In talking of the "failure" of labor in the Weimar Republic, two points of clarification must first be made. This discussion does not address itself to the question of the failure of the revolutionary Left to bring about a socialist revolution in Germany in the aftermath of the First World War: for that is a question which is not peculiar to Germany but has relevance for the whole of Europe outside Russia and has been treated elsewhere. However, there is one way in which the upheavals in Germany between 1913 and 1923 do relate to subsequent developments; namely, the failure of the revolutionary forces to purge the army, judiciary, and civil service of antidemocratic elements. It can be argued that the German Social Democratic party (SPD) could have allied with popular democratic pressure from workers' and soldiers' councils to institute such a purge. This it chose not to do, but rather threw in its lot with the German General Staff against not only the threat of "bolshevism" but against popular protest more generally. In so doing, the leadership of the SPD not only betrayed its socialist goals, but helped to undermine the prospects of successful democracy and can itself be held responsible for the creation of a mass communist movement, alienated from the new Republic, in these early years. For in Austria, where the Social Democrats relied on armed workers and did not employ Freikorps to smash the left, the political arm of the labor movement remained united.

A second qualification must also be made: In many respects labor did not fail in the Weimar Republic. For despite the survival of antidemocratic elites and capitalist property relations, the new Republic conferred substantial benefits on the German working class or at least on its representatives. At
the local level, many municipalities under Social Democratic control embarked upon housing schemes, the provision of adult education, and the building of parks, stadiums, and the like. At the national level, the law concerning factory councils recognized the role of the trade unions as official counselors and negotiators, freedom of assembly and coalition was constitutionally guaranteed, and a system of state arbitration in wage disputes leading to binding settlements upon both employer and union was established. In fact it was precisely this last system that gave rise to opposition from industry and led to a head-on confrontation with the state in the great lockout in the Ruhr iron and steel industry in 1923, when the employers sought not just a particular wage settlement but the destruction of the whole apparatus of compulsory and binding arbitration. The Weimar Republic further guaranteed the right to work, instituted unemployment benefits, and even provided social security payments for those workers (about 250,000 of them) locked out in the Ruhrreisenstreit of 1928. The enormous change that such legislation initiated, when compared to the harsher realities of industrial conflict in the Wilhelmine period, goes some way to explain the SPD's attachment to constitutional forms of struggle in the early 1930s.

The central concern here is the failure of German labor to prevent the demise of the new Republic, from which it derives certain benefits, and to halt the Nazi seizure of power. On one point things are relatively clear: The Weimar Republic did not collapse because the German industrial working class deserted it for the National Socialist party (NSDAP). The Nazi industrial worker was atypical both as a worker and as a Nazi. That this should have been so is at first sight perhaps surprising. The Party began as a workers' party in Munich, called itself the National Socialist Workers' party, and until the late 1920s addressed its propaganda largely to the working class of Germany's large industrial towns. Its Left Wing, around the Strasser brothers (and in the early days, Joseph Goebbels), stressed the anticapitalist elements of Nazi ideology and criticized the SPD for its "betrayal" of the working masses both after the First World War and in the early 1930s, when the SPD tolerated the government of Chancellor Brüning and failed to offer any alternative to his deflationary economic policies. As an alternative, the Nazis suggested a job-creation scheme of public works. They also established their own factory cell organization (NSBO-National Socialist Factory Cell Organization), which claimed only three thousand members in January 1931 but had three hundred thousand by December 1932. According to some commentators, this effort reaped rich dividends: Max Kele has claimed, for example, that by the beginning of 1933 the Nazi party was a party primarily of workers, be they blue- or white-collar. It is certainly true that there were places in which the NSDAP won a significant percentage of working class votes: in parts of the Ruhr (especially in the area around Essen), in parts of
Berlin, parts of Thuringia (especially Chemnitz-Zwickau), Brunswick, Hanover, and Breslau. Claims have also been made that the Nazi paramilitary organization, the SA, recruited primarily from workers (63 percent of its membership were workers according to Conan Fischer).

All such calculations need to be treated with extreme caution. Even Kele admits that the Nazi party was not proletarian in its social composition for most of the 1920s and other commentators agree. Secondly, the membership of the NSBO in the early 1930s lagged way behind that of the trades unions, which had traditionally represented labor and most of which were closely associated with either the SPD or the Catholic Centre party. Furthermore, the NSBO enjoyed greater support among white-collar workers and public employees than among the industrial working class of areas such as the Ruhr. Indeed, this points to a major problem of definition: Nazi membership lists do not differentiate between artisans and factory workers when they talk about workers; and there is evidence that it was to the former rather than the latter that Nazi propaganda was most appealing. An independent nonparty source attempting to differentiate along these lines in 1930 significantly came to the conclusion that, in the Düsseldorf branch of the NSDAP, artisans constituted 34 percent of the membership and "industrial workers" only 14 percent. Furthermore, if one compares the social composition of the Nazi party with the structure of the German population at large in this period it becomes clear that, whereas white-collar workers and the self-employed were overrepresented, the industrial working class was underrepresented in its membership. Even the apparently proletarian nature of the SA is open to question: It has been claimed that Fischer's statistics do not stand up to close scrutiny for they are collated from very different data and depend partly upon the composition of SA men arrested, when, of course, the lower-class elements within the organization might generally be expected to predominate among the ranks of violent militants. In any case, even if it were true that the SA was predominantly working-class in its social composition, we would still be left with the problem of identifying what "working-class" actually meant in this context. It should further be noticed that the ideology of the SA was markedly different to that of the more petty bourgeois party organization.

Analysis of voting returns throughout the Reich also suggests that the Nazis did not find their major support from the working class of the great industrial centers. Indeed, it was precisely for this reason that from 1927-28 the party's propaganda was turned away from the factory worker towards the peasant, small businessman, and shopkeeper. The NSDAP was most successful at the polls in rural areas and small provincial towns, not in the large cities; and in areas that were Protestant, not Catholic. Thus the combined vote of the SPD and the German
Communist party (KPD) remained more or less constant at around 37 percent of the poll, despite the electoral triumphs of National Socialism. When industrial workers did desert social democracy, they gave their support to the KPD and not to the Nazis; and the same seems to have applied to Catholic workers who had previously voted for the Center Party. This further gives lie to the myth that it was the unemployed manual workers who flocked to the Nazi colors. Unemployment was concentrated in large industrial towns of over 100,000 inhabitants; that is, in precisely the places where the NSDAP fared relatively badly at the polls.

That some industrial workers supported the Nazis cannot be doubted; but they constituted a decided minority of the factory proletariat. In fact, working-class nazism took root only in those places that lacked strong traditions of trade union organization; among workers who had not voted before, often in small towns, among public employees who may have had an elevated view of their own status, and perhaps among some who had tried other political medicines to cure the ills of Weimar—even communism and anarcho-syndicalism—which had failed.

That this was so can itself be explained by the specifics of Nazi propaganda and the NSDAP's social composition. The fact that the movement was lower-middle class in composition and that it supported higher food prices, tax cuts, as well as wage and social service reductions, can hardly have made it attractive to industrial workers. Against this background the ability of the combined left-wing vote (SPD plus KPD) to maintain itself is scarcely surprising. It should further be added that the manual working class employed in factories constituted a lower percentage of the total labor force than might be imagined. After the First World War, the industrial working class ceased to grow as a percentage of the active population, while calculations of its size vary from about 30 percent to about 40 percent of the total work force. On the other hand, white-collar workers, who were more highly organized than their blue-collar colleagues by the early 1930s, grew in number at a fairly rapid rate, and the number of independent artisans and small shopkeepers still stood at 3 million in 1925. Together with their helpers they constituted something like 13.6 percent of the population at large. Furthermore, one-third of the German population was still dependent upon agriculture for its living in one way or another in the 1920s. When, in addition to the above, it is realized that women voters outnumbered their male counterparts in the Weimar Republic and that their voting behavior was markedly more conservative, then the ability of the Communists and Socialists combined to poll more than the Nazis in the second Reichstag election of 1932 is quite extraordinary. It is even more so in light of the fact that manual industrial factory workers actually declined in number as a result of intensive rationalization in the period of so-called stabilization (1924-1929) and continued to decline
because the depression hit industry disproportionately hard in the early 1930s.38

Thus, when Hitler assumed the chancellor's mantle in late January 1933, the Nazis confronted what was in the main a hostile working class in Germany's industrial centers. As we have seen, the combined electoral strength of the SPD and the KPD was greater than that of the National Socialist party in late 1932, while the Leftist paramilitary organization, the Reichsbanner, recruited far more men than did the Nazi SA.39 There is also evidence of considerable rank-and-file pressure within the Reichsbanner to take up arms against the forces of reaction, especially at the time of Chancellor von Papen's dissolution of the Social Democratic government in Prussia in mid-1932.40 We are therefore confronted with the question: Why did the apparently powerful labor movement fail to translate its numerical strength into potent anti-Nazi action in the early 1930s?

The classic answer to this question has been that the division of the labor movement into antagonistic socialist and communist wings destroyed its capacity for united action and that the prime responsibility for this sorry state of affairs must be laid at the feet of the KPD and its instructors in Moscow.41 It is true that Russian influence within the German Communist party became increasingly strong after Thälmann assumed the leadership of the party in 1925;42 and further that instructions to abandon cooperation with Social Democratic elements and pursue an ultra-Leftist line of open hostility to the SPD were crucial in the determination of communist policy in 1927-2843 and again in 1932.44 It could also be argued that the Stalinization of German Communism in the mid-1920s45 removed internal party debate and thus made the party extraordinarily inflexible and insensitive, both to the needs of the moment and to the interests of the German working class, as distinct from the interests of Soviet Russia. In the wake of the disastrous destruction of the Chinese Communist party (1927) at the hands of the Kuomintang, with whom Stalin and the Comintern had advocated close cooperation previously, and with a swing to the left in Soviet domestic policy associated with the first Five Year Plan and the drive against the Kulaks, the Comintern declared a policy of "class against class," that cooperation with reformist and centrist elements was to cease and that an age of revolution was at hand. This swing to the left was then reinforced by the onset of the world economic depression, which Stalin and his cronies chose to see as the final crisis of capitalism.46 In this third period, fascism and social democracy were identified as twin pillars of the capitalist establishment, as tools of the bourgeoisie, and thus social democracy became social fascism.47 According to the Comintern, capitalism was about to collapse.48 Hence fascism itself could not survive and thus was put to be overestimated, as Thälmann was still saying in 1931.49 Only if
the SPD misled the working class away from the revolutionary
goal, therefore, would the triumph of socialism be prevented;
and thus the first task of the KPD was to unmask Social Democracy
and only then to fight fascism. The KPD, therefore, was to
conquer the mass of the German working class against the SPD
and, for that matter, the old trade union organizations.

It is obvious that such short-sightedness was to prove fatal.
Clearly the KPD underestimated both the ability of capitalism to
survive and the strength of the Nazi threat. Its open hostility
to the SPD and its creation of a separate trade union organization
for Communists (RGO) further served to divide the labor movement
and undermine the Weimar Republic. There were even occasions
when Nazis and Communists cooperated, as in the referendum to
remove the Social Democratic government in Prussia and in the
strike of Berlin transport workers in the autumn of 1932.
Furthermore, the KPD developed a kind of Lagermentalität, an
obsession with defending its existing constituency, which
weakened its appeal to other groups. Having said this,
however, the blame for the tragic division of German labor and
its failure to prevent the Nazi seizure of power cannot be laid
exclusively on the shoulders of German Communism. In the first
place it is simply untrue to say, as some have done, that the
Communists did not take up arms against the Nazis. In fact
they bore the brunt of the street fighting of the early 1930s
and continued to do so in the Ruhr, for example, way into the
first half of 1933. In 1932 the KPD became less committed
to the social fascist line, though it did not abandon
the line completely. In some parts of Germany Communist
and Social Democratic organizations collaborated against the
Nazis, while individual KPD members disapproved of the violent
campaign of vituperation against the SPD.

This apart, it is perhaps more important to realize that the size
of support for the KPD grew enormously at precisely the time
that the party adopted its Leftist stand; which would suggest
that the social fascism line was not simply a foreign importation
but made sense to a significant section of the German working
class in the early 1930s. In fact the hostility of the KPD
to the SPD had domestic origins and considerable historical
foundation. As we have already seen, between 1918 and 1923 the
SPD was responsible for the bloody suppression of leftist
insurrections, often in collaboration with reactionary elements.
Furthermore, the SPD, often in the shape of social democratic
police chiefs and local authorities, continued its anticommunist
campaign into the last days of Weimar. In Prussia, Communists
were dismissed from public office by the Social Democratic
government, while members of the KPD in Hamburg, who tried
to initiate a strike when Hitler became chancellor, were
arrested on the instructions of the local SPD authorities.
Most famously of all, the Berlin Chief of Police, Karl Zürgiebel,
a Social Democrat, banned the May Day demonstration of 1929. The
Communists ignored the ban but suffered a large number of fatalities and arrests at the hands of police. In such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the KPD was loathe to build bridges to the SPD. Furthermore, the Confederation of German Trade Unions (ADGB), which was closely affiliated to the SPD, also mounted an anticommmunist campaign in the depression, and, it has been suggested, even entered consultations with General Schleicher, chancellor in late 1932, and the Left wing of the Nazis concerning plans for a corporate state. Thus the designation of social fascist seemed not wildly untrue to some workers, who actually greeted the overthrow of the social democratic government in Prussia in 1932 with applause. Such feelings were further reinforced by the SPD's close association with a republic that seemed to offer no hope to the unemployed in the early 1930s, by its toleration of the government of Chancellor Brüning from 1930 to 1932 and of his deflationary policies, which entailed cuts in wages and unemployment benefits, and by the deepening of the depression. They were also strengthened by the ADGB's support for the economics of rationalization in the mid 1920s, which entailed permanent unemployment for some sections of the working class. Such support for rationalization even went to the extreme of enthusiasm for the wonders of American capitalism, as witnessed by Fritz Tarnow's visit to the United States to "see for himself."

The above helps to explain why the split in the ranks of German labor was not easily healed in the Weimar Republic. It is also important to realize that the leadership of the SPD, although most firmly committed to democratic principles, was itself guilty of misreading the situation in the early 1930s and of a failure to take action against nazism. There is considerable evidence that both the ADGB and the Social Democratic party underestimated the Nazi threat. So, for that matter, did the institutions of the Catholic working class. Furthermore, the SPD inherited from its survival of Wilhelmine persecution an almost fatalistic belief in its own invincibility and ultimate victory. This fatalism was reflected in a number of ways. Otto Wels claimed that "we were overtaken by the force of circumstances," while the SPD and especially its leading economists, Rudolf Hilferding, placed their faith in a revival of the capitalist economy and thus failed to offer an alternative to Brüning. In this context, the ADGB was rather more adventurous and developed an ambitious scheme of work creation and public spending to counter the recession. However, this refusal to adopt and it was this refusal that was in part responsible for the Free Trade Unions' willingness to enter discussions with the Right of German politics. A further reflection of the fatalism of the Social Democratic leadership can be seen in its response to Papen's coup against Severing's administration in Prussia: Rather than fight this outrage by extraparliamentary means, the SPD preferred to sit back and hope for victory in the forthcoming parliamentary
Towards the Holocaust

This reflects two other aspects of SPD attitudes that constrained the party at this vital juncture: constitutionalism and organizational fetishism. The SPD was the party of the Weimar Republic and was committed to its constitution, which it sought to defend against both left and right. In a sense, it simply lost sight of the possibility of unconstitutional action or was horrified by the prospect of it. Equally, again partly as a result of developments under the Second Empire, German Social Democracy had become increasingly introverted, possessing the same kind of Lagermentalität as the KPD, but perhaps in a more exaggerated form. Both the SPD and the ADGB were gripped by an obsession with the preservation of their organizations, an Organisationsfetischismus, as Rosa Luxemburg had dubbed it before the First World War. Thus as late as January 1933, Theodor Leipart, the chairman of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions, could say "organization, not demonstration, is the word of the hour" while the SPD and the ADGB rejected the Communist party's proposal for a united front in the aftermath of the Reichstag fire (February 27, 1933) precisely because they were afraid of forfeiting their legal status.

The ability of German Social Democracy to respond to the Nazi threat was further constrained by its humanism, its fear of bloodshed, and its horror of the prospect of civil war. Such hostility to violent action was not purely a matter of principle, however; it was also tactical. For some members of the SPD believed that the prospects of victory were remote, given the way the police and army were likely to respond. Such fears were well-founded when one considers what transpired in Austria in the following year: In 1934 a united labor movement was destroyed in a bloody civil war by the combined forces of clerical conservatism, fascism, and the army. The SPD leadership was loathe to act without the guaranteed support of the ADGB, and this was simply not forthcoming. It is true that the Free Trades Unions did develop a work-creation scheme as an alternative to the deflationary policies of Brüning. However, such economic initiatives were not matched on the political front. Obsessed by the need to preserve its organizations in the face of falling membership rolls and financial difficulties, the ADGB was even prepared to enter negotiations with General Schleicher and some members of the National Socialist party to discuss the possibility of establishing some kind of corporate state.

This last point, however, leads to the major explanation of the paralysis of German labor in the early 1930s and its fragmentation—the depression itself. It is remarkable how two recent articles on the Left at the end of the Weimar Republic devote a great deal of attention to the immobilism and paralysis of the SPD, for example, yet fail to mention the economic constraints under which left-wing politics had to be conducted in the last days.
of Weimar. As others have realized, however, the depression had a profound effect upon the ability of the German Left to resist fascism. As Stephen Salter remarks, “the reasons for this relative passivity on the part of the working class and its organizations are largely to be sought in the effects of the economic crisis of 1929-33 on the German labor movement.” Germany was hit disproportionately heavily by the world economic crisis; and within Germany it was the industrial sector that suffered most. In February 1932 unemployment reached a peak of 6,128,000, an official figure of the registered unemployed, which therefore probably constitutes an underestimate. In the industrial sector, something like 40 percent of male workers were without jobs, while another 16 percent were employed part-time. Such high levels of unemployment meant that large numbers of workers were robbed of industrial muscle: they were simply unable to strike; while for many of those still working, it became increasingly risky to engage in industrial action with such a large reserve army waiting to replace them. The paralyzing effect of such unemployment was magnified by the fact that unemployment was especially marked in sectors that had traditionally formed the backbone of labor militancy, for example, metalwork and the building industry, and because the trade unions saw 50 percent of their membership jobless. Unemployment further increased the rate of fluctuation of Communist party membership, which increasingly recruited from the ranks of the dole queue. By 1924 the KPD had become the party of the unemployed, and by 1932 over 30 percent of its membership were without jobs. Under such circumstances, the KPD was weak in the factories and forced to develop a politics based upon the neighbourhood. Thus the German labor movement had been robbed of its industrial muscle by 1932. Under such circumstances, there was no likelihood of a repetition of a general strike such as that of 1920, which had defeated the reactionary Kapp Putsch. Employers resorted more frequently to the lockout and with higher rates of success, while the trade unions forsook strike action and resorted to arbitration.

In addition to weakening labor, the depression had another profound consequence: It exacerbated divisions at the very base of the labor movement. To a certain extent, the gulf that separated the Communist party from the SPD increasingly corresponded to a hardening of their separate constituencies. The KPD had always possessed a higher percentage of unskilled workers in its ranks than had German Social Democracy, and there is evidence from Frankfurt that it was becoming increasingly dependent upon the support of the unskilled by the late 1920s. More importantly, however, the KPD, as we have seen, essentially became the party of the unemployed, whereas employed workers tended to cling to the SPD, only 30 percent of whose members were unemployed in 1932, compared to the 50 percent of the KPD. Now this division between employed and unemployed might not have had such serious consequences had there been prospects for
re-employing most workers in the foreseeable future. But in the early 1930s this simply was not the case. The factor that caused such a deep cleavage in the ranks of German labor was permanent unemployment. For those in jobs, the situation was not ideal, in so far as real wages declined by about 20 percent during the depression, but their interests were manifestly different, at least in the immediate future, to those of the workers who were permanently unemployed and had nothing to thank Weimar for and nothing to lose by its destruction. In a sense the intensity of the anger directed by Communists against the SPD reflected this situation of despair. As the Austro-Marxist Max Adler remarked with great insight at this very time: "The working class itself has been burst asunder. By its loss of unity and striking power, its lack of direction and its weakness in its most powerful section, the German working class . . . has dug its own grave instead of being the gravedigger of capitalism. . . . The source of this . . . is the differentiation within the proletariat . . . which had existed for decades at the upper levels, but has also become especially marked at the lower levels since the world crisis and its long-term unemployment."103

To this might be added the consequences of the intensive rationalization of German industry in the period between 1924 and 1928, a process which made the economy less flexible in the face of the world economic crisis. This rationalization entailed the closure of inefficient units, the amalgamation of giant companies, as in the case of I. G. Farben and the Vereinigte Stahlwerke, and the use of new techniques of mass production, especially the conveyor belt. It also entailed a restructuring of the German work force, creating a clear division between the interests of those laid off in the process of rationalization and those who remained employed and benefited from the increased productivity that ensued. Germany entered a period of high structural unemployment, especially in the metal industry; and significantly, employed metalworkers disappeared from the ranks of the KPD in Frankfurt.

The hardening of divisions within the working class also correlated to certain developments outside the factory. To a certain extent, the antagonism of Socialists and Communists reflected a conflict between the generations, for the membership of German Social Democracy was noticeably older than that of the Communist party. This conflict extended even to different styles of leisure and different attitudes to criminality. Increasingly the SPD came to be associated with the respectable working class, housed now in different neighborhoods than their rougher brethren. Thus, for example, whereas patterns of illegitimacy within the working class had been fairly uniform in the Wilhelmine period, a clear difference between the behavior of skilled and unskilled workers emerged between the wars; and this difference also correlated with different
residences and even KPD membership. Furthermore, youth's alienation from the Weimar Republic may relate not only to the fact that the unemployed were often the young but also to the extent to which the young unemployed were increasingly subject to harassment on the part of the state authorities, not only at the hands of the police but also of welfare officers, distributors of unemployment benefits, and so on. Once again, therefore, hostility towards the Weimar Republic and the SPD, which was so closely associated with it—the authorities youth encountered in Prussia, for example, were social democratic forces—was not simply a consequence of admittedly misguided Communist instruction.

It may well be that there is no perfect match between the two left-wing parties because of these divisions at the root of the labor movement. The point, however, is that the depression robbed the German working class of its industrial weapon and fragmented it at its very base. In this, as much as in the political divisions between Social Democracy and communism, lay the real origins of impotence.
I would like to thank Richard Bessel and James Wickham for their help and time in discussing several aspects of this chapter.

The Failure of German Labor in the Weimar Republic


For the counterrevolutionary activity of the SPD not only in 1919 but also in the Ruhr subsequently see Eliasberg, Ruhrkrieg; Haffner, Revolution; Lucas, Arbeiter-Radikalismus; Mommsen, "The German Revolution"; von Oertzen, Novemberrevolution; and Rüup, Probleme der Revolution.

For Austria see Carsten, Revolution in Central Europe, pp. 73-126. It is, of course, true that there were deeper ideological causes of the split—see, for example, Carl E. Schorske, German Social Democracy, 1905-1917 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955)—and that the split reflected certain social divisions within the German working class—see Geary, European Labour Protest ch. 4, and Robert Wheeler, "Zur sozialen struktur der Arbeiterbewegung am Anfang der Weimarer Republic" in Hans Mommsen, Dietmar Petzina, Bernd Klebsbrod, eds., Industrielles System und politische Entwicklung in der Weimarer Republik (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1974).


Hüllbusch, "Der Ruhrreisenstreit"; Bernd Weisbrod, Schwerindustrie in der Weimarer Republik (Huppertal: F. Hammer, 1978), ch. V.

Max H. Kele, Nazis and Workers (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 34f; Timothy W. Mason,
190  Towards the Holocaust


3 Mason, Arbeiterklasse, p. 17; Kele, Nazis and Workers, pp. 113, 139f; Reinhard Kühn, Die nationalsozialistische Linke (Heisenheim am Glan: Hain, 1966).

9 Kele, Nazis and Workers, p. 194f.


11 Kele, Nazis and Workers, p. 203.


13 Conan J. Fischer, "The occupational background of the SA’s rank and file membership during the depression years" in Peter D. Stachura, The Shaping of the Nazi State (London: Croom Helm, 1978). Kele also claims that unemployed factory workers flocked to the SA, though he admits that there is no data to support this claim (Kele, Nazis and Workers, p. 148). Others have also detected a transfer of membership from the SA to the KPD and vice versa (Bühnke, Die NSDAP, p. 157f).

14 Kele, Nazis and Workers, pp. 61, 121; Stachura, "Who Were the Nazis?”


18 Bühnke, Die NSDAP, p. 199.

19 Mason, Arbeiterklasse, p. 20; Hambrecht, Der Aufstieg, p. 305f.

21 Conan Fisher, "The SA's Rank and File Membership in the early 1930's" (unpublished paper delivered to the second meeting of the SSRC Research Seminar Group on German Social History, University of East Anglia, January 1979).

22 Salter, "Class Harmony" p. 77.


27 Jürgen Aretz, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung und Nationalsozialismus, p. 54.

28 Salter, "Class Harmony" p. 78; Bünke, Die NSDAP, p. 179f. It may even be a myth that those workers who did join the NSDAP were unemployed. In middle Franconia, for example, only 6.2 percent of the working-class recruits to the Nazi party were unemployed in the early 1930s (Hambrecht, Der Aufstieg, p. 306f.


30 Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 78.

31 Robert A. Gates, "Von der Sozialpolitik zur Wirtschaftspolitik?" in Hans Mommsen et al., Industrielles System, p. 221.


Between 1907 and 1925 in the manufacturing sector there was only a 29 percent increase in the number of Arbeiter (workers), but the number of Angestellten (employers) rose by 129 percent (Kele, Nazis and Workers, p. 71).


For the impact of rationalization see Eva Cornelia Schück, Arbeitslosigkeit und Rationalisierung (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus-Verlag, 1977), p. 73; in mining the number of semiskilled workers in 1923 fell back to the figure for 1913 and by 1932 was no more than in 1895. For the depression, see Mason, Arbeiterklasse, p. 24f; Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 80; Michael Schneider, Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm des ADGB (Bonn Bad-Godesberg: Verlag Neue Gesellschaft, 1975), p. 23.

Hunt, German Social Democracy, p. 51f.


Bahne, Die KPD, p. 11.

Eisner, Das Verhältnis, p. 222, Schück, Arbeitslosigkeit, p. 75.

Bahne, Die KPD, p. 25.

The Failure of German Labor in the Weimar Republic


47 Bahne, Die KPD, p. 12 and p. 23.

48 Ibid., pp. 13, 27.

49 Ibid., p. 13f.

50 Ibid., p. 13.

51 Ibid., p. 12; Eisner, Das Verhiiltnis, p. 223.

52 Kele, Nazis and Workers, p. 189; Mason, Arbeiterklasse, p. 19.


56 Bahne, Die KPD, p. 23ff.

57 Silvia Kontos, Die Partei kämpft wie ein Mann (Basel: Stroemfeld-Verlag, 1979), p. 254.

58 Bahne, Die KPD, p. 24ff.

59 In Reichstag elections the KPD won 3,690,000 votes in May 1924, slightly fewer in 1923, but 4,950,000 in 1930, 5,370,000 in July 1932, and 5,930,001 in November 1932.

60 Witt, Die Hamburger, p. 73.

61 Ibid., p. 167.


63 Deppe et al., Geschichte, p. 197.

64 See note 83 below.

Deppe et al., Geschichte, pp. 180-83.

Schneider, Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm, p. 137; Grebing, Geschichte, p. 206.

Aretz, Katholische Arbeiterbewegung, p. 67f.

Witt, Die Hamburger, p. 121, 123; Grebing, Geschichte, p. 205.

Quoted in Matthias, "Social Democracy," p. 60.


Schneider, Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm.

Ibid., pp. 103-40.

Ibid., p. 103.

Guttmann, The German Social Democratic Party, p. 322; Deppe et al., Geschichte, p. 212.

Matthias, "German Social Democracy," p. 54f.

Ibid., Geschichte, p. 212.


Ibid.

Schneider, Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm, p. 161f.

From a peak of 9,193,000 in 1920, trade-union membership fell to 5,740,000 in 1929, 5,177,000 in 1931 and thereafter continued to decline: Sidney Pollard, "The Trade Unions and
The Failure of German Labor in the Weimar Republic

The Depression of 1929-1933," in Hans Mommsen et al., Industrielle System, p. 240. For ADGB negotiations with Schleicher and the Nazis see Brauthal, Socialist Labour, pp. 70-74; Deppe et al., Geschichte, p. 209f; Schneider, Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm, pp. 140-57.

The articles of Pirker, "Zum Verhalten" and Schulze, "Die SPD."


Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 80.


Schneider, Das Arbeitsbeschaffungsprogramm, p. 27.

Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 80.


Rosenhaft, The German Communists, p. 72.

Guttmann, The German Social Democratic Party, p. 120f.


Rosenhaft, The German Communists and "Working Class Life."

Deppe et al., Geschichte, p. 199f; Schöck, Arbeitslosigkeit, p. 115.

Ibid.

Guttmann, The German Social Democratic Party, p. 120; Bahne, Die KPD, p. 15.

Wickham, "Working Class Movement."


Salter, "Class Harmony," p. 80.


Dietmar Petzina and Werner Abelhauser, "Zum Problem der relativen stagnation der deutschen Wirtschaft in den


106 Pollard, "The Trade Unions," p. 244. This is also the central contention of Schück's work.

107 Thus even during the economic recovery of the mid 1920s, Germany experienced levels of unemployment that were higher than those of the depression years before the First World War.

108 Personal communication from James Wickham.


110 See the articles by Wickham, Rosenhaft, Grütner in the forthcoming Richard J. Evans, ed., *German Working Class*.

111 Stephan Bajohr, "Illegitimacy and the Working Class," forthcoming in Evans, *German Working Class*.