

IMAGES OF THE ENEMY: THE SPD'S PERCEPTION  
OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM IN AUGSBURG, WITH  
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE PORTRAYAL OF  
NAZISM IN THE SCHWÄBISCHE VOLKSZEITUNG,  
1928 - 1933.

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1995



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- a) that this thesis has been composed by me, and
- b) that the work contained within it is my own.

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## A B S T R A C T

The thesis is a study of how the NSDAP was perceived and interpreted by the SPD in the south Bavarian city of Augsburg during the period 1928-1933. It particularly seeks to investigate the response of the Social Democratic rank and file to the rise of Nazism, and to explore the relationship between the local SPD's literary and propaganda output, and that response. Thus, the SPD's failure to defend itself from National Socialist attack in 1933 is examined from a hitherto neglected perspective: that is, by asking what image of the Nazi enemy Augsburg's Social Democrats possessed, to what extent that image was mediated by the SPD's 'official' analysis of the NSDAP, and what contribution the form of that image made to the SPD's fate.

In the absence of wide-ranging archival sources which would allow the construction of a detailed portrait of the organisational structure and development of the SPD in Augsburg during the Weimar Republic, or the recovery of the patterns of day-to-day working-class life and politics, the thesis concentrates on the local Social Democratic newspaper, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung. It analyses thoroughly the latter's material on National Socialism, and relates this to the general history of the SPD in the city in the era of the NSDAP's growth. The question is, further, addressed of how effective the SPD's propaganda reaction to Nazism, as reflected in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was in immunising its rank-and-file support against National Socialism, and in instilling within that support the desire and willingness to defend itself from the NSDAP's attacks. Chapter 1 outlines the political, social and economic structures, and historical preconditions, which provided the context within which the SPD's struggle with Nazism in

Augsburg occurred. Chapters 2 to 10 deal with various aspects of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's engagement with National Socialism, and discuss their wider implications.

The main finding of the thesis is that, in the case of the SPD in Augsburg, the party's capitulation in 1933 cannot be considered the result of a failure to warn its supporters about the threat posed by National Socialism; rather than the SPD's long-term structural inadequacies, which a close reading of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach to Nazism also illuminates, were far more crucial in determining its behaviour. Chapter 11 applies this finding to events in Augsburg after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, and concludes that a desire for mass action in defence of the SPD did exist amongst the city's core Social Democrats, and had indeed been partially created by the success of the party's anti-Nazi propaganda, but that this desire was ultimately frustrated by the SPD's inherent and inescapable caution.



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## CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION - AUGSBURG IN THE WEIMAR ERA

Any overview of the city of Augsburg as it stood in the late 1920s, as the first effects of economic recession and incipient Nazi success began to be felt, must emphasise its apparent typicality as an industrial city and, concomitantly, as a workers' city. Indeed, with the possible exception of the overwhelmingly Catholic nature of its population, Augsburg would seem to accord with those expectations anyone with a knowledge of the period would bring to an analysis of an industrial centre in Weimar Germany. For Augsburg's economic, political and social structures certainly were grounded in the contours of its industrial development. From that industrial development flowed the existence of a clearly identifiable and definable working class, a working class specifically situated within Augsburg's economy and society. From that industrial development flowed the organisations and institutions, in their various forms, which came to represent that working class, and within which at least a significant proportion of that class came to be active. And, finally, from that industrial development flowed the inevitable consequences which the world economic crisis would have on Augsburg, those consequences which provided the context within which the NSDAP could garner the support of around one quarter of the city's electorate by 1932. In short, Augsburg during the period under consideration was to be subject to the political, economic and social conflicts consonant with its structure and, moreover, resonant of the wider traumas of the Weimar Republic. It is, thus, first of all necessary quickly to delineate this structure, at least as it pertains to the

constitution of Augsburg's working class; and, as selective examples of the effects created by it, to say something about patterns of voting behaviour in Augsburg, about the dominant institutions of its workers, and about the results of economic depression from the late 1920s. The aim is to establish the general framework within which Augsburg's workers operated in the period of the rise of National Socialism, for, whilst this is far from the whole story - a story which, as will be shown, is only to be understood by considering Augsburg's longer-term history - it should at least confirm the city's suitability for a study of the industrial working class in Weimar Germany.

That Augsburg was essentially a workers' city is indisputable. With a population that reached 176,000 by 1933, it was Bavaria's third largest city after Munich and Nuremberg, and had experienced a rapid rise in population, as the following table illustrates:

Augsburg's population	1849 :	32,628	
	1875 :	57,213	
	1900 :	89,170	
	1925 :	165,522	[1]

The motor for this rise had been industrialisation: the rate of Augsburg's population growth between 1860 and 1920 (over 27% per decade) was a reflection of the extent of the latter process, just as much as the significant fall in this rate between 1925 and 1933, when it reached only 6.7%, mirrored a decline in the city's economic fortunes [2]. More significantly, the share of its working class was, in 1925, at 55.2% (that is, 46,725 workers) higher than in either Munich (41.1%, 147,117 workers) or Nuremberg (51.2%, 107,423 workers) [3]. Even clearer was the concentration

of this working class in the occupations of what might be termed the `classical` industrial worker located in large factories: around 55% of all industrial employees were, in 1925, located in this sphere [4]. Thus, although smaller concerns predominated in a variety of branches of the local economy - areas, for example, such as clothing, foodstuffs and building often retained the characteristics of small-scale craft, employing only four or five people per factory or workshop - Augsburg`s two main industries functioned almost exclusively through large factories. These two spheres were, firstly, the textile industry, upon the growth of which Augsburg`s 19th century development had been predicated, and, secondly, the mechanical engineering, machine tool and vehicle construction industry. The scale, in 1925, of these two industries in Augsburg can be gauged from the following details:

	No. of concerns	No. of employees	No. of employees in large factories	No. of employees in `gigantic` factories
Textile industry	144	16,348	9,718	6,282
Mechanical engineering, machine tool and vehicle construction	152	13,644	2,982	9,658

An exceptionally high proportion of the employees in the textile industry would, moreover, have been manual workers, in contrast to the engineering industry, with its larger white-collar element. Again, a comparison with Bavaria`s two other major cities

elucidates the point: in Augsburg in 1923 60.7% of all those employed in `Industrie und Handwerk` (both blue-collar and white-collar workers) worked in large factories (according to contemporary definition those with fifty or more employees) and 26.1% in `gigantic` factories (those with 1,000 or more employees). The corresponding figures for Munich were 40.9% and 6.4%, and for Nuremberg 54.1% and 17.1%. In short, as Gerhard Hetzer has written:

Als Sitz einer Reihe von Behörden und eines lebendigen Handelsgewerbes war Augsburg gewiß auch eine Beamten - und Geschäftsstadt, aber in erster Linie doch eine Metropole der Industrie und Industriearbeiterschaft - und somit auch ein Zentrum verschiedener politischer und gewerkschaftlicher Richtungen der Arbeiterbewegung. [5]

(G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg')

The various manifestations of Augsburg`s labour movement will be considered further on; what needs to be emphasised here is the very definite shape Augsburg`s working class possessed - a shape that can be more fully defined with reference to three facts. Firstly, it was overwhelmingly Catholic - Hetzer estimates that in 1933 85% of Augsburg`s workers were Catholics [6]. Given that, in 1925, 78.1% of Augsburg`s total population was found to be Catholic [7], it seems reasonable to assume that the city`s workers were more likely than other social strata to be Catholic. It should be noted that there existed a marked reluctance, even amongst Social Democratic or Communist workers, and despite widespread religious indifference, to break with the church [8]; indeed, bonds with the church were often strongest amongst the poorest sections of the

working class. The high rate of Catholicism within Augsburg's working class can also be explained with reference to the extent of economic activity exhibited by the city's working class-women - for the unusually large number of working women encompassed by it, constitutes the second basic characteristic of Augsburg's working class. This was primarily the consequence of the importance of the textile industry: 41.5% of workers in this industry in Augsburg were female in 1885, a figure which had risen to 56.2% in 1900, and to 63.9% in 1924 [9]. In any particular textile factory, almost without exception, more than half of the employees would have been women, and in many factories significantly more than half - in the 'Weberei Nagler und Sohn' for example, the figure was 75%, in the 'Buntweberei J. P. Bemberg' it was the highest of any Augsburg factory at 80%.

Finally, Augsburg's working class was situated, even segregated, within well-defined and self-conscious workers' districts. These markedly working-class areas had sprung up in the wake of industrialisation. Augsburg's development as a city had been predominantly influenced since the mid - 19th century by the choices made by industrialists of where to locate their factories; and the distribution of the various social classes throughout the city came to reflect this process - above all in the lack of integration of the newly existent factory working class. Newcomers to Augsburg, drawn to the city by the lure of jobs in industry, settled in close proximity to the new factories on its outskirts; thus a belt of working-class districts developed around Augsburg, isolated from the wealthier social classes in, or nearer to the city centre:

Zwar sind dies sozusagen Spätformen einer räumlichen Trennung, die in anderer Weise schon lange vorher bestanden hat und von der häufig die Stadtviertel zeugen, doch hat der enorme Arbeitskräftebedarf wachsender Industriestädte, hier vor allem durch Augsburg repräsentiert, eine klare Abtrennung von Arbeiterwohngegenden begünstigt, wenn nicht bedingt. Zum einen geschah dies dadurch, daß die zuwandernden Arbeiter angesichts der knapper und teurer werdenden Innenstadtquartiere in die Vororte zogen und zum Arbeitsplatz pendelten, wie es für die inzwischen eingemeindeten Vororte Augsburgs, Lechhausen und Oberhausen, typisch ist; zum anderen geschah es durch den Bau von Werkwohnungen - auch hier ist Augsburg ein typischer Fall - auf betriebsnahe Grund und zum dritten durch den Bau von Sozialwohnungen ... Letzteres - Werkssiedlungen und sozialer Wohnungsbau, zum Teil auch genossenschaftlicher Wohnungsbau - führte im wesentlichen über Grundstückspreise zur wohnräumlichen Trennung, die bestimmte Stadtviertel eben zu Arbeitervierteln machte. [10]

(M. Niehuss, Arbeiterschaft in Krieg und Inflation)

Of course, such areas were not homogeneous, they each had their own characteristics and degrees of social admixture; nevertheless, they can justifiably be described as working-class. The ring of districts around Augsburg's 'Altstadt', for instance - Ostend, Nordend, Wertachvorstadt, Westend and Südend - contained



sectors in which up to 70% of the population were working class, and which were strongly marked by the 19th century industrialisation which had produced them. Thus, the `Ostend` contained concerns vital to Augsburg`s economic life such as the `Augsburger Kammgarnspinnerei` (AKS), the `Neue Augsburger Kattunfabrik` and the `Spinnerei und Weberei Augsburg` (SWA); it also contained major company housing settlements, such as those built by the AKS (originated in 1854, with 356 dwellings in 1935) and the SWA (originated in 1862, with 400 homes in 1921). Similar `works colonies` were to be found in the `Nordend`, location of much of Augsburg`s engineering industry, belonging to the `Stadtbachspinnerei` and MAN (Maschinenfabrik Augsburg - Nürnberg), as well as a significant amount of housing association accommodation. MAN, indeed, presents a good example of the close inter-connections that could develop between a firm and its workforce. Succeeding generations of families found employment in MAN, and its workers were strongly rooted in Augsburg: over 95% of MAN`s employees were resident in the city, and around a fifth lived in districts near to the factory itself, such as the `Nordend` and the `Wertachvorstadt`. This latter was one of the most densely populated working class areas in Augsburg - and thus one of the most visibly proletarian:

Die schon vor 1914 als `Glasscherbenviertel` bezeichnete Vorstadt galt nach 1918 als `Spartakistennest`, wo der in bürgerlichen Kategorien denkende Betrachter in den trostlosen Straßenzügen den die Hände in den Hosentaschen verbergenden untätigen Eckensteher mit Schlägermütze und im Mundwinkel hängender Zigarette zu

entdecken hoffte. Hier ließ es sich in den Wirtschaften  
aber auch gemeinsam zurückhassen. Hier konnte man  
Kommunist sein, ohne als moralisch defekt oder als  
Provokateur zu gelten [11].

(G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg')

Beyond Augsburg's industrial quarters, moreover, lay a network  
of working-class suburbs - Lechhausen, Firnhaberau, Pfersee,  
Oberhausen - in which the concentration of workers was even greater  
than in those areas just discussed. Although some industry was to  
be found here - Pfersee, for instance, was the location of textile  
concerns such as the 'Buntweberei J.P. Bemberg' and the 'Spinnerei  
und Weberei Krauss' - these districts primarily contained the pool  
of labour from which Augsburg's economy sustained itself. In the  
largest, Lechhausen, two thirds of the inhabitants (its population  
in 1910 numbered 18,405) were factory workers employed in Augsburg.  
Large concentrations of workers, however, given the typically  
impoverished conditions in which those workers lived, inevitably  
led to a complex of social problems. Thus had Oberhausen in 1910  
with 38.6% deaths per 1,000 inhabitants, in common with Lechhausen,  
the worst yearly death rate in Bavaria. In 1914 30% of new-born  
children died within their first year in Oberhausen, in Lechhausen  
the figure was around 25%, 'links der Wertach' it was 23%, and in  
the 'Westend' - home to Augsburg's bourgeoisie - only 5%. The  
segregation of Augsburg's working class was, it must be remembered,  
not simply spatial, it was also a matter of social realities,  
living conditions and quality of life [12].

Given this, it is hardly surprising that it was in these areas

of high worker population and widespread social impoverishment that the strongholds of the labour movement in Augsburg were to be found, a labour movement which both contributed to and fed on the fairly dense network of educational, leisure, sporting and self-help societies which, along with political and union organisations, constituted at least part of the social milieu which structured the daily life of the working population. The poorest quarters of Augsburg - Lechhausen, Oberhausen and Wertachvorstadt - had, in particular, been the germ cell of the socialist labour movement in the city, and remained at its heart throughout the Weimar Republic - this is evidenced by the lack of electoral success of the NSDAP in such areas, which will be discussed further on, and indeed by the extent to which they were subject to the suppressive actions of the triumphant National Socialists, in the weeks and months following the seizure of power. On 10 April 1933, for example, police spent nine hours combing the area `links der Wertach`, perceived by the Nazis as Augsburg's `bolschewistisches Hauptquartier`, as part of the general persecution of the city's Social Democratic and Communist activists. As such actions by the NSDAP made clear, to contemporaries Augsburg was a class structured city conditioned by its economy and containing concentrated working-class settlements - working-class settlements which, moreover, were increasingly stable, as the extreme population fluctuation of the late 19th and early 20th centuries died away, and an ever higher proportion of workers were Augsburg-born.

It was this context of strong class boundaries which more than anything else placed limits on the extent of National Socialist success in Augsburg - an assertion which an examination of the

city's pattern of electoral behaviour confirms, for this was again produced by the city's class structure, and also provides evidence of the solidity of its working-class political culture. The outstanding characteristic of Augsburg's election results in the Weimar era is the persistence of stable kernels of SPD or SPD/KPD combined (and thus presumably predominantly working-class) and BVP (presumably containing a significant proportion of working-class) voters, kernels which retained a relative stability and extent even after the onset of depression and the emergence of National Socialism as a potential force:

... in Augsburg ergibt eine Untersuchung der Resultate der Reichs- und Landtagswahlen zwischen 1928 und 1933, daß SPD und BVP ziemlich konstant bleibende Blocks darstellten, die fast zwei Drittel der Bevölkerung umfaßten und kaum Anhänger an die NSDAP verloren [13].

(W. Domarus, Nationalsozialismus, Krieg und Bevölkerung)

Although reflected also in both Stadtrat and Landtag election results, this point can best be statistically exemplified with reference to the respective performances of the four major parties in the four Reichstag elections held between 1930 and 1933:

	9/1930	7/1932	11/1932	5/1933
BVP	30,706 (32.3%)	28,363 (30.3%)	24,893 (28.3%)	29,322 (27.1%)
NSDAP	11,907 (12.6%)	21,574 (23.1%)	20,274 (23% )	35,021 (32.3%)
SPD	25,643 (27% )	24,933 (26.6%)	21,998 (25% )	24,974 (23.1%)
KPD	11,012 (11.6%)	12,024 (12% )	12,843 (14.6%)	11,058 (10.2%)

[14]

Certainly, the considerable impact made by the NSDAP in Augsburg is

evidenced here. As elsewhere in Germany, the party had filled the vacuum left by the decline of the conservative and liberal parties in the city (the DNVP's vote had fallen from 14.1% in the December 1924 Reichstag election to 6.3% in November 1932, the DDP's from 4% to 0.5% over the same period), gaining considerable support amongst Mittelstand elements; but the NSDAP had also obviously become a more broadly-based attraction, encompassing young voters, former non-voters, and workers who had previously voted for the mainstream parties. Conversely, the decline in votes for both the BVP and SPD can hardly be dismissed as insignificant: basically, these two parties had by 1930 been thrown back onto their loyal constituencies, their core voters, and could no longer garner support from a wider societal range. The SPD, in particular, had long since lost that plurality in the end-phase of the Weimar Republic, which had seen it achieve 46.8% of the vote in Augsburg in January 1919, and 37.1% in the Reichstag election of April 1928. Both the SPD and the BVP maintained their electoral potential in areas where they had traditionally been strong - but wherever traditions were weaker or the social structure less propitious, they became vulnerable to harmful losses [15].

Nevertheless, the retention of these core supports, the relative impregnability of Augsburg's traditional socio-political families is an achievement that should not be underestimated; on the contrary, it remains impressive given the circumstances of desperate poverty which many working class families found themselves in, in the later Weimar years. That such poverty generated a radicalisation from which the KPD and NSDAP profited is less surprising than that the gains, especially of the NSDAP, were

not even more substantial. This seeming block on Nazism's growth potential was a characteristic Augsburg shared with certain other predominantly Catholic cities in Bavaria and the Rhineland (for example Würzburg, Regensburg, Aachen, Trier [16]); indeed, the contrast between Augsburg and Bavaria as a whole is an instructive one, for it demonstrates the way in which Augsburg as an industrial workers' city with a social structure unusual in a Bavarian context, had a political landscape which hindered National Socialist success on its wider Bavarian scale. Thus, the commensurate Bavarian results for the elections detailed above were:

	9/1930	7/1932	11/1932	5/1933	
BVP	32%	33.7%	32.8%	27.9%	
NSDAP	17.3%	31.2%	28.6%	42.6%	
SPD	20.6%	17.1%	16.4%	15.3%	
KPD	5.3%	7.9%	9.9%	5.8%	[17]

The elements of Augsburg's particularity, the strength of the Marxist parties, the relative weakness of the NSDAP, is clarified by this comparison. Furthermore, a detailed analysis of the results of the March 1933 Reichstag election in terms of the differing patterns of electoral behaviour in the various districts of Augsburg, shows that above all the socialist working class resisted National Socialism's dynamism - for the NSDAP's weakest results occur in areas with a high working-class share of the population, just those areas in which the SPD and KPD were traditionally strongest, whereas four of the five areas in which the NSDAP achieved an absolute majority contained only a weak working-class representation. The following four extreme examples

typify the pattern:

Hardenberg - , Klaus - , Königsbergerstraße (Lechhausen. Ost) - around 70% working class: BVP 36.9%; SPD 29.6%, KPD 14.7%; NSDAP 15.7%.

Firnhaberau - over 90% working class: BVP 10.9%; SPD 56.8%; KPD 20.5%; NSDAP 9.3%.

Bismark - , von der Tann - , Werderstraße (Südend) - around 14% working class: BVP 24.3%; SPD 6.9%; KPD 1.5%; NSDAP 53.6%; DNVP 13.0%.

Spickel - around 16% working class: BVP 21.1%; SPD 14.5%; KPD 4.1%; NSDAP 52.3%.

[18]

Essentially then the coincidence of overwhelming Catholicism and a high proportion of industrial workers - that is to say those groups which over Germany as a whole proved relatively immune to the attractions of National Socialism - worked to prevent any landslide of support to the NSDAP in Augsburg in the late 1920s and early 1930s (as did, it should also be mentioned, the relative quantitative weakness of Augsburg's intellectual, civil service and white-collar classes, often important conduits through which National Socialism established itself in a locality). Moreover, as much of the secondary literature on Augsburg during the Third Reich has demonstrated, the working-class and Catholic milieux continued to be centres of dissatisfaction and recalcitrance during the Nazi regime: thus Domarus, whose book concentrates on just this theme

with particular reference to the war years, reaches much the same conclusions for Augsburg as Kershaw does for Bavaria as a whole in his work on popular opinion, pinpointing a variety of causes and expressions of discontent, and refuting the idea that National Socialism in any way reshaped traditional modes of thinking [19]. Hetzer's study is of more overtly political resistance, but again this resistance can be seen to have fed on pre-1933 Catholic and socialist ideologies, organisations and personell [20]. And, finally, the Augsburg-related entries in the Sopade reports are convincing in their depiction of working-class disaffection and the persistence of an inevitably disabled solidarity, with connections to the strength and tradition of the city's labour movement before the advent of dictatorship [21].

That labour movement, the nature of the organisations and institutions which appear to have, to a degree, inoculated Augsburg's working class against Nazism, constitutes one component of the general framework within which National Socialism engaged with that class - and the interest of this study lies above all in the socialist labour movement, the SPD in particular, although the importance of the BVP as a home for the political allegiance of the working class must not be forgotten. Its other component was that of economic crisis and breakdown - and an analysis of these two elements should help to crystallise the main theme of this introduction. This can be expressed in the idea that just as Augsburg's economic, political and social structures, especially the contours of its working class, were determined by the course of its industrial development, so in turn those contours engendered the political configuration as it existed during the rise of



Nazism, structuring the strengths and weaknesses of parties and unions, and conditioning the extent of possible receptivity to Nazi ideology among Augsburg's workers. It is, moreover, the seeming normality of Augsburg's conditions and responses as a working-class (and Catholic) industrial city in Weimar Germany that should be emphasised - the voting patterns just examined are evidence of this and the same is true of the organisational basis of the labour movement and the decline of the economy after 1929, both of which will now be briefly analysed.

It is certainly true that the identifiable trends among Augsburg's working-class parties and unions paralleled those in the wider arena. Thus, as was generally the case with the SPD by the late 1920s, both at national and at Bavarian level [22], Augsburg's SPD functioned in a state of virtual stagnation, the dynamism of its pre-war development long since departed. Now, although more will be said about this later, it must be mentioned here that insufficient sources exist to enable the historian to construct a detailed picture of the life of the party in Augsburg in this era - of, for example, the social composition of its membership, or its organisational structure. The sclerotic nature of the SPD in Augsburg is, nevertheless, demonstrable [23]. It was obvious, for example, in the party's inability to break out electorally from its working-class constituency - on the one hand, as previously suggested, the SPD's retention of a solid core of support was a notable achievement, but on the other hand, its failure to extend its support base during the Weimar Republic exposed its limitations, its failure to make any inroads into the middle-class electorate, to become a true 'Volkspartei'. This was, moreover,

only the electoral expression of the continued social segregation of Augsburg's working class and the isolation of the SPD from Augsburg's middle class, whose aversion to socialism simply could not be overcome [24].

Even within the working class, the SPD's potential seemed to have been exhausted: its membership growth, for instance - by 1929 the party had 3,000 members organised in 16 sections - came to an end, as new members became ever more difficult to win. The reports of the SPD's general meetings for the years 1931 and 1932 complained of this [25], and the party began to lose members - by 1932/33 only around 2,500 members belonged to Augsburg's SPD. Of course, a variety of factors, above all economic distress, contributed to this, but it was also an expression of a crisis of confidence within the local party and a consequence of the complacency of its leaders. The party's leadership committee was dominated by union functionaries and had seen little change since the early 1920s; its two major figures were Clemens Högg, the local party leader and Landtag representative, and Georg Simon, editor of the party's newspaper, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, and Reichstag representative. As characterised by Hetzer, these two,

... beides biedere, auf die Erfahrungen eines  
jahrzehntelangen Parteieinsatzes pochende Männer,  
hielten auf strikte Einhaltung der Parteilinie [26].

(G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg')

From this latter attitude stemmed the profound mistrust of internal ideological discussion which was characteristic of Augsburg's SPD. There were, however, also more locally-determined dimensions to this trait, and to the paralysis of thought to which it gave rise.

For one thing, the SPD's leadership had a deep fear of any renewal of the mass mobilisation that had occurred within the party's rank and file during 1919, a mass mobilisation that had escaped the control of the local leadership [27]. With the party's main local political focus being reformist policy initiatives in the Rathaus, any spontaneous action among the membership came to be regarded as a distraction that had to be canalised and made harmless.

Similarly, it was the events of 1919 in Augsburg which imbued the rivalry between SPD and KPD locally with a bitterness fiercer even than normal. The KPD was an embodiment and a reminder of the disunity that had overtaken the labour movement, especially as it became more active in Augsburg during the late 1920s. The KPD frequently helped block SPD initiatives in the Stadtrat; it also came to be blamed for the SPD's election losses, far more so, in fact, than the NSDAP. Indeed, to the SPD's leadership, the KPD appeared a more dangerous enemy than the NSDAP, and any possibility of co-operation with the former was consistently dismissed as impossible [28].

Whether this estimation of the relative threats posed by the NSDAP and KPD was shared by the party's activists and supporters, however, is perhaps doubtful. For there is certainly evidence of discontent among Augsburg's rank-and-file Social Democrats with their party, one aspect of which was a dissatisfaction with the party's reaction to Nazi success. Much more will be said concerning this reaction in the course of this study; but what can be established here is a widespread feeling that not enough was being done to combat National Socialism in Augsburg. The call for a more aggressive policy first became insistent after the Reichstag

election of September 1930:

Den ungewöhnlichen Erfolg der NSDAP sah man als Auftakt zur endgültigen Auseinandersetzung mit den reaktionärsten Teilen der Bürgertums an und in sämtlichen Versammlungen wurde ein härterer Kurs im Kampf um die Republik gefordert. [29]

(E. Riegele, 'Parteientwicklung und Wiederaufbau')

And although the party did to a degree respond to such pressure - by means of meetings and demonstrations, and by using the enthusiasm generated by the creation of the Iron Front - yet a definite conflict existed between the radicalisation of the party's base and the constraints imposed from Reich-level by the SPD's toleration policy.

Disaffection with the political practice of the party leadership ultimately led to, in the second half of 1932, Georg Simon giving up both his Reichstag mandate and his position as chairman of the local party, in favour of the 32 year old Josef Felder, since 1925 editor of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, and a more innovative, dynamic figure. Simon had been a target for the hostility above all of younger activists in the SPD, whose criticism of the party's leadership was often most severe. Augsburg's 'Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend' group, viewed with mistrust by the SPD's established functionaries, was particularly radicalised, developing a markedly elitist, anti-bourgeois self-consciousness, and maintaining a deliberate distance from the SPD as a whole [30].

The existence of such rank-and-file dissatisfactions, however, important as they are, should not be allowed to mask the fact that

Augsburg's SPD was capable of important initiatives at Stadtrat-level, particularly in the fields of social and housing policy. The day-to-day organisational activity of the party was obviously also of importance to its members, although the substance of this is not easily recoverable. Certainly, the party demonstrated its vigour in 1932, with the creation of the Iron Front, which could boast 7,500 members within two weeks of its founding. In addition, the party's continuing ability to mobilise its constituency was illustrated in a series of mass meetings and the frequent election campaigns in that year, which imparted to Augsburg's SPD an - ultimately deceptive - feeling of self-confidence, of a kind which had been lacking in previous years. Finally, the importance of the SPD to working-class cultural life must not be overlooked in any analysis of the party's influence - the Social Democratic subculture, self-consciously alienated from the dominant bourgeois culture [31], the natural outgrowth of a context in which the working class population was concentrated in well-defined areas and in which party members lived in close proximity to each other, was still important in the lives of Augsburg's workers during the Weimar Republic [32]. In the city, indeed, much of the SPD's consolidation in the early 20th century had taken place through the means of its leisure, sport, education and self-help organisations, such as the 'Naturfreunde', the 'Arbeiterturner', the 'Arbeiterradfahrbund Solidarität' and the 'Volksbühne'. Similarly, the numerous celebrations, anniversary commemorations and functions held by the SPD in the course of the year imbued its supporters with a sense of political community, and of belonging to a historically important organisation. Not that Augsburg's working-

class subculture was restricted to Social Democrats: the KPD in Augsburg had virtually no success with its attempts to develop separate cultural and sporting clubs [33], and in organisational life, despite the ever-increasing tensions between the two parties, an otherwise lost unity within the labour movement was maintained.

Nevertheless, the KPD was a very definite political presence in Augsburg, and for the local SPD it had an importance disproportionate to its actual significance. One reason for this may have been that the KPD focused much of its attention in Augsburg on the Social Democratic labour movement's main bastion, the large-scale factories. The KPD had, in fact, gained considerable influence within the textile industry in the early 1920s, and throughout the decade Communist factory cells operated in various Augsburg factories (for example, MAN, the 'Maschinenfabrik Riedinger', the 'Fichtelbach-Weberei'), occasionally accompanied by works newspapers, such as 'Die Zange' in MAN, the distribution of which the firm's management tried in vain to ban. In truth, the KPD's attempts to build factory cells in Southern Bavaria were seldom very successful, the number of activists organised in this way remained small, even in an industrialised area such as Augsburg [34]; and the party's failure to undermine the dominance of the free unions amongst Augsburg's industrial workers remained constant, despite the deterioration of the economy and the creation and agitation of the RGO (Revolutionäre Gewerkschaftsopposition) in the city. The RGO certainly did achieve notable successes in certain textile factories in the early 1930s, exploiting workers' dissatisfactions with wage cuts: Communist activists were heavily involved in a

spate of strikes and lock-outs in the industry in 1931 and 1932, former free union strongholds, such as the AKS, became centres of Communist agitation, and the Communist vote in factory council elections increased considerably (in the `Stadtbachspinnerei` from 21.5% in 1930 to 37.1% in 1931; in SWA from 22.0% in 1930 to 34.6% in 1931 - in both cases, these gains were made at the expense of the free unions) [35]. Nevertheless, the RGO in Augsburg, as elsewhere, essentially fulfilled a propaganda function for the KPD in its conflict with the free labour movement; its possibilities for mobilising new forces were always limited both by its tactics, and by the extent to which the KPD became a party of the unemployed, thus losing much of its industrial base [36].

The SPD's perception of the Communist threat, however, was almost certainly exaggerated by the activism of the KPD, by its demonstrations and meetings, by its agitation amongst the unemployed, which began even before the onset of mass unemployment (in 1928, for instance, 8 Communists formed a `committee of the unemployed` which had no union connections, and recognition of which was refused by the Stadtrat), and by its clashes with the local police, such as those which occurred during anti-war demonstrations in 1929 and 1931. As in Bavaria as a whole though, the KPD in Augsburg remained always an `outsider` party, active on the margins of working-class life, never, when compared with the SPD on the broader scale, more than a political sect that was capable of achieving ephemeral success in times of crisis [37]. If this was to an extent determined by the close police supervision attendant upon the party's activities in a city such as Augsburg, it was also partly the consequence of a deliberately chosen

political isolation, typified by the obstructionist policy pursued by Augsburg's three-strong Stadtrat group. The KPD's position in Augsburg was also weakened by the distractions caused by the usual internal squabbling which bedevilled the party [38], and by the fact that its membership structure - again this was typical - was characterised by a high rate of fluctuation and, as was just mentioned, by an influx of unemployed members. (In general, in comparison with the SPD, KPD members in Augsburg seem to have been drawn from the less skilled sectors of the working class, although the party did contain a significant proportion of skilled workers from the engineering and textile industries among others [39]. It seems probable that, although the differences between the social composition of Social Democratic and Communist members in Augsburg were less marked than in Bavaria as a whole, there did exist even in Bavaria's three largest cities a qualitative difference between the two groups, one which acted as another brake on the KPD's potential [40].

For all the KPD's obvious weaknesses, though, the SPD in Augsburg seems to have been genuinely fearful of Communism, particularly so after it developed a crisis-determined dynamism in the early 1930s, and Social Democracy in the city responded in kind to the virulent, if predictable, rhetorical attacks made on it by the KPD [41]. Certainly, perhaps due to the very ideological proximity between the SPD and KPD and also to the aggressiveness with which the KPD propounded its cause, Communism loomed larger in the world-view of Social Democracy in Augsburg than political Catholicism, even though significant numbers of workers were integrated into the latter, as supporters of the BVP or as members



of Catholic workers' organisations or the Catholic trade unions [42]. The Christian trade union movement was strongest in Augsburg in the textile industry, where a consistently mobilised support base ensured representation in virtually every factory council. The Christian trade unions, however, like the RGO, could, with isolated exceptions, do little to alter the predominance of the free unions amongst Augsburg's industrial workers, a predominance reflected in the factory council election results [43]. This is not to say that the free unions were in an especially healthy position in the later Weimar years. An erosion of union membership in the early 1920s (from 39,600 free union members in 1920 to just over 20,000 by 1923/4), as inflated hopes failed to be realised, had been followed by a period of relative stabilisation - but developments from 1929 led to further losses of power from the free unions, as economic crisis strengthened the position of employers and resulted in a haemorrhaging of members, and hence in their financial contributions, from the unions. Thus in 1931, 1,320 of the 1,981 building workers who were free union members were unemployed, as were 715 of the 1,253 wood processing workers, and 1,450 of the 5,200 organised in the DMV. Overall, between 1928 and 1932, membership fell from 21,900 to around 18,000. A general air of fear and resignation became widespread: in MAN participation in the May Day strike fell from 42% in 1920 to 1.2% in 1931 [44]. The sensitivity of the Social Democratic labour movement to the attacks of the KPD is, against such a background, understandable - and the free unions' sense of vulnerability in Augsburg was no doubt increased by the reappearance, in MAN, of one of its traditional enemies of the past, the 'yellow' workers' union.

Clearly, then, economic crisis exercised a considerable influence on Augsburg's socio-economic and political landscapes - and the rise of National Socialism in the city, the most significant consequence of economic depression, will be examined in a moment. As for the configuration of that economic depression, it was the entirely predictable concomitant of Augsburg's economic structure [45]. Although the situation was severe in both the building and timber industries, the metal industry, central to Augsburg's economy, was the worst affected. The numbers working in this sector sank from 9,300 in early 1929, to 5,530 by February, 1933. Long-established firms, such as 'Epple und Buxbaum', Augsburg's third oldest large-scale metal concern, closed down; those firms that survived had to shed large percentages of their workforce. MAN, for example, employed only 3,500 people by 1933, compared to around 5,000 in the mid-1920s. Among those employed in the metal industry in 1925 it is probable that only one-third experienced constant work with no periods of unemployment in the period until 1933, as the workforce shrank to a core of skilled workers, mostly working shortened hours.

Inevitably, unemployment in Augsburg rose rapidly - at its highest point, in March 1932, it claimed 18,160 victims, the majority of whom were reliant on welfare assistance, their eligibility for other forms of financial support having run out due to the long-term nature of their unemployment. The burden of providing such assistance, moreover, together with the reduction in tax income, debilitated the city's financial health: it produced a budget for 1932/3 with a deficit of 2.8 million Reichsmarks, and the city's debts totalled around 60 million Reichsmarks by that

time. As distressing as Augsburg's economic plight was, however, it could certainly have been worse, had it not been for the resilience of the textile industry. In the main crisis years of 1931 and 1932 the number of those employed in the latter actually rose by around 1,200 to 14,600; and whereas the metal industry's workforce in 1935 was only 57.9% of that in 1928, the corresponding figure for the textile industry was 94.9%. Indeed, for the first time in decades more male workers were employed in the textile than in the metal sector of the economy. Thus was Augsburg's unemployment rate less severe than that in either Munich or Nuremberg, and the possibility was offered to the wives and daughters of unemployed men, of earning a wage for their family.

It would be misleading, however, to understate the consequences of economic crisis in Augsburg. Even those who remained in work were affected by the downward pressure on wages, and in terms of the individual poverty and misery produced, the situation was indeed 'catastrophic' [46]. This was to provide a breeding ground for right-wing radicalism in the later Weimar years, just as, on a lesser scale, similar economic difficulties generated activity by völkisch groups in the early years of the Republic. These groups sought in particular to exploit the current of anti-semitism perceptible in Augsburg in these years. Although a local NSDAP group was founded in 1921, and Hitler made his first 'official' appearance in the city in that same year (speaking on 'The worker in the Germany of the future'), the most notable right-wing figure in Augsburg in the early 1920s was Dr Otto Dickel, leader of the Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft and rival to Hitler for the leadership of the NSDAP. The Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft was never

more than an insignificant sect, but it is possible that its influence on the way in which Augsburg's Social Democrats perceived right-wing radicalism was profound, in particular by confirming the desire of the right - already demonstrated by the success of the 'yellow' workers' movement in Augsburg [47] - to mobilise working-class support for its own ends. Thus, Dickel attempted to gain such support by contributing financially to the striking metal workers in 1922 (his organisation's donation was refused), and he did in fact gain the allegiance of former USPD and KPD activists. The SPD's condemnation of the Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft's actions was swift, and included the accusation, to be applied to the NSDAP innumerable times in future years, that the organisation was funded by big business [48].

The Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft was soon eclipsed by the NSDAP in Augsburg, however, as the latter grew to become the strongest völkisch group in the city in the course of 1923, with around 200 members by the end of that year. Even at this stage, the party made its presence felt through its disruptive behaviour and clashes with the left; Augsburg's NSDAP had, nevertheless, no direct involvement in Hitler's failed Putsch. In 1925 a new local National Socialist group was founded, a group which was at first crippled by internal disharmony, and remained without importance until the inception of economic crisis, in which framework the NSDAP achieved both electoral success and a considerable rise in membership - a tripling of membership between 1930 and 1932, in fact, to around 1,800, a figure which made the NSDAP the second largest party in Augsburg in terms of members, after the SPD. The NSDAP remained, however, prone to internal disagreements,

disagreements which, interestingly enough, often had an element of class rivalry to them, with the SA, which was more proletarian in character than the party as a whole in Augsburg, often a centre of discontent. Thus in 1928/9, when a replacement was sought as local party leader for Karl Wahl (the Landtag representative and Gauleiter of the party in Swabia, who had given up his position as leader under pressure from a group of `old fighters`, and SA and Hitler Youth leaders) a conflict developed between Wahl's choice, Josef Mayr, and the more `socio-political` inclined Gallus Schneider, who enjoyed the support of the SA. With the aid of Gregor Strasser, the latter was successful, but the rivalry between Schneider and Wahl endured into the years of the Third Reich.

As the above would tend to suggest, the NSDAP in Augsburg, which until 1929 was fundamentally a radical Mittelstand movement, began after that date to receive the backing of all social groups in significant numbers, including workers, who made up around one third of the party's membership. There is no evidence to suggest, moreover, that these National Socialist workers were significantly different in terms of origins or experience from the core of the SPD's constituency: they are characterised by Hetzer, rather, as casualties of economic depression, whose disappointment with the traditional parties and unions led them to Nazism as a political solution [49]. Despite their definite presence within the NSDAP in Augsburg, the working class remained to a degree marginalised within the party - failing, for example, at any time before or after 1933 to provide it with a local branch leader. The majority of the party's members remained concentrated in areas of the city with a high percentage of white-collar workers and civil servants

amongst the population; relatively few were to be found in the working-class quarters - in Lechhausen, for instance, only around 70 people had joined the NSDAP by 1933. Nevertheless, as will be demonstrated in more detail later, Augsburg's SPD perceived National Socialism to be a real threat to its own working-class constituency. The NSDAP's violent and disruptive entry on to the political scene in Augsburg and its success in gaining working-class support, in whatever numbers; its propaganda which, as surviving local examples show [50], was often aimed in Augsburg at attracting workers by attacking the SPD 'Bonzentum', and depicting the NSDAP as an egalitarian meritocracy, fighting for working-class rights; and the past history of völkisch activity in the city, including the success of the 'Völkische Block' in the 1924 Landtag election, when it garnered 23.2% of the vote, only 1.4% less than the SPD - all of these elements combined to make the emergence of National Socialism as a significant force deeply disturbing to Social Democracy in Augsburg.

The political, economic and social characteristics of Augsburg that have been analysed thus far have all given emphasis to the relative normality of the city in the Weimar era, as a large urban industrial complex with a class-based social structure. A wider historical perspective is, however, required, for specific aspects of Augsburg's post-1870 history had long-term resonances - resonances which should be seen to provide the Augsburg-specific rather than the Weimar-general framework within which the conjuncture outlined above should be located and assessed; and, moreover, within which the question of the form of interaction

which occurred between National Socialism and Augsburg's working class takes on an enriched meaning. In the period from the unification of the Reich until the outbreak of the First World War, Augsburg had a peculiar, in some senses unique history - a history encompassing, paradoxically, both dynamic industrialisation, with the ineluctable tensions and transformations this entailed, and a markedly conservative, even passive set of labour relations. Indeed, far from the industrial sphere proving to be an arena of conflict, with a strong socialist labour movement to the fore, the latter was surprisingly weak in pre-war Augsburg, and the city, on the contrary, became a centre of yellow union activity, witnessing the emergence of

... eine Erscheinungsform wirtschaftsfriedlicher  
betriebsgebundener Arbeitervereinigungen ... wie  
sie in ähnlicher Bedeutung zu dieser Zeit in kaum  
einem anderen industriellen Zentrum Deutschlands  
auftrat. [51]

(G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg')

More generally, all of the secondary sources on this period in Augsburg's history stress the unexpected mildness of social tensions in the city, its atmosphere of stolid, conservative complacency. And the roots of this untypical conservative stamp lay again in the particularities of Augsburg's industrial development - in this case, however, especially in the way in which the course of that development in the nineteenth century worked to promote a far-reaching paternalist social policy, which in turn aided the growth of the 'employer friendly' workers movement and simultaneously hampered the smooth progress of the socialist labour

movement: a general configuration which did much to determine the course of Augsburg's pre-war history, and, it will be suggested further on, perhaps also its history after 1918. Thus, an emphasis on Augsburg's typicality as an industrial city in the Weimar Republic, a typicality which certainly had its roots in Augsburg's pre-war economic growth, must be balanced by an analysis of those characteristics of the city's pre-1914 history which imparted to it a contrasting atypicality as a centre of the conservative labour movement.

The pilot function for Augsburg's economic development, its industrialisation from early in the nineteenth century, was a role played by the textile industry. The precondition for this was the existence of a number of local factors which favoured an early and rapid transition to industrial production, including good rail links, local investment capital, a reservoir of labour from the traditional textile trades, and a cheap energy source in the Lech and Wertach canals [52]. By the end of the 1850s Augsburg stood at the peak of the industrial process in Bavaria as the 'German Manchester', and the textile industry had been the city's largest employer since the 1840s. By 1868, 13 spinning and weaving mills, 3 thread mills, 3 bleaching factories and 3 wool processing concerns had been established in and around Augsburg. During the 1870s the textile industry entered a period of stagnation that lasted until the 1890s; since the foundation of the Reich, however, industrial growth had been maintained by the second pillar of Augsburg's economy, the metal and engineering industry. Unlike the textile industry, in which most firms were large-scale concerns in the form of limited companies from their beginnings, many



engineering firms grew from relatively small-scale origins. The inter-connectedness of the two branches was illustrated by the 'Maschinenfabrik Augsburg', the later MAN, founded in 1840, and which found its main sphere of production in the manufacture for the textile industry of engines which had previously been imported from France. Much of the progress made by Augsburg's engineering industry was in fact due to the growth of MAN, which by 1914 was, in terms of share capital, the largest engineering firm in Germany.

The specific curves of economic growth and downturn as they affected Augsburg's two main industries are of less concern here however than the entrenched economic structures and the composition of the workforce which their predominant position produced - for these were to have political and social, rather than simply economic importance. It must firstly be noted that Augsburg's course of industrialisation was both lop-sided and extraordinarily over-concentrated. It was lop-sided in that, as already stated, it was dependent for dynamic growth on its two major industries, the size and strength of which overshadowed the remaining economy - the detrimental long-term effects of this will be discussed later; and it was over-concentrated in that, even within those two branches of industry, a few leading firms controlled the main levels of economic power. Thus in the latter half of the century the four leading textile firms employed 50% of all textile workers; and similarly, the leading six concerns in the metal and engineering industry employed in 1895 66% of all employees in the industry, a share which had risen to 70% by 1907. The following table compares, for the latter industry, the numbers of workers employed in the three size categories of factory in Augsburg, Munich and

Nuremberg:

1895	FACTORY SIZE IN NUMBERS EMPLOYED		
	5 or less	6-50	over 50
Augsburg	647	895	4,503
Munich	3,186	4,694	6,779
Nuremberg	1,809	4,377	9,480
1907			
Augsburg	593	1,175	6,262
Munich	3,511	6,330	10,775
Nuremberg	2,434	8,315	30,732

[53]

The extent to which Augsburg's workers in this industry - although this would be valid also for the textile industry - were concentrated in large factories is clear. The contrast with Munich is obvious enough, for in this city a far greater proportion of workers were employed in small and medium-sized concerns than was the case with Augsburg; but the comparison with Nuremberg is also instructive for, despite the fact that Nuremberg's industrial structure was in many ways similar to Augsburg's and that it also had large numbers of workers employed in large-scale operations, the strength of its middle-sized sector only serves to underscore Augsburg's weakness in this area and its over-reliance upon large firms.

Secondly, and standing in close connection to the above, the specific composition of Augsburg's workforce must be highlighted; for although the relationship between the latter and the political and economic structures existent during the Weimar Republic in the city has already been briefly dealt with earlier, this relationship

was significantly different, and perhaps no less important for later history, in the pre-war period, when political consciousness and organisations were being first formed. Thus, to reiterate: as later, Augsburg's workforce pre-1914 contained a high and rising proportion of factory workers, a high percentage of women factory workers (38%, that is 20% over the Reich average 1882-1907 [54]) and was predominantly Catholic. Moreover, and more specific to the era of industrialisation, it was a highly unstable, shifting, fluctuating workforce; and an extremely divided one - divided not only along male/female lines, but also along those of the contrast between textile and engineering workers and finding expression in terms of differences in pay, hours and working conditions. As an illustration of such divisions, even in 1911/12, when the male/female wage differential was certainly less than it had been in the 19th century, women workers in the SWA earned on average around two-thirds as much as male workers, and women workers in the AKS only around half as much as their male colleagues. Because the employees in the engineering industry were virtually all male such wage differentials were less pronounced, although they could still be considerable. The gulf in wages between Augsburg's two main economic branches, and its origins in the textile industry's reliance on cheap female labour is, however, unmistakable, as the following comparison between the average wage of workers in the largest textile and engineering firms demonstrates:

	MAN	SWA
1849	363 RM	331 RM
1869/79	826 RM	523 RM
1889/90	1,333 RM	669 RM

In contrast to the obvious divisions within Augsburg's working class at this time, the city's economic elite was extraordinarily united. This most basic of the social and political ramifications resultant upon the underlying economic structure just examined was the consequence of Augsburg's highly concentrated, one-sided economic development - for this was accompanied by the emergence of a markedly homogeneous economic elite, limited to a small circle of often inter-related directors and rich 'Privatiers'. Most factory owners or managers, for example, shared common characteristics - they were almost without exception Protestant immigrants who had rapidly become integrated into the local economic upper class through marriage. The dominant financial structure in Augsburg's industry was the limited company, and this too had implications for the emergence of a self-conscious employers' class - textile firms, for example, were rarely in any true sense competitors, because the same small number of capitalists would own shares in several textile concerns. Directors' posts, moreover, often remained in the hands of one family for several generations. The homogeneity which stemmed from such factors, allied to a sense of social responsibility and civic pride, met with a tradition in Augsburg of social engagement by the elite class, to produce in the city a distinctive and extensive paternalist factory social policy which was certainly matched in no other Bavarian city. Given the vast economic power of local capitalism, the opportunity it possessed to influence a large mass of workers who were economically active in a relatively small number of factories, the situation and attitudes

of these workers and their political organisations could not fail to be fundamentally influenced by this social policy.

The extent of the provision - which could have included savings banks providing higher than normal interest rates, health insurance, pension funds and the establishment of libraries, nurseries and baths - of course differed in extent according to the economic situation of the firm. However, Augsburg's leading concerns had already, well before 1883, reached the standards set down in the social welfare legislation, indeed even surpassed them, as in particular the textile industry became a government-recommended model for the whole of Bavaria. In the following period, the 'Stadtbach Spinnerei', SWA, the 'Nähfadenfabrik Göggingen' and MAN all overtook in expenditure their legal requirements, in some cases by one hundred percent [56]. The construction of workers' accommodation best illustrates the advantages and the limits of this patriarchal strain. From the mid-19th century until 1914 some 1,194 homes were built by 11 firms, and as was described earlier, the largest factories had their own 'workers' colonies', where as many as one third of the workforce could live. Such accommodation was without doubt extremely desired amongst workers in the pre-war era, for, despite the additional duties it could bring with it, such as serving with the firm's fire brigade, it was of better quality and more spacious than was the norm, and the rents were up to 20% cheaper than the usual prices in the city.

There were though disadvantages to living in works' accommodation. A degree of privacy, of life uninfluenced by work was lost, family life was subject to more regimentation and control

than would otherwise have been the case, as

... die Mieter mußten sich wie es hieß, 'im Sinne  
der Fabrik treu und fleißig bewähren'. [57]

(Quoted in: H. Bretschneider, 'Arbeitersportler und Arbeitersänger')

This type of housing could also be used as a method of discipline, since it could be withdrawn at any time - this obviously lessened the willingness of workers living in such accommodation to engage in political activity or strike action, for to lose your job meant to lose also your home, not to mention any other social benefits which might have been accrued. Thus, the wider economic and political aims being pursued by employers by means of workers' accommodation and other types of social provision cannot be disguised. On the one hand, employers wish to maximise profits by securing a reliable and highly skilled permanent workforce, whose loyalty to the factory would be secured, despite low wages and strenuous work discipline, because it was enmeshed in a web of social benefits. That this was a successful endeavour was proven by the complaints of small and middling factory owners, whose lack of capital precluded the implementation of a social policy, about the monopolising of the best labour by the larger concerns:

Naturgemäß wenden sich die besseren Arbeitskräfte  
in verstärktem Maß denjenigen Fabriken zu, in denen  
durch Pensions- und Unterstützungskassen usw. mehr  
geboten ist als bei uns. [58]

(Quoted in: P. Fasl, 'Wirtschaftsgeschichte')

On the other hand, this welfare policy should also be seen as a response to the threat posed to employers by the beginnings of the labour movement - as, in other words, a method of social control that worked either directly, by placing the workers in a relationship of obligation to the employer, or indirectly, by moulding attitudes. Here, again, this was, at least temporarily, highly successful - the evidence that can be adduced to prove this being the unique success, in two waves before and after 1900, of the yellow union movement in Augsburg.

For there could indeed be no better instance of working-class political culture being determined by the wider economic situation. Only the specific conjuncture that has been outlined here, the industrial location of the workforce, the economic power of the elite, and the intensive social policy, could have provided the correct environment to nurture the success of the various non-socialist workers' organisations which flourished in Augsburg in these years. And only this conjuncture could have secured the high degree of respect for their employers that appears to have existed amongst many workers, and, moreover, an almost unbroken industrial peace until 1914: for, although strikes did occur, they were mostly short-lived and devoid of political significance. Christian workers' associations (and, later, Christian unions), liberal Hirsch-Duncker unions, and an 'employer friendly' anti-strike movement which was represented in Augsburg to an extent unknown in any other south German city, all prospered in the 1870s and 1880s, and indeed in the 1890s, when the three strains came together (1893) to form the 'Verband ordnungsliebender Arbeiter' in response to the renewed threat from the free unions. Until its

disintegration in 1903, due to its political and confessional heterogeneity, it did indeed hamper the latter, a measure of its success being provided by the elections to the 'Gewerbegericht' in Augsburg, in which, significantly, the association's highest numbers of votes were to be found in those factories, such as MAN and the 'Stadtbach-Spinnerei' with a strong patriarchal tradition [59].

Various elements, beyond those structural preconditions already examined, contributed to the success of the 'Ordnungsliebenden'. Certain concrete successes in the workplace (such as the abolition of the bonus system in the textile industry and the introduction of the weekly payment of wages) and strong backing from the employers (demonstrated, for example, by industry's financing of Augsburg's first central employment exchange) must have made the association extremely attractive to many workers. This was especially the case as, in contrast, the early history of the free unions in Augsburg was one of failure, with strikes called in order to pressure employers into increasing wages or abolishing factory punishment systems virtually never achieving their aims. The resonance that the 'Verband ordnungsliebender Arbeiter' found in Augsburg was, too, a reflection of more general tendencies within the workforce which even the free unions had to take note of in their practical policies: that is, of paternalistic and liberal self-help ideas from the early period of industrialisation and of the belief, prevalent within Social Democratic revisionism, in the ability of the well-qualified worker to integrate into wider society by virtue of his personal performance and achievements [60].



Such ideas were an important component also of the second wave of the yellow union movement which arose in Augsburg around the turn of the century, an employer-sponsored movement which, again, achieved an importance in the city which it did not attain in any other German industrial centre at this time. The pacemaker and model for this yellow movement was the 'Arbeiterverein vom Werk Augsburg' (AVA) of MAN, which came into being in 1905 in the course of an industrial dispute:

Auf dem Höhepunkt des Konflikts war aus der Sammlung Arbeitswilliger und Nichtorganisierter der "Arbeiterverein vom Werk Augsburg" der MAN (AVA) entstanden, der in der Folgezeit den Aufbau betrieblicher Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen mit Geldern der Direktion übernahm und sich zum bestaunten Modell einer Vereinigung betriebsloyaler, im Interesse ihres eigenen Fortkommens streitbar die Belange ihres Betriebs vertretender Arbeiter entwickelte [61].

(G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg')

The high wages of the MAN workforce, their attachment to their firm and their strong consciousness of themselves as Augsburg's labour aristocracy, in contrast to the poorly paid, mostly female workforce in the textile industry, made them receptive to 'yellow' ideology, with its stress on saving and the 'performance principle'. The AVA, meanwhile, which attained a position of some importance within the yellow movement at national level, was a declared enemy of the free unions, and did not shy away from strike-breaking activity (during a brewing strike and

beer boycott in 1908, for example). It was also the progenitor of a number of similar organisations in the metal, textile, paper and shoe industries, although none of these was as successful as the AVA. Nevertheless, for some years the popularity of the yellow unions posed a serious threat to Augsburg's free unions: between 1905 and 1907 the textile union lost 43%, the metal workers' union 14% and the shoemakers' union over 75% of their membership to the yellow unions. And in 1912 the non-socialist unions possessed more members (11,463: 3,029 belonging to the Christian union, 1,551 to the Hirsch-Duncker unions, and 6,883 to the yellow unions) than the free unions (10,805 members) [62].

There was certainly a close connection between the success of the yellow movement in Augsburg and the dynamic factory social policy outlined above: the latter created a conflict amongst workers between the demands of class solidarity and loyalty to an employer who was providing material benefits, a conflict which could be resolved by joining a yellow union. The composition of Augsburg's workforce, however, was also important here, for in the interaction between a uniquely strong yellow movement and an unexpectedly weak socialist labour movement, those aspects of the city's socio-economic structure which aided the former tended to actively hinder the latter. If one precondition for successful political and union agitation from the left is a degree of common consciousness within a stable and relatively unified working class, then this precondition simply did not exist in Augsburg in these years: the extreme mobility of workforce and population, the importance to the economy of immigrants from rural Swabia and Bavaria (and thus, it may be speculated, the continued influence of

rural patterns of thought and behaviour uncondusive to the acceptance of socialist ideology), the high proportion of Catholics amongst workers (the strength of Catholic workers' organisations in Augsburg was one prerequisite for the progress made by the yellow movement), the large number of women workers (traditionally those most influenced by the clergy), the strong lines of economically-determined division running through the workforce - all of this could not but hamper the solidifying of class consciousness or the creation of a stable labour movement.

This is not to deny the very real achievements of the SPD and free unions in Augsburg in this period, the very real growth demonstrated by both branches of the socialist labour movement. The steady rise of the SPD to the position of third political force in Augsburg after the Centre and Liberal parties (the party's share of the vote in Reichstag elections rose from 2.4% in 1871, to 21.7% in 1890, to 29.8% in 1912, and in 1905 it gained one of Augsburg's three seats in the Landtag) had decisively altered the political landscape in the city. And, as will be discussed later, the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the First World War were to witness a change of mood amongst Augsburg's workforce, a change which worked in favour of the free unions and against the continued advance of the yellow movement. Nevertheless, that the position of the socialist labour movement was adversely affected by the bifurcation of Augsburg's working class into two hostile camps is clear, and it made the process of rebuilding after 1890 much more difficult. The existence of the anti-socialist union movement not only deprived the socialist unions and the SPD of potential members, it also lessened the likelihood that industrial action

would prove successful by providing a reservoir of workers who either would not participate in strike action or would even be prepared to engage in strike-breaking activity. Augsburg's specific socio-economic conjuncture had opened up space in the city's labour relations polity for a variety of competing ideologies to press their claim to represent Augsburg's working class best, and in many of its aspects that conjuncture acted as a barrier to the progress of the socialist labour movement. Thus the textile industry, with its unstable, low paid, often female and/or young and unskilled labour force was unpropitious ground for socialist agitation before 1914 - and, reflecting this, an existing SPD membership breakdown for 1900 shows that, despite the fact that textile workers were the clear majority among Augsburg's workforce, they constituted only one fifth of SPD members (37% were skilled metal workers, 14% cobblers and tailors, 12.6% carpenters, the remainder print workers and cigar makers) [63].

More than this though: just as Augsburg's industrial configuration, and those elements of it which generated a powerful yellow movement, necessarily produced a weak socialist labour movement, so did an awareness of this weakness have a determining effect on the political attitudes of that labour movement. Thus on the one hand, admittedly, a reformist tendency emerged within the free unions, a tendency which was anyway consonant with their far from radical practice. On the other hand, and more interestingly, for it merely entrenched its comparatively weak position, Augsburg's SPD reacted against the prevailing south Bavarian reformist tradition as it was directed by George von Vollmar, indeed was constantly critical of it [64]. There was certainly no

acknowledgement of the possibility that a less radical stance might have, as it was designed to do in Bavaria as a whole, helped to broaden the base of support for the SPD in the city [65]. Hence Augsburg's SPD had more in common politically with the party in north Bavarian Nuremberg, which also opposed reformism, than with the SPD of its near neighbour, Munich. Indeed, to compare and contrast Augsburg with Nuremberg is a salutary way to sum up here - for despite the similarities in terms of industrialisation and the organisations of socialism, it is finally the differences that resonate most, Augsburg's peculiarity in the pre-1914 period, its deviation from expected patterns, the outstanding characteristic of which was the influence of non-socialist organisations and theories on the working class to a degree discernible in few, if any, other areas of Germany at this time.

All of the above was very much of its time, however, located in an era of complex change, conditioned by phenomena the transience of which is obvious in retrospect. It had, however, a long-term relevance - a relevance to be found, it will be argued here, in the painful transition from the established atmosphere and texture of pre-1914 Augsburg to the tensions of war, revolution and the Weimar Republic. Though this transition was certainly part of the universal instability and unpredictability out of which the Weimar Republic was born, it was, however, in Augsburg's case especially intense and traumatic given the city's conservative pre-war climate. It is also this traumatic transition, just as much as the specifics of the period from 1928 to 1933, that must be analysed if the interaction of Augsburg's working class with

National Socialism is to be fully understood - an interaction at least partially conditioned by the effects occasioned by this transition on that working class. The war and its aftermath brought to Augsburg a transformation, a transformation in which the previously solidified attitudes and organisational responses melted away and yet failed to resolidify into a new general pattern - unless that new pattern can be described in terms of the replacement of economic complacency and social conservatism by economic stagnation, a febrile political arena and the infusion of a new dynamic, of radicalised potentialities, into the working class. Those concepts which had previously muted social conflict in Augsburg became outmoded, consigned to an irretrievable past, rendered irrelevant in the face of a working class more radical, more unpredictable and less malleable than before - even by its own organisations.

It constituted in short a radical break - and yet it was a radical break containing within itself at least an element of the release of social tensions previously smothered. The astonishing ease with which previously apparently dominant social and political structures disintegrated under the pressure of war and revolution, allowing an unfolding of political energy which penetrated deep into Augsburg's working-class population, suggests that those structures were, to say the least, not without flaws. In the period immediately preceding war, developments were such as to indicate that a sea-change may well have been inevitable, even without the stimulus of events after 1914. Certainly it needs to be said that paternalistic social policy could conceal, suppress and suffocate social problems but could not fully eradicate them;

Augsburg possessed all of the unfavourable attributes of a rapidly developed industrial centre, and the ameliorative effects of paternalism were limited [66]. Social tension and conflict involving the working class did not disappear, and, in the long-term, the attempt to diffuse and divert such tension and conflict by means of an 'enlightened' social policy and the yellow movement must be considered a failure. This failure was becoming apparent even before 1914, most significantly in the decline of the yellow union movement: reduced to a position of irrevocable irrelevance by internal events during the war (when, for example, MAN's management abandoned the AVA, in favour of a conciliation with the free unions), the movement had already passed the peak of its popularity before that point. The seeming victory of non-socialist over socialist unions had proved transitory, and there had occurred a change in mood amongst the workforce in favour of the free unions and against the yellow union movement - influenced, it may be speculated, by the failure of the latter really to improve the position of Augsburg's workers, either materially or in terms of giving them a greater voice within the workplace [67]. The best illustration of this new mood came in 1912, during a campaign in Augsburg's textile industry aimed at achieving the introduction of industry-wide agreements. The 20,000 strong demonstration which took place in the course of this was the greatest ever show of strength by Augsburg's labour movement - and demonstrated, moreover, that workers in Augsburg's textile industry could be successfully mobilised in support of a union-led campaign.

Thus the political turbulence which, as will be seen in a moment, marked the birth of the Weimar Republic in Augsburg should

not be interpreted as having only had specific origins in the conflicts generated by war, but rather should be considered also as an intensification of a process which had begun before 1914. And the same is true in the economic sphere. The post-war economic conjuncture in Germany did indeed produce inevitable periods of economic downturn in Augsburg, but the city was also afflicted by the unmistakable signs of long-term, inherent economic decay and a general loss of complacent self-confidence in its future development, the causes of which lay in Augsburg's old-fashioned, increasingly sclerotic industrial economy. The illusory boom of the mid-1920s could not mask the true situation, in which the periods of economic depression in the early and late 1920s merely accentuated and accelerated a more general problematic predicated upon just those factors of over-concentration and one-sided development examined above. Augsburg's economy was over-dependent on textiles and engineering and metals, industries facing, to say the least, uncertain future prospects. The textile industry in particular entered into a period of prolonged crisis, one measure of which was the intrusion of outside interests and concerns into its operations (although ironically, as discussed earlier, the industry's position did stabilise in time to offer Augsburg some relief during the economic crisis after 1928). Just as seriously, as had become evident in the early years of the century, Augsburg had failed to attract modern, dynamic new branches of industry such as electronics and chemicals, precision engineering and machine tool engineering. After 1918 no significant industrial concern of the type that could have altered Augsburg's economic structure and labour market was established in the city. Together with the lack



of adaptable middle-sized concerns, again the consequence of limitation to economic expansion in only a few industrial areas, what these facts added up to was virtually inevitable economic deceleration and a perceptible undermining of previous certitudes. This unfavourable perspective was as evident in the unchangingly high share of those employed in the trade and industry sector (58.6% of the working population in 1933) as opposed to the hesitant expansion of the stagnating service sector, as it was in the dramatic slow-down of population increase (as already mentioned, between 1860 and 1920 Augsburg's growth rate had been over 27% per decade, a figure which, by the period 1925-1933, had fallen to 6.7%) as Augsburg was left trailing in the wake of its two Bavarian counterparts, Munich and Nuremberg [68].

This had a socio-political dimension, too, in the rendering impotent of those social concepts which had thrived in an era of economic expansion and aggression, of those social policies which had been used to control and to assuage, but, for all that they might still have existed, were now to be overtaken by fundamental changes in attitude and policy in society, now to lose their relevance along with the industries and the enclosed industrial elite which had given them their purpose. One perhaps symbolic example of this was the decreasing popularity of workers' colonies in the Weimar years - for most workers of the post-war generation a private life completely beyond the influence of their workplace now outweighed the ostensible advantages of such accommodation [69].

This latter point, too, signals a wider change of social atmosphere, particularly amongst Augsburg's working class, which was the corollary not only, or even mainly, of economic dislocation

but rather of political dislocation. The birth of the Weimar Republic, the traumas of war, revolution and of the Soviet Republic, produced amongst Augsburg's population a hitherto unknown unstable, radical temper, a radical temper which found a parallel in the stormy history of the city's working-class organisations at this time. To an extent this radicalisation was not simply the ephemeral product of exceptional circumstances, it also amounted to a permanent change in Augsburg's political culture, and especially in the political culture of the working class. A radical potential had been created which was constantly liable to emerge in the crisis-ridden Weimar years. It is important here to define this idea of a radical potential more specifically. It refers not simply to a left-wing radicalisation, but to the change to a more febrile politics than previously, a politics which could encompass both left- and right-wing radicalism, and a politics in which such radicalism was greatly feared by the leadership of the SPD. This was particularly the case as a further aspect of Augsburg's new political culture was a rank-and-file disillusionment with moderate SPD and union leaders, as the massive expectations of the immediate post-war period remained unfulfilled.

The contrast in social and political behaviour accompanying the transition from Empire to Republic was one perceptible to contemporaries in Augsburg. For the local Social Democratic newspaper, this transition represented an opportunity to atone for Augsburg's shameful past as a centre of capitalist exploitation and the yellow union movement:

Was der kühnste Optimist noch vor wenigen Wochen

nicht für möglich gehalten hat, das ist in der Nacht vom Freitag auf Samstag Tatsache geworden: über der Stadt Augsburg weht die rote Fahne! Die alte Patrizierstadt, die Stadt der Fugger und Welser, die kapitalistischen Unternehmergeist dann später zum bayerischen Manchester umgewandelt, sie hat ihre Farbe gewechselt: die rot-grün-weiße Fahne ist niedergeholt und am Mast steigt die Fahne der Freiheit empor in leuchtendem Rot.

Wie ein Lauffeur hat sich die Kunde von der Revolution in München, in ganz Deutschland verbreitet. Erst Kiel, dann München und andere Städte, warum sollte die Stadt Augsburg zurückbleiben? Die Stadt Augsburg, deren Bevölkerung ja noch einen besonderen Schuldposten zu begleichen hat! Die Augsburger Bevölkerung, die seit Jahrzehnten als willenloses Ausbeutungsobjekt profitsüchtiger Kapitalisten betrachtet worden ist. Und siehe da - kaum war ein Tag nach den Münchner Ereignissen verflossen als auch in Augsburg der Umsturz erfolgte ... Sie bedeutet den Anbruch einer neuen Zeit und wird ein Markstein in der Geschichte der sozialdemokratischen Partei bleiben [70].

(9 November 1919)

For the authorities in Augsburg, however, the change in atmosphere in the city was rather more threatening:

Die Polizeiorgane sind den Ausschreitungen der Soldaten

und der Zivilbevölkerung gegenüber machtlos. Selbst die Angehörigen des Soldatenrates werden, wenn sie polizeilicherseits um Hilfe angegangen werden, seitens der jüngeren Soldaten und eines gewissen Gesindels mit den gröbsten und gemeinsten Beschimpfungen überhäuft, so daß auch deren Einschreiten fast immer nutzlos ist ... Auch die Arbeiterbevölkerung ist der Meinung, daß die Polizei nichts mehr zu sagen habe, und daß nun alles nach ihrem Willen gehen müsse. Es ist deshalb sehr schwer die notwendige Ordnung aufrecht zu erhalten, und muß nun über sehr viel gesehen werden, was eigentlich strafbar wäre [71].

('Wochenbericht Magistrat der Stadt Augsburg, 13 December 1919')

And indeed a certain breakdown in order was characteristic of Augsburg in this period, one which took the form not only of a sudden change in social mores, or, as was also the case, of a rapid rise in criminality (Augsburg had one of the highest rates of criminality in Germany in the early years of the Weimar Republic) but which rather witnessed the entry of violence onto the political scene in the city for the first time with major outbreaks of violent unrest which had definite political motivations. The murder of Kurt Eisner, for example, clearly perceived by Augsburg's working class as a reactionary assault on their newly-won rights, provoked in the city a riot in which the targets were symbols of wealth and authority: thus the Bishop's palace and the justice buildings were attacked, as were the offices of Augsburg's non-socialist newspapers; files and documents were destroyed, prisoners

freed from jail, Augsburg's premier hotel ravaged and many shops plundered. Before order could be restored, two people had died and several had been injured in exchanges of gunfire [72]. As will be shown in a moment, the events of the Soviet Republic in Augsburg constituted the worst example of mass political violence, but even after this violent incidents occurred - on 1 September 1920, for example, a spontaneous demonstration outside the Rathaus in protest at the workers' economic situation ended with four people having been killed in clashes with the police [73]. The contrast such events made with Augsburg's previous history is obvious enough but even acts of violence on a lesser scale, such as the assaults on the meetings and newspapers of political opponents which now began to accompany election campaigns, contributed to a climate of apprehension in the city, in which rumours about potential unrest and Putsch attempts became commonplace [74].

Violence was, however, only one element of a more general dynamic of radicalisation which developed spontaneously out of the extremely labile post-war situation. This situation combined severe economic and supply problems with an unstable and discontented population. Above all it was those deracinated through the effects of war or through demobilisation, along with the unemployed who constituted the core of those involved in political violence. At the same time the USPD, during the war years insignificant in Augsburg, gained more and more influence as the motor of revolutionary change. Although more often responding to events than guiding them, the USPD did successfully exploit economic disaffection, and, in particular, dissatisfaction with the difficulties faced by the unions in realising the social gains of



the revolution at the local level [75].

It was this conjuncture of mounting economic and political problems which began to undermine the local SPD's control of circumstances in early 1919. The party's response to the revolution had been shaped by the desire to maintain such control, to avoid anything resembling civil war, and to create 'order from chaos and new life from ruins', as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung put it [76]. The initially smooth and peaceful transition from Empire to Republic [77], and the SPD's seeming mastery of it by means of its dominance of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council, was deceptive; the establishment of the Soviet Republic in Augsburg on 7 April 1919, the day after its proclamation in Munich, was merely the final sign that the SPD had failed in its attempt to canalise the political energies of the working class into orderly channels, and the events that ensued had long-term significance for Augsburg's labour movement. The creation of the Soviet Republic in the city and its initial measures [78] are of less interest here than the behaviour of the SPD, which retained its majority on the newly-formed council. The party, motivated by political reasoning and Augsburg's desperate economic situation, endeavoured to achieve a conciliation with the Hoffmann government in Bamberg, even at the cost of reversing previously taken decisions. And indeed such an agreement was reached and accepted by a mass meeting on 12 April. This acceptance, however, was based on the understanding that Augsburg would not find itself involved in the imminent military conflict, an understanding that was to prove false. On the morning of 20 April army contingents from both Bavaria and Württemberg entered the city in order to secure the lines of communication

during the operation against Munich:

Die Lage in der Stadt war verworren, die Atmosphäre von Gerüchten, Angst und eisiger Frontstellung zwischen Parteien und Sozialgruppen aufgeladen. Die stellenweise heftigen Kämpfe mit Verbänden des Arbeiter- und Soldatenrats wie mit hastig bewaffneten Arbeitern ... forderten, von Akten individueller Grausamkeit ebenso begleitet wie von lokalen Skurilitäten, 44 Todesopfer. Die Arbeiterviertel links der Wertach und Oberhausen waren bis zum 22.April Zentrum der Gegenwehr [79].

(G. Hetzer, 'Von der Reichsgründung ...')

The bloody suppression of the Soviet Republic in Augsburg left a variety of legacies. The city's labour movement was irrevocably split - the fierce hatred that existed between the KPD and the SPD in later years was in part the continuation of the bitterness produced within the USPD at what it perceived as a betrayal of the courage of the radical left by the majority SPD. This myth of betrayal remained potent throughout the Weimar years and indeed beyond. It was not however only USPD activists who felt themselves betrayed by the SPD's actions: as the SPD itself recognised in a pamphlet it published justifying its actions, this feeling was widespread amongst Augsburg's workers:

Eine tiefgehende Erbitterung hat sich der Augsburger Arbeiterschaft bemächtigt. Sie glaubt sich überfallen und betrogen. In unverantwortlicher, leichtfertiger

Weise wird ihr eingeredet, daß sie von ihren Führern verraten worden sei: Dieser Vorwurf muß mit aller Entschiedenheit zurückgewiesen werden. Wenn erst die Erregung geschwunden ist und das ruhige Denken wieder Platz gegriffen hat, wird die Augsburger Arbeiterschaft ihr Urteil selbst dahin fällen, daß das Tun ihrer Führer einzig und allein von dem sehnlichen Wunsch geleitet war, das Beste für die Arbeiterschaft zu wirken und so zu handeln, wie es das Interesse der gesamten Arbeiterschaft forderte. Eine freche Lüge ist es, zu behaupten, daß die Führer die Truppen der Regierung selbst gerufen hätten [80].

('Flugblatt der Augsburger SPD zur militärischen Besetzung der Stadt durch Regierungstruppen')

That such protestations were largely in vain was proven by the new momentum gained by the USPD, which allowed it to develop into a true mass party in competition with the SPD for the first time. The SPD had suffered a massive loss of respect, and the process of radicalisation already existent before April 1919 was catalysed: in the Reichstag election of 1920 the USPD polled 20.2% of the vote, the SPD 24.8% (the corresponding figures in January 1919 had been 3.1% and 46.8%), with the USPD gaining more votes than the SPD in many of the latter's traditional strongholds, such as Oberhausen and 'links der Wertach'. Another measure of the extent of this radicalisation was given by the results of the first workers' council elections in April 1920 in MAN, the factory it should be recalled at the centre of the yellow union movement - for the USPD



achieved a vote of 64.6%, compared to 22.6% for the SPD (Christian 10%, Hirsch-Duncker 2.8%).

With the loss of respect for the SPD came also a wider sense of humiliation, a sense that the great hopes of 1918 had come to nothing; and to this perception was added a growing disillusionment with the free unions, which was generated by failures in the sphere of industrial conflict. Union campaigns and strike action were unable to prevent the attrition of the social achievements brought about by the revolution, which occurred in both the textile and metal industries in the early 1920s [81]. In part this disillusionment found an outlet in radicalism as the KPD gained some influence at this time, especially in the textile industry. It also found an expression, however, in the increasing reluctance of the working class to be mobilised for political mass strikes [82] and, as previously mentioned, in the flow of workers away from the unions. In short, the SPD had lost some of its influence on Augsburg's working class. The party was now faced with a working-class constituency which was more divided and to a degree more radical, but also more sceptical and more changeable than that which it had hoped to control in 1918. The events of April 1919 had also created a deep fear within Augsburg's Social Democratic leadership of working-class spontaneity, of radical mass movements which could easily become unmanageable [83].

The changes that had occurred in Augsburg's political culture cannot then in truth be conceptualised as amounting to a radicalisation of the working class - for although this was one element of the immediate post-war configuration in the city, and although a radical potential had been created which would later

find its expression in the growth of the KPD's support, this was succeeded by a disenchantment with the established labour movement amongst some sections of the working class, generated in particular by disappointment with the practical outcome of the political turbulence. At this point, too, should be located the beginning of that rank-and-file discontent with the stagnation of the SPD in Augsburg which was mentioned earlier. The continuing anxiety within the SPD's leadership in Augsburg over the dangers of mass spontaneous mobilisation must, however, have been accompanied by the fear that the party's grip on its traditional constituency was now under threat, that this constituency could be lost not only to left-wing radicalism, as the success of the USPD had shown, but also to right-wing radicalism: thus, as previously mentioned, the Landtag election of April 1924, when the 'Völkischer Block' achieved 23.2% of the vote in Augsburg (the SPD figure was 24.6%), demonstrated that a significant proportion of the city's workers could be mobilised by the right in a time of crisis, for although this grouping gained its highest share of the vote in bourgeois areas (areas which would later become the electoral strongholds of the NSDAP), its results were also impressive in certain working-class districts (19.8% in 'rechts der Wertach', 18% in Kriegshaber). As will be made clear throughout this study, the fear, however justified or unjustified it may have been, of losing its constituency to the right was fundamental to the SPD's engagement with National Socialism in Augsburg.

That engagement will be the central concern of this thesis. Augsburg became during the Weimar Republic, far more intensely than in its pre-1914 history, a crucible for bitter political

confrontation, in which rival ideologies were in fierce competition for working-class allegiance within a volatile and unpredictable political framework. The confrontation between Social Democracy and Nazism was especially vehement, encompassing both physical and linguistic violence, as the clashes between Nazis and Social Democrats which took place in the streets of Augsburg found their mirror image in the propaganda output of the two movements. The starting point, in the broadest terms, of this work is the question of how National Socialism was perceived and analysed by the SPD in Augsburg and, more specifically, of how the rank and file, the core Social Democratic following as distinct from the leadership or functionaries, responded to the rise of Nazism. Above all the intention will be to explore the relationship between the interpretation of National Socialism propounded in the local SPD's literary and propaganda material, analysis of which will make up the bulk of the study, and the reception of this interpretation by the rank and file. This should provide a context for the discussion of such questions as how far the rank and file were ideologically armed against National Socialism, immunised against 'infection' by it, and whether any potential existed amongst that rank and file to resist Nazism physically, if such a demand had been made upon it by the SPD's leadership. As has already been mentioned, there existed considerable dissatisfaction amongst some Social Democratic activists, with the party leadership's cautious attitude regarding measures to counteract Nazism, and a real desire for a more aggressive policy - perhaps even, it will be suggested later, the desire for an effort of physical resistance in early 1933. The main aim of this thesis is therefore to deepen existing knowledge

about the SPD's response to National Socialism's attack on it in 1933 by examining the question, in a specified local setting, from a hitherto under-used perspective [84]: that is, by asking what image of the Nazi enemy Augsburg's Social Democrats possessed, how far and in what way that image was mediated by the SPD's 'official' analysis of the NSDAP, and what contribution the form of this image made to the SPD's fate.

The complete realisation of the intended analysis just outlined would, ideally, include a comprehensive examination of the contours of working-class political culture in Augsburg, the culture within which the SPD functioned as a political movement. Such an examination would necessarily encompass a delineation, in greater detail than has hitherto been given, of the organisational make-up and membership composition of the city's major working-class political, social and union organisations, and of the existing network of educational, leisure and sporting activity which constituted much of the social milieu that structured the daily lives of the working population and which was closely connected to political life. Even more than this, if the interaction of National Socialism with Augsburg's working class is to be understood, then some attempt would have to be made to recover the attitudes of that class at the mass level; and this attempt would necessarily have to take into account the complexity and diversity of the working class, the fractured nature of working-class political allegiance, the importance of religion as a factor, and the substantial proportion of workers who never

belonged to the labour movement or voted for the political parties of the left. A detailed framework of this kind, within which a study of the image and interpretation of National Socialism prevalent amongst Augsburg's Social Democrats could unfold, would also facilitate a discussion of a more general historical problematic - that is, the question of just how relevant ideological prescriptions from above, in this case regarding the NSDAP, were to political realities on the ground within the SPD, and whether such prescriptions in any true sense conditioned or set parameters for actual responses and actual behaviour amongst rank-and-file members; and whether errors in the analysis of National Socialism at the higher levels of the SPD seeped down through the party's hierarchy, or whether there did in fact exist a contradiction within that hierarchy between flawed perspectives at the top and a greater clarity about the aims and nature of Nazism amongst local party members and functionaries.

It must be emphasised at this point that although the analysis being developed here remains structured around an exploration of such questions, the approach to them employed in this thesis is circumscribed by an absence of archival material specifically relating to the structure and development of Augsburg's working-class organisations during the Weimar era, or which would have allowed a reconstruction of the patterns of day-to-day working-class political life. And the inability fully to explicate the position of the working class in its political context in a way which would do justice to its variegated nature obviously lessens the possibility of recapturing the beliefs and attitudes of workers as they responded to the rise of National Socialism. This

difficulty in moving from the type of general portrait of working-class politics presented briefly in this introductory chapter, to a more specific examination of the history of workers as a social class within that politics which would include a consideration of the 'voice' of these workers, is exacerbated by the problems facing the historian of the Bavarian SPD during the Weimar era, particularly in the context of a local study. The lack of extensive source material of the type that would allow the construction of a socio-historical profile of the SPD in Bavaria for this period, has been pointed out by Hartmut Mehringer [85], and Augsburg is no exception to this. This lacuna has its origins firstly in the fact that the SPD's activities were far less stringently monitored by the authorities than the KPD's, hence the abundance of information on the KPD that is to be found in, for example, police and court files, does not exist for the SPD; and secondly in the widespread destruction of documents which was a byproduct of the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship, and, especially in Augsburg's case, a consequence of the effects of heavy Allied bombing during the Second World War.

These facts necessitate a concentration in this study on the one source which does provide an insight into the life of Augsburg's SPD in the Weimar Republic, and which can illuminate many aspects of the party's engagement with National Socialism after 1928 - that is the local Social Democratic newspaper, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, which was the second largest newspaper in Augsburg by 1930, with a circulation of around 11,500 copies daily [86]. The importance of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, the influence it must have had in shaping rank-and-file attitudes, is

obvious enough - it was the main voice of Social Democracy in Augsburg, the main means the party possessed of propagating in any complexity the messages and signals it wanted to transmit, and above all the main weapon in its propaganda war with the NSDAP. Certainly, it must be recognised that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was also a commercial concern, it was not, at least ostensibly, a newspaper aimed narrowly at members of the SPD, but was rather one of several newspapers competing in Augsburg for a share of the more general market; and an awareness of the fact that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's material was intended to exercise an influence on this potential wider audience should be brought to any analysis of it. Nevertheless, such an analysis can also leave little doubt about how intimately the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was identified with the SPD and the socialist labour movement in general - closely interlinked with the history of the party's development in Augsburg, and edited by its leading local functionaries, it was the primary conduit for the SPD's views in the city. Of course, it must be recognised that the use of such a source must in essence be more impressionistic than the utilisation of material originating directly from working-class organisations and elucidating their internal structures and workings; nevertheless, an extensive mining of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung for references to and articles on National Socialism - and these were copious indeed from 1930 onwards - furnishes the opportunity to follow, in Augsburg's major sphere of working-class activity, that is the Social Democratic, the reaction to National Socialism through the last years of the Weimar Republic, as that reaction initially took shape and as it then developed in a rapidly changing context.

The bulk of this thesis will consist of a detailed analysis of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's reception of National Socialism, of the reports it contained on the activities of the NSDAP and the interpretations propounded in its pages of Nazism as a political phenomenon; as a general point, though, it can be said here that the challenge presented by the success of National Socialism and the urgent need to combat it, altered the nature of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as it altered the nature of the Social Democratic press as a whole [87]. The party's press was always of great importance to the SPD, closely connected with the desire ideologically to school its membership; as one activist expressed it at the 1919 party conference in Weimar:

Es ist selbstverständlich, daß unsere Parteipresse in erster Linie politisches Kampf - und Aufklärungsmittel bleiben muß. Sie ist nicht dazu da, ein ordinäres Sensationsbedürfnis zu fördern und zu befriedigen. Ihre vornehmste Aufgabe muß sein, die Schulung und Beeinflussung der Massen im Sinne der sozialistischen Weltanschauung [88].

(Quoted in: G. Eisfeld and K. Koszyk, Die Presse der deutschen Sozialdemokratie)

Though this conception of the role of its newspapers was certainly never abandoned by the SPD, the 1920s did witness an attempt by the Social Democratic press to become more competitive in the newspaper market; there thus occurred a process of modernisation, a stylistic relaxation, and a greater emphasis on providing entertainment to



accompany the traditional emphasis on politics. The fight against the NSDAP, however, put into reverse many of these changes, as the SPD's newspapers increasingly focused on the narrow goals of electoral agitation and anti-Nazi propaganda. The heavy burden of propaganda carried by the Social Democratic press in the later Weimar years was not lost on the SPD's opponents, and the party's newspapers became the target for both violence and legal means of suppression, in those areas of Germany where the NSDAP had governmental influence. The contents of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in this period leave no doubt about the awareness of those who produced the newspaper of its purpose as a propaganda weapon in opposition to National Socialism; similarly, as the newspaper became ever more involved in the political climate of vicious confrontation in Augsburg, so its journalists were frequently subjected to Nazi attempts to intimidate them using the threat of violence [89].

The Schwäbische Volkszeitung in this period can therefore be considered a barometer of the SPD's struggle both to interpret National Socialism intellectually and to counteract it, within the context of the newspaper's active involvement in Augsburg's local political scene. This dual perspective is possible due to the nature of the composition of Social Democratic newspapers: thus it must be understood that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was constructed using material from a variety of sources, encompassing not only locally produced journalism but also input from the SPD's press agency, articles from other Social Democratic newspapers, reports of speeches made by leading Social Democrats and proclamations from the party executive. Material relating to the

NSDAP was also of a variety of types, ranging from crude anti-Nazi polemic to serious intellectual analyses of National Socialism. However, although the Schwäbische Volkszeitung contained a number of voices, not necessarily always in agreement, and although any discussion of the newspaper's treatment of National Socialism demands an awareness of the complexity of its material, the different nuances of interpretation revealed, and the variety of approaches deployed, certain constants remain throughout. The implicit political aim of the newspaper is one such constant, the very clear belief that it could shape and alter opinions about Nazism, not only the opinions of Social Democrats, but also of those outwith the labour movement. Similarly, as the following chapters of this work will demonstrate, a basic consistency of analysis underlies the multiplicity of articles on the NSDAP, a consistency which validates the idea that the SPD's general interpretation of National Socialism is revealed in the day-to-day coverage of a newspaper such as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung. This is especially so in the case of Augsburg, as it must be recognised that the moderate nature of the SPD and its leading functionaries in the city during the Weimar era meant that the newspaper was never a forum for overt criticism of the party line, and, in fact, closely reflected the attitudes and policies of the SPD at national level.

Taken as a whole, the plurality of perspectives found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung constituted the web of response, analysis and propaganda which would have shaped the reaction of the newspaper's readership, Augsburg's core Social Democrats, to National Socialism - and to consider the effect that the portrayal

of Nazism would have had on those rank-and-file Social Democrats, the extent to which it might have insulated them against Nazi ideology or determined their response to the NSDAP's violent assault on Social Democracy, is one of the aims of this thesis. Beyond this, though, a more sophisticated deconstruction of the material must be attempted, one which examines what it reveals of the deeper flaws which disabled the SPD in its fight against Nazism. An analysis of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's engagement with National Socialism must be as much a literary exegesis as a historical investigation - it is necessary to be as interested in how things are said, in language, in imagery, in rhetoric, as in what is said. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's treatment of Nazism will thus be used here as a model from which can be extrapolated the more general condition of the SPD in the Weimar Republic. The depiction of the SPD in this era as a stagnant, 'middle-aged' party, one which had lost much of its previously strong sense of purpose and self-definition, and was hence ill-equipped to face the threat posed by the NSDAP, is by now well-established [90]; less attention has however been paid to the SPD's image of the Nazi enemy, to the question, that is, of how far the party's political reaction to National Socialism, particularly in 1933, was conditioned by the way in which Social Democracy perceived and analysed Nazism. Of course, the SPD's interpretation of Nazism and its articulation as propaganda cannot be separated from the party's longer-term structural problems. Whether these long-term problems made it impossible for the SPD adequately to confront the NSDAP, however clearly the latter may have been perceived, or whether in fact basic failures in the analysis of National Socialism were more

crucial in determining the SPD's behaviour in the last years of the Weimar Republic, is however one of the issues which a study of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's engagement with Nazism must address.

This general perspective, though, would be incomplete without an accompanying consideration of the influence exerted on rank-and-file attitudes in Augsburg by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung. It must of course be accepted that, as a literary production of the SPD's articulate and well-informed functionaries, that is the formulators or at least the transmitters of ideology and propaganda rather than its consumers, it is highly unlikely that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung would have reflected popular opinion amongst the party's supporters in Augsburg. Gauging rank-and-file opinion in the absence of sources which directly express it becomes, to a degree, speculative, dependent on inference or on the retrospective evidence of contemporary participants whose testimony may be far from disinterested. As will be suggested later in this work, some evidence can be adduced to support the idea, mentioned earlier, that a significant number of Social Democrats in Augsburg were dissatisfied with their local party's response to Nazism, and desired the adoption of a more radical stance. It is above all this possibility which makes necessary the attempt to gauge the attitudes of Augsburg's core Social Democrats to the NSDAP, for it will be the argument of this thesis that rank-and-file discontent over the perceived weakness of the SPD's measures to combat Nazism locally was to a great extent exacerbated by the crude effectiveness of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's anti-Nazi material, which ensured that its readership did indeed know its enemy, and, moreover, through the aggressiveness of its rhetoric imbued at

least part of that readership with a willingness to move onto the offensive if this was required to defeat National Socialism. This latter possibility must of course be treated with extreme caution; the situation in 1933 was obviously highly complex, and a wide range of factors must be considered when discussing the extent to which the potential for any type of physical response to Nazism in power existed. Thus, any interpretation which suggests that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung may have partially created, or at least reinforced such a potential in Augsburg must be embedded in a broader analysis which takes into account the many aspects of the situation in 1933 which militated against the possible success of mass resistance by the SPD, and hence renders the party's rejection of such a course of action more understandable; and this is an issue which will be considered further in the conclusion to this work. What will be suggested throughout this thesis, however, is that explanations for the SPD's behaviour after the Nazi seizure of power can be found in the Social Democratic interpretation of National Socialism which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung contained - for in the misperceptions and flawed insights of this interpretation were laid bare the inherent deficiencies which increasingly condemned the SPD to a state of ineffectuality in its struggle with the NSDAP.

## CHAPTER 2 :      The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's engagement with National Socialism : Introduction

### i) Initial perspectives

The Social Democratic analysis of National Socialism, as conveyed by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, was in essence in place by late 1929, formed in response to the increasing activism of the NSDAP in that year - and it was this analysis that underlay the ossified polemic that came to dominate the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's engagement with National Socialism in the following years, as any of the flexibility of thought that would perhaps be considered vital for any successful engagement with a movement as dynamic as National Socialism appeared to be undercut by the exigencies of day-to-day political conflict and the deeper determinants of the SPD's particular political nature. This should not be taken to imply that Social Democratic reactions to Nazism were in any precise way uniform - as already stressed, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's material was representative of a variety of voices from within the movement, by no means all in agreement with each other. But, nevertheless, the obdurate persistence of a few fundamental, shaping conceptions of the type of movement National Socialism was, is the most obvious feature of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's analysis of and polemics against Nazism.

It will be argued here, in fact, that this inflexibility was the consequence of Social Democracy's rigid mind-set, of its peculiar Weltanschauung; that this Weltanschauung was capable only of assimilating National Socialism to a limited extent - the limits

being defined by the traditional tram-lines of that world-view, a world-view to a large degree unchanged since the period of its first fashioning in the decades prior to the First World War. More than this, however, it seems clear that National Socialism was especially and deeply disturbing to the SPD precisely because it appeared to operate outwith the favourite categories of Social Democratic thought; the NSDAP's political practice, indeed its very existence and success stood in contradiction to the dictates of the SPD's Marxist theory, its class-based political philosophy. What will become clear in this study of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung is the extent to which an essentially Marxist conceptual framework, however unsophisticated, provided the mode of analysis and discourse within which the SPD, at the level of literary propaganda, worked. However far from its Marxist theory the SPD deviated in its political practice [91], however little understood Marxism may have been by the rank and file, or even by the leadership [92], a continuing adherence to the basic tenets of Marxist ideology, even if only in the form of vague assumptions and verbal radicalism, clearly exercised a shaping influence upon the SPD's interpretation of, and response to, Nazism. Indeed, the difficulties National Socialism presented for the SPD in terms of social and political analysis are, however paradoxically, revealed most obviously in the party's unwavering adherence to the certitudes of an interpretation of Nazism derived from that Marxism. The SPD's ideology of class in fact led it often to 'explain' the rise of National Socialism by reference to models and ideals that elucidated more about the SPD itself than about the NSDAP. This was the source of many of the flaws that characterised

Social Democracy's analysis of Nazism; and these flaws were of particular significance, firstly because they certainly hampered the development of an appropriate strategy to combat the NSDAP, but more importantly because, to the historian, they are revelatory of the deeper fault-lines and fissures within the SPD which provide a framework within which the decisions the party made in 1933 can be interpreted. The treatment of National Socialism in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung will thus be used here as a paradigm, a delineation of which will expose the wider pathology of the SPD in the Weimar Republic. An exploration of the language, the rhetoric, the intellectual and ideological concepts used in the struggle to comprehend and counteract the NSDAP is an exploration of the very psyche of the SPD at its moment of greatest crisis.

It will perhaps be useful to begin by looking at one of the first rigorous analyses of National Socialism to appear in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung - although it was by no means an isolated appearance of Nazism in the newspaper, for the NSDAP attracted frequent attention to its activity from early 1929 onwards. This particular example, though, appears to be almost a crystallisation of themes and of an approach that would persist throughout the last years of Weimar - a mixture of perceptions and confusions and a demonstration of the extent to which the Social Democratic mind-set determined those perceptions and precipitated those confusions. It thus provides a starting point from which to widen the analysis, to make connections and to adumbrate some of the main theses to be dealt with in more detail later.

Entitled 'Aufgepeitschter Mittelstand. Warum werfen sich die



Nationalsozialisten auf den proletarischen Mittelstand!' the article appeared in November 1929 [93]. The essence of the conception of National Socialism it contained is made clear from the outset:

Neben der politisch-agitatorischen Seite der Nationalsozialisten ist es notwendig, auch deren wirtschaftliche Seite zu betrachten, wo wir, sie als verschleierte Schutztruppe des scharfmacherischen Unternehmertums finden.

And the underlying ideological preoccupations are similarly revealed, as the necessity of a class-based, Marxist engagement with the rival party is emphasised and the inter-relationship between National Socialism and capitalism is stressed:

Der Nationalsozialismus ist ein typisches Produkt der gegenwärtigen Lage des Kapitalismus.

From this starting point the author firstly is concerned to explicate the difference between Nazism and earlier anti-semitic movements, perceptively recognising that anti-semitism was subordinated to economic and political questions as a motivating force in the Nazi movement and highlighting the 'socialist' and 'proletarian' aspects of the party programme as another differentiating element (it will be shown later however that similarities between the NSDAP and earlier anti-semitic upsurges were also often drawn, and the conclusion reached that the success

of the former would be as ephemeral as that of the latter).

The core of the interpretation, however, was constructed around an examination of the 'present capitalist conjuncture', that is 'capitalist concentration' and its consequences, the most important amongst which is seen as the 'proletarianisation' of the middle class and its concomitant, a potential increase in the intensity of the class struggle. This latter, though, can only occur

wenn die neuen proletarischen Schichten zur Erkenntnis  
ihrer Klassenlage gelangten

- and it is in the prevention of this that National Socialism's  
'objective function' lies:

Das unbewußt, meist noch unfertig erwachende  
Klassenbewußstein der betreffenden Schichten wird  
abgelenkt, in falsche Bahnen geleitet, umgewandelt.

The NSDAP's 'primitive socialism' is in reality simply a sham, rank-and-file radicalism is contained by the targeting of so-called 'Jewish' capitalism, a diversionary tactic rendering the disconnected middle class harmless to capitalism as a whole. In short, the NSDAP occupies an

... objektive Rolle als bedeutsamer Hilfsfaktor der  
modernen kapitalistischen Entwicklung.

And, as the proposal in its economic programme to forbid strikes

under pain of death shows, the party's attempt to give the appearance of a truly socialist movement is mere pretence, in reality it is 'eine ausgesprochen reaktionäre Bewegung' in receipt of both open and secret support from 'das industrielle Unternehmertum'. The necessary consequence of this is therefore

daß der Nationalsozialismus das Schwergewicht seiner Tätigkeit der Bekämpfung der organisierten Arbeiterschaft gewidmet hat. Judenfeindschaft ist heute nicht mehr Überzeugungssache und Selbstzweck, sondern dient zur Verschleierung wirtschaftsimperialistischer Ziele.

In conclusion then:

Damit ist der Kampf gegen den Nationalsozialismus für die klassenbewußte Arbeiterschaft und ihre Organisationen zu einer politischen Aufgabe ersten Ranges geworden, wobei es unsere Aufgabe ist, nicht nur die Arbeiterschaft über die Gefahren der Nationalsozialisten für ihren weiteren Aufstieg aufzuklären, sondern auch dem Mittelstand klar zu machen, daß es mit einer Unterstützung des Nationalsozialisten sich den Weg für seine weitere Zukunft verbaut, mögen auch schwerindustrielle und junkerliche Drahtzieher der Nationalsozialisten ... die Spuren noch so sehr verwischen. (16 November 1929)

This, the most sophisticated analysis that had thus far appeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung - and obviously presented

in greater detail and with more polemical force than a short summary suggests - illustrates the potency of the theoretical substructure upon which the Social Democratic interpretation of National Socialism was built; for the article is perhaps best summed up as a number of perceptive assessments subsumed within a rigid theoretical framework. The attraction of the NSDAP for the declassed Mittelstand; the function of anti-semitism within the movement as an adjunct to a much wider political and social attack rather than the central factor in the garnering of support; the dissimilarities between National Socialism and previous successful anti-semitic movements; the NSDAP's antipathy to the organisations of the working class - none of this is impercipient, especially given that the NSDAP of this time, although increasingly active, had yet to become the serious threat that it would later, its main characteristics hence being perhaps not quite fully evident to the outside observer. And yet such insights are allied to a mechanistic class-based, fundamentally Marxist analysis, which portrays National Socialism as a tool of big business, as the 'Schutztruppe' of capitalism, and thus lacks any appreciation of the autonomous, uncontrolled dynamism of the party; and which moreover is too deterministic in its view of the impoverished middle class as being manipulated and diverted away from its 'true' class instincts. Indeed, the whole interpretation is predicated upon a precise, theory-driven view of the putative proletarianised middle class, a too hopeful belief that the labour movement must be this latter's natural, inevitable political home, and yet at the same time upon a facile, comforting acceptance that specifically this class (as opposed to the working class), due to its

underdeveloped class consciousness, was susceptible to the Nazi message. The schematic nature of the article, moreover, is only increased by the language of dogmatic certainty in which it is couched, the use of the clichés of Marxist orthodoxy and of blanket terms, often with clear pejorative overtones (such as 'das Unternehmertum'), in order to mask complex realities.

The point here is that these themes will have to be discussed in far greater detail in this examination of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's coverage of the NSDAP; for although, as will be shown, this coverage had many strands and aspects, again and again the conclusion will be reached that the SPD's responses to National Socialism were ideologically predetermined, that polemic took priority over objective observation, that the party often failed really to see or comprehend Nazism, so busy was it looking behind the NSDAP to find the 'real' enemy, the true 'wire pullers'. And whilst this was not the only source of the SPD's misperceptions - the crucial influence exerted by Social Democracy's self-image will, for example, be made evident, along with other factors, less profound, but more prosaic and understandable - its effect was the most disabling.

ii) 'Darkness against light' : the threat of National Socialism

What will not, however, be argued here is that the SPD underestimated the potential threat posed by the rise of National Socialism, that the party did not fully grasp the disastrous, deadly consequences Nazism in power would entail, or that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung failed adequately to emphasise just how much was at stake in the struggle against the NSDAP. On the contrary, it is crucial to the overall argument being advanced in this thesis that the extent to which a rank-and-file reader of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung would have been aware, had indeed been purposefully made aware of all of this, is recognised. It is, therefore, necessary to delineate at the outset the consistency and intensity with which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung sought to convey that National Socialism aimed to destroy freedom and democracy, to stress that working-class achievements and even working-class lives were at risk, and the means by which this was done. In one sense, of course, the whole of the material that is under consideration here, its extent and variety, testifies to this perception of National Socialism as a real threat. It was in response to this perception that Social Democracy developed its analysis of and propaganda against the NSDAP. That the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was extremely anxious to maintain this image of the NSDAP, and to use it to galvanise its readership, will also be confirmed by other aspects of that analysis and propaganda that will be considered later, in particular by the newspaper's presentation of the NSDAP as the instigator of political violence. At this point, though, there are two broad areas that can usefully be examined to

demonstrate that the SPD cannot, in general, be held to have underestimated the potential danger of National Socialism: firstly the predictions to be found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of the horrors and deprivations a Nazi dictatorship would bring; and secondly, the use made of Fascist Italy as a warning example to reinforce the latter message.

In both these cases, of course, future possibilities functioned in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as a means by which present opinion could be shaped or reinforced; especially at critical junctures, the concept of the 'Third Reich', with all that it implied in the Social Democratic lexicon, was an extremely potent propaganda weapon, an admonition to the readership against wavering from the SPD's line. At such critical times, moreover, the struggle against National Socialism was often presented in apocalyptic terms, in terms that is, that could have left the reader in no doubt about the urgent necessity of defeating the NSDAP, or the consequences of failing to do so. Thus, in early 1931, as the ramifications of the Nazi success in the Reichstag elections of the previous autumn were still being considered, the following statement could be found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung:

Nach dem Ausfall der Wahl am 14. September handelte es sich nicht mehr um die Notverordnung, nicht mehr um Krankenschein oder Panzerkreuzer, es handelte sich um ein Ringen auf Leben und Tod, zwischen Demokratie und Republik, gegen Faschismus, Diktatur und Verfassungsbruch.

(2 March 1931) [94]

A similar tone was set in the first paragraph of a fierce front-page anti-Nazi polemic in July 1932:

Die deutsche Arbeiterklasse und mit ihr die deutsche Demokratie stehen in einem Kampf um Leben und Tod. Barbarei und Untergang, oder Freiheit und Fortschritt, es gibt keine andere Wahl für das deutsche Volk und für die deutsche Nation. Das ist der Sinn des großen Ringens, das angehoben hat und in dessen Anfangsstadium wir stehen.

(2 July 1932) [95]

And again a few weeks later, in reference to the forthcoming election:

Gezählt und gewogen wird zum letztenmal am 31. Juli. An diesem Tage entscheidet sich wahrlich das Geschick der Arbeiterklasse. An diesem Tage entscheidet sich, ob unsere Brüder umsonst gefallen oder ob sie weiterleben, in uns selbst und in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. An diesem Tage entscheidet sich, ob wir Spreu sind oder Weizen, ob wir Hammer sein wollen oder Ambos, freie deutsche Menschen oder rechtlose, hungernde Sklaven. [96]

(26 July 1932)

This rhetoric of a life and death struggle, of a struggle between two opposing world-views that would decide the fate of the working class, indeed of German democracy in general for the foreseeable future, had in fact become by 1932 commonplace in the Social Democratic engagement with National Socialism - the



oppositions were starkly drawn, the darkness that would accompany a National Socialist victory continually underlined:

Klar stehen die Fronten! Die alte Zeit gegen die neue!

Die Vergangenheit gegen die Zukunft! Die Nacht gegen den Tag! Die Barbarei gegen den Fortschritt! Die Finsternis gegen das Licht!

Seit den Julitagen 1914 gab es in Deutschland keine solche Spannung als in diesem Juli 1932.

Der 31. Juli 1914 war der Schicksalstag des deutschen Volkes und Europas. Was die Wissenden klar erkennen und was die Unwissenden dumpf ahnen, das ist es, daß an diesem 31. Juli 1932 ebenfalls für uns und für Generationen die Würfel fallen und das Los gezogen wird. Nicht um Abgeordnete geht es, sondern um die Freiheit, um Sein oder Nichtsein der deutschen Arbeiterklasse und damit des deutschen Volkes. (30 July 1932) [97]

The implications of the situation in Germany could even be seen as having a far wider resonance:

Es geht nicht nur um uns, es geht auch um die nächste Generation und um das Schicksal aller europäischen Klassengenossen. (6 July 1932) [98]

Now it is no surprise that these last four examples all stem from July 1932, that they formed part of the propaganda campaign in the run up to the Reichstag election at the end of that month - for

such moments of decision provided the obvious context for appeals like this, especially as the political conjuncture appeared to justify rhetorical extremes. It would be incorrect to assume that this strain of writing in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was only propaganda, that it was not a sincere expression of very real fears about Nazism's destructive potential; but nevertheless, its primary function was clearly propagandistic - the readers of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung were to be left in no doubt that the fight against Nazism was no normal political fight, but rather one with profound implications for Germany's, or even Europe's, future.

What these implications were was not, however, simply left to the reader's imagination; for, even if detailed specifics were rarely given, the Social Democratic idea of the Third Reich was not expressed only in general terms which predicted a reign of barbarism and an end of progress - there was also a more precise conceptualisation of what a Nazi dictatorship would mean for Germany, and a not inaccurate one. That Nazi rule would mean Nazi dictatorship was something about which the SPD was in no doubt:

Im Dritten Reich soll das System der parlamentarischen Demokratie durch die Parteidiktatur abgelöst werden. Im Dritten Reich werden die breiten Volksschichten nach einem Ausspruch Hitlers durch eine Führerschicht angeblich besserer Rasse rücksichtslos beherrscht. [99]

(12 April 1932)

The destruction of the Weimar democratic ideal was consistently stressed as the most fundamental consequence of any Nazi victory:

Es kann keinem Zweifel unterliegen, daß die nationalsozialistische Politik voraussichtlich die Sache Deutschlands nicht bessern, sondern verschlechtern wird. Nun ist aber das Bedenkliche an der Sache, daß ein nationalsozialistischer Sieg zur nationalsozialistischen Diktatur führen wird. Dann entscheidet nicht mehr die Volksmehrheit, sondern allein die nationalsozialistische Regierung, welche auf einem auf sie zugeschnittenen Wahllapparat aufgebaut ist. Das Volk ist dann nicht mehr imstande, durch einen Mehrheitsbeschluß eine schlechte nationalsozialistische Regierung zu beseitigen. Mit brutaler Gewalt werden alle Widerstände niedergedrückt und die Staatsbürger ihrer freien Meinungsäußerung beraubt. Denn das Ziel all der nationalsozialistischen Führer ist ja kein anderes, als der Besitz der Macht, der Macht und nichts als der Macht.

This article (headlined 'Hitler-Sieg wäre Hitler-Diktatur') ends with an admonition to the German electorate to take care not to vote the NSDAP into power, because it would not be so easy to remove the party thereafter:

Nur durch schwerste Erschütterungen und blutigen Bürgerkrieg könnte eine nationalsozialistische Diktaturregierung wieder beseitigt werden. Welcher denkende Deutsche kann dies aber wollen? [100]

(20 April 1932)

A one-party state, moreover, could only be a state riddled with

corruption:

... Ganz Deutschland eine Domäne der Nazi, unter  
Ausschaltung jeder parlamentarischen Kontrolle und Partei;  
denn außer der Nazidiktatur soll jede andere Partei  
aufhören zu existieren. Adolf als Diktator, die kleinen  
Adolfs als Verwalter des deutschen Volksvermögens. Muß  
da nicht jeder Korruption und jedem Betrug Tür und Tor  
geöffnet werden? Wo bisher Parteien und Parlamente  
Kontrollinstanzen und stete Kritik waren, da soll jedes  
freie Wort unterbunden und damit jede Gemeinheit und jeder  
Nazibeamte gedeckt sein. Das Reichsfinanzministerium als  
Kassenverwaltung der Naziparteikasse. Die SA als  
staatliche bezahlte Truppe. Die Naziführer und  
Naziabgeordnete als die mit diktatorischen Vollmachten  
ausgestatteten Beamten, Landräte, Polizeipräsidenten,  
Bürgermeister und städtischen Kassierer. Arme Steuerzahler.

(29 July 1932) [101]

The Third Reich would then mean the end of democracy and its  
substitution by a dictatorship; it would also lead to the vitiation  
of rights and freedoms in a wider sense, Germany would become a  
police state:

Deutschland ein Zuchthausstaat ... Kein Parlament mehr,  
keine sozialdemokratische Zeitung, Ende der  
Arbeiterbewegung, Ende des Rechts, Ende der Freiheit.  
Das deutsche Volk ein Heer von billigen, rechtlosen und  
hungernden Sklaven, soll dazu dienen, das sterbende  
Wirtschaftssystem wieder aufzurichten. [102]

(30 July 1932)

That the realisation of National Socialist desires could only mean a drastic curtailment of many only recently established freedoms was, for example, the message of an article published in March 1930, which outlined NSDAP proposals for amendments to the 'Republikschutzgesetz' of that year - proposals which the article claimed, could be read 'gewissermaßen als Verfassungsgrundlage im faschistischen Zuchthausstaat', and which, if they had become law, would have introduced a series of draconian punishments for offences against the German nation, culture or race such as any expression of the idea that Germany could be held to blame for the war, or marriage to a Jew. These are proposals, the article begins before reprinting them in full,

... die besser als alle Aufklärungsvorträge gegen den Faschismus die Arbeitermassen lehren, was sie zu erwarten haben, wenn die Faschisten in Deutschland zur Macht gelangen.

And the propaganda purpose is also made explicit in the final paragraph:

Dieser Antrag, nach dem neun Zehntel des deutschen Volkes ins Zuchthaus gesperrt oder erschossen werden sollen, dieser Antrag, der die Prügelsstrafe in Deutschland einführen will, ist bezeichnenderweise unterzeichnet von dem thüringischen Innenminister Dr Frick. Die hier einmal offen ausgesprochenen Absichten der Hakenkreuzler müssen das deutsche Proletariat endlich aus seiner

Gleichgültigkeit aufrütteln, müßten das deutsche Volk mobilisieren um dem faschistischen Spuk in Deutschland bald ein Ende zu machen und dafür zu sorgen, daß die Bäume der Hakenkreuzler nicht in den Himmel wachsen. [103]

(18 March 1930)

One of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's favourite methods of approaching this theme, moreover, was through the sensational coverage given to discoveries of secret National Socialist letters and documents which apparently revealed the NSDAP's plans for the Third Reich. The infamous 'Boxheimer document' and the publicity it received in the Social Democratic press was an obvious instance of this, but just as pertinent in this context was the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's coverage - occupying the whole of the front page on 23 July 1932 for example - of the discovery of a letter stemming from the NSDAP in Berlin, describing a variety of measures to be taken in the event of a Nazi seizure of power - measures which appeared to reconfirm all of the SPD's previous warnings about Nazi intentions:

... Kein Kosakenführer im ehemaligen zaristischen Rußland hat je die Peitsche derart über arme, hilflose Gefangene geknallt, wie es dieser Hitler und seine Horden für das Dritte Reiche für die deutsche Arbeiterklasse und für das deutsche Volk planen und ankündigen. Keine Zuchthausverordnung von Horthy, von Mussolini und allen Höllen der heutigen Inseln der Verbannten kann so gesättigt sein von Barbarei, Schrecken und Hunger, so bar jeder

Menschenwürde und jeder Menschlichkeit, wie jener  
Zuchthausstaat des Dritten Reiches, dessen Paragraphen und  
Verordnungen wir an Hand eines streng geheimen Dokumentes  
der Berliner Nazi Partei inzwischen veröffentlicht haben.  
Sie übertreffen in ihrer Brutalität selbst das Boxheimer  
Blut-Dokument.

... Verbot der Gewerkschaften und Ende des Arbeitsrechtes.  
Ende jeder persönlichen Freiheit, Ende der  
Arbeiterbewegung, Sammellager für 'Arbeitsunwillige' und  
politische Gegner, mit Kriegsgefangenenkost,  
Kriegsgefangenenbehandlung und Strafkompagnien: ganz  
Deutschland ein Zuchthaus, die deutschen Arbeiter und  
Angestellten ein Sklavenheer ... Das ist das Dritte Reich  
und so ist der Plan fix und fertig. [104] (26 July 1932)

The concept of the Third Reich in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung  
thus symbolised dictatorship and a threat to basic freedoms.  
Beyond this, the effects of any Nazi government on certain groups  
within German society (such as the Jews [105]) or on Germany's  
economy [106]; or as in the following passage, which encapsulates  
well the whole approach, the potential for disruption and perhaps  
even violence in both Germany and Europe, could be emphasised:

Hitler statt Hindenburg - das bedeutet: Chaos und Panik in  
Deutschland und ganz Europa, äußerste Verschärfung der  
Wirtschaftskrise und der Arbeitsnot, höchste Gefahr  
blutiger Auseinandersetzungen im eigenen Volke und mit dem  
Auslande. Hitler statt Hindenburg - das bedeutet: Sieg des

reaktionärsten Teiles der Bourgeoisie über die  
fortgeschrittenen Teile des Bürgertums und über die  
Arbeiterklasse, Vernichtung aller Staatsbürgerlichen  
Freiheiten der Presse, der politischen, kulturellen und  
gewerkschaftlichen Organisationen, verschärfte Ausbeutung  
und Lohnsklaverei. [107] (29 February 1932)

Nevertheless, and as this passage might also suggest, the  
overriding desire of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung when discussing  
the potential specific effects of Nazism in power, was to accent  
the deterioration of the circumstances of the working class that  
would occur. As the paper stated in late 1931:

Es geht gegenwärtig nicht darum, ob die Sozialdemokratie  
künftig Wahlerstimmen verlieren wird oder nicht, sondern  
darum, ob die Republik, mit ihren sozialen Errungenschaften  
morgen oder übermorgen dem Faschismus ausgeliefert werden  
und an die Stelle des sozialen Volksstaates die  
faschistische Diktatur treten soll.[108] (30 December 1931)

The whole idea of the 'social state' encompassing concrete social  
achievements, of the much improved position of the working class in  
the Weimar Republic in comparison with the previous era, was a  
central component of the SPD's conception of itself at this time -  
for it considered itself responsible for that improvement and,  
moreover, the 'social state' provided an oft-needed reason for  
defending Weimar democracy. That the Schwäbische Volkszeitung  
should portray any future Third Reich as the negation of all that



the 'social state' was held to signify, both in reality and as a symbol, is therefore unsurprising. Thus, although many of the post-war advances made by the unions had already been lost by the early 1930s - as a consequence of both the depression and the partially successful attempts of right-wing circles, and especially the business community, to undermine the 'social state' [109] - that their fate under Nazi rule would be drastic was clear enough to the SPD:

Es sollen keine neuen Gewerkschaften gegründet, wohl aber die bestehenden Gewerkschaften von den Nationalsozialisten erobert und 'umgeformt' werden. Mit anderen Worten: die Gewerkschaften sollen durch den Faschismus ersetzt werden.

(25 January 1932) [110]

The condition of the working class would worsen in other ways too. It was, for example, constantly asserted that the Third Reich would witness the introduction of a coercive 'Arbeitsdienstpflicht' - this was the subject of a Schwäbische Volkszeitung article in June 1932, involving yet another secret Nazi document, which outlined the NSDAP's plans for the establishment of such a scheme to be administered under the command of the SA. This article also reported a statement by a Nazi Landtag representative, made in reference to the possible introduction of an 'Arbeitsdienstpflicht', which appeared unambiguously to confirm that the NSDAP itself imagined the realisation of its intentions as a deliberate reversing of post-1918 developments:

Die Arbeitsdienstpflicht sei überhaupt der wichtigste Abschnitt im ganzen nationalsozialistischen Programm, mit ihr würden die wichtigsten Blätter der Geschichte von 1918 ab endgültig vernichtet, ein neues Zeitalter breche damit an.

(16 June 1932)

The Social Democratic view of this possible 'new age' was, though predictably somewhat different: 'Das neue Zeitalter heißt Zuchthaus!' [111].

It would also mean economic deprivation and the loss of the means of political articulation for the working class - or so the SPD constantly prophesied. One of the means by which validity was given to such prophecies was the frequent attention paid to those areas of Germany, such as Thuringia, Coburg and Brunswick, in which the NSDAP possessed some measure of governmental influence in the early 1930s, an influence claimed to have been anything but beneficial for the working class in those places. The opportunities for anti-Nazi propaganda were obvious enough, and nowhere more so than in the case of Wilhelm Frick's appointment to the position of Minister of the Interior in Thuringia. An example of the way in which Frick's activities were portrayed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was an article in early 1931, in which his attempts to reduce the wages of the state's employees were lambasted and lessons explicitly drawn from this about the position of the working class in the Third Reich. Under the headlines 'Naziminister kommandiert Lohnabbau! So arbeitet das Dritte Reich!' the article begins:

Wie wird es den Arbeitern und Angestellten im Dritten Reich gehen. Antwort: Dreckig! Wer das nicht glaubt, muß durch den Lohndruck des thüringischen Nazi-Innenminister und Vorsitzenden der Nazifraktion im Reichstag Dr Frick eines Bessern belehrt werden.

And, after describing in detail Frick's actions, it concludes:

Die arbeiterfeindliche Haltung des von einem Nationalsozialisten geführten thüringischen Innenministeriums ist völlig offenkundig. Alle Arbeiter und Angestellten, die den Nazis in Thüringen oder sonst zur Macht verholfen haben sehen hier, wohin die Hitler-Reise geht. [112] (12 January 1931)

Similar judgements were equally as often made about the Nazis in Brunswick - for example from February 1932:

Was Herrschaft des Faschismus bedeutet, darüber haben wir auch nicht mehr den geringsten Zweifel. Wo der Faschismus seine Herrschaft errichtet hat, dort ist das Proletariat rechtlos. Wir können in Braunschweig heute nicht ein Flugblatt verteilen, geschweige denn Kundgebungen veranstalten. Sogar Umzüge unserer Kinderfreunde werden verboten, weil sie angeblich die 'öffentliche Sicherheit gefährden' [113] (22 February 1932)

But of course this technique of focusing upon the NSDAP in

positions of power was only one aspect of the general hammering home of the message about working-class prospects in a Nazi-ruled Germany. Another interesting instance of this, was the use made by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of a secret meeting held in Augsburg in the Autumn of 1931 between the NSDAP and Augsburg's leading businessmen and industrialists, at which the party's economic and industrial policies were expounded to the invited audience. This meeting, one of several which took place in Augsburg in the period, was portrayed as a confirmation of Nazi intentions towards the working class [114]. The 'true face' of National Socialism was held to have been uncovered, one which consisted in the desire to remove the rights of the working class and to destroy the whole of the German labour movement in the event of a 'Machtergreifung'. According to the newspaper's account, those present were promised a full scale assault on the 'burden' of the social state, on wages, and on working-class bargaining power in the workplace.

What this would constitute, as far as the SPD was concerned, was slavery, and it was this idea that National Socialism sought to enslave the working class, to subordinate it in order to make it malleable, that became one of the main motifs of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's anti-Nazi polemics in the final months of the Weimar Republic. Thus, the exposé of the NSDAP's post-Machtergreifung plans published in July 1932 and referred to above, was informed by just such a rhetoric of enslavement - an enslavement again conceived as a turning back of history, a forced return to pre-war circumstances:

Die Arbeiterschaft soll versklavt werden! Die Löhne

sollen auf den Stand vom Jahr 1900 zurückgeführt werden.

Hört es, ihr Werktätigen! Das Hakenkreuz will euch um 30 Jahre zurückwerfen! Ihr sollt verlieren, was ihr euch mühselig erhungert und erkämpft habt! Zurück zum Jahre 1900! Kein auswärtiger Feind hat es gewagt, euch mit der Hungerknute in solcher Form zu drohen! Das drohen euch Hitler und Goebbels an! Hakenkreuz ist Hungerkreuz. [115]

(23 July 1932)

The social state and its provisions, wage levels, the trade unions - in other words the perceived core of the Social Democratic achievement would be obliterated and, as had been declared on the front page of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung a few weeks earlier, 'two nations' would be created:

Die letzten Wochen zeigten euch, was das 'Dritte Reich' bringen wird. Wer nichts besitzt, ist vogelfrei. Wer wenig hat, dem soll auch das Wenige genommen werden ...  
... So kündigt sich das 'Dritte Reich' an, in dem die Todfeinde des werktätigen Volkes nach ihrer Willkür herrschen wollen, das Deutschland, in dem es zweierlei Recht und zwei Nationen gibt: die Nation der Bevorrechteten und die Nation der Hungerlöhner und Almosenempfänger. [116]

(23 June 1932)

Now, the potency of such rhetoric - of, indeed the material that has been referred to thus far as a whole - should be clear enough: the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's readership could hardly have been in doubt about the fate of Germany and the German working class under National Socialist rule, although the precise nature of

the cumulative effect that the barrage of anti-Nazi propaganda had should not be taken for granted and must be considered more carefully later. As already mentioned, however, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung,s grasp of the Nazi threat and its determination to highlight that threat, was demonstrated not only by the constant predictions it made about the shape any future Third Reich would take and the symbolic weight the idea of the 'Third Reich' came to carry, but also by the space the newspaper devoted to informing its readers about events in Mussolini's Italy, the use, as a warning, to which this trenchant example of fascism in power, was put. And the primary propaganda function which Fascist Italy served was, overwhelmingly, as a reinforcement of the message that for the working class fascism could only be debilitating - the intentions and behaviour of the NSDAP in Germany were paralleled with the realities - or at any rate, what were claimed as the realities - of life for the working class in Italy, and the obvious conclusions drawn:

Die lärmenden Horden der Hakenkreuzler, die mit demagogischer Agitation und blutigem Terror durch die deutschen Lande ziehen, an die niedrigsten Instinkte appellieren, schießen und morden, sind getreues Abbild der Italienischen Faschisten. Hier wie dort gilt nicht das Recht und die Vernunft, sondern die Gewalt, die Gewalttat. Hier wie dort gilt mangels geistiger Waffen und Überzeugungskraft der Idee die hirnlose Anbetung der terroristischen Faust. Versklavung der Freiheit und freien Meinungsäußerung, Zerschlagen der Rechte des

werktätigen Volkes, Begeisterung für den Militarismus,  
Sieg durch Demagogie und Lüge, durch Terror und Mord,  
das sind die hervorstechendsten Merkmale des italienischen  
wie des deutschen Faschismus. [117] (15 July 1930)

Or more bluntly, from an article headlined 'Hitler, der kleine Mussolini' in which it is asserted that National Socialism's use of violence is a conscious apeing of Mussolini's methods:

Mussolini will bewußt die sozialistischen Arbeiter durch  
Gewaltstreiche einschüchtern und ihre Widerstandskraft  
brechen. Das gleiche Ziel verfolgt die 'Sturmtruppe'  
Adolf Hitlers. [118] (25 July 1930)

Of course, Social Democratic interest in Italian developments predated National Socialism's resurgence [119]; and indeed, even before explicit connections were being drawn to events in Germany, the main emphasis in reports about Fascist Italy was on the limitations on working-class freedoms and the undermining of the economic position of the working class that had occurred there [120]. However the initial paralleling of National Socialism with Fascism in the late 1920s, was overlaid with a tone of mockery - the implication being that for a party as seemingly insignificant as the NSDAP to have pretensions to rule Germany as Fascism now ruled Italy, was simply laughable [121]. Most often this ridicule was expressed through the use of descriptions of Hitler as 'der Duce von München', 'Mussolini der kleine' [122] or 'der deutsche Mussolini' [123] - with memories of the debacle of 1923 still very

much alive (indeed the Beer Hall Putsch was continually referred to in the Social Democratic press) this mock-heroicisation of Hitler must have been an effective tactic. Nevertheless, that there existed a core of similarity between German National Socialism and 'its Roman brother, Fascism' [124] had been established - a consequence, in part, of Nazism's own consciousness of such similarities, its own emulatory desires:

Mit leuchtenden Augen weist jeder Naziot auf die Verbundenheit der Hitlerbewegung mit dem faschistischen Regime in Italien hin. Dabei schwingt das stolze Bewußtsein mit, Mussolinis Experiment eines Tages auf Deutschland zu übertragen. Abwechselnd laden sich auf diesem Grunde Nazi - und Stahlhelm - Delegationen demutsvoll nach Rom ein und Hitler kopiert mit Fleiß, wenn auch mit wenig Erfolg, sein römisches Vorbild. [125]

(2 September 1931)

And as the strength of the NSDAP began to increase alarmingly, so too did the seriousness of the comparison:

Die Nazisozi repräsentieren nicht nur den 'Sozialismus der dummen Kerle', sie sind auch Todfeinde des heutigen Staates seiner demokratischen Grundlage wegen. Sie schwärmen für den Faschismus à la Mussolini, den sie in deutscher Nachahmung verschlimmern wollen. [126]

(7 May 1931)

Thus, the recognition of a commonality of nature and purpose between Nazism and Fascism merged with a pre-existent interest in



Italian affairs, to produce a regular emphasis on the usefulness of Fascist Italy as a prophetic model, a reinforcement of the SPD's warnings about Nazi intentions. Before this is examined in a little more detail, though, it must first be said that the concept of 'fascism' as it appeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung - and the generic term was used, and was applied to other right-wing movements in Europe besides those in Germany and Italy - was hardly a sophisticated one, it was not deployed as a precise theoretical concept. Rather 'fascism' simply meant a desired subjugation of the working class, it was a catch-all term of condemnation for any political group perceived as representing an anti-working-class ideology - the German reactionary right as a whole, as gathered together in the 'Harzburg Front' was, for example, frequently described as fascist [127].

That the use of the term fascism was fairly indiscriminate, however, in the context of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's aims, matters as little as the accuracy of the detailed critiques to be found in the paper of, say, the state of the Italian economy under Fascism: the point is that, again, the threat of National Socialism can be seen not to have been underestimated, that a wider, if basic, conception of fascism and an awareness of the situation in Italy provided a further context within which the NSDAP could be evaluated, within which the potential extent of Nazism's destructive energy could be strikingly impressed upon the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's readership. And although the affinity between Nazism and Fascism provided a variety of angles from which the former could be attacked - it was, for instance, often asserted that aspects of Hitler's foreign policy proposals were, to the

possible detriment of German interests, conditioned by a partiality towards the Fascist regime [128] - it was, as has already been said, as a further layer of almost minatory propaganda that the material on Italy was utilised; the implications of Nazi policies and behaviour could in this way be removed from the realm of theory and speculation and given a concrete grounding (even if Italian realities could never have been quite as grim as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's dark prophecies had made it clear the Third Reich would be).

Thus, and unsurprisingly, Italy as it appeared in the newspaper was, firstly, a land without freedom:

Die Geschichte des Sieges des Faschismus in Italien ist die Geschichte des Untergangs der Freiheit des italienischen Proletariats und der freiheitlich gesinnten Bourgeoisie, sie ist die Geschichte der Vergewaltigung der Menschenwürde durch ein barbarisches System, das auf politischer Sklaverei beruht. Wir kämpfen jetzt gegen den Faschismus in Deutschland! Wir wollen nicht Terror, nicht politische Rechtlosigkeit, nicht Unterdrückung des klassenbewußten Proletariats.

... In Italien, unter der Knute Mussolinis, gibt es keine freie Arbeiterpartei mehr, kein Koalitionsrecht, kein politisches Recht, kein Recht der freien Vereinigung und Versammlung. Wer es wagen würde, eine sozialistische Partei organisieren zu wollen, würde in den Kerker fliegen. Das will Hitler für Deutschland! [129] (12 March 1932)

The NSDAP's programme was nothing more than a 'Salat à la Mussolini'. And:

Dieser Salat à Mussolini ist es, dem zuliebe unsere Brüder in Italien auf die liparischen Inseln, in die Gefängnisse und Zuchthäuser gebracht werden, für den die Freiheit niedergeschlagen und Italien in einen Trümmerhaufen politischer Freiheit verwandelt wurde. [130]

(22 February 1932)

Italy had become, moreover, a land in economic decline, a land of homelessness and poverty [131]; a land in which working-class wages were the worst in Europe [132]; a land in which Fascism had achieved its victory only by posing as anti-capitalist and sympathetic to the workers, only to betray a rather different reality by its actions once in power [133] - and the similarity of this idea of Fascism with the SPD's conception of National Socialism's political tactics shall be discussed shortly; and, as a the most effective warning signals to Germany's working class of what Nazism victorious would mean for its rights and freedoms:

Der deutsche Faschismus hat seine Floskeln und Agitationsmethoden Herrn Mussolini abgeschaut, der bis 1924 von den Alpen bis nach Sizilien gezogen ist und gepredigt hat. Die Gewerkschaftsbözen, die Sozialisten, verraten euch an das internationale Kapital. Gebt mir die Macht, und ich bringe euch den Sozialismus. Ein Teil des italienischen Proletariats hat das geglaubt. Das Ergebnis: Heute ist der italienische Prolet am niedrigsten entlohnt,

steuerlich am meisten belastet und sozialpolitisch am stärksten beraubt unter den Proleten Europas.

Das Schicksal der italienischen Klassengenossen ist das stärkste Warnungszeichen. [134] (6 July 1932)

This idea of Fascism as a warning sign could even extend to a more elaborate paralleling of Mussolini's actions with Hitler's designs: thus in a front page article published in August 1932 (entitled 'Adolfo Schmussolini') a detailed comparison is drawn between Hitler's political position at that time and Mussolini's after the march on Rome. Hitler, it was claimed, was following Mussolini's model by attempting to use his present strength in order to attain an initial power base from which he could then implement a similar suffocation of opposition to that which had occurred in Italy. In August 1932, of course, it appeared that Hindenburg was not prepared to play the role that King Victor Emmanuel III had played in Italy, that he was determined, from whatever motives, to withstand the Nazi movement's pressure. The very example of Victor Emmanuel however, was highlighted by the article as well illustrating the potential for disaster that would be generated if Hindenburg were to give in to this pressure - for had not Mussolini's appointment been seen by the Italian King as no more than a temporary expedient, only to find himself powerless to prevent Mussolini dictating the course of developments? To give Hitler any degree of authority, however seemingly limited, would be to court similar catastrophe for Germany: this, for the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, was the most useful lesson that could be learned from Italian events, as German democracy threatened to implode. [135]

And yet, as is well known, precisely this lesson was not learned by the SPD: although it was certainly not alone in doing so, the party itself, as will be discussed in greater detail later, underestimated Hitler in 1933, it did not act on the assumption that Hitler would use his position as Chancellor to consolidate and extend his power, but rather assumed the opposite, that is that National Socialism had been tamed, hemmed in by traditional conservatism. The Italian parallel may have been a potent propaganda device, but it seems to have exercised little effect on actual political strategy. And indeed, this is the fundamental paradox within which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's engagement with Nazism finds, in retrospect, its historical context: the extent to which the SPD was acutely aware of the threat of National Socialism, and was anxious to convey the reality of that threat to its rank-and-file support is, from the historian's perspective, always undercut by the knowledge of the party's inaction after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, by the - at least on the surface - blatant contradiction between the virulent polemics which had been a mainstay of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's output during the previous years, and the paralysis of Social Democracy after January 1933. The propaganda themes that have just been outlined have not been subjected here to detailed scrutiny, the accuracy of the prophecies about the Third Reich or of the claims about Fascist Italy has not been considered - and with reason, for what has to be established is, more simply, the way in which these themes were used, as they were continually, to underline the enormity of the danger National Socialism represented. Thus the most striking aspect of the confrontation of the SPD with the NSDAP, as it was

reflected in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, is not a failure to recognise the danger, but rather how little influence the continual emphasis on that danger was to have when decisions were made by the SPD's leadership after the Nazi seizure of power; the elaborate and precise portrayal of the threat posed by National Socialism developed in response to the latter's growth, and the possible effect that portrayal may have had on the SPD's rank and file, seems to have little impact in determining the party's response to National Socialist attack in 1933.

As a wider spectrum of material from the newspaper is assessed, moreover, this sense of inherent contradiction will be deepened: for, not only will the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's attempt to arm its readership ideologically and politically against Nazism be confirmed, but it will also be argued that this attempt would have been effective in ensuring that a consciousness of what a Nazi Germany would mean for them would have been created amongst Augsburg's dedicated Social Democrats. More than this, indeed, it will even be suggested that a significant number of these latter would have been willing physically to defend the achievements of the working class, had indeed been psychologically prepared for this eventuality which was in many ways the logical conclusion of the whole tenor of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's treatment of Nazism. Thus it must be made clear that the historian's desire to examine the flaws in the SPD's analysis of National Socialism, or indeed the existence of such flaws, does not preclude the possibility that the essentially propagandistic articulation this analysis found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was efficacious in a contemporary context where sophisticated intellectual discussion

necessarily often took second place to the needs of the moment. It is, in fact, the very probability that anti-Nazi propaganda was successful, that it did influence rank-and-file Social Democrats, and the contrast this makes with the immobility of the SPD after the Nazis' seizure of power that constitutes the kernel of the historical puzzle which is being addressed in this thesis. It also opens up a further, potentially fertile area for analysis: for if there did exist a greater clarity and simplicity of view amongst the SPD's core support in the confrontation with the NSDAP, a clarity and simplicity encouraged by the leadership and the shapers of opinion within the movement, but which ultimately found no outlet, the result, it might be expected, would have been disaffection, disaffection that would have had a particular opportunity to flourish in the final months of Weimar and in the first months of Nazi dictatorship: this however can only be considered after the full variety of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's engagement with National Socialism has been discussed.

**CHAPTER 3 : The working-class constituency as contested ground: the  
Schwäbische Volkszeitung's attack on Nazi "socialism".**

The NSDAP, however, was not merely perceived by the SPD as a threat in purely political and oppositional terms - that is, as a movement which adhered to a philosophy hostile to all that German Social Democracy represented and which counted as one of its main aims the destruction of the 'Marxist' SPD; for in the area of ideology, in the NSDAP's use of the concept of socialism and its exploitation of socialist rhetoric, there is to be found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung the, at least implicit, acceptance that National Socialism also constituted another type of threat, as a very real competitor for the constituency that the SPD considered as its own. The confrontation between the SPD and the NSDAP was never one of simple oppositions. Thus, however much the NSDAP was characterised and caricatured as middle class, as 'spießbürgerlich' in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, that newspaper's own responses to Nazism betray the level of anxiety the SPD felt about National Socialism's ability to penetrate into both the traditional core of Social Democratic support and the newly 'proletarianised' middle class. Hence, it is the effect this anxiety exercised on the SPD's analysis of Nazism that will be considered in this chapter - for it led above all to that determination to disprove the NSDAP's claims to be socialist, that obsessive need to demonstrate that National 'Socialism' was nothing more than an insincerely used political tool and to refute the idea that the NSDAP was in any true sense a 'workers' party', which was a constant feature of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's coverage of Nazism. The desire to discredit the



idea of Nazi socialism could indeed be said to have been the engine driving the Social Democratic analysis, the defining feature shaping its main contours.

The implications of this are certainly far-reaching. For one thing, the SPD's worries about the possible inroads National Socialism was making into the working class would appear to be at least a partial confirmation of that recent trend in historical interpretation [136] that has sought to stress the significant working-class presence in the NSDAP, and the extent to which Nazi propaganda aimed at mobilising support from that class, certainly through vicious attacks on the established labour movement, but also by propounding a quasi-socialist message in tune with working-class desires and discontents [137]. This theme, furthermore, also reveals much about the SPD as a political organisation - not only in the ways in which it found an expression in a newspaper like the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, but also through the theoretical expectations that were obviously at work in its formulation. Above all the theory-driven expectation that the totality of the working class should support the SPD is present here, as well as, as mentioned already above, the belief that if sectors of the middle class had become 'proletarianised' then they too would find a natural home in the party [138]. These expectations may have been all too obviously belied by reality throughout the Weimar era, but the point is that the SPD, at least publicly, never discarded this idea of a natural constituency - and thus, as will be seen when the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's depiction of the social bases of Nazi support is discussed, the existence of the working-class Nazi posed particular problems for the SPD, reluctant as it was to admit that

a party such as the NSDAP could garner support amongst the working class. That there was, however, at least a suppressed recognition of the latter fact, and that this was felt to be a challenge to the very heart of the Social Democratic identity, is precisely what the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's persistent attack on the NSDAP's socialist façade discloses. For all its dismissals of the movement's socialism as sham, for all its disbelief that any worker, particularly any worker schooled in the traditions of the labour movement, could be 'seduced' by Nazism, in reality the discomfort the NSDAP caused the SPD was in large part a consequence of the fact that both parties were engaged in a struggle for the support of the working class - a struggle in which the SPD was forced onto the defensive in its attempt to retain the allegiance of that proportion of the working class which constituted its core support, and to maintain, at least to its own satisfaction, the validity of the concept of a wider, 'natural' constituency [139].

At the centre of that attempt did indeed lie a constantly repeated assault on the NSDAP's credibility as any kind of true workers' party or valid socialist alternative to the SPD. In the Schwäbische Volkszeitung this was couched in a rhetoric of exposure - exposure of the cynical deception that was Nazi socialism to reveal the rather different reality this deception was intended to disguise. The favourite metaphor for the NSDAP's instrumental use of socialist or radical propaganda was its description as a 'mask', an 'antikapitalistische Maske' [140] and the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's aim was to rip away this mask in order to lay bare the 'true face' of the Nazi 'deceivers'. A front page article from late 1931, for example (entitled 'Betrüger. Reißt ihnen die Maske

herunter!') quotes a paragraph with a seemingly anti-capitalist hue from Feder's National Socialist 'programme', and continues:

Diese Sätze sind ein Musterbeispiel für die verlogene Nazi-Propaganda. Sie sind die 'sozialistische' Larve, die die Nationalsozialistische Deutsche 'Arbeiter' - Partei, diese Partei mit dem falschen Namen, mit den vielen auswechselbaren Masken aufsetzt, wenn sie zu dem 'Arbeitertum' spricht, wenn sie den radikalen Kapitalistenfresser mimt, wenn sie antikapitalistische Hetzreden vor Arbeitern und Angestellten hält um - ihre schimpfliche Stellung als Soldknechte des internationalen Kapitalismus zu vernebeln. [141] (20 October 1931)

In short, in another context:

So sieht der Sozialismus der Hakenkreuzler in Wirklichkeit aus! Ihre sozialistische Redeweise entspringt nicht der Gesinnung, sie ist lediglich ein Mittel des Betruges, um Arbeiter für Unternehmerzwecke einzufangen. [142]

(12 June 1930)

Even before the NSDAP was taken seriously as a threat by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, the desire to undermine its false pretensions to being either a socialist or a workers' party was present in the newspaper: thus the practice of using inverted commas when referring to the NSDAP - National 'Sozialismus', National 'Sozialisten', 'Arbeiter' Partei - was commonplace even in early 1928. And as the shape of the party's political strategy

became more obvious to the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, so this simplistic technique was supplemented with a developing analysis which sought to highlight for the paper's readership the true purpose of the Nazi appropriation of aspects of socialism - thus, for example, an article in July 1929 which ridiculed the NSDAP's assumed pose of 'wild anti-capitalism' [143], or the following from October of the same year in which Nazi socialism is, typically enough, viewed as an enticement, a lure for the unsuspecting:

Der 'Sozialismus' Hitler aber ist Phrase, ist Köder für die Massen der noch nicht marxistischen Arbeitnehmer und Intellektuellen, welche die überlebten bürgerlichen Parteien aller Schattierungen nicht mehr zu halten vermocht haben. [144] (14 October 1929)

Also typical was the idea expressed here that above all workers and intellectuals who were 'not yet' Marxist and who had become disenchanted with the 'bourgeois' parties, were especially susceptible to this strain of the Nazi message; for the reluctance to admit openly the existence of the very real fear that even workers from within the Social Democratic tradition could be attracted by the NSDAP's pseudo-socialism, permeated the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's handling of this theme, even as the increasing urgency with which it strove to emphasise its false nature seemed to be a consequence of just such a fear. It was, of course, more convenient and more desirable in propaganda terms to present the SPD's support as an unbreakable fortress, and to locate the groups misled by the NSDAP's use of socialist rhetoric in the

margins of potential SPD support. This tendency is again evident in the reaction of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to the unexpected success of the NSDAP in the Saxony Landtag election of June 1930, one of the defining moments at which the potential threat posed by Nazism became clear:

Die Nationalsozialisten haben den Wahlkampf in Sachsen vorwiegend mit sozialistischer Phraseologie bestritten. Sie haben aus propagandistischen Gründen an der Maifeier teilgenommen! Sie haben dennoch nicht vermocht Sozialdemokratie und Kommunisten nennenswert zu schwächen. Aber sie haben jene Massen aus den bürgerlichen Parteien an sich gezogen, die klassenmäßig nicht zum Bürgertum gehören. Sie haben mit ihrem primitiven Sozialismus der Phrase auf die Schichten gewirkt, die im Laufe der Krise proletarisiert worden sind.  
... diese Wählerschaft wird zu ganz anderen Zwecken als zu sozialistischen von den Führern der Nationalsozialisten gebraucht. Siehe Thüringen! [145] (23 June 1930)

The inevitable denial of any weakening of the two parties of the left in the face of a successful Nazi offensive is, though, here accompanied by a pained awareness that the NSDAP was beginning to intrude on territory that the SPD liked to think of as theirs alone. And although later, as shall be seen, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung could not but admit the existence of the working-class Nazi, at this point there is a sense in which the example of the proletarianised middle class was being used in an attempt to

counteract the possibility that National Socialism could achieve a breakthrough into the organised working class, a possibility that, given the SPD's self-image, could not be easily articulated. An awareness of the SPD's failure to attract the support of disaffected middle-class elements was certainly apparent in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung:

Die sozialistischen Parteien ... können nicht länger zusehen daß die Hunderttausende proletarisierten Bürgerlich - Nationaler statt in ihr eigenes Lager in die Reihen der Pseudosozialisten wandern. [146] (27 June 1930)

It seems highly likely, however, that Social Democratic anxiety about the effectiveness of the NSDAP's socialist sloganeering extended well beyond this particular stratum - an anxiety that could only increase as the NSDAP made ever greater advances.

The techniques through which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung demonstrated the insincerity of this particular strand of Nazi rhetoric were, as will be shown in a moment, various, but the underlying reality of National Socialism the newspaper claimed to be exposing was always the same, that is the reality of a movement that was implacably hostile to the organised working class, that had plans for Germany that would be disastrous for working-class interests. Far from being socialist, Augsburg's Social Democratic Bürgermeister was reported as saying in late 1929, the Nazi movement represented no more than

... den Versuch des Kapitalismus, die gelbe Bewegung der

Vergangenheit durch diese neugelbe Bewegung der Gegenwart zu ersetzen, es ist nichts anderes als der Versuch, die Arbeiterklasse zu zersplittern ... [147] (29 November 1929)

(This reference to the yellow union movement would, of course, given Augsburg's recent history, have had a particular resonance). This type of depiction of the NSDAP is in little need of expansion here; what is more interesting is the way in which the idea of the Nazi use of a socialist façade was located within the more general, overarching theoretical structure outlined at the start of this work. That is to say, the undermining of the NSDAP's credibility in this sphere was not only a practical political necessity, it was also a theoretical inevitability as an aspect of the capitalist conspiracy within which Nazism was embroiled:

Schwächung der Sozialdemokratie war das Kampfziel des Bürgertums bei der Wahl am 14. September. Um es zu erreichen, förderten Großagrarien und Großkapitalisten den Nationalismus und Kommunismus, die sich aufgeregt als die radikalsten Gegner des Kapitalismus aufspielen, die in Wirklichkeit aber seine besten Werkzeuge sind. [148]

(19 September 1930)

Thus even if this aspect of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's coverage certainly began as a genuine reaction to a perceived threat to the SPD's own constituency, its development took place within the wider theoretical construct, it was rapidly assimilated into the fixed analysis through which the NSDAP was evaluated - and thus became inter-connected with Social Democratic beliefs about the funding of

National Socialism, the agency theory of capitalist control, the nature of working-class Nazis and National Socialist supporters in general.

This indeed is an instance of the way in which the SPD's theories about Nazism became self-justifying: for one of the main proofs adduced by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of the falsity of National "Socialism" was the 'fact' that the movement was heavily financed - and hence controlled - by big business. This misconception about the financial basis of the NSDAP was in many ways the lynchpin of the whole Social Democratic analysis and as such will be examined in detail in the next chapter; here though what is to be noted is the use of this absolute conviction that National Socialism was funded by big business to underscore the insincerity of the movement's anti-capitalist rhetoric: the contradiction between these two elements of Nazism was in the eyes of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, too blatant to pass unnoticed. Thus, for example, in October 1929, putative new evidence about the capitalist financial backers of National Socialism is said to demonstrate

daß die Hitler - Leute es sehr gut miteinander vereinbaren können, in den Versammlungen und in ihrer Presse gegen die 'Kapitalisten' loszuwettern und sie gleichzeitig recht kräftig zur Unterstützung ihrer Bewegung in Anspruch zu nehmen. [149] (28 October 1928)

The sub-text, as always, is that such financial support would only be forthcoming for a purpose, a purpose far removed from the



NSDAP's socialist rhetoric, which was no more than a method for ensnaring the working class for reactionary purposes:

Vor den wissenden Geldgebern erklären die Herrn Nazis lächelnd: 'Unser Sozialismus ist nur Mittel zum Zweck, um an die Massen heranzukommen'. [150] (20 October 1931)

And more fully, from an article which referred again to the Nazis' seemingly radical demands:

Die Nazis nennen sich Sozialisten, obwohl sie von wahrem Sozialismus nicht einen Hauch verspürt haben. Mit allen diesen schönklingenden Forderungen ist es den Nationalsozialisten nicht ernst, darf es ihnen nicht ernst sein, denn sie müssen nach der Pfeife tanzen, die die arbeiterfeindlichen Industriellen blasen. [151]

(26 November 1929)

Emphasising this supposed contradiction was not, though, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's only method of exposing the sham nature of the NSDAP's socialism, and the frequency, and variety of contexts, in which this was done reveals just how anxious the newspaper was to drive this particular message home to its readership. The types of prophecy about the Third Reich that were examined above, for example, were certainly used in this way, as was one of the themes that will be examined further later in this work, that is, National Socialist violence: witness the following quote taken from the midst of a more general diatribe against the Nazi tendency to favour the fist over the intellect:

Die Bestialität kann sich kaum noch beherrschen, sie kann kaum den Tag erwarten, bis sie die sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterführer an den Laternenpfählen aufhängen kann. Und diese Leute bringen es fertig, gleichzeitig den Arbeitern vorzumachen, daß sie den Sozialismus erstreben. Nie ist mit dem Wort 'Sozialismus' ein größerer Unfug getrieben worden, als in diesen Tagen von den Nationalsozialisten. [152] (24 July 1930)

It was indeed the general tactic of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in this area of the propaganda battle, to strive to demonstrate the gulf that separated 'socialist' words from the actual deeds of the NSDAP; the Nazi movement was continually accused of hypocrisy, of betraying its radical promises, of revealing its true self through its actions. The aim, in short, was to prove of the National Socialists

... daß ihre Taten im schneidenden Widerspruch zu ihren Worten stehen. Soziale Gesinnung ist nur eine Maske, hinter der sich reaktionäre und kapitalistenfreundliche Gesinnung verbergen. [153] (8 January 1931)

This could take the form of highlighting fairly minor instances of hypocrisy: thus an article in May 1930 which claimed that the NSDAP was acting in contradiction of the 'socialist' aspects of its party programme - specifically the professed intention of 'breaking' the 'Zinsknechtschaft' - by accepting an

advert from a bank for the Völkischer Beobachter [154]. The failure of the movement to realise the anti-capitalist aspects of its election promises was, similarly, frequently castigated - the NSDAP was accused of using socialist rhetoric as a convenient campaigning tool and dropping it thereafter [155]. And connected with this was the attention paid to the activities of the Nazi Reichstag group, where, again, every opportunity was taken to contrast propaganda with the voting behaviour and the general demeanour of the NSDAP's representatives [156]. Generalisations were drawn, moreover, from the experiences of individuals within the Nazi movement, particularly from the experiences of duped and disillusioned working-class Nazis - thus after relating the rather involved history of just such a working-class Nazi living in a Thuringian city, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung concluded:

Und dieses verbrecherische Spiel an einem Arbeiter leistete sich eine Organisation, die sich 'Arbeiterpartei' nennt. Pfui Teufel! Mit ihrem neuesten Skandal, der alle bisherigen Korruptionsaffären dieser Partei übertrifft, haben die Hitlerianer ihren wahren Charakter in einer Weise offenbart, die nicht mehr das geringste zu wünschen übrig läßt: Sie haben sich der Öffentlichkeit als das vorgestellt, was sie sind, als verbrecherische Ausbeuter unserer Proleten! [157] (27 August 1930)

The precise details of 'case histories' like this, and even their veracity, are of less interest than the confirmation they provide of the SPD's agenda in this area, of the illustration they give of

the variety of means by which the lesson that Nazism's socialist appearance was deceptive was constantly being reinforced. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung was, indeed, even quite willing to use material lifted from the newspapers or pamphlets of dissident Nazi groups, accusing the NSDAP of betraying the movement's original socialism by allying with reaction and big business, in order to make its point [158]. It was, though, always those instances in which National Socialists themselves were discovered revealing the insincerity of their radical rhetoric, that were reported with the greatest relish - as when, in January 1932, the newspaper published a letter from a leading Nazi in Dresden to a factory owner in Weimar, in which the former admitted that the NSDAP was cynically using socialist slogans in order to garner working-class support. In reply to the factory owner's worries about the seeming radicalism of the Nazi movement, the letter states:

Lassen Sie sich doch nicht immer von dem Text unserer öffentlichen Plakate beirren! Der Zweck heiligt die Mittel ... Also - verstehen Sie nur recht: Wir müssen die Sprache der verbitterten sozialistischen Arbeiter sprechen, um selbige an uns zu ziehen, sonst würden sie sich nicht bei uns zu Hause fühlen. Mit einem direkten Programm marschieren wir nicht auf - aus diplomatischen Gründen - das behalten wir uns vor. [159] (21 January 1931)

To the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, naturally enough, such 'diplomacy' was no more than 'mendacity' that 'stank to the heavens'.

It was, though, not only the actions of the NSDAP and of

individual Nazis that were used by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to discredit the movement's socialist rhetoric, for there were also other available avenues of attack that played more heavily on straightforward class resentments, especially effective, no doubt, at a time when such resentments were exacerbated by economic depression. Thus, the supposedly brazen contradiction between Nazi propaganda and Hitler's luxurious lifestyle - a concept which, whether reality or falsehood, functioned as a potent myth in the Social Democratic press - was often highlighted. There was, indeed, a belief from quite an early stage that the NSDAP was deliberately fostering Hitler's image in such a way as to gain or retain credibility as a 'good proletarian figure' [160]; the task the Schwäbische Volkszeitung set itself, therefore, was the destruction of that image, as in the following example, in which the appeal to class instincts is crudely apparent:

Die Massen hungern. Nur Hitlers Geschäft geht glänzend.

Er wird von Tag zu Tag nobler! Jetzt hat er sich zu seiner feudalen Achtzimmerwohnung, seiner Villa im bayerischen Hochgebirge und was sein Herz in der Zwischenzeit sonst noch an Luxus begehrt, ein neues Automobil zugelegt. Es ist ein 150-PS- Mercedes-Benz.

Kostenpunkt: die Kleinigkeit von 44,000 RM. Nun kann er wenigstens standesgemäß bei Kirdorf und seinen andern schwerindustriellen Gönnern vorfahren. Seine anderen drei Personenautos waren wohl nicht feudal genug. [161]

(20 February 1931)

Elsewhere the obvious implicit contrast that was being made here between rhetoric and reality was made explicit and the basic aim of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of structuring its readership's perception of the NSDAP in a particular way reconfirmed - for instance in a short article headlined "'Prolet' Adolf Hitler" which, after again detailing Hitler's luxury homes and cars and querying the source of his wealth, claimed that this aspect of Hitler's life was well worth investigating given the type of party the NSDAP claimed to be:

Wenn dieser Mann noch dazu Führer seiner Partei ist,  
die sich Nationalsozialistische Arbeiter partei nennt, so  
muß die Forderung nach Klarheit mit besonderem Nachdruck  
gestellt werden. [162] (10 October 1931)

Of course this tactic was not applied to Hitler alone; other Nazis, both well known and obscure, received similar treatment [163]; and as an abstract symbol of Hitler's love of luxury and of the NSDAP's distance from the lives of the ordinary worker, the Nazi 'Brown House' was often invoked [164]. Most often though, and probably as an attempt to counteract the emerging 'Hitler myth', the Nazi leader was the target, not only with regard to his 'sybaritic' tastes, but also in terms of the type of people he had begun to associate with: a description in early 1932 of Hitler enjoying champagne and lobster as the guest of some leading businessmen, whilst enraged workers protested outside the hotel [165], was entirely typical of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's depictions of Hitler's relationships with bankers, industrialists and the

bourgeoisie in general [166].

The connections of these traditional 'class enemies' of the SPD to the NSDAP were also used in a wider sense as proof of the party's hypocrisy: for how could it claim to be in any way socialist when such social groups could exercise an influence within the movement? Such reasoning was applied both to the alleged financial backers of National Socialism from business circles, and to the presence of aristocrats and landowners in the party. This latter point demonstrates the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's deliberate exploitation of class feeling, for although it must have been obvious that old-style reaction actually had little influence on the NSDAP, nevertheless the presence of such elements was extremely useful, constituting as they did, the SPD's oldest foes and hence being completely incompatible with any form of true socialism:

Von Sozialismus findet sich heute in der Hitlerpartei keine Spur mehr, die vor der Wahl gemachten Versprechungen sind längst vergessen, verweht im Winde. Heute hat der Arbeiter in der Nazi-Partei nichts mehr zu sagen: er ist gut genug, den Kopf hinzuhalten, damit ist Schluß. Den Ton geben heute degenierte Prinzen, abgetakelte Generäle, feudale Gutsbesitzer und Bankdirektoren an. [167]

(10 August 1931)

Hitler's true aim, it was claimed, was the oppression of the working class and the restoration to their former positions of the 'old powers':

Nur deshalb wirken Exprinzen, Barone und nationalistische  
Offiziere in die Reihen dieser famosen 'Arbeiter' partei  
als Agitatoren! [168] (16 March 1932)

Again and again, in numerous contexts, this Social Democratic  
desire to taint National Socialism, to depict it as inevitably  
polluted by the type of support it attracted, indeed welcomed,  
found an outlet in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung. It could be a  
report of a former prince declaring his support for the NSDAP  
( 'Natürlich! Willy jun. ist jetzt auch für die 'Arbeiter' Partei'  
[169]): or it could be a description of a National Socialist rally  
and the number of luxury cars present, which concluded:

Nur war es keine Arbeiter, die in Braunschweig in  
Luxuslimousinen erschienen, sondern Generaldirektoren,  
Hohenzollernprinzen außer Dienst, Generale und andere  
Großpensionäre der Republik. [170] (24 October 1931)

It could be an examination of the social composition of the NSDAP's  
Reichstag group, revealing just how few workers this 'workers'  
party' was represented by [171]; or it could be the propagandistic  
capital that was made out of the creation of the Harzburg Front:

Das ganze Theater, das in Harzburg vorgeführt wurde,  
paradiert jetzt für Hitler. Die Herren Prinzen, Grafen  
und Barone, die Großagrarien und die Herren von Börse und  
Finanz, die ganze Hinterlassenschaft der Reaktion von  
gestern und vorgestern füllen die Hitlerfront. [172]



(6 April 1932)

The aim though was constant: and if the SPD's inability ever fully to remove its gaze from its traditional, but increasingly irrelevant, enemies is worthy of further examination, their usefulness to Social Democracy in its attempt to construct a powerful negative image of National Socialism in contradiction of the latter's socialist rhetoric, is undoubted.

Another illustration of the construction of this negative image was the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's response to the NSBO's efforts to build up support for Nazism in the factories [173] - a response which was predictable enough in itself, but, because it focused on the perceived heart of the SPD's constituency, provides a helpful point from which to sum up what has been said and implied in this chapter so far. Thus the details of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's attacks on the NSBO, the unmasking of the reality behind the worker-friendly façade [174], is less important than the confirmation it provides that the SPD, whatever its denials and its ritual invocations of the 'unshakability' of the movement, did feel vulnerable when the NSDAP engaged it in a competition for the working-class constituency, and did fear the potential for success of Nazism in this area. The giving over of the whole of the front page on 19 May 1932 to an exposé of the true purpose of the NSBO, through the reprinting of a 'document of shame' which supposedly revealed just what socialism meant to 'this famous workers' party' [175], is just such a show of fear, of sensitivity, of that consciousness of the Nazi threat, and of the need to reject and ridicule the NSDAP's pretensions and aspirations with regard to the working class, that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung consistently

displayed. Consequently this, and indeed the totality of the material adduced by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to support its polemics, corroborates claims made about the extent to which the NSDAP targeted the working-class constituency. The anxiety which this trawling for working-class support produced in the SPD is an example of a theme briefly touched on earlier, one which will recur: that is, the SPD's inability to cope with National Socialism's ambiguities, its blurring of ideological and social boundaries. For the complexity of the NSDAP's relationship to the working class, the fact that to some extent it was a workers' party, that there were at least elements within the party who were sincere in their radicalism, could not have escaped notice [176]. What was problematic for the SPD was the co-existence of these latter aspects of National Socialism with other, seemingly contradictory, aspects, both ideological and social. Thus the representation of Nazi socialism as nothing more than a propaganda tool was not simply an attempt by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to immunise its readers against this strain of Nazism; it was also a reflection of the SPD's own deep-seated need to resolve National Socialism's apparent ambiguities and confusions.

The implications this has for the quality of the SPD's analysis will be considered in a moment; however, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's attacks on the NSDAP's pseudo-socialism well illustrate a tendency in that analysis that has previously been briefly mentioned, but can be usefully amplified here - that is, a tendency to ossification and repetition. By this is meant not the ideologically predetermined nature of the SPD's engagement with National Socialism and the inflexibility that flowed from this,

although that is certainly relevant, but rather a more general sense of stagnation that becomes particularly apparent in late 1932 and early 1933. By that stage reactions had seemingly become knee-jerk, the analysis of National Socialism was running along well-worn grooves, a process that precluded original thought. Undoubtedly, this had its origins in the ideological certitudes of the SPD, but it was also a natural outgrowth of the literary and propagandistic articulation of these certitudes when applied on a daily basis to the NSDAP, for this articulation was founded upon the constant reiteration, using a variety of methods, of a handful of basic theories which, taken in total, constituted the SPD's counter-image to the Nazi movement's carefully cultivated propaganda image. The approach of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in the last months of Weimar as a whole reflects this sense of stagnation, and this end period will be considered later; the Social Democratic desire to discredit the NSDAP's socialism, however, is an especially good example of how the analysis had become petrified and responses predictable.

Thus, every development in the rapidly changing situation in Germany from mid-1932 onwards was read by the SPD as a confirmation of its established interpretations and used as an opportunity to further underline its main propaganda themes. In the context of the SPD and the NSDAP's socialism, two examples are particularly salutary, the formation of the 'Cabinet of Barons' and the weeks after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933 - for in both cases the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's reaction demonstrated how rigid and entrenched the analysis of National Socialism had become, to what extent, in fact, events were simply being assimilated into

that pre-existent analysis rather than shaping it anew. Thus Papen's cabinet functioned in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung mainly as a further proof of the cynicism of the NSDAP's socialist rhetoric:

Die Nazis sind in Versammlungen 'sozialistisch'. Das ist Goebbels - Leim. Ihre Führer wollen keine Umbildung der privatkapitalistischen Wirtschaft. Sie sind mit dem Kabinett des Barons ein Herz und eine Seele. Das privatkapitalistische System will sich mit Hilfe der SA wieder in den Sattel setzen. [177] (29 July 1932)

The NSDAP was, of course, held to be responsible for the appointment of the new cabinet - and to have achieved new freedoms as a result, freedoms that were far from being used to the benefit of the working class:

Durch Hitlers Gnaden sind Herr v. Papen und die Seinen an die Macht gekommen. Die SA, von Brüning verboten, unter Papen marschieren sie wieder, marschieren in den feinsten, besten und buntesten Uniformen zum Krieg gegen - das Kapital und gegen die Kapitalisten? O Nein! Gegen das Volk, gegen die Arbeiter! Unter Brüning sprach kein Strasser im Rundfunk für das Dritte Reich. Unter Papen reden sie! Gegen Thyssen, gegen die Schwerindustrie? Gegen die Großagrarien, gegen die Banken, gegen die Zinsknechtschaft, gegen die Notverordnung? Bewahre! Sie reden für Arbeitsdienstpflicht der deutschen Jugend und

That such capital was further made out of every action of the Papen cabinet that had negative implications for the working class need hardly be stated; the new political configuration merely gave added impetus to the old message. And this was also the case in the period after January 30, 1933. Certainly the SPD's reaction to Hitler's appointment was a complex one, flawed in a variety of ways; and yet, even as the situation was changing dramatically, had indeed already moved far beyond the initial shaping confrontations between National Socialism and Social Democracy, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung persisted in using Hitler's new position as ammunition to discredit him and his party's socialist propaganda. Even at this stage it was felt necessary to make the same point that had been made hundreds of times over the previous three years:

Der neue Reichskanzler ist Führer einer Partei, die sich heute noch Arbeiterpartei und sozialistisch nennt. Seine Regierung ist aber eine Kapitalistenregierung, wie sie Deutschland noch nicht gesehen hat. [179] (4 February 1933)

Once again the 'mask' was held to have been 'thrown off':

Dies Kabinett ist der vollständige Sieg der feinen Leute. Sie haben Hitler in die Mitte genommen, der sogenannte Sozialismus der Nationalsozialisten ist gerade genug, um den großkapitalistischen Kurs Hugenberg's, den Angriff auf die Arbeiterschaft, die Begehrlichkeit der feudalen

Ostelbier zu decken. Dahingeschwunden sind alle Deklamation der Nationalsozialisten gegen die Reaktionäre und die feinen Leute. Die sozialistische Maske ist abgeworfen, im Bunde mit der schwärzesten volksfeindlichen Reaktion tritt Hitler seine Reichskanzlerschaft an. Die industriellen Scharfmacher und die Junker, die ihn großgezogen und finanziert, ihn gestützt haben, kassieren jetzt den Nutzen ein! [180] (31 January 1933)

This latter quote, of course, demonstrates both the SPD's wider ideologically-based conception - predicated on the belief that reaction financed and controlled the NSDAP - and the major fault in the party's response to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, that is the unwillingness to accept that Hitler now possessed real, autonomous power. Here, though, it is the remarkable adherence to the effort to undermine the credibility of Hitler and his party as being in any way socialist that is to be noted; and in the days and weeks following the thirtieth of January, Hitler was again and again charged in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung with failing to fulfil his radical promises and, given the make-up of his cabinet, of having allied himself with reaction - in short, with betraying a socialism that the newspaper had spent much time and effort on proving a fake over the preceding four years [181]. Undeniably, this was one element of a broader, deep-rooted failure of analysis; it is being suggested here, however, that it was also symptomatic of the extent to which analysis by this time had become simply a reiteration of stock orthodoxies. In fact the attacks on Nazism's appropriation of elements of socialism is an example of the way in

which the reality of National Socialism was replaced in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung by a construct of National Socialism designed to suit the ideological preconceptions of the SPD. By 1933 National Socialism had come to denote a variety of themes and characteristics which had been underlined so emphatically and so often in the newspaper that even their effectuality as propaganda must have been slightly blunted. Given the seemingly almost automatic resort to them at every opportunity, they were certainly ill-suited to providing flexible responses within the context of a rapidly changing situation.

This 'construct', moreover, amounted to a means of avoiding or containing the difficult ambiguities of National Socialism. Thus, judged as an analysis rather than propaganda, the mechanistic reduction of Nazi 'socialism' to a tactic used by the party in order to artificially retain support amongst the working class and the proletarianised middle class, can only be judged simplistic and superficial. And this is worthy of note, not because the use of simplistic propaganda themes in such a context should be considered unusual, but because their use was often as much an ideologically-driven necessity as a deliberate propaganda technique - that is, a way of conceptualising the NSDAP in a way most convenient to the SPD's theoretical imperatives. For it is obvious enough that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's treatment of the NSDAP's socialist rhetoric bypassed the very real strains of, if not socialism, then at least of a radicalism within the Nazi movement which could encompass anti-capitalism, and the existence of National Socialists who were genuinely concerned with the welfare of workers [182]; and that the SPD was unwilling to recognise that Nazi anti-capitalism

was, although without doubt partly instrumental, not only demagogic, but also one aspect of the movement's dynamism. And this was necessary to the SPD because any such recognition would have contradicted the conception of National Socialism as belonging wholly to the forces of reaction. Portraying the NSDAP's radicalism as nothing more than a cynically- used lure, enabled the SPD to square the circle, providing an explanation of why a party supposedly under the control of big business was yet often anti-capitalist in its pronouncements. Thus, the complexities of National Socialism were suppressed, the movement was comfortably located within the traditional class and ideological parameters, within the rigid battle lines of a previous era, the era in which the Social Democratic Weltanschauung remained grounded.

Not that this suppression was complete. There were moments when a slightly more sophisticated reading of the NSDAP's radicalism was articulated, one which at least acknowledged that that radicalism was not without its sincere representatives even among the party's leadership. Thus, from an essay by Rudolf Breitscheid, published on the front page of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung:

Die Stöhr, Straßer, Reventlow usw., die sich jetzt in Wort und Schrift antikapitalistisch äußern und einen Trennungsstrich zwischen sich und den Scharfmachereien der Industrieverbände und ihrer deutsch-nationalen Vertreter zu ziehen suchen, sind eben nicht die Nationalsozialistische Partei, sondern bilden einen sehr wenig einflußreichen Flügel der Hitlerschen Phalanx



... Was aber das Wesentliche bleibt: Die sozial-  
fortschrittlichen Kräfte im nationalsozialistischen Lager  
mögen ziffernmäßig so stark sein, wie sie wollen, sie  
haben doch nicht die Macht und nicht die Führung. Sie  
haben sie vor allem deswegen nicht, weil sie sich durch  
ihren gehässigen und erbitterten Kampf gegen den Marxismus,  
das heißt, gegen die Klassenbewußte Arbeiterbewegung,  
selbst in eine Position hineinmanövriert haben, die ihnen  
die Abwehr gegen die Sozialreaktionäre in ihren eigenen  
Reihen aufs äußerste erschwert. [183] (5 October 1931)

Even given the inevitable dismissal of the 'social-political wing'  
as a sector of the movement without influence, the very depiction  
of such a wing of sincere anti-capitalists among National  
Socialism's leading figures [184] within an analysis is unusual  
enough to appear subtle in comparison with the normal approach in  
this area. An insight such as this, however, emphasising as it did  
the multiplicity of Nazi 'ideology', was too disruptive to the  
Social Democratic mind-set ever to have become generally  
articulated, although it continued to find occasional expression  
[185]: the hackneyed certainties of the SPD's interpretation of  
National Socialism did not encourage sophisticated thinking.

**CHAPTER 4 : The NSDAP as a 'political instrument': the Social Democratic denial of National Socialism's political autonomy.**

i) The 'agent theory' of capitalist control.

This, indeed, is a recurring feature of the Social Democratic analysis of National Socialism as revealed by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung: the novel nature of the movement, its refusal to conform to the traditional ideological and class contours of German political life, was so confusing a phenomenon for the SPD, that its main response was to deny the NSDAP's complexity, to simplify it. This was not, however, merely a reaction to the character of the NSDAP, it was also a consequence of the SPD's inherent predisposition to ideologically-driven mechanistic thinking, a type of thinking that certainly provided a framework within which National Socialism could be located with little trouble, but also mostly with little originality or clarity of insight. In truth, it provided a framework within which an interpretation of Nazism most suited to the dictates of its essentially Marxist world-view could be developed. And the core of this was the 'agent theory' of National Socialism, which refused the NSDAP its autonomy, viewing it, rather, as the agent, the puppet of big business, of heavy industry, of reaction as a whole - that is, significantly enough, of those traditional conservative forces, in the struggle against which the SPD's self-image and ideology had been formed and fixed. This conviction was the prism through which the NSDAP's characteristics were examined by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung.

Thus, in the preceding discussion of the SPD's dismissal of Nazi anti-capitalism as nothing but a rhetorical lure, a disguise obscuring the reality of the movement's position as a tool of reaction, it is important to realise that this was not the result of empirical observation but rather was the inevitable outgrowth of the SPD's established expectations, of the conspiracy theory, incorporating a very precise portrayal of the relationship between big business and National Socialism, through which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung so often explained events in Germany. It is this 'agent theory' that must now be analysed - firstly in general terms, and then with regard to one of its main components and perhaps the main misconception held by the SPD about the NSDAP, that is the belief that the party was financed (and hence controlled) by big business. Above all in this area the lasting, and stultifying, grip which ideas and modes of thought shaped in the period before the First World War had on the SPD is demonstrated. [186]

The belief that the NSDAP was acting as an agent for the reactionary elements in German society provided the SPD with the basic mode of understanding - or misunderstanding - National Socialism, and, again, this belief and that mode of understanding found an expression in the language by which the Nazi movement was conceptualised in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung: the NSDAP was, for example, 'an instrument in the hands of the employers' [187], 'a tool of political and social reaction' [188]; a puppet being manipulated by the 'string pullers' [189], the 'Hintermänner' [190] of heavy industry; or a 'yellow army' of mercenary henchmen, hirelings of capital, 'Unternehmerknechte' [191],

... die Soldknechte eines machtlüsternen, brutalen

Unternehmertums." [192]

(18 February 1932)

These instances could be multiplied, but the idea of the NSDAP as an organisation under the control of other forces made explicit in such language was merely a convenient propaganda contraction of a fully developed theory of this process of control, a theory that had emerged fairly early on in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung [193] and which shaped the SPD's interpretation of Nazism until 1933. The essence of this theory was that 'reaction', variously characterised as 'Unternehmertum', 'Schwerindustrie', 'Kapital', or even 'Junkertum', was engaged in a conspiracy, the aim of which was the suppression of democracy and working-class rights, and in the realisation of which the NSDAP had been allotted a vital role. An article in July 1930 concisely summarised in one paragraph the Social Democratic portrayal of this conspiracy, beginning with a typical characterisation of the Nazi movement:

Der Nationalsozialismus ist heute noch, was er von Anfang an war: Dummenfang im Interesse des Kapitals.

And 'capital', it was alleged, had deliberately undermined both the economic circumstances of the working class - through, for example, the 'artificial increasing' of unemployment - and the democratic institutions of the Weimar Republic, in order to create conditions propitious for the success of the NSDAP:

Und die Arbeiter sollten verärgert und entmutigt werden.

Verzweiflungsstimmung unter den breiten Massen, das war das Ziel, das das Unternehmertum auch mit dem Abbau des Kranken- und Arbeitslosenschutzes verfolgte. Entmutigte Arbeiter hoffte es, leichter zu dem Glauben an brutale Gewalt, d.h. an den Nationalsozialismus bekehren zu können. [194]

(24 July 1930)

The aims that reaction was pursuing by means of the NSDAP were also clear enough to the SPD:

Hinter dem sogenannten Nationalsozialismus steht als Treiber und Geldgeber der reaktionärste und brutalste Teil der deutschen Kapitalistenklasse. Er will die Zerstörung der Gewerkschaften aller Richtungen, die Beseitigung der Kollektivverträge, die Vernichtung der Sozialversicherung. Ausgerottet werden soll das Bewußtsein eines freien, gleichberechtigten Menschentums, das die Sozialdemokratie in den arbeitenden Massen geweckt hat. Man will wieder ergebene Industrie-Untertanen, die sich aus Furcht vor dem Hunger jedem Diktat fügen. [195]

(28 November 1931)

And in accordance with these aims the Nazis had 'received their orders':

Sie sind die Söldlinge des Junkertums und des schwerkapitals, die den Auftrag erhalten haben, der deutschen Arbeiterklasse die politische Gleichberechtigung und die sozialen Institutionen zu rauben.[196]

(19 October 1931)

Only through the NSDAP could reaction achieve its greatest desire, that is the capturing of the working class [197].

It was, moreover, also posited in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung that the capitalist conspiracy served other purposes beyond its obvious anti-labour movement aims - for instance, as a means of disguising the culpability of German big business for the country's economic distress:

In Deutschland liegen Millionen von Arbeitern erwerbslos auf der Straße. Die deutsche Wirtschaft liegt in schwerer Stagnation, die deutsche Kreditwirtschaft zittert in allen Fugen - und jeder in Deutschland weiß heute, wer die Schuldigen sind. Das sind die bankrotten Wirtschaftsführer, die größte deutsche Konzerne durch Unfähigkeit und Verbrechen in den Zusammenbruch getrieben haben. Das sind ... Nationalsozialisten, die von den bankrotten Wirtschaftsführern als Schutzgarde zur Verdeckung der eigenen Schuld engagiert worden sind. [198]

(13 July 1931)

More generally, the 'unleashing' of National Socialism on Germany was viewed as a last attempt to save itself by capitalism in crisis [199]. Whatever the nuances of analysis involved, however, what remained constant was the presentation of events and processes as being controllable by the capitalist class - and the NSDAP in particular was conceived of as manipulable, as acting at the behest of others' orders, as simply a means that would help to achieve capitalism's ends. Even the economic depression was depicted as having been intentionally precipitated by the 'Unternehmertum',

desperate as it was claimed to be to inflict wounds on the working class and its organisations. And, of course, as the political situation changed, so new developments and occurrences were smoothly assimilated into the broader theory, which provided a framework of comprehension, as well as a framework within which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung could make apparent to its readership the inter-connectedness of political, social and economic events and forces - and in particular the linkage of National Socialism to the traditional foes of Social Democracy.

Thus, for example, the newspaper's coverage of Hitler's meetings with industrialists, already mentioned as one of the means by which the NSDAP's socialist rhetoric was discredited, was further used to reinforce the image of National Socialism in subordination to big business. Hence at one such meeting which received much attention in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung [200], held in Düsseldorf in early 1932, Hitler was portrayed as having, once again, been given his 'orders' to destroy the labour movement, and the nature of this conspiracy and the part of the NSDAP in it, was left in no doubt:

Das größte der großen Dinge aber, die die Schwerindustrie mit Hitler meistern will, ist nach wie vor ihr nicht ohne Kühnheit unternommener Versuch, eine Nazi-Arbeiter-Partei zu schaffen. Bis jetzt ist sie noch nicht da, diese Arbeiter-Partei zur Niederknüppelung der Arbeiter. Sie ist die große Sehnsucht, das große Ziel der schwerindustriellen Verschwörer und ihrer Henkersknechte: der deutsche Arbeiter soll sich selbst umbringen. Das ist

(8 February 1932)

It was indeed a necessity for the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to 'read' the political configuration in such terms, in terms, that is, of conspiracy, of the NSDAP deployed by the forces of capitalism in order to achieve consciously pursued aims. The actuality of events, the essentially uncontrolled nature of much that occurred in Germany at this time, and particularly the reality of the NSDAP's independence, was inevitably suppressed by the certitudes of this conviction. Another example of this was the way in which Hitler's presidential candidacy was seamlessly woven into the broader fabric of the Social Democratic world view, the motivations behind the candidacy presented not in terms of Hitler's ambitions or the exigencies of the NSDAP's political position, but rather, again, as an aspect of capitalism's desperate attempt to save itself from collapse. In the presidential election, Hitler would be nothing more than a representative of the interests of heavy industry and large-scale landownership, as was made clear to the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's readership in an analysis of his candidacy which appeared in mid-February 1932:

Ein Kandidatur Hitlers für die Reichspräsidentschaft ist deshalb die Kandidatur der politischen und sozialen Reaktion. Sie stellt den letzten Versuch der sozialen Reaktion, des in sich zerrütteten Kapitalismus dar, mit Hilfe der faschistischen Diktatur sich zu behaupten gegenüber der in der Krise immer stärker hervortretenden antikapitalistischen Grundstimmung des Volkes. Für wen



will Hitler Reichspräsident werden? Für Deutschlands

Millionäre. [202]

(15 February 1932)

Of course Hindenburg, the candidate that the SPD found itself supporting in opposition to Hitler, could also hardly have been considered as anything other than a representative of reaction; in the peculiar circumstances of the 1932 presidential election, however, this fact, perhaps not surprisingly, received little emphasis in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung.

If this once more illustrates the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's ever-present tendency to look behind Hitler and the NSDAP in an attempt to discern the hands of the real enemies at work, it must be realised that this tendency was the natural concomitant of the SPD's belief that these real enemies were engaged in the unfolding of a machiavellian plot aimed at undermining the Weimar Republic [203]. From such a perspective, events were never random but part of a concerted effort to achieve this aim - a mode of thought well revealed by a speech given by Joseph Felder, Augsburg's Social Democratic Reichstag candidate, and printed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, in late September 1932, and particularly in the idea that the frequency of elections in Germany at this time was in no way mere chance:

Es ist interessant, die Richtlinien und die Taktik der Reaktion zu verfolgen: Erst die wirtschaftliche Zermürbung der breiten Massen, Sabotierung der Arbeitsbeschaffung, Vergrößerung der Arbeitsnot, Zerschlagung der Sozialgesetzgebung, einseitige Steuerpolitik, die die

Lebenshaltung der Massen noch mehr herabdrückt, brutaler Lohnabbau, Zerstörung des Tarif- und Schlichtungswesens. Dann weitere Stärkung des Militarismus ... Dann noch die politische Zermürbung der Wähler. Aus den Parlamenten soll eine Groteske werden. Durch Wahlen bis zum Ermüden im Reich, im Land und in den Gemeinden sollen die Wähler stumpfsinnig, interesselos gemacht werden - dann ist die Zeit für die Reaktionäre gekommen.[204] (26 September 1932)

It was moreover this type of thinking that would lead to the fundamental misjudgement of Hitler's position after his appointment as Chancellor, for the belief that National Socialism was in the control of reaction meant that the SPD could always interpret political changes as a consequence of deliberate decisions on the part of reaction to alter the nature of its relationship with the Nazi movement. It was thus quite possible for the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to claim at various times, that the NSDAP had been dropped by reaction, that the latter would henceforth pursue its aims by means other than through the Nazi movement, which had outlived its usefulness - through, for instance, the 'Cabinet of Barons', which, in the months it held power, seemed to replace National Socialism in the pages of the newspaper as the main 'tool' of capitalist interests. Indeed, it was even claimed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung that Brüning's fall presented the NSDAP's 'masters' with the opportunity to detach Nazism's support from the party, and use it to fill the power vacuum:

So ist für Generäle, Großagrarier und Industriekapitäne

der große psychologische Moment, auf den sie schon lange gelauert haben, herangekommen, um Hitler seine treue Millionenschar abzunehmen und für sich gefügig zu machen.

[205] (14 June 1932)

And yet it was just as inevitable that when Hitler attained power, it would be depicted as a bestowal upon him by these same social forces [206] - and that that power would be analysed as constricted, limited, as representing National Socialism tamed, for this was the only interpretation that the agent theory could allow, the only way in which the reality of Hitler's new position could be acknowledged without contradicting the insistence that the NSDAP was nothing but the servant of reactionary interests. Thus the fatal misjudgements of 1933 were generated not simply by the reaction of the SPD to the specific political conjuncture after Hitler's appointment, but also by the mode of analysis that had been developed over the previous years and which determined that reaction - that is, by constantly locating the SPD's real enemies behind National Socialism and thus supposedly exposing the movement as a tool of capitalism, the party's intellectual flexibility was reduced and its ability to respond adequately to the Machtergreifung damaged.

Given this, it is unsurprising that any evaluation of this key aspect of the Social Democratic analysis of National Socialism must conclude that its effect on that analysis as a whole was almost entirely negative. At times the explications to be found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of the reactionary conspiracy supposedly engulfing Germany hardly seem concerned with social realities at all; rather, they appear to be baroque fictions, fantasies in which

complicated events and processes are reconstructed as simplistic Marxist cautionary tales and to 'reaction' is ascribed the ability to exercise complete control over complex political, social and economic phenomena. The improbability of this, moreover, is only increased by the use of undifferentiated terms, such as 'heavy industry', 'large-scale capital', 'Unternehmertum' or 'Junkertum', as if such socio-economic groupings were easily definable and could be assumed to act, either as united blocs or together under the catch-all of 'reaction', with one will in pursuit of a common goal. It was, however, precisely this belief that 'reaction', and especially the capitalist class, was capable of concerted action designed to eradicate the rights and achievements of the working class, that was consistently articulated in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, a belief, as has been demonstrated, that was in no way vague, but was, rather, almost schematic in its conception - particularly in the conviction that the NSDAP was the agent of reaction, the means by which the labour movement was to be destroyed and the working class captured. Thus were the complexities of the Nazi movement collapsed into one overriding theme; and the refusal to view National Socialism as autonomous is yet another instance of Social Democracy's inability to recognise the NSDAP's true nature, another means by which the difficulties of analysis which the Nazi movement presented for the SPD could be bypassed. Of course, that National Socialism was perceived as a threat by the SPD has already been established; the whole of the material that is being discussed here testifies to this gut reaction on the part of the Social Democratic movement. But what is being considered in this section is an intellectual rather than

a visceral response to Nazism, and although this did not minimise the danger posed by the movement, it yet sought to locate the danger behind National Socialism, as opposed to identifying it as an inherent part of the NSDAP. The SPD simply could not accept that the real enemies, the old foes were not pulling the strings that made the NSDAP dance.

National Socialism, in fact, often seems to function in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as symbolic of these long-established enemies of the SPD; this, indeed, explains why, when a potentially more potent symbol of reaction appeared, the newspaper's focus could, with great ease, leave the NSDAP, as it did when Papen became Chancellor. The fact that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung could claim, because it was propagandistically expeditious to do so, that big business, landowners and reaction in general had abandoned Hitler and turned to Papen as their new 'agent' [207], simply underlines the extent to which the SPD's main target was that reaction, those landowners, the capitalist class - and Papen and his 'Cabinet of Barons' could be inserted just as easily as Hitler and the NSDAP into the SPD's conspiracy theory.

Admittedly, none of this constitutes a negative judgement on this approach as propaganda; it may well have been, indeed, another factor in the general immunisation of Augsburg's core Social Democratic rank and file against National Socialism that is being posited here - after all, the association of the NSDAP with the SPD's traditional enemies could not but have been powerful propaganda. However, considered as the basis of a strategy, this analysis must have had a deleterious effect on the SPD's ability to combat National Socialism, because it structured the whole

perception of the movement upon a mistaken assumption. The effects of this should be evident throughout this work, but it is obvious enough, for example, that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach in this area shows little appreciation of the reality of the relationship between the forces identified as reactionary and National Socialism - which was at best ambiguous and at worst hostile. The failure to grasp the potential Nazism possessed for disturbing the political desires of the traditional right, just as much as the left, was a misjudgement hardly compensated for by an easy resort to a predictable Marxist interpretation of the NSDAP. Conversely, though, the SPD was also prevented from achieving a recognition of the true role of, in particular, the business community in the Weimar policy - for a real case could undoubtedly have been made for the idea that that role was a corrosive one, but it was a case ill-served by the crudely formulaic conception of the links between National Socialism and big business that have just been outlined. [208]

What must be stressed here, moreover, is that the source of this conception was the SPD's pre-existent hostility towards capitalism and the forces of social reaction; once again, that is, the Social Democratic analysis of National Socialism can be seen to have been ideologically pre-determined, for that analysis was really just a further expression of a world-view that had been shaped by a history of past struggle and which was not capable of adaptation. The rise of National Socialism did not lead the SPD to redefine the idea of who its main enemies were; rather that rise was interpreted within an ideological framework which dictated that capitalism and traditional conservatism were those enemies, and

that even an apparently new threat such as Nazism could only be a subsidiary of them. This indeed is why the Schwäbische Volkszeitung seemed particularly to relish its propaganda onslaught on Papen - for the SPD was simply more comfortable attacking the old-style reaction and blatant capitalism that the 'Cabinet of Barons' was perceived to represent, than the NSDAP. There was almost a sense of anticipatory relief in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's proclamation in this period that:

Sie kommen zurück, alle, alle, die sich im November 1918  
verkrochen hatten. [209]

(9 June 1932)

After all, what could have been more congenial to a party whose self-image and entrenched convictions had been formed in the pre-1918 struggle against reaction, than to have had that struggle openly recommenced; although, of course, the point is that the SPD had not, in fact could not have ceased to feel itself still engaged in the historic struggle between socialism and capitalism through which much of the party's self-belief and most of its certitudes had been forged. To have removed National Socialism from this wider context, to have analysed it in any other terms but as an adjunct of capitalism, would have been profoundly disturbing to those certitudes. The SPD's traditionalism of thought was ill-equipped to cope with a movement that was, in comparison, modern - and ill-equipped to deal with the crisis of modernity out of which that movement grew.

ii) The myth of big business funding.

In retrospect it is clear enough that the SPD's expectations predisposed the party to the assumption that the NSDAP was the puppet of reaction; but an analysis of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung further demonstrates that this latter belief, far from being considered an assumption, was presented as an evidentially-based fact - the evidence being the NSDAP's sources of financial support.

The supposed financial dependence of the NSDAP upon that sector of reaction to which the SPD was most antipathetic - that is 'big business', and, within this, especially heavy industry - functioned in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as the 'proof' of its dependency on reaction per se, the glue that held the agent theory together. In reality this putative proof was no such thing, for the absolute conviction that the NSDAP was being bankrolled to a huge extent by the business community was not the cause of the development of the agent theory, but another of its consequences. Capitalism had to be seen to be responsible for National Socialism and, as has just been suggested, the truth of the relationship between business and National Socialism was therefore displaced by what was in essence a propaganda narrative based on myth and supposition rather than on substantiated evidence; nothing reveals this as starkly as an examination of the SPD's misconception of how the NSDAP was financed, a misconception which was simply the greatest myth of all.

Intense curiosity about the sources of National Socialism's funding had been frequently expressed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung since the early 1920s [210], and the refounding of the



NSDAP in 1925 merely gave this curiosity a renewed intensity. The party's financial basis was presented as a mystery that had to be solved in order to fully understand it:

Eines war selbstverständlich, daß aus den eigenen Reihen die ungeheuren finanziellen Mittel Hitlers nicht stammen könnten; alle dahingehenden Erklärungen Hitlers wurden selbst in der eigenen Partei nicht ernst genommen, konnten überdies durch ein einfaches Rechenexempel widerlegt werden ... Auf die Frage nach dem Ursprung der ebenso großen wie mysteriösen Geldmittel wollten wir Auskunft haben, um aus der Antwort unsere Schlüsse ziehen zu können über Hitlers Rückverbindungen und - etwaige Abhängigkeiten." [211]

(14 October 1929)

And even in 1932 the same questions, with the same implications, were still being posed:

Immer wieder herrscht in der Öffentlichkeit mit Recht darüber Kopfzerbrechen, woher Hitler für die Unterhaltung seiner Privatarmee und für großzügige Propaganda die Geldmittel nimmt.

After calculating that comparing the NSDAP's estimated expenditure with its supposed income left around 3.9 million marks a month of expenditure unaccounted for, the article continues:

Es verbliebe also aufzuklären, von welcher Seite die NSDAP mit monatlich 3.9 Millionen subventioniert wird. Diese

Aufklärung über die Subvention ist heute mehr denn je ein dringendes Erfordernis.

Im Gegensatz zu fast allen Organisationen und Parteien ist seitens der NSDAP ein Kassenbericht noch nicht veröffentlicht worden. Die Öffentlichkeit aber hat an einer Klarlegung der finanziellen Hintergründe Hitlers ein großes Interesse. Das Volk muß doch schließlich und endlich wissen, für wen Hitler eigentlich gegen das herrschende System kämpft. [212] (12 March 1932)

Of course, the SPD had long before 1932 determined to its own satisfaction the 'realities' that lay behind the mystery of the NSDAP's financial affairs, steadfastly refuting the (probably correct) suggestion that the party was self-financing in favour of the belief that National Socialism could only survive and prosper by means of big business donations - a belief that was, as has been mentioned, most basically given expression in the language used to describe the NSDAP, as references to the party as, for example, the 'hireling' of the 'Unternehmertum' became part of the routinised rhetoric of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung.

There was, of course, much more depth to the SPD's theories about National Socialist finance than this, even if that depth was in essence spurious; an examination of an extended 'analysis' of the NSDAP's financial affairs which appeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in May 1930 presents a useful starting point for a discussion of those theories. Headlined 'Geldgeber der Nazisozi. Wer finanziert die staatsfeindliche Hitlerbande' [213], the article begins by offering a reason for the restriction of the NSDAP's

attacks on capital to 'Jewish' capital rather than also encompassing so-called 'Christian' capital:

Das hat seine guten Gründe: aus dem christlichen Kapital, aus christlichen zahlungsfähigen Kreisen heraus fließen nämlich reiche Geldmittel, deren die Nazi für ihre sehr umfangreiche und kostspielige Agitation bedürfen.

After denying that National Socialism could be self-financing, the article continues:

Daß schwerreiche Industrielle und sonst mit materiellen Glücksgütern gesegnete Zeitgenossen für politische Parteien oft ganz enorme Aufwendungen machen, ist auch bei anderen bürgerlichen Parteien zu beobachten und an der Tagesordnung.

However, even while admitting that the SPD had itself received occasional financial contributions from outwith the party, the overriding self-reliance of the SPD was emphasised:

Auch die Sozialdemokratie hat, ... in Einzelfällen von Idealisten geldliche Zuwendungen erhalten. Sie hat das niemals bestritten, aber ihre finanziell ausschlaggebende Grundlage sind die Beiträge ihrer Mitglieder, denen über jeden eingegangenen und ausgegebenen Pfennig gewissenhaft Bericht erstattet wird.

With the Nazis, of course, things are arranged rather differently:

Die finanzielle Grundlage ihrer Organisation und Agitation sind nicht die Opfer und Leistungen der eigenen Mitglieder, sondern die Zuwendungen aus geldkräftigen Kreisen, die das antikapitalistische Geschrei der Nazisozi ebenso wenig ernst nehmen, wie es ihre Führer tun, die aber die Nazisozi als Sturmtrupps gegen den heutigen Staat willkommen heißen und aus diesem Grunde häufig und reichlich in den Beutel greifen.

And after a description of the extent of Nazism's need for financial support to maintain its organisations and propaganda, the sources of that support are detailed more specifically:

Der reiche Fabrikant Mutschmann in Plauen als Geldgeber Hitlers ist bekannt, ebenso die liebevolle Unterstützung in vielen tausenden von Reichsmark, die der schlimmste Scharfmacher in Deutschland, der Berliner Industrielle von Borsig, der Hitlerbande angedeihen läßt. Auch die Münchener Geldgeber sind bekannt, die nachhelfen, wenn ausländische Franken, Gulden und Lire ausbleiben.

And finally the motivation for the SPD's exposing of the NSDAP's sources of financial support is given:

Wir entrüsten uns nicht über die Geldgeber der Nazisozi und wir entrüsten uns nicht darüber, daß die Hitlerherrschaften

Kapitalistengelder annehmen. Wir wollen nur die grenzenlose Heuchelei der Nazisozi öffentlich anprangern, die landauf, landab ziehen und unter dem blöden Gebrüll ihrer verhetzten Anhänger die Sozialdemokratie beschuldigen, sie werde finanziell von Judengeldern ausgehalten. Und dieses verlogene und traurige Handwerk der Nazisozi zu erschweren, das ist politische Notwehr.

(7 May 1930)

At the centre of this presentation of National Socialism's financial basis, then, lies not an abhorrence of the fact that business was contributing to the NSDAP as such, but rather a condemnation of the hypocrisy that the receipt of such contributions by the party exposed, the mockery it made of the Nazi's professed political beliefs and attacks on the SPD's finances. This should not, of course, be taken wholly at face value; there can be little doubt that any dabbling by the business community in the political sphere was anathema to the SPD. Nevertheless, leaving aside for the moment the Social Democratic conviction that National Socialism was in effect controlled by big business through its money, the notion that the NSDAP was in some way tainted by its sources of financial support was an important one for the SPD - not least because, as will have been seen from the article just discussed, the party's self-image was inextricably intertwined with its portrayal of the NSDAP's financial relationship with business. The close connection between the self-image of the SPD and the modes of interpretation it applied to National Socialism has already been remarked upon in this study; in the present context, it is arguable that the Social Democratic

conception of the financial structure of National Socialism, as well as serving an obvious propaganda function, was also used to reinforce a self-image which was primarily built upon an emphasis on the virtues of struggle and self-sacrifice - just as it is equally arguable that the potency of this self-image and the desire to characterise National Socialism as the negative contrast to it, was a further obstacle in the way to an acknowledgement of the possibility that, like the SPD, the NSDAP was largely funded by its membership and activities. It was certainly around this idea of self-funding that the contrast was drawn: the virtuous political practice of the SPD, financed by the sacrifices of its members and open to scrutiny, was contrasted with the dishonest politics of National Socialism, mysteriously secretive about its financial affairs, but in actuality reliant on money from its capitalist patrons:

Die sozialdemokratischen Massen haben sich ihre gewaltige Organisation aus eigener Kraft aufgebaut. Sie haben Groschen um Groschen zusammengetragen und ein Bollwerk gegen jene aufgerichtet, die da glaubten, das schaffende Volk für alle Zeiten unterdrücken und ausbeuten zu können. Herr Hitler aber erzählt, daß er 'persönliche Darlehen aufgenommen habe, um die allernötigsten finanziellen Grundlagen für den Neuaufbau der Organisation zu schaffen.' Er sagt, er finanziere den Luxus, der im 'Braunen Haus' aufgewendet wird: 'Unzählige Versammlungsbesucher aus den bessersituierten Kreisen unseres Volkes ... ' sollen entsprechend geschröpft werden. Das ist ein deutliches

Eingeständnis dafür, in welchen Kreisen die Gönner von  
Hitlers 'Arbeiterpartei' sitzen. [214] (15 May 1931)

A similar contrast was drawn around a year later with reference to the 'Iron Front', the umbrella anti-fascist organisation of Social Democratic, Reichsbanner and trade union forces set up at the end of 1931:

Die Faschistischen verwenden die immer reichlicher  
fließenden Gelder der Industrie, der Exprinzen, der  
Krautjunker und der Generäle, die wieder zur Herrschaft im  
Staate drängen. Die Eiserne Front wird sich aus eigener  
Kraft erhalten. [215] (3 February 1932)

The 'Iron Front', indeed, embodying as it did so much of the symbolism that constituted the SPD's self-image, was frequently used in this way - especially through the means of a vocabulary of sacrifice which suffused the rhetoric surrounding the creation of this organisation. This vocabulary of sacrifice, for instance, was clearly to the fore in an Iron Front propaganda appeal of February 1932, in which fascism's reliance on the subventions of the rich is emphasised, alongside the lack of such a reliance on the part of the Iron Front, which is dependent solely on the efforts and contributions, on the 'Opferwilligkeit' of its members:

Gegen das Geld der Schwerindustrie und der Scharfmacher,  
die sich eine faschistische Bürgerkriegspartei und eine  
Bürgerkriegsarmee halten, gilt es, den Opfermut der  
Republikaner zu setzen! Wenn die Unternehmer aus dem

Mehrwert Bürgerkriegsbanden besolden, wenn sie eine konterrevolutionäre Bewegung gegen die Republik und die demokratische Verfassung finanzieren, so wird die Arbeiterschaft trotz ihrer gedrückten Lage aus ihrem Lohn den Kampffonds der Eisernen Front stärken. [216]

(9 February 1932)

Thus Nazi financing is portrayed as operating on a morally lower plane from that of Social Democracy, the sullied nature of the NSDAP's money contrasted with the honesty and purity of the origins of the SPD's. And this idea of the immorality of National Socialist political practice in regard to its financial arrangements was further reinforced in other contexts - it was, for example, another of the functions of the attention paid to Hitler's allegedly luxurious lifestyle, which was usually accounted for in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung with reference to the duplicity of the NSDAP's sources of income, as the following illustrates:

Es entsteht die Frage: Wer hat in Wahrheit die ganze Geschichte bezahlt? Der Lebensstil des Herrn Hitler zeigt auf das deutlichste, daß er in einem Zeitraum von wenigen Jahren ein überaus ansehnliches Vermögen gebildet hat. Kein Zweifel ist, daß seine rednerische und schriftstellerische Betätigung die Mittel dazu nicht geliefert haben kann. Von welcher Seite und mit welcher Begründung sind ihm diese Mittel also zugeflossen? Haben die Gönner der Hitlerpartei nicht nur die Partei, sondern auch ihn persönlich mit finanziert? [217]

(10 October 1931)



If, however, the SPD's conception of National Socialism's financial basis operated as a means of underlining the Social Democratic self-image and belief in a virtuous politics, it could also serve as a method by which aspects of Nazism that were problematic to the SPD could be explained away, could be rationalised. This is particularly evident, for instance, in regard to the intensity and novelty of the NSDAP's propaganda techniques: it was entirely typical of Social Democracy to reach for the ideological cliché when faced with discomfiting phenomena, to respond to National Socialism's propaganda activism by looking for the conspiracy that lay behind it, rather than simply looking at it. Thus, even as early as 1929, Nazi success in Landtag elections in Baden provoked this response in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung:

Ihr Erfolg ist hauptsächlich auf eine maßlose verhetzende Agitation in den Städten und auf dem flachen Lande zurückzuführen. Insgesamt haben die Nationalsozialisten während des Wahlkampfes nicht weniger als 1800 Wahlversammlungen abgehalten; das ist u.a. ein Zeichen dafür, daß die Hitlerianer wieder gut bei Kasse sind und von der deutschen Schwerindustrie wieder reichlich ausgehalten werden. [218] (28 October 1929)

This judgement was reiterated a few weeks later:

Die Hitlerpartei versteht sich auf die Finessen der Reklame, wie keine andere. Kunststück, wenn der

entsprechende Geldschrank da ist und für seine Füllung sorgen schon zur rechten Zeit die schwerindustriellen Hintermänner, die ja jetzt alles auf die Nazikarte setzen.

[219] (5 December 1929)

Hence the fervour of Nazi propaganda could be reduced to a more convenient and manageable concept, could be collapsed into yet another indication that the hand of the business community was at work behind the NSDAP's apparent wealth. The SPD could convince itself that it was wise to the reality of National Socialism - when, in fact, to the historian, the tendency always to interpret Nazism in terms of the supposed financial relationship to capitalism again bespeaks a disguised helplessness in the face of a movement operating outwith traditional political boundaries. It could be claimed that, along with the obvious ideological impulsion, one of the causes of the SPD's misjudgement of the NSDAP's financial affairs lay in its persistent application of widely prevailing models of political behaviour to a movement that largely bypassed them - for it was to some extent the certain knowledge that big business did contribute to the funds of the bourgeois political parties that created or confirmed within Social Democracy the absolute conviction that the same must have been true of the NSDAP [220]. Of course, this may well partially mitigate the SPD's *idée fixe* in this area - it must have seemed a reasonable enough suspicion (and it was a suspicion, it must be recalled, held by other parties as well as the parties of the left [221]) given that the business community did attempt to intervene in the political sphere by making contributions to political parties. And

yet, as has already been stated, National Socialism's relationship with big business was something far removed from this, and the failure to perceive the true nature of this relationship was a consequence of the SPD's difficulty in interpreting the contradictions the NSDAP presented as a mass populist movement of the right.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the SPD's creation of the fiction that big business bankrolled the NSDAP was partly an inference drawn from the actual behaviour of the business community, the ideological imperative was certainly the main driving force in the elaboration of that fiction: thus, as was mentioned earlier, the constant use of the supposed financial relationship between big business and National Socialism by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as a means by which to discredit Nazism's proclaimed anti-capitalist radicalism [222]. To describe the Social Democratic conviction about the existence of that relationship as in essence a fiction, moreover, may seem to be an overstatement of the case; a consideration of the 'evidence' the Schwäbische Volkszeitung adduced to support its claims, however, does little to contradict this notion. There was, indeed, virtually no substantiated evidence presented in the newspaper at all. Instead, the majority of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's material consisted simply of assertion, a fact betrayed by the continual use of blanket terms such as the 'Unternehmertum', 'Schwerindustrie' and the 'Fabrikanten', terms which were arguably without real meaning, but which were routinely used to describe the NSDAP's purported financial backers. This fondness for the use of such general terms - which always carried pejorative overtones -

did not of course mean that individuals were not named, nor even that such individuals did not contribute to the NSDAP; it was, in fact, rather the case that a handful of names constantly reappeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in connection with this theme, taking on an almost symbolic quality, as if the mere mention of industrialists and businessmen such as Emil Kirdorff, Fritz Thyssen, Gustav Krupp, Hugo Bruckmann, Edwin Bechstein and Martin Mutschmann, all of whom were regularly invoked as exemplifying capitalism's financial support of Nazism, was sufficient proof of the SPD's wide-ranging allegations. The paucity of the evidential basis linking such people to the NSDAP, financially and otherwise, and the inadequacy of their use as a means to sustain the SPD's thesis, has been well exposed by H.A. Turner, the totality of whose conclusions need not be agreed with in order to accept that Social Democratic newspapers and propagandists were guilty of founding their accusations on myths and rumours, of magnifying slender connections to National Socialism, of the easy use as examples of small businessmen who were in no way representative of big business - of, in general, creating little more than a parody of the reality of the relationship between business and the NSDAP [223]. Even those individuals highlighted in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung who were financially involved with the Nazi party could rarely, if ever, be said to have typified the attitudes of big business, heavy industry or the business community as a whole to National Socialism, even supposing that such typical attitudes existed. Similar criticisms can be levelled at the other main proof found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of Nazism's reliance on the financial support of industry, that is Hitler's meetings with businessmen,

which have already been mentioned in another context. Disregarding reality and relying on the half-truths and falsehoods that were all the SPD usually possessed in the way of knowledge about such meetings, these events were transformed into the occasions on which Hitler received his orders from big business, after which, upon Hitler's promising to take on the task of destroying the labour movement, he immediately received massive financial contributions from the assembled businessmen. Thus, a report from September 1930 of Hitler's meeting with 'rund 400 Wirtschaftspolitikern des rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiets', has him vowing to destroy international Marxism, to free German workers from its claws; consequently

Kassenschränke öffneten sich, Scheckbücher rauschten. [224]

(23 September 1930)

Of course, such 'evidence' was rarely totally fictitious; it usually had at least some basis in truth, however slim. Meetings between Hitler and businessmen did occur: Emil Kirdorff was a member of the NSDAP (for a short time), while men such as Bechstein and Bruckmann did have some connection with Hitler and some businessmen did contribute to Nazism's 'coffers' [225]. And, although it is easy enough to demonstrate that the SPD grossly exaggerated and misrepresented such facts, a simple condemnation of the party's failure to depict reality in this area yet seems an inadequate analysis, for in a sense reality, the truth did not matter given that the SPD's attitude was ideologically-predetermined. Here, the way in which a continuing theme such as the finances of the NSDAP functioned in a newspaper like the

Schwäbische Volkszeitung has to be appreciated; above all, the extent to which a singular world-view was being propagated, adherence to the tenets of which often became more important than the closeness of those tenets to the truth. Within this context, it is entirely unsurprising that half-truths, myths and lies about Hitler and his party's financial relationship to big business should be seized upon in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung and referred to again and again, ultimately accruing a symbolic resonance far beyond their factual significance. [226]

What is perhaps surprising - not to say a little perplexing - is that, alongside the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's constant allegations about the financial contributions made by big business to Nazi funds, ran another theme, that of the continuing economic difficulties of the NSDAP (227). It is not proposed to examine this theme in any detail, for it was very much subordinate to the more theoretically-driven conception that has just been discussed, in the newspaper's coverage of the NSDAP's finances. There seems little doubt, however, that the portrayal of Nazi financial difficulties that is occasionally to be found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was closer to the truth than the more usual depiction of a party without financial anxiety due to the largess of the business community; this was especially true of the latter half of 1932, when the NSDAP did indeed face financial disaster. Nevertheless, the blatant contradiction between the two treatments of the same theme cannot be disguised, and is evidence of the type of competing imperatives that can at times be seen struggling with each other in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's coverage of National Socialism. On the one hand, and predominantly, there existed the

desire to tie the NSDAP into the SPD's conception of the capitalist system and how it operated, and the consequent need to view Nazism as an agent of that system, financed and hence controlled by it. On the other hand - and this shall be returned to - there persisted within the SPD the tendency to believe that National Socialist success could only be transitory, that the movement must disintegrate, and the idea that the NSDAP stood constantly on the brink of financial collapse was an outgrowth of this tendency. Thus the image of National Socialism presented in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung could be altered if expedient, from that of a party luxuriating in unearned and undeserved wealth to one suffering desperate impoverishment.

To conclude this section of the discussion, it is necessary, firstly, to stress again that the critique advanced here of the Social Democratic approach to the question of the NSDAP's finances should not be taken to imply the total acceptance of Turner's thesis, which seeks, beyond severing the connections between big business and the NSDAP, also to de-emphasise the influence of big business on the failure of Weimar in general. Certainly, Turner's research does much to confirm what is evident enough in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung - that is, that the SPD's desire to unmask Nazism as a tool of capitalism was an ideologically-driven necessity that impaired the judgement of the party. This impaired judgement revealed itself above all in an analysis of the NSDAP's sources of financial support that was simplistic, mechanistic and implausible. And although those accused of contributing to Nazi funds spanned the whole spectrum of reaction - and, indeed beyond,

for the SPD also believed, or professed to, that the NSDAP was in receipt of 'foreign gold' - the basic hostility to the capitalist system that underlay such accusations could never be disguised. This is why it again appears as if the true essence of National Socialism remains hidden from the SPD, continuing as it did to define the former in terms of an imaginary relationship with Social Democracy's fundamental enemy. Thus, although the need to discredit National Socialism by associating it with economic reaction was important to a newspaper like the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, it is arguable that it was at least as important to use this assumed association as a means of lambasting Germany's business community. The supposed contradiction between industry's claim to be suffering from the economic downturn and its generosity to the Nazi party, did not, for example, go unremarked in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, thus the reference to

... die Fabrikanten ... die trotz der Notlage der Industrie für die Zwecke der Hitlerpartei heute noch eine offene Hand haben. [228] (10 August 1931)

or to the payments of

... die sonst so notleidende Schwerindustrie an Hitlers Parteikasse. [229] (16 March 1932)

The frequent highlighting of heavy industry as a major contributor to the NSDAP's wealth, indeed, would similarly seem to have had more to do with the extent to which the SPD's consciousness



remained rooted in the previous era's labour struggles, where it had been forged, than the reality of heavy industry's - even given that the concept of 'heavy industry' is a valid one - relationship with Nazism.

And yet, although these analytical faults without doubt led the SPD to a complete misunderstanding of the NSDAP's connections with the business community and of the latter's complex and variegated attitudes to the former, it should not be forgotten that the SPD's instinctual belief that much of business was inherently hostile to the political, social and above all economic compromises upon which the Weimar Republic was founded, and increasingly so by the early 1930s, was a valid one. This, however, merely serves to underline how necessary an accurate dissection of the Nazi - business relationship was, and thus how disastrously wrong-headed the SPD was in its blind adherence to the propaganda myth it had done so much to create.

## CHAPTER 5 : National Socialism as a transitory phenomenon:

the analysis of National Socialist ideology and propaganda in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung and its wider implications.

The use made by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of the myths surrounding the question of the sources of the NSDAP's apparent wealth, is an example of the SPD's engagement with National Socialism at its most propagandistic; indeed, throughout the analysis thus far the propaganda function of the material on Nazism to be found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung has been emphasised, and the extent to which that material was designed to portray National Socialism in a manner which would have the greatest negative impact on the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's readership has been highlighted. It would, however, be erroneous to give the impression that the reader of the newspaper would have encountered no discussion of the ideas represented by National Socialism. On the contrary, the SPD appears to have been very keen to dissect the NSDAP's fundamental ideology, for this too constituted part of its wider aim of elucidating the rival movement's main characteristics for its readership. It is, though, arguable that the difficulty the party had in developing such an analysis of Nazi ideology, a difficulty which is certainly evident in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's material on this theme, again reveals much about its inherent characteristics - for again that inflexibility of response is present, that reliance, already frequently noted, on predetermined expectations which subordinated thought to polemic. Now, as will be shown in a moment, that Social Democracy was

capable of identifying, and condemning, the key elements that constituted the motivating Weltanschauung of the NSDAP is not in doubt. However, this identification and condemnation is less interesting to the historian than the wider terms in which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung couched its analyses of Nazi ideology, especially the models against which National Socialist ideas were judged. As with the themes that have been discussed up to this point, if attention here is focused, not on the propaganda value of the Social Democratic analysis - the portrayal of Nazi ideology in an entirely negative light - but rather on what it reveals of the SPD at this time, the texts can be shown to have had more than one level of meaning, to be open to more than one possible reading. Thus the various traits that are being suggested as typical of the Social Democratic mind-set reveal themselves to the historian, not only through the obvious consequences they effected upon the content of the SPD's analysis of National Socialism, but also through the underlying shape of that analysis, in ways requiring a more subtle exegesis in order to become evident. Thus, the examination of Nazi ideology in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, it will be suggested, above all reveals the SPD's tendency to judge the NSDAP against itself, to use its own development and organisation as an analytical model through which National Socialism could be assessed; and this, it will be argued, represented another method of escaping the uncomfortable difficulties the Nazi movement presented for the SPD, another inadequate attempt to restructure the NSDAP's challenge to traditional political practice in conventional terms.

First, though the more basic point must be made, that the SPD

was interested in National Socialism's motivating ideas and did quite accurately depict them from fairly early on in the NSDAP's resurgence. Thus, the party's anti-semitism and racial theories, its hatred of the Weimar system, its economic beliefs, its attitudes to Christianity, to women, to culture - these types of themes were all well covered by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung. Unsurprisingly, though, the newspaper concentrated most of its attention on those aspects of Nazi ideology which appeared most relevant to the SPD itself, both in general and in local terms. The previously examined emphasis on the NSDAP's anti-Marxism and the use of the concept of fascism in the Italian parallel were manifestations of this, and, with a similar aim, it was National Socialism's fundamental hostility to Germany's new democratic system that was most often used in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to characterise the movement's ideology. Indeed, for the SPD, this hostility was merely the counterpart of the NSDAP's anti-Marxism and fanatical hatred of the labour movement, given the amount of political capital that Social Democracy had invested in the Weimar Republic as a democratic system; for, however ambiguous its attitude was to the system in operation, Weimar nevertheless represented democracy and working-class achievements to the SPD - and if the NSDAP was able eventually to polarise opinion around the system as a concept, the SPD was at least partially complicit in this, because it felt compelled to defend the system, however far removed from a democratic ideal it was, against Nazi attacks, when more might have been gained from maintaining a more circumspect critical distance from it and, consequently, a less defensive posture. As it was, the NSDAP in a sense set the agenda for the

SPD, as the latter reacted to the anti-system propaganda of the former. Certainly, this aspect of Nazi ideology, its 'Haß gegen die Verfassung' [230], was noted early on in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung and constantly reiterated in the following years, as this typical example from 1930 illustrates:

Die Nazi-Sozi repräsentieren nicht nur den 'Sozialismus der dummen Kerle', sie sind auch Todfeinde des heutigen Staates seiner demokratischen Grundlage wegen ... In ihrem Haß gegen den heutigen Staat schrecken sie, genau wie in anderer Art die Kommunisten, vor keinem Mittel zurück, die Grundlagen des Staates zu zerstören. Neben der skrupellosesten Hetze gegen einzelne Bevölkerungsschichten ist es den NaziSozi vor allem darum zu tun, die Autorität jeder Regierung zu untergraben, die Bevölkerung gegen die Behörden aufzustacheln, die Gesetze zu verhöhnen, um dadurch die Fundamente des Staates langsam, aber, wie sie glauben, sicher zu unterwühlen." [231] (7 May 1930)

Later National Socialism was defined as

eine konterrevolutionäre Bewegung gegen die Republik und die demokratische Auffassung. [232] (9 February 1932)

Clearly, then, the highlighting by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of the NSDAP's anti-Weimar attitudes as, quite accurately, one of the foundation stones of its ideology was part of the wider perception of National Socialism as a threat, as a

threat, that is to say, particularly to achievements valued by the SPD. In other words, the portrayal of Nazi ideology was initially structured by the SPD's own areas of interest, naturally enough. This is why, in comparison to the the NSDAP's hostility to the Weimar system the party's anti-semitism and racial theories in general were, if not ignored, treated almost as a side issue in the SPD's anti-Nazi propaganda [233]. The contemptible nature of Nazi anti-semitism was taken for granted and therefore less often engaged with intellectually than savagely mocked. The relative marginalisation of this theme in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to the cutting aside or dubious jokes about Goebbels' 'semitic' appearance [234] was however also the result of a basic underestimation of the sincerity of National Socialist anti-semitism. Thus, according to D.L. Niewyk:

Most Social Democrats believed that right-wing leaders who played on bourgeois psychoses in Machiavellian style were too intelligent themselves to believe such racist nonsense. Only a minority thought it likely that Jews would be subject to severe persecution in the event of Nazi take-over, and none sensed that the Nazis might eventually resort to genocide. [235]

(D.L. Niewyk, Socialist, Anti-Semite and Jew)

This belief that Nazi anti-semitism was primarily a method of attracting support by playing on base prejudices rather than a genuine theoretical conviction was further encouraged by the readiness of the NSDAP to play down its anti-semitism when this was

expedient, in order, for example, not to harm perceptions of the party abroad.

An interesting contrast to this, however, is the relatively high level of interest paid in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, to an aspect of the NSDAP's ideology that might have seemed just as peripheral to the SPD's interests as anti-semitism - that is, to National Socialist attitudes to Christianity; or, to be more exact, to the incompatibility of those attitudes and indeed Nazi attitudes in general, with any kind of traditional Christianity. A typical article from September 1930 (headlined 'Nazi = Christen') for instance, talked of:

All die Unflätigkeiten und Gemeinheiten, die sich die nationalsozialistische Bewegung seit ihren Anfängen gegenüber Christentum und Kirche wiederholt geleistet hat..

(5 September 1930)

and claimed that the Nazis sought the creation of a nationalistic 'Deutschtumsreligion', which would take its starting point from the party's 'deeply unchristian' racial beliefs. [236].

Similarly, any negative pronouncement from the religious establishment on National Socialism was eagerly published in the newspaper, and the writings of the 'theorists' of National Socialism, in particular Rosenberg's Myth of the 20th Century, were on occasion subjected to close and essentially propagandistic examination, in order that what the SPD perceived as a deliberate and expedient ambiguity in the Nazis' professed attitude to religion could be dispelled and the reality of its hostility to

Christianity revealed [237]. And the point here is that this must be seen as a response by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to the nature of the Social Democratic constituency in Augsburg - that is to say, its overwhelmingly Catholic nature. Whatever the actualities of the relationship between the average rank-and-file Social Democrat in Augsburg and his nominal religion, National Socialism's antipathy to Catholicism must yet have seemed to the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's journalists one aspect of Nazi ideology that could not fail to have a negative impact on the newspaper's readership; it may also have been the case that the highlighting of this element of Nazi ideology was an attempt by Augsburg's SPD to reach beyond its core support, to transmit a message about the nature of the NSDAP to other sectors of the city's Catholic population. Thus, as far as the content of the NSDAP's ideology was concerned, the basic aim remained constant: whether dealing with the NSDAP's hatred of the Weimar system, its anti-semitism or its hostility to established religion, its messianic aspirations [238], its theories about the function of women in society [239], or its cultural criticism [240] - whatever element of Nazi ideology was the subject of attention, the substance of the ideas being discussed was always merely fodder for the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's continued assault on National Socialism, propaganda to be used in whichever way seemed likely to make the most lasting impression.

The despicable nature of the content of National Socialist ideology, then, was taken for granted, and material concerning it in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung entirely predictable in nature. Much more interesting to the historian, however, is the underlying Social Democratic attitude to what may be termed the form of Nazi



ideology; that is to say, to the place that ideas occupied within the National Socialist movement and the intellectual quality of those ideas - in short, the extent to which they formed a coherent ideology which could be analysed as the SPD's could be. To the SPD, it was above all the poverty of National Socialist ideas and their failure to cohere as an ideology that was evident. Thus, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was littered with expressions of contempt for the paucity of original ideas and the lack of theoretical rigour and logical thought in Nazi propaganda and pronouncements. An article by Erik Nölting, for example, talked of:

Die trostlose Unfruchtbarkeit der nationalsozialistischen  
Ideenwelt ... [241] (3 December 1929)

The report of a speech by Carl Severing reiterated his claim that:

... von Geist und Idee kann bei der nationalsozialistischen  
Propaganda keine Rede sein. [242] (21 February 1931)

Elsewhere the question was asked:

... ist schließlich nicht alles, was der  
Nationalsozialismus bis jetzt an Ideen produziert hat, ein  
schlechter Witz? [243] (17 July 1931)

And finally, a similar strain of thinking was present when Augsburg's SPD Bürgermeister Ackermann discussed the secondhand nature of Nazi ideology:

Da ist nicht eine Spur von Originalität, nicht eine Spur von Erkenntnis der soziologischen Zusammenhänge ... Man kann sich auf politischem Gebiet überhaupt nicht ernsthaft mit ihnen auseinandersetzen, weil sie nirgends greifbar, nirgends faßbar sind und nur Schlagworte haben. [244]

(29 November 1929)

There existed, then, a fundamental disdain for National Socialism's perceived inability properly to use ideas or to produce a consistent and convincing ideology - and, as will be shown more fully in a moment, the model, the ideal against which the NSDAP was judged by the SPD in this case was the SPD itself. The type of ideology that National Socialism was despised for failing to possess, was exactly the type of ideology that had played such a large part in the development of the SPD and which continued to exercise at least an intellectual grip on the party. The Social Democratic approach to Nazi ideology thus demonstrated its own belief in the importance of ideology and its own conception of what constituted such an ideology, more than it elucidated National Socialist ideas; for the SPD's 'analysis' of Nazi ideology was conditioned by its own self-image, its expectation of what a successful, durable mass movement should be and what it must possess.

These traits were, for instance, written into the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach to one feature of the NSDAP's ideology that it recognised from the beginning: that is, the fact that the rival movement often appeared not to have one ideology but rather several

ideologies, a range of competing beliefs and motivations which was not merely the consequence of deliberate tactics on the part of the Nazi leadership (different messages for different constituencies) but was actually inherent in National Socialism. It was characteristic of the SPD's analysis, however [245], to judge this multiplicity against an ideal of unity, that type of relative ideological unity prevalent within the SPD itself. Indeed, it could even be said that the Social Democratic attempt to discern a Nazi ideology could not but fail as, in the sense understood by the SPD, such an ideology did not exist, the essence of National Socialism did not, beyond their basic mobilising function, lie in its ideas. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung gleefully highlighted any example of 'ideological' squabbling within the NSDAP or contradictions in the ideas expressed by the party's leadership and propagandists, apparently without realising that Nazi success was certainly not dependent on a conventional ideological unity; rather activism, propaganda and sloganeering were more highly prized than coherent intellectual or philosophical thinking about politics or economics. The contrast this made with the SPD's political behaviour, in which action was always justified (however tenuously) with reference to theory, and in which the theoretically schooled worker represented an ideal, could not have been starker - and equally clear in the pages of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was just how impossible it was for the SPD to make the leap of imagination that would have been necessary for an understanding to develop of how Nazi 'ideology' could differ so markedly from the SPD's (or the SPD's conception of its) ideology, without condemning the movement to impotent obscurity. Thus, although the Schwäbische

Volkszeitung's attempts to engage with National Socialist ideas were both understandable and inevitable, those attempts again ultimately seem to expose the SPD's inability to analyse National Socialism in anything but conventional terms, its use, even if that use was unconscious, as a hermeneutic model, of concepts of ideology and class which perhaps adequately captured the essence of the SPD, but in terms of which National Socialism could only have been defined negatively - that is, with reference to the movement's refusal to be a traditional class-based and ideologically-determined political organisation.

To be fair, and to be more precise, it must be acknowledged that the SPD was capable of recognising that ideas were not vital to the success of National Socialism, that an ideology as such did not bind its followers together. Thus, it was occasionally suggested, or implied, that other aspects of the movement functioned almost as a replacement ideology, aspects such as the NSDAP's intense propaganda activism [246] or its use of violence [247]. And of course the logical counterpart of the SPD's rhetoric of contempt for the poverty of National Socialist ideas would have been a belief that those ideas could only have played a marginal part in the NSDAP's success; and yet in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung Nazi ideas did not cease to be analysed as if they were absolutely crucial to that success and as if a dissection of their intellectual inadequacy could somehow make a difference to that success. Consider, for example, the following extract, taken from an analysis of the NSDAP's party programme:

Das 'unabänderliche' Programm der Partei ist etwa hundert Zeilen lang und von verblüffender Primitivität. Es ist so unfähig und bar jeder konstruktiven Idee, daß nach ihm sich wirklich kein Staat, schon gar nicht ein bewußt ins Chaos gerissenes Staatswesen neu aufbauen ließe. Mit der kindlichnaiven 'Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft', dem Judenhaß und dem 'heldischen Führerprinzip' ist die Vielfältigkeit des modernen Staatslebens nicht zu bewältigen.

... Seinem Inhalt nach ist das Programm ein treues Spiegelbild der Nazi-Partei. Es operiert mit unklaren Begriffen und mystischen Forderungen. Es besteht aus völliger Verkennung der Gegenwartskräfte und auf dieser 'wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnis' fußenden phantastischen Vorstellungen. [248] (13 February 1931)

The contempt here is a contempt for a movement which fails to measure up to the SPD's standard of rationality (this theme of the SPD's image of itself as embodying rational thought and behaviour in opposition to Nazi irrationality will be further explored later); the presumed irrationality and primitiveness of Nazi ideas leads to an absolute confidence that National Socialism could not ultimately succeed. And yet the SPD continued to attempt to engage with National Socialism on the intellectual plane; the obvious consequence of the type of conception of National Socialism's ideology just quoted - which would have been to condemn Nazi ideas, but which hardly necessitated an analysis of them - was not drawn, the SPD's natural instinct was to look for a National Socialist

equivalent to its Marxism.

This was also what led the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to focus on Gottfried Feder as the NSDAP's main theorist or ideologist - the attention paid to Feder's ideas was not a true reflection of his position within the party (which required no such ideological guru) but was rather a reflection of the SPD's own expectations, even of its own requirements if it was to combat National Socialism. [249] Feder's economic theories provided at least a semblance of coherent thought and hence one of the few aspects of National Socialist ideology which could be subject to a detailed intellectual critique. And for the SPD to believe itself to have adequately comprehended National Socialism, it needed to develop and publicise such critiques, thus the misreading of the importance of Feder and his ideas to National Socialism. A good example of this misreading, and one which further elucidates its origins, was a series of articles published in the newspaper in February 1931, entitled 'Die Nationalökonomie des kleinen Moritz. Die nationalsozialistische Wirtschaftstheorie unter der Lupe des Fachmannes' [250]. Although other strands of Nazi belief are mentioned, such as the movement's racial theories, these are quickly dismissed as failing to possess the mobilising power necessary for the creation of a mass movement; rather, because

Die motorischen Kräfte der Zeit liegen heute im Ringen der Klassen,  
because

Ökonomische und soziale Probleme stehen überall im

the NSDAP had to have an economic programme if it was to have any hope of success. The consequence, according to these articles, was Feder's economic theories, which in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung were always summed up in the phrase 'Brechung der Zinsknechtschaft'. What then followed was a lengthy critique of Feder's economic concepts, from the perspective of orthodox Marxist economics, and there can be no doubt about its thoroughness and accuracy; again, however, the suspicion arises that, rather than dealing with ideas that were central to the functioning of National Socialism, the SPD's particular preoccupations were being imposed upon the analysis of the rival movement in an almost artificial manner. Certainly the presence of Feder's ideas as part of the general political landscape of the time is not in question; but the claim that the class struggle, and economic and social problems constituted the motor force of the age reveals the extent to which the emphasising of Feder's theories especially suited the SPD, for although this may have been the case for the SPD and its intellectuals, it yet seems at best a partial perspective from which to interpret National Socialism. Precisely defined economic plans, like a precisely detailed programme, may have been vital to the SPD, but the Nazi movement operated along quite different lines. This is why the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's consistently pursued desire to expose the inadequacies of the Nazi movement's socio-economic theories - for all that this was, admittedly, at least partly understandable as a means of propaganda counter-attack - seems in retrospect above all a template of the SPD's own

fixations, its own preoccupation with theory and, once again, its inability to comprehend the basis of a political practice so radically removed from its own.

This is not, of course, to deny that intellectual analyses of National Socialist ideas could not yield insights and perceptions. Among the most perceptive treatments of National Socialism to be found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung were three lengthy articles which appeared in June 1930 [251], the first of which dealt with Nazi ideas, and which in general demonstrated less of the ideological cliché and a greater recognition of the realities and dangers of National Socialism than was often the case. Nevertheless, even here there was to be found the same underlying discomfort about engaging with a movement such as National Socialism, the same paradoxical combination of contempt for Nazi ideology and the compulsion to analyse it, and the same confidence that the poverty of Nazi ideas would ultimately render the movement harmless, the same characteristics, in other words, which prevailed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's less sophisticated material on this theme. The article, entitled 'Die Ideen', begins with a typical enough disclaimer about the impossibility of the task of explicating Nazi ideas, claiming that any attempt to do so must founder on the latter's 'uncontrollable mysticism':

Das ist das Charakteristische dieser soziologischen  
Erscheinung, daß ihre geistige Substanz schaumiger ist als  
die irgend einer früheren Massenbewegung.

Certainly the seeming irrationalities of Nazism, its ambiguities



and confusions were always problematic for the SPD; this article, however, comes close, briefly, to discerning the real operating principles of National Socialism when it notes the intention behind the movement's 'Vagheit', that is the way it prevents National Socialism from being overtaken by events.

Nevertheless, although in this sense the notion of Nazi ideology is admitted to be almost a false one, the remainder of the article concerns itself with attempts to penetrate the NSDAP's ideological 'vagueness', attempts undertaken with the model in mind of the type of cementing ideology present in the SPD. In particular, and predictably enough, Feder ('der große Theoretiker, die wirtschaftliche Kapazität der Nationalsozialisten') is pinpointed as the party's main ideologue, responsible for its programme (supposedly) and its core economic beliefs. And, as in the article just discussed above, much effort is then given over to a rational undermining of these beliefs, as well as the more nebulous Nazi concepts such as the importance of 'blood' and the 'Führerprinzip'. The importance attached by the SPD to such a critique, moreover, was indicated by the contempt that the NSDAP's supposed failure intellectually to confront Marxism elicited:

... der Versuch einer konkret-faßbaren Auseinandersetzung mit der marxistischen Gedankenwelt ist von den 'Theoretikern' des Nationalsozialismus noch nie gemacht worden.

And the conclusion reached by this commentary was no less condemnatory:

Was bleibt, wenn man die geistigen Grundlagen dieser Bewegung untersucht, die kraftvoll sein will und von Führerkonkurrenz durchtobt ist, die einen Wirtschaftsplan zu haben vorgibt und ihn gegen die Einwände eines Elementarstudenten nicht verteidigen kann, die sich hinter einer Mystik verschanzt, mit der alles, schlechthin alles begründet und abgelehnt werden kann? Es bleibt als konkret faßbare Idee schließlich nichts anders übrig als der Judenhaß. Aber selbst der kann sich nur emotionell, nicht vernunftmäßig begründen ...

... Selbst der Gegner versucht, sich in die geistigen Grundlagen einer soziologischen Erscheinung hineinzufinden. Aber dem Nationalsozialismus gegenüber versagt der beste Wille, weil ihm irgend etwas Geistiges einfach nicht zugrunde liegt. [252] (27 June 1930)

This went straight to the heart of the Social Democratic dilemma in this area: for its worst possible enemy was the enemy with whom intellectual debate and dispute was at least futile, if not impossible. In the clash between Social Democratic rationality and Nazi irrationality, the SPD was bound to remain trapped in modes of thought and methods of political discourse structured around its experiences just as surely as the NSDAP was free of such shackles. For this reason, the accurate diagnosis of how the SPD should proceed which ended the analysis was certain to remain unheeded: National Socialist success, it was stated,

... ist der Erfolg eines kapitalkräftigen Barnum und Bailey, dessen Reklame grandioser ist als die irgend eines Konkurrenten. Dieses massenpsychologische Phänomen ist das, womit sich die ernsthafte Zeitkritik auseinanderzusetzen hat; nicht die verworrene Ideologie, die nur so lange bestehen kann, wie es ihr erspart bleibt, praktische Verantwortung zu tragen. [253] (27 June 1930)

The 'muddled ideology' of National Socialism would continue to be a focus for discussion and polemic in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung - the SPD was not capable of freeing itself from its instinctual belief in the crucial importance of ideology in politics, even in the act of analysing the behaviour of other political movements.

Implicit in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's investigation of the NSDAP's ideology was the belief that rationality, rational ideas would ultimately prevail over the intellectually impoverished approach of National Socialism. It was inconceivable to the SPD that a movement as bereft of ideas as the Nazi movement could mount a sustainable bid for power, far less a successful one; for the party's own development and experiences led it to put an enormous and probably misplaced faith in the power of theoretically grounded ideas. Political activism alone could not suffice. Feeding into this conviction was another feature of the NSDAP's political practice, one which clearly infuriated Social Democrats - that is, the extreme promiscuity of Nazi rhetoric, the tactic of casually promising everything to everyone, which was employed so brazenly by the party:

In der Agitation operiert sie mit auswechselbarem Programm:  
hier schillert es agrarisch, dort großindustriell, hier  
sozialpolitisch-fortschrittlich, dort scharfmacherisch-  
reaktionär, hier monarchisch, dort republikanisch. [254]

(1 October 1930)

This was, to Social Democratic minds, a politics without virtue, mere demagogy and, as such, the SPD was convinced, it was a politics that would ultimately be exposed, practice would betray promise, reality would betray rhetoric, and the National Socialists would be revealed as the dissemblers they undoubtedly were. More than this, it was the task of a Social Democratic newspaper such as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung both to emphasise the inevitability of this process, and to accelerate it by highlighting every instance of Nazi contradiction and hypocrisy - an aspect of the SPD's approach to National Socialism that, as shall be seen in a moment, had far wider implications than might be expected.

First though, it is necessary to outline briefly the way in which this theme manifested itself in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung; a theme it must immediately be said, which was a constant throughout the period under discussion, used with wearying repetition. The newspaper never tired of emphasising the gulf separating Nazi propaganda from the realities of Nazi action, nor of lambasting the unscrupulousness of the practice of making infinite promises to various constituencies. The existence of this latter tactic was made clear to the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's readership many times, as in, for example, August 1930:

In ihren Wahlversprechen haben sie alle übrigen Parteien weit übertroffen. Sie haben sich nicht darauf beschränkt, die eine oder die andere Bevölkerungsschicht politisch zu gewinnen, sondern sie haben sicherheitshalber allen alles versprochen. Sie sind eine Partei für Bürger und Arbeiter, für Enteignung und Schutz des Privateigentums, für Stadt und Land - kurz, nach ihren Wahlversprechungen sind sie Meister in der Kunst 'es recht zu machen jedermann'. In der Praxis sieht das allerdings anders aus. [255]

(26 August 1930)

Or in June 1932, with reference specifically to the workers:

Er [Hitler] ... macht dem Arbeiter Versprechungen über Versprechungen mit größter Gewissenlosigkeit, wie es eben nur einem Hitler eigen sein kann ... [256] (9 June 1932)

Also made explicit, however, was the SPD's expectation that any achievement of governmental responsibility by the NSDAP would reveal the impossibility of fulfilling its multitude of promises, that this would be the true test of Nazi rhetoric:

Erst wenn diese Partei in regierenden Körperschaften ... in ausschlaggebende Stellungen gelangt, erst dann beginnt auch für sie die Probe auf die Echtheit oder Unechtheit ihrer Propaganda-Rhetorik. [257] (28 June 1930)

To the SPD, of course, this was a test that the NSDAP would inevitably fail:

Sie ... schlagen selbst den Rekord in unerfüllbaren  
Versprechungen an alle Bevölkerungsschichten! Sie würden  
alle enttäuschen - am meisten aber die Arbeiter - wenn sie  
an der Macht wären. [258] (18 February 1932)

It was even occasionally suggested in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung that the National Socialists did not really desire the responsibility of power for precisely this reason [259]. And certainly the belief that, whether by being exposed to the realities of power or through some other means, the artificially-created National Socialist support base would disintegrate under the weight of unkept promises and lost illusions, was sincerely held by the SPD - providing, for example, a measure of consolation in an analysis of 'the situation in Augsburg' after the Landtag elections of April 1932, in which the NSDAP had displaced the SPD as the second most popular party locally. For, while admitting that the party had suffered a 'set back', the author of the article was yet confident that the NSDAP's support was but temporary, built upon hopes that could not be realised, proclaiming:

Verlieren werden sie eines Tages die Wählerschichten, die  
sie in den letzten Wochen durch unglaubliche Versprechungen  
an sich zogen. [260] (27 April 1932)

Of course, this belief that support for National Socialism would quickly dissipate, seemingly as part of an inevitable

process, did not prevent the Schwäbische Volkszeitung from seeking to hasten that process by highlighting the hollowness of Nazi rhetoric, the gap between promise and practice. The use of this tactic hardly needs labouing here as heavily as it was laboured in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung itself, but it took the form, for example, and as has already been mentioned in another context, of contrasting the activities of Nazism in positions of power and responsibility with its previous propaganda [261]; or of, more generally, ridiculing the NSDAP's lack of practical achievements to match the extravagance of its rhetoric [262]. In another vein, that extravagant rhetoric was exploited in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as the yardstick against which the contradictions and hypocrisies of National Socialist political practice could be measured, either at the level of the personal behaviour of individual Nazis, especially amongst the leadership, who conspicuously failed to remain true to the movement's ideals and policies [263]; or on the wider political plane, in the many articles which contrasted the 'words' and 'deeds' of the NSDAP in the day-to-day political struggle, in, to give one instance, parliament [264].

The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach to this theme in its daily coverage of Nazism is, however, less significant than the wider implications of that approach. What should be said, firstly, is that, as with the analysis of Nazi ideology, the treatment of the NSDAP's unscrupulous rhetoric represented another instance of the transformation by the Social Democratic mind-set of those very qualities which, in retrospect, contributed most to Nazi success into negative characteristics that would supposedly guarantee the

movement's demise within the short-term. Moreover, although the continual reiteration of the failure of Nazi reality to match Nazi rhetoric may well have been a useful method of propaganda to direct towards the SPD's own supporters, it yet appears simplistic to have expected, as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung apparently did expect, that exposing the mendacity and inconsistencies of Nazi propaganda in relation to practice would have had any effect on National Socialism's momentum. It is, of course, quite possible that the hammering home of this theme was another manifestation of the SPD's vulnerability, of its anxiety about the attractiveness of the NSDAP's rhetoric for its own followers; and it is certainly another instance of the SPD's faith in the instructive power of its propaganda, from which perspective its constant repetition becomes more understandable. It also, however, had its roots in the SPD's basic inability to comprehend Nazism's political practice, an inability which, again, was partly determined by the SPD's conception of its own political behaviour as embodying political virtue, rationality and scrupulous honesty. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's constant identification of examples of Nazi hypocrisy and disingenuousness most often appears as a pedantic resort to a rulebook of political virtue - a rulebook that the NSDAP had no intention of adhering to - which could possess little force in the face of the realities of Nazi politics.

Moreover, although this tactic on the part of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was in one sense an active one, that is it was a means of attacking National Socialism, it nevertheless also revealed a curious strain of passivity of response, or, perhaps better expressed, a passivity of expectation - the shaping expectation



being that National Socialism would betray itself, and that, therefore, the task of the SPD was to point this out whenever it occurred, and thus aid the process of disintegration. In part this was the consequence of a Social Democratic tendency which will be encountered again elsewhere, to avoid looking inward, to substitute the conviction that events would in some way inevitably run in their favour, for any self-criticism, for any profound consideration of the failings of the SPD that contributed to Nazi success. It was also attributable, however, to Social Democracy's adherence to Marxist theory in its analysis of National Socialism - for, to the SPD, the NSDAP's support base was a completely unnatural and unsustainable agglomeration of social classes, which was bound to fly apart at some point in the future:

Auf die Dauer wird sich gewiß auch in dieser Partei der Gegensatz der Klasseninteressen stärker bemerkbar machen. Aber fürs erste lebt sie davon, daß sie kein greifbares Programm besitzt und ganz wie es der agitatorische Bedarf verlangt, allen Schichten der Bevölkerung alles versprechen kann. [265] (5 November 1931)

What can be said here on favour of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's obsessive underscoring of the 'immorality' of Nazi propaganda is that it correctly posited the possibility of tensions erupting within National Socialism if the high level of rank-and-file expectations aroused by that propaganda was not fulfilled, or was not fulfilled quickly enough. Thus, the crisis faced by the NSDAP in the aftermath of the November 1932 Reichstag election

[266] was in one sense a confirmation of the SPD's analysis, a justification of all of its previous predictions that National Socialist success would, indeed could, only be a temporary irrationality. Certainly, this was the way that the Nazi position in late 1932 was presented [267] - that is, with the absolute conviction that the NSDAP had entered a period of irrevocable decline, encompassing electoral defeat, financial ruin and internecine strife. The steadfast opposition of the SPD, moreover, was held to have contributed to this decline.

Nevertheless, although perceptively identifying very real traits existent within the Nazi movement at this time, the ultimate effect of this seeming confirmation of the Social Democratic line can only be considered to have been disastrous. It was all too easy for the SPD to take false comfort from its belief that the NSDAP was rapidly becoming a spent political force. The NSDAP's obvious difficulties in late 1932 merely reinforced that conception of the movement's inherently transitory nature which was the most influential conclusion reached by the SPD from its study of the party's propaganda, that firm confidence that the latter's deceitful structure could not be maintained. And the damage produced by the resultant underestimation of National Socialism, which permeated the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's perceptions of the movement, the never-hidden disbelief in its ability to attain power, was to become most evident in the period after 30 January 1933. For the idea that National Socialism would be tamed by governmental responsibility, that its radicalism and easy promises could never be realised in practice, was not an instantaneous response to Hitler's appointment, but rather the culmination of a

portrayal of the NSDAP as a party whose demagogy was only possible outwith the limits imposed by power - and which, even outwith those limits, was constantly on the verge of disintegration.

Basing a response to National Socialism on the supposed inevitability of its future disintegration contained obvious dangers - the danger, for example, that this would encourage passivity or complacency amongst the SPD's supporters, and, more threateningly, the danger that the NSDAP could achieve its goal of power before the process of disintegration had occurred. This central perception of the NSDAP was, however, widely held within the SPD, and was fed by other aspects of the party's analysis of Nazism besides the interpretations of National Socialist ideology and propaganda just examined. For example, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung hungrily seized upon any evidence of rifts and conflicts within the NSDAP as indicating that the party's decline had begun [268]. In particular, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was eager to portray disaffection within the SA as the discontent of working-class Nazis who were disillusioned by their party's failure to translate its propaganda into reality - a portrayal which, although accurate to an extent, was also more than a little tendentious [269]. The Social Democratic tendency to look to the past for guidance, or, to be more accurate, for reassurance about its present difficulties also played a part here. National Socialism was frequently paralleled with earlier waves of anti-semitism in Germany, and the lesson drawn, either explicitly or implicitly, that Nazism like these earlier movements could not endure [270] - a method of consolation which did not escape criticism for its superficiality even in the Schwäbische

Volkszeitung [271]. There was, further, always an undercurrent of mockery in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's attitude to National Socialism: even while constantly underlining the deadly threat posed by Nazism to the working class, that identification of the NSDAP with the farce and failure of 1923 yet continued, that image of the party as a political rival which could not be taken wholly seriously, which was obviously fixed in the minds of Social Democrats and could not easily be obliterated [272]. This was perhaps most evident in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach to Hitler as a political leader, for there persisted a refusal to regard him as a worthy opponent, his pretensions were ridiculed, he was portrayed as a philistine and a parvenu, and particular use was made of the technique of mock-heroicisation, with the frequent sardonic paralleling of Hitler with Wilhelm II [273]. The rhetorical question implicit in such material always remained the same: how could such a man as Hitler, how could such a party as the NSDAP, aspire to govern Germany?

However, more significant than these elements in reinforcing this view of National Socialism was the presence of a strong streak of what can only be called economic determinism in the SPD's analysis of the movement: for the success of the NSDAP was most often explained in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung with reference to Germany's parlous economic situation. More significantly, however, this explanation brought with it the allied expectation - again presented as an almost inevitable occurrence - that the alleviation of that situation would rob the NSDAP of the only context within which it could thrive.

The connection between the growing popularity of the NSDAP and

the worsening economic crisis was first made in a detailed way in an article analysing the unusual degree of success Nazism was enjoying in the town of Pirmasens, described as 'the proletarian centre of the shoe industry.' The reason for that success was located in the town's particular economic conjuncture - having enjoyed a boom in the mid-1920s, the shoe industry, and hence the town, had since suffered a rapid economic decline producing an embittered middle class and thus fertile ground for National Socialism. In short:

Die Ursache liegt ausschließlich in den wirtschaftlichen  
Verhältnissen. [274] (12 November 1929)

The use of the word 'ausschließlich' is particularly revealing: for, although this article focused on a town with a specific economic structure, the type of economic determinism upon which its conclusions were predicated was to become the automatic response of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung whenever it was faced with the task of rationalising National Socialism's advances. This, indeed, is why the economic explanation was particularly in evidence in the aftermath of Nazi electoral triumphs. In the front page coverage of the NSDAP's huge increase in votes in the Saxony Landtag elections of June 1930, for example, it was boldly stated

... daß die schwere Wirtschaftskrise den Hang zum Extrem  
fördere und daß also das schwache Wachsen der Kommunisten  
und das starke Wachsen der Nationalsozialisten  
konjunkturrell bedingt sei [275] (23 June 1930)

and the accompanying interpretation laid great stress on the effect of swathes of the middle class proletarianised by economic depression, moving away from the old bourgeois parties incapable of representing these interests, to the NSDAP. Similar comment was to be found after the next 'catastrophe vote', that for the Reichstag in September 1930, in which National Socialism again made massive gains. On 17 September, for instance, under the headline 'Warum der Radikalismus?', the answer was duly provided:

Es ist unzweifelhaft, daß ein Teil dieser Wähler geglaubt hat, mit der Wirtschaftsnot, gegen Erwerbslosigkeit und Elend zu protestieren, daß er, von der antikapitalistischen Maske des Nationalsozialismus betört, damit glaubte, einen Schlag gegen das kapitalistische System zu führen ... Die Illusion, daß mit dem bloßen Protestgeschrei und dem Proteststimmzettel oder mit einer Politik der nationalistischen Abenteuer die Wirtschaftsnöte von heute geheilt werden könnten, ist weiter verbreitet als man geglaubt hatte. [276] (17 September 1930)

Then on 18th September was to be read:

... eine der Hauptursachen der Wählerinflation liegt in der schweren Enttäuschung, die die wirtschaftliche Enttäuschung seit der Verabschiedung des Young-Planes bei den breiten Massen verursacht hat: anstatt der versprochenen und erwarteten Entlastung und Ankurbelung der Wirtschaft, ist

eine unerhörte Verschlechterung eingetreten; und die verzweifelten Millionen, politisch und wirtschaftlich ungeschult, führen nun ihr Elend auf die Reparationslasten zurück, während es sich in Wirklichkeit um weltumspannende Krisenerscheinungen handelt... [277] (18 September 1930)

And for good measure this analysis was reiterated on 19 September:

Nationalsozialisten und Kommunisten verdanken die wesentliche Vermehrung ihrer Sitze der skrupellosen demagogischen Ausnutzung einer aus der Not erwachsenen Verzweiflungsstimmung. [278] (19 September 1930)

By this stage, then, the existence of the interconnectedness of the rise of National Socialism and economic conditions was well established in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung. At its core lay the SPD's realisation that the NSDAP had become the party of the disenchanted middle class:

... die wesentlichen soziologischen Untergründe für den Erfolge der Nazis: Zerreibung des Kleinbürgertums, Aussichtslosigkeit für den Nachwuchs des Mittelstandes, Abbau der Angestellten als Folge der Wirtschaftskrise ...

[279] (16 January 1931)

- a realisation that was far from comfortable for a party which considered itself as the natural framework from within which the frustrations and discontents of the proletarianised middle class

could be articulated. As with so many of the elements of the Social Democratic analysis though, once this interconnection had been so established, it was, so to speak, frozen: always available as a convenient explanatory tool, but essentially unchanging. It is, nevertheless, useful to quote from a few more instances of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach in this area, because it is interesting to note the way in which the newspaper's language and imagery mirrored, in the bluntness of its appeal, the reductive simplicity of the concept it sought to convey. The word that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung most often used to describe the effect of the depression on its victims was 'desperation':

Die trostlose wirtschaftliche Lage erklärt unschwer den Aufschwung der Katastrophenpolitiker von rechts und links. Immer weitere Volkskreise werden von dumpfer Verzweiflung erfaßt und fallen so auf das Geschwätze gewissenloser Hetzer herein, die ihnen das Blaue von Himmel versprechen.

[280] (12 April 1932)

And, as this latter suggests, the desperate are easily preyed upon:

Kein Zweifel wenn die Nazibewegung so große Teile des deutschen Volkes in ihren Bann zwingt, daß es in der Hauptsache der Hunger, die Arbeitslosigkeit und die Verzweiflung sind, die den Boden bereitet und Millionen leidender und gequälter Menschen in die Arme der Scharlatane und Quacksalber des Dritten Reichs getrieben haben. Daß ein hungriger Magen nicht mit Logik gesättigt



werden kann, hat schon Heinrich Heine treffend dargelegt.

[281] (21 May 1932)

National Socialism, moreover, was specifically and repeatedly charged by the SPD with the deliberate exploitation of the German people's suffering, with being parasitic upon poverty and unemployment:

Stempelstellen, Hunger, Not und Elend: das war das tägliche Brot dieser Agitation, von dem sie gelebt haben. Am Hunger und an dem Elend der Millionen von Mühseligen und Beladenen haben sich diese Nazis großgesäugt, daran haben sie sich gemästet und daran sind sie fett geworden ... Dick und fett sind sie geworden und groß durch das Elend der Massen.

[282] (2 July 1932)

Of course, it is not being suggested here that there was no causal connection between the rise of the NSDAP and deteriorating economic conditions, merely, as will be discussed later, that the depiction of this connection in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was deeply, but typically suspect in the way it portrayed the motivations of Nazi supporters. The immediate point, though, is that this depiction also further entrenched the belief that National Socialism's success could only be temporary, that it was nothing but a 'Konjunkturpartei', which would not survive economic recovery:

Ist vielleicht ein Jahr vergangen, ist, wie anzunehmen ist, auch ein Auftrieb der Wirtschaft erfolgt, sinkt die Zahl

der Erwerblosen, dann ist es aus mit dem Spuk, aus mit den Konjunkturparteien, die, wie die Nazi und die Kozi, nur im Sumpf wachsen können und von der Not und der Verbitterung zehren. Weder die Nationalsozialisten noch ihre Konkurrenten auf der Linken werden bei einer Neuwahl dann so viel Dumme finden wie am 14. September 1930. [283]

(2 March 1931)

Contrasted to this, naturally enough, was the SPD's self-perception of its own qualities of endurance:

Sie [die Sozialdemokratie] weiß, daß ihre Grundsätze noch bestehen werden, wenn die politischen Konjunkturgewinnler von heute längst nur noch in Archiven und Museen zu finden sind. [284]

(31 December 1931)

This type of self-perception, indeed, could remain inviolate, could retain its credibility largely as a consequence of the importance of factors such as the party's unthinking economic determinism in the SPD's analysis of Nazism - factors, that is, which placed the blame for the rise of the NSDAP on external events and thus removed the necessity from the SPD of looking inwards, of self-criticism and self-analysis. The economic explanation may, by the beginning of 1933, have become just another hardened assumption, another ideological cliché virtually emptied of meaning by repeated use; its influence, however - in the way it had allowed the SPD to elude responsibility, to rationalise as beyond its control the reasons for widespread discontent and Nazi success, and conveniently to

explain that success without reference to its own inability to adapt to a rapidly-changing situation - had been profound.

## CHAPTER 6 : The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's portrayal of

### Nazism's following.

- i) The basic Social Democratic conceptualisation of the Nazi constituency.

It would, of course, be true to say that the SPD's economic determinism was conditioned by the party's ideology; for, although employed in a relatively unsophisticated way, the concept certainly had its roots in Marxist belief. It was, however, more than just an expression of Marxism: the Social Democratic analysis of the influence Germany's economic plight exercised on the political sphere was also part of a broader attempt to address - or, more accurately, to justify - the SPD's failure to capitalise on that plight itself; to answer the question of why, in conditions so seemingly conducive to an anti- capitalist party like the SPD, it was proving to be so unattractive for those affected by economic problems. At the core of this attempt lay a very particular perception of the Nazi supporter, not as someone making a reasoned political choice, but rather as someone in some way misled, deceived or seduced. The economic context was crucial to this perception, in that it supposedly rendered the masses vulnerable to the lure of National Socialism; but, as may have been suggested by the quotations used a moment ago, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung did not simply depict Nazi supporters as the economically desperate seeking a cure for their woes, it also suggested that this desperation had rendered them incapable of making rational choices, had produced some kind of mass mental dysfunction leading to the

rise of Nazism. In September 1931, for example, it was stated:

Diese Zeit der Krise und der Not hat Millionen von Menschen aus dem seelischen Gleichgewicht gebracht. Je schlechter die Wirtschaftskonjunktur desto glänzender die Konjunktur für politische Scharlatane. [285]

(9 September 1931)

And some time later the connections between the economic crisis, a widespread sense of 'confusion' and Nazi success were drawn again in forceful language:

Die Nationalsozialisten verdanken ihr Wachstum der geistigen Verwirrung, die als Folge der entsetzlichen Not in Deutschland um sich gegriffen hat. Diese geistige Verwirrung hat den Boden abgegeben für eine dreist verlogene, das Volk vergiftende nationalsozialistische Hetze. [286]

(26 October 1932)

The effects of the depression, however, provided only the obvious starting point for the conceptualisation of Nazi support in terms of a collective madness which had gripped Germany. It has already been pointed out that in its engagement with National Socialism the SPD saw itself as embodying the values of political rationality and logic, values judged against which Nazism seemed condemned to ultimate failure, whatever its temporary success. This self-conception, with its accompanying conviction about the complete lack of such values to be found in National Socialism, seeps through the whole of the Social Democratic analysis, but it

is particularly resonant in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's portrayal of Nazi supporters as the duped and misled, or even as the sick, less acting upon rational motives, desires and fears, and more being acted upon by an irrational force or malevolent disease. It is that portrayal that will be analysed in this section, with particular attention being paid to the language used by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, constructed as it was around some very potent images and metaphors used to describe the rise of National Socialism - images and metaphors which, it seems likely, impeded rather than aided the SPD's efforts to comprehend Nazism.

The essence of Social Democratic belief about support for National Socialism was that it could not be grounded in rationality - it could not, that is, be the expression of a consciously-exercised political will, but must rather be the consequence of political immaturity or political stupidity, of a politics of emotion and passion rather than logic and reason, or of an aberrational state-of-mind such as that generated by economic difficulties. As has already been indicated, the SPD's analysis of Nazism was to a large extent shaped by its first reactions to the resurgent NSDAP, and this was true also in this area: the frequent characterisation in 1928 and 1929 of Nazi supporters as childish and immature - as, for instance 'lausbübische Gymnasiasten unter der Führung von politischen Hetzern' [287] - was merely the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's initial method of implying that this particular political choice was not one that would ever be made by someone of adult intellect. The newspaper's attitude to Nazis in the very early stages was still clearly laced with a basic scepticism about whether they were to be taken seriously, but even

in the period before 1930 the arrogant, but significant assumption that National Socialism was the refuge of the politically confused, dominated, as in the following, taken from a discussion of Nazism as part of the wider völkisch movement:

Wenn die Völkischen in jüngster Zeit wiederholt Erfolge gehabt haben, so beweist das nur, wie viele verzweifelte, politisch leider unklare Menschen in unseren Land leben; wie viele Menschen sich deshalb an Strohholme klammern und auf jede politische Scharlatanerie hineinfallen ...

[288] (6 September 1929)

And as the threat posed by the NSDAP grew, so too did the determination of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to trivialise the motivations of National Socialism's followers, to dismiss the reality of that threat by dismissing as in some sense inferior the articulation of political grievances through the vehicle of Nazism: Nazi voters, for example, were said to stem

... aus der großen Masse der Indifferenten, der Nichtwähler, der Unpolitischen ... Es sind Stimmen von Leuten, die es von Zeit zu Zeit einer Regierung oder einen System 'einmal bewiesen wollen', Stimmen der Verärgerung, der Verzweiflung, nicht bewußten politischen Willens. [289]

(17 September 1930)

It could even be suggested at times that supporters of Nazism were somehow victims, victims of a political psychosis, of a political confidence trick, even of a form of political hypnosis:

In diesem Sinn hat die Hitlerei trotz allem 'Deutschland - erwache' Geschrei die Leute nie aus dem Schlaf getrommelt, sondern das dumpfe Bumbum ihrer Propagandapauke hat im Gegenteil die dafür empfänglichen Massen in einer Art hypnotische Schlummerei versenkt. [290] (16 January 1931)

And in the crudest manifestation of this perception of Nazi followers, they could simply be characterised as the stupid, or as in some way representing all that was most stupid in society:

Hitler war der erste der die Dummheit der Menschen als politische Großmacht entdeckt. [291] (2 July 1932)

Especially the German middle class, moreover - 'ein vielfach ganz unpolitischer und unwissender Bürgertum' [292] - was believed to be susceptible to National Socialism's political magic: the NSDAP's success was

... die Folge davon daß die Machtträume des Faschismus die Köpfe von Millionen von Spießbürgern vernebelt haben. Die geistige Umschichtung in den Köpfen des Bürgertums, das ist das wirklich Aktivum (sic) an Machtzuwachs der faschistischen Kräfte. [293] (4 February 1932)

Such susceptibility, however, was only of use to National Socialism if it could be successfully exploited, and the notion that the NSDAP was particularly adept at such exploitation was central to



the SPD's interpretation of the process by which the rival movement garnered support - for, to the SPD, the NSDAP's propaganda methods were a deeply suspect, indeed essentially an alien means of preying upon the despairing. This was made clear, for example, in a lengthy article published in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in June 1932, which began by posing the question

ob die 13 Millionen NSDAP-Wähler aus weltanschaulichen Grundsätzen für diese Partei optierten, oder ob sie nur einer Irreführung verfallen sind, der die Masse durch die Not nicht entgehen konnte?

That the author of the article believed the latter to be the case, that any possibility of votes being cast for National Socialism on the grounds of rational conviction as opposed to the harsh demands of the moment was dismissed, is of little surprise. More interesting, though, is the emphasis placed upon Nazi propaganda techniques, where again Social Democratic frustration with the NSDAP's refusal to play the political game by the established rules was in evidence:

Mit einer rücksichtslosen geradezu brutalen Reklame in Wort, Bild und Schrift nagt Hitler an dem notleidenden Volkskörper und begann an diesem seine Zersetzungsarbeit, bis er ihn sich schließlich gefügig gemacht hat ... Seine Art von Propaganda, die die sprichwörtliche Solidität der Deutschen roh erfaßt, auf deren neuartige Reklametechnik wir Deutsche bisher nicht eingestellt waren, machte jeden,

der nur Hitlers Völkischen Beobachter las, die gebildeten  
Anschläge und Plakate der NSDAP täglich studierte und deren  
Versammlungen besuchte, ungeahnt zum Söldling seiner  
Partei.

Der Deutsche unterliegt in seiner Biederkeit allzuleicht  
einer derartigen, auf grösste Suggestion abgestellten  
Reklame.

[294] (8 June 1932)

This portrayal of the honest, upright German people having been  
completely captured by the power of National Socialism's ruthless  
and unfamiliar style of propaganda, may seem in retrospect an  
exaggeration of the efficacy of that style, which was perhaps less  
important than the content of the NSDAP's propaganda to the party's  
success. No doubt this reflected the impression the NSDAP had made  
with its innovative methods of campaigning; it was also, however,  
the logical counterpart of the SPD's conception of the Nazi voter,  
for again this latter could be described as a victim, driven,  
almost against his or her will, to support the NSDAP by outside  
factors, by economic troubles or Nazi propaganda, and not as  
someone exercising a normal political choice:

Papierfluten überschwemmen die Straßen. An den  
Anschlagssäulen brüllte ein teures Plakat das andere an.  
Amerikanische Methoden der Werbung trieben die Wähler in  
Angst und Rettungspsychosen hinein. [295]

(23 September 1930)

In short: to the SPD reason could never be the basis for supporting  
Nazism; but who could be expected to retain their power of

reasoning in the face of the National Socialist propaganda bombardment?

'Reason', in fact, was the concept which underlay the SPD's depiction of National Socialism's supporters [296] - for the NSDAP was regarded as embodying all that was opposed to reason, of representing 'Unverstand':

Schwieriger [than the struggle against the bourgeois parties] ist der Kampf gegen den Feind, der von jeher ihr schlimmster war: 'Der Feind, den wir am tiefsten hassen, das ist der Unverstand der Massen, den nur des Geistes Schwert durchbricht'. Dieser Feind sammelt sich im Lager des Nationalsozialismus. [297] (24 July 1930)

The SPD's vocabulary of rationality, revolving around the words 'Verstand' and 'Vernunft', was also used to define the type of person who would be attracted to Nazism:

... weil die NSDAP nichts erreichen, sondern nur schimpfen kann, wird kein vernünftiger Mensch ihr Gefolgschaft leisten. [298] (23 August 1930)

The frequency with which the word 'Vernunft', or one of its variants, appeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as the antithesis of all that National Socialism stood for, was only one instance of the way in which language entrenched the prevailing attitude to Nazi followers in the newspaper. The ideas that have just been discussed were fixed by language, the importance of

Nazism's mass support was contained and dismissed by imagery and metaphors which encoded that support as an irrationality, psychotic, unhealthy and, by implication, ephemeral. Most common was the suggestion through use of language that, far from constituting a simple matter of political choice, a decision to support the NSDAP had to be the result of some form of deception. The Nazi supporter from this perspective was someone who had been 'lured', 'tempted', or 'enticed', someone who had taken the Nazi 'bait', even someone who had been 'seduced' [299] - the insinuation being that National Socialist success was only explicable as the result of some kind of confidence trick or illusion, a gathering of support by unscrupulous means, rather than a straightforward attraction to the reality of the movement. This led, moreover, to the development of a strain of vocabulary which depicted attraction to Nazism as something involuntary and the Nazi as someone who had been in some sense 'captured': thus the use of words such as 'enslavement' and 'addiction', 'bewitchment' and 'beguilement', or the use of such metaphors as hypnosis and slumber, chloroform and morphine to describe the success of National Socialism [300]. Images such as these latter, moreover - which again, of course, sought to emphasise how far removed from rational politics Nazism was - could also be extended to encapsulate more direct suggestions that succumbing to Nazism could only be likened to a condition of physical incapacity, such as drunkenness [301] or blindness [302], which impaired the 'victim's' ability to resist or see through the movement's temptations. And in a similar vein, the paralleling of National Socialism with illness was frequent in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung: either mental illness - Nazism as a psychosis, Nazis

as psychopaths [303]; or physical illness - Nazism as an infection, a disease,, a poison, a fever ('Hitlerfieber') or an epidemic [304].

The consequences of such conceptualisations of National Socialist supporters were profoundly damaging to the SPD's analysis of Nazism - most notably in the casting of those supporters as essentially passive, as victims, as the seduced and misled unable to withstand the barrage of Nazi propaganda, a depiction which circumvented the need for any consideration, beyond the superficial, of the reasons for widespread discontent, and also neatly avoided the dangerous ground of introspection on the part of the SPD concerning its own failures in the political sphere. Of course, the Social Democratic belief that the NSDAP had become the focus for Germany's despairing and disillusioned is unproblematic; but the ideological belittling of this process, its convenient reduction to a visceral cry of pain from people without a conscious political will, the dismissing of Nazism as no more than a politics of desperation and illusion - such a caricaturing of its opponent's followers merely allowed the SPD to insulate itself against political realities, to feel itself absolved from the painful duties of self-analysis and self-criticism. The effects of Nazi political magic were added to those of the economic deterioration as a sufficient explanation for National Socialism's success. Thus both the wider failings of the Weimar Republic and the SPD's own failings were divorced from the factors seen to be propelling so many into the ranks of the National Socialists; and the disaffection evidenced by those attracted to the NSDAP could be disregarded, viewed as unimportant simply because it was refused -

quite arbitrarily - the qualities which, to the SPD, were politically significant.

Such an attitude, moreover, served only to reinforce the SPD's self-deluding self-image; and was, in fact, part of a broader tendency for Social Democracy to reach for explanations comforting to and confirmatory of that self-image, when confronted with a movement which directly challenged it. In this particular case, the SPD delighted in portraying itself and its supporters as the only sane element in a society increasingly engulfed by madness. Thus to the SPD and to rank-and-file Social Democrats were ascribed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung qualities which were in explicit contrast to the psychosis of Nazism - qualities such as a rational approach to politics and political education and maturity. The traditional oppositions which provided the framework within which the SPD's conception of Nazi support was developed centred on the contrast between the SPD as the embodiment of rationality, intellect, 'Vernunft' and 'Verstand', and the NSDAP as the embodiment of irrationality, of lack of reason and of the idiot's resort to the physical rather than the intellectual. In February 1932, for example, the type of virtues which Social Democracy perceived itself to be relying upon to secure victory in the struggle against fascism was made quite clear:

Die Faschisten setzen ihre Hoffnung auf das Ruhröl, das ihre Propagandamaschine schmiert - die Kräfte der lebendigen Demokratie aber setzen ihr Vertrauen auf die Festigkeit der demokratischen Überzeugung, die aus politischer Erkenntnis und Erfahrung herausgewachsen ist.

Sie vertrauen nicht auf die Propagandaphrase, sondern auf  
die Einsicht des Volkes. [305] (19 February 1932)

And unsurprisingly the key-word in the Social Democratic lexicon of  
political rationality - 'Vernunft' - was often used in connection  
with the SPD's possession of that quality and not only with the  
NSDAP's lack of it. Hence, it was stated:

Wir wissen, daß unsere Anhänger politische Vernunft  
Richtschnur ihres politischen Handelns sein und sich nicht  
von Sentiments leiten lassen. [306] (22 April 1932)

And a few months later, in the midst of a general lamentation over  
continuing National Socialist success came another statement of  
faith in reason:

Die Reaktion ist im Anmarsch ... Noch ist die Naziflut  
nicht eingedämmt, noch nicht abgeriegelt. Oldenburg und  
Mecklenburg sind die Beweise politischer Verwirrung und  
Verwilderung. Und doch muß es wieder anders werden, es muß  
Vernunft und Verstand gegen Wahnsinn, Verleumdung und  
Niedertracht siegen. [307] (10 June 1932)

These oppositions could even be articulated in a more philosophical  
vein:

Der Nationalsozialismus hat alle verderblichen Triebe und  
Leidenschaften der Menschen aus dem Tiefen hervorgeholt und  
zu Mitteln des politischen Kampfes gemacht. Wir

Sozialdemokraten wissen aber, daß die deutsche Republik, wie jede menschliche Gemeinschaft, auf dem sittlichen Bewußtsein, dem Rechtsgefühl der meisten ihrer Mitglieder begründet sein muß, weil anders menschliche Gemeinschaft überhaupt nicht bestehen kann. [308] (29 December 1931)

As well as being drawn in such abstract terms, however, such contrasts were also expressed through the depiction of a class conscious working class, spiritually and intellectually armed within the traditions of the labour movement, in opposition to a basically stupid Spießbürgertum, especially susceptible to Nazi propaganda. Of course, these characteristics were almost certainly delusory, but it was vital to the SPD's self-image that the idea of the well-schooled rank-and-file Social Democrat, immune to the meretricious appeal of National Socialism, be maintained - just as it was vital to continue to assert that the lack of such schooling provided one explanation for Nazi success: National Socialist voters, that is, were drawn from the ranks of the politically and economically 'unschooled' [309]. This latter argument was particularly pressed into service whenever the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was called upon to rationalise the NSDAP's success in attracting the support of the impoverished middle class [310]. The SPD's analysis clearly identified the resentments of this class as anti-capitalist in nature, and could perceive Nazism's success in exploiting this; but given that the party saw itself as the only viable anti-capitalist party, it struggled adequately to assimilate this fact into its overall interpretation, it could not admit that the NSDAP was better able to take political advantage out of



economic discontents than the SPD itself. One way out of this dilemma, as has been seen, was to point to the confidence trick of the NSDAP's 'pseudo-socialism'; another, as has just been discussed, was to portray Nazi success as the victory of superficial allure over political logic - with the concomitant implication that only those without the necessary political schooling, only such social groups as the proletarianised middle class, the bourgeoisie in general, and indeed anyone standing outside of the traditions of the labour movement, could be lured into the National Socialist trap, could fail to draw the only reasonable conclusion from their present predicament and support the SPD.

The inevitable consequence of this line of thought, moreover, was that the unschooled could be educated and the deceived enlightened - and that the SPD, through its propaganda, could achieve this. For accompanying the party's perceptions of the Nazi supporter, was the SPD's belief in the power of its 'Aufklärungsarbeit' to cure the latter's 'sickness', to enable the 'blind' to see again (such terms, natural extensions of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's favourite metaphors in this area, were often used). Indeed, the repetitive use of the concepts 'Aufklärung' and 'Aufklärungsarbeit' - 'Aufklärungsarbeit gegen Faschismus und Terror'; 'Eine Welle der Aufklärung gegen die Welle der Hasses und der Unvernunft' [311] - reveals the depth of the SPD's faith in reason as a political weapon. It is here that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's expectations of the influence it could have are most clearly revealed, the conviction that it was educating its readership, and that its efforts in this sphere could

have a direct political effect. Thus, although the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's anti-Nazi material has frequently been described as propaganda in this thesis, the use of this term should not be taken to imply that the newspaper's overall approach was simplistic or one-dimensional; rather, that approach was predicated on the SPD's belief that by disseminating information about National Socialism, it could both protect its readership against the NSDAP and hasten the end of the latter's success by enlightening Nazism's misguided followers. [312] This belief, for example, lay behind the front page assurance the Schwäbische Volkszeitung gave its readers during the presidential election of February 1932, that they, the 'politically schooled', well understood the only choice that could be made between Hindenburg and Hitler - coupled as it was with the admonition:

Außerhalb unserer großen Organisation stehen aber noch gewaltige Massen, die noch der Aufklärung und der Aufrüttelung bedürfen. Auf sie kommt es an! [313]

(29 February 1932)

Similarly, it was claimed in November 1932 that, by this stage - after, it is implied, all the efforts of the SPD to expose Nazism - the deception of National Socialism should have been recognised by all but 'der Rest der Unheilbaren' [314]. This type of conviction about the effectiveness of its propaganda, though, for all that it may have been a legitimate consequence of the SPD's conception of the political role its press could play, necessarily reinforced the party's continuing, and ultimately fatal, underestimation of the NSDAP - an underestimation most often manifesting itself in the

belief that the movement's success would prove ephemeral, not least because it failed the SPD's tests of reason and logic:

Diese Partei ... ist schon um dieser barbarischen Umbildung und unüberbietbaren Unseriosität willen, rein parlamentarisch und geistig auf die Dauer gefahrlos. Auf dem Felde vernunftmäßiger Auseinandersetzung ist sie kläglich unterlegen und wird sie immer unterlegen bleiben.

[315] (30 June 1930)

Thus the SPD's depiction of the Nazi supporter was both an expression of and a contributor to the party's scepticism about National Socialism's lasting potential: for to the SPD, the Nazi voter, the Nazi follower was always a victim, a victim of a temporary madness which could be cured - which, indeed, the SPD seemed to believe itself capable of curing.

ii) The sociological basis of National Socialist support and the spectre of the working-class Nazi.

If the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's conceptualisation of the process by which 13 million Germans came to support the NSDAP betrays, especially through its language, a hidden agenda, the Social Democratic analysis of the sociological basis of Nazi support is far more transparent in its desire to locate Nazi followers in social strata which accorded with the SPD's theoretical expectations and to repel the idea that the class it considered as its natural constituency had been, to any significant extent, 'captured' by National Socialism. This, indeed, is another area of the SPD's approach to Nazism in which the word 'analysis' is a misnomer - for again fossilised assumptions shaped the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's material on this theme, assumptions hardened into 'facts' by their constant repetition in every available context. Most evident was the assumption that the NSDAP was basically a party of the middle class, a belief which was widely shared by commentators in Germany at the time. The fact that the historiographical tide has now turned against the middle-class interpretation, of course, would be a far from sufficient basis from which to mount a critique of the SPD's firm adherence to this view [316]; there would be little point in making such a retrospective judgement from the perspective of modern historical research. An examination of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's presentation of Nazism's social basis, and particularly its portrayal of working-class Nazism, is relevant, however, in that it reveals again that nexus of factors - theoretical and ideological

expectations, the SPD's self-image, and its suppressed anxieties concerning the NSDAP's encroachment upon the working-class constituency - which conditioned its interpretation of Nazism and damaged its ability adequately to respond to the threat it posed [317].

Unsurprisingly, the sociology of the Nazi movement as it was established by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung concentrated above all on its class basis, and was indeed an outgrowth of the Social Democratic preoccupation with class. Nevertheless, other aspects of the make-up of the Nazi constituency were not ignored. It had, for example, been quickly noticed that the NSDAP was extremely attractive to the young, a fact which was continually stressed throughout the period, often in conjunction with a recognition of the SPD's own failure in this area [318]. Naturally, though, this feature of Nazism was turned readily to propagandistic use in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, for especially in 1928 and 1929 the extreme youthfulness of Nazi followers was frequently mocked. An account of a Hitler meeting published in November 1929 thus claimed that one prominent element amongst the audience consisted of:

kriegerisch, finster blickende Jünglinge, die sich gern in die Inflationslisten eingetragen hätten, wenn - das Wahlalter auf 16 Jahre herabgesetzt wäre. [319]

(9 November 1929)

And just as a metaphorical immaturity was, as has just been discussed, often used by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to explain susceptibility to Nazism, so a literal immaturity was seen as another factor that could leave one open to seduction by National

Ein großer Teil der deutschen Jugend, der nicht weiß, was Massenmord ist und bedeutet, wird von verbrecherischen Phrasen in Wirklichkeit gar nicht so mutiger Leute in faschistischen Versammlungen eingefangen ... die ... die sich von Uniformglanz blenden lassen ... Diesen Irregeleiteten gehört unser Mitleid und es ist unsere Pflicht, sie eines Besseren zu belehren. [321]

(29 November 1929)

The trivialisation of the motives of young Nazis present here was typical; although the effects of mass unemployment on the hopes of the young, and consequently on their willingness to turn to radicalism for solutions, was recognised, in line with the SPD's economic determinism, characterisations of the NSDAP's young followers tended just as frequently to emphasise the importance of Nazism's superficial attractions - hence the suggestion that the young were especially vulnerable to the appeal of organisations which, like the NSDAP, surrounded themselves with an aura of conspiratorial secrecy [322].

In close connection to this stress on

die unreifen jungen Burschen ... die das Gros der

Hitleranhänger ausmachen [323]

(11 January 1930)

stood the recognition that the universities were infected with reactionary tendencies in general, and Nazism in particular. An initial lengthy analysis of this phenomenon published in March 1929

[324] was merely the precursor to a steady stream of articles delineating the right-wing atmosphere and anti-semitism present especially in Bavaria's universities and denouncing the intensity and consequences of the NSDAP's activities amongst students [325]. And just as students as a group came to be identified in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung with a high degree of Nazi support, so was this also the case with a variety of other occupational and professional groups [326]. Nazi success in penetrating the ranks of the country's teachers, civil servants, white-collar workers, farmers and even of the evangelical clergy was not, however, established in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in any analytical way, but, rather, impressionistically - references to the susceptibility of these professions to the temptations of National Socialism were scattered throughout the newspaper's coverage of the NSDAP until the existence of such links became accepted, and certainly unquestioned, facts.

In similar impressionistic manner, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung emphasised the NSDAP's attraction for some of Germany's more dubious elements, an emphasis which was designed further to alienate the paper's readership from National Socialism - thus was National Socialism frequently characterised as having an over-proportion of the anachronistic, the indifferent, the marginalised and the rootless within its ranks. The movement was presented, for example, as a refuge for hankers after a lost era, for members of Germany's former royal families, for ex-army officers -

Offizierstypen, die sich wehmütig zurückerinnern an die

Zeit, in der sie noch auf dem Kasernenhof kommandieren

durften [327]

(9 November 1929)

and for those who had been brutalised by war and its aftermath, and who were now enticed by Nazism's bloodthirsty rhetoric [328]. And in some connection to this, Nazis were commonly portrayed as a collection of ne'er-do-wells, of the displaced and deracinated, of, as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung liked to put it, 'entwurzelte Existenzen':

Die gegenwärtige Anhängerschaft [of the NSDAP] besteht vornehmlich aus wurzellosen Elementen, die man mit propagandistischen Methoden sehr leicht gewinnen kann.

[329] (21 October 1931)

National Socialism was also perceived as having been successful in mobilising the previously unpolitical, those who, to the SPD, were best described as the 'indifferent'. Hence the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's post-mortem on the 'catastrophe vote' of September 1930 claimed that:

4 Millionen bisherige Nichtwähler stoßen zu den extremen Linken und Rechten ... Der Hauptteil der Wähler aber, der ihnen diesmal die Stimme gegeben hat, ist aus der großen Masse der Indifferenten, der Nichtwähler und der

Unpolitischen gekommen. [330]

(15 September 1930)

However, although this point was made on a number of occasions, it



was never followed up in any systematic way; it remained an impression, an assumption. As such its accuracy, like the accuracy of the other claims made in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung about Nazi membership, was hardly relevant: for the aim of such claims, whether they centred upon the youth of the Nazis, the reactionary elements among the NSDAP's following, or the party's ability to tap new sources of electoral support, was basically propagandistic - the implication was always that such support, such votes were politically unworthy. Perhaps the best example of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's use of this tactic was its treatment of the relationship between National Socialism and women. There was certainly a kernel of truth in the SPD's perception that women were proving especially responsive to the appeal of Nazism - a perception that had been made in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung almost as soon as the NSDAP had begun to gain support on a significant scale [331]. This perception, however, was noticeably accompanied by a deliberate degrading of female Nazi supporters, in line with the more general disparagement of Nazi followers examined in the last section. Thus the motives of such women were portrayed as illogical, often as emotional ('hysterischen Hitlerjungfrauen'; 'hysterische Weiber' [332]) and, perhaps more interestingly, also as sexual. As an example of this, the following extract from the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's account of a visit by Hitler to Augsburg in April 1932, is typical:

Und den mögen zur Kenntniss nehmen jene Damen und Dämchen aus dem bürgerlichen Lager, die vor Adolfs Ankunft die Blumenläden förmlich gestürmt hatten. Jene Damen, die dann

in der Halle draußen am Rosenauberg in minutenlange Schreikrämpfe ausbrachen! Jene Damen, denen es nicht um Politik geht, sondern um die Sensation, um den Nervenkitzel, den ihnen ein Kinostar einer politischen Schmierenbühne (genannt Theater der NSDAP) mit einer 15-Minuten-Rede bereitete. Jenen Damen, die ihre Sexualkomplexe am letzten Samstag abreagierten und 5 RM als angemessenen Preis dafür erachteten...[333] (22 April 1932)

And a similar explanation for Nazi success amongst women was propounded in December of the same year, when it was noted that 'das erotische Moment' played a great role in the 'strange' attraction of women to National Socialism - 'strange', in the eyes of the SPD, because of the NSDAP's opposition to equal rights for women [334]. Faced with such apparent irrationality it was predictable enough that the SPD should resort to the belief that emotion, passion and something as alien as sexuality should have had no place in the political arena, and that any party which exploited such factors in order to garner support deserved only contempt.

The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's ideas about the general social basis of Nazism were thus embedded within material which had an explicitly propagandistic slant, but this very fact should be a warning against being too condemnatory of those ideas. It is necessary always to recall that the newspaper was indeed engaged in a daily propaganda war, and to remember how difficult it must have been to analyse the fast growing Nazi movement. National Socialism was first and foremost a threat; there was obviously no time for,

and no reliable data on which to base, a systematic survey of the NSDAP's support - if indeed the inclination to undertake one even existed. This is why there is little intellectual rigour in evidence in this area of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's coverage of Nazism, why it is impressionistic, imprecise and inconsistent, and why Nazi supporters also seem to be presented as stemming from whichever social group was most appropriate in the context of a particular analysis or article. Moreover, the SPD's approach to this aspect of Nazism was certainly shaped by the party's wider desire to trivialise the motivations of National Socialist supporters, as examined above. More consistency is, however, evidenced if the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's depiction of the class basis of the NSDAP is considered; for if it was always the desire of the SPD to portray National Socialism's followers unsympathetically, it was an even more urgent necessity to repel the idea that the working class - or the 'true' working class - were present in any significant numbers within National Socialism.

This was most obviously achieved by definitively linking the NSDAP with the interests of the middle class. The reader of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung had from very early on been left in no doubt that National Socialism was primarily a vehicle of middle-class outrage. In July 1929, an article in the newspaper discussed Nazism's capture of

... breite Schichten des durch die Auswirkung des  
verlorenen Krieges verelendeten Mittelstandes, [335],

(4 July 1929)

and a few months later this analysis was confirmed in an

examination of the class basis of Nazi support which defined the nature of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's convictions in this area for the whole period [336]:

In der Hauptsache setzt sich die Mitgliedschaft und Wählerschaft dieser Partei ... aus den Kreisen des gewerblichen Mittelstandes, die Zuhörerschaft nationalsozialistischer Versammlungen aus Mittelständlern zusammen. (16 November 1929)

The SPD was aware, moreover, that the NSDAP had become the beneficiary of the collapse of the bourgeois parties of the centre, which had begun even before the onset of economic depression, the inheritor of 'das bürgerliche Stimmvieh':

... beweist heute jede neue Wahl, daß der Nationalsozialismus sein Rekrutenmaterial aus den Reihen des sogenannten 'bürgerlichen Wahlstimmviehs', insbesondere aus den liberalistischen Kreisen bezieht. Ehemals große bürgerliche Parteien liegen zerschmettert auf dem politischen Schlachtfeld und stehen in Sorge, ob sie auch nur bescheidenste Reste in die kommenden Parlamente zu retten vermögen. Aus ihrer Asche allein erhob sich der Phönix NSDAP. [337] (15 September 1931)

The tinge of contempt here for these middle-class Nazi supporters was entirely typical of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's attitude to them; indeed the most common term used by the newspaper in such

contexts was the pejorative 'Spießer', a catchall expression of abuse for the middle class. Thus were National Socialist meetings described as being filled with 'rabiaten Spießern' [338], with 'rabiater, reaktionärer Spießer' [339], or with 'das wildgewordene Spießbürgertum' [340]; Fascism was claimed to have confused 'die Köpfe von Millionen Spießbürger' [341]; and Nazi electoral support in Augsburg was depicted as consisting primarily of 'einige Haufen ewig unzufriedener Spießbürger'. [342] An example of the way the terms 'Spießer' and 'Spießbürger' were used in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's propaganda occurred in April 1932, when the SPD organised a political meeting in opposition to a National Socialist meeting in the city addressed by Hitler. The newspaper's report was headlined

Die Schmach des Hitler - Besuches getilgt. Ein großer Tag  
für Augsburgs Sozialdemokratie! 8000 Staatsbürger gegen  
8000 Spießbürger

and the difference between these two types of person made quite explicit:

Bei Adolf die Spießbürger, bei uns die Staatsbürger! Bei ihm Arbeiterfeinde, Klassenkämpfer für den Profit, für die Ausbeutung, für die gesellschaftlichen Vorrechte - bei uns die Massen politisch geschulter Republikaner, die eintreten für Demokratie, für Freiheit, für den Sozialismus. [343]

(22 April 1932)

The validity and importance of the image of the working-class

Social Democrat which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung used as a contrast to the reactionary 'Spießer' will be considered in a moment; that the latter term was used as an insult and did not represent any profound analysis should, however, have been made clear enough, and illustrates the more general tenor of the SPD's approach to this question. There was a large amount of imprecision present in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's language; the various terms employed to describe the class or social basis of Nazism seem to have been interchangeable, and no attempt was made to delineate in any precise way what the 'middle class', or the 'petty bourgeoisie', or the 'Spießbürgertum' consisted of, of which strata of society they were constituted - everyone from the most impoverished sections of the middle class to the highest ranking civil servants were included at different times. Such imprecision was, however, inevitable given the ideological nature of the material, which was certainly not based upon factual evidence. The SPD's adherence to Marxist theory and consequent interest in questions of class obviously predisposed it to categorise the NSDAP as a middle-class party; and insofar as the middle class, broadly defined, certainly did provide a disproportionate amount of support for Nazism, then reality coincided with theoretical prescription and political necessity. Although recent studies have provided a more complex and differentiated analysis of the NSDAP's constituency, and have stressed that it encompassed sectors of German society previously thought to have been relatively immune to Nazi influence, the essential importance of middle-class support to the NSDAP's electoral success remains unchallenged [344]. The bitterly mocking tone which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung adopts

when discussing the middle class and National Socialism was also, however, another expression of the SPD's disappointment at its failure to exploit in any significant way the discontents of especially the newly impoverished middle class and awareness of the NSDAP's success in doing just that. Certainly the SPD in this period did not wish to alienate the middle class, or at least elements of it, such as white-collar workers, to which it believed it could be attractive, but political realities made the characterisation of the NSDAP as the party of the 'Spießer' irresistible.

Arguably, though, underlying the more obvious reasons for the SPD's desire to characterise the NSDAP as middle class was, again, deep Social Democratic anxiety about the relationship between Nazism and the working class. For if, as many historians would now stress [345], significant numbers of workers did become members of, or vote for, the NSDAP, this would have been deeply disturbing to the SPD - and, indeed, as has already been argued above, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, in its attacks on Nazi socialism, evidences just such an awareness of the inroads National Socialism was capable of making into the SPD's 'natural' constituency. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the newspaper's methods of dealing with the concept of the working-class Nazi underline this sense of unease and insecurity.

It was, of course, quite understandable that Social Democrats, given their ideas about the working class - which often appear to have been based on myths and illusions - and especially given their conception of the historical process in which that class was deemed to be caught up, were ill-prepared to confront the possibility that

National Socialism could find support among the working class. And inevitably, once the SPD did bring itself to confront this phenomenon - a phenomenon that, far more than, say, working-class support for the Catholic political parties, or even for the bourgeois parties, challenged the party's deepest convictions - this confrontation took the form of an attempted stripping away from the working-class Nazi of his working-class credentials and assigning of him to a category outside of the traditional German labour movement. The putative power of the labour movement to immunise the worker against the propaganda of National Socialism was invoked as the positive contrast to and explanation for those workers who, without the benefit of such schooling, had fallen prey to Nazism; and the self-image of the SPD, in particular the image it fostered of the schooled Social Democrat, and the defining of the working-class Nazi in opposition to it, led the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to construct its analysis upon some highly questionable assumptions about its own support, and about the nature of working-class engagement in the political process in general.

The most basic way in which Social Democracy defended itself against the spectre of the working-class Nazi, however, was to deny that it existed, or at least in any way that was significant to the SPD; that is to say, denials that the NSDAP had achieved any success amongst the SPD's constituency - or amongst a more widely defined 'Marxist front', consisting of the combined supports of SPD and KPD - were consistent throughout the period. It was often stated that National Socialism had been decisively rejected by the 'organised working class', that Hitler's desires in this direction



had been frustrated:

Jedes Kind weiß heute, daß der Versuch Hitlers, die breite Masse der handarbeitenden Bevölkerung für sich und seine Bewegung zu gewinnen, völlig gescheitert ist. Nirgends ist es ihm gelungen, in beachtlichen Ausmaß in die marxistische Front einzubrechen. [346] (15 September 1931)

The expedient combining of the followers of the KPD and SPD in this way, in order to sustain the impression of working-class indifference to Nazism, was certainly a sign of the SPD's awareness of its deteriorating position - in what other context would the SPD happily have bracketed itself with the KPD? Despite its apparent confidence, it is clear that beneath the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's declarations about the invincibility of the SPD or Marxism, there existed an unease, a sense of uncertainty which meant that the possibility that the party was, even if only at the margins, losing support to the NSDAP, could not be so easily dismissed. Indeed, such a loss of support was occasionally discussed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, for example in April 1932, when it was predicted that this loss would prove only temporary:

Vorausschauend kann wohl jetzt schon gesagt werden, daß die dem Nationalsozialismus aus der Sozialdemokratie zugeströmten Wähler der NSDAP bei nächster sich bietender Gelegenheit, zum mindesten zu einem Großteil die Gefolgschaft wieder versagen werden. [347] (26 April 1932)

There had, moreover, right from the start been admissions in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung that National Socialism had proved attractive to some workers - even in 1929, there were frequent expressions of regret of the foolishness of some German workers in this regard, such as the following from April of that year:

Es ist nur traurig, daß eine Minderheit deutscher Arbeiter sich noch immer von Phrasen betören läßt, ohne auf Taten zu sehen ... [348] (16 April 1929)

or this from November 1929:

Es ist tief bedauerlich, daß deutsche Arbeiter sich soweit vergessen können, einer Partei des Verrats ihre Stimme zu geben. [349] (26 November 1929)

And in the same month, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung had reluctantly to face the fact that Nazism's support extended beyond the young, the confused and the hysterical:

Diese, bei allem Geschrei höchst harmlose, romantische Kerntruppe der Bewegung würde man sich selbst überlassen können, wenn nicht in letzter Zeit größere Kresie des städtischen Mittelstandes der nationalsozialistischen Agitation verfallen wär, die auch in der Industriearbeiterschaft einige Erfolge erzielen konnte.

[350] (29 November 1929)

Such perceptions, and the anxiety accompanying them, only increased in the following years, as the NSDAP became even more successful - an increase that can be followed, not through statements of worry, which would have damaged rank-and-file morale, but rather through the explanations the SPD provided for the existence of these 'deviant' working-class Nazis.

For explanations were needed - there was an apparent contradiction between the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's assertions about the invulnerability of the SPD's support and its acceptance of the idea of the Nazi worker. It was also likely that the reader of the newspaper knew of such workers active in Augsburg, even if their numbers were not large. What was to be made of such a phenomenon, one which confounded the SPD's class-bound political expectations? The SPD's solution to this problem was to stigmatise the working class Nazi as an outsider, as someone to whom the traditions of the Social Democratic labour movement were alien. Whether this characterisation had its roots in reality or was simply the consequence of political imperatives will be considered in a moment; it is necessary first, though, to delineate the approach in more detail.

A useful starting point is an article which appeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in April 1928, in which the claim was made that support for Nazism came

... nur zum allergeringsten Teil aus Arbeitern.

The existence even of this small proportion of workers was, however, easily explained away:

Bei den letzteren ergibt sich übrigens nicht selten, daß auch waschechte Kommunisten im Nationalsozialismus ihre neue politische Heimat gefunden haben. [351] (April 1928)

Although this was by no means the only example of ex-Communists being pinpointed as constituting the bulk of working-class Nazis [352], the importance of this article is less this specific accusation, than the pattern it set of locating the Nazi worker decisively outwith the Social Democratic tradition. Rather than depicting him as an ex-Communist, however, it became more usual to portray him as belonging to the 'unorganised' [353], to those workers who the SPD instinctively felt should rally to its cause, but consistently proved beyond the party's reach. In the midst of anti-Nazi polemics, moreover, the 'unorganised' were transformed into something more, seen as a mercenary underclass selling themselves to Nazism. Thus were working-class Nazis often described as 'lumpenproletariat' - it was claimed, for example

... daß die Nationalsozialisten für ihre Schlägerkolonnen den Abhub des Lumpenproletariats zusammenkratzen [354];

(12 August 1930)

or as 'the mob':

Hitler sollte die Arbeiter fangen. Aber bei seinem Fischzug in den Industriestädten ist nicht die Arbeiterschaft sondern nur der Mob im Netz hangen geblieben. Den Arbeiter fing man nicht. Nur der Bodensatz

der Großstädte blieb in den Maschen des Netzes ... [355]

(21 October 1931)

In essence, such workers were being demonised; a clear message was being sent out about them, one which at the same time could only reinforce the righteous image of the true proletarian which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung sought to project:

Gewiß: es stellten sich schließlich auch in seiner  
Mannschaft Arbeiter ein, aber was für Arbeiter! Krakeeler  
... die irgendwo nichts werden konnten, Unorganisierte und  
Gelbe, die sich überall herumtreiben, wo ein neuer Laden  
aufgemacht wird, und schließlich die katilinarischen  
Existenzen der Großstädte. Wer darauf ausgeht, eine  
Revolution zu machen, muß rechtzeitig mit dem Mob und mit  
den Rowdies Fühlung nehmen. Daher auch der bewußt rüde und  
gemeine Ton in der Agitation und Propaganda der Nazis.[356]

(24 July 1930)

As to what made the lumpen, the mob, the 'class renegades' [357]  
vulnerable to Nazi propaganda, beyond their obvious economic  
plight, on this the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was quite clear: like  
the proletarianised middle class, the so-called underclass had  
failed to find their way to socialism [358], had not been immunised  
against Nazism by the powers of Social Democratic schooling - they  
constituted, that is

jener Arbeiter, die nicht genügend politisch geschult  
waren, um der Schlammlut von Lüge und Verleumdung zu  
widerstehen. [359]

(27 April 1932)

Conversely, of course, those who had experienced such schooling could never be seduced by National Socialism's temptations:

Arbeiter, die denken gelernt haben, die erzogen wurden und aufgewachsen sind in der Schule der SPD und der Gewerkschaften, werden gegen solche 'Lockungen' gefeit sein. [360] (28 November 1929)

The same point was made in a discussion about the NSDAP's attempts to recruit amongst the unemployed, published in April 1936:

Viele Erfolge werden die Nationalsozialisten mit ihrem Anbiederungsversuch bei dem Erwerbslosen kaum haben. Ihre judenfresserischen und sozialistenfeindlichen Parolen üben höchstens eine Wirkung auf solche Teile der Erwerbslosen aus, die nicht durch die politische und gewerkschaftliche Schulung gegangen sind. Jeder politisch aufgeklärte Arbeiter kennt die Naturgeschichte der Hakenkreuzler zur Genüge. [361] (10 April 1932)

The strength of this myth of the schooled worker, of the 'geschulter und politisch wohlerzogener Arbeiter' [362] must be grasped. At times the Schwäbische Volkszeitung gave the impression of believing not in the desirability of the creation, but in the existence of

eine ihrer hohen Mission bewußte, kulturell und politisch hochentwickelte Arbeiterklasse. [363] (2 May 1929)

And it always retained its faith in the ultimate victory of class consciousness:

'Deutschland erwache!' rufen die Nazis. Jawohl, das Erwachen der Arbeiter wird kommen! Die Arbeiter, die sich heute noch von der Nazi-Partei der Prinzen und Offiziere und Großgeldgeber mißbrauchen lassen, werden erkennen, wohin sie als Arbeiter, die auf Arbeiter-Ehre halten, gehören. Das Klassengefühl kann sich wohl vorübergehend bei einem Teil der Arbeiterschaft verwirren und verirren lassen, aber ersticken, gänzlich ersticken läßt es sich nicht - auf die Dauer nicht. [364] (2 January 1931)

The SPD seemed truly to believe that it was engaged in a battle it could not lose, a struggle between enemies of unequal strength - and as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung once put it, the key to the inequality lay in the differing qualities of Nazism and Social Democracy's respective supporters:

Ungleich ist das Kräfteverhältnis ... Ungleich nicht nur nach der Zahl, sondern auch nach der Qualität der Kämpfer: Disziplinierte, politisch geschulte Arbeiter gegen rabiate, reaktionäre Spießer und einige verhetzte unorganisierte Arbeiter. [365] (18 February 1932)

Recent historiography has, of course, emphasised that the Nazi penetration of the working-class constituency went deeper than

merely reaching the type of worker consistently suggested by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung and indeed earlier historical work as the typical working-class Nazi - that is, the worker brought up outside of the traditions of the labour movement [366]. It is not, however, necessarily on such grounds that the newspaper's depiction of the working-class Nazi as a political deviant should be criticised - again it must be stressed that it would be unrealistic to use later historical research as a yardstick against which to measure contemporary impressions. Moreover, the idea that workers outwith the Social Democratic mainstream were more susceptible to the attractions of Nazism than those within it is basically accurate. There was, however, more involved in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's presentation of this aspect of Nazism than merely the perceptions and confusions of the contemporary observer: for the demonisation of the working-class Nazi served a crucial function within the analysis of National Socialism as a whole, it was another aspect of the SPD's desire to explain away those elements of National Socialism most inconvenient to its politics and its theory. That the SPD was anxious about the National Socialist threat to its own constituency has already been established; and this anxiety belies the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's apparent certainty that no class conscious, organised worker could support the NSDAP. At the level of theory and analysis, however, the Nazi threat did not exist: the working-class Nazi was a concept contradictory of the SPD's belief that the NSDAP was a party of the middle class. But since the presence of workers within the Nazi party could scarcely be wholly denied, the only way in which that presence could be acknowledged, and the integrity of the Social



Democratic analysis yet simultaneously maintained, was through the marginalisation of such workers. The caricature of the working-class Nazi as stemming solely from traditions alien to mainstream Social Democracy that was developed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was thus both expedient in propaganda terms and the inevitable consequence of the SPD's shaping theoretical beliefs.

In this area as in others, then, the SPD's ideological convictions acted as a block on the party's ability to confront those aspects of National Socialism that appeared to confound those convictions; instead the party resorted to ideological manoeuvring, to the skillful side-stepping of the awkward analytical hurdle by means of the most convenient theoretical explanation. As far as the SPD was concerned, the NSDAP was, indeed had to be a middle-class party; thus its working-class supporters were only explicable as the lumpen and unschooled, or at most as the schooled, whose 'schooling' had been disrupted by economic distress. Any real engagement with the sources of dissatisfaction that led former SPD voters to switch allegiance to National Socialism was carefully avoided - and the question of why those outwith the parameters of the organised working class became Nazis in a time of economic depression rather than Social Democrats, the possibility that this was the result of a political approach on the part of the SPD which, had it been altered, had it been less parochial, could have increased its support to include a larger proportion of Germany's workers, was simply ignored.

It is important to understand, moreover, that the SPD's attitude to the working-class Nazi was no mere propaganda facade - the internalised ideological obstacles to an open acknowledgement

of working-class support for National Socialism were huge. There seems little reason, given the mind-set of most Social Democrats, especially those Social Democrats involved in literary production, to doubt that the explanations for the phenomenon of workers within the NSDAP propounded in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung were sincerely held beliefs - just as there is no doubt that the image of the worker schooled in the Social Democratic tradition was as much a reality as an ideal to the newspaper. It was, of course, almost certainly a false reality; the SPD's concept of a deviant working class could only exist alongside the idea of the virtuous, class conscious rank-and-file Social Democrat, immunised by political education against Nazism - an idea that was dubious, if not wholly illusory. How well schooled ordinary SPD supporters and voters really were must be open to question, and in a complex socio-political situation to single out the idea of schooling as the crucial factor differentiating the working-class Nazi from the rest of the working class seems simplistic, if entirely consistent with the SPD's world-view. The ideal of the schooled Social Democrat was another of the clichés of Social Democratic thought, the development of which enabled the SPD to make National Socialism comprehensible to itself; and like so much else in the SPD's outlook, this ideal may have been born in an era long since past, but its potency, its constricting potential remained very much a part of the SPD's present in the Weimar Republic.

CHAPTER 7 : Rhetorical responses to National Socialist violence  
in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung.

The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's initial defining image of the NSDAP had been that of a party of violence; and although, as has been seen, the newspaper's engagement with National Socialism became far broader, the image of the Nazi as a violent thug was yet the most consistently adhered to aspect of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's portrayal of Nazism [367]. The flood of articles and reports designed to maintain and reinforce this image was unrelenting and, while various in detail and extent, they contained but one message about Nazism's essential nature and threat. It is, indeed, highly likely that the basic 'image of the enemy' formed by the reader of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung would have centred around the NSDAP's involvement in violence, and the implications of this must be explored. This is all the more necessary as it was in reaction to its own perceptions of Nazi violence that Social Democracy determined the limits of its own willingness to resort to force, at least defensively; it will be shown however, that as the SPD's rhetorical assertions of such a willingness became ever more strident in response to the NSDAP's growth, so the tensions and contradictions within that rhetoric became ever more apparent - tensions and contradictions which it is vital to understand if an explanation is sought for the SPD's rejection of mass resistance in 1933. Rhetoric and reality were separated by years of ingrained political practice, and the inability of the SPD to break free of the constraints of its tradition is revealed by the confusions and ambiguities its rhetorical assault on Nazi violence contained.

Nazi violence was presented in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as a cancer eating at the heart of German political life, indeed at the heart of German society as a whole; and the NSDAP as a party incapable of reasoned political debate, a party which, through its easy resort to the physical as a substitute for such debate had contributed more than any other to the barbarisation of the political atmosphere. The NSDAP was, in the common vocabulary of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, bestial and brutal, a 'Bürgerkriegspartei' or, more accurately, a 'Bürgerkriegsarmee'. And as in other spheres, the consequences of Nazi violence were portrayed in the newspaper by means of the apocalyptic vision, in barely exaggerated depictions of a decent, civilised country suffering an onslaught from barbarian hordes:

Das uniformierte Nazigesindel unternimmt an allen Ecken und Enden Terrorversuche gegen friedliebende Bürger, von Disziplin ist keine Rede, die Faust, das Messer und der Revolver feiern Orgien. [368] (18 June 1932)

National Socialism, it was stated, was possessed of the will

... Deutschland, seine Dörfer und Städte, in ein brennendes Schlachtfeld zu verwandeln und unser Volk in den blutigsten Bürgerkrieg zu stürzen [369]; (16 September 1928)

it had perpetrated countless

... politische Übeltäten die seit Jahr und Tag das ganze

Land in einen Hexenkessel des Hasses, der Verleumdung und  
der Mordlust zu verwandeln droht. [370] (12 April 1932)

Knuckledusters and pistols had become established tools of  
political conviction [371], and Germany was gradually succumbing to  
a primacy of the fist:

Die Nachrichten über terroristische Anschläge der  
Hakenkreuzhorden haben sich in den letzten Tagen derart  
gehäuft, daß mit allem Nachdruck verlangt werden muß, daß  
dieser Kulturschande ein Ende bereitet wird ... Heute leben  
wir wie im Zeitalter des Faustrechts, kein anständiger  
Mensch ist seines Lebens sicher, selbst die Frauen und  
Kinder in den Wohnungen sind diesen Bestien nicht mehr  
heilig. Tag für Tag, Tote und Verwundete, Überfälle auf  
Gewerkschaftshäuser, Druckereien, Genossenschaften,  
Überfälle auf Privatwohnungen - fürwahr ein Zustand, der  
zum Himmel stinkt. [372] (4 August 1932)

It was the SPD's belief, moreover, that such violence was in no way  
random and uncontrolled, but rather amounted to a purposeful  
political strategy designed specifically to intimidate and  
ultimately defeat the NSDAP's political and intellectual opponents.  
Violence, from this perspective, was being deliberately provoked by  
Nazi propaganda: the purpose of the Völkischer Beobachter, for  
example, was claimed to be the

... Aufpeitschung der niedrigsten Instinkte [of its

readership] ... Blut! Blut! Blut! so muß es den  
urteilslosen Hakenkreuzgehirnen täglich und stündlich  
eingehämmert werden, so muß die Bestie im Menschen geweckt  
werden. [373] (5 October 1929)

Not only members of the NSDAP were portrayed as being affected by  
Nazi propaganda, however:

So darf man sich über die möglichen Auswirkungen der  
nationalsozialistischen Stoßpropaganda keiner Täuschung  
hingeben. Die Versammlungssprache der Nationalsozialisten  
hat breite Volksschichten, namentlich die Jugend, unsäglich  
verroht. Die politischen Leidenschaften sind bis zur  
Siedenhitze aufgepeitscht. [374] (29 December 1931)

And along with the content of Nazi propaganda in general, the  
proclamations and speeches of the National Socialist leadership  
were similarly seen as creating the necessary context for political  
violence:

Eine jede Rede der nationalsozialistischen Führer  
bezeichnet den politischen Gegner als lebensunwürdig, als  
Untermenschen den man am besten abtue ... Die  
nationalsozialistische Presse reizt ganz systematisch zu  
Gewalttätigkeiten. [375] (3 January 1931)

The Nazi 'intellectual originators' [376] of violence had to take  
responsibility for the type of party they had created:

Vom politischen Meinungskampf ist keine Rede mehr. Es handelt sich darum, daß eine Partei, die den Terror will, offen zu Morden und Blutvergießen auffordert, und ihre Leute uniformiert zum Blutvergießen auf die Straße schickt ... Der Wille zum Bürgerkrieg und der Befehl zum Bürgerkrieg geht von den nationalsozialistischen Führern aus. [377] (23 June 1932)

And the most significant aspect of such terror was its deployment as a means of silencing opposition:

Ein besonders dunkles Kapital bilden die systematisch vorbereiteten Versammlungssprengungen und Überfälle auf politische Gegner. Die viehische Roheit, mit der diese Messerstecher ihr Mörderhandwerk ausüben, die zynische Grausamkeit, mit der sie sich mit fürchterlichen Waffen ausrüsten und die Tatsache, daß es sich immer und immer um notorische Rohlinge handelt, die die Nationalsozialistische Partei mit großer Brutalität gegenüber Andersdenkenden vertreten, der Terror, in ihren eigenen Versammlungen, die zügellose Herabsetzung der Arbeit des Proletariats und seiner Partei, der Sozialdemokratie, das alles beweist, daß wir recht haben, wenn wir der nationalsozialistischen Gefahr mit aller Kraft entgentreten. [378] (26 November 1929)

The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's messages about Nazi violence

were conveyed to its readership through a predictable enough catalogue of National Socialist involvement in violent incidents [379]: Nazi murders, Nazi bombings, reports of clashes between Nazis and Communists, and of the 'bestial' behaviour of Nazi Reichstag and Landtag delegates, extensive, sensationalist coverage of court cases resulting from Nazi violence, the publicising of secret Nazi documents detailing the movement's violent desires, lists and statistics of violent crimes committed by National Socialists - such was the staple daily diet which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung took great delight in providing. It was a diet, moreover, supplemented by the type of warnings to the working class about National Socialist intentions examined earlier, only in this context specifically focusing on the movement's violent intentions - constantly emphasising, for example, Hitler's prophecy that heads would roll after the NSDAP came to power, or declaring:

Sie [the Nazis] wollen die brutale Gewalt mit Messer und Revolver zum staatlichen System erheben. [380]

(29 July 1930)

The SPD could have no illusions about the role which force would play in a Nazi Germany, for the NSDAP's words and deeds allowed none:

... Wir zweifeln nicht daran, daß die nationalsozialistischen Führer das Gelüste haben, ihre blutrünstigen Deklamationen in die Tat umzusetzen. Ihre Bürgerkriegsbanden haben bisher schon blutig genug gehaust ... Diesen Haß wollen die nationalsozialistischen



Blutprediger benutzen, um Deutschland in ein allgemeines Schlachtfeld, in einen Trümmerhaufen zu verwandeln. [381]

(18 July 1932)

Nevertheless, despite the deliberate construction of this image of National Socialism as a violent army disrupting normal life and poisoning the political atmosphere, the SPD ostensibly accepted that the NSDAP aimed to take power by legal means and not through the instrument of a Putsch. This acceptance, though, was deceptive: the possibility of such a Putsch is never quite dismissed, indeed accusations about the preparation of one are frequently made. Similarly the actions of the Nazi rank and file are seen to contradict the leadership's legal stance, even though Hitler's assertions of legality are accepted as a political fact. It was, that is to say, necessary for the SPD to maintain its image of the enemy by keeping alive the idea that the NSDAP was capable of the ultimate violent act, the insurrection against democracy.

In part, of course, this may also have been a hangover from 1923. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung frequently made reference to Hitler's failed Putsch of that year, and there is a sense in which that event crystallised one image of National Socialism in the imagination of the SPD. Hence, notwithstanding the SPD's recognition that it was no longer Hitler's intention to attempt such an action, a willingness, indeed a desire to believe the contrary yet persisted. For this reason, acceptance of Hitler's professions of legality was, in the first place, only ever qualified, and, in the second, consistently undermined in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung by evidence suggesting the hollowness of those professions. Thus, a lengthy discussion of the problem

published in May 1931 [382], whilst certain that Hitler was serious in his disavowals of using violence as a direct means to achieve power, and clear about the pragmatic Realpolitik lying behind this, was yet perceptively aware of the possibility that the violence inherent in National Socialism could emerge in unrestrained form if the movement ever did gain control of the country:

Gewiß übersieht Hitler die Wirkung seiner Legalitätsschwüre auf die Sturmabteilungen nicht. Aber das Ziel, dem er mit der Preisgabe seiner revolutionären Haltung zustrebt, scheint ihm das Opfer von ein paar tausend alten Anhängern wert. Er wird salonfähig, regierungsfähig ...

Ob Hitler legal bleibt, wenn ihm einmal hilfsbereite Bundesgenossen die Möglichkeit geben sollten, den Regierungstraum Wirklichkeit werden zu lassen, ob er nicht dann auf demokratischem Weg zur Macht gelangt, sich durch einen Staatsstreich die Macht erhalten würde, sei dahingestellt. Gegenwärtig sind seine Legalitätsbeteuerungen ernst gemeint.

The author of the article was, however, also compelled to demonstrate that the threat of Nazi violence did not simply lie in the future but was evident in the present behaviour of the Nazis, behaviour which made a stark contrast to Hitler's recent pronouncements:

Aber Legalität müßte verpflichten. Nicht nur zur Ausschaltung von Putschplänen, nicht nur zur Absage an den

Hochverrat; Legalität bedeutet, daß das Staatsgrundgesetz, die Verfassung und alle Gesetze des Staates aus ehrlicher Überzeugung geachtet und befolgt werden.

Wie hält's die Partei in Wahrheit mit der Legalität?

The answer to this question was provided by a long list of examples of Nazi lawlessness over the previous two months, and the conclusion reached:

So steht es in Wirklichkeit: Der Führer schwört, und die Geführten pfeifen auf den Schwur.

And this approach was merely the continuation of a pattern whereby any violent incident in which the NSDAP was involved could be seized upon as yet another demonstration of the sham nature of Hitler's legal course. Thus, the following reaction to a Nazi attack on a Volkshaus in Lemberg:

Welcher Art und Beschaffenheit die von Hitler wiederholt beschworene Legalität ist, dafür gibt der Augenzeugenbericht eines Unbeteiligten über den planmäßigen Überfall von Nationalsozialisten auf das 'Volkshaus' in Lemberg (bei Pirmasens) am Sonntag, den 10. Mai, eine lehrreiche Illustration. [383] (16 May 1931)

Unsurprisingly, the previously mentioned secret Hessen document was exploited in similar fashion:

Das Nachspiel, das die Hessenwahlen gefunden haben, zeigt ... auch die Verlogenheit der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung. Das Programm der hessischen nationalsozialistischen Landtagsabgeordneten für ihren illegalen Regierungsantritt steht in schneidendem Widerspruch zu den Legalitätsschwüren Adolf Hitlers. Die Doppelzüngigkeit und namenlose Heuchelei des Nationalsozialismus ist entlarvt. [384] (28 November 1931)

Beyond this obvious tactic of stressing the gulf that existed between Nazism's rhetoric of legality and its violent reality, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung further sought to cast doubt on the relevance of that rhetoric by claiming that many Nazis strongly disagreed with Hitler's policy. An article published in July 1931, for example, portrayed a faction within the NSDAP as impatient with the legal way and agitating for violent action:

Man bereitet eine Stimmung vor, die der im Oktober 1923 außerordentlich ähnelt und die Anführer, ob sie wollen oder nicht, schließlich zu Gefangenen der eigenen unverantwortlichen Agitation machen muß.

To Hitler, though, is ascribed a rather more common-sense view (which again indicates that the SPD did accept that Hitler's declared legality was a serious political strategy):

Wahrscheinlich ist ... er davon überzeugt, daß schon der Versuch einer Gewaltaktion von der abwehrbereiten

preußischen Polizei mit drakonischen Mitteln im Keime  
erstickt werden müßte.

But nevertheless:

... Vorsicht ist am Platze, denn die Verzweiflung hat schon  
manchen zum Verbrecher gemacht. [385] (31 July 1931)

The possibility that an act of force might be hazarded by the NSDAP was never removed from the minds of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's readers. On the contrary, in fact, for the newspaper was forever relaying rumours about supposed preparations on the part of the Nazis for a Putsch or for a civil war [386].

In short, the trenchant negative image of National Socialism as a party of thuggish bestiality could not be allowed to be erased by any concept of the NSDAP as an essentially legal party as far as long-term political tactics were concerned - for, even though this latter concept was acknowledged and even publicised in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, it was simultaneously and continually contradicted by the newspaper's broader depiction of Nazi violence. Beyond the basic reporting of the NSDAP's involvement in violence described above, the party's legalism was also made to seem less relevant by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung than an aspect of that broader picture not yet mentioned: that is the SPD's conviction that the authorities were too lax in their treatment of Nazi violence. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung was full of the same type of complaints that would have been found in any Social Democratic newspaper of the time [387]: the police were charged with failures

to act, or to act rapidly enough against Nazi displays of force, the courts with an unwillingness to punish the perpetrators of such displays (while being more than willing to act against members of the left-wing parties) and the state as an entity with an abdication of its duty to prevent Nazi violence and behaving too passively. By mid-1932, moreover, these beliefs had been transformed into an analysis which claimed that the Papen and Schleicher governments were in active collusion with National Socialism, had deliberately removed the barriers (such as the banning of the SA) which were all that prevented Germany from being plunged into civil war. In the months leading up to the Nazi *Machtergreifung*, indeed, when the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's portrayal of Nazi violence was at its most intense, that violence came almost to be regarded as state-sponsored [388].

It must also be remembered that the paramount fact concerning National Socialist violence for any Social Democrat was that it was violence very specifically targeted at the labour movement - in comparison to this fact and its manifestation in daily life, the NSDAP's disavowal of insurrectionary violence could have been of little importance [389]. It must be noted here that the SPD's interpretation of Nazi violence was comfortably located within its wider analysis of the NSDAP as the paid army of big business entrusted with the task of destroying the labour movement - violence was only the starkest aspect of this attempted destruction, but also the one that could be most effectively dramatised in a newspaper like the Schwäbische Volkszeitung. Thus throughout the period no opportunity was lost to emphasise how often Social Democrats found themselves the victims of unprovoked

Nazi attacks [390]; particularly from mid-1932, however, the extent to which Social Democracy felt itself to be under assault produced a type of siege mentality in the party (one which could only be reinforced by the hostile presence of the KPD on the political scene):

Der ganze Haß dieser Bürgerkriegshetze richtet sich gegen die organisierte Arbeiterschaft, gegen den stärksten Hort des Friedens und der Sicherheit, den Deutschland besitzt. Die Terrorakte der braunen Banden richten sich systematisch gegen die Einrichtungen der Arbeiterschaft. Der Haß, der daraus spricht, ist der Haß der Klassenrenegaten, der Proleten, die sich der Reaktion und dem Scharfmachertum zum Kampfe gegen ihre Klassenbrüder verkauft haben. Sie sind Landsknechte gegen die Freiheit geworden, die das Brot des Söldners gegen ihre Klassengenossen essen. Sie hassen uns, sie hassen unsere Disziplin, sie hassen das, was wir geschaffen haben, weil es eine dauernde Mahnung, eine dauernde Peitsche für ihre Gewissen ist! [391]

(18 July 1932)

The NSDAP's violence, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung noted, was yet another contradiction of its socialism, directed as it was not against 'the palaces of the barons of industry' or the castles of Germany's princes and large-scale landowners:

Statt dessen aber fliegen die Bomben und Benzinflaschen ... in die Gewerkschaftshäuser, in die Gebäude der Krankenkassen und der Arbeiterzeitungen. Arbeiter sind es,

die nachts in ihren Betten erschossen werden,  
Arbeiterfrauen und Arbeiterkinder werden ihrer Ernährer  
beraubt, Arbeitermütter ihrer Söhne. Funktionäre der  
Arbeiterschaft werden terrorisiert, niedergestochen und  
niederschlagen, dieselben Leute die Jahrzehnte für die  
Arbeiterschaft gekämpft und in den Gefängnissen gesessen  
haben für ihre Überzeugung und für das Recht der Volkes auf  
Arbeit und Brot.

Das ist das Gesicht dieses Naziterrors, das ist das Gesicht  
einer 'Arbeiterpartei' des Herrn Hitler! Judas Hitler.

[392] (10 August 1932)

To the SPD, however, the very use of violence, irrespective of  
against whom it was used, was inherently incompatible with  
socialist values; this belief, indeed, shaped the SPD's response to  
the physical assault on it by Nazism. Once again, the SPD's  
self-image was crucial here: the NSDAP's casual resort to violence  
was contrasted with Social Democratic values perceived to be rooted  
in legality, order and discipline and maintained even while the  
party was being assailed from all sides by ideological enemies  
without scruples [393]. This contrast was inscribed in the SPD's  
thought and was the cause, as will be discussed in a moment, of the  
difficulties that confronted the SPD as it tried to counter the  
threat and the actuality of Nazi violence. In the Schwäbische  
Volkszeitung it was often made explicit in reports of Social  
Democratic events, in which the disciplined behaviour of the  
participants was used as a yardstick against which to condemn the  
lack of such discipline displayed by the National Socialists. An



early example of this was an article published in August 1929, which took as its starting point the Nazi Parteitag recently held in Nuremberg, and the violence accompanying it, and continued:

Wie konnte es auch anders sein! Vor 14 Tagen  
hunderttausend Arbeiterturner in Nürnbergs Mauern. Der  
Bürger sah sie. Kein Zwischenfall war zu verzeichnen,  
trotz Tropenhitze keine Entgleisung. Selbst Polizeibeamte  
rühmten unaufgefordert die zu bewundernde Disziplin der  
Arbeiter und deren Betragen. [394] (7 August 1929)

As it developed over the next few years, this idea of the disciplined Social Democrat became almost fetishistic in the way it was applied to almost every large-scale gathering of the labour movement reported on in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung. A typical description of a Reichsbanner demonstration, for example, would proudly emphasise the presence of the Reichsbanner members

... in straffen korrekten Formationen

and continue:

... so stehen im ganzen Reich in dieser Stunde die fertig  
ausgebildeten, wohldisziplinierten Schufomänner. [395]  
(23 February 1931)

And discipline was the Social Democratic quality that the National Socialists, possessing none themselves, were believed to despise most of all:

Sie hassen uns, sie hassen unsere Disziplin. [396]

(18 July 1932)

The supreme demonstration of this discipline, moreover, was the refusal to be provoked by the NSDAP, the refusal to descend to the level of Nazism - and such refusals to be provoked based upon an ability to maintain discipline were, on the evidence provided by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, commonplace. While the details may have been variable, the scenario was in essence always the same, as exemplified in the following extracts from the above mentioned article on a Reichsbanner meeting:

Trotz nationalsozialistischer Provokationsversuche kam es nicht zu ernsteren Zwischenfällen ... Die zahllosen unverschämten Provokationen des sich in seiner Lächerlichkeit und bodenlosen Gemeinheit gleichermaßen überschlagenden Nationalsozialisten.

... Tatsächlich verdient die Geduld der aktiven Republikaner die höchste Bewunderung und das höchste Lob.

[397] (23 February 1931)

Or this from a few weeks later, making reference to a Nazi demonstration:

Es fehlte natürlich nicht an den bekannten Provokationen der Arbeiterschaft, doch verhielten sich die vernünftigen Arbeiter ruhig und disziplinierte. [398] (16 May 1931)

It was, moreover, not only the provocation of direct violence that

the SPD had to resist, the intellectual provocation provided by the Nazi leadership was just as much a test of Social Democratic discipline and patience - for instance, the behaviour of Frick in Thuringia:

Es ist ein unwürdiger Zustand, daß Herr Frick ungehindert weiter provozieren darf. Man sollte in den Kreisen der Verantwortlichen nicht vergessen, daß es ungeheurer Selbstbeherrschung aller republikanischen Kreise bedarf, um das putschistische und verfassungsfeindliche Treiben des Herrn Frick noch länger mitanzusehen. [399] (12 May 1930)

The SPD, however, had no doubt about its capability to ignore such provocations and to refrain from becoming embroiled in the consequences of

... die Entfesselung dieser wilden und blutrünstigen Bürgerkriegshetze, die nur dank der kaltblütigen Besonnenheit der linksstehenden noch nicht zur katastrophalen Explosion geführt hat...[400] (25 June 1932)

For ultimately the discipline of Social Democratic workers was believed to lie at the heart of the moral strength that enabled them to refrain from resorting to violence, even during a time of great desperation - a point made in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in response to the accusation that the Weimar Republic's welfare state had undermined the will of the German people:

Ist es moralische Zermürbung, wenn sechs Millionen  
Arbeitslose und ihre Angehörigen ihr hartes Los, ihr Elend  
und ihre Not männlich tragen, ohne dem Aufruhr und der  
Anarchie zu verfallen.

Diese schweigende und leidende Millionenarmee - das ist das  
beste Zeugnis der moralischen Kraft der deutschen  
Arbeiterschaft. [401] (11 June 1932)

The SPD's rhetoric of discipline, however, co-existed with a rhetoric of defiance, with constant assertions in aggressive language of the party's willingness to defend itself against Nazism; a co-existence which was extremely problematical. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's eagerness to proclaim that Social Democracy possessed both the capability and the desire to counteract any full-scale Nazi assault on the labour movement or indeed on the Weimar Republic as a whole, was the active, or potentially active, counterpart to the use of Nazi violence in the construction of a negative image of the enemy. This aspect of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's response to Nazi violence was present from the first but became virtually systematised within the language and propaganda of the newspaper with the advent of the Iron Front [402], which, considered as a literary expression of the SPD's reaction to the intensity of the NSDAP's activism - which is of course how it manifested itself within the Schwäbische Volkszeitung - was intended even in its very name to embody the party's steadfastness and invincibility, and the absolute impossibility of succumbing to Nazi violence. Despite such surface confidence, however, this assertiveness, the attempt to compete

with National Socialism on its own terms, was an uncomfortable, almost unnatural, role for the SPD to occupy. For although the party sought to base its counter-offensive on the traditional Social Democratic self-image with its stress on discipline, that self-image stood in fact in real contradiction to the exciting of political passions, to the employment of an overtly aggressive political practice and especially to any coherent discussion of the possibility that the party, even in the most extreme of circumstances, would itself resort to violence. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung deliberately created an image of National Socialism which could produce only contempt and anger among its readership, whilst simultaneously relying upon a language of aggression to bolster the self-belief of that readership at a time when it was under fierce attack; but the tensions inherent in the use of that language, particularly the gulf separating the aggressiveness of expression from the actuality of action promised, betrayed the dilemma the SPD faced in this area. And, in spite of an attempt to convince even itself to the contrary, the traditional virtues of Social Democracy that the party was so keen to contrast with the behaviour of its enemies - discipline, patience, the ability to resist provocation, the reliance on the intellect rather than physical force - were clearly destined to prevail and to shape the party's behaviour at moments of crisis.

Nevertheless, even without the possibility of such a reading of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's assertions of the SPD's readiness to defend itself, those assertions would be important - not least because their possible impact on the paper's readership is one of the factors that must be considered later when analysing the

response of Augsburg's Social Democrats to the Nazi seizure of power. As was often the case, that which was to gain a new intensity in the final months of the Weimar Republic had been present in embryo in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in the early years of Nazism's resurgence. It was common enough even at this stage to find in the newspaper declarations about the unwillingness of the working class to remain passive if Nazi violence did not cease:

Die Arbeiterschaft aber ist nicht gewillt, willenlos den Zeitpunkt abzuwarten, wo 'Arbeiter wie tolle Hunde niedergeschossen' werden sollen. [403] (5 October 1929)

Similarly frequent were warnings concerning the action that the labour movement would be forced to take, if the state authorities failed to curb Nazi aggression. It was stated, for example,

... daß der Sozialdemokratie und dem Reichsbanner schließlich nichts übrig bleiben wird, als zur Selbsthilfe aufzurufen, wenn die staatlichen Organe nicht in der Lage sind, mit der Nazi-Pest fertigzuwerden, [404]

(18 August 1931)

and this type of complaint could be put more stridently:

In der republikanische Bewegung ist über das Treiben der Hitler-Banden wie auch die Versagen der Justiz ein gewaltiges Maß von Empörung und Erbitterung herangewachsen. Aus ihren Reihen kommt immer lauter der Ruf: So darf es

nicht weiter gehen! Es ist höchst Zeit, daß die Staatsorgane energisch gegen das nationalsozialistischen Mordtreiben vorgehen, denn die Erregung der republikanischen Bevölkerung wächst ungeheuer, und die Republikaner sind keineswegs gewillt, sich von den Mordbuben mit dem Hakenkreuz wehrlos abschlachten zu lassen. [405] (3 January 1931)

Also characteristic at this point was the claim that the patience of the working class had its limits:

Genug der faschistischen Brutalitäten und Bluttaten! Die Geduld der friedliebenden Bevölkerung ist erschöpft. [406] (28 October 1931)

The traditional values of Social Democratic workers were reaffirmed even as the possibility was admitted that those values might be difficult to maintain in an increasingly violent climate:

Man sollte sich davor hüten, den Langmut und die Disziplin der Republikaner auf eine zu harte Probe zu stellen. [407] (12 May 1930)

However much the type of bravado that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was capable of displaying in the years before 1931 was a genuine response to the anxieties provoked by Nazi violence, it was only after that date that the SPD began to develop a rhetoric the aggression of which equalled, or attempted to equal the aggression the party faced. It was in this year, for example, that a militaristic vocabulary began to be routinely used, a vocabulary of struggle, of defence, of attack, as in the following, taken from

a front page report published on 2 January 1931:

Partei, Gewerkschaften, Arbeitersportorganisationen und Reichsbanner formieren sich zur großen, geschlossenen Verteidigungsarmee der Republik ... Einigkeit und Geschlossenheit im Kampf gegen die Demagogen der Diktatur muß die Parole sein ... Wir sind stark in der Verteidigung. Wir müssen stärker werden zum Angriff. [408]

(2 January 1931)

The idea that the SPD had somehow moved into the attack against Nazism was the main component of the shift in tone of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's propaganda:

Noch nie ist unsere Bewegung in Stadt und Land so lebendig, so aktiv gewesen, wie in den letzten Monaten. Überall rührt sich was. Wir sind im Angriff, die Nazis - sie geben es selbst zu - in die Verteidigung gedrängt. [409]

(2 March 1931)

And this shift in tone was indeed conceived as a response to Nazi terror:

Die Sozialdemokratie wird sich aber nicht darauf beschränken, Terror und Gewaltwidrigkeiten abzuwehren, sie geht zum Angriff gegen den Nationalsozialismus über und wird ihn schlagen.

Ungebrochene Kampfkraft lebt nur noch in der sozialistischen Arbeiterbewegung, in den Gewerkschaften, im Reichsbanner, in der Arbeitersportbewegung, die es mit



allen Kräften zu fördern gilt.

Auf politischen Boden fällt zwischen der faschistischen Reaktion und der Sozialdemokratie die Entscheidung. Wer nicht will, daß Deutschland faschistisch wird, der gehört als Kämpfer in die Reihen der Sozialdemokratie. [410]

(28 November 1931)

It was at this time, too, that language began to be used that, more explicitly than anything that had hitherto appeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, appeared to suggest that the SPD would not shrink from the use of physical force if necessary - for instance, Hörsing was quoted, in an article headlined '1931 - Bürgerkrieg?' as denying that the Reichsbanner wanted a civil war, but then adding:

Wenn aber die Feinde der Republik sich erdreisten sollten, gegen uns und damit gegen die Republik vorzugehen, so werden wir mit derselben Art und Methode und auch mit allen Mitteln, mit denen sie uns angreifen, ihnen entgegentreten. Wir werden sie, wenn die Interessen der deutschen Nation es fordern sollten, restlos bis auf den letzten Mann vernichten. [411]

(23 January 1931)

And this shift to a more aggressive style of rhetoric was especially reflected on the front page of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, which came even more frequently to be given over to strident appeals to 'fight fascism' - a report of a Berlin Reichsbanner demonstration which occupied all of the front page on 23 February 1931, for example, gives a good indication of the new

intensity with which the SPD had begun to respond to Nazi violence:

Es galt, in der Gefahr dieser erregenden und den Bestand der Nation gefährdenden Wochen den Totengräbern der Republik mit aller Deutlichkeit zu zeigen, daß die vernünftige Mehrheit des deutschen Volkes nicht gewillt ist, sich durch die Hand verbrecherischer 'Politiker' das Vaterland zerschlagen zu lassen.

... vor allen Dingen sind unsere Parteigenossen zur Stelle: Zehntausende, viele Zehntausende insgesamt, ein Heer, ein Menschenmeer, Wehr der Republik. Worte, die dem Ernst der Stunde entsprechen, Sätze der Stärke und der Kraft: jener Kraft, die die Republik erhalten wird, allen Feinden zum Trotz!

... so stehen im ganzen Reich in dieser Stunde die fertig ausgebildeten wohldisziplinierten Schufomänner des Reichsbanners Schwarz-Rot-Gold im Reih und Glied, jeder in seinem Gau, jederzeit bereit: zu marschieren, zu kämpfen, zu siegen, wenn es die Verteidigung der Republik und der Demokratie erfordert.

....Hakenkreuz und Sowjetstern aber erleben heute ihren schwarzen Tag ... die Straßen wollten sie erobern, mit Terror und Gewalt sich durchsetzen. Das ist vorbei! ... Alle Gaue des Reichsbanners stehen 'marschbereit', körperlich und geistig stark und beweglich - abwehrbereit! Kameraden! Ein Bürgerkriegserfolg unserer Gegner ist von heute ab unmöglich, denn alle gewaltanbetenden oder kriegslüsternen Gegner der Demokratie sehen heute unsere

Macht, und sie werden sich hüten, loszuschlagen. Die  
Republik ist nicht wehrlos. [412] (23 February 1931)

Inevitably, then, it was as a focus for this type of rhetoric that the 'Iron Front' manifested itself in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung; whatever the actuality of the 'Iron Front' as a vehicle of political mobilisation, it functioned in the newspaper as a means of propagandistic assertion of the SPD's resistance to National Socialism's aggression, a literary and symbolic declaration of the impossibility of Nazi success and the immovability of organised labour. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's 'Iron Front' material gives the impression of being a conscious attempt to create an urgency and a momentum, to foster a sense of the labour movement's potential to defeat Nazi violence [413]; and an attempt also to infuse a sense of this potential into its readership. It was built around concepts such as the force, the power, the extent and the iron will of Social Democracy - and the 'Iron Front' itself was constantly presented as an ever-growing army ready for action, ready for the coming struggle, ready to move into the attack. The vocabulary deployed exuded confidence and certainty, again making ready use of the language of the battlefield and a language of attack, and a similarly suggestive symbolism was used, such as that of the worker with his fist upraised [414]. All of this combined gave forth a message which, in its general sweep, must have appeared unambiguous - a message about the SPD's refusal to be intimidated and its determination to match force with force.

It would of course be unacceptable to dismiss this rhetoric,

this attempt to construct an image of iron readiness to fight, as no more than hollow bombast, from a position of retrospective historical knowledge. The fact that there was no mass resistance to National Socialism in 1933, that rhetoric did not become reality, does not invalidate its potency as propaganda, and it is certainly not being implied here that its use was the consequence of anything other than a genuine belief in the steadfast qualities of the SPD's support. However, the air of unreality which often surrounds the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's aggressive rhetoric, its gestural and forced nature, is not simply imparted by a knowledge of future events: the rhetoric itself evidences the unease which underlay the SPD's confident declamations, and elucidates the real dilemma the party faced whenever it attempted to confront the possibility of using physical force as a political weapon. Although this strain of propaganda represented an attempt to simplify a complex situation, to reduce it to the need to fight back against Nazism, although it certainly served an important internal function in bolstering Social Democratic self-belief, it never in fact freed itself from ambiguity. Ostensibly, the cumulative effect of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's rhetoric of defiance was potentially incendiary - its tone and language and its repetitive use within a context in which an image of Nazis as bestial thugs had been deliberately constructed, seemed designed to provoke a willingness to resort to the use of force if necessary. A closer examination of the meaning behind this rhetoric, however, of the actual action being proposed, yields something far less clear, something shifting and ambivalent. At times the possibility of physical resistance in extreme circumstances is baldly stated,

as the declaration by Hörsing quoted above demonstrates; at others, as will be shown in a moment, it is seemingly made clear that resistance will be limited to the intellectual or spiritual, that a propaganda struggle for the minds of the misled will suffice. More often though the precise nature of the struggle is left vague: violent images are conjured up, the use of physical force as a last resort is never ruled out, but in exactly which circumstances and how such force might be deployed is never specified. This sense of vagueness and uncertainty about how rhetoric related to action was present from the first in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's responses to Nazi violence; and it was again systematised in the material relating to the Iron Front, the ambiguity of which mirrored the ambiguous position of the Iron Front as an organisation, hovering, as it did, between propaganda and quasi-military functions [415]. Ambiguity, though, was the inevitable consequence of the SPD's struggle to reconcile the need to consider using force with a characterisation of the Nazi enemy which placed its casual use of violence at the forefront of its evil.

The limitations on the SPD's ability to accept the use of force, even defensively, as a valid political weapon were certainly considerable - in the course of the party's development, strong intellectual barriers against such a possibility had been created. One such barrier was the party's essential legalism - it was often stated that any Social Democratic action against Nazism would not be autonomous, that it could only take place in the context of a wider 'legal' offensive by the state against the NSDAP. The passage of rhetorical defiance quoted above from a February 1931 front page article, for example, was immediately followed by this

statement:

Wir stehen bereit jedem Ruf der legalen Staatsgewalt zu  
folgen als Helfer der legalen Machtmittel des Staates.[416]

(23 February 1931)

The SPD could not both defend the system and simultaneously demand activity that would transgress the system's structure of legality, could not easily castigate the NSDAP for its disregard of the force of law whilst seriously considering the use of extra-legal tactics, even if only in the most extreme of circumstances - this was to be, of course, one of the main dilemmas that the SPD faced in the aftermath of the Nazi seizure of power.

The intellectual constraints on the SPD with regard to the use of force were, however, less often clearly explicated than revealed in the confusions of the Party's rhetoric of assertion, and most obviously in the contrast between the violence of the language used and what it appears to imply, and the reality of what is being proposed if, that is, any clear goal is discernible. Although a certain vagueness had been characteristic of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's reactions to Nazi violence from the first - the day on which the Nazis would pay for their acts of brutality was always said to be near, what exactly would occur on that day was never specified - it was really when the SPD felt called upon to mount its more strident counter-offensive against National Socialism that the inherent contradiction between rhetoric and reality was crystallised, and it became ever more clear that the language of assertion and aggression employed was overstated when placed in the context of the actual possibilities for action. Beneath the

torrent of provocative words which accompanied the establishment of the Iron Front lay what was basically no more than a propaganda struggle for the minds of the misled, a form of intellectual resistance to Nazism. While, as has been demonstrated, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's articles on the Iron Front were free in their use of militaristic, pugnacious rhetoric, the reality of what was being described in those articles was rather more mundane - that is, a mobilisation of support through organisation and propaganda, in particular through the holding of meetings. The potential for the use of physical force as a tactic seemingly inherent in the language is in fact delusory - indeed, one of the most striking aspects of the Iron Front material is how often the need is felt to distance the organisation from its rhetoric, to state that, despite appearances, the Iron Front was not an army, but rather an organisation whose tasks were located in the intellectual sphere, in the area of 'Aufklärungsarbeit'. Thus the Iron Front was frequently described in terms which made it appear to be primarily a spiritual front of some kind. An article published in February 1932, for example, stressed the importance of 'geistige Macht' to the success of the Iron Front and located its main strength in the intellectual and spiritual superiority of its supporters:

Die größte Stärke der Eisernen Front gegen den Faschismus ist die geistige Klarheit ihrer Anhänger über das, worum es geht. Der geballte eiserne Abwehrwille gegen alle putschistischen Bestrebungen ruht auf der Erkenntnis der großen gesellschaftlichen und politischen Grundtatsachen

der letzten Zeit. Er erweckt aus einem glühenden  
idealistischen Willen zur Freiheit die Eiserne Front: Das  
ist geistige Geschlossenheit gegenüber dem Heer der  
Mitläufer des Faschismus, gegenüber der Vielheit der  
spießbürgerlichen Bestrebungen ... [417] (4 February 1932)

This was the type of conceptualisation of the Iron Front with which  
the SPD was most comfortable. The logic of its own rhetoric might  
have taken the party in a different direction, but vague  
assumptions about the superior 'will' of Social Democrats were  
preferable to any more concrete definition of what form the SPD's  
resistance to Nazism would or might take. This was in fact  
inevitable: an avoidance of violence, a pride in the ability to  
achieve advances without its use, the condemnation of Nazism for  
its brutality, a belief in the primacy of the intellect in  
political struggle - these were some of the SPD's deepest  
convictions:

Wir brauchen nicht die rohe Gewalt. Wir sind überzeugt,  
daß die Ideen weit stärker sind als alle Mittel des Zwanges  
und der Brutalität! Gerade im Kampfe der Geister - und das  
soll der politische Kampf sein - entscheidet nicht das  
Rüstzeug der Barbaren, sondern Kraft der Überzeugung und  
des Geistes! [418] (6 April 1932)

This is why, even in the process of stating that the SPD would be  
willing to meet force with force, the party's pride in the fact  
that for it, unlike its opponents, this could only be the last



resort, is undisguised. Thus, for example, a front page article from June 1932 which was militant in its rhetoric, more explicit in its promise to respond to Nazi violence in kind than was usually the case, nevertheless simultaneously emphasised the alien nature of such rhetoric to the SPD, how conscious the party was that the use of force would involve a break with its traditions and self-image:

Die emporgereckten Fäuste der Millionen sind Treugelöbnis: sie sind der Jugend, den Männern und Frauen der Eisernen Front zugleich Kampfansage an den politischen Gegner. Er mag wissen, daß die Eiserne Front den politischen Kampf mit geistigen Waffen führt, daß aber die Faust der Eisernen Front ebenso entschlossen ist, gewalttätige Angriffe abzuwehren. Die Organisationen der Eisernen Front haben in jahrzehntelangen Kämpfen gezeigt, daß sie ohne jede Gewalttat politisch streiten und kämpfen können. Der niederträchtige Gegner hat die rohe Gewalt auf die Straßen und Plätze, in die Versammlungen, ja in die Wohnungen und Organisationshäuser getragen! Dieser rohen Gewalt setzen wir nötigenfalls die Gewalt entgegen. [419] (24 June 1932)

Political morality, political virtue is located in the intellectual sphere; the use of force is contemplated as a possible evil necessity, but it can hardly be stated with certainty that this contemplation was anything but rhetorical. Indeed, everything suggests that the SPD's instinctive distrust of political violence could not have been overcome in any circumstances - or at least in

any circumstances in which the party would have remained recognisable as the SPD which had functioned in the Weimar Republic.

Thus, in the struggle between rhetorical aggression and inherent caution which was played out in the pages of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, caution would always be victorious, even in moments of great crisis for the SPD. The truth of this would become apparent after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933, as will be shown later; but to an extent the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's response to that event merely replayed its reactions to Papen's coup against Prussia six months earlier [420]. In its attempt to deal with this severe blow to its self-esteem, all of those traits of the SPD's self-image that have just been examined, all of those characteristics which the party considered raised it above the level of its opponents and constituted political virtue, came to the fore, as the SPD, clearly in fear of any rank-and-file spontaneous action, tried to calm the passions of its supporters. The stress was, as the following illustrates, on discipline, on the importance of not being provoked into rash action, and on the reliance on the legal path, most obviously on the forthcoming election, to display Social Democratic anger:

Der Kampf um die Wiederherstellung geordneter  
Rechtszustände in der deutschen Republik ist zunächst mit  
aller Kraft als Wahlkampf zu führen. Es liegt beim  
deutschen Volke, durch seinen Machtspruche am 31. Juli dem  
gegenwärtigen Zustand ein Ende zu bereiten, der durch das  
Zusammenwirken mit der Nationalsozialistischen Partei

entstanden ist. Die Organisationen sind in höchste Kampfbereitschaft zu bringen. Strengste Disziplin ist mehr denn je geboten. Wilden Parolen von unbefugter Seite ist Widerstand zu leisten. Jetzt vor allem mit konzentrischer Kraft für den Sieg der Sozialdemokratie am 31. Juli. [421]

(21 July 1932)

Another article, again published the day after the deposition of the Prussian government, emphasised the need for 'level-headedness' (Besonnenheit), despite the great agitation it claimed Papen's action had created amongst Germany's proletariat, white-collar workers and civil servants. It further pointed out that legally the situation in Prussia had yet to be decided, for an appeal had been launched in Germany's constitutional court; and the declaration ended, inevitably, with a call for the maintenance of the workers' 'exemplary' discipline [422]. In contrast to such discipline, the KPD's adventurism in calling for a general strike was rejected and condemned:

Die kommunistischen Führer, die seit Jahren Schulter an Schulter mit den Nationalsozialisten den Kampf gegen Braun und Severing geführt ... rufen jetzt wegen der Absetzung von Braun und Severing zum Generalstreik auf! Die deutsche Arbeiterklasse wird sich die Wahl ihrer Mittel und die Stunde ihres Handelns nicht von den Bundesgenossen der Nationalsozialisten im Kampfe gegen Braun und Severing vorschreiben lassen. Es gilt jetzt in voller Aktivität, Disziplin und Einigkeit alle Kräfte für den Wahlkampf und den Sieg der Sozialdemokratie zusammenzufassen. [423]

(22 July 1932)

The fact that the KPD was identified with a politics of foolhardy action was a further impediment to the SPD itself ever using supposedly extreme measures such as the general strike - for, just as the association of National Socialism with violence and brutality made it more difficult for the SPD to contemplate the use of force and thus a descent to the same moral level as the NSDAP, so the adoption of radical tactics previously championed by the KPD would have entailed a retreat from years of condemning such tactics. The greatest impediment however was the SPD's inherent belief in caution and legalism. Despite the previous fighting talk and passionate declamations, and despite the central importance of Prussia to Social Democracy, it was yet the necessity for restraint, the need to refrain from action, except for that connected with the July election, that was underlined in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung after Papen's coup. As was also the case whenever the rhetoric of aggression was deployed, the language used and the virtues lauded demonstrated the determining influence of the SPD's image of itself as the disciplined, law-abiding defenders of a state which was under threat from forces which possessed none of these qualities. They also demonstrated, however, that, as the ground decisively shifted from under the SPD, this self-image would ensure that the party's political options would be limited and its freedom of manoeuvre restricted.

## CHAPTER 8 : The KPD in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung: parallels and contrasts with National Socialism.

The only political target attacked in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung with a similar degree of fervour and consistency as National Socialism in the later Weimar period was the KPD. A brief consideration of the newspaper's approach in this regard is appropriate in the context of this study, firstly because the KPD and NSDAP were often paralleled in the pages of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, and any examples of or allegations about co-operation and inter-connections between the two parties seized upon and emphasised; and secondly because the contrasts and similarities between the SPD's analyses of its two ideological foes are extremely revealing.

That anti-KPD polemics were a staple of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's output for the whole of the Weimar era is entirely unsurprising, not only because of the general enmity that existed between the SPD and KPD on a nationwide scale, but also because of the depth of bitterness that the events of 1919 in Augsburg had created between Communists and Social Democrats there - the gulf thus created was without doubt unbridgeable, certainly as far as the respective local leaderships were concerned. Indeed, as was mentioned in the introduction, it has been suggested that even in mid-1932 the KPD was still regarded as a bigger threat by the SPD's leadership in Augsburg than the NSDAP, which continued to be seen as a transitory phenomenon [424]. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's anti-KPD propaganda was consistent and unrelenting, and represented one of the unchanging ideological determinants of Social Democracy

in the Weimar era. Whereas interest in the far-right fluctuated throughout the period according to the changing perceptions of the threat it posed, polemics against the KPD were unremitting - their frequency and intensity merely increased in the early 1930s as the KPD began to pose, from the left, a danger to the SPD equal to that posed by Nazism from the right. The nature of the SPD's propaganda in this area need be sketched only briefly; its content and tone were predictable enough [425]: attacks on the Soviet Union as a symbol of Communism, stressing the poor economic and living conditions of the working class there, the lack of political freedoms and so on; on the extent to which the KPD was under the control of Moscow; on the KPD's involvement in violence; on the insincerity of the KPD's 'united front' policy; on the activities of the RGO - all of this was commonplace in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, along with more general condemnations of the KPD's betrayal of the German working class by dividing it, and specific disputes with Augsburg's local Communists. And the contrast that most obviously suggests itself between this material and the newspaper's anti-Nazi propaganda is the more fixed and established nature of the former: the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach to the KPD was unchanging and repetitive throughout the period of Nazism's rise, constantly levelling the same charges, hurling the same invective at the KPD, with only minor alterations required to incorporate the Communists' latest tactical manoeuvrings. The treatment of Nazism, however, especially in its initial stages, reveals far more of an attempt to come to terms with that which was new and not yet fully understood - indeed, it has been suggested above that National Socialism was peculiarly difficult for the SPD

to analyse because of the way it blurred traditional ideological and class boundaries, and the party's responses to this have been examined. The KPD, of course, presented no such difficulty for the SPD.

Arguably, though, in its absorption of Nazism into its pre-existent world-view, the SPD pushed its analysis of National Socialism to the same position as its 'analysis' of Communism - that is, as has been demonstrated, the interpretation of Nazism that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung reveals rapidly becomes frozen, becomes a polemic reflecting the Social Democratic mind-set rather than political reality; in short, precisely the impression of unthinking ritual abuse, of ideologically predicated propaganda that the material on the KPD gives. There are, moreover, interesting similarities of interpretative and propaganda techniques in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approaches to the two movements - similarities which at least open up the possibility that the newspaper's engagement with National Socialism was in part shaped or influenced by the propaganda methods and themes forged in its longer confrontation with the KPD. This may have been to an extent unconscious - for example, in the case of the SPD's belief that both the NSDAP and KPD were under the control of powerful forces working in the background (big business and Soviet Communism respectively) and its desire to expose this reality. It would be pushing this a little too far to claim it as another instance of the Social Democratic mind-set at work - after all, the KPD was indeed under the control of Moscow [426]; but it does at least suggest that there were modes of thought and propaganda with which the SPD felt particularly comfortable and which could be applied to

National Socialism as they had been applied to the KPD - and of these the most apparent is the SPD's propensity to view its political opponents within the framework of a wider conspiracy, a conspiracy which was usually perceived as being especially directed against the SPD itself.

There were also, however, explicit parallels drawn between the two movements in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung - parallels which reflected real similarities on a general level between the NSDAP and the KPD, but the function of which was more clearly propagandistic: the SPD's two main enemies could be simultaneously attacked and each further damned by its comparison with the other [427]. Thus were Nazism and German Communism analysed at various times as embodying common characteristics and aims [428]: both were parties of violence; both were believed to be targeting the SPD's constituency; both evinced a deep-seated hatred of both the SPD and the Weimar Republic; both were striving to create a dictatorship; and both espoused a 'false' socialism. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung attempted, moreover, to strengthen the idea that there existed a basic 'inner affinity' between the KPD and NSDAP by highlighting any instances of co-operation between the two parties [429] - mainly parliamentary co-operation - and by frequently alleging that there was a fluidity of voters and members between them [430]. It would be unwise to read too much into this; certainly the distilling of the KPD and NSDAP into a few easily comparable negative characteristics was superficial, but this propaganda ploy never obscured the very real differences between the two parties. Nevertheless, it was possibly helpful to the SPD to feel that both Nazism and Communism could be attacked on the



same grounds - especially National Socialism, perhaps, seemed to become more explicable from this perspective.

Even more helpful to the SPD, however, was the role of scapegoat for the success of National Socialism that the KPD came to play in its analysis and propaganda - the role of 'Steigbügelhalter' for Nazism [431]. The rise of National Socialism furnished Social Democracy with a new context within which to attack the KPD, an attack which grew in intensity as the NSDAP's momentum increased. Particularly in 1932, the accusation that the primary responsibility for Nazi success lay with the political behaviour of the Communists is repeatedly made, although this was only the culmination of an earlier trend. In both its nature and tone, and in its repetitive use, the manifestation of this accusation in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was entirely predictable [432]: the KPD, despite its radical rhetoric, was, in its objective role, a reactionary party; its agitation against the SPD and the free trade union movement aided capitalism in general and the NSDAP especially. Such themes received extra emphasis in moments of crisis - during the presidential election of 1932, for instance, one of the SPD's responses to its discomfiture over its support for Hindenburg was constantly to condemn the KPD's decision to put forward Thälmann as a candidate, its attitude encapsulated in the oft-used slogan: 'Wer Thälmann wählt, wählt Hitler' [433]. In such ways the KPD became one of the SPD's stock explanations for the continuing success of the NSDAP - this was, for example, the implied answer to a question that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung asked itself in March 1932:

Warum war es möglich, daß ein Mann wie Hitler in  
Deutschland eingebürgert werden könnte? Weil die  
Arbeiterschaft zum Teil in falschen Fronten steht und in  
völliger Verkennung der Sachlage. [434] (3 March 1932)

And a month later, after describing the extent of reaction's grip  
on Germany, an article in the newspaper continued:

Nationalsozialismus ist eine betrübliche Erscheinung in der  
deutschen Republik. Es brauchte aber keine Gefahr zu sein,  
wenn nicht jetzt und immerda dem Nationalsozialismus  
Hilfestellung geleistet wurde durch die Kommunisten.  
Und es ist das größte Verbrechen der Kommunisten an der  
Arbeiterschaft Deutschlands und nicht nur Deutschlands, daß  
sie die Hüter und Förderer und die Stütze der Reaktion  
sind. [435] (22 April 1932)

But the existence of the enemy on the left was not just a  
convenient explanation for the NSDAP's irrational progress, it was  
also an excuse, another means of escaping the need for  
self-criticism, a justification, for example, for the lack of  
decisive action in the aftermath of Papen's coup against Prussia:

Wenn wir wichtige, sehr wichtige Positionen preisgeben  
mußten, ich erinnere an Preußen, wenn wir nicht vollkommen  
gewachsen waren all den hinterlistigen Anschlägen, dann  
ist die Ursache in fehlenden Bataillonen zu sehen, die sich  
aber seit Jahren abtreiben ließen durch den

Linksradikalismus der Kommunisten. Durch die Uneinigkeit der Arbeiterklasse war es möglich, daß ein Leutnant mit einigen Mann es wagen konnte, Genossen wie Grzesinski, Braun und Severing aus ihren Ämtern zu holen. Der Genosse Otto Bauer, der Führer der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie, konnte kürzlich mit Stolz darauf hinweisen, daß es in Wien unmöglich wäre, daß ein Leutnant und einige Mann einen der verdienten Genossen aus dem Wiener Rathaus holen, denn eine derartige Aktion stieße auf die Abwehr des gesamten Proletariats. Bei uns ist diese Abwehr leider nicht möglich durch die Zerstörungstaktik von links. [436] (20 December 1932)

The existence of the KPD and its tactics had systematically undermined the influence of the SPD and thus weakened the working class:

Der von ihr mit allen Mitteln der Lüge und der Verleumdung geschürte Bruderkampf im sozialistischen Proletariat ist die tiefste Ursache für die Schwächung der Arbeiterklasse und den gefährlichen Machtzuwachs ihrer unerbittlichen Feinde. [437] (6 December 1932)

The existence of the KPD was thus inextricably linked with the rise of National Socialism and the resurgence of reaction in Germany, as well as with the SPD's inability to prevent this - for the concomitant of that existence was the absence of its mythical alternative, that is of a united working class under the sole

leadership of the SPD. As in so many other aspects of its political engagement during the Weimar Republic, it was, here, the SPD's self-image - which was in fact the image of the party it thought it should be rather than the party it actually was - and not the reality of its own flawed political behaviour which determined its interpretation of events.

**CHAPTER 9 : The NSDAP in Augsburg: the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's treatment of Nazism in the local context.**

Most of the material on Nazism in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung presented it in a general way, as a political phenomenon exercising influence throughout Germany and which, thus, had to be analysed in accordance with this. However, the NSDAP was also a very real and a very disruptive political and social presence in Augsburg itself and the Schwäbische Volkszeitung could not but reflect this.

Unsurprisingly, this local aspect of the newspaper's engagement with Nazism largely paralleled the more general interpretation - local National Socialist activity was placed within the same rhetorical and analytical matrix which underpinned the latter. National Socialism in the local arena as depicted in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung confirmed, although no doubt it also partly shaped, the broader analysis, it was presented in terms of the same essential characteristics using the same language, and subject to the same emphases and perspectives. For this reason, it would be repetitious to examine in any detail the similarities between the local and the more general portrayal of Nazism in the newspaper. The NSDAP in Augsburg was, for example, characterised as the party which had introduced violence into the town's political scene, just as it had done throughout Germany as a whole, violence aimed directly at Augsburg's labour movement, and in reaction to which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung resorted to a locally- specific version of that rhetoric of discipline and of the SPD's refusal to be needlessly provoked, combined with assertions of the party's ultimate willingness to defend itself and its

achievements which was examined above [438]. Similarly, the SPD's perception that the struggle with National Socialism was essentially a struggle for the working-class constituency informed the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's coverage of local events just as strongly as those on the national level; thus, the newspaper displayed in the former the persistent desire to discredit the 'socialism' of the local NSDAP and thus to undermine its credibility amongst Augsburg's working class. The supposed lack of working-class support for Nazism in Augsburg, the absence of workers amongst Augsburg's Nazi leadership, the NSDAP's support from local factory owners well-known for their poor treatment of their employees, the lack of socialist measures in the party's proposed communal programme [439] - these were the types of approach deployed on a daily basis to expose the sham of Nazi 'socialism' and, again, this is an area that has been fully analysed in a previous section. Augsburg's National Socialist voters, just like all Nazi voters and followers were conceptualised as the blind, the sick, the misled and the seduced, the anti-rational who could only be cured or enlightened by the SPD - the vocabulary and the ideas it encompassed remained the same, whatever the focus [440]. And the technique of contrasting rhetoric and reality was also consistent, that desire to demonstrate the failure of local Nazis to live up to their propaganda (especially with regard to anti-semitism) [441]. In short: the full range of attitudes and approaches which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung displayed in its attempt to comprehend Nazism, and to reduce its threat unsurprisingly found an application in the coverage of local Nazi activity. What must be

considered, however, is the reception of such locally-based material amongst the newspaper's readership - the immediacy and impact gained by the use of events and examples drawn from that readership's community should not be underestimated. Of course, this is not a complex point, but it is an important one because, as will be discussed in a moment, the differences between the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's Augsburg-specific material and its general coverage of Nazism were differences of tone, rather than of ideas, perspectives or interpretation.

This is not to say that no such differences existed; for, even though Augsburg was in many ways a typical town of the Weimar era in Germany, the progress National Socialism made in the town inevitably ran its individual course which found a reflection in the distinctive emphases of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's coverage of that progress. There was, for example, far less attention paid to the activities of the NSDAP in Augsburg before 1930 than to Nazism in the wider sense; in comparison to the frequency with which Nazism as a general phenomenon appeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, it appears almost under-represented in its local manifestations in these early years of the Nazi resurgence, and even to an extent in the early thirties. This was, no doubt, one consequence of the relative difficulty that the NSDAP had in making significantly rapid headway in Augsburg, faced as it was with two fairly solid blocks of support - i.e. the Social Democratic and the Catholic - in opposition to it. The relative nature of this difficulty needs to be stressed again here, but there were definite limits to the NSDAP's potential for growth in Augsburg, and one result of this was that Nazism as a national movement was possibly

seen to provide more scope and more interest than local Nazi activities. And to this was perhaps added a reluctance to admit that Augsburg, the status of which as a 'workers' city' the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was always ready to eulogise, could seriously be under threat from National Socialism - it was far easier to locate that threat in the wider arena, whilst, as will be seen in a moment, treating Augsburg's local Nazi contingent with the type of sardonic contempt which suggested that they could not be taken seriously.

The perception of Augsburg as an 'Arbeiterstadt' also informed another particularity of the analysis of Nazism in Augsburg, that is the consistent characterisation of the local NSDAP as a party of the middle class. Far more than when discussing the class basis of the party as a whole, this aspect of its depiction in the local context gives less of an impression of knee-jerk prejudice, both because it accords well with Augsburg's socio-political structure, and because, as a depiction, it demonstrates the certainty and lack of ambiguity which so often eludes the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach to this topic elsewhere [442]. It would, of course, be unwise to view this as entirely straightforward. Although the Schwäbische Volkszeitung evidences little, beyond the application of the customary caricatures, of the tortuous engagement with the idea of the working-class Nazi with regard to Augsburg's Nazi following that it displays in general, this cannot be taken to imply that there were no working-class Nazis in Augsburg or that the SPD was less anxious about the Nazi challenge for the working-class constituency in the town than elsewhere. On the contrary, although outwardly confident about the stability of its support,



the labour movement in Augsburg had, as has been shown, real historical reasons for fearing the ability of the right to gain ground within the working class. In this light, the portrayal of the NSDAP as overwhelmingly the party of Augsburg's middle class, although fundamentally accurate, was also a deliberate over-statement designed to reinforce a distinct image of the NSDAP in the town, to reassert the belief in the loyalty of the working class to the SPD, and to reassure the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's readership about the validity of that belief.

In the local context, then, the job of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was almost wholly propagandistic - there was no attempt to analyse Augsburg's NSDAP in ideological terms, no sense, indeed, of any conception that the party at the local level need be subject to any serious analysis. Rather, the policies and practice of Nazism in Augsburg were regarded as an extension of those of Nazism as a whole, and thus the task the Schwäbische Volkszeitung clearly set itself was not to analyse the local party intellectually, but to undermine its credibility in the minds of its readership. This is why it is a difference in tone rather than interpretation which distinguishes the newspaper's local engagement with Nazism; the targeting of events and individuals within the local community produced a markedly different style of polemic from that employed elsewhere [443]. The presentation of Augsburg's Nazi party as politically amateurish and contemptibly fractious and corrupt was achieved above all by personalised attacks on the party's main figures, in particular on its leader, Karl Wahl, who was depicted in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as incompetent, venal and immoral. Local knowledge of a figure such as Wahl imparted an

edge to this material unlike that of similar character assassinations of leading Nazis on the national scene, the sphere of reference was different, the undermining of the image or reputation of an individual seemed almost more important than of the political ideas he represented. In the early years of renewed Nazi activity in Augsburg, moreover, much of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's coverage was imbued with a mocking tone, a tone which was never quite lost when dealing with local Nazi figures; there would always be present the sense that National Socialism's pretensions and ambitions, especially the stated aim of 'conquering' Augsburg for Nazism, were laughably ridiculous if they were to be achieved by men of such low spiritual and intellectual quality, driven by personal ambition rather than political ideals. It was always with great glee that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung reported any apparent failure by a local Nazi to live up to the party's stated principles, and any such failure could be woven into the mythology of the Augsburg NSDAP and referred to time and again.

The idea of National Socialists as the 'renewers' of Germany was made to appear particularly risible given that, according to the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, the local party was in a state of intermittent flux, riven by discontents precipitated both by personality clashes and clashes which were interpreted as essentially class based, with Wahl emerging as the champion of the middle class, ensuring that the working-class influence on the Nazi party in Augsburg was kept to a minimum.

This last point is a further reminder of the wider imperatives at work behind the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's engagement with local Nazism, of the consistently pursued purpose which the use of a more

knowing tone did not alter. The newspaper's sharp consciousness of its purpose in relation to National Socialism, its self-perception as a propaganda weapon, has been mentioned previously; in the local context this consciousness, and the sense that it was extremely effective as a counter-weight to Nazi propaganda could only have been strengthened as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung became, as early as 1928 [444], the recipient of threats of retribution from Augsburg's NSDAP for the type of coverage the party was receiving in the newspaper. In the years to follow, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was to find itself ever more frequently a focus for political confrontation; and its role in such confrontation was by no means a passive one - as well as reporting on it and even condemning it, the newspaper also purposely embroiled itself in the newly heightened, aggressive political climate that National Socialism had introduced to Augsburg. The articles on the theory and practice of Augsburg's National Socialists that have been frequently cited in this chapter are a good illustration of this involvement, for, as they appeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, they were accompanied by a commentary on the reactions they had provoked among Augsburg's Nazi following - reactions claimed to include a widespread sense of disillusionment, accusations about the integrity of the newspaper's material, and, more typically, threats of, and actual acts of violence in retribution:

An die Stelle klarer, sachlicher Feststellungen zu unseren bisherigen Veröffentlichungen haben die verantwortlichen Leute der hiesigen NSDAP wilde Drohungen gesetzt ... Wo der

Geist ausläßt, greifen sie zum Knüttel und zum Messer.

[445] (22 July 1930)

Against this background, it is entirely unsurprising that the foundation of a Nazi newspaper, the Neue Nationalzeitung, in 1931 and consequent heightening of the propaganda war between the SPD and the NSDAP in Augsburg, served only to reinforce the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's consciousness of its vital role:

Der neuen Zeitung der Nationalsozialisten ist durch Verdoppelung unserer Propagandatätigkeit für die Parteipresse zu begegnen. Die 'Schwäbische Volkszeitung', die in diesem Jahr auf ihr 30-jähriges Bestehen zurückblickt, ist die beste Waffe im Kampfe der schwäbischen Arbeiterschaft um die Erhaltung und der Ausbau der Republik. [446] (2 March 1931)

The confrontations between the Schwäbische Volkszeitung and the Neue Nationalzeitung were bitter and, as polemicising against the Nazi newspaper become one of the SPD's main means of attacking National Socialism in Augsburg, throwing of charge and counter-charge, impassioned invective and simple abuse between the two newspapers became a daily occurrence. The actual battlegrounds upon which the clashes took place varied widely, and included, for example, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung accusing the Neue Nationalzeitung of hypocrisy in employing the services of a Jewish lawyer [447], a dispute over the details of Hitler's war record [448], Social Democratic anger over the supposed attempts of the

Nazi newspaper to intimidate local civil servants [449], and the frequent condemnation by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of the Neue Nationalzeitung's sins of omission, of its failure, for instance, to give adequate coverage to the Papen cabinet's emergency decrees:

... Der Inhalt der Notverordnung ist bekannt, die gesamte Presse hat sie im Wortlaute veröffentlicht - eine 'rühmliche' Ausnahme aber macht die Nazi-Presse; sie schweigt sich über diese Hitler tolerierte Notverordnung aus!

Und das hat uns Veranlassung gegeben, die Augsburger Nazi-Zeitung zu studieren, was sie dem Pg-Arbeitslosen, dem Pg-Sozialrentner und dem Pg-Kriegsbeschädigten von der fünften Notverordnung, die alle früheren Notverordnungen an Lasten für die ärmsten Schichten unserer Bevölkerung übertrifft, zu sagen weiß. Wir haben nach der Notverordnung in der Augsburger Nazi-Zeitung gesucht und haben - nichts gefunden! Kein Wort über ihren Inhalt, nur ein paar vage und heuchlerische Sätze, die eine 'Kritik' dieses von Hitler tolerierten reaktionären Aderlasses an der schaffenden und darbenden Bevölkerung darstellen soll. So gemein und so demagogisch kann nur die National Sozialistische Deutsche 'Arbeiter' - partei sein. [450]

(20 June 1932)

As this last might suggest, within the range of issues over which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung became involved in a war of words with the Neue Nationalzeitung, there was one constant - a condemnation of the perceived damage that the newspaper, as Augsburg's main

carrier of the Nazi message, was doing to the town's political discourse, of the baseness of its propaganda, of its use of unscrupulous methods, of its mendacity, and of its promotion of violence and terror. And, unsurprisingly, what most enraged the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was the application of these methods to the SPD itself - whether to the policies of the party in general [451] or to the activities of the local SPD in particular. The reaction to Neue Nationalzeitung's claims that Augsburg's Iron Front was making active preparations for a civil war, for example, was typical:

Heute sei allgemein gesagt: Die Zeitung, die seit Monaten täglich mit mehr oder weniger versteckten Drohungen gegen die Sozialdemokratie operiert, hat kein Recht, von Bürgerkriegsvorbereitungen der anderen Seite zu sprechen. ... Sie spotten über die Hammerschaften der Augsburger Eisernen Front (nennen sie Wellblechfront usw.) und - rufen gleichzeitig nach der Polizei! Hilfe, Hilfe!: Die Roten machen Bürgerkrieg! Wie einfältig, wie lächerlich und wie widerspruchsvoll ist diese Haltung. [452] (10 March 1932)

And the Nazi newspaper's report, in the midst of the campaign for the November 1932 Reichstag election, that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung had cut its workers' wages, produced another condemnation of the newspaper's methods:

Die 'Neue Nationalzeitung' brachte in ihrer Nummer 221 unter dem Titel 'Palastrevolution bei der Schwäbischen'

Auslassungen, die den Tatsachen nicht entsprechen.

... Im Laufe des Wahlkampfes werden ja noch mehrere Lügenbomben der Nationalzeitung platzen. Wie verzweifelt muß doch die politische Situation der Nationalsozialisten geworden sein, wenn sie jetzt in Kampf gegen die Marxisten zu solch plumpen Mitteln greifen. [453] (1 October 1932)

There was indeed a sense of steadily accumulating frustration evidenced in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as it sought to combat the distortions and falsehoods of the Neue Nationalzeitung. It can, of course, hardly be asserted that the former did not itself publish some dubious material at this time; but the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's constant focus on the immorality and duplicity of the Neue Nationalzeitung was entirely consistent with the SPD's self-perception of the moral gulf that separated it from the NSDAP. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's contempt of the Nazi newspaper, expressed in high moral tones, led inevitably to reaction and counter-reaction, and even on occasion to active political mobilisation in protest against it. A useful illustration of this is provided by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's response to a description in the rival newspaper of a recently-held Iron Front demonstration:

Das Augsburger Naziblatt hat es fertig gebracht, von der Demonstration am Samstag als von einem 'Häuflein Zigaretten rauchender Männlein und Weiblein' zu sprechen. Wiederum ein drastisches Beispiel von der Wahrheitsliebe jenes Blattes, das vorgibt, für Wahrheit zu kämpfen.

Two days later the issue was taken up again as, once more quoting from the Neue Nationalzeitung's report, the 'Kampfleitung' of the Iron Front called, on the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's front page, for a march in protest:

In ohnmächtiger Wut beschimpfte die hetzerische  
National-Zeitung in Augsburg euch Republikaner!  
Sie schrieb:

'Der 'Aufmarsch' der Ritter von der Mistgabel. Der mit  
großem Geschrei angekündigte Aufmarsch der Eisernen  
Blechfront, 'Krampfabschnitt Augsburg', am vergangenen  
Samstag war eine heillose Pleite - Wegen des zeitweisen  
Regenwetters fand der Marsch durch die innere Stadt  
nicht allein nicht statt, sondern aus Angst vor der  
grenzenlosen Blamage, die man sich mit diesen einige  
Hundert pfeifen- und zigarettenrauchenden Männlein ohne  
jede Marschdisziplin und den schafsgeduldig mitlaufenden  
Weiblein geholt hätte!!!'

Das ist Gemeinheit und Lüge! Die Eiserne Front ist durch  
die Wertachvorstädte und Oberhausen marschiert, weil die  
Polizei die innere Stadt für den Aufmarsch nicht freigab!  
Und sie freut sich der Teilnahme der Frauen am Zuge denn  
bei ihr sind die Frauen nicht Menschen zweiter Klasse! Bei  
uns gilt Gleichberechtigung. Wir antworten am Samstag mit  
neuem Aufmarsch in Augsburg! [455] (15 July 1932)



And this march, in turn, brought forth a further 'shameful' report in the Neue Nationalzeitung, and the inevitable retort in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung:

Die 'Neue National-Zeitung' in Augsburg hat sich den 'Ruhm' gesichert, einen besonders teutschen Stil zu pflegen. Was sie sich bisher an rüder und unverschämter Tonart gestattet hat, das übertraf sie mit einer Glosse über die Demonstration der Eisernen Front in ihrer Montagsausgabe. Das Unmögliche ist mögliche geworden: die Gemeinheit hat sich selbst übertroffen. Die Antwort an die Redakteure einer 'Arbeiter'-Partei gab Stadtrat Genosse Felder in der gestrigen großen Kundgebung der Eisernen Front im Herrle-Saalbau.

... Es sollte aber noch besser kommen nach dem Zug am Samstag, von dem auch das Bürgertum gestehen mußte, daß er in größter Disziplin durchgeführt wurde von einer imponierenden Masse anständiger Menschen.

Die Nazi-Zeitung vom Montag hat es fertig gebracht, von Zuhältergestalten in diesem Zug zu sprechen ...

Zugteilnehmern wurde in diesem Schmähartikel im den Mund gelegt, daß sie davon gesprochen hätten, sie würden wenigstens irgend ein Fahnentuch als Tischtuch von der Demonstration nach Hause bringen. Redakteure einer sogenannten Arbeiterpartei schreiben das! Das Unerhörteste kam aber dann am Schluß und da hieß es wörtlich:

'Die Begeisterung der Frontier' war nicht übermäßig.

Die Anwesenheit der Polizei und das Bewußtsein, daß die Plünderung von Läden, Lebensmitteln usw. unmöglich sei, dämpften natürlich die geistige Schwungkraft der klassenbewußten Marxisten, die sich mit stiller Wehmut an die Zeiten erinnerten, da sie von ihren Umzügen mit gefüllten Rucksäcken heimkehrten'

Das ist der Gipfel der Gemeinheit und ich frage Sie: Was wollen diese Leute damit in Augsburg. Es ist anscheinend so, daß es den Nazis bisher in Augsburg zu ruhig zugegangen ist, daß sie mit solchen unerhörten Vorwürfen Maßnahmen der Schwergekränkten gegen ihre Zeitung und Partei provozieren wollen, um dann heuchlerisch von marxistischen Untermenschen zu sprechen, die die Gewalttätigkeiten eröffnen. Man muß diesen Leuten sagen:

Es ist eine ungeheuer widerliche Heuchelei, wenn diese Leute für sich und ihre Presse in Anspruch genommen haben sie seien es, die Anstand und Sitte gegen die Presse der Marxisten verteidigen müßten ... So lange auch hier am Orte sich Nazi-Führer befinden, die sich bis heute noch nicht gereinigt haben von den schweren Vorwürfen, die wir öffentlich seit Jahr und Tag gegen sie erhoben, so lange ein Mann sich von dem schweren Vorwurf seiner eigenen Pgs, er habe Heeresgut verschoben, sich nicht gereinigt hat, und das ist der Herr Rehm, so lange wird die ungeheure Infamie des Nazi-Blattes noch unterstrichen. [456] (19 July 1932)

A consideration of this lengthy quotation is a useful point at which to sum up here - for it demonstrates the way in which

coverage of National Socialist activity in Augsburg assimilated into a more general propaganda framework, in which the common motifs of Social Democratic rhetoric such as the emphasis on the importance of discipline or the anxiety to discredit the NSDAP's working-class credibility were present, local material which often had a slightly more mordant edge to it, and which gives an insight into just how deeply-felt the disruptive effect that the NSDAP had on political life in Augsburg was by the SPD. It also perhaps suggests that the tone of moral superiority adopted by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in its propaganda war with the Neue Nationalzeitung, though entirely consistent with the SPD's self-image and political intentions, was slightly deceptive. The SPD always faced the dilemma when confronting National Socialism of how to combat it effectively without adopting its methods. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's fulminations against the debasement of local political culture produced by the NSDAP were no doubt sincere; it had little choice though but to participate in this debasement, as it responded in kind to the propaganda of the Neue Nationalzeitung, in ways which often were themselves inflammatory, as the reproduction of the most offensive passages of the Nazi newspaper's reports on Social Democratic events could be adjudged. Here, as elsewhere, then - most notably in the SPD's use of a language of violence - there is a sense in which National Socialism forced an agenda upon the SPD, dictated the terms of struggle and forced the party to use a propaganda rhetoric it would not have freely chosen: what masqueraded in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as an active and assertive response to Nazi aggression was frequently just another expression of Social Democratic uncertainty, of the

SPD's inability to shape a politics of opposition to the NSDAP which was both effective and true to its own nature.

CHAPTER 10 : 30 January 1933 and after: the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's response to Nazism in power.

An analysis of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's response to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor on 30 January 1933, although of obvious importance, inevitably involves some repetition, simply because there was no new response, merely a recapitulation of well-worn themes. Although there was certainly a recognition of the potential seriousness of the situation, and the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was certainly vigorous in its efforts to mobilise the Social Democratic constituency for the March Reichstag election, there was no re-evaluation of National Socialism. For by this stage the SPD's view of the NSDAP was so deeply entrenched that its analysis of the party in power was determined by the expectations its own rhetoric had created, rather than by realities. It was therefore predictable that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung would react to the new political conjuncture by reiterating those elements of its interpretation of Nazism which had become mere propaganda clichés through over-use. Thus, as briefly mentioned previously, it remained the case even after Hitler's appointment that the newspaper wished continually to underscore, as it had done so many times before, the sham nature of the NSDAP's professed socialism. The complexion of Hitler's cabinet was proclaimed as the final proof of this latter point, for how could a socialist surround himself with the representatives of reaction:

Dies Kabinett bedeutet den Klassenkampf von oben gegen die Arbeiterschaft. Sein Programm ist:

großkapitalistischer Kurs! In diesem Kabinett sitzt  
der angebliche Sozialist Hitler zusammen mit dem  
Kapitalisten Hugenberg, der Personifizierung aller  
arbeiterfeindlichen und sozialreaktionären Kräfte in  
Deutschland. Kapitalistischer Kurs! Dazu Herr von Papen,  
der Mann der Steuergeschenke an die Unternehmer, der  
Vertrauensmann der Großagrarier und Osthilfenehmer!  
Kapitalistischer Kurs im Bunde mit dem feudalen Junkertum!  
Dazu Stahlhelm Seldt als Arbeitsminister, der erklärte  
Gegner der Sozialversicherung, der Feind der deutschen  
Gewerkschaften aller Richtungen, der Verkünder  
Hugenbergscher sozialreaktionärer Gedanken. Der  
Unternehmer an der Spitze der Reichsarbeitsministeriums.  
Das ist deutlich. [457] (31 January 1933)

Hitler had become the head of

... der ausgesprochensten Kapitalistenregierung, die  
es jemals in Deutschland gegeben hat.  
... Wo bleibt der Kampf gegen das 'rasende Kapital'?  
Hugenberg erlaubt ihn nicht!  
Wo bleibt die Enteignung der Bank- und Börsenfürsten!  
Herr von Papen erlaubt sie ihnen nicht! [458]  
(3 February 1933)

Far from realising the NSDAP's socialist rhetoric, the installation  
of such a government could result only in the oppression of the  
working class:

Grenzenlos ist die Verachtung, die jeder klassenbewußte Arbeiter gegen eine sogenannte 'Arbeiter' Partei hegt, deren Führer sich mit 5 Adeligen und mit den Vertretern der Schwerindustriellen- und Junker-Kaste in eine Regierung setzen! Das Hitler-Papen-Hugenberg-Kabinett wird positiv nur in einer Richtung arbeiten: Unterdrückung aller staatsbürgerlichen Freiheit, unerhörte Versklavung der Arbeiterschaft! [459] (3 February 1933)

And indeed the first acts of the new government were presented as an attack on the working class at the behest of reaction, couched in terms which stressed that the mendacity that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung had accused Nazism of so often was now an unmistakable reality. Thus one of its first measures, the announcement that the 'Reichsarbeitsministerium' would be abolished, was interpreted as the beginning of a full-scale assault on the Weimar Republic's social provisions [460]. An article published on 6 February 1933, assessing the first week of Hitler's government, first of all emphasised what had not taken place, before making this very point:

Was ist geschehen? Wir stellen fest, daß weder die Zinsknechtschaft gebrochen, noch die Großbanken verstaatlicht, noch Renten, Löhne und Unterstützungen erhöht ... ist.

Seine erste Tat war die Zerschlagung des Arbeitsministeriums. Worum die Arbeiterschaft seit Jahrzehnten gekämpft hatte, das ist ausgestrichen ...

Hitler ist Reichskanzler, Hugenberg feiert Orgien der Sozialreaktion, wo bleibt die Nazipropaganda gegen den Sozialreaktionär Hugenberg?

... Eine Woche Hitler - eine Woche voll Verwirrung des Staatslebens, voll Sozialreaktion und Terror! Eine Woche Hitler - eine Woche der Entfesselung aller sozialreaktionären Gelüste, der Verwirklichung sozialreaktionärer Träume! Noch nie ist eine demagogische Agitation so restlos entlarvt worden, wie die nationalsozialistische Agitation durch die erste Woche des Systems Hitler! Hitler geht im Joch Hugenburgs, des erbittertsten Feindes der Arbeiterschaft! [461]

(6 February 1933)

Similarly, when condemning the raising of customs duties on cattle and fat on 10 February 1933, the comparison was again with those radical measures which had been part of Nazi propaganda over the previous years:

Endlich hat die Hitler-Regierung auf wirtschaftlichem Gebiet einen Beschluß zustandegebracht. Er hilft nicht den Arbeitslosen, Rentnern und Kriegsbeschädigten, die am hilfsbedürftigsten sind. Er verstaatlicht auch nicht die Banken und schafft auch die Zinsknechtschaft nicht ab. Was er bringt sind Zollerhöhungen, die eine Preiserhöhung und damit eine weitere Beeinträchtigung der Kaufkraft breiter Volksschichten zur Folge haben müssen. [462]

(10 February 1933)

Events in Prussia, where it was alleged that many long-serving



civil servants, often, it was claimed, former workers and union activists who were well-respected by the population, were being removed in favour of Nazi sympathisers from the higher social classes, were adduced as further proof of the hollowness of the NSDAP's radical rhetoric, which had been a useful tool for achieving power, but nothing more:

Unter der Herrschaft der 'Arbeiterpartei' von Hitler, Goering, Prinz Auwi, Graf Hilldorf, Graf Reventlow und General Litzmann verschwindet der letzte Hauch von Sozialismus, von Freiheit und Gleichberechtigung der Arbeiterschaft. Es ist wieder freie Bahn den Prinzen, den Adligen, dem Großgrundbesitz und Großkapital. Der nationale Sozialismus der 'Arbeiterpartei' marschiert, so daß die Adligen und Barone, die 'feinen Leute' zu Amt und Würden kommen. Davon, daß den Ärmsten der Armen 'in 48 Stunden' geholfen wird, ist es ebenso still geworden wie von der Aufhebung der Zinsknechtschaft, der Zerreißung des Versailler Vertrages und von der Aufhebung der Hunger-Verordnung des Herren von Papen. [463]

(17 February 1933)

This type of approach to the new government was not simply directed by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung at Social Democrats as confirmation of a long-standing analysis, but was also aimed, in the SPD's tradition of attempting to educate its enemies' deluded supporters, at the followers of Nazism. In one example, the existence of former Social Democrats and Communists, who had transferred their loyalties to the NSDAP in the belief that

socialism could be achieved by this party was admitted (and, as discussed earlier, it was rare to find in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung an admission that working-class Nazis could have this motivation), in order to warn them that their expectations would remain unfulfilled:

... Woher sollen dem Sozialisten, der von KPD oder SPD in die Reihen des 'Sohnes des Volkes', des Spitzenkandidaten der NSDAP trat, Erfüllung seiner sozialistischen Sehnsucht werden, wenn der Vertrauensmann der landwirtschaftlichen und schwerindustriellen Arbeitgeber und der zum viertenmal sanierungslüsternden Großagrarien des Ostens Verwalter, nein Diktator der Wirtschaft geworden ist. Auf Vorschlag Hitlers! Glauben diese sozialistischen Arbeiter der Faust, daß Alfred Hugenberg seine Scherl- und Ufa-Konzerne verstaatlicht? Glauben sie, daß ihre Pgs in diesen Betrieben oder in denen des Geldgebers Fritz Thyssen, der Krupps, der I.G. Farben usw. dividendenberechtigt werden? Wie wollen sie den sozialen Volkstaat der Gerechtigkeit errichten, wenn für 'Streik gegen Lohnraub des ausbeuterischen Kapitalismus' Todesstrafe mit den Unterschriften Hitler-Hugenberg notverordnet wird? [464] (11 February 1933)

National Socialist followers continued to be characterised as the deceived, the confused and the misled, as the blind and the asleep [465] - and comfortably locating the new situation within the matrix of propaganda that had been constructed hitherto, the

Schwäbische Volkszeitung once again saw its task as one of awakening the politically slumbering, of allowing the ideologically blind to see once more, primarily by constantly demonstrating that National Socialism in power could not make good the rash promises of its election propaganda. The newspaper firmly believed that:

In den Kreisen des politisch Ideenlosen, durch die Wirtschaftskrise zermürbten und entwurzelten Bürgertums wird es bald ein jähes Erwachen geben [466] (4 March 1933)

A belief in the essentially transitory nature of Nazi success remained fundamental in determining the SPD's attitude to events. That propaganda ploy of the NSDAP of promising 'everything to everyone' which so frustrated the SPD and which the party believed could not survive the harsh realities of power, would now be revealed as the fraudulent contrivance it was, as demands were made that promises be made reality:

Wer so viel versprochen hat wie Adolf Hitler, hat natürlich die Pflicht, seine Versprechungen soweit zu erfüllen, wie das möglich ist ... Auch die national-sozialistischen Massen verlangen Antwort, wann die Erfüllung kommt. [467] (10 February 1933)

And, as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung stated the day after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, it was determined to expose what it regarded as inevitable, that is Hitler's inability to satisfy the many desires of his varied constituency, assuring its readers of

its intentions towards the new men in power:

Wir werden ihnen ihre Versprechungen, ihre Prophezeiungen, ihre Großmäuligkeit Tag für Tag vorhalten. Wir werden dem Volke aufzeigen, wie es mit der nationalsozialistischen Propaganda belogen und betrogen worden ist. [468]

(31 January 1933)

Thus the Schwäbische Volkszeitung highlighted the basic ridiculousness of Hitler's new position, as the man who had declared so often that he would renew Germany was shackled to the forces of the past. [469] And as the days passed, it made its main theme the Hitler government's lack of concrete achievements, especially in the economic sphere where the NSDAP had been so extravagant in its promises. [470] An article published on 9 February 1933 in response to a speech given by Hitler posed the question:

... Wie steht es mit Arbeit und Brot?

Es war wieder einmal nichts mit der Enthüllung der großen Rettungspläne Hitlers, die angeblich schon seit Jahren in der Schublade seines Geheimschranks schlummern. Seine Anhänger und Gläubigen warten mit Schmerzen darauf. Sie rufen laut zu ihm: Herr, gib sie uns, damit wir wider die Feinde stehen. Zwar hat Adolf Hitler in die Schublade gegriffen, aber es war nur die Schublade Schleichers. Und was er hervorgezogen hat, war ein Instrument gegen die Presse- und Meinungsfreiheit in Deutschland, aber kein Instrument zum Kampfe gegen die Not.

... Von Prophezeiungen wird das Volk nicht satt. Das hat es inzwischen gelernt. Es will Freiheit, es will Arbeit und Brot. Statt der Freiheit hat es eine Verordnung gegen die Pressefreiheit erhalten. Auf Arbeit und Brot aber soll es vier Jahre warten. Das ist die Regierungskunst des neuen 'Systems'. [471] (9 February 1933)

The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's judgement after '14 days of Hitler' was equally as bleak:

... In diesen 14 Tagen hat sich in Deutschland manches geändert - aber wer wollte behaupten, daß es besser geworden sei? Arbeitslosigkeit, Not, Hunger, Elend - alles wie zuvor! Wer seine Sache auf Versprechungen gestellt hat, erlebt bittere Enttäuschung. [472]

(16 February 1933)

The changes produced by the new government were all negative - as well as ending press freedom, these changes included, it was claimed, a worsening of Germany's foreign relations and the creation of a climate in which the SA could commit acts of violence against Social Democrats and Communists with impunity. This empty record was contrasted with the achievements of Social Democracy in power in 1918 and 1928/30 [473]; and inevitably the point was made that, just as the SPD had predicted, once burdened by the responsibilities of power, National Socialism's demagogy would begin to fracture, the hyperbolic claims which had attracted so many to the NSDAP would be revealed as a meretricious deceit:

Jetzt sind sie an der Macht, jetzt können sie zeigen,  
was sie können, und schon jetzt zeigt sich, daß sie gar  
nichts können. [474] (10 February 1933)

Nevertheless, although this latter, oft-repeated theme would seem to suggest that National Socialism did at least possess the reality of power, even if not the capability to use that power to solve Germany's problems, it was characteristic of the Social Democratic analysis that, simultaneously, the NSDAP was consistently portrayed as in fact having no significant governmental power at all. The SPD had, after all, so often denied that this was possible, had predicated its whole interpretation of Nazism on the belief that it was an ephemeral phenomenon that would disintegrate long before it could attain power - and, as has just been discussed, this belief informed its view of the movement after 30 January 1933, a newspaper like the Schwäbische Volkszeitung still saw as its main purpose to expose the NSDAP's failures and thus accelerate its decline. Not that this apparent contradiction presented the SPD with any real difficulty - for, again as had been so frequently explicated in the past, the NSDAP was not autonomous. If Hitler had become Chancellor it could only be because the real powers, the forces of reaction and big business had deemed it expedient; he was a mere 'Aushängeschild' [475], without any real influence. Thus, according to an article written by Josef Felder, Augsburg's Reichstag representative, Hitler's government was no such thing:

Ja, wir haben eben keine Regierung Hitler. Wir haben

nur einen Reichskanzler Hitler, der von dem für das  
Volk weit gefährlicheren Vizekanzler Papen scharf  
kontrolliert wird. [476] (1 February 1933)

More usually it was Hugenberg who was described as the man in  
control, the 'Wirtschaftsdiktator' determining economic policy:

Hitler ist zwar 'an der Macht', aber Hugenberg und  
seine kapitalistischen Hintermänner regieren. [477]  
(10 February 1933)

The constitution of Hitler's cabinet appeared to confirm this:

In einem Kabinett von 11 Personen sitzen 3  
Nationalsozialisten. Als 'Macht' hat sich Adolf Hitler  
immer die Maschinengewehre und die Uniformen vorgestellt.  
Wo ist der nationalsozialistische Preußenkommissar, dem  
die preußische Polizei untersteht? Wo ist der  
nationalsozialistische Reichswehrminister? Und endlich:  
wo ist der nationalsozialistische Arbeitsminister? Ich  
frage Sie und sage Ihnen, das sind die Posten, die von  
einer Clique Hugenbergs und den Deutschnationalen für sich  
okkupiert worden sind!

Adolf Hitler hat den Schein der Macht ... Damit erfüllt  
er seine historische Mission. Früher war er Dekorateur,  
heute ist er Dekorationsstück. Das Kabinett heißt Adolf  
Hitler, aber das Kabinett ist Alfred Hugenberg. Adolf  
Hitler darf reden, Alfred Hugenberg wird handeln. [478]

(7 February 1933)

The manner in which Hitler came to power - correctly presented in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as the result of intrigue and secret dealing within the reactionary elite [479] - and the composition of his cabinet, appeared so well to confirm the expectations of Social Democracy with regard to National Socialism that the whole process became the culminating point of the Social Democratic analysis. National Socialism's attainment of power was, paradoxically, read as the ultimate proof of its impotence, as final proof that the NSDAP was in the control of other forces, of big business, which had now 'decided' that the party would be most useful in government, and of reaction in general. Thus the underestimation of National Socialism, that fatal belief that it had been shackled and tamed in power [480] - and, indeed, even after it had become clear that this was not the case, the belief that the Nazi regime simply could not endure, which was widespread amongst SPD activists - cannot be seen as other than having been rooted in the long-term misperceptions of Nazism that have been analysed above: primarily, that is, in the absolute refusal to accept the NSDAP as an independent political organisation, an organisation which was simply beyond the possible control of German reaction and big business, and also in an over-reliance on such tools of interpretation as the agent theory and the conviction that big business funded National Socialism.

It could, of course, be argued that, against a background of years of chronic governmental instability, the belief that National Socialism's time in power would be no more than another short-lived episode, did have some justification in a contemporary context.



However, the SPD's response to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor simply cannot be considered as nothing more than a rational analysis of the political conjuncture in the aftermath of that event; for that response was determined by the persistent tendency to underestimate Nazism's potential political durability which was the particular consequence of the modes of interpretation applied by the SPD to the NSDAP, a tendency which has been frequently highlighted in the preceding chapters of this thesis.

As was often the case in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, though, its rhetoric belied its analysis in the weeks after Hitler's appointment. It may have professed to view National Socialism in government as little more than another aspect of a general 'counter-revolution' instigated by reaction at this time, but the propaganda content of the newspaper reveals unmistakable signs of anxiety. There occurred in particular a further heightening of its rhetoric of defiance, further declarations of the unbreakable spirit of Social Democracy, and a further flirtation with the idea of the labour movement's willingness to defend itself with all the methods at its disposal in the decisive struggle now approaching [481] - the sub-text being, as ever, that the SPD would even be prepared to use force if necessary. Again, a vocabulary of struggle and combat was deployed - 'Kampfbereitschaft', 'Kampfentschlossenheit', 'Kampfeswille' and 'Kampfgeist' were constants in the articles appearing in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung at this time, as that militaristic language which was examined in an earlier section of this work was forcefully reiterated. [482] And again it was often the 'Iron Front' which provided the propaganda framework for the articulation of such sentiments. [483]

At the same time, the readers of the newspaper were left in no doubt that they and the labour movement in general were under renewed physical attack as the SA were given free rein and a wave of terror swept over the country:

Tatsache ist, daß die Unruhe in Deutschland immer stärker wird. Täglich fallen Todesopfer. Die Blutschuld der SA schreit zum Himmel. Versammlungen der Sozialdemokraten und der Kommunisten werden immer wieder von bewaffneten nationalsozialistischen Banden überfallen und zu sprengen versucht. [484] (2 February 1933)

At the local level, though, there were declarations that the SA would never rule the streets of Augsburg, for the united will of the city's working class simply would not allow this to occur:

Dieser Wille wird vor allem nicht dulden, daß die SA in Augsburg die Straße beherrscht, er wird nicht dulden, daß in der Arbeiterstadt Augsburg Terrorakte gegen die Arbeiterschaft versucht werden ... [485] (2 February 1933)

And if such acts of terror were attempted, then Augsburg's National Socialists were left in no doubt about how the SPD would react:

Wir wiederholen mit noch größeren Nachdruck, was wir im Jahre 1932 schon einmal gesagt haben, als die persönliche Hetze der Augsburger Nazis maßlos unverschämt wurde: Für jeden von uns 10 von euch! [486] (3 February 1933)

This type of rodomontade was accompanied by an atavistic turning to the past as a means of self-assurance: to, that is, the image of the SPD as the party which had faced adversity and persecution before and emerged from it strengthened, the party which many foes had attempted to destroy, none successfully, above all the party which had survived its greatest test, the period of Bismark's Socialist Law. Significantly, allusions to that era were frequent after 30 January 1933 - conditions during the campaign for the March Reichstag elections were compared with those during the operation of the Socialist Law, and judged to be worse. As then, though, this kind of persecution would only make the SPD more determined:

In einem großen Teil des Reiches ist unsere Werbearbeit für die Wahlen des 5 März völlig unterbunden. In anderen ist sie empfindlich eingeschränkt. Damit ist ein tatsächlicher Zustand geschaffen, wie er selbst zur Zeit des Sozialistengesetzes nicht bestanden hat.  
... Aus Verfolgungen hat unsere Partei stets neue Kraft geschöpft. Schon der 5 März muß die Wahrheit dieser alten Erfahrung bestätigen. [487] (4 March 1933)

And this indeed was how the election results were analysed:

Noch nie, auch in der Zeit des Sozialistengesetzes nicht, hat die Partei einen solchen Wahlkampf erlebt! Geknebelt und gebunden, gehetzt und verfolgt, mit Verleumdungen überschüttet, gegen die sie sich nicht wehren konnte, so

ging sie in diesen Kampf. Und ihre Verluste? Von 121 Reichstagsmandaten eines, von 7,247,952 Stimmen 71,455, noch nicht einmal 1 Prozent. Das ist ein Erfolg, der mehr wiegt, als mancher stürmisch gefeierte Wahlsieg.[488]

(7 March 1933)

The Schwäbische Volkszeitung exuded an outward confidence in the ability of the working class to withstand an assault on it by the NSDAP - an awareness of the fighting qualities of the working class, for example, was believed to be behind the calm and measured response of the national committee of the socialist trade union movement to the new political situation, described thus in an article published on 2 February 1933:

Die Ruhe und die Zuversicht, die für die Verhandlungen des Bundesausschusses kennzeichnend war, kommt nicht von ungefähr, sie stammt aus der genauen Kenntniss der reichen Widerstandskräfte der deutschen Arbeiterschaft, die in ihrer jahrzehntelangen Geschichte schon manchen Gegner kommen und gehen sah, von dem die Sage ging, daß er die Arbeiterbewegung endgültig vernichten werde. [489]

(2 February 1933)

Behind such confident declamations, however, and behind the image of a party steadfast and defiant, lay a reality of timidity and caution. As far as a prescription for action was concerned, the same message was transmitted over and over in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung: there was to be no precipitate action, no pretext was to be given to the new government for an attack on the organisations of the working class, discipline was to be maintained

and the boundaries of the constitution observed. This basic principle of fighting Hitler's government on the basis of the constitution and legality was laid down the day after Hitler became Chancellor:

... Wir werden diese Regierung der Provokation und der Reaktion unerbittlich bekämpfen. Die Männer dieses Kabinetts haben den Verfassungseid geschworen, wir aber werden fest mit beiden Füßen auf dem Boden der Verfassung und der Gesetzlichkeit den Kampf gegen sie führen. [490]

(31 January 1933)

At the same time, the vital importance of providing the government with no excuse to ignore the constitutionally-defined limits to its powers was stressed:

Diese Regierung wartet auf die Gelegenheit, auf den Vorwand, um die Grenzen der Verfassung zu sprengen. Wir werden ihr diesen Vorwand nicht gehen! Jetzt ist die Pflicht der gesamten Arbeiterbewegung ein äußerstes Maß von Kaltblütigkeit und Disziplin zu zeigen. Es gilt die Kampfkraft der gesamten Arbeiterbewegung geschlossen zu erhalten, es gilt sie zu sammeln für den Fall, daß diese Regierung den äußersten Konfliktfall schafft. [491]

(31 January 1933)

Thus, as ever the rhetoric of action referred only to future possibilities; for the present it was the 'highest duty' [492] of Social Democrats to remain calm. 'Disziplin', 'Kaltblütigkeit', and 'Besonnenheit' became the key positive words in the Schwäbische

Volkszeitung's lexicon at this time whereas the concept of the 'Einzelaktion', the rash and foolish independent action, had an overwhelmingly negative value. [493] The temptation to take such action was admitted:

... Daß die deutsche Arbeiterschaft, soweit sie den Geist der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung in sich aufgenommen hat und gewerkschaftlich geschult ist, sich gegen diese sozialreaktionäre Regierung am liebsten in unmittelbarer Aktion zur Wehr setzen würde, ist menschlich begreiflich, aber sachlich falsch. [494] (2 February 1934)

To give way to such impulses, to indulge in the politics of the grand gesture would only harm the interests of the working class. Even a weapon such as the general strike could only be used as a last resort:

Letzte Mittel, wie der Generalstreik, sind nur in letzten Situationen erfolgreich. Wenn einmal angewendet, müssen sie Erfolge bringen, falls sie nicht eine Katastrophe nach sich ziehen sollen. Die schärfsten Patronen verschießt man nicht auf dem Schießplatz, sondern im wirklichen Kampf. Diese Situation ist der Staatsstreich von oben. [495]

(7 February 1933)

The parallels between the SPD's response to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor and its response after Papen's removal of the Prussian government in July 1932 are obvious enough - in both cases stress was laid on the need for discipline, the dangers of

being provoked into hasty action, and the importance of operating within the boundaries of legality. [496] In both cases, too, the KPD was used as an exemplar of the idiocy of rash adventurism; thus warning was given in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in early February 1933 against

... Einzelaktionen, wie sie von den kommunistischen Führern propagiert werden ...

... Die Führer der Eisernen Front sind sich ihrer Aufgabe und ihrer Verantwortung bewußt und sie werden nicht ein Flugzeug nach Moskau besteigen, wenn eine Einzelaktion mißglückt ist. [497] (3 February 1933)

And the persecution of the KPD by the new regime in the aftermath of the Reichstag fire (which the SPD accepted as being the work of the KPD) was used in the newspaper to reinforce the message that discipline and restraint were all-important:

Der sinnlose, verbrecherische Anschlag gegen das Reichstagsgebäude und die zweifellos planmäßig betriebenen Terrorakte der Kommunisten haben, wie nicht anders zu erwarten war, der Regierung willkommenen Anlaß gegeben, einen Feldzug auf Leben und Tod gegen die Kommunisten und ihre Organisationen zu führen. [498] (4 March 1933)

In disavowing any responsibility for the Reichstag fire, the opportunity was taken to emphasise the moral basis of Social Democratic politics:

Wir verabscheuen, wie jeder vernünftige Deutsche,  
dieses Werk sinnlosen und verbrecherischen politischen  
Hasses und politischer Entartung ... Die  
Sozialdemokratische Partei hat in 70 Jahren mühseligen,  
aber auch ruhmreichen Wirkens an dem deutschen Volke  
Werke des kulturellen, sozialen und wirtschaftlichen  
Aufbaues verrichtet, deren Spuren die dank der  
Verblendung weiter Teile unseres Volkes nunmehr über  
unser armes Land hereingebrochene Reaktion nicht wird  
verwischen können.

Den ethischen Grundlagen unserer sozialistischen  
Weltanschauung entspringt die unbedingte Ablehnung  
jeglicher Gewaltakte zur Erreichung politischer Zwecke.

[499] (4 March 1933)

Ultimately it was not possible for the SPD to abandon these  
ethical foundations, or the moral abhorrence of political violence  
they created. That violence would be the consequence if the  
government did not abide by the constitution was made clear in the  
Schwäbische Volkszeitung, thus Josef Felder:

... es kann werden ein erbitterter Kampf von Millionen,  
wenn die neuen Herren auch nur um Haaresbreite von den  
Grundrechten der Verfassung abweichen. [500]

(1 February 1933)

Clearly, though, this was not what the SPD hoped for; it wished  
rather for a continuation of legal politics:

Sie brauchen nur eine legale Regierung zu sein, dann



sind wir ganz selbstverständlich auch eine legale

Opposition. [501]

(7 February 1933)

Again it was threatened that if the government turned away from legality it would have to bear responsibility for the results of its actions; even in stating this, however, the extent to which the SPD's own faith in legality would remain the starting-point for the party's political decision-making, was revealed:

Die Arbeiterbewegung wird in Deutschland immer ein politischer Faktor bleiben. Wir denken nicht daran, unsere Ziele zu verbergen. Wir wollen unsere Gegnerschaft gegen die Herren von heute weder abschwächen noch bemänteln, wir sagen jeder arbeiterfeindlichen Politik den schärfsten Kampf an. Wir sagen nur, daß es seit Jahrzehnten unsere Art ist mit gesetzlichen Mitteln und sachlich zu kämpfen. Wir zeigen damit den Herren von heute die Möglichkeit, den politischen Kampf in Deutschland wieder auf ein Niveau zu bringen, das eines Kulturvolkes würdig ist. Diese Möglichkeit bietet ihnen jetzt die Verfassung. Sie zeigt den Weg. Wird dennoch ein anderer, ihm entgegengesetzter beschritten, so mögen die Sieger von heute dafür die Verantwortung übernehmen. Sie werden sie auf die Dauer nicht tragen können. [502]

(7 March 1933)

The legalism and the moral certainty expressed here was the true essence of the SPD's politics and had contributed to its resilience in the past. To have made actual its rhetoric of defiance and its

asseverations of a willingness to defend itself with all the means at its disposal if necessary, would have constituted a fundamental shift in the nature of the SPD. As has been suggested here, there was a real linguistic attempt to make the possibility of such a shift seem persuasive; and this linguistic attempt was partially mirrored by organisational initiatives such as the creation of the Iron Front. Of course, the use of this particular strain of belligerent propaganda must be understood within the wider context of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's general aims, specifically the urgent necessity to bolster the morale of the SPD's rank and file at an extremely difficult time for the party. The newspaper's rhetoric of assertion was an inevitable consequence of the daily propaganda struggle with National Socialism; arguably, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung would have been failing in its duty if it had not made this attempt to boost the confidence of its readership, and it would be wrong to imply that it was in some way duplicitous of the newspaper to use such language when little of real substance lay behind it. Nevertheless, it remains the case that Social Democracy was never comfortable employing such linguistic aggression, and that the heart of the SPD remained embodied in the language of discipline and caution it continued to speak, even whilst simultaneously seeming to threaten the NSDAP with violence. Thus, while the other aspects of the Social Democratic analysis of National Socialism that have been examined in this work, and the inflexible nature of that analysis which was so clearly revealed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in the weeks after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, are certainly illuminative of why the SPD rejected mass resistance and adhered to

the legal path, it is suggested here that it is above all in the use of a language of violence that the SPD's particular world-view, that world-view which so influenced the decisions the party made in 1933, was expressed. For the SPD's effort to forge a rhetoric of assertion in its confrontation with Nazism exposed the virtual impotence of Social Democracy before an enemy as ruthless and amoral as the NSDAP, and exposed also the SPD's awareness of this and its desire to reinvigorate itself. That it could not do this, that it could not alter its intrinsic character, that it in the end could not but remain true to its past history may have been a political and intellectual failure; it is more questionable though if it was also a moral failure.

## CHAPTER 11 : CONCLUSION

For all that much of the emphasis in this study has been on the flaws evident in the SPD's analysis of National Socialism, it must nevertheless be recognised that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's material on Nazism exhibited a basic vigour, effective if considered purely as propaganda. If the primary task of Social Democratic newspapers in the later Weimar years was to shape the reactions of Social Democrats to National Socialism in ways which would protect them from the contagion of Nazism, and create the degree of self-confidence within them necessary to defend working-class organisations and achievements from the attacks of the NSDAP, then the Schwäbische Volkszeitung can be adjudged to have succeeded. As will be discussed in a moment, evidence does exist to support the assertion that Augsburg's core Social Democrats did indeed know their enemy and knew, moreover, how they wished to combat that enemy; and, even if this necessarily cannot be proven conclusively, it hardly seems overly speculative to suggest that the Schwäbische Volkszeitung must have been influential in this area, although other factors, such as organisational loyalties and the pressures of social circumstances, would of course also have been important in determining responses to Nazism. The extent of the coverage devoted to National Socialism, its often confrontational and sensational style, and the virulence of the anti-Nazi polemics the Schwäbische Volkszeitung contained, was clearly designed to impress upon the newspaper's readership that their freedom, livelihoods, and even their lives were at risk from National Socialism. The explicit depiction of Nazism as a threat

to working-class rights was examined in chapter 2, but this was also the underlying theme of other aspects of the SPD's analysis, such as the interpretation of the NSDAP as a tool of reaction being used to attack the working class and its organisations, and, within this, its characterisation as an inherently violent party.

In the pursuit of its aims, and as the Nazi threat grew alarmingly, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's propaganda became increasingly militant, its language ever more aggressive, and its prognostications of the fate of the working class under any future Nazi rule took on an apocalyptic tone, as the nature of the newspaper was inevitably changed by the exigencies of the struggle to counteract Nazism. Moreover, this change in its nature was certainly forced upon the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as one aspect of the debasement of German political culture which Social Democrats believed the rise of Nazism had precipitated; it did not represent an approach stemming naturally from the SPD's traditional mode of agitation, and it is this fact which makes a consideration of the cumulative effect of the newspaper's propaganda especially interesting. In its willingness to gamble on what effect its overtly bellicose stance might have on the newspaper's readership, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung reflects the extent to which the SPD had by this time lost control of events and could merely react to an agenda set by the actions of the NSDAP, even whilst simultaneously declaring its intention of asserting itself with renewed energy.

In retrospect, of course, it is clear that the deliberate construction of an image of the Nazi enemy, the function of which was to warn and to motivate rank-and-file Social Democrats, was

undermined by other elements of the Social Democratic analysis of National Socialism. Thus, for example, the SPD's tendency, often remarked upon in this thesis, to underestimate the NSDAP, to convince itself that the party's success could only be transitory, was a contradiction of the volume and tenor of the material devoted to Nazism in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, and exposed the competing imperatives at work within the newspaper - for the need to maintain morale amongst the rank and file by diminishing the importance of National Socialism could not be allowed to disguise the equally pressing necessity to galvanise that rank and file by constantly underlining the seriousness of the Nazi menace. It is in such confused and ambiguous messages, and not in any failure by the SPD in Augsburg adequately to recognise the danger Nazism represented and to warn its supporters against that danger, that the historian can find explanations for the feebleness of the SPD's capitulation in 1933.

This must be explored later in this conclusion in more detail, and with specific regard to the response of Augsburg's Social Democrats to the establishment of the National Socialist dictatorship. First, though, a more basic point must be made, one which can perhaps be lost if the focus is too much on the complexities of the SPD's analysis of Nazism: that is, the effort that has been made in the preceding chapters to deconstruct the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's rhetoric, as a means of interpreting the difficulties that the SPD faced when confronting the NSDAP, should not be allowed to obscure the direct and negative effect that aspects of the SPD's analysis had on the party's ability to combat its enemy. It is not only the hidden meanings behind the rhetoric,

and the subtleties and ambiguities of the language employed which elucidate why the SPD made the decisions it did in 1933, but also the consequences for the party's political behaviour and strategy in the struggle against National Socialism of its misperceptions of the rival movement. It is thus obvious enough that the SPD's over-concentration on a number of ideologically-predetermined themes, many of which revolved around questions of class, hindered its capability of realistically assessing the causes of Nazism's success, by producing a fixed and inflexible view of National Socialism, one which, moreover, relieved the party of the need for honest self-examination. Again, the persistent underestimation by the SPD of National Socialism's potential to succeed as a lasting political movement, was the analytical defect which most obviously exercised a deleterious effect on the party's response to events, particularly so after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor. For although, as mentioned in the last chapter, there were several factors which apparently justified the SPD's belief in the temporary nature of Nazism in power, and although that belief was shared by other political parties in Germany at the time, the contradiction between such a belief and the volume of anti-Nazi propaganda that had appeared in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung since 1928 remains nevertheless glaring. It is precisely because the SPD had so often emphasised the danger National Socialism represented to the Weimar Republic, and had so often used the parallel with events in Italy to reinforce this message, that the party's seeming lack of awareness in 1933 of the NSDAP's long-term threat is so surprising. As has been suggested throughout this thesis, though, this response flowed from an interpretation of National Socialism

which continually conceptualised it as an inevitably ephemeral movement, the success of which stemmed primarily from short-term circumstances, such as the economic depression, the removal of which would end Nazism's success.

It could also be argued, however, that just as serious in the long-term as the power of the idea of National Socialism as a transitory phenomenon, had been the SPD's inability, in its confrontation with the NSDAP, to produce a propaganda capable of mobilising support from outwith Social Democracy's traditional constituency, something which the parochial nature of the type of material found in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was hardly designed to achieve. In the introduction to this thesis, mention was made of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's position as a general daily newspaper, aimed not only at members of the SPD or the wider labour movement, but rather also at Augsburg's newspaper-reading public as a whole, as a commercial enterprise. In truth, though, there is little evidence in the content of the newspaper, at least as it is reflected in the engagement with National Socialism, that this fact ever significantly shaped the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach. The constant expectation, alluded to several times in the course of this work, that the newspaper's anti-Nazi material could have an effect on non-Social Democrats, and even on Nazi supporters, was belied by the narrow range of its propaganda. The latter, in its repetitive concentration on such themes as the conspiracy of the capitalist class at work behind National Socialism, big business funding of the NSDAP, and the class basis of Nazism's support, was clearly tailored to the interests and outlook of Social Democrats, and seldom effectively addressed the newspaper's putative wider



audience. If, therefore, one element of the SPD's dilemma in the Weimar Republic was that it could not expand as a political movement by mobilising either sectors of the middle class or those workers outwith the Social Democratic mainstream, then an analysis of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung suggests that the insularity of the SPD's literary propaganda may have contributed to this.

It was exactly this type of defect which was identified by contemporary intellectual critics of the SPD's engagement with Nazism, from both the right and the left wings of the party. [503] Carlo Mierendorff, for example, explicitly attacked the belief that the NSDAP would simply fade into obscurity like previous anti-semitic movements, and admonished the SPD not to rely on the disintegration of the Nazi movement, but rather to rely on its own efforts. Alexander Schiffrin, meanwhile, censured the widespread idea that the NSDAP's rise was simply due to the critical economic situation, and also perceptively noted that to characterise National Socialism as nothing more than a tool of capitalism was to ignore the fact that it was precisely because the movement had an independent existence ('Eigenleben') that it was such a dangerous opponent. And from the left wing of the SPD criticism was constant of the party's passivity of response to Nazism, a passivity which, again, could be seen to have been encouraged by convictions about the temporary nature of the NSDAP's success.

Despite the validity of such criticisms, the SPD's response to National Socialism's assault on the labour movement in 1933 should not be interpreted as having been principally the consequence of an inaccurate analysis of Nazism; arguably, such inaccuracy would not have prevented the SPD from achieving a more robust defence of

itself than actually occurred, if the party had not anyway been fundamentally weak. Certainly, the NSDAP was the enemy that the SPD was least well- equipped to comprehend and to confront; a basic lack of understanding of the type of movement National Socialism was does pervade the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's material on Nazism, and it was the source of much of the SPD's political difficulty in the last Weimar years. Nevertheless, the SPD was also clearly ill-equipped to deal with any determined enemy during those years, for it exuded a general aura of stagnation, and of a loss of its previous certitudes and sureness of political orientation, which were difficult to retain amid the uncertainties of the Weimar Republic. Thus, the predicament of the SPD in 1933 was as much the result of the general structural problems of the party as a political organisation, the culmination of a long-term sclerosis, as it was a reaction specifically determined by the nature of the party's engagement with National Socialism over the preceding years. This is not to dismiss the importance of the direct effects of the latter, or of the value to the historian of a delineation of the main contours of the SPD's interpretation of Nazism; it is, though, to claim that merely to concentrate on the flaws in that interpretation is inadequate as an explanatory tool, for it was the determinants underlying those flaws, and not the flaws as such, which ultimately conditioned the SPD's behaviour.

It is, then, those traits which have been identified throughout this thesis as having exercised a shaping influence on the approach to National Socialism demonstrated by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, that have the most significance, those deep-rooted Social Democratic characteristics which could not but be revealed

in the course of the propaganda struggle with Nazism. Taken as a whole, those characteristics represented the Social Democratic mind-set, a mind-set which did not provide the SPD with the type of intellectual flexibility that would have enabled it to react with greater assurance to the emergence of the National Socialist threat. One aspect of this mind-set which has been frequently mentioned in this study, was the extent to which it remained grounded in pre-1914 conceptions; it was this, above all, which produced the SPD's incapacity ever really to 'see' the NSDAP properly, because the latter did not function within traditional class or ideological boundaries, and thus could not easily be intellectually located. The SPD's obvious bewilderment in the face of this was the consequence also of an analysis of Nazism often driven by the party's own self-image and political expectations, again a part of the SPD's mind-set. Thus, for instance, as was discussed in chapter 5, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach to Nazi ideas illuminates as much about the SPD's attitude to ideology as it does about the latter's role within the NSDAP. Similarly, what is most often revealed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's discussions of the NSDAP's following, is the very precise, if hardly realistic, conception that the SPD had of its own support and the qualities it supposedly possessed. And the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, further, exhibited the tendency to transform elements which were in fact positively contributing to the success of National Socialism - such as the movement's ability to gain support from across the class spectrum - into exactly those factors which would 'inevitably' guarantee the NSDAP's disintegration, simply because they did not accord with the SPD's view of how a mass

movement should operate.

It must be reiterated here that this narrowness of perspective did not damage the efficacy of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's material on Nazism as propaganda; it does however demonstrate the limits of the SPD's political imagination, which certainly affected the party's political judgement, for the SPD's misperceptions of National Socialism were often only symbolic of wider misreadings of events and circumstances. The most significant example of this was certainly the SPD's denial of the NSDAP's autonomy, the shackling of the movement to the old enemies who continued to obsess Social Democracy, through the use of the myth of big business funding. It has to be recognised that this myth blinded the SPD, not only to the reality of National Socialism, but also to the reality of the economic and political role of business in the Weimar Republic. The modes of interpretation revealed by an examination of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's anti-Nazi rhetoric, were not, that is, simply the SPD's method of comprehending the NSDAP, they also represented the party's general means of analysing political, social and economic phenomena. A further instance of this was the continuing importance of, if not Marxist theory explicitly, then at least Marxist concepts and beliefs. The SPD's self-deceiving convictions about the, seemingly preordained, behaviour of class groups has been highlighted in previous chapters, but the more subtle influence of Marxism is also discernible in the SPD's always implicit faith in the inevitability of its ultimate victory, and in the idea that the NSDAP, as an 'unnatural' combination of social groups, could not long survive.

Such attitudes were not simply generated by the necessities of

the immediate confrontation with National Socialism, but were rather rooted in the SPD's long-term development. This is best exemplified by the contradictions and equivocations revealed in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's approach and response to Nazi violence: the legalism, the humanist fear of bloodshed, and the desire to avoid the taking of risks were integral to the SPD's perception of itself, to its belief in the morality of its political behaviour. The rise of the NSDAP and the violence of its methods merely provided a pressing set of circumstances within which this self-perception could be confirmed, a moral dilemma to which there could only ever have been one, non-violent, solution. Similarly, the Social Democratic 'mentality' in the later Weimar years is only explicable if the importance of the SPD's sense of its own history is realised; for this provided a further framework of interpretation, one which, as in the case of the false parallel drawn between the era of Bismark's Socialist Law and the advent of the Nazi dictatorship, was used to diminish the significance of National Socialism and to bolster the SPD's misplaced confidence in its ability to survive repression.

What this study of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung has revealed about the SPD's modes of thought, and the direct and often disastrous political consequences those modes of thought could have, is therefore confirmatory of other interpretations which seek to explain the SPD's response to the rise of Nazism by examining the prevailing mentality within the party - emphasising, as indeed this thesis has done, the SPD's traditionalism, its legalism, and its fear of risk, and often applying this to the hesitant and indecisive behaviour of the SPD's leadership at national level in

1933. Of course, it must be acknowledged that the idea of a Social Democratic mind-set only has relevance within the wider context of actual political events and decisions, in isolation it tells but a partial story; it is certainly not being suggested here that the SPD's world-view provides a singular explanation for its actions. Nevertheless, the importance of the Social Democratic mind-set can be related to the specific course of events in Augsburg after 30 January 1933; for if indeed the SPD's reaction to National Socialist attack can be explained with reference to that mind-set, then this should be demonstrable in the case of Augsburg's SPD, and with regard to the influence of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung.

What is certain is that the various steps of the Nazi seizure of power in Augsburg [504], and in particular the terror directed against the SPD in the weeks following 9 March 1933, met with no mass Social Democratic resistance in the city. This latter date was the day on which Augsburg's National Socialists took possession of the city hall, an event which was thereafter mythologised as having provided the signal for the 'national revolution' to begin throughout Bavaria. On 9 March, Augsburg's NSDAP leader, Karl Wahl, in a speech from the balcony of the city hall, had the following message for those who had, from the same spot, proclaimed the beginning of the Weimar Republic in November 1918:

Hier sind sie gestanden, diese Schurken, und haben  
alles in den Kot gezogen. Die heutige Kundgebung  
wird den Herren zum Ausdruck bringen, daß ihre Zeit  
ein für allemal vorbei ist und daß ihr System mit  
Stumpf und Stiel ausgerottet wird. Die Idee des

Marxismus und die elenden verbrecherischen Führer  
müssen weggefeht werden ... [505]

(Quoted in: K. Filser and P. Sobczyk, 'Augsburg im Dritten Reich')

The making real of this promise involved, for the SPD, the banning from 10 March 1933 of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, at first for four days and then indefinitely, and the arrests, in several waves over the next four months, of the party's city council representatives, the leadership of the Reichsbanner, leading functionaries of the party, the Iron Front, and the socialist societies, and a number of Jewish intellectuals who were SPD members (in contrast to the NSDAP's persecution of the KPD in Augsburg, however, lower lever SPD functionaries and ordinary party members largely escaped arrest. [506])

Against the background of the response of the SPD at national level to similar events throughout Germany, the caution of Augsburg's Social Democratic leadership was entirely predictable; this caution should, however, be analysed also in the light of the attitudes revealed by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in this period, as outlined in chapter 10, for these were the attitudes of Augsburg's local SPD leaders, and they were clearly not likely to produce radical measures. The enduring belief that National Socialism was an instrument of reaction and capitalism, and hence that Hitler possessed only the semblance and not the reality of power, and the desire not to provoke the new government or take unnecessary risks, were the shaping concepts of these leaders at this time. Thus, beyond the stationing of a Reichsbanner unit in the Social Democratic 'Volkshaus' , no preparations for armed

conflict or resistance were made, and the party in Augsburg, as elsewhere, seemed to ready itself for a period of repression, heartened, as always, by the collective memory of earlier times:

Der schmachvollen Zeit des Sozialistengesetzes

folgte ... ein glänzender Sieg der Sozialdemokratie. [507]

(6 March 1933)

This is not to say that there were no disputes within the SPD in Augsburg concerning the strategy the party should adopt. Such disputes, though, did not centre on the possibility of attempting direct resistance to National Socialism, but were rather disagreements over whether continued legal SPD activity might be feasible if the party pursued a course of 'adaptation' (Anpassung), or whether emigration and illegal activity represented the only realistic options. [508]

Such arguments, of course, ceased to be relevant following the outlawing of the SPD by the new regime on 22 June 1933. This final blow produced in Augsburg, as elsewhere in Germany, a widespread feeling of resignation and dismay amongst Social Democrats. [509] There was, too, anger at the inaction and helplessness which had marked the response of the SPD's leadership to the Nazi terror; but, more than this, there is evidence that there was frustration that no signal had been given by the leadership for, at the very least, vigorous defensive action, for it does seem that in Augsburg the potential for such action did exist, that a hard core of Social Democratic activists were awaiting such a signal, and were bitterly disenchanted when it failed to materialise. For many Social Democratic activists in Augsburg, the party's inertia after 30



January 1933 was the fatal climax of an inadequacy in the attempt to counteract Nazism which, as was discussed in the introduction, had provoked discontent within the party's rank and file from 1930.

It is, of course, far from easy to demonstrate conclusively the existence of such attitudes; that there was a mood of expectancy and a willingness to resist National Socialism physically amongst Augsburg's Social Democrats, is, however, asserted by various contemporary participants in the events of this time in the city. Certainly, this would not have been unique to Augsburg: as, for example, Hartmut Mehringer has pointed out in his discussion of the SPD in Bavaria as a whole in this period, there was real pressure, especially from within the party's youth movement and the Reichsbanner, for decisive action, a pressure which the leadership sought to dissipate by diverting it in the direction of campaigning for the March Reichstag election. That the leadership did not respond positively to the obvious desire of the SPD's activists in Bavaria for a more forceful policy, served only to widen an already existent gulf between the rank and file and the higher levels of the party. [510]

This wish to move on to the offensive in the struggle against National Socialism was discernible also among the SPD's activists in Augsburg as Nazism's grip on Germany tightened [511]; a common component of the recollections of such activists is the identification of the rank and file's readiness for a physical confrontation, and of the disillusionment created by waiting for a signal from above which never came. Thus, for example, Heinrich Wismann, a young SPD member and contributor to the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, recalled the atmosphere of the time in the following

way:

Wir bereiteten uns in dieser Zeit auf eine gewaltsame Auseinandersetzung mit den Nationalsozialisten vor ...  
... Die 'Hitleritis' wurde immer gefährlicher, und ich erinnere mich, daß wir am Ende der Weimarer Zeit in der Wohnung von Bauer (Jakobertor) auf den Befehl warteten zurückzuschlagen. Ausgerüstet waren wir mit einfachen und primitiven Waffen. Der Einsatzbefehl blieb aus. [512] (H. Wismann, 'Erinnerungen ...')

Significantly enough, this rank-and-file militancy is related to the creation of the Iron Front and the publicity the latter received in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung, by Eugen Nerdinger, another young Social Democrat active at this time, in his book Brüder, zum Licht empor:

Die Saalschlachten der Nazis im Herrlesaalbau forderten die Gegenwehr des Reichsbanners, später der 'Eisernen Front' heraus. Die Basis der Augsburger Arbeiterbewegung nahm die Herausforderung an. Sie militarisierte sich in den Arbeitersport-, Jugend- und Parteiverbänden. Die Basis, bereit die Republik zu verteidigen, schloß sich 1931 in der 'Eisernen Front' zusammen ...

Die Gründung der 'Eisernen Front' wurde in der Schwäbische Volkszeitung ausführlich angezeigt und besprochen. Die zunehmende Militanz der Arbeiterbewegung hatte das Ziel, die Republik, die örtlichen Einrichtungen der Bewegung, wie Volkshaus, Vertagsgebäude, Druckerei,

Gewerkschaftshäuser usw. gegen nazistische Angriffe zu verteidigen. [513] (E. Nerdinger, Brüder, zum Licht empor)

As mentioned previously, it was often younger Social Democratic elements who had been most disaffected by a perceived weakness in the response of the party leadership to the rise of National Socialism; unsurprisingly, then, the type of readiness and expectation described by Wismann and Nerdinger, was strongly felt by such youthful activists, at least according to the testimony of one member of the 'Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend' in Augsburg:

Man sah den Gegner in geschlossenen Formationen vor sich und man sah, daß die Republik verloren war. Und man hatte den unbändigen Willen, ihnen zu zeigen, daß man gegen sie antreten wollte und daß man das soziale Geschaffene verteidigen wollte. Und da kommt nun die Organisation dazu, die SAJ formierte sich zu Zehnerschaften. Wir waren bereit, zusammen mit der Eisernen Front und den Organisationen der Arbeiterschaft, Arbeitersportvereine, die ja, bis zu 26 hab' ich einmal gezählt sind es gewesen, einzelne Sparten mit dem Reichsbanner usw. kämpfen wollten, die Republik verteidigen wollten...

Wir waren bereit, die Konsequenzen zu ziehen und es kam keine außerparlamentarische Kampfwendung, kein Signal, die Republik zu verteidigen. Und so gingen wir unter und wir wußten genau, diese Kämpfe, wie sie jetzt nun stattfinden werden, die dauern länger als wie die, unsere Vätergeneration uns damals sagte, Bub glaub doch,

Weihnachten ist der ganze Spuk zu Ende. [514]

(Quoted in: H. Bretschneider, 'Arbeitersportler und  
Arbeitersänger')

This last reference to a generational difference in the perception of how long the Nazi regime could endure is important, for this was one of the key points of disagreement between the first resistance groups in the Augsburg area, active from the summer of 1933, and the SPD leadership in exile in Prague. [515] The rejection by those involved in resistance work in Augsburg of the belief, held by the exiled leadership and shared by many of the SPD functionaries who remained in Germany, that Nazi rule could last only a few months, led also to a rejection of the leadership's conception of how illegal activity should be organised. [516] Such differences, however, were the result also of a wider distrust of the SPD establishment; for, in what can be seen as a retrospective confirmation of the claim that a potential for decisive action was to be found amongst Augsburg's rank-and-file Social Democrats in 1933, it was the perceived betrayal of this potential by the SPD's leadership which determined the subsequent attitudes of many participants in resistance groups. Moreover, the core of such resistance groups was often provided by, for instance, former SAJ activists, and others from the radical wing of the Weimar SPD, those, that is, who had been most critical of the party's stagnation and its ineffectuality in combating the NSDAP. [517] And it was certainly disenchantment with the behaviour of Social Democracy's leaders, which provided the starting-point for the work of such illegal activists as those who, in a pamphlet published in

1945, sought to explain their motivation and ideals:

Mit dem Jahre 1945 endete ein Krieg, der für uns bereits 1930 begonnen hatte. Nach dem ersten Wahlsieg der Nationalsozialisten 1930 erwarteten wir eine Intensivierung des politischen Kampfes unserer SPD-Parteiführung. Wir setzten uns bei der Errichtung der Eisernen Front voll ein. Wir sahen die Fronten gegeneinander aufmarschieren, bereit für eine bevorstehende Auseinandersetzung. Wir warteten auf den Befehl zum Einsatz. Wie Reichsbanner und Eisernen Front standen auch einige Zehnerschaften der 'Sozialistischen Jugend' bewaffnet in Augsburg bereit. Der Befehl blieb aus. Das war für uns die dramatische Wendung. Im Entsetzen über den würdelosen Untergang der Partei und die kampflose Aufgabe der Demokratie zeigte sich uns folgende Situation: Geistige Desorientierung, Wirrnis, falsche Beurteilung, unrichtige Prognosen durch SPD-Funktionäre im Innern und durch die emigrierte Leitung des Parteivorstandes in Prag, über Wesen und Weg, Eigenart und Struktur des Hitlertums. [518] ('Bericht der "Revolutionären Sozialisten" Sudbayerns, Gruppe Augsburg')

A knowledge of the provenance of the source from which the above quotation stems, and indeed of the other sources used here in support of the idea that in 1933 rank-and-file radicalism amongst Augsburg's Social Democrats was frustrated by the indecision of the leadership, must lead to the exercise of some caution when

considering the credibility of such sources as evidence. The memoirs of contemporary participants, written many years after the events they describe (thus Wismann's memoir is from 1963, and Nerdinger's book was published in 1984), cannot be accepted completely uncritically, an awareness is necessary of the retrospective distance involved and the distortions this could generate. Moreover, when the testimony involved is that of those, such as the resistance group which published the pamphlet mentioned a moment ago (and to which Eugen Nerdinger belonged), who were deeply involved in illegal anti-Nazi activity, the danger must always exist that, consciously or unconsciously, the events of the Weimar era may have been reconstructed in such a way as to justify the later actions of the authors. It must also be recognised that assertions about the militant state of mind of Augsburg's rank-and-file Social Democrats, do not amount to a definitive proof of that militancy - especially when those assertions originate from a relatively small number of sources.

Furthermore, even an acceptance, or partial acceptance, of such assertions, should not be taken to imply a judgement of any type concerning the potential for success of an attempted act of mass resistance by the SPD or the labour movement in general, or regarding the number of workers who might have become involved in such an act. There were, of course, massive obstacles in the way of mass action: the divided nature of working-class political allegiance was one such obstacle [519], as was the intimidating atmosphere created by Nazi terror, arrests, threats and harassment, but it is above all the consequences for the labour movement of the world economic crisis which must be considered in this context.

[520] This latter, although its effects cannot be considered in isolation from a broader range of political and social trends, including particularly the SPD, undermined both the economic position of the working class and, as a result, the strength of the labour movement. Given the limits that were thus clearly placed on the SPD's ability to mobilise workers, and on the capability of workers to respond to any appeal for radical measures, the risk involved in attempting mass resistance was undeniably great. Although an unwillingness to take risks can be identified as one of the traits of the SPD's leadership which led to its fatal lack of decisiveness, the fear that precipitate action could have a tragic and bloody outcome was certainly not without foundation. Thus as T.W. Mason has pointed out [521], the difficulties in which the economic depression placed the SPD, in combination with its more general political disorientation, did not provide an auspicious starting point from which to resist National Socialism.

The SPD's avoidance of mass action is therefore understandable from a number of perspectives. It is, for example, understandable in the light of the objective situation as it was assessed by the party's leadership at the time, however that assessment may be judged in retrospect. Thus, given the factors just outlined above, and the debilitating effects of the economic crisis in particular; given the lack of preparation for any kind of insurrection, and that a virtually weaponless Iron Front would have confronted the full power of the state, which was now in the possession of the NSDAP; given that the SPD had no history of using violence as a political weapon; and given the firm belief within the party that Nazism in power could not endure - given all this, the decision to

refrain from an endeavour which involved incalculable risks appears entirely rational. The idea that the response of the SPD in 1933 was reasoned and guided by prevailing circumstances, must however be balanced by a consideration of the influence of those underlying determinants which, as this thesis has shown, the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's engagement with National Socialism disclosed, and which provide a further framework for analysing the SPD's dilemma after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor. For what is being suggested here, and what has been suggested throughout this work, is that, when decisions were made in 1933, these underlying determinants, the SPD's legalism, its humanism, its faith in discipline and order, and its abhorrence of violence, were just as crucial to the outcome, indeed perhaps more crucial, than any objective analysis of the situation, any measured consideration of the likelihood of mass resistance proving successful.

What the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's anti-Nazi material illustrates, therefore, is the struggle which occurred between the traditionalism of the SPD's inherent nature, and the dictates of the political moment, the necessity to attempt to alter that nature in order to confront the NSDAP. However, although the argument of this study has been that the SPD's traditional values were always the strongest influence when decisions had to be made, what an analysis of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in its local context demonstrates is that, no matter how little effect the SPD's rhetoric of assertion may have had in determining the attitude of the party's leadership in 1933, its effect on the rank and file in Augsburg had been considerable; and that a desire did exist within that rank and file for active resistance to National Socialism,



however carefully this desire must be defined. The decision to practise restraint and to avoid taking risks, that is to say, did not negate the years of repeated proclamations exhorting the working class to be ready for battle, and claiming that the SPD would resist with every means at its disposal any attempt to destroy the Weimar Republic, or the impact of such proclamations.

Thus, much of what has been revealed in the preceding analysis of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung would appear to confirm the plausibility of the depiction given in the sources quoted from above of Augsburg's core Social Democrats as radicalised, militant, and waiting in early 1933 for the signal to resist National Socialism. Of course, the efficacy of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's anti-Nazi rhetoric as propaganda should not distract the historian's attention entirely away from the range of counter-factors militating against mass resistance; and, indeed, even the assertion of that efficacy must be more speculative than empirically demonstrable. It is, though, as stated at the beginning of this conclusion, the construction of a very specific image of the enemy which is most striking about the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's treatment of Nazism - an image of the enemy intended to produce an aggressive antipathy to the NSDAP in the newspaper's readership, and to instil that readership with a self-belief and an energy which would enable it to withstand Nazi intimidation more effectively. It is probable that the most significant concrete influence this effort by the Schwäbische Volkszeitung to create a consciousness amongst Social Democrats of the Nazi threat had, was in the contribution this made to the maintenance of that fairly stable SPD electoral support described in chapter 1. However, in

the aggressiveness of its rhetoric the Schwäbische Volkszeitung went far beyond what would have been necessary to achieve only this, employing in fact, a mode of propaganda entirely consistent with the creation of the type of radicalised, active potential those such as Nerdinger and Wismann claim existed amongst the rank and file.

This supposition , moreover, gains further credence when it is considered within the framework of Augsburg's wider history, as outlined in the introduction. The sense of flux and unpredictability, the unstable temper of the working class, the entry of violence into the political arena - this change in Augsburg's political culture, in combination with the extremely labile nature of the late Weimar era, certainly made possible in 1933 what would have been unthinkable in the years before 1914 in Augsburg: that is, mass action, involving at least part of the working class, of the kind that could conceivably have been triggered off by the SPD's leadership in resistance to National Socialism, though, as just discussed, this is a complex matter, difficult to judge. In a similar way, the fact that such mass resistance did not occur had a specifically local dimension, in that the fear of mass mobilisation and working-class spontaneity which the events of the immediate post-war years had produced within Augsburg's SPD leadership, acted as a brake upon any radical action which could potentially escape the control of that leadership. This, indeed, suggests a parallel between the situation in Augsburg during the Weimar Republic's first and last years. In both cases a radicalised, or partially radicalised, rank

and file had that radicalism stymied by the fear and hesitancy of the SPD's leadership, its refusal to take risks, and desire to maintain a rapidly-disappearing control - in the earlier period this was most evident in the response of the local Social Democratic leaders to the establishment of the Soviet Republic in Augsburg, and the consequences of that response. One of those consequences, of course, was a widespread loss of respect for the SPD's leadership in the city, a sense of disillusionment which arguably remained constant throughout the Weimar Republic, and which was only reinforced by the party's defeat in 1933.

This general disillusionment, and particularly the disenchantment provoked by the leadership's perceived indecisiveness at the crucial moment, can be regarded as a partially- articulated recognition of those flaws in the structure and world- view of the SPD which prevented it from functioning effectively within the Weimar polity, and especially in its confrontation with National Socialism; though perhaps the fact of that ineffectuality was more apparent than the causes of it. It seems, however, significant that it is not a lack of information and warnings about the NSDAP that is complained of in the sources quoted from a moment ago; those sources evince, rather, a keenly-felt awareness of the wider failings of the SPD's leadership which prevented the rank and file from acting upon the unequivocal knowledge of the threat of Nazism which they had gained from the SPD's newspapers and propaganda over the previous years. And this tends further to support the idea advanced in this thesis that explanations for the SPD's ultimate powerlessness should be located in the general stagnation of the party, in that mind-set which

close study of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung reveals, and not in any failure of propaganda.

To claim that rank-and-file Social Democrats in Augsburg would have known their enemy, however, is not to claim that the image of National Socialism possessed by that rank and file was ideologically underpinned. That image would have been primarily mediated by the SPD's propaganda; however, as the example of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung demonstrates, this propaganda was not, in the main, characterised by its intellectual subtlety, even if it was clearly informed by certain fixed ideological concepts. The basic purpose of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's anti-Nazi material was not explicitly ideological, but was rather grounded in the exigencies of the day-to-day political struggle with the NSDAP; and there is little to suggest that complex, ideologically-based perceptions of National Socialism were of any importance to ordinary members of the SPD in Augsburg. It would, therefore, be unsurprising if a greater clarity and simplicity about the Nazi problem and how it should be dealt with, had existed within the mass base of the SPD than amongst its leadership; and this, in turn, would help to explain why the gulf between the rank and file and the leadership of the party was widened, as it apparently was in Augsburg, by the tensions precipitated by the rise of Nazism. A situation of conflicting pressures had been created, in which a rank and file increasingly predisposed to a more aggressive response to Nazism came into conflict with a leadership and with organisational imperatives tending towards caution.

Paradoxically, though, this rank-and-file desire for forceful action to combat the NSDAP could not safely be suppressed by the

Social Democratic elite, but had, in fact, to be encouraged by the SPD's propaganda: the necessities of political mobilisation simply did not allow for a rhetoric of caution (although, as discussed previously, even the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's rhetoric of aggression reveals much about the inherently cautious nature of the SPD). It is this sense of contradictory impulses at the heart of the SPD which the Schwäbische Volkszeitung above all illustrates, contradictory impulses generated as the party struggled to react convincingly to the new style of politics initiated by the NSDAP, and yet simultaneously strove to retain its traditional political identity. The dilemma facing the SPD was that, although clearly recognising how dangerous National Socialism was, the party remained imprisoned within that traditional identity; thus it could not reinvent, and therefore reinvigorate, itself. That such a reinvention was attempted at the level of rhetoric, is certainly confirmed by an examination of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung in the later Weimar years. And as the history of the SPD in Augsburg in these years shows, the use of a rhetoric of pugnacious defiance, however ambiguous and confused that rhetoric may appear in retrospect, was not without risks in the effect it produced on the SPD's core support, and in the desire it provoked within at least part of that support for a militant solution to the Nazi problem. Forced, however, as the SPD was, to take a risk in propaganda terms which it would not take in reality, it was inevitable that this desire, though potent, would remain unfulfilled.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AKS	Augsburger Kammgarnspinnerei
ASD	Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn
AVA	Arbeiterverein vom Werk Augsburg
BHStA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich
BVP	Bayerische Volkspartei
DDP	Deutsche Demokratische Partei
DMV	Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
MAN	Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nürnberg
NSBO	Nationalsozialistische Betriebszellen-Organisation
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
RGO	Revolutionäre Gewerkschaftsopposition
SA	Sturmabteilung
SAJ	Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend
Sopade	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Emigration)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
StdA	Stadtarchiv Augsburg
SWA	Spinnerei und Weberei Augsburg
USPD	Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands

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3. Augsburger Statistisches Taschenbuch 1927, p.20. These figures refer to those categorised as 'Arbeiter' in the latter publication.
4. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.1.
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14. Ibid., p.29.
15. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.71-72.
16. See W. Domarus, Nationalsozialismus, Krieg und Bevölkerung, p.31
17. Ibid., p.30.
18. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.74.
19. W. Domarus, Nationalsozialismus, Krieg und Bevölkerung, pp. 199-202. Also: I. Kershaw, Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich. Bavaria 1933-1945 (Oxford, 1983).
20. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.106-233.
21. For example: Deutschland Berichte der SPD (Sopade): 1934, pp.431-435, 675-677; 1935, pp.286-287, 297-299; 1936, p.508; 1937, pp.1245, 1293-1294, 1676-1677; 1939, pp.408-409. See also E. Riegele 'Parteientwicklung und Wiederaufbau. Die lokale Neugründung und Politik der SPD in den Jahren 1945 bis 1949 im Beispiel der Stadt Augsburg', University of Augsburg PhD thesis 1983, part A (II).
22. For the Bavarian perspective, see H. Mehringer, 'Die bayerische Sozialdemokratie bis zum Ende des NS-Regimes', in M. Broszat et al. (eds.), Bayern in der NS-Zeit V (Munich and Vienna, 1983), especially pp.327-328.
23. E. Riegele, 'Parteientwicklung und Wiederaufbau', Part A (I).
24. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.58.
25. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 3 March 1932, 'Die SPD in Augsburg im Sturmjahr 1931'; 31 January 1933, 'Vorwärts ist die große Lösung. Augsburger Sozialdemokratie im Jahre 1932'.
26. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.57.
27. E. Riegele, 'Parteientwicklung und Wiederaufbau', Part A(I).
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid. See also: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 26 June 1931, 'Augsburgs Sozialdemokratie zur politischen Lage', a report of a members' meeting, during which discontent was expressed over the local SPD's response to the Nazi threat.

30. On Simon's replacement by Felder see: Schwäbische Volkszeitung 26 September 1932, 'Spieß voran, drauf und dran'.
31. H. Mehringer, 'Die bayerische Sozialdemokratie', p.301.
32. H. Bretschneider, 'Arbeitersportler und Arbeitersänger. Sozialistische Gegenkultur in Augsburg zwischen 1880 und 1930'. This is a transcript of a radio broadcast from 11 November 1984 which included interviews with several people who were actively involved in the socialist subculture of the Weimar era.
33. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.58.
34. H. Mehringer, 'Die KPD in Bayern 1919-1945', in Bayern in der NS-Zeit V, p.40.
35. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.65-67.
36. On this, see H. Mehringer, 'Die KPD in Bayern', pp.50-51; G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.60. According to Mehringer, the KPD's membership in Augsburg at the end of 1932 numbered 921.
37. H. Mehringer, 'Die KPD in Bayern', p.55.
38. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.59-60; Stadtarchiv Augsburg (hereafter referred to as StdA), 42/101, Zusammensetzung des Stadtrates ... 1927-1932, 8/9 April 1930.
39. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.60-61.
40. H. Mehringer, 'Die KPD in Bayern', pp.56-67.
41. For examples of the local KPD's rhetoric: StdA, DOK 855, Betriebszeitungen und Flugblätter vor 1933. More will be said about the SPD's response to the KPD later.
42. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.62.
43. Ibid., p.65.
44. G. Hetzer, 'Von der Reichsgründung bis zum Ende der Weimarer Republik 1871-1933', in G. Gottlieb et al. (eds.), Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg (Stuttgart, 1984), p.582.
45. Details of the effects of economic depression in Augsburg are contained in StdA, 241/22, 242/22, Halbmonatsberichte, 1927-1934.
46. 'Bericht des Gewerkschaftsvereins an der Bürgermeister und den Stadtrat über das Ausmaß der Arbeitslosigkeit bei den Gewerkschaftsmitgliedern', reproduced in Und über sich keinen Herrn. Dokumente zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung in Augsburg 1848-1954, volume 2.
47. This will be described later.
48. On the activities of the Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft and the SPD's response: Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (hereafter referred to as BHStA): M. Inn. 73720, Versammlungsverbote 1922-1933; MA 102 147, Lageberichte des Regierungs - Präsident von Schwaben und Neuburg 1921-1924. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung declared on 21 March 1921 that the aim of the Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft was further to divide the working class in order to render it subservient to the 'Unternehmertum'.
49. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.68.
50. Archiv der sozialen Demokratie (hereafter referred to as ASD), file 'SPD Augsburg 1848-1932'.
51. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.39-40.
52. I. Fischer, Industrialisierung, sozialer Konflikt und politische Willensbildung in der Stadtgemeinde. Ein Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte Augsburg 1840-1914 (Augsburg, 1977) p.390.
53. P. Fasl, 'Wirtschaftsgeschichte 1800-1914', in G. Gottlieb et al. (eds.), Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg, p.601.
54. Ibid., p.602.
55. Ibid., p.603.



56. Ibid., p.604. For a detailed description of the preconditions for and development of Augsburg's Sozialpolitik, see I. Fischer, Industrialisierung, pp.192-221.
57. Quoted in H. Bretschneider, 'Arbeitersportler und Arbeitersänger', p.3.
58. Quoted in P. Fasl, 'Wirtschaftsgeschichte', p.604.
59. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.38-39.
60. G. Hetzer, 'Von der Reichsgründung ...', p.574
61. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.40. Also: I. Fischer, Industrialisierung, pp.303-317.
62. P. Fasl, 'Wirtschaftsgeschichte', p.604.
63. H. Mehringer, 'Die bayerische Sozialdemokratie', p.299.
64. See I. Fischer, Industrialisierung, pp.338-342, p.396.
65. H. Mehringer, 'Die bayerische Sozialdemokratie', pp.309-310.
66. P. Fasl, 'Wirtschaftsgeschichte', pp.603-604; G. Hetzer, 'Von der Reichsgründung ...', p.575; M. Niehuss, Arbeiterschaft in Krieg und Inflation, pp.158-176.
67. I. Fischer, Industrialisierung, pp.396-397.
68. P. Fasl, 'Wirtschaftsgeschichte', p.593.
69. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.14.
70. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 9 November 1919.
71. StdA, 10/3746 II, Wochenberichte Magistrat der Stadt Augsburg 1917-1920, 13 December 1919.
72. StdA, 10/3746 II, 22 February 1919; W. Domarus, Nationalsozialismus, Krieg und Bevölkerung, pp.19-20; M. Niehuss, Arbeiterschaft in Krieg und Inflation, pp.208-209.
73. BHStA, M. Inn. 71722, Unruhen in Augsburg 1920-1921; StdA, 10/3746 II, 4 September 1920.
74. The reports in StdA, 10/3741, convey this apprehensive atmosphere; see especially 14 June 1919, 5 July 1919, 19 July 1919, and 3 July 1920.
75. StdA. 10/3746 II - for example 27 September 1919, 11 October 1919, and 24 January 1920.
76. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 6 January 1919, quoted in M. Niehuss, Arbeiterschaft in Krieg und Inflation, p.201.
77. On this transition, see G. Hetzer, 'Von der Reichsgründung...', pp.576-583.
78. StdA, 10/3746 II: 12 April 1919, 19 April 1919, 26 April 1919; E. Riegele, 'Parteientwicklung und Wiederaufbau', part A (I); G. Hetzer, 'Von der Reichsgründung ...', pp.576-583.
79. G. Hetzer, *ibid.*, p.583.
80. StdA, DOK 854, Flugblatt der Augsburger SPD zur militärischen Besetzung der Stadt durch Regierungstruppen.
81. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.48-50, 52-54.
82. G. Hetzer, 'Von der Reichsgründung ...', pp.581-582.
83. Thus the lack of a response to the Kapp Putsch is attributed by E. Riegele to this fear: 'Parteientwicklung und Wiederaufbau', Part A (I).
84. As R. Breitman has pointed out, research into socialist intellectuals' conceptions of fascism has been more common than analyses of the more basic image of National Socialism held by the SPD at a more general level - R. Breitman, 'Nazism in the Eyes of German Social Democracy', in M.N. Dobkowski and I. Walliman (eds.), Towards the Holocaust (Connecticut and London, 1983), p.197.
85. H. Mehringer, 'Die bayerische Sozialdemokratie', pp.287-289.
86. The strength of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung was closely connected to the strength of the SPD's membership in Augsburg;

unsurprisingly, then, as the SPD lost members in the early 1930s, so the newspaper's circulation declined from this high point.

87. On the Social Democratic press during the Weimar Republic generally, see: K. Koszyk, Zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur. Die Sozialdemokratische Presse von 1914 bis 1933 (Heidelberg, 1958), and G. Eisfeld and K. Koszyk, Die Presse der deutschen Sozialdemokratie. Eine Bibliographie (Bonn, 1980).
88. Quoted in Eisfeld and Koszyk, Die Presse der deutschen Sozialdemokratie, p.31.
89. Thus, as recollected by Eugen Nerdinger, a young Social Democratic activist and contributor to the Schwäbische Volkszeitung at the time, in his book Brüder, zum Licht empor (Augsburg, 1984);

Die Beschimpfungen und Drohungen führten dazu, daß sich kein Redakteur der Schwäbische Volkszeitung mehr in die Versammlungen der Nazis wagen durfte, weil er befürchten mußte, von den Nazis mißhandelt zu werden. Nerdinger - bisher als Reporter für kulturelle Ereignisse und als Filmrezensent für die Schwäbische Volkszeitung tätig - übernahm fortan die Aufgabe, die Nazi-Propagandaaktionen, -Versammlungen und -Kundgebungen im Herrlesaalbau, Ludswigsbau und in der Sängershalle zu beobachten und darüber mündliche und schriftliche Berichte zu geben.

(p.170).

90. A typical example of this type of interpretation would be: R.N. Hunt, German Social Democracy 1918-1993 (New Haven, Connecticut, 1964).
91. See: G. Roth The Social Democrats in Imperial Germany (New Jersey, 1963), Ch.7; H. Grebing, The History of the German Labour Movement (London, 1969), pp.74-87; S. Miller and H. Potthoff, A History of German Social Democracy (Leamington Spa, 1986), p.54.
92. On the well-known idea that the rank and file had little understanding of or interest in Marxism or theory in general, see: G. Roth, Social Democrats, Ch.8; V.L. Lidtke, The Alternative Culture (Oxford, 1985), pp.194-195. For the leadership's deficiencies in this regard, see: D. Geary, European Labour Protest (London, 1981), p.14; D. Geary Karl Kautsky (Manchester, 1987), pp.10-11; G.P. Steenson, "Not One man, not one penny" German Social Democracy 1863 - 1914 (Pittsburgh, 1981), pp.189-190.
93. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 16 November 1929
94. Ibid., 2 March 1931
95. Ibid., 2 July 1932
96. Ibid., 26 July 1932
97. Ibid., 30 July 1932
98. Ibid., 6 July 1932
99. Ibid., 12 April 1932

100. Ibid., 20 April 1932
101. Ibid., 29 July 1932
102. Ibid., 30 July 1932
103. Ibid., 18 March 1930
104. Ibid., 26 July 1932; see also 23 July 1932
105. For example: *ibid.*, 8 December 1931 'Die Behandlung der Juden im Dritten Reich. Ein neues Dokument des Irrsinns'
106. For example: *ibid.* 4 April 1932 'Hitler heißt Inflation'
107. Ibid., 29 February 1932
108. Ibid., 30 December 1931
109. See: D.J.K. Peukert, The Weimar Republic (Harmondsworth, 1991), p.229, and D. Abraham, The Collapse of the Weimar Republic (Princeton, 1981), Ch.5. This latter work, although it has many faults, does capture well the central importance of social policy as an area of conflict in the Weimar Republic.
110. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 25 January 1932
111. Ibid., 16 June 1932
112. Ibid., 12 January 1931
113. Ibid., 22 February 1932
114. Ibid., 12 October 1931
115. Ibid., 23 July 1932
116. Ibid., 23 June 1932
117. Ibid., 15 July 1930
118. Ibid., 25 July 1930
119. See: R. Breitman, 'Nazism in the Eyes of German Social Democracy', pp.198-201, and K.E. Lönne, Faschismus als Herausforderung. Die Auseinandersetzung der "Roten Fahne" und des "Vorwärts" mit dem italienischen Faschismus 1920-1933 (Cologne and Vienna, 1981).
120. For example: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 5 March 1929 'Im Lande des Faschismus'
121. For example: *ibid.*, 26 November 1929 'Nazi-Sozi'
122. Ibid., 12 April 1929
123. Ibid., 26 November 1929
124. Ibid., 14 October 1929
125. Ibid., 2 September 1931
126. Ibid., 7 May 1931
127. Ibid., 10 October 1931
128. For example: *ibid.* 30 November 1929 'Prof. Dr Erik Nölting sagt über die Nationalsozialisten' which stated:  
  

Aus Schwärmerei für den Diktator Mussolini werden alle Unterrückungen der Deutschen in Südtirol von den sonst überempfindlichen Nationalsozialisten leichten Herzens hingenommen.
129. Ibid., 12 March 1932
130. Ibid., 22 February 1932
131. For example: *ibid.*, 19 May 1932, 'Das dritte Reich'
132. Ibid., 26 August 1931
133. For example: *ibid.*, 8 January 1931, 'Die Nachbeter Mussolinis'
134. Ibid., 6 July 1932
135. Ibid., 17 August 1932. It must also be pointed out that occasionally the example of Fascist Italy could be used as a means of reassurance by the SPD. Some commentators thus claimed that Germany would never succumb to fascism as Italy had done because it was far more industrialised and possessed a stronger working class. See: R. Breitman, 'Nazism in the

- Eyes of German Social Democracy', p.203; H. Grebing, 'Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus', in W. Luthardt (ed.), Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterbewegung und Weimarer Republik: Materialien zur gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung 1927-1933 (Frankfurt am Main, 1978), p.265.
136. For a summary of this recent historiography see C. Fischer, The German Communists and the Rise of Nazism (London, 1991), pp.118-120. Examples of works which deal with this question from a variety of perspectives and with varying degrees of emphasis on the extent and importance of the working-class presence in the NSDAP and among its electoral constituency: C. Fischer, Stormtroopers (London, 1983), pp.67-68; D. Mühlberger, Hitler's Followers (London and New York, 1991), pp.202-209; G. Paul, Aufstand der Bilder (Bonn, 1990), pp.103, 221, 225, 230; T. Childers, The Nazi Voter (Chapel Hill and London, 1983), pp.245-257. Although this topic will be addressed again later, it should be stressed here that, more important than the extent of working-class support for Nazism, or the types of workers who were attracted to the NSDAP (in general it can be stated that industrial workers of the kind which made up the bulk of the SPD's support remained relatively immune to the enticements of Nazism) is the emphasis which recent historical work lays on the NSDAP's continuing desire to gain working-class support, the SPD's awareness of this, and the reflection this awareness found in a newspaper like the Schwäbische Volkszeitung.
  137. As was mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, surviving examples of the type of Nazi propaganda in circulation in Augsburg (see ASD files 'SPD Augsburg 1848-1932') demonstrate exactly this approach, with attempts to discredit the SPD's functionaries (for instance a pamphlet headed 'Rente! Rente! Rente!' which attacked the 'giant salaries' and 'luxury lifestyle' of the party's 'Bonzen') or even its credentials as an anti-capitalist party (thus in one document the SPD is accused of being 'die kapitalistische Judenschutztruppe'). At the same time, the supposedly egalitarian, anti-capitalist aspects of Nazism were stressed - a pamphlet addressed to the SPD's voters, supposedly written by a recent convert to National Socialism from the SPD, portrayed the NSDAP as a party fighting for working-class rights, mentioned the party's willingness to participate in strikes, and contrasted the SPD's betrayal of its ideas and principles with Hitler's refusal to abandon his beliefs in return for power and privilege. It seems likely that a more detailed examination of National Socialism's propaganda output in Augsburg, and especially of the NSDAP's local newspaper, the Neue Nationalzeitung, would confirm this desire to gain the support of the city's working class.
  138. This belief was one aspect of a wider expectation, held to by many Social Democrats, that the natural development of capitalism would inevitably create the necessary conditions for the victory of socialism. This idea that events must somehow ultimately run in the SPD's favour will be encountered several times in this thesis. See R. Breitman, German Socialism and Weimar Democracy (Chapel Hill, 1981), pp.84-85.
  139. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's obvious sensitivity to the threat Nazism posed to the continuing allegiance of the SPD's traditional constituency should also be placed in the context

of the previous manifestations of such a threat in Augsburg, already outlined in Chapter 1 - that is, not only the success of the yellow union movement before 1914 but also the more recent activities of the Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft, the völkisch group which in Augsburg in the early 1920s made attempts, vigorously resisted by the SPD, to gain support amongst the working class by exploiting economic discontent. It is also probable that the earliest National Socialist group active in Augsburg was perceived in a similar way by the SPD. Thus a governmental report from 7 April 1923, which should perhaps be treated with caution given its obvious anti-left bias, stated:

Die Sozialdemokraten befaßten sich in ihren Versammlungen in der Hauptsache mit den Nationalsozialisten, von denen die sozialistischen Führer für ihr Brot fürchten.

(BHStA, MA 102 147, Lageberichte des Regierungs-Präsidenten von Schwaben und Neuburg 1921-1924; also M. Inn. 73720, Versammlungsverbote, 1922-1933).

It is thus possible that past experiences magnified the anxiety that the NSDAP's agitation within the working class after 1928 provoked amongst Augsburg's Social Democrats.

140. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 17 September 1930
141. Ibid., 20 October 1931
142. Ibid., 12 June 1930
143. Ibid., 4 July 1929
144. Ibid., 14 October 1929
145. Ibid., 23 June 1930
146. Ibid., 27 June 1930
147. Ibid., 29 November 1929
148. Ibid., 19 September 1930
149. Ibid., 28 October 1929
150. Ibid., 20 October 1931
151. Ibid., 26 November 1929
152. Ibid., 24 July 1930
153. Ibid., 8 January 1931
154. Ibid., 12 May 1930
155. For example: ibid., 10 August 1931 'Hitlers Abmarsch ins Lager der Kapitalisten.'
156. For example: ibid., 12 December 1930 '107 Nazi entlarvt!' and 15 October 1931 'Breitscheid erinnert Frick.'
157. Ibid., 27 August 1930
158. For example: ibid., 20 November 1931 'Wieder peinliche Fragen an Hitler.'
159. Ibid., 21 January 1931
160. Ibid., 9 December 1929
161. Ibid., 20 February 1931
162. Ibid., 10 October 1931
163. For example: ibid., 5 March 1931 'Nazi-Generale in Schlesien.'
164. For example: ibid., 14 March 1931 'Hitlers Größenwahn.'
165. Ibid., 28 January 1932
166. Also for example: ibid., 10 August 1931 'Hitlers Abmarsch ins Lager der Kapitalisten'; 20 April 1932 'Heil Schückelgruber.'
167. Ibid., 10 August 1931
168. Ibid., 16 March 1932
169. Ibid., 4 April 1932

170. Ibid., 24 October 1931
171. For example: *ibid.*, 24 February 1930 'Hitlers Arbeiterpartei.'
172. Ibid., 6 April 1932
173. According to M. Broszat, *The Hitler State* (London and New York, 1981), pp.40-42, the NSBO, which formally came into being in early 1931, although Nazi factory cells had been in existence since the late 1920s, had 39,000 members by the end of 1931 and 100,000 by mid-1932. Broszat rightly states that the NSBO 'was of only marginal importance in the factories until 1933, when compared with the millions of members of the Free Trade Unions'; and T.W. Mason has also laid great stress on the NSBO's failure to become a significant political force - see, for example, 'National Socialism and the Working Class 1925 - May 1933', in *New German Critique*, No.11, Spring 1977, pp.70-72. This failure on the part of the NSBO, though, merely re-emphasises the obvious point that it was the SPD's perception of the Nazi threat to its constituency that was important in shaping its reactions, rather than the actuality of that threat as revealed by later historical analysis.
174. For example: *Schwäbische Volkszeitung*, 8 April 1931 'Der unerschütterliche Marxismus'; 8 April 1932 'Kampforganisation gegen die Gewerkschaften'; 4 August 1932 'Das nationalsozialistische Bonzentum.'
175. Ibid., 19 May 1932
176. In fact, at times the *Schwäbische Volkszeitung* did appear to accept this, but only when it was propagandistically expedient to do so. Thus, as will be mentioned again later, it was often suggested in the *Schwäbische Volkszeitung* that the NSDAP was riven with internal disputes, one source of which was the disillusionment of those working-class Nazis attracted to the party by its radical rhetoric over the failure to make that rhetoric reality. The occasional depiction of a discontented 'revolutionary' wing within the NSDAP could hence be comfortably located within this framework, although such a theme was necessarily subordinated to the more urgent imperative of attacking the NSDAP's demagogic use of socialist sloganeering. See: *ibid.*, 1 July 1932, 'Hitlers verrat am Arbeiter der Faust'; 9 August 1932, 'Papen, Hitler und seine Parteiopposition'; 15 December 1932, 'Gregor Strasser, Der Mann, der ging'.
177. Ibid., 29 July 1932
178. Ibid., 2 July 1932
179. Ibid., 4 February 1933
180. Ibid., 31 January 1933
181. For example: *ibid.*, 3 February 1933 'Fort mit euch! Unsere Antwort an Hitler und Papen', 6 February 1933 'Eine Woche Hitler'; 11 February 1933 'Die Nazis gestern und heute.'
182. This should not, of course, be taken to imply the existence of an organised, ideologically coherent 'Nazi Left' as suggested in M.H. Kele, *Nazis and Workers* (Chapel Hill, 1972) and denied in P.D. Stachura, *Gregor Strasser and the Rise of Nazism* (London, 1983), p.10. However, although this was not the case, although there was undoubtedly a large element of 'strategic opportunism' (Mason) present in the NSDAP's use of socialist rhetoric as historians such as Stachura and Mason, echoing the Social Democratic line, have argued, National Socialism's radicalism cannot be dismissed as nothing more than this. Sincerely held radical and even socialist views

were present within the NSDAP: they were certainly to be found, for example, within the SA, and also provided the stimulus for the creation of the NSBO. The fact that Hitler, although deeply anti-socialist, was prepared to tolerate the instrumental use of socialist propaganda, inevitably opened up a space for the development of radical perspectives within the party - the negative effect the articulation of such perspectives had on the NSDAP's relationship with the business community is discussed by H.A. Turner, German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler (New York, 1985), pp.76-83, 96-99, 218-219, 233-234, 291-292.

183. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 5 October, 1931.
184. It must be noted here that the recognition in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung of 'socialist' rank-and-file Nazis is not in question; it was indeed a logical consequence of the Social Democratic argument that those 'duped' by the NSDAP's pseudo-socialist rhetoric could be considered sincere in their beliefs, but misled - and the implications of this for the Nazi movement, particularly the potential for rank-and-file disillusionment and discontent, did receive attention in the newspaper. The discussion here, however, concerns the SPD's unwillingness to acknowledge the existence of any anti-capitalist or radical opinions and motivations which were not either a cynical ploy to entice working-class support or the consequence of the success of such a ploy.
185. One such occasion was Gregor Strasser's resignation from the NSDAP in December 1932, which was depicted in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung as, at least in part, a consequence of frustration over his inability to realise his 'woolly' socialist ideas. Ibid., 15 December 1932, 'Gregor Strasser. Der Mann, der ging.' Although this interpretation was largely inaccurate - see P.D. Stachura, Gregor Strasser, pp.102-120 - it provided the Schwäbische Volkszeitung with yet another opportunity to underline Nazism's failure to realise its socialist promises.
186. On the continuing influence of 'petrified pre-war conceptions' (Matthias) on the politics and perspectives of the SPD in the Weimar Republic see: E. Matthias, 'German Social Democracy in the Weimar Republic', in A. Nicholls and E. Matthias (eds.), German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler (London, 1971), pp. 53-57; R. Breitman, German Social Democracy, p.160; H. Grebing, German Labour Movement, pp.135-136; H. Mommsen, 'The Immobility of the SPD and the Rise of National Socialism', in From Weimar to Auschwitz (Cambridge, 1991), pp.43-44, 52-61. For a critique which views left-wing politics as practised during the Weimar Republic as fundamentally anachronistic, based upon social and economic models which were being rendered increasingly irrelevant in the face of long-term structural changes which cut across the previous politics and culture of class see R. Bessel, 'Why did the Weimar Republic Collapse?' in I. Kershaw (ed.), Weimar: Why did German Democracy Fail? (London, 1990), pp.142-148. Arguably, the most profound influence exercised on the SPD's political behaviour by its pre-war experiences was the fallacious belief in its own ability to withstand repression which the party gained from its survival of Bismark's Socialist Law, and which clearly helped shape its reactions to Nazism in power. This will be addressed later.

187. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 26 April 1930
188. Ibid., 26 August 1930
189. Ibid., 21 October 1931
190. Ibid., 17 September 1930
191. Ibid., 22 February 1932
192. Ibid., 18 February 1932
193. For example: *ibid.*, 4 July 1929 'Die Nazis.'
194. Ibid., 24 July 1930
195. Ibid., 28 November 1931
196. Ibid., 19 October 1931
197. Ibid., 21 October 1931
198. Ibid., 13 July 1931
199. For example: *ibid.*, 17 July 1931 'Der Narrenkönig.'
200. Ibid., 28 January 1932 'Hitler bei Sekt und Hummer';  
30 January 1932 'Thyssen: Heil Hitler'; 5 February 1932  
'Hinter eisernen Jalousien'; 8 February 1932 'Hitler und der  
Arbeiter.'
201. Ibid., 8 February 1932
202. Ibid., 15 February 1932
203. There is, of course, some truth in this. The Schwäbische  
Volkszeitung's schematic portrayal of the mechanistic  
unfolding of a conspiracy by capitalists and reaction in which  
National Socialism was allotted a precise, instrumental role  
was, however, rather different from the type of behind-the-  
scenes intrigue which would eventually hand to Hitler the post  
of Chancellor in January 1933. It should be noted, though,  
that a fondness for conspiracy theories was by no means  
restricted to the SPD in the later years of the Weimar  
Republic, thus Harold James:

By the low point of the depression, trade unions, business pressure groups and also the agrarian leagues had lost their power to act coherently, although the relics of all these groups still had a powerful Feindbild and believed that other interest groups were able to conspire and act effectively against them.

- H. James, The German Slump (Oxford, 1987), p.423.
204. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 26 September 1932
  205. Ibid., 14 June 1932
  206. For example: *ibid.*, 7 February 1933 'Das Gesicht der  
Gegenrevolution.'
  207. For example: *ibid.*, 26 September 1932 'Spieß voran, drauf und  
dran.'
  208. As well as the two works cited in footnote 109 see, on the  
negative influence of the business community on the  
development of the Weimar Republic: D. Geary, 'The Industrial  
Elite and the Nazis in the Weimar Republic', in P.D. Stachura  
(ed.), The Nazi Machtergreifung (London, 1983), pp.89-98;  
D. Geary, 'Employers, Workers and the collapse of the Weimar  
Republic', in I. Kershaw (ed.), Weimar, pp.92-105; T.W. Mason,  
'National Socialism and the Working Class', pp.77-79. For a  
rather more generous analysis of business attitudes to the  
Weimar Republic, see H.A. Turner, German Big Business, pp.45-  
46. This latter study usefully underlines the highly  
uncertain and ambivalent view that business, and especially  
big business, had of the NSDAP as a potential political ally:  
see pp.134-135, 187-189, 252-253.



209. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 9 June 1932
210. It is interesting to note in this context that the Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft, which was, as previously mentioned, the first significant if short-lived völkisch group to emerge in Augsburg in the early 1920s, was also interpreted by the SPD as working in the interests of, and receiving financial support from industry. See, for example, the report of a Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft meeting held on 29 March 1922, during which this accusation was made by a Social Democrat in attendance contained in: BHStA, M. Inn. 73720, Versammlungsverbote, 1922-1933.
211. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 14 October 1929
212. Ibid., 12 March 1932
213. Ibid., 7 May 1930
214. Ibid., 15 May 1931
215. Ibid., 3 February 1932
216. Ibid., 9 February 1932
217. Ibid., 10 October 1931
218. Ibid., 28 October 1929
219. Ibid., 5 December 1929
220. See H.A. Turner, German Big Business, pp.18-31.
221. Ibid., pp.111-112, 156.
222. For example: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 26 November 1929 'Nazi-Sozi'; 10 April 1930 'Die Hakenkreuzler und die Erwerbslosen'; 11 September 1930 'Die Geldquellen'; 20 October 1931 'Betrüger.'
223. H.A. Turner, German Big Business. For a useful critique of Turner's approach, see D. Geary, 'The Industrial Elite.'
224. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 23 September 1930. Also articles quoted in note 200.
225. Turner does not deny this, although he contends that only amongst 'lesser businessmen' did the NSDAP garner significant support. H.A. Turner, German Big Business, pp.191-203.
226. The use of this strategy in the 'leftist press' is a major theme in Turner's study. See, for example, H.A. Turner, *ibid.*, p.173.
227. See for example: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 10 April 1931 'Zerrissene Stiefelsohlen für die SA aber Parteipalast für Hitler'; 25 April 1931 'Der Pleitegeier im Hitlerladen'; 21 May 1931 'Hitlers Legalität'; 6 July 1931 'Gehaltsabbau bei den Nazibonzen'; 31 July 1931 'Hitler und Dingeldey in Nürnberg'; 19 August 1931 'Hitler und Hugenberg'; 28 September 1932 'Hitlers Front wankt.'
228. Ibid., 10 August 1931
229. Ibid., 16 March 1932
230. Ibid., 6 October 1928
231. Ibid., 7 May 1930
232. Ibid., 9 February 1932. See also, for example: *ibid.*, 13 January 1930 'Putschist und Hochverräter Frick Polizeiminister'; 29 December 1931 'Sammelbecken der Bösen'; 19 January 1932 'Pimperl Wichtig.'
233. Examples of the Schwäbische Volkszeitung's awareness of Nazi anti-semitism: 4 July 1929, 'Die Nazis'; 16 November 1929, 'Aufgepeitschter Mittelstand'; 9 December 1929 'Hitler kauft von einem Juden'; 16 October 1930, 'Hitlers Hepp Hepp'; 8 December 1931, 'Die Behandlung der Juden im Dritten Reich'; 31 December 1931, 'Politische Jahreswende'; 4 March 1933, 'Führer der deutschen Nation-vom Ausland zugereist'.

234. An example of this: *ibid.*, 18 June 1929, 'Goebbels'.
235. D.L. Niewyk, Socialist, Anti-Semite and Jew (Baton Rouge, 1971), pp.217-218. Niewyk points out that this view of Nazi anti-semitism was not exclusive to the SPD, being widespread both within Germany and abroad.
236. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 5 September 1930
237. For example: *ibid.* 17 March 1931 'Neuer Bischofserlaß: Kein Christ kann Nationalsozialist sein'; 12 June 1931 'Die Naziseuche in Südbayern'; 27 January 1932 'Katholizismus und Hakenkreuz'; 1 April 1932 'Herhören, ihr nationalsozialistische Pharisäer. Die Wahrheit über Punkt 24 eures Partei-Programmes: Nationalsozialismus und Christentum.'
238. For example: *ibid.*, 7 August 1929 'Der Parteitag des Hakenkreuzlummel!'
239. For example: *ibid.*, 5 November 1932 'Frauen, denkt daran Liste 2.'
240. For example: *ibid.*, 16 March 1931 'Deutsche Hausmusik bei Hitler.'
241. *Ibid.*, 3 December 1929
242. *Ibid.*, 21 February 1931
243. *Ibid.*, 17 July 1931
244. *Ibid.*, 29 November 1929
245. For example: *ibid.*, July 1929 'Die "einigen" Brüder.'
246. For example: *ibid.*, 28 June 1930 'Der Nationalsozialismus.'
247. For example: *ibid.*, 14 July 1930 'Kampf dem Faschismus.'
248. *Ibid.*, 13 February 1931
249. The SPD's interest in Feder was to some extent understandable, as it must be remembered that Feder styled himself as 'The Ideologist of the Movement', and was described in this way by the Nazi press; moreover, Feder was indeed one of National Socialism's theorists, and his ideas did have some influence on Hitler, especially in the early 1920s, although his importance to Hitler and the NSDAP in general was never as great as Feder himself tended to assert. Feder's career in the NSDAP, however, his inability successfully to use the party as a means of propagating his own programme based on the concept of 'breaking the slavery of interest', well illustrates the limits which Hitler's flexible political strategy placed upon, National Socialism's ideologists. See A. Tyrell, 'Gottfried Feder and the NSDAP', in P.D. Stachura (ed.), The Shaping of the Nazi State (London, 1978), pp.48-87.
250. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 13/14 February 1931
251. *Ibid.*, 27/28/30 June 1930
252. *Ibid.*, 27 June 1930
253. *Ibid.*, 27 June 1930
254. *Ibid.*, 1 October 1930
255. *Ibid.*, 26 August 1930
256. *Ibid.*, 9 June 1932
257. *Ibid.*, 28 June 1930
258. *Ibid.*, 18 February 1932
259. For example: *ibid.*, 4 May 1932 'Wie sich die Nazi von der Verantwortung drücken.'
260. *Ibid.*, 27 April 1932
261. For example: *ibid.*, 16 January 1930 'Nationalsozialistischen Volksbetrug'; 8 September 1930 'Die Nazis im Hemd. Was sie versprechen und wie sie erhalten'; 9 May 1932 'Alles wird anders. Die Nazis vor und nach den Wahlen.'
262. For example: *ibid.*, 28 June 1930 'Der Nationalsozialismus'; 15

- May 1931 'Fort mit dem Geschwätz. Wo bleiben die Taten der Nazis'; 19 October 1931 'Die Marneschlacht des deutschen Faschismus.'
263. For example: *ibid.*, 9 December 1929 'Hitler kauft von einem Juden'; 24 February 1930 'Hitlers "Arbeiterpartei".'
264. For example: *ibid.*, 25 October 1930 'Eine Woche Hakenkreuz. Worte und Taten der Nationalsozialisten'; 12 December 1930 '107 entlarvt'; 2 January 1931 'Die Treue, sie ist ein leerer Wahn ...'; 21 January 1932 'Die Partei der Lüge.'
265. *Ibid.*, 5 November 1931
266. For an excellent summary of this crisis see T. Childers, 'The Limits of National Socialist Mobilisation: The Elections of 6 November 1932', in T. Childers (ed.), The Formation of the Nazi Constituency 1919-1933 (London and Sydney, 1986), pp.232-259.
267. Schwäbische Volkszeitung: 7 November 1932, 'Hitlers Moskau'; 6 December 1932, 'An die Partei'; 13 December 1932, 'Nazidämmerung. Hitlers Aufstieg und Abstieg'; 22 December 1932, 'Nazi-Bewegung weiter rückläufig'; 31 December 1932, 'Soll und Haben der NSDAP 1932'. See also W.H. Maehl, The German Socialist Party (Kansas, 1986), p.203.
268. Again this was particularly the case in late 1932, but had been a consistent theme since late 1920s. See for example Schwäbische Volkszeitung: 16 September 1929, 'Aus der Hakenkreuzler-Kloake'; 4 July 1930, 'Spaltung der Nazis vollzogen'; 2-5 September 1930, 'Krach im Nazi-Lager'; 2 April 1931, 'Krach im Hitler-Lager'; 13 April 1932, 'Krach im Hitlerlager'; 9 August 1932, 'Papen, Hitler und seine Parteiopposition'; 17 September 1932, 'Es gärt bei den Nazis'; 5 October 1932, 'Aus der Hakenkreuz-Kloake'; 10 September 1932, 'Krach in der Nazi-Partei'; 13 December 1932, 'Zersetzung in der Nazi Partei.'
269. That the SA was often a locus of discontent within the NSDAP was certainly true. However, whether or not such disputes can be portrayed, as the Schwäbische Volkszeitung sought to do, as somehow ideologically motivated, as reflecting the unhappiness of working-class Nazis, is open to dispute. R. Bessel in Political Violence and the Rise of Nazism (New Haven and London, 1984), p.61, convincingly claims that conflicts involving the SA were 'peculiarly devoid of overt political or ideological content' and had much more to do with organisational questions, disputes over money and personality clashes, and E.G. Reiche in The Development of the SA in Nürnberg 1922-1934 (Cambridge, 1986), pp.226-227, agrees. For an interpretation which lays more stress on the class background of SA members, however, see C. Fischer, Stormtroopers, pp.148-169. What is not in dispute is the growing impatience of the SA with the NSDAP's failure to gain power by late 1932.
270. For example: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 6 September 1930 'Die neue völkische Welle'; 15 October 1930 'Hitlers Hepp Hepp.'
271. See article *ibid.*, 25 January 1930 'Hakenkreuz über Weimar' in which the facile assumption that Nazism was simply another 'temporary wave' of anti-semitism is attacked.
272. For typical references to the Beer Hall Putsch see: *ibid.*, 12 May 1930, 'Die Nazis gehen aufs Ganze'; 12 November 1930, 'Hitler im Bürgerbräu'.
273. For example: *ibid.*, 16 January 1931, 'Zwei Bücher über Hitler

und Hitlerei'; 14 July 1931, 'Statt Wilhelm Hitler'; 11 February 1932, 'Hitler als Präsidentschaftskandidat'; 29 February 1932, 'Frontsoldat Hitler'; 12 March 1932, 'Kamerad Hitler'; 31 March 1932, 'Hitler der "Erlöser"'; 9 April 1932, '1912-1932 Von Wilhelm bis Adolf'; 20 April 1932, 'Heil Schücklegruber'; 17 August 1932, 'Adolfo Schmussolini'; 12 October 1932, 'Hitler im Herbst'.

274. Ibid., 12 November 1929
275. Ibid., 23 June 1930
276. Ibid., 17 September 1930
277. Ibid., 18 September 1930
278. Ibid., 19 September 1930
279. Ibid., 16 January 1931
280. Ibid., 12 April 1932
281. Ibid., 21 May 1932
282. Ibid., 2 July 1932
283. Ibid., 2 March 1931
284. Ibid., 31 December 1931
285. Ibid., 9 September 1931
286. Ibid., 26 October 1932
287. Ibid., 23 August 1928
288. Ibid., 6 September 1929
289. Ibid., 17 September 1930
290. Ibid., 16 January 1931
291. Ibid., 2 July 1932
292. Ibid., 29 December 1931
293. Ibid., 4 February 1932
294. Ibid., 8 June 1932 'Die größte Fata Morgana des 20 Jahrhunderts.'
295. Ibid., 23 September 1930
296. The rationalist world-view of the SPD's leadership was subject to criticism from both the right and the left of the party. Many contemporary critics advocated a more emotional, passionate style of propaganda, one which was, however, alien to the SPD's traditional faith in reason. Carlo Mierendorff, for example, claimed that the SPD's agitation, in contrast to the NSDAP's 'assumed too much knowledge and insight on the part of the voters' (R. Breitman, 'Nazism in the Eyes of German Social Democracy', p.202), and summed up this difference in styles thus:

Die nationalsozialistische Bewegung hat zuviel was die Sozialdemokratische Partei zuwenig hat (die Betonung der gefühlsmäßigen Komponenten bei der politischen Willensbildung), und sie hat zuwenig, was die Sozialdemokratie fast ausschließlich hat (Erziehung der Wähler zu bewußtem und klarem Denken).

See H.A. Winkler, Der Weg in die Katastrophe. Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik 1930-1933 (Bonn, 1990), pp.194-198.

Similarly, Paul Levi, as early as 1924, had well analysed the limiting effect of the SPD's rationalism on its position in the Weimar Republic, his argument summarised thus by Hans Mommsen:

He argued that the exclusively rational appeal of SPD propaganda, the realist pragmatism of its leadership and

its almost classic liberal belief that political and social conflict were open to rational solutions were in the last resort a recipe for failure. Marx and Engels as well as classic social democracy had regarded the eschatological element and the power of elemental moral outrage as decisively important factors alongside the 'sharp logical weapon' of Marxist theory. This power totally transcended the rational and was the driving force behind all 'great historical movements'. It was the force which had made the social democratic movement great, which had rallied thousands of people to it and which even in the caricature of it represented by contemporary communism continued to retain its power. 'Political movement and conflict was anything but a purely intellectual process': 'Perhaps experience will show us yet', he added prophetically, 'that there is something more powerful than the ability to be clever'.

H. Mommsen, 'The Immobility of the SPD', p.58. See also G. Paul, Aufstand der Bilder, pp.117-118, 177-178; R. Breitman, 'Negative Integration and Parliamentary Politics: Literature on German Social Democracy 1890-1933', in Central European History, Vol.XIII, June 1980, pp.195-196.

297. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 24 July 1930
298. Ibid., 23 August 1930
299. See for example: ibid., 6 September 1929 'Die neue völkische Welle'; 18 November 1929 'Genossen. Unsere Bewegung marschiert unaufhaltsam'; 11 August 1930 'Die betrogenen Nazi-Wähler'; 16 January 1931 '"Zerbrecher des Marxismus" oder schlechter Trommler?'; 8 June 1932 'Die größte Fata Morgana des 20 Jahrhunderts.'
300. See for example: As note 299; ibid., 12 November 1929 'Wo Hitler gedeiht ...'; 17 September 1930 'Warum des Radikalismus?'; 12 October 1931 'Sie fordern die Inflation.'
301. For example: ibid., 9 September 1930 'Auch bei Hitler nichts Neues.'
302. For example: ibid., 12 October 1931 'Sie fordern die Inflation.'
303. For example: ibid., 27/30 June 1930 'Der Nationalsozialismus'; 5 September 1930 'Nazi-Christ?'
304. For example: As note 299; ibid., 14 April 1931 'Ehren Tafel für das "Dritte Reich"'; 12 June 1931 'Die Nazi Seuche in Südbayern'; 4 April 1932 'Schlagt Hitler.'
305. Ibid., 19 February 1932
306. Ibid., 22 April 1932
307. Ibid., 10 June 1932
308. Ibid., 29 December 1931
309. See: ibid., 18 September 1930 'Das Gebot der Stunde.'
310. See: ibid., 12 November 1929 'Wo Hitler gedeiht ...'
311. Ibid., 7 December 1931; 18 February 1932
312. For example: ibid., 11 August 1930 'Die betrogenen Nazi-Wähler.'
313. Ibid., 29 February 1932
314. Ibid., 4 November 1932
315. Ibid., 30 June 1930
316. On this see the studies mentioned in footnote 136 and also T. Childers (ed.), The Formation of the Nazi Constituency 1919-1933, in which the basic thesis of this new approach to the

sociology of Nazi support is summed up thus by Childers:

... the social foundations of Nazi success before 1933 were far broader and more diverse than traditional literature assumed, extending far beyond the party's lower-middle-class base to encompass elements of both the affluent and educated upper bourgeoisie and the blue-collar working class. By 1932, the NSDAP had mobilised an extraordinarily heterogeneous social coalition, becoming a remarkably successful catch-all party of protest. (pp.1-2)

317. The Schwäbische Volkszeitung's handling of this theme is, understandably, impressionistic rather than empirical. In particular, little or no distinction is made between supporting the NSDAP electorally, and actual membership of the party; the implication always is that the two can be assumed to be identical.
318. For example: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 2 March 1931 'Die SPD in Augsburg im Sturmjahr 1931.'
319. Ibid., 9 November 1929
320. It was of course the case that the NSDAP's support, certainly as reflected in its membership composition, was noticeably youthful, especially in comparison with that of the SPD and the bourgeois political parties, a characteristic it shared with the KPD. Thus of 720,000 new members joining the NSDAP between 1930 and 1933, 43% were aged between 18 and 30 (M. Broszat, The Hitler State, p.30). See: M.H. Kater, The Nazi Party (Oxford, 1983), pp.139-144; G. Pridham, Hitler's Rise to Power (London, 1973), pp.205-206; P.D. Stachura, 'The Social and Welfare Implications of Youth Unemployment in Weimar Germany', in P.D. Stachura (ed.), Unemployment and the Great Depression in Weimar Germany (London, 1986), p.140; R. Bessel, Political Violence, pp.44-45. Note, however, that T. Childers in The Nazi Voter, p.205, claims that, despite the traditional view of the NSDAP as a party of youth, in fact it 'found its greatest electoral support among groups composed of older voters'.
321. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 29 November 1929
322. Ibid., 7 May 1930
323. Ibid., 11 January 1930
324. Ibid., 16 March 1930 'Nationalbolschewismus auf dem Hochschulen.'
325. For two typical examples: ibid., 1 July 1931 'Neuer Radau der Nazi - Studenten. Die Münchener Universität geschlossen'; 2 July 1931 'Die Nazi - Saustall an der Münchener Universität.' Such portrayals seem to have been basically accurate. G. Pridham, Hitler's Rise to Power, pp.209-215, describes the Nazi Student League's achievement of a 'dominant position' within Bavaria's universities, and the often violent consequences of such dominance. For a broader discussion of this theme see G.J. Giles, Students and National Socialism in Germany (Princeton, 1985).
326. The NSDAP had since the late 1920s made significant and successful efforts to gain a foothold within occupational groups such as lawyers, doctors, teachers and civil servants which traditionally had close connections to Germany's elite - thus forming, for example, the Nazi Lawyers' League in October 1928, the Nazi Teachers' League in April 1929 and the Fighting

- Association of German Architects and Engineers in the summer of 1931. See M.H. Kater, The Nazi Party, pp.67-71.
327. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 9 November 1929
  328. Ibid., 29 November 1929 'Wir und die anderen.'
  329. Ibid., 21 October 1931
  330. Ibid., 15 September 1930. Recent work by J.W. Falter has refined the traditional view that the NSDAP was able to mobilise vast numbers of previous non-voters. See, for example, 'The National Socialist Mobilisation of New Voters 1928-33' in T. Childers (ed.), The Formation of the Nazi Constituency 1919-1933, pp.202-231.
  331. For example: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 9 November 1929 'Im Hitler-Zirkus.' Although in membership terms the NSDAP was overwhelmingly male-dominated (according to G. Pridham, Hitler's Rise to Power, p.203, for example, women constituted 4% of the total membership of the NSDAP in Bavaria) the party's female electoral support rose steadily after 1928 and especially after 1931/2, so that by the final elections of the Weimar era proportionately as many women voted for the NSDAP as men. See also H.L. Boak, 'Women in Weimar Germany: The "Frauenfrage" and the Female Vote', in R. Bessel and E.J. Feuchtwanger (eds.), Social Change and Political Development in Weimar Germany (London, 1981), pp.155-158, 166-168.
  332. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 29 November 1929; 22 Juli 1932
  333. Ibid., 22 April 1932; also 27 April 1932 'Die Situation in Augsburg.'
  334. Ibid., 20 December 1932
  335. Ibid., 4 July 1929
  336. Ibid., 16 November 1929 'Aufgepeitschter Mittelstand. Warum werfen sich die Nationalsozialisten auf den proletarischen Mittelstand.' Further examples: 9 August 1930 'Hitler, der Führer'; 29 May 1931 'Die Oldenburger Nationalrevolutionäre'; 6 April 1932 'Hitlers Müllhaufen.'
  337. Ibid., 15 September 1931
  338. Ibid., 9 January 1932
  339. Ibid., 18 February 1932
  340. Ibid., 4 February 1932
  341. Ibid., 4 February 1932
  342. Ibid., 16 March 1932
  343. Ibid., 22 April 1932
  344. M.H. Kater, The Nazi Party, pp.38-44, 56-62, 236. T. Childers, The Nazi Voter, pp.203-205.
  345. See footnotes 136 and 316.
  346. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 15 September 1931
  347. Ibid., 26 April 1932
  348. Ibid., 16 April 1929
  349. Ibid., 26 November 1929
  350. Ibid., 29 November 1929
  351. Ibid., April 1928
  352. For example: ibid., 29 November 1929 'Wir und die anderen.'
  353. Examples: ibid., 16 September 1929 'Aus der Hakenkreuzler-Kloake'; 24 July 1930 'Der Hauptfeind'; 18 February 1932 'Augsburg den Republikanern.'
  354. Ibid., 12 August 1930
  355. Ibid., 21 October 1931
  356. Ibid., 24 July 1930
  357. Ibid., 18 July 1932
  358. Ibid., 10 August 1931 'Hitlers Abmarsch ins Lager der

Kapitalisten.'

359. Ibid., 27 April 1932

360. Ibid., 28 November 1929

361. Ibid., 10 April 1932

362. Ibid., 14 March 1932

363. Ibid., 2 May 1929

364. Ibid., 2 January 1931

365. Ibid., 18 February 1932

366. Although some historians have sought recently to emphasise the effort made by the NSDAP to penetrate the working class constituency and the not insubstantial success of this endeavour, what has been most convincingly established is that this success was concentrated amongst the large proportion of workers (T.W. Mason states that at most half of all wage earners voted for the two Marxist parties: Social Policy in the Third Reich (Providence/Oxford 1993), p.53) who remained outwith the organised labour movement and who did not support it electorally. Thus, although statistically-based studies, such as Childers's The Nazi Voter, which have altered the view of the NSDAP as simply a party of the middle class, and interpretations from a left-wing perspective of the relationship between the working class and Nazism such as those of T.W. Mason (as well as the two works cited hitherto, see also 'National Socialist Policies Towards the German Working Classes 1925-1939', D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford 1971, especially Ch.2), which lay great stress on, indeed overstate the middle-class nature of Nazism, may seem fundamentally to differ, in fact a measure of consensus exists. Firstly, the basic stability of support for the SPD and KPD, taken together, during the depression years, fluctuating between 36% and 38% can be stated, and hence, as Childers notes, 'National Socialist penetration of the working-class electorate remained clearly circumscribed by organised industrial labour, which remained firm in its commitment to the Marxist parties' (Childers, The Nazi Voter, p.257). Secondly, although the NSDAP undoubtedly did attract previous supporters of the SPD and KPD (on the latter see C. Fischer, The German Communists and the Rise of Nazism, p.131), and although in general it was more successful in mobilising working-class support than was previously thought, the bulk of such support was located not within the industrial working class but amongst other groups of workers uninfluenced by the organisations of the labour movement, such as those employed in small-scale manufacturing. See T. Childers, The Nazi Voter, pp.253-257, 265; T.W. Mason, 'National Socialism and the Working Class', p.66.

It must however be restated here that retrospective historical analysis of this type is of secondary importance in the context of this thesis. The primary interest lies in how the SPD reacted to what it clearly believed to be a threat from the NSDAP to its traditional constituency.

367. Violence was of course extremely important to the success of the NSDAP, although its role in that success was more complex than the depiction of its use in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung would suggest. See on this above all R. Bessel, 'Violence as Propaganda: The Role of the Stormtroopers in the Rise of National Socialism', in T. Childers (ed.), The Formation of the Nazi Constituency 1919-1933, pp.131-146. Also: R. Bessel,



- Political Violence, pp.95-96, E.G. Reiche, The SA in Nürnberg, p.227.
368. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 18 June 1932
  369. Ibid., 16 September 1929
  370. Ibid., 12 April 1932
  371. Ibid., 1 August 1932
  372. Ibid., 4 August 1932
  373. Ibid., 5 October 1929
  374. Ibid., 29 December 1931
  375. Ibid., 3 January 1931
  376. Ibid., 5 August 1932
  377. Ibid., 23 June 1932
  378. Ibid., 26 November 1929
  379. Examples: ibid., 4 December 1931 'Die Herkunft des Blutwahns'; 24 December 1931 'Zwei Jahre Nazi Morde - Die Totenliste'; 29 December 1931 'Statistik aus zwei Jahren'; 6 May 1932 'Der politische Mord in Danzig'; 13 May 1932 'Parlamentarier oder Banditen? Nazi-Bestien überfallen einen Journalisten im Reichstag'; 27 May 1932 'Die Bestie wütet'; 2 July 1932 'Lug und Trug'; 29 December 1932 'Weinende Mutter'; 5 January 1933 'Seht, das sind Hitlers Kameraden. SA-Kriminalität 1932.'
  380. Ibid., 21 July 1930
  381. Ibid., 18 July 1932
  382. Ibid., 21 May 1931 'Hitler's Legalität.'
  383. Ibid., 16 May 1931
  384. Ibid., 28 November 1931
  385. Ibid., 31 July 1931
  386. For example: ibid., 3 March 1932 'Die SPD in Augsburg im Sturmjahr 1931'; 24 March 1932 'Nazi terror in Bayern. Die Vorbereitungen zum Bürgerkrieg'; 6 April 1932 'Hoch und Landesverrat der NSDAP', 9 April 1932 'Der Wille zum Bürgerkrieg.'
  387. For example: ibid., 25 July 1931 'Warum triumphierte in Italien der Faschismus'; 3 January 1931 'Hitlers Bürgerkriegs-Armee'; 21 May 1931 'Die Nazibanditen von Pirmasens'; 25 July 1931 'Wildwest in Bayern'; 13 November 1931 'Hitlers Privat-Armee'; 20 December 1932 'So oder so ...'
  388. For example: ibid., 18 June 1932 'Dem Pack die Zähne zeigen'; 25 June 1932 'Die Bluthetze'; 30 June 1932 'Kämpfer und Kämpferinnen der Eisernen Front'; 5 August 1932 'Jetzt aber Schluß'; 6 August 1932 'Parteilichkeit ohne Ende'; 16 January 1933 'Töne statt Taten.'
  389. That the organisations of the labour movement were the main target of Nazi violence cannot be doubted - as C. Fischer states in Stormtroopers, p.178, the SA's confrontation with Social Democracy was 'uniquely single-minded and intense', and J.M. Diehl, Paramilitary Politics in Weimar Germany (Bloomington and London, 1977), pp.3-22, interprets National Socialism and its use of violence as the culminating point of a long-term search by the German middle class for an effective anti-socialist movement. See also R. Bessel, Political Violence, pp.75-79.
  390. As R. Bessel points out, the portrayal of their followers as the innocent victims of unprovoked violent attacks by opponents was common to the Nazi, left-wing and Catholic press - 'Violence as Propaganda', p.141.
  391. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 18 July 1932
  392. Ibid., 10 August 1932. Other examples: 16 April 1929

- 'Hitlerbanditen in Rothenburg o. T.'; 16 May 1929 'An die deutsche Arbeiterschaft'; 28 May 1930 'Die Kommunazi'; 12 June 1931 'Die Naziseuche in Südbayern'; 25 July 1931 'Wildwest in Bayern'; 21 October 1931 'Nervosität'; 27 June 1932 'SA-Angriff auf den Vorwärts.'
393. As this section will demonstrate, the importance of legality, order and discipline to the SPD produced, at least amongst the leadership, a dislike of risk and of extra-parliamentary action which militated against the use of violence in most, if not all, contexts. See: H. Grebing, German Labour Movement, p.132; D.J.K. Peukert, The Weimar Republic, p.29; W.H. Maehl, The German Socialist Party, p.174. On the pre-war origins of these traits see, for example: V.L. Lidtke, The Alternative Culture, pp.12-13; S.H.F. Hickey, Workers in Imperial Germany (Oxford, 1985), p.294.
394. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 7 August 1929
395. Ibid., 23 February 1931
396. Ibid., 18 July 1932
397. Ibid., 23 February 1931
398. Ibid., 16 May 1931
399. Ibid., 12 May 1930
400. Ibid., 25 June 1932
401. Ibid., 11 June 1932
402. Like the Reichsbanner itself, the Iron Front was often viewed with distrust by many officials and pacifist elements within the SPD - its militant, aggressive posturing, and the threat of extra-parliamentary action that it seemed to promise, obviously sat uncomfortably with the traditions and previous practice of the SPD. See: R. Breitman, 'Nazism in the Eyes of German Social Democracy', p.207; J.M. Diehl, Paramilitary Politics, pp.132, 250.
403. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 5 October 1929
404. Ibid., 18 August 1931
405. Ibid., 3 January 1931
406. Ibid., 28 October 1931
407. Ibid., 12 May 1930
408. Ibid., 2 January 1931. The use of aggressive language and military metaphors was of course also commonplace in Nazi propaganda - see R. Bessel, 'Violence as Propaganda', pp.131-132.
409. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 2 March 1931
410. Ibid., 28 November 1931
411. Ibid., 23 January 1931
412. Ibid., 23 February 1931
413. The Iron Front should also be seen as a reaction to the NSDAP's propaganda and mobilisation techniques - as, in fact, an attempt by the SPD to imitate those techniques and to utilise them for its own ends. Thus D.J.K. Peukert interprets the symbolism of the Iron Front as the SPD's response to the NSDAP's propagandistic harnessing of the 'regimented mass', this latter concept being, in Peukert's view, crucial to the transformation of the public domain in the Weimar Republic - The Weimar Republic, p.161; and H. Mommsen points out that the distaste some within Social Democracy felt for the Iron Front stemmed from the fact that it adopted quasi-fascist forms - 'The Immobility of the SPD', pp.52,57.
414. Examples of 'Iron Front' material: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 16 January 1932 'Eiserne Front marschiert'; 25 January 1932

- 'Große Aktion der Eiserne Front'; 3 February 1932 'Eiserne Front in Augsburg gebildet'; 5 February 1932 'Wir marschieren'; 15 February 1932 'Die große Kampfgemeinschaft für Volksrechte gegen Diktatur'; 18 February 1932 'Augsburg den Republikanern'; 22 February 1932 'Sieghaft schreitet die Eiserne Front'; 2 March 1932 'Wir schlagen Hitler'; 4 April 1932 'Schlagt Hitler'; 29 June 1932 'Die Volksmehrheit gegen die Nazi-Barone'; 5 July 1932 'Augsburger, heute in den Saalbau Herrle'; 18 July 1932 'Eiserne Macht'; 11 August 1932 'Auf den Barrikaden ...?'; 5 November 1932 'Her zu uns.'
415. The rhetorical ambiguity which characterised Iron Front literary propaganda paralleled, and was an articulation of, the ambiguous position of the Iron Front within the Social Democratic movement. Militaristic in appearance and organisation, the creation of the Iron Front only really made sense if it was to be used in the type of violent conflict which the SPD's leadership was desperate to avoid; it soon became clear that the Iron Front was highly unlikely to be called into action in this way, and thus it remained primarily a focus for propaganda and morale-boosting. Hence, just as the SPD's rhetoric of aggression could never displace the more deeply-rooted Social Democratic values of order, discipline and legality, so the outward form of the Iron Front was belied by its actual function.
416. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 23 February 1931
417. Ibid., 4 February 1932
418. Ibid., 6 April 1932; Other examples: 4 August 1932 'An die Partei'; 12 January 1932 'Die große Rede des Landtages - Vizepräsidenten Genossen Auer in Augsburg'; 8 March 1932 'Das 3 Reich kommt nie.'
419. Ibid., 24 June 1932
420. The merits of the SPD's response to Papen's coup, the alternative options open to the party, the extent of the capability and willingness of the rank and file to resist the coup with force, the probable outcome of such resistance - all of this remains fertile ground for discussion and dispute. What is important in the context of this study is that this response demonstrated - more clearly, perhaps, even than the party's reaction to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor and subsequent events - that caution, discipline and the desire to remain within the legal and constitutional framework would determine the SPD's behaviour and not the aggression seemingly reflected in its propaganda rhetoric. See: R. Breitman, German Socialism and Weimar Democracy, pp.185-188; W.H. Maehl, The German Socialist Party, pp.190-193; H. Mehringer, 'Die bayerische Sozialdemokratie', p.327.
421. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 21 July 1932. See also: ibid., 21 July 1932, 'Reichsexekution auf Befehl Hitlers!'; 26 July 1932, 'Macht vor Recht'.
422. Ibid., 21 July 1932, 'An die deutsche Arbeitnehmerschaft'.
423. Ibid., 22 July 1932
424. E. Riegele, 'Parteientwicklung und Wiederaufbau', part A (I)
425. A few examples from many: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 7 November 1929 'Paradies oder Hölle'; 31 March 1930 'Stalin befiehlt: Neue Parole der KPD'; 10 September 1930 'Rußland - wie es ist'; 7 November 1930 'Moskaus neueste Attraktion'; 29 December 1930 'Sklavarie statt Sozialismus. Die Folge des Staatskapitalismus im Sowjetparadies'; 10 July 1931 'System

und Mensch'; 20 November 1931 'Kommunistische Einheitsfront. Hauptfeind: die Sozialdemokratie'; 31 December 1931 'Politische Jahreswende'; 2 February 1933 'Das Kampfge­löhnis der 700 Funktionäre'; 7 February 1933 'Das Gesicht der Gegenrevolution. Augsburg-specific examples: 15 February 1930 'Das "Verbrechen" der Betriebsobmänner Baur!'; 8 April 1930 'Ein schwerer Schlag gegen die Augsburg KPD'; 9 April 1930 'Krach in der Augsburger KPD'; 24 July 1931 'Auf der Straße nach wildem Streik. Das ist die Frucht kommunistischer Arbeit'; 24 June 1932 'Kommunistische Einheitsfront - Manöver.'

426. See, for example, B. Fowkes, Communism in Germany under the Weimar Republic (London, 1984), pp.155-159, 199-201, who describes the 'ultimate function' of the KPD to have been that of 'an instrument of Soviet foreign policy'. The most obvious manifestation of this was, of course, the 'social fascism' line laid down by the Comintern and followed by the KPD in Germany, thereby further poisoning the relationship between KPD and SPD. It would, though, as D. Geary has pointed out (in 'The Failure of German Labor in the Weimar Republic', in M.N. Dobkowski and I. Walliman (eds.), Towards the Holocaust, p.182) be simplistic to ascribe the failure of the two working class parties to form a united front to fight Nazism only to the influence of the Soviet Union on the KPD. Given that the KPD began to increase its support precisely when propagating the social fascism line, this latter must therefore have found some resonance amongst sections of the German working class and could not simply have been a foreign importation. There were, moreover, plentiful historical and domestic reasons, as the example of Augsburg demonstrates, for the bitter hostility that existed between SPD and KPD.
  427. Such paralleling of the NSDAP and the KPD had taken place within Social Democratic circles as early as 1923 - see R. Breitman, 'Nazism in the Eyes of German Social Democracy', p.199. Interestingly enough, though, the KPD in turn similarly compared Nazism and Social Democracy - C. Fischer, The German Communists and the Rise of Nazism. p.176.
  428. For example: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 23 August 1928 'Hakenkreuz und Sowjetstern'; 6 May 1929 'An die deutsche Arbeiterschaft'; 1 April 1930 'Einheitsfrontschwindel nach kommunistischen Muster'; 10 April 1930 'Die Hakenkreuzler und die Erwerbslosen'; 28 May 1930 'Die Kommunazi'; 21 January 1931 'Aus dem Tiergarten die Nazis'; 16 March 1931 'In den Armen liegen sich beide'; 23 October 1932 'Verräter. Das neueste Schanddokument der KPD.'
  429. For example: *ibid.*, 22 December 1930 'Kommu-Nazi im Landtag'; 6 July 1931 'Landtag und Notverordnung. Niedrige Manöver der Kommu-Nazi'; 14 October 1932 'An das deutsche Volk'; 6 December 1932 'An die Partei.'
  430. Examples: *ibid.*, 16 April 1928; 26 August 1929 'Klassenkampftöne bei Hitler'; 2/3 September 1930 'Krach im Nazi Lager'; 2 January 1931 'Aus dem Tiergarten der Nazi'; 24 February 1931 'Stellungswechsel: Von der Nazis zu den Kozis'; 2 November 1931 'Der neue Schwindel der Augsburger "National-Zeitung"'; 11 April 1932 'Reichspräsident Hindenburg.'
- Such a fluidity does seem to have existed, although its extent, and also the interpretation that should be placed upon it, remains an area of debate. See: C. Fischer, The German

Communists and the Rise of Nazism, p.137; C. Fischer, Stormtroopers, pp.206-218. There was again a local historical precedent for this type of fluidity, for a significant number of völkisch activists in the early 1920s had formerly been involved in left-wing politics. Thus the chairman of the Deutsche Werkgemeinschaft, Karl Böhrer, had been an official in the Soviet Republic, and the chairman of Augsburg's first National Socialist group formed in November 1922, Josef Schröffner, had previously been a member of the MSPD, USPD and KPD. It was, moreover, reported of the newly established NSDAP in Augsburg

...daß sich in dieser Partei eine Reihe ehemaliger Kommunisten und Spartakisten befindet...

(BHStA, MA 102 147, Lageberichte des Regierungs - Präsidenten von Schwaben und Neuburg 1921-1924, 22 January 1923; see also G. Hetzer 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.51-52).

431. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 6 February 1931
432. Examples: *ibid.*, 21 July 1930 'Wähler und Wählerinnen'; 26 July 1930 'Die Hoffnung der Scharfmacher. Die politische Rolle der kommunistischen Partei'; 9 September 1930 'Ein letzter Appell'; 30 January 1932 'Die Hauptaufgabe der KPD. Freies Feld dem Faschismus durch Zerschlagung der Eisernen Front'; 14 March 1932 'Glänzender Sieg der Augsburger Republikaner'; 25 April 1932 'Keine Alleinherrschaft der Nazis'; 14 September 1932 'An das deutsche Volk'; 1 October 1932 'Wahlkampf in Augsburg eröffnet.'
433. Examples: *ibid.*, 11 February 1932 'Der Feind in Rücken'; 2 March 1932 'Adolfs Bundesgenossen'; 8 March 1932 'Wer Thälmann wählt, wählt Hitler.'
434. *Ibid.*, 3 March 1932
435. *Ibid.*, 22 April 1932
436. *Ibid.*, 20 December 1932
437. *Ibid.*, 6 December 1932
438. For example: *ibid.*, 20 October 1928 'Läßt euch durch die Hitlerianer nicht provozieren'; 23 October 1928 'Nationalsozialisten greifen die Bürger an'; 3 December 1929 'Nationalsozialisten greifen an'; 14 July 1930 / 22 July 1930 'Theorie u. Praxis der Augsburger Nationalsozialisten'; 29 February 1932 'Eine freche Terror - Androhung gegen Augsburgs Polizeidirektor'; 10 March 1932 'Plumpe Fälschung der Nationalzeitung'; 22 July 1932 'Gefahr in Augsburg. Weg von der Straße beim Goebbels - Rummel'; 29 September 1932 '"Helden" sehen dich an, Adolf.'
439. For example: *ibid.*, 22 July 1930 'Theorie und Praxis der Augsburger Nationalsozialisten'; 9 September 1930 'Auch bei Hitler - nicht Neues'; 16/23 January 1931 'Das Kommunal-Programm der Nationalsozialisten'; 22 May 1931 '"Arbeiterpartei" tagt geheim im Augsburger Palast-Hotel'; 14 July 1931 'Adolf-Hitler - Putschismus und das Dritte Reich'; 30 July 1932 'Heinrich Löscher & Co. Augsburg. So zählt ein begeisterte Nazi.'
440. *Ibid.*, 9 December 1929 'Die große Abwehrschlacht gegen das Augsburger Bürgertum'; 23 November 1929 'Opposition um der Opposition willen'; 22 July 1930 'Theorie und Praxis der Augsburger Nationalsozialisten'; 9 September 1930 'Auch bei

- Hitler - nicht Neues'; 15 July 1931 'Seht her, das sind die "National-Sozialisten".'
441. Ibid., 23 August 1930 'Theorie und Praxis bei den Augsburger Nationalsozialisten'; 28 December 1931 'Wenn das der Hitler sehen würde ...'; 23 January 1932 'Heil! Heil! Neue National-Zeitung.'
442. Examples: ibid., 10/22 July 1930 'Theorie und Praxis bei den Augsburg Nationalsozialisten'; 8 September 1930 '"Adolf Hitler, antworten Sie heute in der Sngerhalle!"; 9 September 1930 'Auch bei Hitler - nichts Neues!'; 12 September 1930 'Noch einmal: Adolf in Augsburg'; 26 November 1930 'Der Reichstags - Prsident spricht heute im Saalbau Herrle!'; 24 February 1931 'Die letzte Nazi-Versammlung im Herrle'; 25 June 1931 'Nationalsozialistischen Kopfbger'; 17 March 1932 'Nachlese zur Reichsprsidentenwahl.'
443. For the following see, for example: ibid., 20 October 1928 'Ein Tag der Freude'; 22 June 1929 'Meuterei bei den Augsburger Hakenkreuz-Sturmtrupps'; 9/10/14/22 July 1930 'Theorie und Praxis bei den Augsburger Nationalsozialisten'; 8 September 1930 '"Adolf Hitler, antworten Sie heute in der Sngerhalle!"; 9 September 1930 'Auch bei Hitler - nicht Neues'; 9 April 1931 'Hakenkreuz-Herrschaft im Versorgungsamt. Wie lange noch'; 14 July 1931 'Adolf Hitler - Putschismus und das Dritte Reich'; 15 July 1931 'Seht her, das sind die "National"-Sozialisten'; 26 September 1931 'Wie die Augsburger Nazi schwindeln'; 12 October 1931 'So sieht es im Dritten Reich aus. Das wahre Gesicht der National "sozialisten"'; 17 March 1932 'Nachlese zur Reichsprsidentwahl'; 23 April 1932 'Augsburger! Das ist Wahl, der nationalsozialistische Landtagskandidat'; 13 March 1932 'Die Nazis beantragen Auflsung des Stadtrates', 28 July 1932 'Die Wahrheit ber den Gautag der Nazis in Augsburg.'
444. Ibid., 3 November 1928 'Sie wollen in der Redaktion kommen.'
445. Ibid., 22 July 1930
446. Ibid., 2 March 1931 'Die Augsburger Sozialdemokratie im Jahre 1931.'
447. Ibid., 23 January 1932 'Heil! Heil! Neue National-Zeitung. Gemilderte Antisemitismus - Adolf, was sagte nun!'
448. Ibid., 4 March 1932 'Eine Antwort an die Neue "National-Zeitung". Mit Adolf im Felde'.
449. Ibid., 29 February 1932 'Eine freche Terror - Androhung gegen Augsburgs Polizeidirektor. Was sich die "Neue Nationalzeitung" alles leistet'.
450. Ibid., 20 June 1932
451. For example: ibid., 12 October 1931 'So sieht es im Dritten Reich aus. Das wahre Gesicht der National "sozialisten"'; 2 November 1931 'Der neue Schwindel der Augsburger "National-Zeitung". Bankerotte Wirtschaftsfhrer sind bei ihr stets Sozialdemokraten'; 3 November 1931 'An unserer Leser. Ein unerhrter Schwindel der National-Zeitung.'
452. Ibid., 10 March 1932 'Plumpe Flschung der Nationalzeitung. Die Hakenkreuzler blamieren sich'. Also 12 March 1932 'Nur frech gelogen Ne-Na-Zi.'
453. Ibid., 1 October 1932
454. Ibid., 13 July 1932
455. Ibid., 15 July 1932
456. Ibid., 19 July 1932
457. Ibid., 31 January 1933

458. Ibid., 3 February 1933
459. Ibid., 3 February 1933
460. Ibid., 1 February 1933 'Hitlers erste "Tat"'.
461. Ibid., 6 February 1933
462. Ibid., 10 February 1933. See also ibid., 10 February 1933 'Hitlers Sofortprogramm. Wann wird es erfüllt?'.
463. Ibid., 17 February 1933
464. Ibid., 11 February 1933
465. For example: ibid., 1 February 1933 'Hitlers erste "Tat"'; 6 March 1933, 'Nationale Mehrheit mit Waffenhilfe der KPD'.
466. Ibid., 4 March 1933
467. Ibid., 10 February 1933
468. Ibid., 31 January 1933
469. Ibid., 1 February 1933 'Hitlers erste "Tat"'.
470. See for example: ibid., 6 February 1933, 'Eine Woche Hitler'; 10 February 1933, 'Hitlers Sofortprogramm. Wann wird es erfüllt?'; 13 February 1933, 'Wieviel erhält Hitler aus Reichsgeldern'.
471. Ibid., 9 February 1933. A presidential decree, drafted before Hitler's appointment but promulgated on 4 February 1933, allowed the banning of newspapers and meetings which 'abused, or treated with contempt, organs, institutions, bureaus or leading officials of the state' or broadcast information that might 'endanger the vital interests of the state'. The reference to a 4 year wait is an allusion to the two four year economic plans announced by Hitler in his 'Appeal to the German People', his first speech as Chancellor, given on 31 January 1933. For the text of his speech see: J. Noakes and G. Pridham, Nazism 1919-1945. Volume 1. The Rise to Power 1919-1934 (Exeter, 1983), pp.131-134.
472. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 16 February 1933.
473. Ibid., 1 March 1933, 'Für ein freies Deutschland'.
474. Ibid., 10 February 1933
475. Ibid., 3 February 1933
476. Ibid., 1 February 1933
477. Ibid., 10 February 1933. See also: 3 February 1933, 'Fort mit euch! Unsere Antwort an Hitler und Papen'; 6 February 1933, 'Eine Woche Hitler'.
478. Ibid., 7 February 1933. For an analysis of the realities of Hugenberg's position at this time, and of the events leading to his resignation from Hitler's government on 26 June 1933, see: G. Corni, 'Alfred Hugenberg as Minister of Agriculture: Interlude or Continuity?', in German History volume 7, number 2 (1989).
479. For example: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 7 February 1933, 'Das Gesicht der Gegenrevolution'.
480. It must be remembered, of course, that this belief was not unique to the SPD, but was rather held by many on both the left and the right, and indeed by many foreign observers of the situation in Germany - I. Kershaw, Hitler (London, 1991), p.87.
481. For example: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 2 February 1933, 'Erhöhte Kampfbereitschaft'.
482. For example: ibid., 2 February 1933, 'Das Kampfge löb nis der 700 Funktionäre'; 8 February 1933, 'Die Eisenbahner stehen bereit'; 7 March 1933, 'An der Partei'.
483. For example: ibid., 2 February 1933 op. cit.; 1 March 1933, 'Arbeitersportler'.

484. Ibid., 2 February 1933
485. Ibid., 2 February 1933
486. Ibid., 3 February 1933
487. Ibid., 4 March 1933
488. Ibid., 7 March 1933
489. Ibid., 2 February 1933
490. Ibid., 31 January 1933
491. Ibid., 31 January 1933
492. Ibid., 1 February 1933, 'Wie im August 1914'.
493. For example: 1 February 1933 op. cit.; ibid., 2 February 1933, 'Das Kampfge­löb­nis der 700 Funk­tionä­re'; 3 February 1933, 'Wir er­öff­nen heu­te den Wahlkampf in Augs­burg'; 8 February 1933, 'Die Eisenbahner stehen bereit'.
494. Ibid., 2 February 1933
495. Ibid., 7 February 1933
496. See Chapter 7
497. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 3 February 1933
498. Ibid., 4 March 1933. The KPD also, and typically, served a further function in the Schwäbische Volkszeitung at this time, that of scapegoat in its analysis of the election of 5 March. On 6 March the newspaper's front page was headlined 'Nationale Mehrheit - mit Waffenhilfe der KPD', and the text claimed, correctly, that 'many, many' communists had switched their votes to the NSDAP.
499. Ibid., 4 March 1933
500. Ibid., 1 February 1933
501. Ibid., 7 February 1933
502. Ibid., 7 March 1933
503. On this see: H.A. Winkler, Der Weg in die Katastrophe, pp.194-206; H. Grebing, 'Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus', especially pp.262-264; R. Breitman, 'Nazism in the Eyes of German Social Democracy', p.207.
504. See: K. Filser and P. Sobczyk, 'Augsburg im Dritten Reich', in G. Gottlieb et al. (eds.), Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg, pp. 614-619; G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.76-106, 150-154, 178-187; W. Domarus, Nationalsozialismus, Krieg und Bevölkerung, pp.41-46; H. Mehringer, 'Die bayerische Sozialdemokratie', pp.338-347.
505. Quoted in K. Filser und P. Sobczyk, 'Augsburg im Dritten Reich', pp.614-615.
506. Thus of the 579 people arrested during 1933 in Augsburg, between 350 and 400 were members of the KPD or its associated organisations: ibid., p.618.
507. Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 6 March, 1933.
508. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', p.181.
509. E. Riegele, 'Parteientwicklung und Wiederaufbau', part A (II); H. Mehringer, 'Die bayerische Sozialdemokratie', p.345.
510. Ibid., p.342
511. E. Riegele, 'Parteientwicklung und Wiederaufbau', Part A (I).
512. H. Wismann, 'Erinnerungen an die Zeit des Widerstandes gegen die Hitlerdiktatur' contained in ASD file 'SPD Augsburg 1933-1963'.
513. E. Nerdinger, Brüder, zum Licht empor, p.181.
514. H. Bretschneider, 'Arbeitersportler und Arbeitersänger', pp.13-14.
515. K. Filser and P. Sobczyk, 'Augsburg im Dritten Reich', p.619.
516. G. Hetzer, 'Die Industriestadt Augsburg', pp.191-200.
517. Ibid., p.215



518. 'Bericht der "Revolutionären Sozialisten" Sudbayerns, Gruppe Augsburg', contained in ASD file 'SPD Augsburg 1864-1978'.
519. The bitterness that existed between Communists and Social Democrats in Augsburg ruled out any possibility of cooperation between the two parties in defence of working-class rights in 1933. Indeed, when Augsburg's SPD leader, Josef Felder, suggested at an Iron Front meeting in February 1933 that the coming struggle would have to be undertaken 'shoulder to shoulder' with Communist workers, the negative reaction of his audience demonstrated that this was simply unrealistic: Schwäbische Volkszeitung, 2 February 1933.
520. See: T.W. Mason, Social Policy in the Third Reich, pp.79-87.
521. Ibid., p.85

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