather. Remscheid's citizens were transported by a festive spirit and a feeling of relief that the Nazis had delivered them from the hands of the Communists. The weekend preceding the "Day of Potsdam" which was heralded in the local press as the "Rebirth of the German Nation"¹⁶, resembled a holiday period, as the bourgeoisie celebrated the unconvincing election victory and looked forward to a more secure future. Restaurateurs whose premises were situated in the town centre, advertised their weekend menus and dance evenings in the local papers. The "Max und Moritz", for example, announced Sunday lunches in four different price categories.¹⁷ For 1 mark 10 pfennigs there was a three course lunch consisting of minestrone soup, smoked ham in burgundy sauce with noodles, followed by pineapple beignets in a wine cream sauce. For 1 mark 30 pfennigs, veal with salad or compot or chicken and rice. For 1 mark 50 pfennigs, asparagus and ham, and at 1 mark 80 pfennigs tournedos Helgoland with potatoes and slivered almonds. The "Bürgerhaus" advertised a

'German evening' with military march music and German dances¹⁸, whilst the "Restaurant zur Filiale" in Hasten¹⁹ gave notice of the appearance of the Boshof Brothers, billed as popular entertainers and supported by the well known local comedian Herman Voshammer. This establishment promised a programme of entertainment for the whole family. The Salamander²⁰ announced a Sunday concert provided by its new jazz band and promised an entertaining dance evening, admission free. For more serious tastes, the Elly-Ney-trio presented their third concert for the local Brahms festival in the Realgymnasium²¹, tickets priced at 1 mark.

The prices of these kinds of entertainment firmly precluded the participation of working class families, and the venues were in any case by tradition those which catered solely for the middle and lower-middle classes. Such establishments, by rules of dress, strict adherence to middle-class etiquette and restrictive prices, placed themselves voluntarily beyond the reach of those workers, who might otherwise have been inclined to take advantage of bourgeois entertainment. The majority of local workers, however, as we have already demonstrated, preferred their own local pubs and the Volkshaus and never contemplated visiting the more exclusive establishments like the "Weinberg", "Cafe Industrie" and "Hotel Leyer", so that at the level of social entertainment, there was a pronounced class segregation.

On Sunday 19th March, however, the National Socialist Youth Organisation of Remscheid staged a recruitment evening at the Stadtspark halle to boost its still relatively mediocre membership performance, which prior to the seizure of power had consisted of a mere handful. The event was preceded by a march of the NS Youth Organisation sub-group Bergisch Industrial Area, to which Remscheid together with Solingen, Wuppertal and several other towns belonged.²² The guest speaker for the recruitment evening was Hartmann Lauterbacher, area leader for Westphalia and the Lower Rhine of the Hitler Youth, and Gerd Bennewitz, Hitler youth leader from Düsseldorf. The event which was advertised in the RGA, was interspersed with entertainment spots of a didactic nature, and music was performed by the NS band from Lüttringhausen. The press announcement

of the event stipulated that 'German parents (sic.) of Remscheid boys and girls were especially invited to attend'. Admission was 50 pfennigs, and 20 pfennigs for the unemployed and youths under 18 years of age.

The festivities continued beyond the weekend and reached a climax on the 'Day of Potsdam'. The streets of the town centre were draped with flags, and loudspeakers were erected on the Rathausplatz, shortly to be renamed Adolf Hitler Platz, so that local townfolk could participate, albeit passively, in the rebirth of their nation. In the morning there was a one and a half hour broadcast describing the procession to the Potsdam Garrison Church, and a live transmission of the speeches made by Hindenburg and Hitler. In the afternoon, Remscheid citizens were again called to the town hall square, to listen to an hour long broadcast of the opening of the Reichstag in the Kroll Opera House in Berlin. The evening witnessed a huge torchlight parade from the Stadtparkhalle via Hindenburgstraße, Alleestraße, Elberfelder Straße to the town hall square. The parade which was watched by thousands of cheering spectators, contained all the various NSDAP formations, the Stahlhelm led by Fritz Boker, the combined veterans' association headed by Major Brandt, the Remscheid Committee for Physical Recreation led by Dr. Bergmann, the German Choral Society led by Hermann Schumacher, the West German Association of Marching Bands under the leadership of E. Pickardt, and the German Gymnastics Organisation. The evening was terminated by a mass-rally addressed by Mayor Hartmann and NSDAP local group leader Vogt, and was brought to a close by the singing of the national anthem and the Horst-Wessel-song.

The following evening it was the turn of the NSDAP Ortsgruppe Hasten to provide yet another spectacular march and rally in conjunction with a number of nationalist organisations and the local fire service brass band.²³ Pfarrer Schmießing who was an early sympathiser of the NSDAP, held a commemoration service, and NSDAP local group leader Richard Wiegand informed the cheering crowds that the national revolution was now on the march.

2. Gleichschaltung.

The Nazi seizure of power had in Remscheid completed the unification of the bourgeois parties, the employers' organisations, the various nationalist organisations, civic associations and guilds - a process which had begun with the Bürgerfest (citizens' festival) in 1921 and continued by way of local government coalitions aimed at preventing a communist and socialist majority on the town council. The procedure was rounded off by the policy of Gleichschaltung which was already underway, with some organisations like the Kampf bund des gewerblichen Mittelstandes (Association of Middle-Class Businessmen²⁴) which voluntarily adopted the swastika symbol and Nazi policy, even before it was officially required of them.²⁵ In this respect with regard to the bourgeoisie it is questionable to what extent one can consider Gleichschaltung as being the result of coercion. Particularly - but not only - at the local level, National Socialist economic and political policies revealed many points of broad agreement with those of the middle-class parties and pressure groups, and offered an acceptable solution to the workers' question (Arbeiterfrage).²⁶ It was precisely the inability of the middle class parties and interest groups to consolidate their power, and nowhere is this more noticeable than at the local level, which induced first the voters and then the active members to switch allegiance to the NSDAP, which seemed to offer a large measure of continuity, and - most importantly - the means to put their policies into operation.²⁷ This is, of course, not to suggest that local leaders of bourgeois parties and interest groups necessarily identified with the NSDAP's brutal methods of suppression; it must be remembered that the majority of beatings and ransacking of houses took place in working-class districts and in the Gestapo headquarters, out of sight of the majority of the middle classes.²⁸ With the exceptions of protests in Lennep, the majority of the Remscheid bourgeoisie did not concern itself with Nazi excesses. Many felt that the Communists, who were now on the receiving end, were themselves to blame for the harsh treatment which was being meted out to them. A common saying during

the spring and summer of 1933 - "Wo gehobelt wird, fallen Späne" (approximately, "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs"), helped to appease consciences.

The dissolution of the Remscheid Ortsgruppe of the DVP, announced on 28th April, also seems to have been induced rather by agreement than force.²⁹ The DVP town councillor Karl Becker took the opportunity to inform his former colleagues of his defection to the NSDAP. He was followed by other prominent members like Dr. Borchardt and bank director Schilling.³⁰ The Remscheid local group decided not to wait for instructions from the regional committee Düsseldorf-Ost, and made it known that they would dissolve whether the regional committee recommended disbanding or not.³¹ This trend was continued several days later when the Wirtschaftspartei regional committee for Düsseldorf-Ost disbanded with the recommendation that its supporters should seek membership in the NSDAP. The local chairman of the Remscheid group, Christian Luck, had already defected to the Nazis and the Kampfbund des gewerblichen Mittelstandes, and he personally appealed to all members to follow him.³²

On the same day the RGA announced that 95 % of Remscheid's civil servants were already organised in the National Socialist Civil Servants' Association - NSBA.³³ The Remscheid Canoeing Club also declared its assimilation, at the same time pointing out that it had in any case always been a nationalist organisation.³⁴

The flood of applications for party membership elicited a warning against opportunists from Ortsgruppenleiter (local party leader) Vogt and Kreisleiter (district party leader) Straßweg at a political meeting held at the "Weinberg" in June.³⁵ Vogt referred to the 'mountain of applications' which he had received during the previous months, and indicated that those who had been accepted depended on the satisfactory completion of a trial period. Without elucidating the criteria for successful application, the speaker informed listeners that a large number of applicants had been rejected outright. Somewhat ambiguously Vogt told the gathering, that the practice of enclosing a one-hundred-mark note together with a request for membership did not enhance the individual's chances of

success, however gifts of money for the party would be accepted and indeed were expected.³⁶ Straßweg, taking up the same theme, was more explicit when he lambasted the business practices of Kemnscheid manufacturers, traders and shopkeepers who had formerly supported the Wirtschaftspartei. Hinting at the favourite Nazi slogan Gemein nutz vor Eigennutz (public before private good), the speaker warned businessmen not to revert to their former selfishly liberal and materialist ways.³⁷ Straßweg went on to expound the concept of the Volksgemeinschaft (community of a classless nation)³⁸, in which each class was supposed to complement the others, so that the German nation would presumably converge in a united collective consciousness. The district leader's attack on the bourgeois self-interest which also included a swipe at certain newspapers which practised "acrobatic ideological leaps", of which apart from the Nazi controlled press only one other existed in Kemnscheid, namely the RGA, brought a prompt reply from that direction, asseverating the paper's long standing support for the National Socialists.³⁹ The declaration alluded to the superfluous measure of Gleichschaltung in this case, as the newspaper had already regarded itself as a proponent of the movement long before this step was taken.

The process of Gleichschaltung also appears to have been accepted without reservation in the local protestant church. Pfarrer Schmießing, who was the chairman of the Evangelischer Bund Kemnscheid (Union of Protestant Churches), addressed a meeting in May with a lecture entitled "Revolution in the Church ?" The speaker praised Hitler for dispelling the danger of bolshevism and pledged his support for National Socialist policies for uniting the German people.⁴⁰ Referring directly to the procedure of Gleichschaltung, Schmießing was of the opinion that church and state were essentially different institutions, and that the relationship would be clarified by a treaty however, providing the new state was able to prevail, after this a radical solution would be necessary. The speaker assured the audience that talks with the Deutsche Christen (German Christians) were progressing satisfactorily, and he was confident that the desired aim, "Ein Volk - ein Reich - eine Kirche" (one people - one empire - one church) would be achieved.

Schmießing also pointed out that the church would be prepared to carry the political and völkisch revolution to the people.

The German Christian movement under the local leadership of Willi Holstein was a sub-organisation of the NSDAP in the protestant church and was striving for unity between the church and the 'people' (in reality the party). The supporters of this movement claimed that this unity had been lost, particularly during the Weimar Republic, as thousands of Protestants became contaminated by Marxist ideology.⁴¹ At a rally held in June, the Landesleiter (state leader) Dr. Krummbacher of the German Christians told the Remscheid audience, that the movement - like National Socialism - was the will of God, and that the will of God excluded Jews from the German Community.⁴² This movement became an influential force in Remscheid during the early years of the Third Reich and attracted the support of many leading local figures.

In contrast to the numerous examples of voluntary Gleichschaltung in Remscheid there were many cases of enforced assimilation, the removal of Social Democratic civil servants, compulsory liquidation of organisations, and destruction of property belonging to the workers' movement. This policy operated from the first hours of the Third Reich and was closely connected with the Nazi campaign of terror, the ferocity of which even surprised the Communists. During the early hours of 31st January, the local SA forced entry to the premises of the Bergische Volksstimme, ransacking the offices and removing files.

In contrast to bourgeois parties and clubs, the Gleichschaltung of working-class institutions was positively coercive. The removal of Social Democratic and communist civil servants and town council employees was effected on the basis of the reintroduction of the old Prussian law defining the eligibility of employment in state and local government service (Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums) passed on 7th April⁴³. Even before the law became valid, the Nazis began to suspend leading local government officials like⁴⁴ Dr. Aschenheim⁴⁵, the city medical inspector; deputy mayor Ludwig Lemmer; the director of the city administration, Will; and Rudolf Bühler. On the 2nd May the RGA⁴⁶ gave

notice of the dismissal of 11 employees of the Remscheid employment office. The discarded employees were mostly Social Democrats and included the chairman of the local party organisation, Schmidt; the son of the SPD deputy mayor Iserloh, together with his wife; Ewald Petermann and the office manager, Paul Weidig. The article also informed readers that the NSDAP had entrusted Erwin Laubach⁴⁷ with the position of commissarial director of the employment exchange. Furthermore, the article listed names of six employees of the sickness insurance office dismissed by the new boss, Max Hesse. The pensions of some older employees forced into early retirement were reduced by 25 %. On the same day as this article appeared, the Nazis occupied the offices of the DMV and the Zentralverband der Angestellten, and appointed an official of the NSBU, Frorath, as business manager of the local branch of the trade union council ADGB. The Volkshaus which had already experienced several visitations by the SA and SS, was also occupied, and the swastika flag was raised above the building.⁴⁸ The following day it was the Reichsverband für Kriegsbeschädigte (Association of War Widows and Disabled) and the Internationaler Bund der Kriegsoffer. The political police confiscated records, membership lists and various files, and sealed the offices.⁴⁹ On the 10th May the offices of the SPD and the Volkszeitung⁵⁰ were searched together with the houses of leading SPD officials.⁵¹ During the course of this operation, Max Blank, the leading local figure in the party, was arrested and taken into protective custody. The SPD finance fund, confiscated by the Nazis, totalled only one mark and ten pfennigs, and all financial records had been destroyed.⁵² The same issue of the RGA also told of the confiscation by the Nazis of the Teufelsteich swimming pool, which, it will be recalled, had been built and financed solely by members of the Arbeiter Schwimmverein over the previous two years. In fact, work on this project had only been completed in the summer of 1932, so that the swimmers were now prevented from recouping the costs incurred in the pool's construction.⁵³

The next workers' institution to undergo the process of Gleichschaltung was the local cooperative society "Einigkeit", which,

contrary to NSDAP policy, was not forced into liquidation but continued to operate under the control of the NSBU official Hans Ohlmann.⁵⁴ The Konsum enjoyed such wide support even beyond the working class that the NSDAP would have made itself unpopular with large sections of the lower-middle class, had it closed down this organisation, as it had indeed promised.

The removal of civil servants and council white-collar employees continued unabated through June and July with further dismissals at the employment exchange, the sickness insurance office and the savings bank.⁵⁵ However, it was not only civil servants and council employees who were ejected by the Nazis for belonging to left wing parties. There now followed a purge in the majority of local private factories and workshops, to remove Communists and Social Democrats and replace these by hitherto unemployed SA and SS men.⁵⁶ The prospect of losing jobs doubtlessly induced some workers to join NSDAP organisations, and at least outwardly declare their allegiance to the new regime.

In July the SA began to confiscate bicycles and motor cycles belonging to Communists and communist sympathisers. These were then distributed amongst various SA groups and the SS motor cycle corps.⁵⁷

The SA also indulged in senseless wholesale destruction, depending on the momentary mood and the amount of alcohol consumed prior to specific operations. Both, the Naturfreunde hostel an der Beek⁵⁸, and the new workers' sports club house at Struck⁵⁹ were burned down in acts of revenge.

3. The SA's Campaign of Terror in Reimscheid.

The campaign of terror unleashed by the NSDAP was carried out principally by the SA, which were accorded the status of auxiliary police. The local SA, aided by the police, began to arrest leading Communists during the first weeks of the Hitler government. The systematic round up of Communists was initiated, however, following the Reichstag fire and the presidential decree for the protection

of people and state issued on 28th February.⁶⁰ This decree enabled the police and the SA to commit persons regarded as a risk to the new regime to Schutzhaft (protective custody).

The SA's campaign of terror which was in full sway during March and April, lasted throughout the summer and was responsible for a number of murders, suicides, and viciously brutal beatings, some of which were in large measure the major cause of premature deaths of the victims. During the spring and summer of 1933, SA excesses for the most part went unchecked by the police and judiciary who, for various reasons, and to differing degrees, willingly abetted their eager new comrades in the hunt for enemies of the state. Although ordinary policemen participated in arrests and the ransacking of flats, on the whole they had no part in the beatings which accompanied these measures. On many occasions they were able to prevent excesses by personal initiative whilst victims were in their temporary custody, but had no influence on the treatment of prisoners once these were handed over to the Gestapo. Nor can it be claimed that all SA men behaved incorrectly. There were, however, those - most probably small in number - who had old scores to settle with the Communists and who now seized the opportunity in the knowledge that they were more or less unencumbered by legal restraints. The mood of the local middle classes' enthusiasm for the new regime, a feeling of relief at their deliverance from the Communists, also carried undertones of desired retribution for the years of fear and hardship which many had undergone. Clearly, some individual members of the middle classes had suffered attacks by Communists directly or had received threats in one way or another, the majority, however, had little or no contact with Communists and received most or nearly all their information from newspapers, radio and hearsay. The regime's propaganda and direct or, more usually indirect, experience of communist agitation, and the by now intrinsic belief that these elements were the agents of an evil conspiracy engaged in the destruction of their country, combined to create an atmosphere in which excesses were quietly condoned, particularly if they occurred out of sight, at the police stations, in prisons and in concentration camps. The general feeling appeared to be, that

the Communists deserved the fate which they were now suffering, and this posture was justified by speculations on the treatment the middle classes would have had to endure had the situation been reversed. Of course, very few citizens were witnesses to the actual torture and human degradation to which enemies of the state were subjected. Middle-class trust in the infallibility of authority was also a safeguard on the occasions when rumours of torture and deaths in police custody leaked out to the public. A common reaction to such rumours was a shrug of the shoulder and a mode of reasoning that they could not possibly contain any truth. There is evidence of only one instance when uninvolved citizens actually intervened to demonstrate their disapproval of the maltreatment of prisoners.⁶¹ This occurred at some time during the spring or early summer of 1933, when residents of the streets surrounding the NSDAP regional headquarters in Lennep, the Hermann Goering Haus, gathered outside the police station to complain about the SA's handling of suspects. These residents had become alarmed by the screams of tortured prisoners over a period of days following a round up of suspects. Photographs of one of the maltreated suspects were taken on his release and were eventually presented as evidence in the trial of three local SA men after the war. It is not known whether the police took any steps to curtail such practices in Lennep, and there were rumours that some of the residents themselves received threats of imprisonment, if they continued to pursue the matter.

The Gestapo headquarters in Remscheid were situated in Uhlandstrabe, a middle-class residential area. Throughout the year suspects were hauled in for interrogation and many had to endure weeks of torture. As the Gestapo offices were part of the larger complex of the local police headquarters, and there was much coming and going in the building, it is extremely unlikely that the Gestapo was able to conceal their maltreatment of prisoners from the public, although the majority of interrogations took place during the night.⁶² On the other hand, rumours spread among the townsfolk made an important psychological contribution in establishing a mood of uncertainty and fear, fertile ground from which the authorities were

able to counteract feelings of solidarity with opponents of the regime. In the light of these considerations, it is likely that the Nazis actually encouraged speculation about the treatment of prisoners without actually supplying details. Constant threats of internment in concentration camps testify to the validity of this argument, and it may be supposed that the majority of Remscheid people knew of their existence, at least by the end of 1933 or the beginning of 1934.⁶³

Following the Reichstag fire the SA, SS and police began to arrest communist officials in Remscheid. A newspaper article on 1st April⁶⁴ reported that between 16th and 31st March 27 functionaries and sympathisers of the KPD had been taken into protective custody. House searches had uncovered a total of six rifles, six machine guns, five pistols and two hand grenades. During the course of a surprise raid on the headquarters of the Konsumgenossenschaft "Einigkeit" in April, 120 members were arrested, only three of whom were subsequently remanded in custody.⁶⁵ Two weeks later a raid on the working-class district of Osterbusch revealed a small arms cache, and a total of 18 KPD officials were arrested and taken into protective custody.⁶⁶ A more detailed communique issued by the new police commissioner in Remscheid, Dr. Schubert, informed the public that Communists were still at work in the town, and that a total of 154 KPD officials were at that time being held in custody.⁶⁷ Schubert claimed that a large stock of weapons had been unearthed by the police and that these were all well oiled and in good working condition. Whilst it is undeniable that Remscheid Communists had indeed collected a store of weapons over the previous years, there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that these presented a serious threat to the new regime. Despite the daily announcements of the confiscation of large arsenals, newspaper articles themselves usually contradicted the impression created by the headlines. One is therefore led to the conclusion that the reports of arms caches were above all important for their propagandist value, namely to create hysteria amongst the townsfolk and justify the ruthless suppression of the KPD. Lists of confiscated weapons reported in newspaper articles reveal mostly ancient

weapons, and by far the majority of these were pistols. Furthermore, several interviewees⁶⁸ assured the author that a number of arms in the possession of the KPD originated from the First World War and the Kapp-Putsch, and had been buried in wooden boxes in the ground for many years. Consequently, the majority of rifles and machine-guns which were anyway very few in number, were rusty and no longer of any use, in effect posing a greater threat to the marksman than the target. In addition to this evidence, throughout the Weimar years, excluding the fighting during the Kapp-Putsch, there is no mention in either police reports or newspapers of the use of rifles and machine guns in and around Remscheid. In view of these considerations one is at a loss to imagine how the 'imminent uprising' was to be effected, at least in Remscheid. On the other hand it is likely that local Nazis completely over-estimated the fighting strength of the KPD. The fact that Honsberg was given a wide berth during the first months of Nazi rule would seem to lend weight to this supposition. When the Nazis did venture into this particular working class district, it was in considerable strength.⁶⁹ A massive raid was carried out in August by one thousand men, belonging to the SA (800 from Remscheid and Wuppertal), SS (80), and nearly two hundred policemen, led by the newly appointed Polizeipräsident Willi Veller from Wuppertal.⁷⁰ The raid which was carried out at 4 a.m. unearthed three revolvers, one hunting rifle, two grenades, three rifles and 2500 rounds of ammunition, and a number of knives, as well as diverse objects like red flags, KPD collection boxes, a large amount of marxist literature and printing materials. A total of 38 suspects were arrested including ten women.⁷¹

During the summer months Remscheid and Wuppertal prisons could no longer accommodate the hundreds of Communists being held in protective custody, as increasingly more cells were required to hold the steady stream of resistance members now falling into the hands of the Gestapo. Veller therefore authorised the setting up of a concentration camp in a disused factory at Kemna near Wuppertal. The camp which came under the control of the Wuppertal SA, was the scene of some of the worst excesses seen anywhere in the country

during the first year of ^{the} Hitler regime.⁷² The concentration camp Kemna appears to be an exception in that instead of drawing personnel from different areas, all of the guards - as members of the Wuppertal SA - knew many of the prisoners personally and many others by name and reputation. During the nine months prior to its closure in 1934, the Kemna concentration camp handled a total of 4,500 internees, primarily from the immediate vicinity.⁷³ Many of the camp guards chosen for duty at the camp took advantage of the complete lack of legal restraints to settle scores with helpless prisoners. Some obviously enjoyed their roles of tormentors and spurred their colleagues on to devise original methods of torture, one of which was the "Kemna sandwich" which consisted of over-salted herrings caked with machine grease or excrement. These were then forced fed to prisoners who had first been severely beaten and then locked in a tiny cupboard for a number of days without water. The cupboard also had tiny apertures through which cigarette smoke was blown. When the prisoner vomitted, he was then forced to devour his own disgorgements. Some prisoners were made to drink petroleum and urine.⁷⁴ Internees were constantly beaten and kicked to unconsciousness and then revived by cold water. The torture was so unbearable that several prisoners committed suicide either by slashing their wrists or else by throwing themselves from the second floor of the factory building onto the concreted yard below. Although technically no actual murders were committed in the camp, the court which tried members of the Kemna guard in 1948 accepted that several inmates died prematurely in the years following their release, as a direct consequence of injuries sustained during interrogations. Whilst no Remscheid SA personnel were actually involved in the maltreatment of internees at Kemna, many must have been aware of the prevailing conditions, as they cooperated closely with their Wuppertal colleagues, and regularly delivered prisoners to the camp. On the occasion of Prince August Wilhelm's visit in the late summer of 1933, the latter was accompanied by Ewald Lamm on his tour of the camp.⁷⁵

During the summer and autumn, rumours about the conditions in Kemna had proliferated to such an extent that the Nazis saw themselves compelled to close the camp. As we shall see presently, a Remscheid resistance group played a major role in the circulation of information which led directly to the camp's closure. Furthermore, a doctor at a Wuppertal clinic alerted the public prosecutor, after having examined several of the camp's inmates, and the latter began proceedings against the Kommandant Hilger and his staff of guards. Although the prosecution's case was quashed on the orders of Hitler before proceedings reached the trial stage, a copious amount of evidence had already been amassed and was subsequently placed out of reach of the Nazis. Public prosecutor Winckler who survived an attempt on his life by Wuppertal SA men, was finally transferred to Kassel. After the war, on his reinstatement, he again took up proceedings against the camp guards, who stood trial in 1948. The camp Kommandant Hilger was sentenced to death, and a large number of guards were given life sentences.⁷⁶ At least 89 Remscheid Communists were interned at Kemna, and many of those who survived were able to give evidence at the trial.⁷⁷

4. The Reichstag Election on 5th March 1933.

The election in March 1933 was instigated by Hitler's dissolution of the Reichstag. The NSDAP, which now enjoyed complete control of the state propaganda apparatus, hoped by calling new elections to gain an overall majority, which would enable them to dissolve parliament permanently and establish a dictatorship. The prospect of another election gave rise to hopes of stopping the Nazis by legal means, notably in the SPD and trade unions, but also in the liberal parties. The result of this act of self deception was to further weaken the resolve of Social Democrats to prevent the consolidation of power by the Nazis by extra-parliamentary means. Whilst Social Democrats in Remscheid had no grounds for optimism regarding a turn in their party's fortunes at the polls, the Freie Presse of Wuppertal plunged into the election campaign with

remarkable gusto, claiming that at this late hour the tide would be turned by the realisation on the part of the electorate that this was the last chance to prevent a Nazi dictatorship.⁷⁸ The Freie Presse still appeared to believe in the SPD and Eiserne Front's (iron front) ability to somehow reverse the situation, even when it saw the Social Democratic election campaign severely shackled by a ban on demonstrations, and a further decree issued by the Nazis which limited the freedom of the press. Rudolf Hilferding, who was due to address a mass-rally in Elberfeld on 23rd February, was informed at short notice that he would not be allowed to take the rostrum. His speech was finally delivered by a colleague, with Hilferding present at the meeting, but unable to take an active part.⁷⁹ The SPD newspaper appealed yet again to members of the Eiserne Front not to allow themselves to be provoked into premature action against the Nazis.⁸⁰ The Freie Presse ceased its activities with a pathetic reminder that neither Bismarck nor Wilhelm II had succeeded in destroying the SPD, and that the party would once again prevail.⁸¹

The KPD and SPD campaigns were severely hamstrung, so that the March election can in no way be described as fair. Furthermore, on polling day uniformed SA and SS men were in close attendance at polling stations. In Remscheid town, the Nazis gained a hollow victory in a high 93 % turnout, securing only 41.4 % (21,807) of the total vote. Their allies, the Kampffront Schwarz-Weiß-Rot (DNVP and Stahlhelm) gained 5.3 % (2,784), with the result that the coalition still fell far short of the intended majority. The KPD managed to win a total of 15 wards, polling in all 18,071 votes (34.3 %), and the SPD picked up 6.4 % (3,367). The only other party to pick up a significant amount of votes was the Zentrum with 3,585 (6.8 %). The DVP gained 3.0 % (1,563), the Christlich Sozialer Volksdienst 1.1 % (582), and the Staatspartei 0.7 % (378). Comparing these results with those of the November Reichstag election in 1932, which - it will be remembered - produced a lower turn-out (85.1 %) and in which 17 parties put up candidates (March 1933 = 10), one is able to draw the following conclusions:

In the absence of significant changes regarding voting eligibility (+263), the NSDAP increased its total of votes from 14,572 (30.6 %) to 21,807 (41.4 %), a net gain of 7,235, and 3,887 more than in the July election of 1932. We may firstly assume therefore, that the Nazis succeeded in remobilising those voters who cast their votes in favour of the NSDAP in July 1932, but who did not participate in the November election. Furthermore, the DVP's share of votes fell from 2,046 to 1,563, a loss of 483. Neither the Mittelstands- nor the Volksrechtspartei nominated candidates for election in March 1933, as both groups were already in a state of dissolution. In November 1932, these parties won 433 and 387 votes respectively. It may safely be assumed that almost all of these votes plus those lost by the DVP and by the Schwarz-Weiß-Rot (-113), and those of the Radikaler Mittelstand, which also did not campaign in March (-38) were switched to the NSDAP, equalling a net gain of 1,454. The KPD lost 1,253 votes which can only have been to the benefit of the Nazis. As the other parties remained fairly constant - the SPD lost 314, and the Zentrum gained 380 - it would seem that vote-switching to the Nazis was minimal here, it appears that even attributing all the new votes to the Nazis (+263), the latter managed to persuade nearly a thousand former non-voters to turn out, over and above those in this category who had exercised their vote in favour of the NSDAP in July 1932. Whilst it is evident that in March 1933 the NSDAP succeeded in making in-roads into the working class votes, and for the first time significantly into the KPD vote, this did not amount to a major shift of allegiance. Considering the external pressures on the working class movement, and the almost unlimited benefit of executive power, the Nazis failed utterly to harness the workers' vote. Once again the NSDAP's share of the vote was primarily augmented by non-catholic middle-class converts and the indifferent 'non-political' sections of society. In Lüttringhausen which - it will be recalled - was already an NSDAP stronghold in 1930, the Nazis gained 64.3 % (3,653) in a high turn out of 94.3 %. The KPD was the second strongest faction, but with only 14.4 % (820). The Schwarz-Weiß-Rot secured a further 10 votes (353), and the Zentrum 17 (275), whilst the SPD lost 43 (216). Comparing the results of the three Reichstag elections

March 1933, November 1932 and July 1932 - it is evident that vote-switching between the KPD and NSDAP was much more pronounced than in Remscheid with at least 200 votes, equalling roughly 20 % of the KPD total in November 1932, being cast in March 1933 in favour of the Nazis. This considerable discrepancy can most likely be explained by the intense pressure on the KPD in a Nazi stronghold like Luttringhausen, the lack of security afforded by working-class districts like those in Remscheid (in Luttringhausen Communists were becoming increasingly isolated and hence were subject to a higher degree of demoralisation), and lastly the absence of a strong radical left wing tradition.

In Lennep the NSDAP polled 45.0 % (4,064) on a 92.0 % turn-out. This total marked an increase of 560 votes over their performance in July 1932. The KPD vote held up remarkably well on this ballot, although as in Remscheid and Luttringhausen, there is evidence of realignment, in percentage terms however considerably less than in the latter, at the most 10 % of the party's November total. The KPD polled 1,910 votes (21.2 %). The Zentrum improved slightly, gaining 1,229 votes (13.6 %), as did the Kampffront Schwarz-Weiß-Rot, 829 votes (9.2 %). The SPD on the other hand lost a handful of votes, attracting a total of 566 (6.3 %). If we now examine individual wards in Remscheid, this should give us a clearer picture of the extent of locality of realignment. In Honsberg 3, the KPD increased its total of votes by 1 to 1,000 (74.0 %) on a 94.2 % turn out. The NSDAP more than recouped the losses sustained in November 1932, gaining 167 votes (12.3 %). The SPD lost 30 votes, falling to 60 (4.9 %), and the Zentrum improved by the same margin to 80 (5.9 %). From this it is evident that NSDAP gains can be largely ascribed to new and former non voters, with the barest minimum of movement away from the KPD. In ward 7, Struck, on a turn out of 91.4 % with reduced voting eligibility (-49), the KPD took 57.2 % (762 votes), and the NSDAP 20.9 % (279). The results of the other parties varied only marginally. In the 1930 election in this ward, there had been a 91.9 % turn out and the KPD had attracted 770 votes (55.7 %), whilst the NSDAP had managed 179 = 13 % (in July 1932 212 votes = 16.1 %). Once more suggests that in March 1933 the Nazis profited

from the return of deserters to the KPD and apathetic sections of the electorate in November 1932. The Reichstag elections of 1928 and 1930 set the stable KPD vote in Struck between 692 and 770, so that the gains made thereafter must be considered as fluctuating - between 50 and 60 votes - which in the radically altered circumstances the KPD could not hold. In ward 1, Bismarckstraße 1, containing Remscheid's second most important shopping street, the Nazis had taken over from the DVP as the strongest party in 1928 and managed to consolidate their position in subsequent elections. In 1933, with expanded voting eligibility (+37) and an increased turn out of 92.9 % (152 more voters than in November 1932; and 95 more than in 1930), the NSDAP increased its number of votes to 627 (50.6 %), a gain of 185 over November 1932 and of 115 over July of that year. The KPD collected 321 votes (25.9 %), only 6 fewer than in November 1932 and 29 more than in the July election. The votes of all the other parties vary negligibly, so that the conclusion to be drawn here is that the NSDAP gains were again due to the remobilisation of former non-voters who had deserted owing to lack of interest in November 1932, new voters and the handful of votes from the parties which had been eliminated. Again the KPD vote held up extremely well and there is little evidence of desertion by more than a tiny number. Ward 4, Eichenstraße, was a more marginal area which the Nazis captured from the KPD in July 1932 and lost again three months later. In 1933 there was a 92.5 % turn out in an unchanged electorate. The NSDAP received 603 votes (41.7 %), 215 more than in November, and 132 more than in July 1932. The KPD remained very stable with 405 votes (28.0 %), which constituted a loss of only 34 since November and of 10 since July 1932. The SPD secured 118 (8.2 %), 4 votes more than in November and 14 more than in July 1932. The Zentrum also picked up a few more votes reaching a total of 180 (12.5 %), 37 more than in November and 19 more than in July 1932. The remaining parties lost votes; the DVP lost 35, the Staatspartei 7, and the Schwarz-Weiß-Rot (DNVP and Stahlhelm) 6. From this it will be seen that NSDAP gains in this ward were also due to the increased turn-out which was considerably higher than in any previous election (136 more votes were cast than in July 1932, the

highest turn out prior to 1933). The Nazis had clearly succeeded in mobilising sections of the electorate which had never voted before, had taken back votes lost to the KPD in November 1932, and had harnessed the non-catholic middle classes.

In Ward 16, Alleestraße, the NSDAP won an overall majority of 52.2% (685 votes) in a 93.8 % turn-out. The size of the electorate had increased by only 2 since November 1932. The Nazi gains were 220 votes over November, and 101 over July 1932. The KPD won 13.7 % (180), a decrease of 38 votes since November and of 30 since July 1932. The DNVP (Schwarz-Weiß-Rot) on the other hand added a further 16 votes to reach a total of 161 (12.3 %), and the Staatspartei also gained 16 to score 32 (2.4 %). The SPD lost 15 votes and the Zentrum 2, winning 60 (4.6 %) and 85 (6.5 %) respectively. The major casualty after an ephemeral recovery was the DVP which lost 63, dropping to 79 (6.0 %). Yet again it is evident that the NSDAP profited first and foremost from the mobilisation of politically 'indifferents' who turned out in greater number than ever before. There was also a large degree of realignment of KPD voters than in any of the other Reimscheid wards analysed so far, but even here it remains relatively insignificant. The DVP's collapse most certainly benefited the Nazis, but also the Kampffront Schwarz-Weiß-Rot, and perhaps also the Staatspartei's total, albeit only 32, is interesting, as it signals either a slight realignment of SPD voters (possibly younger Jews) or of a few former DVP voters (again possibly Jews). The Kampffront's gains may be interpreted as a desire by a section of the middle-class electorate which was in broad agreement with the aims of the new government but could not identify with the Nazis, to strengthen the junior partner in the coalition. Although the NSDAP won an overall majority in ward 16, given the circumstances, the victory must be regarded as relatively unimpressive.

Ward 27, Schillerstraße, populated largely by civil servants, white-collar employees and members of the professions can also not be regarded as a bastion of National Socialism in the same sense as Lüttringhausen. Here the Nazis failed to attain an overall majority

securing 45.3 % (727) in a slightly expanded electorate (+21) and in a high turn out of 93.6 %. The second strongest party was the Kampffront, 261 (16.3 %); followed by the KPD, 201 (12.5 %); the SPD, 146 (9.1 %); and the DVP, 135 (8.4 %). Taken together, of course, the voters in this ward were broadly sympathetic to the new regime, but as in Alleestraße, there is evidence of a desire to boast the junior coalition partner. As it would appear to be the case everywhere, the NSDAP attracted a large number of 'indifferents' and most of the new voters. It would also seem that the Nazis took votes from both, the KPD and SPD, although the extent remains unclear, owing to the fairly wide distribution of votes over the whole party spectrum. The SPD was the heaviest casualty, losing 87 votes since November, and 109 from its total in July 1932. It may safely be assumed that some of these votes shifted to the KPD, which actually increased its total by 1. All the other parties, with the exception of the Zentrum (+3), lost votes. However, the fact that 124 votes more were cast in March 1933 than in July 1932, and that the corresponding gain by the NSDAP was +144, would appear to minimise the flow of votes from the KPD to the NSDAP. Some DVP votes clearly returned to the Nazis, and the majority of the Volksrechtspartei's share of 29 in November 1932 went the same way. Nevertheless, the SPD losses are difficult to account for, and it must be assumed that a certain number of Social Democratic voters had become so disillusioned, that they did not vote in March 1933. Likewise, a handful of former KPD voters may also have abstained owing either to their detainment in police custody or else their absence in hiding.

The NSDAP strongholds in Remscheid were: wards 26, Reinshagen (60.0 %); 38, Hasten 2, (56.8 %); Hasten 3, (59.6 %); and 40, Hasten 4 (58.8 %); all of them areas it will be recalled populated by a large percentage of small manufacturers. It will be further recalled, that the local workers' movement had never managed to make a notable impact on these areas, where the style of management in the factories and workshops remained essentially paternalistic. Both Reinshagen and Hasten were traditionally nationalist, and together played host to the majority of Remscheid's ex-Service-

men's and veterans' associations. The results of elections between 1930 and 1933 testify conclusively to the fact that more than any other section of local society, it was the small manufacturers and artisans, who embraced National Socialism most enthusiastically.

In Reinshagen, ward 26, where the Nazis achieved their best percentage vote, there was a 96.3% turn out. The electorate had increased by only 4 since November 1932, but was 8 fewer than in July 1932. In July 1932 the NSDAP had already attained an overall majority of 55.0 % (538 votes). In the same election the KPD was the only serious challenger with 25.7 % (252). In March 1933, the Nazis benefited from the extremely high turn out to improve its share, and the KPD held steady at 22.8 % (242), a loss of only 10 votes. None of the other parties made an impact whatsoever in the elections between July 1932 and March 1933. In November 1932 the KPD had taken some votes from the NSDAP to reach a total of 273 (28.1 %). In March 1933 all the converts returned to the Nazis. Yet again it is apparent that the NSDAP managed to persuade almost all the 'indifferents' (consistently high turn out figures would suggest that there were anyway extremely few in this ward) to exercise their vote. This pattern is repeated in all the Hasten wards, so that in conclusion we can safely say, that the Nazis benefited in every Remscheid ward from the return of deserters in the November election of 1932, the disappearance of the Mittelstands/Wirtschafts and Volksrecht parties, the mobilisation of still more former non-voters as well as most of the new electors and deserters from the remaining middle-class parties. The NSDAP took very few votes from the KPD, probably less than 500 to 600. This calculation is underlined by the fact that the Communists polled only 308 votes fewer in March 1933 than in July 1932, and the SPD lost only 345 over the same period. These figures conclusively disprove the theory of large-scale communist realignment in Remscheid following the Nazi takeover. The NSDAP success in this town was unequivocally due to the radicalisation of the middle and lower-middle classes who had never warmly embraced parliamentary democracy. Authoritarian attitudes, deeply rooted in the Remscheid bourgeoisie, were reinforced by the traumatic experience of the lost war, hyper-inflation, the Versailles treaty and the world economic depression. The presence of a well-organised radical workers' movement which enjoyed mass support, posed a constant threat to the interests of local manufacturers.

5. Resistance against the National Socialists in Remscheid 1933-45.

Resistance in Remscheid took on many different forms and was carried out by individuals and groups from all classes. However, as one might imagine in a town with such a strong and effective workers' movement, the bulk of active opposition came from this quarter, both with regard to organised and unorganised resistance. Organised resistance appears to have been almost exclusively the domain of the workers, with the Communists playing the leading role, supported by Social Democrats, trade unionists, members of the workers' sports clubs, Naturfreunde, Freidenker, and other workers who were not organised in any parties, clubs and organisations belonging to the workers' movement. Unorganised resistance which excluded sporadic and isolated demonstrations of frustration and anger, also appears to have come largely from the workers, but also from Christians, particularly Methodists, Jehova's witnesses, members of the Bekennende Kirche, several protestant and catholic clergymen, and a number of non-aligned individuals.

The author subscribes to a broad definition of the term 'resistance', which is neither dependent on ultimate effectivity and achievement, nor on the social and geographical extent of conspiratorial activity. In his choice of criteria, the author finds himself in broad agreement with Hans Josef Steinberg⁸², who excludes politically apathetic elements, who - through lack of interest - remained totally passive and therefore did not actively and consistently support the Nazis; notorious grumblers who were wont to complain out of reasons of personal dissatisfaction during the years of the Third Reich, as indeed during the Weimar Republic; arm chair politicians in pubs (Biertischpolitiker) whose courage and interest increased in proportion to the amount of alcohol they consumed, and those who under the influence of drink were grasped by a momentary upsurge of courage inducing them to shout "Heil Moskau" or "Rot Front". The essential factors regarding resistance to the Nazis are the interaction with other individuals or groups (not merely family members), either in a personal capacity, for example by the spread of propaganda by word of mouth, the collec-

tion of party dues or the payment of these, the purchase of proscribed literature, the extension of refuge to fugitives and aid to prisoners of war and Russian and Polish slave workers (Ostarbeiter), or by the preparation and distribution of oppositional literature. A further important factor involved in resistance is the desire, not out of motives of personal gain, to undermine and eventually topple the National Socialist State, in the knowledge that in the event of discovery severe penalties would be exacted.

Resistance can be subdivided into two categories, organised and unorganised activities. The former concerns the interaction of individuals and groups forming a network spread over several districts (Stadtteile) with connections with other towns and areas, and steered either wholly or partly by a central organisation. The only obvious example of organised resistance in Remscheid known to the author is that of communist groups. Unorganised resistance is that which is carried out by individuals and/or small isolated groups working on their own initiative with no external help.

Material used for this study was taken from newspaper articles, Gestapo files⁸³ and denazification questionnaires located in the Landeshauptstaatsarchiv in Düsseldorf, personal files belonging to the Berlin Document Centre collection, and from information supplied by interviewees.

Resistance in Remscheid falls broadly into three phases: from January to May 1933, from May 1933 to 1935, and the war years. Between 1935 and 1942 oppositional activity was on the whole sporadic and isolated, although by no means restricted to individuals. Communist groups, for example, were still active in the town, even though links with the regional headquarters had been severed and were only loosely and temporarily reestablished.⁸⁴ During this period, however, most oppositional activity was of an unorganised nature, primarily consisting of the gathering of information from foreign radio stations and disseminating propayanda by word of mouth in small circles.

The first phase of resistance which marks the transition to illegality, for which the KPD claimed to have been prepared, was perpetra-

ted initially in the hope that a united front of the workers' movement would be established, and that the National Socialist state would soon be toppled. This optimistic view is amply reflected in the many examples of daring and careless operations carried out by the working-class organisations. The workers' movement suffered serious set backs during the first months as a result of the arrest and internment of the majority of its leaders and a large section of its functionaries. Whilst the KPD had theoretically prepared its members for the transition to clandestine operations, it is evident that this preparation was inadequate and in many cases ineffective. Furthermore, the savagery with which repression^{WAS} pursued seems to have taken even experienced communist functionaries by surprise. Despite the general confusion of the first weeks of Nazi rule, which could have been exploited to conceal weapons in safe hiding places, a great many officials were caught red handed in their own homes with pistols and ammunition during police and SA raids. The first phase ended with the decimation of the local party cadre and left enormous gaps which had to be filled with young and inexperienced members.

The second phase, like the first, was signified by numerous and diverse activities, concerning the rebuilding of party organisation, the establishment of links with different groups, the procurement of oppositional literature, the designing, printing and distribution of leaflets and stickers, the collection of party subscriptions and gifts for the families of comrades held in protective custody, the provision of temporary asylum for fugitives from the authorities and the establishment of escape routes across the border to Holland, Belgium and the Saar. During this phase there were three main groups at work in Remscheid, and all of these maintained links with groups throughout the Bergische Land, the Lower Rhine and the Ruhr. This phase was terminated by the Gestapo's systematic and relentless pursuit of local opposition, based on the torturing of suspects and the wide use of informers and spies, some of which were recruited either by coercion or threats from the ranks of the resistance movement.

The third identifiable phase coincided with the turning point of the war. The war itself offered abundant scope for illegal oppositional activity, but this was offset by the frequent implementation of vicious penalties which increasingly included the death sentence for comparatively minor offences. The set-backs sustained by the German armies, the personal suffering owing to the effects of bombing raids, the increased work tempo and longer working hours demanded for the war effort, the close proximity of natural opponents of the system in the form of slave workers and prisoners of war, and the steady encroachment of allied armies on the Reich, were all factors which encouraged resistance which, as the war progressed, began to seem less futile than in the middle years of the Nazi dictatorship. Until the final months of the war, however, interactive opposition was still chiefly conducted by the workers. The majority of inhabitants at least outwardly appeared to oscillate between fanaticism and supreme confidence in the Führer on the one hand, and numbness and lethargy on the other. The extent of resistance in Renscheid, particularly in the later stages of the war, may never be known, as only those cases discovered by the Nazis have been documented. Activities such as the sabotage of weapons and munitions, and compassionate support for foreign workers were documented only seldom before the survivors returned home to their own countries after the war.

The first phase of resistance began immediately in the working-class movement and may be regarded as a continuation of the class conflict which was being waged during the final years of the Weimar Republic. The fact that initial resistance was spearheaded by the KPD is not surprising, as this party was the first candidate for destruction by the Nazis. The naivety with which communist resistance was carried out during the first months is exemplified by the case of two workers who were caught in the centre of Lennep in broad daylight distributing leaflets urging German workers to unite to bring down the Nazi state.⁸⁵ This kind of action underlines the continuity of a pattern of operation established in the Weimar Republic, and testifies to the failure to appreciate the nature of National Socialism in power. The KPD itself must bear responsibility

for the misappreciation of the changed circumstances, a mistake which had been committed earlier, with misconstrued propayanda pertaining to "Brüning Faschismus", "Papen Faschismus" and "Sozialfaschismus", labels which confused the party's own supporters. The consequence of previous mistakes was that members did not know what to expect from real ^Sfacism when it was elevated to power.

Another example of naïve bravado on the part of local Communists occurred on the day of the election (March 5th). Red flags had been hoisted on the top of trees in a copse in Kremenholl. When a troop of SA men arrived on the scene to remove the offending banners, they came under fire from a group of Communists lying in ambush. Evidence points to a continuation of tactics commonly employed during the latter years of the Weimar Republic, viz. pranks designed to compromise the SA in such a way as to make them a laughing stock. Although the ambushers had ample time to select a target (there were several stormtroopers present and standing in a group), no one was hit. Eventually the beleaguered SA men were relieved by a detachment of policemen hurrying to their aid. The ruse now backfired as the police and SA sealed off the neighbourhood and systematically combed the area. A number of residents who had witnessed the exchange of shots informed the police as to the whereabouts of the ambushers, and policemen and stormtroopers were able to capture two of the Communists involved in the operation. One of these was badly wounded in the belly and thigh by shots sustained in the shoot out. A subsequent search of the houses, in which the Communists had taken refuge, revealed several Rotfront uniforms.⁸⁶ The accused were each sentenced to five years hard labour in a correction centre and were deprived of their civil rights for the same period. This kind of action was repeated on several occasions during the spring of 1933, and each time led to arrests and convictions without any tangible achievements.⁸⁷ The counter productive side of such exploits can be gauged by the reaction in the press to one such ambush later in the year in which a stormtrooper, Willi Hoffmann, was hit in the arm on his way home. The Nazi press called for a merciless campaign against all 'Marxist criminals'. Striking a pathetic note typical of the Bergischer Beobachter⁸⁸ the article described the event in the following way:

'...Und nun dieser Überfall! Ein SA Kamerad kommt aus dem Kino. Er hat sich mit seinem Sturm unseren Film vom SA Mann Brand angesehen. Noch ist der Eindruck des herrlichen Films nicht verflogen, da trifft ihn auf dem Nachhauseweg die Kugel eines kommunistischen Verraters... Es ist wohl klar, daß sich die SA Leitung in Remscheid die Überfälle des roten Gesindels nicht mehr gefallen läßt. Mit der so lange geübten Rücksichtnahme ist es jetzt vorbei. Die SA wird die Anweisung erhalten, bei Überfällen rücksichtslos zur Selbsthilfe zu schreiten...'

Such incidents were used to perpetuate the fear of the communist threat in Remscheid and to isolate the opposition.

Further examples of the actual unpreparedness of KPD functionaries and members alike for the initial impact of Nazi terror are to be seen in the large number of house searches which uncovered incriminating evidence. The newspapers reported such finds daily from March onwards.⁸⁹

Of the many different leaflets distributed in Remscheid during the first months following the Nazi take over, the main themes appear to have been appeals for a united front and a general strike. In February and March one particular leaflet appealed to the SPD workers to abandon their leaders and join the KPD in order to overthrow the regime. A report sent to the police commissioner in Kecklinghausen⁹⁰ (Sonderkommissar des Ministers des Inneren) told of the Solingen Reichsbanner members' decision to expel their leaders and go over to the Communists. There was no mention of similar moves in Remscheid although it is known that some local Reichsbanner men did work in KPD-led resistance groups.⁹¹ Another leaflet circulated in the town, which appears to have been written and printed in Remscheid appealed to SA workers to join the KPD if they were really interested in overthrowing the capitalist system⁹²:

'Klassengenossen in der SA und SS, warum denunziert ihr unschuldige Arbeiter und Arbeiterfamilien, warum veranlaßt ihr Haussuchungen und Verhaftungen. Warum verursacht ihr neben den wirtschaftlichen Sorgen der Arbeiterfamilien noch mehr Unheil. Trefft ihr damit den Kapitalisten? Schafft ihr damit eine neue Kultur? Schafft ihr damit neue Freunde für Hitler? Nein. Eure Tätigkeit dient nicht der nationalen Einigung und Befreiung. Sie dient zur Erhaltung des Kapitalismus und des Elends des Kriegees und der Not. Du kämpfst an falscher Front. Wir rufen dir zu: Augen auf, Schluß damit, los von Hitler.'

The first phase of resistance ended with the round up of the workers' leaders and a large section of the most experienced and active functionaries. These had been listed by the NSDAP long before the party came to power. The lists were completed by police files, so that very few party activists were able to escape detection. Some wanted Communists did manage to evade capture in the first weeks and spent periods in hiding. It is claimed that both Ernst Thälmann and Max Hölz found temporary refuge in Remscheid during the first weeks of February. They spent several days in hiding in allotments in Lobach before continuing on their way; Thälmann returned to Berlin for the secret KPD conference, and Max Hölz presumably to safety across the border.⁹³

The second phase of resistance began with the rebuilding of the local KPD apparatus after recovering from the initial shock. This process was completed fairly rapidly by the readiness of younger Communists, particularly single women but also the wives of detainees and minor functionaries, who had either been overlooked or somehow escaped detection, or else had been released by the Gestapo, after interrogation had failed to establish grounds for prosecution. One of the first measures to be undertaken was to secure the collection of subscriptions and financial support for the families of internees. Although the majority of district (Stadtteil) collectors had been seized by the Nazis, the network had not been completely paralysed, as in some cases provision had been made for various contingencies like illness or imprisonment. One young woman, for instance, had accompanied her father as a young girl on his rounds in the Neuenhof district.⁹⁴ After his arrest by the police she took over collections for the Rote Hilfe as she was well known to the majority of residents in that particular area. Despite this advantage, however, the transition did not always function smoothly. Fear of detection combined with widespread demoralisation and frustration, which in many cases was directed against the workers movement and in particular against the KPD, made the collector's task infinitely more difficult. The payment of subscriptions was no longer an automatic commitment for many households. Collectors sometimes experienced difficulties in households where the husband

had been taken into custody. On one such occasion the wife of a party member who was awaiting trial in prison threatened to inform the Gestapo when the collector called for subscriptions. This experience together with a narrow escape in the summer, when a meeting of the workers' Esperanto club in her flat in Neuenhaus was denounced and subsequently raided by the Gestapo⁹⁵, frightened this young woman to such an extent that she discontinued collections, and restricted her activities to a small and trusted circle of friends.

Following the first waves of arrests, high priority was given to expressions of solidarity with the prisoners and their families. On Sunday mornings groups of young people belonging to the Naturfreunde and Communist Youth would stand outside the Court House jail singing songs. When the police moved them on, they stationed themselves outside the police headquarters, where other workers were held, and repeated the exercise there.⁹⁶

During the summer of 1933 there were two large resistance groups operating in Remscheid. It is not clear whether they were aware of each other's existence, although the Hans-Salz-group, based primarily in Lennep and Remscheid-South, distributed leaflets which had been produced by the other, the Andreas-Pflüger-group⁹⁷ based in Remscheid town.

The Andreas-Pflüger-group was the larger organisation consisting mainly of KPD members, and was politically far more experienced than the Salz-group based in Lennep. The Remscheid organisation which consisted of at least 120 members⁹⁸ was established at the behest of the KPD Bezirksleitung Niederrhein (regional organisation) in Düsseldorf. A man under the pseudonym 'Gustav' was dispatched to Remscheid to contact Karl Zülch, a KPD official who had so far escaped detection by the Nazis. Zülch was asked to provide a meeting place and an address for the collation and distribution of leaflets.⁹⁹ Zülch enlisted the aid of minor KPD official Helmut Trommelschläger who had a small grocery store and who agreed to provide a small room behind the shop for illegal meetings. A meeting was arranged to discuss the organisation of a local resistance movement which in the initial stage would be supplied with material directly from the KPD regional headquarters. This meeting was

attended by 'Gustav', Zülch, Trommelschlayer, Karl Wellershaus - a KPD official and member of the workers' swimming club - and Franz Leyk from the Rotfrontkämpferbund. The dispatch of material from Düsseldorf was announced by coded instructions sent to Zülch who in turn passed these on to Trommelschlayer. It was collected by Edelbert Schumacher, a KPD official, who picked it up at the Guldenwerth railway station and deposited it at Trommelschlayer's shop. The leaflets were then collected by a group of district organisers who in turn handed the material to a staff of distributors in their particular district. Leaflets were passed down the line to subordinate distributors who sold them for 10 pfennigs per copy. The proceeds flowed in the opposite direction back to Zülch who handed them on to 'Gustav'. The organisation, which resembled the structure of a pyramid, functioned along the lines of the Dreiersystem (groups of three), in which each individual knew only the identity of the person from whom he received the material and the person whom he supplied. As the organisation had a number of duplicating machines and typewriters at its disposal, it soon began to produce its own leaflets and brochures. In order to make detection more difficult, these apparatuses were constantly circulated amongst Remscheid families, so that no one particular household would come under suspicion. One of the houses used by the group for the purposes of typing material was situated opposite the Gestapo headquarters in Uhlandstraße. Emmi Leyendecker¹⁰⁰ typed leaflets at the house of Paul and Hertha Glas¹⁰¹. When the young woman was arrested by the Gestapo she was able to shield her hosts by claiming that these had allowed her to use a room to practise typewriting in order to improve her chances of employment. The tenants denied all knowledge of the real nature of Leyendecker's work, and despite reservations, the Gestapo had to accept this version in the absence of corroborative evidence. Emmi Leyendecker also made her room above her parents' newsagent's shop available to the group, and together with Luise Paul¹⁰² typed a number of leaflets there. The Pflüger-group also devised an elaborate system for the collection of party subscriptions which ran parallel to the distribution of illegal literature. In addition to these activities, this

organisation provided refuge for party functionaries on the run from the police.¹⁰³ The political instructor of the Remscheid group was Artur Dorf who was simultaneously one of the KPD resistance leaders in the Lower Rhineland regional headquarters. He also found refuge in Remscheid and was able to evade capture. The Gestapo achieved an important breakthrough on 9th August when a policeman arrested Pflüger, who was on his way to work with a number of leaflets in his bag. Despite the rapid speed with which the Gestapo moved, several important members of the group were able to escape. Ludwig Stillger, for instance, jumped through the window of his flat as Gestapo officials were forcing entry at the door.¹⁰⁴ He then spent the night in a garden shed before collecting one or two belongings and making his getaway across the border to Holland. The second major resistance organisation in Remscheid was led by Hans Salz who was a member of the workers' sports movement.¹⁰⁵ This group had over 60 members, mostly belonging to the KPD or affiliated organisations. Whereas the Pflüger-group could draw on a considerable amount of experience, the Lennep group consisted primarily of young men and women who had not yet held positions of responsibility within the movement. The inexperience and youthful enthusiasm with which they went about their tasks on a number of occasions almost led to their downfall. Despite this disadvantage the Salz-group was able to remain undetected for nearly two years. Salz and his colleagues formed part of a network which stretched over the whole of the Bergisch industrial region and cooperated closely with communist and Social Democratic groups in Wuppertal. Several of the group's members began their subterranean activities during the first phase of resistance. It was above all during the first few weeks that the Salz-group made mistakes which might well have had catastrophic consequences. On one occasion Grete Salz¹⁰⁶, on her own initiative, wrote slogans on newspapers and magazines in a dentist's surgery in Lennep. She had barely left the premises after receiving treatment, when they were discovered by the next patient. The Gestapo were summoned and were able to ascertain that only two people had received treatment so far that morning. The young woman was arrested the following day and a grapho-

logist assisted the police during the interrogation session. Grete Salz managed to disguise her handwriting to such an extent that the expert was not able to establish her guilt. Other members of the group helped to exonerate her by writing the same slogans in other surgeries and telephone kiosks all over the town. On another occasion Grete Salz admonished Hans Salz and Karl Engels for their failure to distribute leaflets on schedule. The following day the two men, still ashamed at their attack of nerves, painted slogans on a wall opposite the police station in broad daylight and afterwards threw a wad of pamphlets over a factory wall.¹⁰⁷ The members of the group, however, learned from their mistakes and in future refrained from impulsive actions of the kind described above. Perhaps their most successful operation was the campaign against the concentration camp at Kemna.¹⁰⁸ Apart from smuggling first aid equipment and cigarettes into the camp, they also gathered information about prevailing conditions and the brutal treatment of detainees by the SA guards. This information was distributed throughout the region in the form of pamphlets and stickers which came to the notice of foreign press correspondents with the result that a vociferous campaign was waged in newspapers abroad.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the families of camp inmates were encouraged to gather on the slopes above the camp on Sunday afternoons, an act which provoked warning shots from the guards, but which drew the attention of increasing numbers of inhabitants of the region to the exploits of the SA guards. The closure of the camp was due in no small measure to the work of this conspiratorial group.

The Lennep resistance organisation produced a large number of leaflets, brochures and stickers which were distributed in the Remscheid and Wuppertal area.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, they smuggled illegal literature into the Mannesmann factory in which a communist cell was active. Like the Remscheid group they collected subscriptions for the KPD and gifts for the families of internees. The Salz-group was supposedly betrayed by a KPD functionary who had been arrested in the course of inquiries into a different matter.¹¹¹ Hans Salz was intercepted by Gestapo agents in

Düsseldorf in December 1934 whilst trying to make contact with other KPD officials. 59 members of the group stood trial between 11th and 16th November 1935 in Wuppertal. Of these, 52 were convicted and sentenced to a total of 153 years imprisonment. For his part in the conspiracy Hans Salz received a ten-year sentence with hard labour. In comparison with the sentences passed on the members of the Pflüger-group only 12 months earlier, the penalties on the Lennep group were extremely severe and reflect the progressive intensification of punishment demanded by the authorities. During the trial of Hans Salz and his companions, the public prosecutor regretted that Salz had not been arrested a month later, because as a result of further legislation he could have pleaded for the death penalty.¹¹²

At about the same time the Remscheid Gestapo discovered another local organisation under the leadership of Karl Siebertz. This organisation was based in Remscheid and consisted primarily of former members of the communist youth movement (KJVD). Siebertz was charged with the task of rebuilding this organisation for the infiltration of the local SA, Hitler Youth and German Girls' League (BDM).¹¹³ Siebertz had been approached by Hans Hofmann, who until 1933 had been a KPD town councillor and a former local communist youth leader. At the time of the meeting Hofmann was in hiding and about to make his escape from Remscheid. In the summer of 1935 Siebertz undertook a series of hikes with several young people in the surrounding area of the town. It transpired that the majority of his companions had formerly belonged to the KJVD and accepted Siebertz' plans to rebuild the organisation enthusiastically. On subsequent hikes this group made the acquaintance of other hiking groups from Solingen and Ronsdorf and these were recruited for the resistance organisation. The Ronsdorf hikers were then instructed to make contact with young people in Wuppertal-Barmen with a view to founding a local group in that town. Subscriptions were paid at the rate of 20 pfennigs per member per week and were collected in Remscheid by Karl Weber and Kurt Bergerhoff. The leader of the Remscheid branch was Karl Hufschmied and the district leader for Honsberg was Willi Helpensteller. Siebertz coordinated the work of

the various groups in the Bergisch industrial region and functioned as an instructor. It is not known how far the plan to infiltrate Nazi organisations had matured, when members of the Solingen group were arrested. The connections with Remscheid were soon discovered and the Gestapo was able to capture all the leading members with the exception of Hufschmied and Siebertz. These made their way to France but were arrested by police and given the choice of either joining the Foreign Legion or leaving the country. They elected to return to Germany and were seized by the Gestapo on their arrival in Remscheid. 29 group members stood trial and 14 of these were sentenced to prison sentences ranging from three months to three years.

The destruction of the three organisations summarised above ended the second phase of resistance in Remscheid. At this point it seems appropriate to take stock of the situation in the local workers' movement and in the working class during the first years of Nazi rule. Firstly, it is clear that the local workers' movement suffered a defeat in 1933, which was due above all to events elsewhere, but also in Remscheid. Despite the KPD's impressive tally of votes in the March election, plus those votes secured by the SPD, these were not sufficient to legally prevent the Nazi consolidation of power, and this - it must be remembered - was the situation in a stronghold of the German workers' movement. Even in a town which boasted a strong and active militant movement, the communist and Social Democratic base was not wide enough to succeed. In addition to this fact the two working class parties were hopelessly split and failed to find a broad enough consensus from which to challenge the NSDAP effectively. Both parties had been surprised by the swift and savage reaction of the Nazis, although the SPD had time to witness the destruction of its rival before itself falling victim to the same kind of brutal suppression. The campaign of terror and Gleichschaltung following in the wake of the electoral defeat, led to demoralisation on a large scale. The destruction or the assimilation of the working class movement's institutions, internment and in some cases murder or suicide of its leadership¹¹⁴ plunged the movement into disarray. These initial set backs may have been

surmounted in a democracy, but under the Nazi dictatorship they had calamitous consequences. The Nazis did not allow the workers' movement to recover from these blows, but instead perfected their techniques of suppression by the establishment of a substantial network of spies and the encouragement of denunciations¹¹⁵, offering the opportunity for neighbours to settle scores which were not always politically motivated.¹¹⁶ The constant hounding of opponents and continued surveillance after release from prison or protective custody made renewed political activity an exceedingly hazardous business. The destruction of workers' institutions, in particular their youth organisations which under normal circumstances ensured a ready supply of new blood, effectively interrupted the process of rejuvenation. In addition to these measures, the ideological education of boys and girls in the Hitler Youth, German Girls' League and at school often outweighed parental influence, particularly in families where the fathers were absent for long periods of time, either due to imprisonment or later military service, and where working mothers had too little time to provide an effective counter-balance. Furthermore, atomisation operated not only between family units and the outside world, but also within the home. Parents were forced to restrict discussions to non-political issues whenever younger children were present for fear of unintentional denunciation in front of eager schoolmasters, HJ section leaders and neighbours. In this climate of fear, energy was increasingly devoted to everyday problems of a materialist nature by many working-class families. The home became a refuge from the everyday pressures of the Third Reich¹¹⁷; the increased work-rate (particularly after the onset of the rearmaments boom in 1935) longer hours, mandatory works' meetings which lengthened the working day, the constant urgings by party officials to join affiliated organisations and the never ending collections. Complementary to the atomisation of society were the effects of National Socialist propaganda, claiming the erection of a classless society - the much quoted folk community (Volksgemeinschaft) - and 'Socialism of deeds' (Sozialismus der Tat) and the elevation of consumerist values were designed to distract attention from political

issues and encourage prestige thinking thus eroding traditional working-class relationships and undermining solidarity. In the main it was former functionaries of the workers' movement who proved most resistant to both, propaganda and palliatives in the form of 'strength through joy' (Kraft durch Freude) mass tourism, 'pay as you earn' Volkswagen cars, government aided housing construction schemes carried out by owners themselves, and household furniture and appliances. Even if the majority of the population did not actually participate in the consumption of such articles, a great deal more interest was apportioned to their future acquisition. It has already been noted that in the pre-war years of the Third Reich satisfaction was linked more closely with expectations than actual performance¹¹⁸, an attitude of approval which was due above all to the achievements of Nazi propaganda.

The NSDAP, enjoying monopoly control of the media, succeeded in creating the illusion of embryonic prosperity which was reinforced by the steady reduction of unemployment and the imposing construction programmes which were started during the first year. In return for jobs the workers were forced to accept the loss of trade union rights of association and collective bargaining. In addition, the suppression of the workers' movement encouraged the confidence of industry and business, thus inducing expansion. A combination of coercion, rhetoric, abundant energy and modest success, which were in part fortuitously assisted by the already noticeable if still hesitant, upswing of the trade cycle when the Nazis took power¹¹⁹, gradually left their mark on those elements of the working class who had formerly not been politically active. Furthermore, it may be supposed that even the majority of convicted functionaries on their release from prison and protective custody for obvious reasons refrained from continued oppositional activity, although this is not to suggest that they became convinced followers of National Socialism. Their enforced resignation, however, widened the gulf between one time activists and nominal members of the working class movement who had become grudgingly reconciled to the prevailing situation. The result of this was that under the circumstances former nominal members tended to concentrate more on their

own individual problems. These factors taken together undermined the cohesion of the workers' movement and severely limited the numbers of potential resistance members.

Mason has posed the question of the quality of political consciousness in the workers' movement prior to 1933 as a possible indicator of the defeat of 1933, the submission of large sections of the working class and even willingness to support a regime which any well-schooled party or trade union activist could immediately identify as capitalist¹²⁰ with aims running contrary to those of the workers. Whilst we have already demonstrated the awareness and resolve of the officials and indeed a considerable number of rank and file members of the workers' movement in Reimscheid, we still do not know enough about the majority of nominal members and KPD and SPD voters. As long as the workers' institutions were able to function normally, the question of quality of political consciousness was subordinated to that of quantity in the search for new members. Whilst the March 1933 election result indicates continuing mass support for the KPD, it is apparent that over years of Nazi rule, this was undermined and eroded. Clearly, large numbers of workers were confused by seemingly contradictory elements of National Socialist policy; on the one hand police terror, on the other flattering overtures to workers of hand (Arbeiter der Faust) exemplified by Hitler's acknowledgement of only one nobility, namely that of labour.¹²¹ Mason also points to the impaired vision of sections of the working class which undoubtedly contained former KPD and SPD votes. The inability to identify connections between separate elements of policy and political events enhanced confusion resulting in the acceptance of some political offerings and rejection of others.¹²² The consequence of the search for positive elements, for example Hitler as opposed to Himmler, 'strength through joy' but not the German Workers' Front (DAF), the payment of children's benefits, but not the wage freeze, led to the creation of illusions which functioning workers' institutions would have been able to dispel. The necessity of relying on one's own judgement whilst the masses demonstrated, or appeared to demonstrate, their approbation, must at times have unsettled even the

most politically educated workers and induced reappraisals of perception. It is evident that much more research into the qualitative aspect of the workers' movement's political education policies is required before a comprehensive understanding of the movement's defeat and subsequent decline can be obtained.

If we now turn our attention to some of the elements of National Socialist social and economic policy, this may help to identify reasons for the wider acceptance of the regime during the middle years of the Third Reich.¹²³ Whereas the system of terror was designed to physically neutralise workers' opposition, some of the regime's social and economic policies were devised to offer material concessions with the aim of integrating workers in the state. It was the combination of these strategies which proved so effective in the prevention of large-scale unrest.¹²⁴

6. Social and Economic Policies as Integrative Factors.

When the Nazis came to power, the most pressing problem with which they were faced was that of mass unemployment which had to be solved rapidly if the regime was to retain its credibility. The social, economic and political preconditions for the solution of this problem were not altogether unpropitious. Whilst external economic factors, eg. Germany's weak financial position¹²⁵, foreign import tariffs and reluctance to invest in the country, tended to militate against the new government, although by no means as forcefully as in previous years, internal ones were much more favourable. As already demonstrated, the Nazis enjoyed the support of a large section of the middle classes, the workers' movement was disunited and the demoralising experience of long-term mass unemployment, were all factors which worked to the advantage of the new regime. The simultaneous destruction of the workers' movement, and the widely publicised Arbeitsschlacht (battle for jobs), which during the first three years brought about mainly cosmetic improvements, served to consolidate the Nazi's power.

Considering the vital nature of the employment problem, it is all the more astounding to observe the rather conservative approach to actual job creation, whilst the National Socialist press vociferously proclaimed the government's generous funding of such schemes.¹²⁶ By invoking the slogans of the Volksgemeinschaft, "Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz" and "Sozialismus der Tat" the regime actually succeeded in levying a proportion of the required capital for the creation of jobs from the workers themselves.¹²⁷ The exaction of regular contributions for the Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt (NS welfare) as well as other organisations, and the incessant door-to-door and street collections for the Winterhilfswerk (winter aid campaigns) became a permanent feature of the Third Reich, and an important source of funds which significantly reduced pressure on the government. Contributions, although described as voluntary, were in reality extorted by threats.¹²⁸ Lists of contributions were recorded in the local district offices, and Ortsgruppenleiter would issue warnings to those whose contributions were deemed unsatisfactory.¹²⁹

The 'battle for jobs', as Mason has demonstrated, was only effective in so far as it removed workers from the dole queues and the welfare register, often only temporarily, thus creating the illusion of a miraculous victory over the spectre of unemployment. The main beneficiary of the various relief work schemes were the statistics; in terms of effective aid to the economy, these measures brought extremely modest returns.¹³⁰ When the Nazis came to power, they introduced changes in the calculation of unemployment statistics, which tended to exaggerate the government's success. From 1933 onwards young auxiliary workers in agriculture and young people employed in labour service camps (Arbeitsdienstlager) were no longer registered as unemployed although they received only pocket money and board in return for their labour. In addition to these youngsters, those engaged in relief work schemes also disappeared from the total of unemployed, despite the fact that their jobs were only of a temporary nature and their remuneration remained on a par with unemployment benefit.¹³¹

In 1935 the director of the employment office reviewed the effects of government policy on the area served by his office. Mennenoh reported astonishing improvements with a reduction from 14,400 at the beginning of 1933, to 9,909 on 1st January 1934, and to 5,715 on 1st December 1934.¹³² Mennenoh elaborated on these totals with specific figures for the metal-working and textile industries. The metal-working industry, which had suffered the highest unemployment in Remscheid, witnessed a reduction in unemployed in 1934 from 3,235 to 1,439, and over the same period the spinning branch of the textile industry showed a fall in unemployment from 497 to 253. These overall successes were mainly attributed to the redirection of welfare recipients into auxiliary work in agriculture, the voluntary forfeiture of jobs by young single workers in favour of older married men, a policy which apparently met with considerable opposition from local manufacturers, and the local authority's various relief work schemes. Mennenoh's report also referred to the continuing lack of export orders which - it will be recalled - were traditionally the life blood of local industry. This picture was confirmed in the council administration report for 1934, which stated that the total of exports was less than in 1933, and only roughly one third of the 1929 figure.¹³³ In the light of these considerations, the rapid reduction in unemployment in the metal-working and textile industries in Remscheid indicates a strong suspicion of engagement by local firms in the rearmament programme, which for obvious reasons could not be publicised.¹³⁴

The most rapid reduction in unemployment figures, however, was noted in the building industry which benefited from modest government loans to finance relief work schemes and house repairs. In 1933, for instance, the council authorised the construction of a number of public conveniences in the town, the building of a diet kitchen at the hospital, and major repairs to 1019 council owned flats as well as a number of road repairs and the laying of sewage pipes.¹³⁵ Under the central government loan scheme to private house owners, a total of 4,563 applications were received in Remscheid by the end of December 1933, and 684,152 marks were granted. By the end of February 1934, the number of applications had in-

creased to 8,836, and the authorised grants rose to 963,434 marks. It was noted that this scheme was particularly beneficial to artisans (Handwerker).

The direction of welfare recipients into the Voluntary Auxiliary Labour Service (Freiwilliger Arbeitsdienst) was secured by various methods of coercion, so that in 1933 the welfare office was able to report a reduction of 100 male recipients under the age of 25 years who joined of their own accord, and a further 417 who were compelled to enter labour service camps.¹³⁶ The report noted a more positive attitude amongst welfare recipients, who were now beginning to shake off their former 'lethargy' and were evidently seeking employment on their own initiative.

The following year, a total of 1,051 recipients of unemployment and welfare benefits (844 males, 207 females) were induced to join the Auxiliary Labour Service on pain of forfeiting their allowance.¹³⁷

During the course of 1933 a total of 205 recipients of unemployment benefit under the age of 25 years were placed in agriculture, presumably as Landhelfer. Of these, 95 were sent to eastern regions and received a small contribution of 50 % of travel costs and working clothes from the welfare office.¹³⁸ This kind of scheme constituted a particularly disadvantageous exchange for the participant who was as a rule shamefully exploited in badly paid hard labour. The government, however, calculated that this kind of experience would be ideal preparation for future soldiers.¹³⁹

Another side of the regime's 'battle for jobs' was the much publicised investigation into undeclared income, which was allegedly accorded considerable effort on the part of the employment office and the police. In September 1933 the Bergischer Beobachter reported the case of a recipient of unemployment benefit who had been employed in a Lennep factory and had earned a total of 800 marks, of which he had declared only 70.¹⁴⁰ The police decided to make an example by committing this man to a concentration camp as an enemy of the state. The report echoed the employment office's ominous warning:

'...sich jeder irgendwie gearteten Form der Schwarzarbeit zu enthalten, da andernfalls unweigerlich die Verhaftung und Einlieferung in ein Konzentrationslager durchgeführt wird.'¹⁴¹

It is not clear whether such warnings sufficed to deter from this practice or whether the problem of Schwarzarbeit was grossly exaggerated by the authorities for propaganda purposes. Despite spot-checks on hundreds of local factories and workshops, the police were able to detect only 20 offenders in 1933, the majority of whom were released with a warning.¹⁴² The police action against illicit work continued the following year, during the course of which 240 firms were required to present their books for examination. This time only 16 offenders were discovered, a handful of whom were finally prosecuted.¹⁴³ The conclusion of the council administration's report was that illicit work had been significantly reduced in Remscheid, but in the light of available evidence this claim appears spurious. Whilst the practice of illicit work undoubtedly existed, it was rather of a casual and temporary nature than a deliberately calculated attempt to defraud the state. In any case, the Nazis were able to exploit the situation fully without issuing the available statistical data, which - as shown above - rather suggests a make-believe problem.

Several social policies aimed specifically at women were also linked to the creation of jobs for men. In accordance with National Socialist ideology, women were encouraged to discontinue their employment, particularly in industry, in order to make way for unemployed males. They were now expected to revert to the traditional role of wives and mothers and either remain at home or else seek employment as domestic servants. The German home was bestowed with a quasi sacred status, and a whole range of maudlin epithets and 'mock heroic verbiage' were coined to make the transition to the kitchen sink more palatable. Gertrud Scholtz-Klink's vision of battalions of German women armed with soup ladles marked a peak in what was for many an extremely dull career¹⁴⁴, and was surpassed only by the award of the mother's cross of honour which bore the inscription "Der schönste Name im Erdenrund ist Mutter"¹⁴⁵ (The most wonderful name in all the world is mother).

There were, of course, thousands of young women who did aspire to the role of wife and mother, and who gladly seized one of the more popular opportunities provided by the new state. This was the scheme begun in June 1933 to offer loans on generous terms to young couples who wished to marry and set up their own homes. The RGA ran a series of articles in that month to publicise the scheme. The first article, penned in patronising style, explained the terms to the 'junger Mann' and his 'Fraulein Braut'.¹⁴⁶ The loans were offered to young men whose wives had been employed for at least six months on condition that wives agreed not to seek reemployment after the wedding. A later article pointed out that political opponents of the NSDAP and those suffering from genetically transmitted infirmities were precluded from the scheme.¹⁴⁷ The loans were repayable at an interest of one percent, and a quarter of the total was waived on the birth of each newly born infant. The scheme was financed by revenues from a supplementary tax imposed on unmarried persons, levied at the rate of two percent on incomes up to 150 marks per month, three percent up to 300 marks, four percent up to 500 marks and at five percent over 500 marks per month.¹⁴⁸ The RGA even researched current furniture prices and calculated that 400 marks would purchase a complete bedroom suite including a bed, and that a kitchen could be bought for 300. A beneficial corollary of this policy was a boom in furniture making and household appliances, which were two of the few consumer sectors to actually flourish in the Third Reich.¹⁴⁹ Although Remscheid had no furniture industry, a number of local firms, in particular the Alexanderwerk, produced a whole range of household appliances, and thus benefited directly from the scheme. Local furniture retail shops were also guaranteed a considerable increase in turn over. Between June and the end of 1933, a total of 670 applications for loans were received at the registry office, and at least 240,000 marks were paid out.¹⁵⁰ The scheme continued to attract considerable interest. In 1937, 482 applications were made (an increase of 12 % over the previous year), and loans of 375,400 marks were approved.¹⁵¹ By this time, however, industry was facing a shortage of labour, so that the clause preventing a return to work

by wives was jettisoned against repayment at three percent interest. There were also further benefits in the form of tax relief for young newly-weds, if they agreed to employ a domestic servant after setting up home. In January 1934 it was calculated that of the roughly 20,000 households in Remscheid, between three and five thousand were in a position to take on an unemployed female school-leaver.¹⁵² The district leader of the Women's League regarded the fact that only 1,060 girls had been employed by Remscheid families, as extremely vexatious and called for a greater show of good will. In order to ensure serious consideration, the Women's League dispatched members to every household in town to explain the advantages accruing from the employment of housemaids. Fräulein Dr. Christ concluded her speech with the appeal:

'Deutsche Hausfrauen, öffnet diesen Werberinnen die Tore ! Betrachtet sie nicht als Bittstellerin, sondern als Fordernde. Tragt mit dazu bei, daß der Wille der Hitler-Regierung Wirklichkeit werde.'¹⁵³

It has already been noted that the Nazis successfully persuaded Germans that vast improvements in the country's economic fortunes had been achieved during the first two or three years, and whilst by far the majority of workers were still in no position to afford more than the very basic necessities of life, many held out hope for the future. Interest in luxury consumer goods was encouraged even if they were not yet available. Volkswagen cars, for instance, were exhibited to enthusiastic townsfolk who then returned home to dream of the day when they would acquire their own limousines.¹⁵⁴ The Volkswagen beetle was priced at 999 marks and could be purchased by paying a weekly instalment of five marks, with the owner taking possession only on completion of the total payments. Private motorisation did not increase very spectacularly in Remscheid during the years of the Third Reich. A report in the RGA on 1st January 1933¹⁵⁵ estimated a total of 929 motor cars in the town on 31st July 1930. This figure fell to 641 on 30th December 1932. By the end of 1937, the total number of motor cars in Remscheid was 2,088.¹⁵⁶ Any misconceptions regarding the accessibility of motor car ownership for workers will be dispelled by reference to the following table.

TABLE 20: Hourly rates of pay in the Remscheid metal working industry, 1933 and 1938.*

	<u>1933</u>	<u>1938</u>
skilled worker	70,8	70,8
semi skilled	67,8	67,8
unskilled male	59,7	59,7
unskilled female		44,8.

* in pfennigs per hour

Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich 1938, Berlin 1938, p. 340.

Radios were another item, which, however, were placed within the reach of most families, so that official propayanda could reach a maximum number of homes. In August 1933, the Bergischer Beobachter published a survey of radio sets in a number of larger towns and cities in the Reich, which revealed that Remscheid was well down the list with only 9.8% of households in possession of one¹⁵⁷. The corresponding figures were: Leipzig 15.5 %, Hamburg 15 %, Berlin 14.8 %, Magdeburg 13.8 %, Frankfurt a.M. 13 %, Düsseldorf 12.8 %, Hagen 11.9 %, München 11.2 %, Wuppertal 11.1 %, Köln and Stuttgart 11 %, Solingen 10.7 %, Dortmund 8.6 % and Gelsenkirchen 5.7 %. Once more loans were made available to families who wished to purchase a standard Volksempfänger, a set which for obvious reasons had only a limited range of stations. In 1936, 259 loans were approved which amounted to 13 fewer than the previous year.¹⁵⁸

Possibly the most significant luxury item made available to the working population were Kraft durch Freude (strength through joy) holidays. The Nazis offered the employed a concession which had never been attained by the free trade unions, namely paid annual leave for all workers.¹⁵⁹ Although this agreement was never made legally binding¹⁶⁰, most of Germany's workers were granted paid leave, many for the first time in their working lives. Strength through Joy which was the most important sub-organisation

of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF), rapidly developed into Germany's most powerful mass tourist operator, offering holidays and excursions at incredibly low prices.¹⁶¹ Special trains and omnibuses were provided for weekend excursions, and participants were accommodated in the company's own hostels, and later hotels, which were constructed at Baltic seaside resorts and on Lake Constance. Despite the under-representation of workers participating in longer KdF holidays¹⁶² the mere existence of such opportunities captured the imagination of most. The majority of those who actually did take part returned impressed and supported Strength through Joy propaganda by relating their experiences to envious colleagues. By far the most spectacular holidays were the sea cruises to Norway and Madeira in the organisation's own ships. Six citizens from Remscheid accompanied the cruise to Madeira in 1936 and reported highlights of the journey in the local press.¹⁶³ Perhaps it was the bad weather and rough seas which induced one of the local holiday makers to conclude his report in the following way:

'Möge man auch den sonnigen Süden über alles preisen, möge man ruhig Madeira die glückliche Insel nennen, wir haben herausgefunden, daß nichts, aber auch nichts über Deutschland geht. Wir danken dem Führer für das, was er für Deutschland getan hat. Wir danken ihm für das Erlebnis, das er uns mit dieser Fahrt in die Fremde schenkte. Dieses Erlebnis hat uns die Augen geöffnet und uns erkennen gelehrt, wie glücklich wir in Deutschland leben und wie stolz wir auf unser Vaterland sein können.'¹⁶⁴

Strength through Joy also provided cheap tickets for cultural events, for instance theatre productions, which enabled 'workers of hand' to sit next to 'workers of brain'¹⁶⁵, and visits to museums and art galleries - 'halls of German art' - were organised for groups of factory workers. Lectures at the municipal evening institutes, sports clubs and diverse other recreational facilities were also taken over by the KdF, so that this organisation penetrated the lives of millions of Germans and thereby played an important role in the integration of workers.

From this short survey which examines only a limited number of social and economic policies, it can be seen that the Nazis were able to win the approval of many German workers and at least pla

cate others. It is, however, inconceivable, that on the strength of these policies alone, the Nazis could have gained and held the support of Remscheid workers, or even have persuaded them to tolerate the Hitler dictatorship. Despite the introduction of new values and aims, which to some extent replaced those of the socialist workers' movement, the Nazis relied heavily on the severe repression of all potential opponents, the creation of an atmosphere of insecurity, felt even by those who did not openly oppose the state, and the all pervading influence of a powerful propaganda machine.

7. Remscheid Workers during the Second World War 1939 1945.

The third phase of resistance in Remscheid began after the outbreak of war and consisted of both, organised and unorganised opposition. Despite growing discontent in the years prior to 1939¹⁶⁶ there appears to have been little activity against the Nazis¹⁶⁷, although remnants of communist groups still continued to meet and discuss the current political situation.¹⁶⁸ Such meetings were held in private homes, but owing to the awareness of Gestapo surveillance tactics, these were usually limited to a small number of trusted friends. The most common practice at these gatherings was to listen to foreign radio stations and discuss the bulletins. Information and ideas gleaned in this way, however, remained 'private' or for a limited circle, as attempts to break out of this isolation would almost certainly have been detected immediately.¹⁶⁹ The size of Remscheid factories - only a mere handful employed more than 250 workers - militated strongly against oppositional activity under the prevailing circumstances; this was a lesson which active Communists had presumably learned from their experience between 1933 and 1935. The only evidence of oppositional activity in local industry after 1935 comes from larger factories and was in the majority of cases carried out by individuals (usually former activists), small groups of disgruntled workers without connections to the KPD led resistance movement, former members of

the workers' movement who had managed to escape detection in the years 1933-1935, and an unknown number of communist cells in the BSI, DEW and Mannesmann works, which operated largely on their own initiative.¹⁷⁰

Most of the relatively few documented acts of opposition in the war years involved cooperation between German workers and prisoners of war or Russian and Polish workers. In the DEW a small group of workers supplemented the miserable rations of Ustarbeiter and French prisoners of war, an act which ensured the survival of some of the Russians.¹⁷¹ A group of Remscheid workers at the Dowlidat factory also supplied French prisoners with extra rations until the contact was discovered in 1942. Unfortunately, the outcome of proceedings is not known.¹⁷²

At the Remscheid factory Raab & Schafer two Communists, one of whom was a former section leader of the Rotfrontkampferbund and who had already spent some time in protective custody, were arrested by the Gestapo in April 1943 on information supplied by one of their agents. The two workers had helped a French prisoner of war to escape, supplying him with maps, money, food and clothes. Both men were sentenced to death and executed on 16th October 1943.¹⁷³

A number of workers at the BSI factory were involved in acts of sabotage. Wheel bearings, for instance, were assembled without being cleaned and a turning lathe was willfully damaged with the result that the machine had to be scrapped. The six weeks required for the delivery of a new lathe constituted a considerable loss of production.¹⁷⁴

Considering that almost all the documented evidence during the war years results from cases which came to the notice of the Gestapo, it is likely that undetected acts of sabotage of the war effort were more numerous than is suggested by the short summary given above. Much more research is required on this subject before an adequate understanding of the scope and magnitude of this kind of opposition can be obtained.

Remscheid again played a vital role in the country's war production. The BSI¹⁷⁵, for instance, supplied the army with weapons, including tanks, and various kinds of castings and fittings

for engineering corps. In February 1943 the company had a total workforce of 2,758, comprised of 1,682 German males, 80 German females, 48 prisoners of war, 668 Ustarbeiter (slave workers from Eastern Europe), male and female, and 280 other foreign workers. The total value of the company's deliveries to the German army increased from nearly 19 million marks in 1939 to almost 30 million marks in 1943. Production was severely impeded after the heavy bombing raid carried out by the Royal Air Force in July of 1943, in which the BSI factory suffered heavy losses. The Deutsche Edeltahlwerk's workforce was 2,316 in June 1943, consisting of 1,382 German males, 70 German females, 358 prisoners of war, 175 slave workers and 331 other foreigners. The corresponding figures for the Mannesmann factory in June 1943 were a total workforce of 1,207 consisting of 714 German males, 57 German females, 53 prisoners of war, 172 slave workers and 205 other foreigners. In December 1944 the Alexanderwerk had a total workforce of 679, consisting of 329 German males, 107 German females, 85 slave workers, 113 prisoners of war, and 45 other foreigners. All of these factories, as indeed the majority of local firms, were involved in war production. The bombing raids on 30th/31st July 1943 totally destroyed 194 (28 %) industrial plants and heavily damaged 224 others (32%).¹⁷⁶ Of the 2,695 export firms, shops and offices situated in Remscheid, 1,764 (66 %) were either totally destroyed or severely damaged. 11,295 flats (31 %) were totally destroyed, 5,705 (16 %) were very badly damaged, and 3,762 (10 %) were badly damaged (mittelschwer beschadigt). The raid which lasted roughly one and a half hours, claimed the lives of 1,063 inhabitants¹⁷⁷, of these 210 were foreigners, nearly all Polish and Russian slave workers.¹⁷⁸ The total loss of life due to the effects of bombing on Remscheid during the war amounted to 1,346, and 5,481 were injured in 73 separate raids.¹⁷⁹ The loss of lives would undoubtedly have been much higher had the authorities not taken the precaution of evacuating around 15,000 people, mainly women and children, at some time prior to the attack in July 1943.¹⁸⁰ The bombing raids on Remscheid hit the workers particularly hard, many of the casualties in the July raid in 1943 were working the

night shift in factories. Working-class districts adjoining the larger factories were heavily hit and the level of destruction was exceedingly high. This fact had serious repercussions on the recrudescence of workers' movement after 1945, in that long-standing relationships in working-class neighbourhoods were physically destroyed when survivors were resettled in different parts of the town together with the considerable numbers of refugees from areas to the east of the Elbe. The restructuring of the town worked to the detriment of the workers' movement with the influx of nearly ten thousand Silesians, East Prussians and Sudeten Germans.¹⁸¹ The physical destruction was followed by the partial break-up of 'red neighbourhoods' resulting from greater geographical mobility, which was prompted by the regime's social policies during the Third Reich.¹⁸² The destruction and continued suppression of working-class institutions for a period of 13 years disrupted the rejuvenation process, which had hitherto ensured the continuity of the movement. The loss of a large number of the KPD cadre, either by murder, suicide, premature deaths, due to the injuries sustained in interrogations and the long years of suffering in prisons and concentration camps, plus the casualties on the battle field, severely weakened the radical workers' movement in Remscheid. In addition to these factors the widespread disillusionment with politics which was revealed particularly after the inception of the Federal Republic, the well publicised crimes committed in the Soviet Union under Stalin, the emergence of Titoism as an alternative, which found acceptance in the late forties and early fifties, and obstruction tactics by the allied forces, all combined to militate against a resurgence of the traditional radicalism of Remscheid's workers. Despite a transient revival between 1945 and 1949¹⁸³, in which the KPD again emerged as the single strongest party, and for a time supplied the town's mayor, the momentum could not be sustained for the reason that the movement did not possess sufficient substance and was swelled only temporarily by hungry and deprived citizens, who deserted when the situation improved. The leadership of the local workers was usurped by the SPD in the fifties, but by then the movement had long ceased to exist in its previous form.

CHAPTER VI

NOTES

- 1 The town archives in Remscheid contain very little material relating to the years 1933-45. A large amount of files were either destroyed in the bombing raids or lost in the course of transportation after the cessation of hostilities. It is also unclear whether the allies returned documents which they confiscated in order to compile lists of Nazis for denazification purposes.
The former deputy Ortsgruppenleiter of Lennep, Gustav Jesinghaus informed the author that he personally supervised the destruction of all papers and files from the NSDAP district headquarters, situated in Lennep, during the days preceding the occupation of Remscheid by American forces in April 1945.
- 2 Regional and national studies do not ail to anything like the same extent, as they are able to draw on much wider resources of material deposited in central archives which the Nazis were not able to obliterate in time.
- 3 Oral information for this chapter was supplied by, inter alia:
Erich Thieler, Otto Rau, Hannah Quaas, Fritz Knapper, Olga Jung, Robert Führer, Millie Hilbert, Karl Engels, Paul von der Burg, Hertha Glas, Emmi Leyendecker, Willi Krell, Otto and Linnie Alders, Grethe Salz, Dora Salz, Alexander Vogel, Rudi Lichtenberg.
- 4 BV, 15/2/33, Nazi Führer Voyt dankt dem SPD Polizeirat Schrader; and Bergische Morgenpost, 29/1/83, In "Bergisch Moskau" kam Wechsel von "Rot" nach "Braun" nicht übernacht.
- 5 RGA, 4/2/23, NSDAP Fackelzug durch die Stadt.
- 6 RGA, 6/2/23, Aufmarsch der NSDAP anlaßlich einjährigen Bestehens der SA in Hasten.
- 7 Die Freie Presse, 6/2/23, Zusammenstoß in der Hammesberger Straße aus Anlaß eines Nazi Umzuges.

This report blamed the Nazis for the incident:

'Da den Herrschaften jetzt seitens der Polizei jeder Schutz gewahrt wird, konnte der Zug auch durch die Hammesberger Straße ziehen, wo in den grauen Häusern der hohen Mietskasernen nur politisch Linksorientierte, vorwiegend Kommunisten, wohnen. Da die Nazis wie üblich gerade in solchen Vierteln, wenn sie den nötigen Polizeischutz haben, ihre herausfordernden Lieder singen und Ausrufe hörbar werden lassen, entstand eine furchtbare Erregung unter den Anwohnern, die um so schlimmere Formen annehmen mußte, weil linksgerichteten Organisationen Demonstrationen erschwert und zum Teil völlig unterbunden sind. Hinzu kommt, daß die aufdringliche Verherrlichung der SA durch den deutschen Rundfunk, wie es gestern wieder geschah, jene Kreise, die sich mit Recht von der SA bedroht fühlen, in immer stärkere Verbitterung treiben müssen.'

8 RGA, 6/2/33, *ibid.*

9 *Ibid.*, the ban was proclaimed on 2nd February and applied to open air demonstrations.

10 Bergische Morgenpost, 29/1/33, *op. cit.*

11 Interviews with Willi Krell, Paul Schneider, Otto Rau and Karl Engels.

All four claimed that communist, Social Democrat, some catholic and many non-aligned workers were ready to fight and were waiting for a signal from the parties and trade unions for concerted action to begin.

12 For an account of the development of the united front question, see Georg Fürbeth/Jürgen Harrer, Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie 1890 - 1933, Darmstadt and Neuwied 1974, pp. 227-238.

The authors particularly stress SPD fears of losing the leadership of the German workers' movement to the KPD as a prime factor in the failure to establish a united front. The KPD's tactics of appealing to Social Democratic workers to join a "grass roots united front" with the explicit exclusion of their leaders is likewise held responsible for the ultimate lack of cooperation between the two parties.

Cf. also Nicos Poulantzas, Fascism and Dictatorship. The Third International and the Problem of Fascism, London 1979, pp. 177-188.

The author highlights the extent of disagreement within the SPD and trade unions on the nature of their opposition to the Nazis. Considering the massive potential support enjoyed by the SPD, trade unions and their affiliated organisations and the lack of decisive commitment to lead the mass of workers in any kind of positive action against the Nazis, Poulantzas concludes that the greatest share of responsibility for the Nazis' coming to power is borne by the SPD.

- 13 Detlev Peukert, Die KPD im Widerstand. Verfolgung und Untergrundarbeit an Rhein und Ruhr 1933 bis 1945, Wuppertal 1980, pp. 40-41.
- 14 See Wilhelm Pieck's assessment of the Brussels Conference of the KPD in 1935:

'Aber die Mehrheit der deutschen Arbeiterklasse leistete der Sozialdemokratie Gefolgschaft und setzte ihre Hoffnungen auf die bürgerliche Demokratie, auf die Koalitionspolitik der Sozialdemokratie. Die faschistische Bewegung schwoll indessen mächtig an und bedrohte alle Rechte und Freiheiten der Arbeiterklasse. Das hatte uns zur Änderung der Richtung unseres Hauptstoßes veranlassen müssen. Das Anwachsen der faschistischen Gefahr wurde jedoch von uns unterschätzt...

...Es fehlte die Linie auf ein Herantreten an die sozialdemokratischen Organisationen, es überwoy mehr der Versuch zur Gewinnung der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiter für die Partei. Vor allem verhinderte aber das in der Partei tief eingewurzelte Sektierertum ein wirklich ernstes Herangehen an die sozialdemokratische Arbeiterschaft, um die Einheitsfront zustande zu bringen oder wenigstens Verständnis bei ihnen für die Losungen und die Politik der Partei zu erwirken...'

quoted in Klönne, op. cit., p. 270f.

- 15 The ADGB for instance, had been exploring the possibility of a coalition with left wing Nazis under the leadership of Gregor Strasser.

The SPD and ADGB sanction of a joint 1st May demonstration with the Nazis is a further example of an attempted integration. The SPD's subsequent secession from the Socialist International and its hesitant acceptance of Hitler's foreign policy are to be viewed in a similar light.

- 16 See RGA, 20/3/33, Der Tag von Potsdam. Weihe und Gedenkstunde an die Wiedergeburt der deutschen Nation.
- 17 RGA, 18/3/33, Max und Moritz - Elberfelder Straße. Mittagskarte für Sonntag.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 RGA, 21/3/33, Die nationale Revolution marschiert.
- 24 See eg. RGA, 25/3/33, Kampfbund des gewerblichen Mittelstandes, Untergruppe der NSDAP, Mittelstandsversammlung.
- 25 The second Gleichschaltung law was passed on 7th April 1933. See Wolfgang Ruge and Wolfgang Schumann (edit.), Dokumente zur Deutschen Geschichte 1933-1935, Berlin Ost 1977, p. 42.
- 25 Cf. Mason, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

'Die Aussichten, daß die NSDAP die wirtschaftliche, soziale und politische Machtstellung des Bürgertums mit allen Mitteln behaupten werde, scheint besonders auf lokaler Ebene ihren Aufstieg ausschlaggebend gefördert zu haben. Auf nationaler Ebene vermochte sich die Partei in steigendem Maße der Sympathie der Großindustrie zu versichern, denn diese begann, sie als ein brauchbares Instrument einzuschätzen, durch das die politische und wirtschaftliche Macht der Arbeiterklasse entscheidend geschwächt werden konnte. Das Unvermögen aller anderen konservativen Parteien und Gruppen, diese Aufgabe zu vollbringen, bildete eine der wesentlichen Vorbedingungen für den Aufstieg des Nationalsozialismus.'

Also for complicity of middle class with the NSDAP, see Kuhn op. cit., p. 399f.

- 27 Ibid.,

'Diese Faktoren vermögen auch zu erklären, warum zwischen März und November 1933 das nationalistische bürgerliche Deutschland sich geschlossen hinter das neue Regime stellte. Denn in dieser Hinsicht war die Konsolidierung der nationalsozialistischen Machtposition nicht in erster Linie die Folge von Einschüchterung und Manipulation. Sie hing vielmehr damit zusammen, daß es dem Regime gelungen war, die eigene spezifische Version jenes allgemeinen Zielprogrammes durchzusetzen, zu dem sich all diese Gruppen bekannten. KPD, SPD und Gewerkschaften existierten nicht mehr.'

Cf. also Franklin Kopitsch, "Der Weg zur Machtergreifung. Vom Scheitern einer Demokratie", in: Inge Brodersen (edit.), 1933. Wie die Deutschen Hitler zur Macht verhalfen. Ein Lesebuch für Demokraten, Hamburg 1983, p. 320.

- 28 On one occasion residents of a rather well-to-do area near the Hermann-Göring-Haus in Lennep complained to the police about the treatment of prisoners who were held in the local party headquarters. Alarmed by the screams of tortured prisoners, a large crowd of townsfolk assembled outside the Hermann-Göring-Haus to protest.

See Freies Volk, 26/7/49, Kein Engel ist wie so rein.

- 29 RGA, 28/4/33, Auflösung der Remscheider DVP.

- 30 RGA, 2/5/33, Zur NSDAP übergetreten.

- 31 RGA, 28/4/33, Auflösung..., op. cit.,

'Schon seit längerer Zeit hat innerhalb der Ortsgruppe Remscheid der Deutschen Volkspartei ein Zug zur NSDAP eingesetzt, der in letzter Zeit immer stärkere Formen angenommen hat. Jetzt hat auch der Stadtverordnete Karl Becker den Übertritt zur NSDAP vollzogen. Die Abwanderung der volksparteilichen Mitglieder hat, wie wir weiter erfahren, einen derartigen Umfang angenommen, daß die Ortsgruppe Remscheid in den nächsten Tagen aufgelöst werden wird. Als Termin hierfür ist, wie verlautet, der Mittwoch nächster Woche vorgesehen. Morgen findet eine Sitzung innerhalb des Wahlkreises Düsseldorf Ost statt, in der man sich vor allem mit diesen Fragen befassen wird. Sollte man dort noch nicht zu einem Auflösungsbeschluß kommen, so wird unabhängig davon in der Remscheider Ortsgruppe die Auflösung vorgenommen werden.'

- 32 RGA, 4/5/33, Übertritt zur NSDAP,

'In seiner letzten Sitzung beschloß der Gesamtvorstand des Wahlkreises Düsseldorf Ost der Reichspartei des deutschen Mittelstandes (Wirtschaftspartei) gemäß der Anregung des Herrn Reg. Rat Große, Führer der früheren wirtschaftsparteilichen Landtagsfraktion, die Organisation des Wahlkreises Düsseldorf Ost der Wirtschaftspartei aufzulösen und den Ortsgruppen anzuraten, ihren Mitgliedern den Beitritt zur NSDAP zu empfehlen. Der frühere Stadtverordnete und Vorsitzende der Ortsgruppe der Wirtschaftspartei, Christian Luck, ist bereits zur NSDAP und zum Kampfbund für den gewerblichen Mittelstand übergetreten. Er fordert alle früheren Mitglieder der Wirtschaftspartei auf, sich restlos der NSDAP anzuschließen.'

- 33 RGA, 4/5/33, 95 % der Beamten in der NSBA.
34 RGA, 6/5/33, Im Kanakklub.
35 RGA, 10/6/33, Wer ist Nationalsozialist ? Eine Mahnung an die Neuen.
36 Ibid.,

'Auch mit einem Hundertmarkschein kann man seine Mitgliedschaft nicht abkaufen. Wer aber ehrlichen Herzens zu uns gekommen ist und eine freiwillige Spende bieten kann, der ist verachtenswert, wenn er es nicht tut, denn er zeigt, daß er kein Verständnis hat für die zahlreichen Erwerbslosen in den Reihen unserer tapferen SA Leute.'

- 37 Ibid.,

'...Denn der Geist dieser Kreise wurzelt noch ganz in der alten liberalistischen und materialistischen Denkweise. Sie begreifen unsere Weltanschauung nicht. Handlerisch eingestellt, wie sie sind, haben sie auch jetzt als Mitglied der Partei Konjunkturmißbrauch getrieben, und in diesem schweren Ringen unseres Volkes ihre eigenen Vorteile gesucht...'

- 38 For an analysis of the discrepancy between the concept of the Volksgemeinschaft and reality during the Third Reich, see Richard Grunberger, A Social History of the Third Reich, op. cit. , pp. 67 80;
and Mason, op. cit., pp. 27f, 113f, 130, 182 188.
39 RGA, 10/6/33, Und die Zeitung.

'...Nur um Verwechslungen zu vermeiden, betonen wir, daß der RGA zu diesen Blättern nicht gehört. Wir können mit Stolz darauf hinweisen, daß der "Remscheider Generalanzeiger" auch nach dem Novemberumsturz 1918 - und darin machte er, so dürfen wir sagen, im weiten Umkreis seines Verbreitungsgebietes eine rühmliche Ausnahme - seine nationale Haltung nicht verleugnete und sie niemals verleugnet hat! Das gibt uns auch ein Recht, ein inneres und äußeres Recht, uns heute freudig zur Nationalsozialistischen Bewegung, wie sie in Adolf Hitler ihren höchsten Ausdruck findet, zu bekennen. Wobei wir (zu wiederholten Malen) darauf aufmerksam machen dürfen, daß dieses Bekenntum nicht erst seit den Tagen der "Gleichschaltung" in Erscheinung getreten ist. Akrobatische Gesinnungssprünge brauchten wir nicht zu machen.'

See also StA Remscheid, GHW/14 Zie., Die Gestaltung des RGA und sein Kampf im politischen Zeitgeschehen, Remscheid 1935.

This pamphlet published by Dr. Hans Ziegler in 1935 was an attempt to review the newspaper's political stance during the Weimar period in the light of present difficulties with the local NSDAP leadership. With the aid of numerous quotes from various issues, the publisher attempted to prove his paper's close identification with the aims of the NSDAP throughout the Weimar years. One quote, for example, from the RGA 10/11/23 calls for a dictatorship and a rejection of parliamentary democracy. A few months later the RGA reported the trial of Hitler and Ludendorff in favourable terms for the accused (RGA, 5/4/24) By 1930, according to the publisher, the RGA already sympathised strongly with the NSDAP,

'Bei der Reichstagswahl vom 14.9.1930 hat der "Remscheider Generalanzeiger" sich sehr für die Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei eingesetzt. Er hat nicht nur über alle Wahlversammlungen eingehend berichtet, stellte vielmehr auch in den letzten Monaten vor der Wahl seinen Textteil unter der Rubrik "Freies Wort" in großem Umfange den Nationalsozialisten zur Verfügung. Es erschienen viele Aufsätze der Nationalsozialisten'

The RGA's cooperation with local Nazis is described in the following terms,

'Mit dem damaligen Ortsgruppenführer der NSDAP, Kuhlbars, bestand dauernde Verbindung. Der "RGA" hat zahlreiche Artikel auch aus dessen Feder aufgenommen...'

The RGA's support for, and cooperation with the Nazis generated criticism from the middle classes. One letter in particular is cited to illustrate the feeling in leading local business circles that the Nazi success was in large measure attributable to the RGA's support for the party:

'Mit großem Interesse habe ich Ihre geschätzten Zeilen gelesen und gebe Ihnen gern zu, daß auch ich zu denjenigen Leuten gehöre, die der Ansicht sind, daß der "RGA" in den letzten Monaten im nationalsozialistischen Fahrwasser sich bewegt. Daß ich und meine näheren Bekannten nicht alleine dieses gefunden haben, möge Ihnen daraus klar werden, daß einer unserer prominentesten

und angesehensten Bürger, den ich nicht nennen kann, weil die Äußerung im privaten Kreise fiel, gesagt hat, daß die NSDAP in Remscheid einen großen Teil ihres Erfolges am 14. September der Stellungnahme des "RGA" zu verdanken habe. Dieselbe Ansicht hörte ich in Industrie, Handels und Beamtenkreisen...
...Ferner wurde von verschiedenen Seiten Ihnen s.Zt. der Artikel "Heil Hitler" sehr verübelt. Ich persönlich habe ihn nur als Stimmungsbild aufgefaßt, doch ist es Faktum, daß er vom Gros des Publikums als Verherrlichung der Richtung bewertet wurde...'

Ziegler expressed agreement with this interpretation of the paper's policy and the resultant consequences, in the following way:

'Dieser Brief besagt genug über die damalige Haltung des "Remscheider Generalanzeigers", insbesondere seine positive Einstellung zur Hitlerbewegung. Ein weiterer Kommentar ist überflüssig.'

In all, the pamphlet contains 32 pages of quotes and explanations of the RGA's affinity with the NSDAP. In fairness it must be remembered that this pamphlet was written as a tactical measure in an attempt to smooth over current difficulties with the Nazis. Nevertheless, the document is clearly a damning indictment of the RGA's role in preparing the way for the Nazi seizure of power at the local level. The RGA was the unchallenged mouthpiece of the Remscheid bourgeoisie during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, and by this token wielded great influence in these circles. The pamphlet reveals remarkable consistency throughout and underpins the continuity of local bourgeois thought from the days of the Empire through to the Third Reich. When one considers the fact that such a powerful local institution as the RGA not only helped form opinions and encourage ideas in the minds of its readers, but also mirrored the current trends in Remscheid middle-class circles, the above-mentioned pamphlet constitutes a chronicle of the movement by the local middle classes away from their traditional liberal parties towards the National Socialists, which in the Reichstag elections of 1930 usurped the position of leading middle-class party both in Remscheid and in the rest of Germany.

40 RGA, 4/5/33, Revolution in der Kirche ?

'Adolf Hitler hat das Verdienst, die Gefahr des Bolschewismus beseitigt zu haben, das wird auch in der Kirche restlos anerkannt. Der Staat verlangt Mitarbeit gegen alle zersetzenden Erscheinungen, und die Kirche wird sie gern leisten, ohne nach dem Preis zu fragen. Von nicht geringerer Bedeutung ist die Schaffung der Reichseinheit. Bleibt diese Einheit erhalten, dann sind die Opfer seit 1914 nicht umsonst gewesen. In diesem neuen einheitlichen Staat lebt nun die evangelische Kirche. Dann kann auch ihre Vielgestaltigkeit nicht bleiben, sie konnte unter Umständen zu einer Gefahr für die Einheit werden. Der Reichseinheit muß die Reichskirche folgen, auch um der Kirche selbst willen...'

41 RGA, 14/6/33, Glaubensbewegung deutscher Christen. Kirchliche Erneuerung,

'Millionen deutsche Volksgenossen aus den evangelischen Kreisen, die sahen, daß auch das Religiöse im bisherigen Staat Unsinn gewesen war, stellten Fragen an die Kirche, die die Kirche nicht beantworten konnte, weil weiteste Teile in ihr die große deutsche Freiheitsbewegung nicht verstanden haben. Da haben wir gesagt, wir müssen der Kirche Männer und Frauen geben, die ihre Dienste im Sinne des Evangeliums leisten können. Aber wir stießen zuerst auf Haß, Ablehnung, Verfolgung und Verachtung. Das waren vor allen Dingen die Gruppen, die im Christlichen Volksdienst saßen...Es kam die große Wende am 30. Januar 1933. Kein Nationalsozialist hat damals das getan, was man in der marxistischen Presse vorher gelesen hatte: "Jetzt kommt die Nacht der langen Messer." Keine Ausschreitungen, nur Friede und Verbundenheit, eine Revolution der Liebe, der Treue und der Disziplin.'

42 Ibid.

'Mit der Glaubensbewegung deutscher Christen ist es genau wie mit dem Nationalsozialismus: sie ist keine menschliche Erfindung, sondern von Gott gewollt. Das Wort von der Volksgemeinschaft, wie es der Nationalsozialismus will, ist ein Gotteswort, und was Gott zusammengefügt hat, das soll der Mensch nicht durch Klassenkampf und Standesdünkel scheiden. Wir bejahen das Evangelium restlos und ungeteilt. Wir nehmen es so, wie wir es bekommen haben. Was die Judenfrage anlangt, so ist es Gottes Befehl, auch den Juden das Wort Gottes zu predigen. Ein jüdisch getaufter Mensch kann aber nicht in die deutsche Volksgemeinschaft aufgenommen werden...'

- 43 Ruge und Schumann, Dokumente..., op. cit., p. 41.
- 44 RGA, 23/3/33, Zwangsbeurlaubt.
- 45 It is not known whether Dr. Aschenheim was a member of the SPD. He was nevertheless regarded as a sympathiser and had constantly made himself unpopular with National Socialists in Remscheid on account of his outspoken criticism of central and local government health policy.
- 46 RGA, 2/5/33, Entlassungen am Arbeitsamt. 11 Leute verschwunden.
- 47 See Chapters IV and V.
- 48 RGA, 3/5/33, Die Aktion gegen die freien Gewerkschaften. Die Remscheider Büros ebenfalls besetzt.
- 49 RGA, 4/5/33, Geschlossene Büros. Eingreifen der politischen Polizei.
- 50 Volkszeitung was the name of the local issue of the Freie Presse which was based in Wuppertal.
- 51 RGA, 11/5/33, Haussuchungen bei Remscheider Sozialdemokraten.
- 52 RGA, 15/5/33, Die Kasse der SPD. Gewerkschaftssekretar Max Blank verhaftet.
- 53 Information from Erich Thieler who together with his brother Ferdinand played a leading role in the organisation of the Teufelsteich project. The pool had been opened to the public briefly in the previous summer, and the workers' swimming club was looking forward to the first full season in the summer of 1933. Many of the members were to spend the following months in the concentration camp at Kemna.
- 54 RGA, 20/5/33, Konsumgenossenschaft Einigkeit von der NSBU besetzt.
- 55 RGA, 10/6/33, Die zwangsbeurlaubten Beamten und Angestellten.
RGA, 12/6/33, Die Rückkehr zum Berufsbeamtentum.
RGA, 30/6/33, Weitere Entlassungen bei der Ortskrankenkasse; Entlassungen auch beim Arbeitsamt.
- 56 Bergischer Beobachter (BB), 1/7/33, NSBU Stellenvermittlung.
'Wir haben dafür zu sorgen, daß diejenigen, welche sich mit dem neuen Deutschland noch nicht abfinden können und wollen, restlos beseitigt werden. Dieses kann nur über den Weg der Stellenbesetzung in den Betrieben geschehen. Alle unwürdigen Elemente, die da versuchen, den Betrieb von innen heraus morsch zu machen, sind zu entfernen...'

57 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 1021/46.

58 60 Jahre Touristenverein "Die Naturfreunde" Ortsgruppe Remscheid;

and information from Gerd Friele, Hannah Quaas and Otto Rau.

59 See 50 Jahre Spielvereinigung Struck, Remscheid 1969.

60 Ruge and Schumann, Dokumente..., op. cit., p. 30.

61 Freies Volk, 26/1/49, Kein Engel ist wie so rein, op. cit.

62 Information from Emmi Leyendecker and Otto Alders.

Interrogations were conducted by the Gestapo with the aid of local SA men who supplied the strong-arm tactics in order to loosen the suspect's tongue. Women were extended the same treatment as men.

Emmi Leyendecker found herself surrounded by SA men when she was interrogated by the Remscheid Gestapo. Whenever the answer she gave was considered to be insufficient, blows and kicks rained in from all sides.

Another variation employed in the questioning of suspects in the Uhlandstraße headquarters was the simulated execution. Here the interrogating officer would point the barrel of his pistol in the suspect's mouth and threaten to pull the trigger if he did not supply the necessary information. These and similar practices came to light in 1948 during the trial of Gestapo official Lendermann, who was sentenced to four years imprisonment for his role in the maltreatment of prisoners.

See Freiheit, 7/9/48, Es waren keine Menschen mehr.

63 For a discussion of the aims and mechanics of terror under a totalitarian regime, see Eugen Kogon, Der SS Staat. Das System der deutschen Konzentrationslager, München 1974, p. 11.

Apart from individual threats, townsfolk learned of the existence of concentration camps in the Nazi press. In addition to this, rumours about the maltreatment of prisoners at the nearby concentration camp at Kemna circulated in all the Beryische towns.

64 RGA, 1/4/33, Chronik des Tages. Kommunistische Waffenlager.

65 RGA, 12/4/33, 120 Personen verhaftet. Durchsuchung der "Einigkeit" und des Volkshauses.

- 66 RGA, 29/4/33, Kommunistische Waffenlager in Usterbusch.
- 67 RGA, 8/5/33, Krieg im Dunkeln. Regierungsrat Dr. Schubert über die Wuhlarbeit der Kommunisten.
- 68 Interviews with Erich Thieler, Ludwig Stillger, Millie Hilbert.
- 69 Honsberg still proved to be dangerous territory for Nazis who ventured in unaccompanied by armed contingents. On one occasion an SA man in uniform was informed by a group of workers that Nazi insignia was not to be worn in Honsberg, and in order to underline this point, they proceeded to beat him up.
- 70 Willi Veller, a notorious roughian whose drunken exploits were well known throughout the Bergische Land and indeed further afield.

Cf. Karl Ibach, Kemna. Wuppertaler Konzentrationslager 1933 1934, Wuppertal 1981, p. 26f, 59f.

Freie Presse, 10/11/32, Das ist der Führer der Wuppertaler NSDAP. Veller in Altona verhaftet!

And ibid., 12/11/32, Die Affäre Veller. Von St. Pauli ins Gefangnis.

Veller, who was already a Reichstag deputy in 1932, was arrested by police in St. Pauli in Hamburg in a state of inebriation. Apparently carried away by the merriment at the Hippodrom he had drawn his pistol and proceeded in wild-west fashion to shoot out a number of windows.

Veller's reputation eventually made him untenable for the Nazis and he was dismissed from his post of Police President and transferred to East Prussia where he was subsequently murdered by the SS.

Erich Stockhorst, Fünftausend Köpfe. Wer war was im Dritten Reich, Velbert 1967.

Remscheid SA Sturmabführer Hugo Neuhoff who also led the raid on Honsberg together with his friend Veller was a co-founder of the Wuppertal group of the NSDAP. Like Veller, Neuhoff was a notorious bully and had a police record of over 30 convictions, of which only a handful were of a political nature. In 1942 as a non-commissioned officer in the 19th Infantry Division, he was convicted of theft and sentenced to a period of three years

imprisonment, demoted and ejected from the NSDAP. Despite his many previous convictions, it is clear that Neuhoff had managed to conceal his record (almost certainly with the collusion of some of his superiors - he wore the party emblem in gold, NSDAP membership number 25346), so that he was usually able to escape punishment or else benefited from various amnesties proclaimed by Hitler. He was also pardoned for the theft in 1942, but there is no record of his being reinstated in the party. He was killed in action in December 1944.

See BDC, Personal file, Hugo Neuhoff, born 20/6 1904;
and ibid., SA Strafliste 1943-45.

- 71 Bergischer Beobachter, 26/8/33, Kommune Honsberg ausgeräuchert.
- 72 Cf. Rudolf Diels, Luzifer ante portas, p. 262f;
and Karl Schabrod, Widerstand an Rhein und Ruhr 1933-45,
Dusseldorf 1969, p. 12f.
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Cf. Ibach, op. cit., p. 117f.
- 75 Information from Erich Thieler who was himself a prisoner in Kemna, and who in earlier years had been a friend of Lamm's.
- 76 Ibach, op. cit.
- 77 See VVN list of Remscheid internees (no date), and statements made by witnesses, supplied by Ibach in the first edition of his book, op. cit., 1948.
- 78 Cf. eg. Freie Presse, 15/2/33, Glänzender Wahlauftakt der SPD. Freiheit oder Knechtschaft.
- 79 Freie Presse, 24/2/33, Dr. Hilferding durfte nicht reden.
- 80 Ibid., An die Mitglieder der Eisernen Front! Laßt euch nicht provozieren.
- 81 Ibid.,

'Mit all diesen Verboten schlägt man keine Idee tot! Die Sozialdemokratie hat den Verfolgungen Bismarcks und den Beschimpfungen Wilhelms II. getrotzt und ist Sieger geblieben. Sie wird auch jetzt Sieger bleiben. Trotz alledem!...'

The newspaper was then banned and duly ceased to exist. It was the last left wing newspaper to survive in the Wuppertal/Remscheid area.

- 82 Cf. Hans Josef Steinberg, Widerstand und Verfolgung in Essen 1933-45, Hannover 1969, p. 15f.
See also Kurt Klotzbach, Gegen den Nationalsozialismus. Widerstand und Verfolgung in Dortmund 1930-1945, Hannover 1969, p. 15.
- 83 The author examined around 300 Gestapo files pertaining to Communist resistance in Remscheid and Lennep, and approximately 50 files concerning individual opponents from Christian and Social Democratic circles. This study by no means exhausts the complete collection of Gestapo files relating to resistance in Remscheid. Lack of time precluded the examination of files of Remscheid Communists involved in resistance in other towns, resistance in Lüttringhausen, including the correction centre (Zuchthaus), resistance in concentration camps, files pertaining to Ostarbeiter and prisoners of war, and to many unaligned individuals who also opposed the Nazis. From this it is clear that the present study cannot do justice to the complex problem of resistance in Remscheid, and has to be content with a fairly superficial survey. Much more research is needed before a comprehensive study can be undertaken. For this reason the author together with the two Remscheid historians Wolfgang Fey and Hans Gerd Selbach is engaged in the founding of a history workshop, which it is hoped will aid research into this and other topics which as yet have been completely ignored at the local level.
- With regard to the evaluation of Gestapo files caution is required as statements contained in these were made under duress, and suspects were anxious to deny or mitigate their own roles in illegal activities. As the individuals concerned endeavoured to obscure their own complicity, the degree of truth is not readily apparent.
- 84 Hanni Schafer informed the author that party subscriptions were paid regularly in Remscheid until 1938, and Otto Alders claimed that his group continued to pay dues until the end of the war.
- 85 RGA, 1/4/33, Sünden des Alltags. Sitzung des Remscheid Schöffengerichts. Vorbereitung zum Hochverrat.

- 86 RGA, 2/6/33, Die Schießerei am 5. März.
Also HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 48020, Alfred Ries.
HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 28070, Paul Becker.
HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 30957, Erich Neumann.
- 87 See also RGA, 22/6/33, Wieder Schüsse in Remscheid. Erhöhte Aktivität der Kommunisten.
It is of course easy to criticise such actions with the benefit of hindsight. It must, however, be remembered that the perpetrators at the time could not foresee the course of future developments. Such acts were most likely intended to encourage further resistance by example. In reality, however, the use of weapons played into the Nazis' hands, as they were able to exploit such incidents for their propaganda value to spread fear and insecurity amongst local citizens and justify their brutal suppression of opposition.
- 88 BB, 19/7/33, Keinerlei Rücksichtnahme mehr: Gemeiner Feuerüberfall auf unseren Kameraden Willi Hoffmann - Die SA Leitung warnt.
- 89 See ey, RGA, 5/5/33, Waffenfunde in Müngsten,
RGA, 11/5/33, Gegen Kommunistische Wühlarbeit: Verteilung illegaler kommunistischer Druckschriften.
HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30662d, Illegale Kommunistische Druckschriften des Pressedienstes der Bezirksleitung der KPD, Bezirk Niederrhein, Mai 1933.
- 90 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30649d, Einheitsfrontbestrebungen zwischen SPD und KPD.
- 91 Information from Willi Krell and Hermann Röhrig.
- 92 HStA Düsseldorf, Reg. Düss. 30662d, Rüstet zum 1. Mai. Der Weltfeiertag des Proletariats im Zeichen des Kampfes gegen kapitalistische Wirtschaftsbarbarei und faschistische Blutdiktatur.
- 93 See Bergische Morgenpost, 29/1/83, In "Bergisch Moskau" kam der Wechsel von "Rot" nach "Braun" nicht übernacht.
This article which is a report of reminiscences by Remscheid workers on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Nazi seizure of power, repeats the claim made in various other articles,

that both Thalmann and Hölz were concealed in Remscheid. Furthermore, only a few trusted functionaries knew of the whereabouts of their illustrious 'guests'. On the occasion of a lecture given by the author in the Volkshochschule in Remscheid in May 1983 this point was confirmed by a number of former KPD members who were present. Whilst Ernst Thalmann was arrested on March 3rd, Max Hölz was able to escape to the Soviet Union.

- 94 Interview with Hannah Quaas.
- 95 On this particular occasion members of the Esperanto club were gathered in her flat. Some one tapped on the window and informed them, that he had overheard a telephone conversation in the pub. A resident of the estate had phoned the police to tell them of the meeting. Hannah Quaas quickly set the table and made coffee whilst one or two people slipped out of the flat. When the Gestapo arrived, they found a mere handful of visitors sitting around the table drinking coffee. Although the policemen excused themselves, it was evident that the flat would now be observed more closely, so that Frau Quaas had no alternative but to cease her activities.
- 96 Information from Otto and Linnie Alders.
- 97 The group based in Alt Remscheid was named after Andreas Pflüger, not because he was the leader but because with his arrest the Gestapo was able to roll up the whole group.
- 98 In the course of their inquiries, the Gestapo interrogated 91 persons, but could only bring a case against 62. Other members of the group escaped detection or were able to go 'underground' and eventually flee from Remscheid.
- 99 HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 27168, Andreas Pflüger.
- 100 Emmi Leyendecker appears in the Gestapo files under her maiden name Kubatz.
- 101 Interviews with Hertha Glas and Emmi Leyendecker. Both Hertha Glas and Emmi Leyendecker came from lower middle class families and had been introduced to the workers' movement by the Freie Volkshochschule.
- 102 Information from Luise Paul.

- 103 Fritz Vollerthum, a senior KPD official from Upladen, spent several months at the home of Otto Alders and assisted in the compilation of illegal literature.
See HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 27618, Andreas Pflüger, op.cit., and information from Otto Alders.
Vollerthum was able to evade capture yet again before the Gestapo were able to complete their inquiries.
- 104 Information from Ludwig Stillger. Stillger made his way to Amsterdam where he found help at the Rote Hilfe headquarters. In 1936 he and a number of colleagues from Remscheid joined the International Brigade and fought in the Spanish Civil War. His wife was given the choice of either divorce or extradition by the authorities in Remscheid. Ludwig Stillger's experiences were the subject of a film made for the German television company ZDF by Johann Feindt, Karl Siebig and Klaus Volkenborn under the title, Unversöhnliche Erinnerungen, 1979/80.
- 105 See Unsere Zeit (UZ) No. 23, June 1965, Einer von Tausenden. Ein Remscheider Arbeiter berichtet über den Widerstand gegen Hitler.
- 106 Interview with Grete Salz. At the time she was still single (maiden name Müller). After the Lennep organisation was smashed, Grete Salz was able to evade capture and with the aid of party officials made her way to Moscow where she spent over a year attending a course at the Lenin Academy. During this period she met and married Willi Seng who was later to play a major role in the reorganisation of communist resistance in the Ruhr. Seng fell into Gestapo hands in 1943 and was executed the following year. After the war, Grete married Hans Salz. For an account of Grete Salz's work as a courier and instructor between Amsterdam and the Ruhr, see Ernst Schmidt, Lichter in der Finsternis: Widerstand und Verfolgung in Essen 1933-1945, Frankfurt a.M. 1979, pp. 216-230.
- 107 Interview with Grete Salz and Karl Engels.
- 108 UZ, No. 23, June 1965, op. cit.
- 109 Rudolf Diels, Luzifer..., op. cit.

- 110 See Karl Schabrod, Widerstand..., op. cit., pp. 160-174.
Also UZ, June 1965, op. cit.;
and HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 29375, Johannes Salz; and
Gestapo Akte 6526, Emil Schmidt.
Some of the leaflets and stickers circulated by the Salz group
were produced with the aid of children's printing outfits.
- 111 Information from Grete Salz.
- 112 UZ, No. 23, June 1965, op. cit.
- 113 HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 17904, Karl Siebertz.
- 114 For instance Karl Giersiepen who committed suicide during in-
terrogation by the Gestapo in Düsseldorf on 5/3/34. See Klotz-
bach, Gegen den Nationalsozialismus..., op. cit., p. 267.
And Fritz Schiffler who together with his wife committed
suicide in October 1933. See BB, 27/10/33, Das Ende des
Kommunistengenerals.
And August Hampe who died in a concentration camp in 1933 or
1934. See illegal leaflet, Die Liste des Grauens, copy in StA
Remscheid.
Ewald Funke and Robert Stamm were both executed in 1937. See
Schabrod, Widerstand..., op. cit., pp. 86-88.
- 115 Cf. Richard Grunberger, op. cit., p. 146.
- 116 For example the case of Hermann Oberberg and his wife in Rem-
scheid, who were denounced by a neighbour who claimed that he
had heard them sing the communist song "Auf, auf zum Kampf".
After a thorough investigation the Gestapo discovered that the
two families had quarrelled, and this was an attempt by the
neighbours to settle with the Oberbergs. From the statements
and information contained in the file, it is quite possible
that the accusations were accurate, but the motive for the
denunciation was private.
See HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 59170, Hermann Oberberg.
Other examples of denunciation which were of a political
nature are: the case brought against Auguste Schlüter, see
HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 92/92 1938. Schlüter was denounced
by neighbours to whom she had disclosed information concerning
her work at the BSI which entailed the assembling of bombs and

grenades. These weapons were then dispatched to Spain and Japan.

The son of Max Weidig's landlord penned a letter to Heinrich Himmler which contained detailed accusations of alleged illegal political activities. Gestapo inquiries revealed that the accusations pertained to the early years of the Weimar period. A case could not be brought against the accused. See HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 1801, Max Weidig.

On another occasion a family was denounced by the divorced wife of the son, Kurt Tuttlies. His divorced wife told the Gestapo of political meetings in the Tuttlies flat with friends and neighbours who together listened to foreign radio stations and then discussed the news. On this evidence, the parents, the son and a friend were sentenced to two years imprisonment. See HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 49668, Franz Tuttlies.

Paul Becker, see HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 28070, Paul Becker, was denounced by a neighbour of his father-in-law. In the ensuing Gestapo inquiry, his wife and father-in-law also made incriminating statements against him. Despite the accusations and supporting statements, Becker was acquitted.

117 Tim Mason, "Die Bandigung der Arbeiterklasse im nationalsozialistischen Deutschland", in: Carola Sachse, Tilla Siegel, Hasso Spode and Wolfgang Spohn, Angst, Belohnung, Zucht und Ordnung. Herrschaftsmechanismen im Nationalsozialismus, Upladen 1982, p. 42.

118 Cf. Grunberger, op. cit., p. 262.

See also Erhard Lucas, Vom Scheitern der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Gedanken und Überlegungen zur subjektiven Seite ihrer Geschichte, Frankfurt a.M., 1983.

The cover of this book shows a Volkswagen beetle which symbolises the decline of the workers' movement. The author, however, does not take up the theme of consumerism in this work.

119 Ibid., p. 240.

120 Cf. Mason, "Die Bandigung der Arbeiterklasse...", op. cit. pp. 35-37.

- 121 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 70.
- 122 Mason, "Die Bandigung der Arbeiterklasse...", op. cit., p.46f.
- 123 As already indicated in the preamble to this chapter, the lack of reliable statistics and the presumably intended opaque presentation of material which has survived the Third Reich precludes a thorough examination of National Socialist economic and social policy at the local level in a dissertation of this kind.
- 124 Cf. Mason, "Die Bandigung der Arbeiterklasse...", op. cit., p. 18.
- 125 Mason, Sozialpolitik im Dritten Reich..., op. cit., p. 128.
- 126 Ibid., p. 146f.
- 127 See BB, 26/8/33, Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm durchberaten. Remscheid bekommt 500.000 Mark. Bebauungsplane und Fluchtlinien genehmigt;
and, Arbeitsbeschaffung der Tat. Erfolge in der Bergischen Stahlindustrie.
430 marks were collected in the BSl and it was proposed to make this sum a target for regular contributions. Unfortunately, the article does not indicate whether the collections were to take place on a weekly or a monthly basis. The article also reports the collection of 31,50 marks from workers of Arthur and Hermann Dohrmann who were engaged in road repairs in Haddenbacher Straße. It was pointed out that these particular workers were low paid.
- 128 Cf. Grunberger, op. cit., pp. 109-111.
- 129 Cf. Breidenbach, Und ich hatte doch Recht!, no date, unpublished manuscript, copy in StA Remscheid. Cf. also Sopade 1934, pp. 519-523 and 528-536.
- 130 Mason, Sozialpolitik..., op. cit., p. 129.
- 131 Ibid., p. 126f.
- 132 RGA, /35, Vertrauen und Hoffnung. Die Arbeitsschlacht im Jahre 1934. UA/31
- 133 StA Remscheid, Verwaltungsbericht Remscheid 1934, p. 1.

134 The author was not able to uncover any documentary evidence to support this supposition, although a number of interviewees maintained that local industry's participation in rearmament was an open secret from mid-1933. This is not necessarily to suggest that weapons were being produced at this early stage, although this should not be discounted. But as Remscheid's role in the First World War showed, local industry was also a major supplier of tools and maintenance equipment for the construction of aeroplanes and military vehicles as well as producers of munitions.

Workers employed in the rearmament programme were of course sworn to secrecy, and stiff penalties were imposed on those who failed to observe the code. Cf. HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 92/92, ./. Auguste Schlüter wegen Landesverrats, 1938.

In this case an employee of the BSI engaged in the production of incendiary bombs bound for Spain and Japan was accused of treason for having casually informed a neighbour about the nature of her work. Although the case against her appeared consistent, she was acquitted on the grounds that a malicious motive for her misdemeanour could not be detected.

135 StA Remscheid, ^{IIA/30} Verwaltungsbericht Remscheid 1933, p. 47.

136 Ibid., p. 41.

137 StA Remscheid, ^{IIA/30} Verwaltungsbericht Remscheid, op. cit., p. 54.

138 Ibid.

139 RGA, /35, Vertrauen und Hoffnung, op. cit.

140 BB, 9/9/33, Gewissenlose Sabotage.

141 Ibid.

142 StA Remscheid, ^{IIA/30} Verwaltungsbericht Remscheid 1933, op. cit., p. 42.

143 Grunberger, op. cit., p. 329.

144 Renzo Vespignani, Faschismus, Berlin 1976, p. 94.

'Wenn auch unsere Waffe nur der Kochlöffel ist, so soll seine Durchschlagkraft nicht geringer sein.'

Gertrud Scholz-Klink was the leader of the Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft (National Socialist Women's League).

145 Ibid.

- 146 RGA, 10/6/33, "Wir wollen heiraten". Was bekommt man für 1.000 Mark.
- 147 RGA, 24/6/33, Hurra die Reichsbraut! Hochbetrieb auf dem Standesamt. Zwischen Ehestandshilfen und Berufsbeamtentum. Und wer zahlt ?
- 148 RGA, 29/6/33, Der erste Schritt in die Ehe. Die praktische Seite der Ehe. Möbeleinkauf.
- 149 Mason, Sozialpolitik..., op. cit., p. 129.
- 150 StA Remscheid, ^{u. a. 13c} Verwaltungsbericht Remscheid 1933, op. cit., p. 46.
- 151 StA Remscheid, ^{TA 1-c} Verwaltungsbericht Remscheid 1937, p. 53.
- 152 RGA, Frauen schaffen Arbeit. Remscheider Frauenvereine werben für die Unterbringung junger Mädchen im Haushalt.
- 153 Ibid., There were also extra benefits if the housewife provided employment for out-of-work typists or salesgirls.
- 154 See Gerd Courts, op. cit., p. 55. A photograph shows a crowd of enthusiasts surrounding a Volkswagen 'beetle' on display in Lennep.
- 155 RGA, 1/1/33, Remscheider Verkehrsfragen.
- 156 Statistisches Jahrbuch deutscher Gemeinden 1938. Amtliche Veröffentlichung des deutschen Gemeindetages, p. 482.
- 157 BB, 23/8/33, 9,8 % Rundfunkhörer in Remscheid.
- 158 StA Remscheid, ^{TA 1/34} Verwaltungsbericht Remscheid 1936, p. 24.
- 159 Cf. Hasso Spode, "Arbeiterurlaub im Dritten Reich", in: idem and others, Angst, Belohnung, Zucht und Ordnung..., op. cit., p. 278f.
- 160 Ibid., p. 281.
- 161 Ibid., p. 296.
- 162 Ibid., pp. 303 305.

According to a survey carried out by the Statistisches Amt in 1937, 87 % of the 350 households examined and whose average monthly income was 180 marks, could not afford to save for KdF holidays. It was ascertained that the remaining 13 % spent only an average of 14 marks p.a. mostly on short excursions. The overall survey revealed an average of only two marks per household p.a. for KdF excursions and holidays. This amounted

0.5 % of the annual income, a sum which was less than that spent on soap powder, for instance. The conclusion drawn from these figures is that despite very equitable prices, KdF holidays remained an unattainable luxury for the majority of the working population.

Furthermore, as many DAF and NS Hago (Commercial and Trading Organisation) officials received free tickets, and SA and SS personnel travelled at half price, whilst Alte Kämpfer were rewarded for their loyalty with holidays free of charge, KdF, although unintentionally, increasingly developed into a travel organisation for party comrades.

- 163 Rheinische Landeszeitung, 2/4/36, Madeira - ein richtiges Paradies. Unsere Madeirafahrer kehrten heim.

Unfortunately we were not informed how many of the participants were workers.

- 164 Ibid.

- 165 RGA, 25/1/34, Erwin Hosfeld, Gauwart des KdF, Düsseldorf, Gemeinschaft "Kraft durch Freude". Gau Düsseldorf verwirklicht die gestellten Aufgaben!

- 166 Cf. Sopade reports, especially from 1937 onwards.

- 167 See, for instance, HStA Düsseldorf, Gestapo Akte 39698, Wilhelmine Pommerin.

In 1937 the Gestapo smashed a KPD escape organisation which stretched from Remscheid to Emmerich on the Dutch border. There was only one person arrested in Remscheid, Mathilde Schuchmilski, whose husband was currently detained in protective custody. She had harboured several KPD officials who were wanted by the Gestapo. Mathilde Schuchmilski received a prison sentence of one year and nine months.

- 168 Information from Otto Alders, who claimed that the KPD continued to exist in Remscheid throughout the Third Reich. Subscriptions were collected up to the end of the war.

- 169 Cf. Tim Mason, "The Workers' Opposition in Nazi Germany", in: History Workshop, Spring 1981, pp. 120-137.

- 170 During the course of his research the author was unable to find any evidence of communist cells operating in Remscheid factories during the war. Fritz Beinersdorf informed the author of one cell involved in acts of sabotage in the Deutsche Edelstahlwerke, which helped a number of prisoners of war to escape. Beinersdorf's father who was a KPD activist, belonged to this group.
- Shortly before the completion of this dissertation the author learned of the existence of the local resistance group led by Hugo Paul which had close ties with the reorganised KPD organisation of the Lower Rhineland region via Willi Seng, the husband of Grete Salz. This attempt to rebuilt the communist resistance movement during the war appears to have been short-lived, and the local group was rounded up in 1942/43. Hugo Paul, who had already spent ten years in prisons and concentration camps was able to conceal his own important role in the movement. Unfortunately, lack of time prevented the author from investigating the activities of this resistance group. It is therefore still not clear whether the cells in the larger Remscheid factories were in close contact with this group.
- 171 Interview with Paul von der Burg. November 18th, 1978. See Appendix II.
- This group consisting of Communists and formerly unorganised workers escaped detection and were able to give aid to a number of prisoners throughout the war years.
- 172 HStA Düsseldorf, Ger. Rep. 92/174, ./ Heinrich Günzler und Genossen.
- 173 HStA Dusseldorf, Gestapo Akte 64116, Emil Illigmann und Friedrich Ickler.
- Cf. also, "Strafsache gegen Marianne Koll aus Remscheid wegen Verbrechens gegen die Menschlichkeit am 11/2/49", in: Justiz und NS Verbrechen. Sammlung Deutscher Strafurteile wegen Nationalsozialistischer Totungsverbrechen 1945 - 1966, Band IV, University Press Amsterdam, Amsterdam 1970.
- 174 Detlev Peukert, Ruhrarbeiter gegen den Faschismus..., op. cit. p. 309f.

- 175 Industrie- und Handelskammer Remscheid, Survey of War Production conducted by the Allied Military Command, June 1948.
- 176 Statistisches Amt Remscheid, Zusammenstellung der Schadensfälle nach dem Stand vom 15. Januar 1944. Stadt Remscheid, p.1.
- 177 Hermann Hasenclever (edit.), Die Zerstörung der Stadt Remscheid, 2nd edition, Remscheid 1978, p. IX.
- 178 Statistisches Amt Remscheid, Zusammenstellung, op. cit., p. 2.
- 179 Ibid.
- 180 Ibid.
- 181 Statistisches Amt Remscheid, Heimatvertriebene und Zugewanderte aus der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone und Berlin nach dem Stande der Volkszählung im Jahre 1950.

The total number of refugees absorbed by Remscheid was 9,313 which equalled approximately eight percent of the town's population. They were distributed in the following way:

Remscheid town	5,679
Lennep	2,307
Lüttringhausen	1,327.

- 182 Mason, "Die Bandigung der Arbeiterklasse...", op. cit., p. 31.
- 183 Freiheit, 22/4/1947, Landtagswahlergebnis Remscheid(Kreis 50).

KPD	13,292
SPD	12,186
CDU	11,337
FDP	7,792
Zentrum	2,537
DRP	1,098

In the council elections held the following year, the result was

KPD	10,856	= 7 seats
SPD	12,710	= 8 seats
CDU	10,267	= 6 seats
FDP	10,325	= 6 seats
Zentrum	2,269	= 0 seats
RSF	3,724	= 2 seats

See Freiheit, 18/10/48, Das Ergebnis der Gemeindewahlen.

C O N C L U S I O N

The Remscheid workers' movement was already established as a radical force in local society by the beginning of the period which this dissertation examines. Prevailing conditions in this, one of Germany's oldest industrial regions, had compelled the workers to organise in order to safeguard their interests, at a time when large parts of the Ruhr were still covered by grassy meadows and grazing cattle. After a long and hard struggle to maintain their independent status, highly skilled master craftsmen, in particular file-makers and grinders, were driven out of business and forced to seek employment in the factories. Their experience of exploitation by capitalist entrepreneurs revealed the necessity of organisation, as the only means of defending their economic interests. It was these highly-skilled and disciplined craftsmen who directed the local workers' movement into the twentieth century, and imprinted their character on the tradition. The organisation of a trade union to further their economic interests was followed by the establishment of a local branch of the Social Democratic Party to argue their political case, and by numerous clubs and societies which catered for their social needs. These three types of institutions were coordinated and anchored in the working-class districts of the town to form a cohesive alternative system, segregated from and militantly opposed to the prevailing ideological ethos. The high degree of intermarriage between the families of political activists was an important factor which ensured solidarity. Conscious of their growing strength and confident of their ultimate triumph, local workers were nevertheless unimpressed by the revisionist theory of gradual transition to power by the undermining of capitalism from within. Any illusions which remained were dispelled by the outbreak of war in 1914.

Institutions founded in the first decade of this century, like the Volkshaus, the local SPD newspaper, and the consumer cooperative "Einigkeit" were both a mark of the movement's strength and important factors determining its continuing development.

The decision by the central party leadership to approve the war credits opened up a rift between the party and the local movement, which was to determine the course of political developments in Remscheid throughout the period under scrutiny. The 'betrayal' by remote party deputies and the trade union bureaucracy was a traumatic shock for local workers and their leaders, who played a leading role in the formation of the opposition movement in Germany. The accusation of betrayal by the Social Democratic Party was to be made repeatedly in Remscheid thereafter.

The experience of war, characterised by the grossly unequal distribution of burdens; on the one hand years of sacrifice, hunger, exploitation and continual repression, on the other immense profits, incessant demands for ever-greater efforts on the part of the workers and the rapacious appetite of local manufacturers for new colonies, resulted in an escalation of hostility to the point of open class conflict. The local workers' movement was in the forefront of the revolution and in the organisation of the council system, both on a regional and national scale. The attempt to carry through their objective of establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat was undermined by external forces, but this did not weaken the morale and determination of the local movement. Spurred on by the success of Russian workers, they were still supremely confident of attaining their goal in the near future.

Whilst the Remscheid movement was compelled to accept the principle of parliamentary democracy against its will, the considerable degree of political awareness of the local workers, demonstrated in every election by higher-than-Reich-average turn-outs, which at least ensured their party of the largest share of votes, added a further dimension to the struggle for power, which in the early years of the Republic did not appear to halt their progress at the local level.

The severe discrepancy between aims, which workers felt to be legitimate, and their actual social and economic situation, which deteriorated rapidly in 1923, after a short period of increased expectation, and the assault by employers on the modest achievements of

the revolution were the causes of conflict which broke out in the autumn of 1923. The defeat of that year did not lead to a reunification of the workers' movement; on the contrary, the gulf between various factions widened. Remscheid workers again chose to support the proponents of revolution. Frustrated expectations and the immediate ramifications of defeat precipitated a change of leadership and policy which reflected a hardening of attitudes within the movement. Former leaders, regarded by many as too ready to compromise and therefore partly responsible for the debacle, were ousted by young hard-liners who set about implementing the KPD's policy of bolshevisation.

The KPD attempted to shift the emphasis of attack to the factories by the establishment of communist cells. At the same time they began a campaign in working-class neighbourhoods to widen the active base of the movement. Despite their efforts, however, the Communists' strategy fell short of expectations. On various occasions they were able to mobilise substantial numbers of workers, but the momentum could not be sustained indefinitely. Demands for rigid discipline and their intolerance of dissent which was frequently answered by castigation in the local press and expulsion from the party, alienated sections of the working class, who clearly had other needs which the party neglected. The Stalinist methods, which ran contrary to the tradition of the German workers' movement allowed no criticism of party policy and ignored alternative propositions, so that insufficient impulses from the working class penetrated the thinking of cadre members. The result of this style of leadership was not immediately apparent.

There was no evidence of marked decline in support for the KPD during elections, and after the onset of the economic crisis and ensuing depression, the party's share of votes began to increase dramatically. Mass support, however, remained essentially passive and qualitatively suspect. The KPD, whilst consistently maintaining a strong and energetic corps of officials in Remscheid and controlling the majority of institutions of the workers' movement, was nevertheless guilty of self-deception. In their desire to extend the base of active

support, local Communists clearly neglected the important qualitative aspects of political consciousness. A consequence of this failure was the high rate of fluctuation in party membership, which was boosted temporarily by recruitment and subscription campaigns, but was not sufficiently consolidated before the introduction of new drives. Political meetings with audiences of a thousand workers cheering the speaker whilst not daring to question policy and tactics for fear of reprisals, also encouraged delusion on the part of the local leadership.

In electoral terms, the extreme right was weak in Remscheid until the end of 1930, when the NSDAP experienced a meteoric rise to become the largest middle-class party, and unite the majority of organisations and interest groups which had formed the bourgeois coalition from 1921 onwards. The process of progressive polarisation within local society drove the manufacturers and civil servants further to the right until the protestant middle-class parties finally collapsed. The pre-1933 NSDAP was overwhelmingly lower-middle class with a strong declassé element and relatively few genuine proletarians. The SA was also mainly lower-middle class, but the young and unemployed working class were present in a slightly higher ratio than in the local party. Here again the percentage of declassés was very high, but it must be remembered that the local SA numbered no more than 500 before the seizure of power.

The period of depression was one of intense class hostility punctuated by intermittent outbreaks of class conflict which, however, were quantitatively and qualitatively weaker than in the years 1918 to 1923. Class conflict between 1929 and 1933 did not carry the support of a united working class, although substantial numbers of workers were involved.

Particularly during the depression, street violence in Remscheid developed typical patterns. Considering that pistols were used with alarming regularity, and clashes occurred almost daily, the most striking point about local street fights is, that only two ended with fatalities. The low ratio of deaths to violent clashes appears to result from a combination of inhibitory factors, such as acquaintances and fear of prosecution. After March 1933, both factors disappeared or were significantly weakened, in that Nazis no longer

needed to fear legal reprisals, and that outsiders were used more frequently in the round-up and punishment of opponents. In Remscheid, for instance, it was above all SA troops from Wuppertal under the command of chief of police Veller, who conducted the arrests of local Communists. The changed situation, with the Nazis now representing legality, encouraged acts of revenge, but even these stopped short of cold-blooded murder, when those carrying out arrests and their prisoners were personally acquainted. In cases where Remscheid Communists lost their lives, this always happened elsewhere, in situations where they were not personally known to their interrogators. The situation was yet again resolved by external events in 1933, and the election results in March of that year show that the majority of workers remained loyal to the KPD. The National Socialists owed their electoral 'victory' above all to the support of the middle classes, large numbers of young and unemployed voters and 'unpolitical' elements, whose participation was presumably induced by the exceptional circumstances of the depression and the beguiling style of the Nazi campaign. A consequence of the extreme polarisation in Remscheid towards the end of the Weimar Republic was that the process of Gleichschaltung had effectively been carried through in many bourgeois organisations before the policy was officially implemented.

Despite the merciless repression which neutralised the workers' leaders and the communist party cadre, younger members and women stepped into the breach to continue resistance. The combination of police terror, concessions and the encouragement of consumerist values, disseminated by the omnipotent Nazi propaganda machine, isolated the activists of the workers' movement. The destruction of workers' institutions and the Gleichschaltung of all public life separated the movement from the working class and interrupted the regeneration process.

Although the workers' movement experienced a short-lived yet turbulent revival between 1945 and 1950, it was unable to recover from the damage inflicted during the years of Nazi rule, and declined rapidly during the fifties.

This dissertation does not claim to present a complete history of the Remscheid workers' movement during the period 1914 to 1945, but it does provide a basis for comparison with other towns. There still

remains considerable scope for further research on the local movement, and a number of important questions require fuller treatment. The problem of the quality of political consciousness of the rank and file members in the years after 1924 clearly needs further examination. Likewise the relationship between the movement and the working class as a whole might be researched with particular regard to the effects of the emergent mass media. It is still unclear, what impact radio, cinema, trivial literature and newspapers had on their audience and readership. The reading habits of workers and their participation in the culture of mass media are questions which require thorough investigation, both on a global and local scale, before an assessment of their negative influence on the workers' movement can be made. Another important aspect of this problem is the movement's own exploitation of the mass media. Whilst the Kulturkartell in Remscheid did try to make use of films, and the Bergische Volksstimme maintained a bookshop in the town, we are not yet able to gauge the level of success of these ventures, though the introduction of film festivals reveals an awareness of the significance of mass media, the level of priority given to the exploitation of new forms of expression remains uncertain.

The undermining tendency of consumerism also requires further investigation, particularly with regard to the Weimar period. Although the Nazis positively encouraged consumerist values, they certainly did not discover them. What still needs to be ascertained is, how far consumerist values had spread before the Nazis came to power, and to what extent were institutions of the workers' movement themselves unwittingly responsible.

The role of women has largely been neglected, not out of lack of interest, but because the author did not feel competent to furnish it with the attention it obviously warrants. Women were often in the forefront in clashes with authority and at times offered sterner and more determined resistance than their menfolk. It is still not clear, to what extent their resoluteness was a result of double oppression, not only by bourgeois society but also by their own husbands. Predominant attitudes in the local workers' movement towards women need careful analysis. There appears to be little evidence of positive encouragement and help for women. Was the neglect of women an in-

trinsic weakness of the local workers' movement and did it constitute a lost opportunity to improve the quality of political consciousness and simultaneously widen the base ?

This dissertation is to be regarded as a contribution to the study of the local workers' movement, and it is hoped that it will help to stimulate further research in this field.

A P P E N D I X I

The Social Composition of 40 Electoral Wards of
Alt-Remscheid, based on the Remscheid Address
Book 1929.*

Ward 1: Stadt/Markt/Bismarckstraße 1

A	219	=	37.5 %
B	115	=	19.7 %
C	25	=	4.3 %
D	43	=	7.4 %
E	96	=	16.4 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	73	=	12.5 %
G	12	=	2.0 %
H	1	=	0.2 %

62.5 % non-manual workers

Ward 2: Bismarckstraße 2

393	=	53.5 %
95	=	14.4 %
15	=	2.3 %
35	=	5.3 %
68	=	10.3 %
0	=	0.0 %
81	=	12.3 %
11	=	1.6 %
2	=	0.3 %

46.5 % non-manual workers

Ward 3: Haddenbacher Straße/
Dorfmühle

A	423	=	54.4 %
B	103	=	13.2 %
C	26	=	3.4 %
D	44	=	5.7 %
E	47	=	6.1 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	91	=	11.7 %
G	38	=	4.9 %
H	5	=	0.6 %

45.6 % non-manual workers

Ward 4: Fichtenhöhe/Hohenhagen/
Neuenkamp

306	=	50.6 %
78	=	12.9 %
12	=	2.0 %
94	=	15.5 %
21	=	3.5 %
9	=	1.5 %
66	=	10.9 %
15	=	2.5 %
4	=	0.6 %

49.4 % non-manual workers

Ward 5: Neuenhaus/Mixsiepen/
Lenneper Straße/Böckerhöhe

A	485	=	69.0 %
B	73	=	10.4 %
C	17	=	2.6 %
D	22	=	3.1 %
E	20	=	2.8 %
E1	13	=	1.8 %
F	65	=	9.2 %
G	8	=	1.1 %
H	0	=	0.0 %

31.0 % non-manual workers

Ward 6: Neuenhof/Lenneper Straße

481	=	66.4 %
54	=	7.5 %
23	=	3.2 %
26	=	3.6 %
33	=	4.6 %
8	=	1.1 %
77	=	10.6 %
18	=	2.5 %
4	=	0.5 %

33.6 % non-manual workers

* For categorisation see chapter II, note 164

Ward 7 : Intzestraße/Struck

A	466	=	70.8 %
B	52	=	7.9 %
C	10	=	1.5 %
D	8	=	1.2 %
E	20	=	3.1 %
E1	3	=	0.5 %
F	87	=	13.2 %
G	12	=	1.8 %
H	0	=	0.0 %

29.2 % non-manual workers

Ward 8 : Menninghausen

	427	=	56.9 %
	78	=	10.4 %
	33	=	4.4 %
	37	=	4.9 %
	46	=	6.1 %
	3	=	0.3 %
	86	=	11.5 %
	41	=	5.5 %
	0	=	0.0 %

43.1 % non-manual workers

Ward 9 : Bliedinghausen

A	441	=	67.2 %
B	50	=	7.6 %
C	15	=	2.3 %
D	22	=	3.3 %
E	32	=	4.9 %
E1	6	=	0.9 %
F	74	=	11.4 %
G	16	=	2.4 %
H	0	=	0.0 %

32.8 % non-manual workers

Ward 10 : Burger Straße/Ehringhaus

	319	=	50.4 %
	69	=	10.9 %
	50	=	7.9 %
	40	=	6.3 %
	43	=	6.8 %
	0	=	0.0 %
	67	=	10.6 %
	45	=	7.1 %
	0	=	0.0 %

49.6 % non-manual workers

Ward 11 : Rosenhügel/Burger
Straße

A	376	=	56.5 %
B	70	=	10.5 %
C	32	=	4.8 %
D	36	=	5.4 %
E	37	=	5.6 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	63	=	9.5 %
G	51	=	7.7 %
H	0	=	0.0 %

43.5 % non-manual workers

Ward 12 : Papenberg/Rosenhügel

	386	=	64.9 %
	58	=	9.7 %
	7	=	1.2 %
	13	=	2.2 %
	38	=	6.4 %
	2	=	0.3 %
	73	=	12.3 %
	18	=	3.0 %
	0	=	0.0 %

35.1 % non-manual workers

Ward 13 : Blumenstraße/Palmstraße

A	294	=	39.8 %
B	109	=	14.8 %
C	45	=	6.1 %
D	61	=	8.3 %
E	103	=	13.9 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	87	=	11.8 %
G	34	=	4.6 %
H	5	=	0.7 %

60.2 % non-manual workers

Ward 14 : Osterbusch

402	=	68.6 %
39	=	6.7 %
14	=	2.4 %
12	=	2.0 %
31	=	5.3 %
0	=	0.0 %
67	=	11.4 %
18	=	3.1 %
3	=	0.5 %

31.4 % non-manual workers

Ward 15 : Lobusch

A	325	=	60.9 %
B	56	=	10.5 %
C	17	=	3.2 %
D	19	=	3.6 %
E	31	=	5.8 %
E1	1	=	0.2 %
F	64	=	12.0 %
G	19	=	3.6 %
H	1	=	0.2 %

39.1 % non-manual workers

Ward 16 : Stadt/Alleestraße

197	=	26.5 %
102	=	13.7 %
92	=	12.4 %
85	=	11.4 %
128	=	17.2 %
0	=	0.0 %
95	=	12.8 %
38	=	5.1 %
7	=	0.9 %

73.5 % non-manual workers

Ward 17 : Honsberg I

A	356	=	68.5 %
B	29	=	5.6 %
C	5	=	0.9 %
D	20	=	3.8 %
E	28	=	5.4 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	63	=	12.1 %
G	16	=	3.1 %
H	3	=	0.6 %

31.5 % non-manual workers

Ward 18 : Honsberg II

324	=	75.5 %
22	=	5.1 %
6	=	1.4 %
2	=	0.5 %
15	=	3.5 %
2	=	0.5 %
49	=	11.4 %
6	=	1.4 %
3	=	0.7 %

24.5 % non-manual workers

Ward 19 : Honsberg III

A	434	=	79.1 %
B	31	=	5.6 %
C	3	=	0.5 %
D	13	=	2.4 %
E	7	=	1.3 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	53	=	9.7 %
G	3	=	0.5 %
H	5	=	0.9 %

20.9 % non-manual workers

Ward 20 : Kremenholl

367	=	64.6 %
61	=	10.7 %
15	=	2.6 %
6	=	1.1 %
36	=	6.4 %
4	=	0.7 %
58	=	10.2 %
15	=	2.6 %
6	=	1.1 %

35.4 % non-manual workers

Ward 21 : Kippdorf

A	383	=	68.6 %
B	58	=	10.4 %
C	5	=	0.9 %
D	15	=	2.7 %
E	19	=	3.4 %
E1	1	=	0.2 %
F	61	=	10.9 %
G	10	=	1.8 %
H	6	=	1.1 %

31.4 % non-manual workers

Ward 22 : Brüderstraße/Amtsgericht

Am Bruch			
283	=	38.1 %	
108	=	14.5 %	
35	=	4.7 %	
53	=	7.1 %	
71	=	9.6 %	
0	=	0.0 %	
113	=	15.2 %	
72	=	9.7 %	
8	=	1.1 %	

61.9 % non-manual workers

Ward 23 : Schüttendelle

A	363	=	59.7 %
B	43	=	7.1 %
C	21	=	3.4 %
D	27	=	4.4 %
E	42	=	6.9 %
E1	2	=	0.3 %
F	69	=	11.3 %
G	41	=	6.7 %
H	1	=	0.2 %

40.3 % non-manual workers

Ward 24 : Vieringhausen

320	=	51.9 %
62	=	10.0 %
25	=	4.0 %
30	=	4.9 %
47	=	7.6 %
3	=	0.5 %
51	=	8.3 %
78	=	12.6 %
1	=	0.2 %

48.1 % non-manual workers

Ward 25 : .Güldenwerth

A	340	=	49.3 %
B	73	=	10.6 %
C	19	=	2.8 %
D	27	=	3.9 %
E	47	=	6.8 %
E1	5	=	0.7 %
F	75	=	10.9 %
G	97	=	14.1 %
H	6	=	0.9 %

50.7 % non-manual workers

Ward 26 : Reinshagen

215	=	45.2 %
31	=	6.5 %
10	=	2.1 %
17	=	3.6 %
32	=	6.7 %
15	=	3.1 %
57	=	12.0 %
99	=	20.8 %
0	=	0.0 %

54.8 % non-manual workers

Ward 27 : Polizeipräsidium/
Lindenstraße

A	173	=	21.0 %
B	121	=	14.7 %
C	119	=	14.4 %
D	196	=	23.8 %
E	40	=	4.9 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	96	=	11.6 %
G	74	=	9.0 %
H	5	=	0.6 %

79.0 % non-manual workers

Ward 28 : Hindenburgstraße

237	=	32.1 %
135	=	18.3 %
66	=	8.9 %
122	=	16.6 %
66	=	8.9 %
0	=	0.0 %
87	=	11.8 %
20	=	2.7 %
5	=	0.7 %

67.9 % non-manual workers

Ward 29 : Wilhelmstraße

A	199	=	29.1 %
B	134	=	19.6 %
C	67	=	9.8 %
D	77	=	11.2 %
E	48	=	7.0 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	100	=	14.6 %
G	54	=	7.9 %
H	6	=	0.8 %

70.9 % non-manual workers

Ward 30 : Schützenstraße

234	=	34.2 %
108	=	15.8 %
56	=	8.2 %
80	=	11.7 %
66	=	9.6 %
0	=	0.0 %
88	=	12.9 %
48	=	7.0 %
4	=	0.6 %

65.8 % non-manual workers

Ward 31 : Elberfelder Straße/
Villenstraße

A	289	=	36.5 %
B	132	=	16.7 %
C	69	=	8.7 %
D	72	=	9.1 %
E	78	=	9.8 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	96	=	12.1 %
G	54	=	6.8 %
H	2	=	0.3 %

63.5 % non-manual workers

Ward 32 : Laspert I

320	=	60.7 %
60	=	11.4 %
6	=	1.1 %
22	=	4.2 %
39	=	7.4 %
0	=	0.0 %
62	=	11.8 %
15	=	2.8 %
3	=	0.6 %

39.3 % non-manual workers

Ward 33 : Laspert II/Salemstraße

A	336	=	57.0 %
B	48	=	8.2 %
C	13	=	2.2 %
D	42	=	7.1 %
E	47	=	8.0 %
E1	1	=	0.2 %
F	58	=	9.8 %
G	43	=	7.3 %
H	1	=	0.2 %

43 % non-manual workers

Ward 34 : Steinberg

385	=	64.3 %
55	=	9.2 %
3	=	0.5 %
22	=	3.7 %
36	=	6.0 %
1	=	0.2 %
69	=	11.5 %
26	=	4.3 %
2	=	0.3 %

35.7 % non-manual workers

Ward 35 : Heidhof

A	279	=	44.7 %
B	63	=	10.1 %
C	43	=	6.9 %
D	71	=	11.4 %
E	34	=	5.4 %
E1	1	=	0.2 %
F	74	=	11.9 %
G	59	=	9.4 %
H	0	=	0.0 %

55.3 % non-manual workers

Ward 36 : Haddenbach

360	=	55.0 %
66	=	10.1 %
16	=	2.4 %
24	=	3.7 %
32	=	4.9 %
4	=	0.6 %
62	=	9.5 %
89	=	13.6 %
1	=	0.2 %

45 % non-manual workers

Ward 37 : Büchel/Hasten I

A	350	=	52.0 %
B	53	=	7.9 %
C	19	=	2.8 %
D	25	=	3.7 %
E	68	=	10.1 %
E1	0	=	0.0 %
F	74	=	11.0 %
G	84	=	12.5 %
H	0	=	0.0 %

48 % non-manual workers

Ward 38 : Stockderstraße/König-
straße/Hasten II

336	=	51.0 %
55	=	8.3 %
34	=	5.2 %
26	=	3.9 %
39	=	5.9 %
3	=	0.5 %
70	=	10.6 %
96	=	14.6 %
0	=	0.0 %

49 % non-manual workers

Ward 39 : Hasten III

A	298	=	49.8 %
B	50	=	8.3 %
C	19	=	3.2 %
D	9	=	1.5 %
E	42	=	7.0 %
E1	2	=	0.3 %
F	78	=	13.0 %
G	101	=	16.9 %
H	0	=	0.0 %

50.2 % non-manual workers

Ward 40 : Hasten IV

249	=	46.3 %
40	=	7.4 %
25	=	4.6 %
21	=	3.9 %
38	=	7.1 %
0	=	0.0 %
63	=	11.7 %
100	=	18.6 %
2	=	0.4 %

53.7 % non-manual workers

A P P E N D I X II

Hückeswagen, le 3 Mai 1945

Nous tenons à signaler l'aide que nous avons toujours trouvée auprès de Monsieur Paul VAN DER BURG, et particulièrement à l'occasion d'une évasion d'un camarade, prisonnier de guerre auquel il a fourni vêtements civils et billets de chemin de fer,

De par sa conduite il a toujours montré ses sentiments anti-nazis.

Maurice HEDDE
Maurice HEDDE
Maurice HEDDE, Sergent, Prisonnier de guerre
Français.

Jean GUIGONNET
Jean GUIGONNET, Maréchal des logis, Prisonnier
de guerre Français.

Jean NEUBAUER
Jean NEUBAUER, Homme de confiance des Civils
Français.

Translation:

We should like to point out, that we have always found help by Paul von der Burg, especially at the occasion of a comrade's escape, a prisoner of war, to whom he gave civil suits and railway-tickets.

By his behaviour he has at every time shown an anti-nazi sense.

Signatures: as above

Удостоверение

Ныжеподписавшиеся русские рабочие удостоверяем г. Паулю фон дер Бург, проживающему в г. Гюксваген по ул. Фридриха - 29, что вышеуказанный в годы нашей принудительной работы в Германии был всегда и во всех случаях подлинным анти-фашистом.

К примеру: Поддерживал русских рабочих питанием и одеждой. Всегда указывал нам на необходимость медленной работы и показывал методы к максимальному снижению производительности труда. Подтолково информировал нас о военном положении передаваемыми через радиостанции шифров Москвы и Лондона.

1. Инженер Назаренко Георгий, г. Таганрог
2. Зализецкий Иван, с. Щебутинцы, об. Каменец-Защепенский ЛМ Подольская
3. Солдник Михаил, с. Николая, Тамбовская область
Солдник
4. Машинист Владимир, г. Коганович, обл. Воронежская
Машинист
5. Тирков Александр, с. Осташки, обл. Калининская

Wir wollen gerne darauf hinweisen daß wir oft
Hilfe durch Taut von der Berg funder, besonders bei
der Gelegenheit der Flucht als Kriegsgefangenen, denen
er unter Klugheit und Instruktion geht.
Bei seinem Verhalten hat er sich stets als Gegner des
Nationalsozialismus gezeigt.

NEWSPAPERS

Bergischer Beobachter (Rheinische Landeszeitung)

Bergische Volksstimme

Remscheider Arbeiterzeitung

Remscheider Generalanzeiger

Remscheider Zeitung

Lenneper Kreisblatt

Lüttringhauser Täglicher Anzeiger

Freie Presse, Wuppertal

Freiheit, Düsseldorf

Freies Volk

Bergische Arbeiterstimme, Solingen

Unsere Zeit, Düsseldorf,

Die Rote Fahne, Berlin

Die Neue, Berlin

OFFICIAL FILES

Stadtarchiv Remscheid

I B/21-27b, I B/29-35, I C/4-11, I H/65-78, I H/84-94, I Ha/38,39,
I J/5,6;
II A/29-42, II A/81-86, II A/120-122, II A/125-132, II Ja/1,2, II T/18,19
III A/75,76;
IV L/2, 5, 8, 14, IV M/3;
VI B/1-13 ;
VII F/5, VII G/7-43, VII H/7-28, VII K/4-7, VII M/1-30;
X B/46-48, X C/24-34, X C/45, X Ca/1, X I/1, 2, X J/14, X R/14;
XI D/27-71;
XII K/7-38;
W I/1-10, W II/2-20, W IIa/10, 42, 52, W VIII/3-5;
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7338, 8212, 8762, 9828, 10039, 10851, 11192, 11407, 11666, 11767,
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Akten des Regierungspräsidenten (Reg. Düss.)

8148, 1021/46, 15445, 15446, 15814, 16536, 16738, 16741, 16945,
16953, 17192, 17193, 17253;
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Ger. Rep.

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Personal Files and Membership Cards of circa 120 Remscheid members
of the NSDAP and SA.

INTERVIEWS

Otto and Linni Alders
Artur Bevernick
Grete Busch
Hans Dürhager
Karl Engels
Gerd Friele
Robert and Millie Führer
Ernst Giesecke
Hertha Gläs
Millie Hilbert
Charlotte Hilger
Gustav Jesinghaus
Olga Jung
Fritz Knäpper
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Paul Schneider
Margot Schröder
Ludwig Stillger
Alfred Straßweg
Erich Thieler
Klara Trusheim
Alexander Vogel

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