The Social Democratic movement in Steyr, Austria, 1927–1934

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THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN STEYR, AUSTRIA, 1927-1934

by

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A Doctoral Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of the Loughborough University of Technology

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ABSTRACT


The social and economic background to politics in Steyr was highly unusual. The town was a working class, social democratic stronghold isolated within an agrarian, conservative region. Moreover, its economy was dominated by one single, highly unstable automobile works, the Steyr-Verke. This thesis is concerned with the ways in which this unusual background dominated and defined the nature and development of the local social democratic movement between 1927 and 1934. It argues that this background conditioned the emergence of a distinctive, insular social democratic ethos which encapsulated a moderate, reformist approach to politics based not on ideological considerations, but on practical local experience. Between 1927 and 1929, the Steyr-Verke undertook a massive expansion of production and employment which triggered a local economic boom. The boom in the local economy supported and promoted the social democratic ethos. Conversely, the sudden shutdown of automobile production late in 1929 plunged the local economy into depression and undermined the rationale of the social democratic ethos, which became anachronistic and inconsistent with the new local economic background. However, the unwieldiness of the Social Democratic Party structure and the rigidly bureaucratic mentality of the party leadership precluded effective response to the new local conditions. The inability to respond stimulated the development of an opposition faction within the movement which rejected the authority and policies of the established party leadership, and which mobilised in support of a radically different, quasi-communist political strategy.
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INTRODUCTION

The historiography of Austrian social democracy has largely been dominated by a traditional, neo-historicist approach which examines the history of the movement from "above", in terms of the ideology, organisation and leading personalities of the Social Democratic Party at the national level (1). However, in the last fifteen years or so, building on developments in West German historiography (2), the study of Austrian social democracy has increasingly revolved around the concept of a "historical social science", an approach which draws upon the methods of the social sciences to build up a history of the movement based not just on the documentation of events at the political centre, but also on the socio-economic context within which the movement developed (3). This new approach has tended to focus on the grassroots of politics, on the everyday life and experiences of the working class in general and of the members of the social democratic movement in particular. In other words, it represents an attempt to approach the history of the movement from "below". The first part of this introduction explores some of the characteristics of these two approaches and sets out the relationship of this study to them. This is followed by a discussion of the methodological considerations which provide the framework for analysis. The introduction then concludes with a synopsis of the themes and hypotheses raised and proposed in the study.

Some works have attempted to assess the history of the SDAP from its foundation in 1869 to its demise in 1934 purely in terms of central ideological and organisational factors. The standard, classic work in this field is Norbert Leser's Zwischen Reformismus und Bolschewismus (4). Leser places great emphasis on the fixation with party unity which dominated the SDAP from its foundation in 1889. After the First World War this produced,
he argues, an obsession with finding a "middle way" of compromise between the two poles of reformism and bolshevism in the international spectrum of the Left. The obsession with the middle way narrowed the party's freedom of manoeuvre and ultimately condemned it to a fatal immobilism. This was reinforced by the unwieldiness and unresponsiveness of the SDAP's mass party organisation, and was lent theoretical justification in Otto Bauer's increasingly deterministic ideological analysis. Ultimately it led to the party's defeat and dissolution at the hands of the Dollfuß regime.

Leser's work has had a pervasive influence over subsequent studies of the SDAP. Melanie Sully, for example, has attempted to extend the concept of the "middle way" by seeking to establish a continuum of ideological compromise and innovation between more extreme alternatives ("the eternal quest for the third way") from the foundation of the SDAP right through to the Socialist Party in the era of Bruno Kreisky (5). Anson Rabinbach has developed the theme of Bauer's determinism, and proposed that this formed one dimension of a dualist social democratic strategy for power. The SDAP combined Bauer's essentially passive, neo-Kautskyan determinism, which asserted the historical inevitability of a gradual evolution into parliamentary power, with a unique, active commitment to developing the cultural values and intellectual competence necessary for the exercise of socialist power. It therefore cast itself both in the objectivist role of "inheritor" party, and in an active, anticipatory role, which emphasised the subjective dimension and was based in the municipal socialism of "Red Vienna" and the party's long-standing commitment to the cultivation of Bildung and Kultur among its membership (6). Peter Kulemann on the other hand has focussed his attention on the nature of the social democratic party organisation. He assumes that the Austrian working class had an inherent revolutionary potential, which was demonstrated on several occasions between 1918 and 1934, but was always held back by the
SDAP. This he attributes to the conservatism of a bureaucratic party leadership whose personal interests were tied to the existence of the party organisation; in no circumstances would the leadership endanger the existence of the party - and therefore prejudice its personal interests - by supporting the revolutionary outbursts of the masses (7).

While such studies have without a doubt advanced our knowledge and understanding of the history of Austrian social democracy, they have significant drawbacks. Foremost among these is that they concentrate on "high" politics. Political processes, and influences are perceived as flowing downwards from the top level of politics, and fail to take fully into account the political influence exerted from below by the rank and file of the party. Even though Kulemann, for example, refers to the "revolutionary energies" of the working class masses (8), he does little to elucidate the concerns and aims of the rank and file workers, and, in any case, argues that their "energies" were always reined in and brought under control by the party leadership (9); the rank and file was always subject to the omnipresent influence of the leadership. Thus, to adapt a characterisation of such "history from above" by Richard Evans, the social democratic movement is presented as a puppet theatre, with Otto Bauer and the party executive pulling the strings, and the party activists and ordinary members dancing jerkily across the stage of history towards the final curtain of the Austrian civil war (10).

A second problem inherent in the histories from "above" by Leser, Kulemann et al is that they display the tendency to equate social democracy in Austria with the ideological impulses and organisational developments which originated in Vienna (11). This is understandable and to some extent even justifiable. Vienna was the most important industrial centre and the largest city in Austria. It was also the seat of the party executive, the home of around 60% of the SDAP membership (12) and, above
all, a showcase for social democratic municipal politics. "Red Vienna", with its progressive taxation system, its "welfare state" and imposing housing programmes has, quite understandably, become one of the major focal points of research into Austrian social democracy (13). However, the manifold importance of Vienna to the study of Austrian social democracy has led to a situation where the 40% of the party membership located outside Vienna has been, until very recently, largely ignored. The result is a "blanket" depiction of the movement which fails to take into account the diversity of its regional and local components and thus endows it with spuriously monolithic and homogenous qualities.

The problems and drawbacks associated with "history from above" were a major stimulant in the development of new approaches in the study of the social democratic movement in Austria. These were intimately associated with the academic activities of the Ludwig-Boltzmann-Institut für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, founded at the University of Linz in 1968, and sought to place far greater emphasis on social and economic factors in labour movement history (14). The aim was to approach the past from the point of interface between political history and social and economic history (15). It was first represented, somewhat experimentally, in 1974 in Hans Hautmann and Rudolf Kropf's study of the Austrian labour movement between 1830 and 1945, which sought, in a chronological format, to derive the social and economic origins of its ideology and politics (16). However, through examining the development of the national labour movement over such a long period of time, this study inevitably succumbed to the same problems of overgeneralisation which were inherent in more traditionally oriented works.

The approach used by Hautmann and Kropf was employed much more fruitfully in the regional studies by Helmut Konrad and Karin-Maria Schmidlechner, which examine the social and economic background to the evolving political consciousness of the
nineteenth century working class in Upper Austria and Styria respectively (17). A central concern of both Konrad and Schmidlechner is to illuminate the Alltag, the conditions of everyday life of the worker, and to establish a causal link between these and the development of political consciousness and organisation. There is a danger, as Konrad elsewhere notes (18), that the adoption of the Alltag as a focal point of research can all too easily result in a descriptive account of the trivial details of daily life which neglects the political context to become a "history with the politics left out" (19). However, he and Schmidlechner have largely avoided this problem by maintaining a constant and rigorous focus on the political implications of everyday experience. Their studies underline the fact that the various regions of Austria had differing social and economic backgrounds, that different workers thus experienced different Alltage which influenced the development of disparate forms of political consciousness and organisation.

This thesis seeks to build on the methodological innovations which have added new dimensions to the study of Austrian social democracy since the 1960's. It is intended as an attempt to counteract the tendency to view the history of the movement from "above", to concentrate on the ideas and personalities of a group of national political leaders based in and oriented towards the peculiar circumstances of Vienna. As noted above, this type of approach too easily results in a "blanket" depiction of the history of social democracy which fails to take into account the full diversity of a movement whose organisation and membership was spread across ten socially, economically, and politically heterogenous Länder. This study, like those of Konrad and Schmidlechner, seeks to take account of and highlight part of this diversity. It seeks to illuminate the factors which helped to condition the forms of political behaviour and activity particular to the social democratic movement in one town, Steyr, which was one of the major centres of social democratic strength outside Vienna, but which has not yet
received adequate historical attention.

The thesis is conceived as a *socio-political* study, a study based upon the premise that the nature of politics is intimately bound to the particular social context within which those politics were conducted. It seeks to meet the demand laid down by Helene Maizmann to give full consideration to "the complicated socio-economic and social-psychological context within which the labour organisations developed" (20). However, the focus is not placed, as Maizmann goes on to prescribe (21), on a narrow examination of the social democratic *Alltag* in Steyr. As noted above, such an enterprise can all too easily become a "history with the politics left out". The focus is placed more broadly on the social and economic structures which formed the basic local framework within which the social democratic movement operated, and in particular on the ways in which these structures conditioned the nature and development of social democratic politics in the town. This is not to suggest that the study is of an exclusively structuralist-determinist nature; indeed, the role of independent human agency is crucial to the latter parts of the thesis, in particular the final chapter. However, the underlying philosophy of the study is that the potential of human agency in Steyr was very much circumscribed by the structural characteristics of local economy and society.

The explanatory framework developed to carry out this socio-political investigation can be termed the *local milieu*. The concept of a "local milieu" refers to the attributes of a particular political "habitat" in their significance as determinants of the nature of political activity within that "habitat". In his important essay on the theoretical considerations involved in regional/local studies in labour history, Helmut Konrad indicates the two essential aspects which comprise a "local milieu". Firstly, he notes the "decisive importance" which should be accorded to "the internal conditions
of the region in the emergence of the cultural and political behavioural forms of the working class" (22). He goes on to add that regional labour histories, most of which focus on industrial areas, must, without fail, take the structure of the (usually non-industrial) hinterland into consideration, since "the working class and its political organisations do not develop in a vacuum, but rather establish their field of activity within an environment, whose character largely co-determines the possibilities and types of activity undertaken" (23). Thus, adopting the dual focus of attention suggested by Konrad, the local milieu is an analytical concept which encompasses both the internal socio-economic characteristics of the locality and the socio-economic structure of the surrounding area in their combined significance as co-determinants of the nature of local politics.

The relevance of the concept of the local milieu is not intended to be specific to the study of social democracy in Steyr. The concept could equally be applied to the politics of any other locality. This does not imply however that Steyr was chosen for this study for its presumed typicality among Austrian towns and their local milieux; indeed, it is doubtful whether there can be such a thing as a "typical" town (24). Rather, it was selected because of the blatant lack of any sense of symmetry within its local milieu. Steyr constituted in many respects an extraordinary setting for politics. It was an isolated, highly industrialised, urban enclave, dominated socially by the manual working class and politically by the social democratic movement, situated in the midst of an overwhelmingly agrarian, catholic-conservative region. Furthermore, the town's internal economic structure was dominated by one single works, the Steyr-Werke (25), an automobile factory which experienced massive fluctuations in its economic performance: the local economy enjoyed boom conditions between 1927 and 1929, followed by a period of deep depression until 1934. This incidentally accounts for the time period
chosen for this study. The period of boom and its implications for the social democratic movement provide a fascinating contrast with the subsequent period of economic decline.

It is evident that in several important respects Steyr was an extreme case, and, as David Crew suggests, "the extreme case can often be extremely revealing" (26). The local milieu in Steyr exemplified, in a highly exaggerated form, the broader circumstances which confronted Austrian social democracy as a whole: the deep, hostile social and political cleft between the Austrian Lager and the unpredictability and fragility of the Austrian economy. It represented an extreme encapsulation of the opportunities and problems which faced the social democratic movement nationwide. It is thus the purpose of this study to investigate the "products" of these extreme and exaggerated circumstances, to assess what kind of social democratic movement emerged within this unique and exemplary local milieu, and, ultimately, to offer in this way new insights into the nature of Austrian social democracy.

This implies something of the wider relevance and value of the local study as a genre of academic enquiry. This study is not intended to be a form of scholarly parochialism, a narrow case study of social democracy with no implications which extend beyond the locality under examination. Nor is it intended just as an illustrative microcosm of national "high" politics, which might imply that the mathematical sum of all conceivable local studies could somehow automatically "equal" the national history of the social democratic movement (27). The relationship between local and national history is perceived in this study as one of mutuality and complementarity: the local study inevitably confirms much of the existing orthodoxy represented in national studies of the social democratic movement, but it also demonstrates the heterogeneity of political experience within the nation, thus also qualifying and adding to our knowledge of the history of the movement. "It is a question of asking how and
in what ways the experience of the local community fits into the national experience and how, in what ways, and to what extent local areas participated in, contributed to, were affected by, and reacted to the large-scale social, economic and political transformations" (28) encountered in inter-war Austria as a whole. This study is thus envisaged as a contribution certainly to a more differentiated and, it is hoped, to a better balanced and more accurate account of the history of the social democratic movement in Austria.

In regard to the application of a socio-political methodology to the local/regional history of social democracy in the First Republic, this study is largely breaking new ground. Although Konrad and Schmidlechner have done much to illuminate the social contexts, or milieux, which formed the background to the initial emergence of the Upper Austrian and Styrian labour movements in Habsburg Austria (see above), little has yet been done to extend the focus of socio-political enquiry into the twentieth century. While local/regional histories of social democracy in the First Republic are not uncommon, the majority of these tend to be purely organisational studies whose remit does not extend to a systematic examination of the political implications of the socio-economic milieux which dominated the regions concerned (29). The exceptions to this rule are Vorarlberg, where Werner Dreier has briefly analysed the implications of the peculiarities of the Vorarlberg social and industrial structures for the development of the regional social democratic movement (30), Styria, and the setting for this study, the town of Steyr.

Inter-war social democracy in Styria has been the focus of research by both Robert Hinteregger and the Jill Lewis. Hinteregger attempts to explain the intensity of social democratic resistance in Styria in the Civil War of 1934 in terms of a dichotomous social model, based around the conflicts of interest of "proletariat" and "bourgeoisie". He finds that
these were especially pronounced in Styria and thus greatly increased the potential for social conflict in the region. (31). His work is useful in that he drags the emphasis away from the political centre, from the diverting, but not always especially informative spectacles of controversies surrounding "Red" Vienna and rhetorical parliamentary altercations between Left and Right, to demonstrate that social conflict in inter-war Austria had far more deep-seated and prosaic roots.

Lewis, on the other hand, restricts her attention to the social democratic trade unions, primarily in the industrial valleys of Upper Styria (32). She is concerned to explain the "failure of Styrian labour", the particular weakness of the trade unions in the region and their capitulation to the aggressively anti-unionist Alpine iron and steel conglomerate. This weakness was, she argues, inherent in the structure of the region's industry: Upper Styrian industry was geographically dispersed, making united union action difficult; it required a low skill level which made individual workers - especially unwanted union activists - dispensable; and the industry produced basic, unfinished products highly susceptible to fluctuations in demand, resulting in regular periods of high unemployment which debilitated union strength. By analysing the broader context, or milieu, within which the Styrian unions were forced to operate, Lewis is able to throw critical insights into the reasons for the weakness of social democracy in one of the major industrial areas in Austria and thus, by implication, its weakness in Austria as a whole.

The local and regional studies by Lewis, Hinteregger and Dreier serve to emphasise the heterogenous nature of social democracy in Austria and thus help to present a more subtle and accurate account of the movement than the homogenous, Vienna-based picture which has traditionally been predominant. Such too is the aim of this study, which is fortunate enough in this respect to be able to build on the foundations laid by
Josef Stockinger in his recent doctoral thesis on the labour movement in Steyr (33). Stockinger's thesis is conceived as a "social-historically oriented regional study", whose purpose is the comparison of the "processes of development of the (organised) labour movement" in Steyr and in selected villages in the area surrounding the town (34). Stockinger's aims are bold: while concentrating on the social democratic labour movement, he also seeks to examine all other forms of working class organisation - communist, christian social, Heimwehr and national socialist - in the light of the basic economic background of his intra-regional comparison, while also considering basic problems of daily life in the area. The thesis unfortunately fails to fulfil these aims. The breadth of its focus is probably over-ambitious, with the result that its construction and argumentation lack coherence and central unifying themes, while the analytical impetus of the study is all too readily lost in a well-documented but dry, narrative account. Stockinger's work does however contain a wealth of factual evidence and invaluable information on relevant source materials. These provided an initial orientation for this study, to whose thematic content the discussion now turns.

As established above, it is the central underlying assumption of this study that the character and development of social democratic politics was strongly conditioned by the extraordinary nature of the local milieu in Steyr. The essence of the study can be encapsulated in four basic propositions:

Firstly that the peculiarities of the local milieu in Steyr conditioned the emergence of a highly unusual social democratic ethos which encapsulated a distinctive, fundamentally non-ideological approach to politics.

Secondly that conditions in the local milieu up to the end of 1929 gave the social democratic ethos a certain logic and internal consistency. However, the local milieu was
redefined by developments in 1929-1930, such that the social
democratic ethos became outdated and anachronistic, and
inconsistent with the new local conditions.

Thirdly that the structure of the Social Democratic Party in
Steyr and the mentality of its leadership inhibited
effective response and adaptation to the new conditions in
the local milieu after 1929.

Fourthly, that the inadaptability of the local party and the
inconsistency of the social democratic ethos with local
conditions after 1929 led to the rejection of that ethos by
parts of the movement and the simultaneous elaboration of a
new and fundamentally different political approach.

The remainder of this introductory chapter is concerned to
outline the major themes which are addressed throughout the
study and which serve as means to illuminate and investigate the
propositions set out above. Of fundamental importance in the
arguments developed in the study is the isolation of Steyr
within a socially and politically alien and opposed region. It
is a central premise of the study that this isolation served to
an exaggerated extent to encapsulate and localise the context
for politics in the town. As a result, the social democratic
movement was conditioned almost exclusively by local factors;
conversely it was at most only peripherally conditioned by and
preoccupied with the factors which are assumed to have
determined the nature of Austrian social democracy in the
generalised national context. The social democrats in Steyr were
thus imbued by a strong local consciousness which distinguished
them very clearly from social democrats elsewhere. This
localised consciousness formed the basis of the social
democratic ethos.
Ethos is taken here to refer to the values, attitudes and mentalities which were derived by the social democrats in Steyr from local, day-to-day experience. It is argued in this study that this ethos underlay and defined their political behaviour. Conversely it is argued that in no sense was their political behaviour motivated and inspired by ideological considerations. The term "ideology" connotes a more or less coherent, codified system of ideas about politics and society which provides some kind of political orientation for its adherents. The social democrats in Steyr had made no attempt to elaborate any such system of ideas. They had not developed their own nor assumed anyone else's considered, theoretical conception or critique of Austrian society upon which to base their politics; their politics was conditioned above all else by their ethos, based in practical local experience.

This study argues that the social democratic ethos in Steyr emerged from the local consciousness and experience of isolation. Isolation fostered an insular and inward-directed mentality among the social democrats which was reflected in the concern to seal Steyr off (even more than it already was) from the "outside world", and to build the town up (even more) as a local bastion of social democracy. The means by which the social democrats sought to deflect "outside" influence and to consolidate the stronghold was the extension and diffusion of social democratic organisational influence within the town. The social democratic ethos in Steyr thus incorporated a marked predisposition to emphasise the value of organisation.

The stress placed on the virtues of organisation was reflected for example in the commitment to locate, as far as possible, all activities undertaken by social democrats within an explicitly social democratic context (see Chapter Five). A broad "sub-culture" of organisations and activities was built up - ranging from the extra-school education/indoctrination of children to the burial of the dead, from abstinence to zither...
playing - which sought to demarcate and insulate the social democrats from the influence of the capitalist and catholic-clericalist cultural values which dominated in Austria (and, more pertinently in view of the narrow, localised consciousness which predominated in Steyr, in the region which surrounded the town). Organisation was however not just employed to contain "outside" influence, but also to extend and cement social democratic influence over politics and society within Steyr. The social democrats aspired to a complete hegemony over other political movements in the town. The instrument of domination was what might be termed a "network" or "machine" which was founded on the privileges, powers and patronage of the social democratic metalworkers' trade union (Metallarbeiterverband, or MAV), whose significance is examined in Chapter Two, and the complementary powers and patronage of the social democratic town hall. Chapter Three analyses how the organisational influence of trade union and municipal administration was able, through this network, to reach into and permeate areas of daily life not normally open to overt political manipulation (e.g. the employment prospects of the local labour force or the quality of "law and order" upheld by the local police). In this way, the social democrats were able to dominate local politics and society far more extensively than formal indicators of power, e.g. electoral statistics (see Table 1), might suggest.

The social democratic ethos in Steyr thus placed great emphasis on the expansion and consolidation of organisational influence. A major contention of this study is that this preoccupation with organisational expansion represents an ideal test case for the verification of Robert Michels' theories on the structural characteristics of labour movement organisation and the political attributes these characteristics tend to produce (35). Michels suggested that any expanding organisation is bound to develop an excessive, cumbersome bureaucracy presided over by a narrow oligarchy with an all-consuming
passion for the consolidation and conservation of the organisation. The overriding rationale of the social democratic movement in Steyr was organisational expansion; it is thus argued that the movement was especially susceptible to the syndrome Michels discussed. Indeed it is proposed in Chapter Four that the structure of the Social Democratic Party in Steyr and the nature of the party leadership conformed very closely to the Michels model. The organisational preoccupation central to the local ethos was thus reinforced by the organisational conservatism inherent in oligarchical rule to produce a tendency among the party leadership to value the size and well-being of the social democratic organisational apparatus as the major criteria of political life. It is further suggested in Chapters Four and Five that the activist members of both the Social Democratic Party and the myriad "cultural" organisations affiliated to it were also dominated by a similar fetish for organisation. In consequence, organisation in Steyr became less and less a means with which to realise political aims and more and more an end in itself. This extreme organisational fixation had profound implications both for the tactical flexibility of the social democrats (see below) and for the nature of their political strategy.

The social democratic strategy in Steyr was unequivocally moderate and reformist. In Chapter Six, it is shown that the social democrats combined a deep commitment to the processes of parliamentary democracy, as enshrined in the republican constitution, with the aim of reforming certain limited aspects of the existing social and economic order. As suggested above, this study contends that the social democratic movement was dominated by an insular, localised mentality which lacked any kind of systematic conception of the nature of Austrian state and society as a whole. The reformist strategy of the social democrats was therefore based very firmly in practical experience at the local level rather than in any considered ideological prescription for action. It is argued for example in
Chapter Six that the social democrats derived a positive commitment to the existing order of Austrian state and society from the preoccupation with organisation which was central to their ethos. The emphasis placed on organisation effectively meant that they had made a considerable investment in the existing order of society. They therefore had no revolutionary or anti-system aims; they accepted the basic parameters of the capitalist socio-economic system and the political system of parliamentary democracy.

It is further suggested that the social democrats' preoccupation with organisation also provided the rationale for their strategy for power within the parliamentary system. This was based on the premise that a sustained recruitment of new members to the party organisation would bring the SDAP ever nearer to the all-important level of 51% support among the electorate, which would, it was thought, guarantee power in the state. Consequently, a premium was placed on the sheer size of the organisation; the larger the organisation, the nearer were the social democrats, by implication, to the exercise of state power. The social democratic ethos and the organisational preoccupation it incorporated thus underlay a quintessentially reformist parliamentary strategy for power.

A further dimension of local experience determined exactly what the social democrats hoped to reform in the existing system. As noted above, the local economy was dominated by one single firm operating in a fluctuating market. This exposed the town, and in particular the manual working class supporters of the social democratic movement to the instability and insecurity of employment inherent in a capitalist economy. The social democrats aimed therefore, on the basis of this local experience rather than any theoretical analysis of capitalism, to reform certain aspects of the capitalist economy and thus ameliorate the worst effects of capitalist instability.
The preceding discussion has suggested that certain essential characteristics of the social democratic movement were intrinsically related to the social democratic ethos in Steyr. This ethos both incorporated the aspiration to consolidate social democratic hegemony within Steyr and also conditioned a moderate local reformist strategy. In turn, this ethos was itself conditioned and formed by the peculiarities of the local milieu which provided the basic framework for politics in the town. However, it must not be assumed that the peculiar conditions in the local milieu which gave rise to the social democratic ethos remained static during the whole period under examination. The following paragraphs outline the relationship between the changing nature of the local milieu and the social democratic ethos.

Between 1927 and 1929, the local milieu supported and promoted the social democratic ethos. This pertains to a key theme which permeates the whole of this study: the relationship between the social democratic movement and the most crucial factor in the socio-economic background to politics in Steyr, the fluctuating economic performance of the Steyr-Werke. The economic history of the Steyr-Werke is analysed in Chapter One, where it is shown that the works experienced a significant revival of its fortunes in 1927 and the first half of 1928. In the second half of 1928 and in 1929, the management of the Steyr-Werke extended this revival artificially and without economic justification, so that the local economy suddenly enjoyed boom conditions while the economy elsewhere in Austria was stagnant. In this period therefore, the experience of social democracy in Steyr diverged strongly from the general, national experience.

Austrian social democracy is generally assumed to have experienced a decisive turning point in July 1927 (36). The crushing of the workers' demonstration in Vienna and the subsequent national social democratic railway strike severely
undermined the confidence and morale of the SDAP at national level. This applied in particular to the belief in the efficacy of a parliamentary strategy to secure social democratic interests when parliamentary power was in the hands of a fiercely anti-social democratic majority prepared to use state power against the social democratic movement.

However, as is argued in Chapter Three, the social democrats were able radically to extend the influence of their organisational network in the town against the material background of boom at the Steyr-Werke after 1927. This enabled them to cement their dominance over the local Right and thus to realise their hegemonic aspirations in the town. This local hegemony had a twofold significance. Firstly, it represented a marked deviation from the national experience of social democracy. Secondly it served even further to stress the uniquely encapsulated and insular nature of the milieu within which politics was conducted in Steyr. Encapsulation/insulation shielded the local social democratic movement from the ramifications of recent political developments at the national level. It was thus able to maintain an unimpaired confidence in a parliamentary-majoritarian strategy even though the events of July 1927 had indicated that such a strategy was increasingly illusory and unrealistic. Furthermore, the local economic boom provided the means for the SDAP town hall majority to implement local ameliorative reforms. Thus, between 1927 and 1929, not only were the hegemonic aspirations central to the ethos of the social democrats realised, but the reformist strategy derived from that ethos also retained an apparent efficacy.

The social democratic ethos was therefore especially appropriate to a situation in which the capitalist economy (in the local guise of the Steyr-Werke) was buoyant and in which a belief in the efficacy of parliamentary democracy could be (however spuriously) maintained. In other words, it was specifically attuned to the nature of the local milieu in Steyr
which existed in the late 1920's, which combined a highly localised and insulated context for politics with local economic boom. However, between the autumn of 1929 and late 1930, the local milieu underwent a wholesale and drastic redefinition. The Steyr-Werke collapsed, plunging the local economy into long-term crisis, while the "insulation" which shielded Steyr from the impact of broader national trends was pierced and eroded as factors in national politics increasingly impinged on the local context. Hence, even the social democratic "stronghold" in Steyr was now subject to the increasingly repressive and progressively anti-constitutional measures of successive governments of the Right. The local milieu after 1929 was thus characterised by deep economic crisis and lost its insulating function as Steyr became increasingly exposed to the increasing national dominance of the anti-democratic Right.

In these circumstances, the ethos of the social democratic movement in Steyr was patently inappropriate as a basis for political action; its success was contingent on the relative well-being of the capitalist economy and on relatively open and competitive parliamentary politics. This did not necessarily, however, represent a lasting disadvantage for the social democratic movement. Any political movement normally has the option of redefining its objectives and reevaluating its strategy to take into account new circumstances and problems. It is argued in this study however, that the social democratic movement in Steyr was wholly unable to undertake any such reevaluation. This reflected the extreme fixation with organisation which prevailed throughout the movement. The tendency noted above, whereby organisation became less a means to achieve political aims and more an end in itself severely prejudiced the its political flexibility. This was especially so since the social democratic ethos, largely expressed in a preoccupation with organisation, had been supported and promoted by conditions within the local milieu between 1927 and 1929. As a consequence, the social democrats were unable to abandon the
precepts which were established in the 1920's or to adapt their approach to the new conditions which prevailed in Steyr in the 1930's. The social democratic movement was increasingly characterised by a rigidity of approach which condemned it to passivity, immobility and fatalistic resignation in the face of mass local unemployment and increasing political repression.

The final major theme of this thesis, addressed in detail in Chapter Seven, concerns the cohesion of the movement after it had become evident both that the social democratic ethos was inappropriate to the new circumstances of the 1930's and that the movement was unable to adapt to these circumstances. It is proposed that these two factors served to stimulate the development of an opposition within the movement in Steyr. Opposition mobilised around the way in which the party leadership in particular clung rigidly to the social democratic ethos, with its emphasis on the merits of organisation and of a parliamentary strategy, even as that organisation and parliamentary democracy were being destroyed, especially after March 1933, by the Dollfuß dictatorship.

However, it is argued in Chapter Seven that the opposition which emerged during 1933 represented much more than just the rejection of the unadaptability and immobility of the party leadership; the emergence of opposition also represented in a much broader sense a rejection of social democracy as an international political tradition. Although the impetus for opposition was drawn from the failure of the distinctive variant of social democracy which had developed in the peculiar local context of Steyr, it was also strengthened by the growing local conviction that reformist social democracy had also failed not only in the national Austrian context, but in Germany as well in the early 1930's. The consideration of wider developments by the emergent opposition represents, it is argued, a "liberation" from the narrow, localised consciousness and ethos which had hitherto dominated the social democratic movement. It was
moreover indicative of an attempt to draw general implications from the comparison of different experiences. In other words, the opposition was attempting to take on a more theoretical approach to politics which recognised and compared the broad similarity of the failings of local, all-Austrian and German social democracy and consequently rejected social democracy as a whole. Emphasis on organisation, parliamentary majoritarianism and moderate reform were thus rejected by the social democratic opposition in Steyr for a fundamentally new and diametrically opposed approach to politics, based around Leninist organisational principles, extra-parliamentary tactics and, ultimately, the revolutionary reorganisation of society on quasi-communist lines.
CHAPTER ONE

THE LOCAL MILIEU AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC POLITICS IN STEYR 1927–1934

The history of social democracy in Steyr between 1927 and 1934 consists of two very distinct phases. Between 1927 and late 1929 the social democratic movement enjoyed its most successful period. Already electorally dominant in Steyr, it was able to extend its influence into ostensibly non-political areas by means of a local political "machine", a network of patronage and manipulation based in the metalworkers' trade union (the Metallarbeiterverband, or MAV) and the town hall. It was also able to implement modest local social reforms and maintained an optimistic and confident attitude towards the prospect of a national social democratic electoral victory in the near future. However, the period after 1929 saw the collapse of the system of patronage and manipulation, the disintegration of the social reform programme and the emergence of a pessimistic and defensive political outlook. By 1934 the movement was a weak, divided and, for the most part, ineffectual and demoralised political farce.

It is the contention of this chapter, and indeed of the thesis as a whole, that the primary explanation for the fluctuations in the fortunes of the social democratic movement is to be found in the changing nature of the social and economic background to politics, or local milieu, in Steyr. As established in the Introduction of this study, the concept of the local milieu refers to the structural characteristics of local economy and society in their role as determinants of the
nature of local politics. This chapter has the twofold purpose of examining the essential features of this local milieu and of demonstrating that they conditioned and circumscribed the development of social democratic politics. The chapter also aims to show that a local milieu may be markedly distinctive to the generalised national situation, which is all too often assumed to apply equally throughout the nation. The local social and economic background to politics in Steyr was highly unusual, thus forming the basis of the distinctive, and in national terms, deviant experience of the local social democratic movement.

The socio-economic basis of politics in Steyr was defined above all else by the Steyr-Werke. This massive car works dominated the local economy and defined the local social environment. For example, between 1928 and late 1929, some 78% of the local (employed) industrial workforce was employed at the works; this share never dipped below a level of 53%, recorded at the economic lowpoint of the works during the Great Depression (see Figure 1). The social structure of the town, and the political implications inherent in that social structure, were furthermore largely determined by the size and characteristics of the workforce at the Steyr-Werke. The workforce was overwhelmingly manual, with the result that the social structure of Steyr was that of an Arbeiterstadt, a town dominated by the manual working class (1). In addition, Steyr's long industrial tradition of metal-working meant that the manual workforce at the car works consisted primarily of skilled workers (2). Such skilled metal-workers had traditionally been at the forefront of labour movement organisation in Austria (3), and had accordingly, since the late 1880's, formed the backbone of the social democratic labour movement in Steyr (4). The workforce of the Steyr-Werke thus formed the social basis and prerequisite for a localised, working class and social democratic stronghold in Steyr.
One of the most striking characteristics of this social democratic stronghold was the almost complete social, economic and political contrast it presented to the surrounding area. Steyr was a compact, highly industrialised, predominantly social democratic town, situated in the middle of a rural, agrarian, catholic-conservative and essentially hostile hinterland. Seen in electoral terms Steyr was around 60% social democratic; the surrounding Traunviertel was around 70% conservative (5). The position of Steyr as an isolated enclave in a contrary environment strongly conditioned the ethos of the social democratic movement. Isolation promoted the development of an insular, inward-looking mentality among the social democrats, which was reflected in an exaggerated quest to maximise the political influence and power of their organisations within the boundaries of the town.

The social democratic ethos in Steyr thus underlay a drive to penetrate and dominate as many spheres of public and private life as was possible with social democratic organisational influence. This organisational emphasis in the social democratic movement was exhibited particularly in the development of two parallel power bases in the town: the first lay in the shopfloor and Works Council of the Steyr-Werke, where the MAV had been able to establish a powerful and exclusive position after the First World War; the second lay in the town hall, which was under continuous social democratic control between 1919 and 1934. Both power bases, however, were fundamentally dependent on the economic performance of the Steyr-Werke. The bargaining strength of the MAV in industrial relations was naturally dependent on the economic climate in the car industry. Similarly, the financial cornerstone of the municipal budget, and therefore of the activities of the social democratic town hall, was the local income tax raised from the workforce at the car works. Thus, the extent and success of social democratic activities in Steyr were largely contingent on, and determined by, the current commercial fortunes of the Steyr-Werke. This
underlined the extent to which politics in Steyr was conditioned by the local socio-economic milieu. Indeed, the recognition of the relationship between the economic performance of the Steyr-Verke and the performance of the social democratic movement is an absolutely crucial prerequisite for interpreting and understanding the development of social democracy in Steyr.

The economic development of the Steyr-Verke in the First Republic was highly unstable, exhibiting wild fluctuations which were either at variance with, or were exaggerated reflections of, broader national economic trends. Three distinct phases can be identified: in the first, from 1927 to late 1929, the works enjoyed boom conditions, with ever-increasing production and employment levels; in the second phase, from late 1929 to mid-1930, the car production line was completely shut down; and thirdly, from mid-1930 to 1934 the works was operating at only a fraction of its full capacity (see Table 2). These exaggerated fluctuations were essentially mirrored in the development of the social democratic movement in Steyr. Between 1927 and 1929 the social democrats were faced with the unusually favourable background conditions of boom at the car works. As has been noted, their isolated social and political situation encouraged them to turn inward and make the most of the opportunities available to them for the extension of social democratic power and influence within Steyr. Between 1927 and 1929 they had the means to do so on an unprecedented scale, as the boom conditions at the Steyr-Verke "fed" into and consolidated the existing organisational power bases in the HAV and the town hall.

The peculiar conditions which existed in the local milieu between 1927 and 1929 also represented an almost ideal situation for the demonstration of the apparent efficacy and viability of the social democratic reformist strategy in Steyr. On the one hand, the local insularity born of social and political isolation allowed the social democrats to maintain a belief in the efficacy of electoral competition as a feasible strategy for
power long after other, non-electoral factors had taken centre stage in Austrian politics. On the other, local economic boom generated the financial resources for the pursuit of modest local welfare reforms. Thus the period 1927-1929 was also the highpoint of social democratic reformism in Steyr. It is evident that in these years the local milieu in Steyr represented a uniquely encapsulated, exaggeratedly favourable local environment for social democratic politics. The social democratic movement faced a wholly different (and highly auspicious) framework for its activities than that which faced social democrats elsewhere in Austria. In this period therefore, the experience of social democracy in Steyr deviated from the general, national experience. Broadly speaking, the Austrian social democratic movement had taken on an increasingly pessimistic and defensive outlook after July 1927; at the same time, the social democrats in Steyr were enjoying their most active, optimistic and successful years (see section 1.1).

However, the shutdown of the Steyr-Werke in 1929-1930, and the low levels of production thereafter drastically altered the framework around social democratic politics in Steyr. Exaggeratedly favourable economic background conditions were abruptly replaced by exaggeratedly unfavourable conditions as production and employment levels at the works were slashed. The uniquely encapsulated local milieu of 1927-1929 underwent a fundamental redefinition as local unemployment soared, immediately eroding the NAV's power base in the Steyr-Werke, and decimating the social democratic town hall's major source of income. The organisational power bases of social democracy disintegrated and the movement fell into a steep decline. This decline was confirmed as the social democratic strategy became increasingly unviable in the new circumstances of the 1930's. Abruptly, with the economic collapse of the Steyr-Werke, the social democratic movement in Steyr found itself realigned with the national trends from which it had deviated after 1927 (see section 1.2). Social democracy in Steyr thus proved to be
inherently and excessively dependent on the particular nature of the local milieu in the late 1920's.

1.1: Social Democracy and the Local Milieu, 1927-1929.

The isolation of Steyr in a contrary and hostile social and political environment fostered the development of an insular social democratic ethos whose essence was reflected in the concern to establish Steyr as an exclusive Hochburg, or "fortress" of social democracy. The social democrats sought to establish a hegemony over other political parties and movements by permeating the town as much as possible with social democratic organisational influence and by sealing it off as much as possible from "outside", i.e. non-social democratic influence (6). The key instruments in the establishment of this exclusive "fortress" were the powers held by the MAV in the Steyr-Werke and by the social democratic majority in the town hall.

Encouraged by the success of anti-war and anti-governmental strikes in the final months of the First World War, the MAV expanded rapidly in the Steyr-Werke in 1919-1920. It was able to make use of the strong bargaining hand represented by the centralisation of union support and resources in one workplace to attain and maintain an especially strong position in the works. In particular, the MAV-dominated Works Council was able to negotiate a series of extraordinary workplace rights whose significance reached well beyond the shopfloor of the works. For example, the Works Council was able to levy extraordinary contributions - in effect a private tax - on the whole manual workforce. A large proportion of the funds thus raised was then passed on to finance social democratic organisations and projects in the town. The Works Council also had the right to
veto all appointments of manual workers at the works; in this way it controlled a large proportion of the local labour market. The powers of the Works Council were complemented by those of the social democratic municipal administration. Here too a "party book" employment policy operated, both in the municipal bureaucracy and, through the manipulation of the local Unemployment Office, elsewhere in the town. The social democrats in the town hall also controlled the local police force and thus ensured that the exercise of "law and order" in Steyr was highly favourable to social democracy. The powers of MAV and municipality thus underpinned a network of patronage and manipulation, a classic example of "machine politics". This laid the foundation for a social democratic hegemony over other political movements in the town which was to extend far beyond formal electoral/numerical superiority to become an inherent part of the local political culture (see Chapter Three). However, as outlined above, the powers of MAV and municipality were direct functions of the economic performance of the Steyr-Werke. Thus, the network, the foundation of social democratic hegemony, was dependent on the size of the workforce at the car works.

Between 1927 and 1929, the Steyr-Werke underwent an unprecedented expansion. Production and employment were expanding rapidly (see Table 2), and sales were higher than forecast in both 1927 and 1928. However, this outward appearance of commercial success and prosperity concealed serious flaws in the economic structure of the firm. The Steyr-Werke was overproducing on a large scale, and stocks had been mounting up throughout the latter half of 1928 and during 1929. Increased turnover had been achieved only by selling at less than cost price on the export market. Dividends had been maintained at a recklessly high level in an attempt to court the good favour of the financial markets, in order to keep open the possibility of a new share issue which could be used to cut excessive debts. As a result, profits had been sluggish, and deteriorated into huge
losses in 1929 (7). Despite this series of adverse economic indicators, the company took no remedial action until August 1929. "Monstrously dilettantish" in the eyes of Austria's most respected economic journal (8), the management of the Steyr-Verke had sustained the favourable conditions of 1927 and early 1928 artificially into 1929. This "false boom" is of crucial importance in understanding the development of social democracy in Steyr. On the one hand it decimated the economic basis of the firm, leading directly to the complete shutdown of the works in 1929 (see section 1.2). More immediately, it strengthened social democratic hegemony in Steyr, based in the "machine-politics" of the network, far beyond the point in time when this was justifiable in real economic terms and far beyond the experience of social democrats elsewhere in Austria. This point is illustrated in Figure 2, which depicts the local and national unemployment rates between 1927 and 1933. Between 1927 and 1929, the national unemployment rate remained fairly constant at around 10%, reflecting the sluggish recovery of Austrian industry after the post-inflationary recession of 1922-1924 (9). In Steyr however, the unemployment rate dropped, abnormally, from around 10% in 1927 to 5-6% in 1928-1929.

The "false boom" at the Steyr-Verke prolonged and accentuated the highly specific, unique local circumstances which conditioned the outlook and activities of the social democrats in Steyr. The situation of Steyr as an isolated enclave in an alien environment combined with the local economic upswing to form an unusually advantageous local situation within which the social democrats were able to cement their hegemony in the town. The insular ethos born of Steyr's isolation focussed social democratic attention on the exploitation of the possibilities for influence open to their movement within the boundaries of the town. The "false boom" at the Steyr-Verke provided the means, via the MAV and the town hall, to realise those possibilities. As a result, the social democratic movement in Steyr enjoyed a period of localised dominance which
contrasted strongly to the general experience of social democrats in Austria as a whole.

It is generally held that the social democratic movement in Austria experienced a decisive turning point in its fortunes in 1927. The parliamentary elections of April 1927 were an unprecedented success for the SDAP. The polling of over 42% of the national vote meant, according to the confident prediction of the SDAP's national press, that the conquest of power via the ballot box was now within the social democrats' grasp: the next election would prove decisive (10). Within three months however, the vulnerability of a party dedicated to peaceful, democratic means to state and state-sponsored violence and intimidation had been vividly illustrated. The brutal suppression of the workers' demonstration of 15th July 1927 in Vienna and the mobilisation of the Heimwehr against the subsequent social democratic railway strike dealt a damaging blow to the morale of the social democratic movement and pointed to the real distribution of power in the republic. The events of 15th July 1927 exposed the social democratic preoccupation with electoral advance as an illusory and self-deluding measure of power (11). July 1927 revealed the weakness of parliamentary democracy in Austria in the face of the extra-parliamentary significance and strength of the executive organs of the state and the paramilitary organisations of the far Right. As a result the social democratic movement was shifted from a forward-looking and optimistic footing to one which was defensive and increasingly pessimistic.

The encapsulation of the social democratic movement in Steyr within the local milieu of the late 1920's insulated it from the implications of these broader national trends. The insular, inward-looking mentality fostered by Steyr's isolated situation furnished the movement with a narrow frame of reference, a blinkered outlook, which deflected the influence of "outside" politics. National, even regional events and trends had little
resonance or significance in Steyr: attention was centred firmly and almost exclusively on the local "stronghold", particularly since social democratic domination of Steyr was at its most clear-cut in the wake of the "false boom" at the Steyr-Werke. Local circumstances thus bred an illusory optimism quite at odds with the political situation elsewhere in Austria. Steyr remained unaffected by the ramifications of the national power politics of July 1927; the disparity between local political conditions and the growing dominance of the Right on the national scene meant that the social democrats could enjoy the spin-offs of the artificial local economic boom without facing up to the real power relations prevalent in the republic. This had major implications for the perceived efficacy of the social democratic strategy in Steyr.

As noted in the Introduction to this study, the social democratic strategy encompassed a strong commitment to parliamentary-electoral majoritarianism as a basis for the achievement of limited welfarist reforms of the existing social and economic order. The social democrats thus followed a classical pattern of reformist social democracy. Furthermore, they did so with great confidence and considerable success under the conditions which dominated the local milieu in the late 1920's. The "false boom" at the Steyr-Werke boosted municipal tax income to provide them with the means to implement local reforms. In addition, they were able to retain their confidence in the efficacy of a majoritarian strategy long after simple electoral arithmetic had been supplanted by more basic power-political factors as the real determinants of political power in Austria (see above). The insulated development of social democracy within the local milieu denied the relevance of national politics to the local situation, thus enabling this illusory confidence to be maintained.

It must be stressed, however, that both the apparent efficacy of the social democrats' reformist strategy, and the
assertion of their hegemony in Steyr were intimately linked to, and ultimately dependent on, the unique framework for politics represented in the local milieu in the late 1920's. Steyr's near ghetto status as a "red" stronghold in a "black" region endowed the social democrats with an inward-directed mentality, which both insulated them from the implications of broader national political trends, and focussed their energies on the expansion of social democratic organisational influence, in the form of the network, within the town. Furthermore, the high levels of employment arising from the "false boom" at the car works both extended and consolidated the network and provided the funds, via the local taxation system, for the implementation of local municipal reforms. Social democracy in Steyr was thus particularly attuned to the nature of the local milieu in the late 1920's. However, the collapse of the Steyr-Verke in the autumn of 1929 led to the abrupt and drastic redefinition of the nature of the local milieu and shattered the base upon which the hegemony and reformist strategy of the social democrats had been founded.

1.2: The Redefinition of the Local Milieu and the Decline of Social Democracy after 1929.

In August 1929, the management at the Steyr-Werke finally acted upon the huge losses associated with the overproduction of the "false boom" of 1928-1929. Production was run down after August and over a thousand workers had been dismissed by mid-September - initially on a temporary basis while the production line was rationalised to cut costs and restore competitiveness. Management intended to complete the reorganisation of production by the end of November. However, an event which had extensive ramifications for the Steyr-Verke intervened. On 6th October, the collapse of the
Boden-Credit-Anstalt (BCA), one of Austria's biggest banks and financial patron of the Steyr-Werke was announced. The collapse of the BCA was, in large part, a consequence of the amateurish way both it and the Steyr-Werke had been run. The BCA had injudiciously lent the Steyr-Werke around ninety percent of its total assets. Having thus staked its assets and reputation on the future of the Steyr-Werke, the BCA dictated that the works should do everything to preserve a healthy outward economic appearance, in spite of the fact that it was producing cars which were uncompetitive and could only be disposed of by selling them at less than cost price (12). The result was the massive loss by the Steyr-Werke of twenty-four million shillings in 1929 (13), which could no longer be covered by the BCA and led to the bank's collapse (14).

The immediate result of the BCA's collapse was the complete shutdown of car production in Steyr, pending the announcement of any financial rescue package for the bank. Baron Rothschild was "persuaded", allegedly at machine gunpoint (15), to step in, and his Credit-Anstalt assumed all the industrial holdings, assets and liabilities of the BCA. The future of the Steyr-Werke was only assured in January 1930, when a return to normal working was promised as soon as the excess stocks from 1929 had been sold (16). In the meantime, the car production line remained still, leaving over 3,000 car workers unemployed. Even when the production line was eventually reopened in July 1930, employment and production levels never recovered to anything near the pre-1929 levels (see Table 2). The effect of the economic problems of the Steyr-Werke on the local economic situation can be assessed from Figures 1 and 2. It is clear that the economic foundation of social democracy in Steyr had collapsed. The local milieu, the social and economic background to social democratic politics in Steyr, was now fundamentally different. After facing unusually favourable economic conditions in 1928 and 1929, far better than the national average, the social democrats now
encountered an abrupt change, which left a far worse situation than that which existed, on average, elsewhere in Austria.

It was noted above how the local hegemony and the apparent efficacy of the reformist strategy of the social democratic movement were dependent on the particular nature of the local milieu in Steyr as it existed between 1927 and 1929. By implication therefore the collapse of the Steyr-Werke in 1929 and the resultant redefinition of the local milieu served to call into question the assumptions which had hitherto underpinned the beliefs and activities of the movement. Local hegemony and reformist strategy were "situation-specific", tied to and dependent on a combination of impermanent local socio-economic conditions. This section examines the implications and consequences for the social democratic movement in Steyr of the changes in these conditions after 1929.

The most immediate effect of the collapse of the Steyr-Werke was the undermining of the MAV's position of strength in the works. One the one hand, mass unemployment and the reduced dependence of the works on skilled workers following rationalisation weakened the union's bargaining position. On the other, the new management at the works, installed by Rothschild's Credit-Anstalt, was assertive and aggressive. The resumption of production in July 1930 was made conditional on the renunciation of the extraordinary workplace rights the MAV had enjoyed since the early post-war era. The MAV's weakness ensured that the management's terms were accepted (see Chapter Two). This had a devastating effect on the social democratic network. The funds raised for the movement by the MAV's "private tax" in the works were lost, as were the union's powers of patronage in the local labour market. Much of the basis of the social democrats' hegemony over other political movements in Steyr was thus eliminated. There was also no prospect of the MAV regaining its old powers. Employment and production levels at the car works remained low, and with them the potential for
strong trade unionism, until after the social democratic movement had been crushed in 1934.

The disintegration of the basis of local social democratic hegemony in the network was completed as the municipal administration became unable to support its system of patronage and manipulation in the wake of the collapse of the Steyr-Verke. The municipal budget was decimated by the shutdown of production in October 1929, and the sluggish performance of the car industry after 1930 ensured that there would be no recovery. The municipality was forced to cut back its "party book" workforce and to pass over control of those aspects of municipal activity which had been key elements in the network (Unemployment Office and police force) to more affluent Land and federal authorities.

The erosion of social democratic dominance left, in effect, a power vacuum in the town, which local opposition forces, at their forefront the Heimwehr, eagerly exploited. This development signalled the final demise of the conditions which had characterised the local milieu in the late 1920's, and which had provided the basic framework for social democratic success. Those conditions - boom at the Steyr-Verke and the insulation of Steyr from the wider political trends prevalent in Austria as a whole - had now disappeared. The car works was now in a state of semi-permanent economic crisis, and, in consequence, the bases of social democratic power in the town had collapsed, thus eradicating the localised, insular dominance which had "kept out" wider political trends. The assumption by the Heimwehr and the christian social movement of political prominence in Steyr during 1930 signalled the demise of the social democratic "fortress" in Steyr and the realignment of the town with the broader political developments - in particular the national renaissance of the Right - from which it had deviated after 1927 (see Chapter Three).
By the end of 1930, the local milieu in Steyr had undergone a fundamental transformation. It was now characterised by deep and intractable economic crisis, and had lost its insulating function as Steyr became increasingly exposed to national political trends. This had a significance which extended beyond the erosion of local social democratic hegemony. It also called into question the viability of social democratic reformist strategy. As noted above, this strategy prescribed a gradual accession to power in Austria via the electoral process, and the limited reform of the existing social and economic order in favour of social welfare objectives. Its viability was very much conditional on the situation which existed in the local milieu in the late 1920's. At this time, the local milieu insulated the social democrats from national political trends and enabled them to maintain their (illusory) confidence in the efficacy of parliamentary democracy. Furthermore, the "false boom" at the Steyr-Werke provided the financial means, through local taxation, to cover the costs of local reforms. The collapse and stagnation of employment at the works after 1929 therefore removed the financial basis of the reform programme. For example, in 1929 the municipality gathered some 753,701 shillings in local income tax; the equivalent figure for 1930 was 474,791 (17). The decline in income was accompanied by a surge in local welfare expenditure; this had, however, little to do with concepts of collective responsibility, but rather reflected the provision of minimum, statutory welfare relief for the greatly increased number of unemployed and their dependents. Municipal social and economic policy degenerated into little more than the formal administration and distribution of largely inadequate emergency relief.

Moreover, the realignment of Steyr with national political trends exposed the social democrats to the dominance of the increasingly anti-democratic and steadfastly anti-social democratic Right. This revealed the illusory nature of local social democratic confidence in the efficacy of parliamentary
majoritarianism. In other words, the social democratic strategy in Steyr was only viable at a time when the local economy was relatively prosperous and in circumstances when a parliamentary strategy for power retained an apparent feasibility. The social democratic strategy was thus conditional upon and specific to the abnormal conditions which existed in the local milieu in the late 1920's, and was unsuited and ineffective in a period of economic decline and when the dominance of the anti-democratic Right was plainly visible, even in Steyr.

Some of the basic assumptions of the social democratic movement in Steyr were therefore deeply flawed. Both the potential for organisational expansion, as epitomised in the network, and the welfare-reformist strategy of the social democrats became defunct after the Steyr-Verka, and with it the unique situation of the late 1920's, collapsed. Both network and strategy were dependent on a highly specific social and economic milieu. Both thus lost their prerequisites and, in turn, their relevance after 1929. This can be related to a broader issue, which is addressed in detail in Chapter Seven, namely the disintegration and collapse of reformist social democracy in Steyr. Both the establishment of positions of power and influence within the existing framework of society (the network), and the desire to modify certain aspects of that society via the parliamentary system are typical characteristics of reformist social democracy. In the peculiar circumstances of 1927-1929, they were, in the local context, eminently feasible; in the vastly different social and economic background to politics in Steyr after 1929, they lost their relevance. In face of this (and in face of the inability of an entrenched social democratic leadership to lead the movement in adapting to the new circumstances - see Chapters Four and Seven), there developed an embryonic inner-movement opposition after 1929. This was centred in the MAV, the youth organisation and the paramilitary Schutzbund, and sought alternatives to previous reformist orthodoxy. Initially sporadic and uncoordinated, the
expression of anti-reformist sentiment became more widespread and consistent during 1933. MAV, youth organisation and Schutzbund finally coalesced into a tangible opposition movement at the end of 1933, which gathered in support of a strategy unconditionally opposed to the principles and practices of reformist social democracy. The roots of this opposition can be traced back to the changing social and economic background to politics in Steyr: the exaggeratedly favourable conditions of the local milieu from 1927-1929 pointed to the potential of reformism; the exaggeratedly unfavourable conditions after 1929 revealed its limitations and specificity and led to its rejection by parts of the movement.

This chapter has discussed how the characteristics of the local milieu, the political "habitat" which surrounded social democracy in Steyr, influenced and conditioned the development of social democratic politics in the town from 1927-1934. Several important points emerge from this discussion. The most fundamental of these is perhaps something of a truism, given the methodological assumptions upon which this study is founded: i.e. that social democratic politics were wholly attuned to and supported by the particular nature of the local milieu between 1927 and 1929. The social democrats' drive to attain local political hegemony and their moderate reformist strategy were ideally suited to conditions of local economic boom and a situation where Steyr was insulated from the broader trends of Austrian politics. However, the implicit converse of this is that social democratic politics would be wholly unsuited to the circumstances which existed if the local milieu suddenly changed. This was confirmed in an especially severe way by the abrupt metamorphosis of the political "habitat" in Steyr following the shutdown of the Steyr-Werke. Economic boom gave way to collapse and Steyr's political insulation evaporated. This precipitate reversal of the local framework for politics
illustrated in stark relief the limitations of local social democracy. The particular nature of the social democratic movement in Steyr was founded upon and promoted by the buoyancy of the Steyr-Werke and a belief in the efficacy of parliamentary politics. When such conditions no longer existed within the local milieu after 1929, the movement lost its rationale and fell into decline.

The chapter also stresses the differentiated experience and development of Austrian social democracy. Steyr deviated quite drastically from the "norm": local boom and the isolated/insulated political development of the town combined to create an environment within which social democracy could flourish in the town for some time after it is supposed to have moved past its peak and on to a defensive footing. This calls into question the widespread assumption that the events of 15th July 1927 in Vienna represented an all-encompassing turning point for social democracy in Austria. Viewed from the perspective of (an albeit unusually strong) local social democratic movement situated well away from Vienna, the significance of July 1927 was limited. In this respect therefore, the experience in Steyr provides a significant qualification of an existing orthodoxy whose focus has, by and large, been restricted to a narrow Viennese milieu, and has thus failed to take account of the regional diversity of the social democratic movement.
CHAPTER TWO

THE BALANCE OF POWER IN MAV-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS IN THE STEYR-WERKE...

The balance of power in MAV-management relations in the Steyr-Werke - i.e. the ability of either to pursue its stated or implied aims in the works against the will of the other - is of crucial importance in the development of the arguments proposed in this thesis. The MAV was able to establish a dominant position in industrial relations in the works after the First World War and to maintain that dominance against the opposition of management until the collapse of the local milieu in 1929-1930. This chapter argues that this dominance formed an essential precondition for the assertion of social democratic hegemony in Steyr during the period between 1927 and 1929 when the local milieu provided a highly favourable framework for the development of social democracy. However, as established in the previous chapter, the fundamental changes in the nature of the local milieu after 1929 drastically redefined the framework for the activities of the social democrats. This was reflected in an abrupt reversal of the balance of power in union-management relations in the car works. Management was able to assert its own dominance from 1930; it was increasingly able to override and, ultimately, to ignore the concerns of the MAV. Just as MAV dominance was an essential precondition for the assertion of social democratic hegemony, then so was the reversal of the balance of power and the establishment of management dominance a crucial element in the collapse of social democratic hegemony and the general decline of the social democratic movement after 1930.
In the early post-war period, the MAV-dominated Works Council attained a series of shopfloor rights in the Steyr-Werke which extended far beyond the provisions of Austrian industrial relations legislation. These supplementary rights effectively constrained management's ability to direct the firm autonomously and established the shopfloor and the manual workforce as the thoroughly politicised preserve of MAV functionaries and Works councillors. The balance of power in the works thus lay firmly with the MAV (see section 2:1). The attainment of extraordinary, non-statutory workplace rights by social democratic trade unions and the Works Councils they controlled was not unusual in the political upheaval of early post-war Austria (1) (although the number of special rights attained by the MAV in the Steyr-Werke was exceptional). However, with the stabilisation of the political situation and the dissipation of the "revolutionary" atmosphere which followed World War One, the confidence of the employers returned and was directed almost immediately - and with increasing success - at the removal of extra-statutory union rights at the workplace (2). The management of the Steyr-Werke was no exception and attempted to subdue the MAV and remove its extraordinary rights during an 8½-week lockout in 1925. Unlike the situation elsewhere, the attempt was a complete failure. Management had undermined its own hand both in a tactical sense, by timing the lockout badly, and also in a more fundamental sense, by pursuing inept and shortsighted financial and commercial policies which had weakened the financial ability of the firm to withstand any significant stoppage of production. Moreover, it had very much underestimated the strength of the MAV, both in the works itself, and, even more crucially, in its position at the heart of the social democratic network in Steyr.

The extra-statutory rights enjoyed by the MAV formed a key part of the network, the "machine" by which the social democrats sought to consolidate and extend their influence in the town. One aspect of this network which had particular importance in the defence of the balance of power in the Steyr-Werke in 1925.
was the NAV's right to raise considerable sums of money from the manual workforce. A large proportion of this money was then passed on to form the financial basis of many non-trade unionist social democratic activities in the town. This financial benevolence was repaid during the lockout of 1925 as social democratic organisations, in particular the children's organisation, the Kinderfreunde, the major recipient of MAV funding, rallied in support of the union. In effect, the network was mobilised behind the MAV, providing an additional resource in the conflict over non-statutory rights and vastly strengthening its bargaining position. The relative financial strength of the social democrats, derived largely from the MAV's extraordinary rights and channelled and distributed through the network, was therefore a decisive factor in ensuring the victory of the union in 1925 and the defence of those rights (see section 2:2).

The emphasis placed on the course and implications of the 1925 lockout in this chapter (in a study whose primary focus is on the years 1927-1934) merits further justification. This lies in the far-reaching effects the outcome of the lockout had both for the balance of power in MAV-management relations in the works until the turn of the decade and for the establishment of the local hegemony of the social democrats during the extraordinary years of 1927-1929. During the 1920's, when parts of Austrian industry, led by the Alpine-Montan-Gesellschaft in Upper Styria, successfully attacked even those trade union workplace rights guaranteed by law (3), the Steyr-Verke was unable to follow suit. Its defeat in 1925 ensured the continued existence of the MAV's extra-statutory rights and that the balance of power in the works remained firmly in favour of the trade union. This had implications which extended far beyond the conduct of industrial relations. As noted above, the MAV's rights formed a key part of the social democratic network in Steyr. As established in Chapter One, the network was a function of the level of employment at the car works. Between 1927 and
1929, as the works embarked on its "false boom", the social democrats had the means to expand the influence of this network so that it pervaded and dominated vital aspects of daily life in the town (see Chapter Three). The successful defence of the MAV's workplace rights in 1925 and the maintenance of a balance of power in the Steyr-Werke favourable to the MAV were thus crucial prerequisites for the assertion of social democratic hegemony within the highly advantageous framework of the local milieu in the late 1920's.

However, the balance of power in the car works swung violently in favour of management in the aftermath of the shutdown of car production at the Steyr-Werke in 1929-1930. Three factors are important here. Firstly, the bargaining hand of the MAV was much diminished, primarily as a result of the mass unemployment caused by the collapse of the local economy in the aftermath of the shutdown. Secondly, new federal industrial relations legislation undermined the position of the trade union in the firm. And thirdly, a new and vigorously anti-unionist management had been installed by the car works' post-1930 creditor, Rothschild's Credit-Anstalt. The new management immediately signalled its determination to eliminate the union's extra-statutory rights and its unusual position of strength in the works. In view of the weakening of the MAV's position by mass unemployment and as a result of the new legislation, it was successful. In the following years continuing economic crisis and high unemployment ensured that the MAV had no chance of recovering its lost strength. This had much wider implications, as one anti-social democratic newspaper pointed out as early as 1925: "... whenever the dictatorship [the phrase generally employed by the local bourgeois press to describe the MAV's dominance] in the car works falls, the party too will have lost its main power base" (4). Indeed, having lost its workplace rights, the MAV could no longer form the mainstay of the social democratic network, and without the network, social democratic hegemony in Steyr disintegrated. The reversal of the balance of
power in the Steyr-Werke was therefore a central factor in the decline of social democracy in Steyr in the 1930's.

2.1: The Extra-Statutory Rights of the MAV.

The nature of MAV-management relations in the Steyr-Werke after the First World War was conditioned by a series of factors which tended to favour the trade union. Management's position was weakened at the outset in two ways: firstly, the company was operating in a highly competitive market, increasingly flooded by mass-produced, low-cost imports from the U.S.A.; it was thus imperative to avoid any stoppage in production which might interrupt supplies and endanger the works' market share. Secondly, the necessity to avoid stoppages was underlined by the extreme financial insecurity of the firm (see Table 3); any significant interruption to production - and therefore cash-flow - could easily have signalled collapse and liquidation. In these circumstances, management was more likely to defer to the wishes of the MAV than to risk any serious dispute in industrial relations, especially since the union's position was inherently strong in three respects. In the first place, Steyr's long history of metal-working had produced a skilled workforce highly amenable to trade union organisation (the first metalworkers' union in the town was established in 1889). Following the abolition of restrictions on trade union activity in the aftermath of World War One, the MAV was able to draw on the local tradition of unionisation to establish very quickly a strong organisation in the works. Secondly, the strength of this organisation was further enhanced by the centralisation of membership and resources on one major site. And thirdly, the functioning of the works was very much dependent on the skilled workers the MAV organised. These factors, whose implications are examined in the context of the 1925 lockout in section 2.2,
represented the general framework for industrial relations in the Steyr-Werke and ensured that the balance of power was tilted markedly towards the MAV. This superiority was cemented and extended by the focal point of this section, the extra-statutory rights held by the MAV-controlled Works Council.

The supplementary rights attained by the MAV-controlled Works Council in the Steyr-Werke were quite exceptional. Alongside a Works Council right of veto over recruitments and dismissals, the workforce enjoyed the specific right to hawk newspapers (i.e. social democratic newspapers), display political notices and hold collections for political purposes (for the paramilitary Schutzbund and for the SDAP electoral campaign fund) on the shopfloor. In addition, MAV dues, including a special supplement for the Kinderfreunde, were centrally deducted from wages by the works finance office; twice the amount prescribed by law was deducted from wages to fund Works Council activities, one third of Works Council costs were paid by the firm, and Works Councillors were paid as normal for Works Council activities undertaken in the firm's time. It is not clear from the available sources exactly how the MAV was able to extract such extensive concessions from the management. It must be assumed that the basic framework for industrial relations in the works, as outlined above, plus the burgeoning membership of the MAV in the early post-war years and the residue of militancy which had characterised the workforce of the Steyr-Werke in the last months of the First World War combined to force such major concessions from management.

The extra-statutory rights attained by the Works Council directly after the war ensured that the balance of power in the Steyr-Werke remained in favour of the MAV for the following decade. The shopfloor of the works was established as a highly politicised vehicle for social democratic agitation and fund-raising. In addition, the firm effectively provided the free administration of both union and non-union (i.e.
Kinderfreunde) dues-collection, and the Works Council had assumed what might normally have been conceived as exclusive management prerogatives in matters of manual worker staffing. This latter point ensured that the MAV was able to perpetuate the social democratic domination of the shopfloor. Through the right to veto recruitments, the Works Council was able to exclude "unfriendly" elements from the works. Members of non-social democratic unions, primarily the christian metalworkers, had no chance of finding work. Furthermore, the Works Council ran a closed shop; recruitment was dependent either on membership in the MAV or a willingness to join the union during the recruitment process (10). Works Councillors even colluded with the staff of Steyr's municipal Unemployment Office to ensure that only card-carrying social democrats were put forward for employment at the works (11). This illustrates the interaction of different branches of the social democratic "machine" in Steyr: the local Unemployment Office, staffed by social democrats employed by the social democratic town hall cooperated with the social democratic Works Councillors of the Steyr-Werke to make sure that social democrats were given jobs. Given the dominant position of the Steyr-Werke in the local economy, this ensured that the social democrats exerted a massive influence over the local labour market, especially during the years of high and expanding employment at the car works in the late 1920's. An inevitable corollary of this was that non-social democratic workers were constrained to join the MAV in order to get work (12). Such workers had purely instrumental reasons for joining the MAV, directed at one particular outcome, i.e. employment. Beyond this, they had no interest in the MAV, they lacked commitment to the wider aims of social democracy and free trade unionism - a point which has great relevance in the reversal of the balance of power in the works, examined below in section 2.3.

Alongside its "party-book" staffing policies, the Works Council was also able to make explicitly political usage of the
subscriptions it levied from the manual workforce. These were set at one percent of wages — twice the amount prescribed by law — and raised relatively enormous sums. In 1929, for example, the levy on wages raised 166,866 shillings, boosting total Works Council income to 221,139 shillings (for comparative purposes, this was just under a tenth of total municipal income in Steyr for that year (13)). In effect therefore, the Works Council had a lucrative private tax at its disposal, which was used to subsidise a whole series of social democratic causes and activities. Table 4 reproduces, in modified form, the expenditure column of the Works Council balance sheet for the first six months of 1929. Over a quarter of these funds was set aside in 1929 to reimburse some 200 MAV functionaries who lost wages for supposedly carrying out MAV work in the firm’s time. These payments bore little relation to the possible work a functionary might have carried out. On average, over six shillings, or four and a half hour’s pay, were allocated per functionary per week to look after the interests of less than thirty workers (14). It is hardly conceivable that each functionary could have had so much work to do on behalf of so few workers. The implication is that MAV functionary work was semi-professionalised. This raises the issues of whether the functionaries were motivated by genuine trade unionist commitment, or merely by the perks on offer, and whether the instrumentalist tendencies noted above extended into the functionary network. Again, the implications of instrumentalism for the reversal of the balance of power in the works are addressed in section 2.3.

The proceeds of the Works Council’s “private tax” also served to subsidise other parts of the social democratic movement in Steyr (see Table 4). For example, Works Council money had purchased, under the auspices of subsidies to the Verein Arbeiterheim (analogous to a British Labour Club), both the building which housed the local party headquarters and expensive cinema equipment for the party meeting hall (15). In
addition, sizeable annual subsidies were granted to the local social democratic housing co-operative and to the Kinderfreunde. This latter subsidy complemented the "Kindergroschen" ("children's penny"), the special supplement to basic MAV subscriptions, which was collected centrally by the Steyr-Werke finance office and passed directly to the children's organisation. With this twofold financial support from the workforce at the car works, the Kinderfreunde organisation for the Steyr district was easily the richest per head of population in the whole of Austria (16).

The process of subsidising other social democratic organisations had a dual significance. On the one hand the ability to raise large sums of money and to have them processed gratis by the firm was an expression of the MAV's dominance in the car works. On the other hand, it also represented a reinforcement of that dominance. The MAV's fund-raising and distributing powers were a key part of the social democratic network, channelling funds into other parts of the movement and thereby significantly increasing its overall financial strength. As shall be seen in the following section, this financial strength was of crucial importance for the maintenance of MAV dominance in the works. In effect, if the management of the Steyr-Werke chose to challenge the dominant position of the MAV, it would face not only the trade union, but also the considerable material resources of the social democratic network. The extra-statutory rights of the MAV thus guaranteed that the balance of power in the works was weighted very firmly in the MAV's favour. Not surprisingly, these rights and the practices associated with them were anathema to management, which, in 1925, made a concerted attempt to remove them.
2.2: Implications and Consequences of the 1925 Lockout.

On 29th September 1925, the manual workforce at the Steyr-Werke was locked out. The evidence suggests that the conflict which precipitated the lockout was deliberately provoked by management and that the lockout was conceived from the outset as a means by which to strip the MAV of its extra-statutory rights, and thereby eliminate the crucial element in its dominance in the car works. The lockout thus took on the character of a power struggle over the future nature of industrial relations, i.e. over the balance of power, in the works. The success of the MAV in defending its rights and maintaining the balance of power in the works in its favour was of critical importance for the unique development of the social democratic movement in the following years. The MAV's rights were central to the social democratic network in Steyr, and in the late 1920's, in the highly beneficial circumstances which then existed within the local milieu, the influence exerted by the social democrats via this network increased significantly to cement their hegemony over local politics and society. Thus an examination of the course of the lockout and the factors which ensured MAV success, are vital in explaining the subsequent development of social democracy in the town.

The proclamation of the lockout was the culmination of a confrontational and aggressive anti-union attitude taken by management during the summer of 1925. Throughout the summer, the works had been undergoing a technical reorganisation aimed at the introduction of assembly line production methods. To facilitate a smooth reorganisation, the manual workers' Works Council had agreed to a temporary "economic peace" (i.e. a suspension of industrial conflict) at the works. By September however, it was felt that management was exploiting the "economic peace" agreement to hold down wages below average levels in the industry. A new wage claim, which even normally
anti-NAV sources considered justified (17), was tabled by the NAV but rejected out of hand by management. The developing wages conflict between NAV and management was mirrored by a more serious conflict between the social democratic white-collar workers' union in the Steyr-Verke, the Bund der Industrieangestellten and management. Management had refused to recognise nationally agreed supplements to the existing collective agreement and had begun to negotiate pay on an individual basis, completely ignoring the white-collar union and its statutory collective bargaining rights.

The exploitation of the "economic peace" and the refusal to adhere to national agreements with the Bund der Industrieangestellten pointed to the emergence of an anti-union policy at the works. This was confirmed on 28th September, when twenty-eight manual workers, twenty-five of them NAV functionaries, were arbitrarily and provocatively "picked out" (herausgegriffen) and sacked. This was supposedly a punitive measure on the one hand for attempts by manual workers to intervene in the management-Angestellten dispute in the previous week, and on the other because the NAV's wage claims were an "unjustified" disturbance of the agreed "economic peace" (18). More realistically, it can be seen as a deliberate step in the escalation of a wages dispute into a more fundamental conflict about the position and rights of the trade union in the firm. Certainly, given the 100% NAV organisation among the manual workforce and the tradition of union strength in the works, management must have calculated that the dismissal of twenty-five NAV functionaries would act as a catalyst for further conflict. Accordingly, upon the publication of the dismissal notices both manual workers and Angestellten spontaneously stopped work and (also somewhat arbitrarily) "fetched out" various officials of the firm to explain management's actions. At least one official was physically assaulted; upon hearing this, management proclaimed the lockout of the manual workforce (19).
The dramatic escalation of wages conflict into lockout suggests that management was deliberately seeking a major confrontation with the MAV and that the disturbance on 28th September was merely a pretext with which to bring this confrontation about. The timing of the lockout backs up this view. Between 1923 and 1925, the recovery from the post-inflationary recession in Austria had been sluggish, and, excepting the post-1929 period, 1925 was the year of the lowest employment at the Steyr-Werke during the First Republic (see Table 2). This may have suggested a temporary reduction in MAV bargaining power, especially since the union had agreed to an "economic peace" at the works while the production line was rationalised. The willingness to enter this agreement, which in effect amounted to a restriction on normal union activities, may have been interpreted by management as a sign of union weakness. In addition, by early October 1925, three other lockouts were running concurrently at firms in the Austrian metal industry: at the Alpine works in Donawitz and Eisenerz, at Siemens-Halske in Vienna, and at the St. Egydyer steelworks in Hainfeld. In view of the need to coordinate several conflicts simultaneously, the MAV's overall effectiveness in national terms was significantly diminished at this time (20). In all, the various factors pointed to a short-term lowpoint in MAV strength and to a favourable point for management to attempt to assert its authority in the works.

The publication on 8th October of management's guidelines for resolving the dispute confirmed that this was indeed management's reasoning (21). According to these, the directors were prepared to reopen the firm only under the existing manual worker pay structure, and remained unprepared to recognise the nationally agreed supplements to the collective agreements of the Angestellten. Upon reopening the works, the workers to be reemployed were to be specified by name (whereby the number of MAV functionaries could presumably expect to be further reduced). Finally, and most significantly, "the manual workers
shall not lay claim to rights which exceed the rights granted
them by law": MAV dues would no longer be deducted centrally,
the Works Council would lose its influence on staffing matters,
the works would no longer subsidise the running costs of the
Works Council, and newspapers were no longer to be hawked on
the shopfloor. The publication of these guidelines thus revealed
the ultimate aim of management's increasingly anti-union policies in
1925: the elimination of the MAV's extra-statutory rights and,
with that, the reversal of the balance of power in the works.
Not unnaturally, the MAV refused to enter negotiations on these
terms, and for the next seven weeks, the dispute entered a
standoff, during which time the real distribution of power in
the firm became increasingly evident.

As the length of the dispute increased, it became clear that
management had vastly miscalculated its potential to impose its
will on the MAV. Its own position was weakened by the timing of
the conflict, which, although geared to an assumed temporary
lowpoint in MAV strength, wholly failed to take into account the
pressures on the firm created by the nature of the Austrian car
market. The lockout was begun at a time when important
preparations for the launch of a new mass-produced,
assembly-line Steyr were in progress. The demand for cars in
Austria was, in view of the hard, Alpine winters, highly
seasonal; preparations therefore had to be completed in time for
sufficient stocks to be ready for the increase in demand for
cars in the spring season. The longer the dispute continued, the
more pressure management was under, therefore, to reopen
production. This was, in effect, an extra bargaining counter for
the MAV, especially since the market in cars was so competitive.
In the mid-1920's, cheap, mass-produced Fords began to conquer
an increasing share of the European market; if the Steyr-Verke
missed the start of the season, cheap, foreign competition could
easily swallow its market share (22). To compound the problems
facing management, more and more car workers were beginning to
emigrate to escape the uncertainty of employment in Steyr.
Skilled, qualified workers were being lost, again heightening management's need to see a quick resolution to the dispute (23).

In view of the above factors, it must be assumed that management did not expect the lockout to last more than two or three weeks. This is underlined by the fact that the company could in no way afford any lengthy stoppage. Its long-term bargaining position had been undermined by its own financial policies. Table 3 gives an overview of the financial performance of the Steyr-Werke between 1924 and 1929. Two things are especially striking: a rapidly accumulating debt burden and a level of dividend payments which was startlingly high as a percentage of net profits. As noted in the previous chapter, profligate borrowing and recklessly high dividend payments had been encouraged by the works' creditor bank, the BCA. The BCA was determined to maintain the prestige it had enjoyed under the monarchy by dictating that both it and its client firms paid high dividends to shareholders. In the same quest to maintain a healthy appearance in its industrial empire, it granted loans far greater than commercial sense would dictate, and which bore little relation to either its own assets or those of its debtors. As indicated in Table 3, the Steyr-Werke was a particularly crass case (24). Hence, despite the outward economic vigour which high dividend payments and the large-scale rationalisation of production in 1925 might suggest, the works was by no means in an assured long-term economic position. By 1925 it was already walking a financial tightrope: a lengthy stoppage of production could have signalled collapse and liquidation.

In view of the above, the position of management in the lockout was exceedingly weak. In effect it had staked its all on an early collapse of MAV resolve. This was a disastrous miscalculation which vastly underestimated the inherent strength of the union and the support it could expect to receive from the social democratic "machine" in Steyr. One example of this was
the cooperation of the local police, under the orders of the social democratic mayor, with the social democratic paramilitary organisation, the Schutzbund, in the maintenance of order and discipline among the locked-out workers (25). Even more critical was the support the MAV received during the lockout from the Kinderfreunde, the major financial beneficiary of the MAV's fund-raising rights in the car works. It can be seen here that the strength of the MAV in the works was a self-reinforcing phenomenon: the "outputs" of its extra-statutory rights returned as "inputs" into the dispute, strengthening the MAV's position in the defence of those rights.

In cooperation with its National Executive, the local Kinderfreunde organised a national social democratic fostering scheme to look after the children of the locked-out workforce for the duration of the lockout. Within fourteen days, 802 children were living with temporary foster parents (26). This impressive mobilisation of the "machine" was supplemented by another Kinderfreunde campaign aimed at providing a daily meal for another 3,500 children in Steyr (27). Moreover, donations sent to Steyr, the Kinderfreunde and the Arbeiterzeitung in Vienna eventually totalled 113,352 shillings (28). This amounted to around four shillings per worker per week during the lockout. In addition, the workers received full union strike pay—eighteen shillings per week according to one source (29)—and a special 13% discount at the social democratic consumer co-operative (30). A proportion of strike pay was granted in the form of food vouchers redeemable only at the co-op. The extra turnover this produced from workers (especially non-social democratic instrumentalists) who would not normally shop at the co-op made possible the special discount. If donations, strike pay, co-operative discount and the savings made by parents as a result of the Kinderfreunde campaigns are all taken together, it is clear that the locked-out workforce had a standard of living, which though poor in comparison with normal times, was tolerable at least in the short term. The depth of strength embodied in
the social democratic "machine" - particularly the MAV-funded Kinderfreunde - thus ensured that the MAV could endure a longer stoppage than management had expected. In turn, the unexpected length of the lockout exposed the fundamental weakness of management's position.

Thus, when the MAV Works Councillors suggested the resumption of negotiations on 21st November, management accepted. By the 23rd agreement had been reached. Management was forced to retract the demands it had made on 8th October. Furthermore, it agreed to recognise the supplements to the collective agreements of the Angestellten and the manual workers were to receive a one-off lump sum payment, equivalent to a 6% pay rise over the year, pending the negotiation of a new collective agreement. The MAV made one concession, whereby it was agreed to phase out the central collection of MAV dues by the end of the year. No mention at all was made of the other extra-statutory rights called into question during the dispute (31). There is even evidence that central dues deduction continued in some form after 1925 and that the practice was only abolished in 1930 by the "Anti-Terror Law". Certainly, the clerical Steyrer Zeitung was still complaining about the practice in early 1930, and the Kinderfreunde were still receiving the benefits of the MAV Kindergroschen in the late 1920's (32).

The outcome of the lockout was thus a decisive victory for the MAV. Management had challenged the bases of MAV dominance in the works, but had clearly failed in the attempt to assert its own authority (while simultaneously exposing its tactical ineptitude and financial weakness). The immediate material outcome of the dispute (wage settlements/collective agreements) is not significant for the present argument. More important is the fact that the MAV's extra-statutory rights remained intact and thus that the pro-union balance of power in the firm was confirmed. This ensured that the MAV and the Works Council could
continue to raise and distribute funds and to exert their control over recruitments and dismissals at the works. Taken alongside the social democratic municipal administration's powers of patronage in the town and its control over important local bodies (especially the police and the Unemployment Office), the MAV's ability to raise funds for the social democratic movement and the influence it exerted over the local labour market through its staffing veto formed the foundation of the social democratic network in Steyr. The influence which this system of patronage and manipulation could generate for the social democrats in the town was, as noted in the previous chapter, a function of the level of employment at the Steyr-Werke. Thus, as employment levels at the works rose consistently from 1927, and extravagantly during the "false boom" of 1928-29, so did the level of municipal activity, the amount of funds raised and distributed by the MAV and the influence exerted by the MAV over the local labour market. This extension of the influence of the network, as examined in detail in Chapter Three, represented the basis of the comprehensive hegemony enjoyed by the social democrats over other political movements in Steyr in the late 1920's. It must be stressed therefore, that without the successful defence of MAV rights and the powers associated with them in 1925, the social democrats would not have been able to assert that hegemony.

As a result of its victory in the 1925 lockout, the MAV was able to maintain its dominance in the Steyr-Werke and its inputs into the network - until mass local unemployment undermined its strength in industrial relations in 1930. This was certainly not the general experience of provincial social democratic trade unions in the 1920's, to which the attention of the discussion is now turned. An examination of the reasons for trade union weakness and employer dominance in other regions will serve as a measure of comparison with which to explain and reiterate the particular strengths of the MAV in Steyr throughout the 1920's.
The most prominent example of a balance of power decisively in favour of the employers was the situation in the various works of the Alpine-Kontan-Gesellschaft in Upper Styria. Even by the early 1920's, the Alpine had managed to erode or evade the implementation of much of the post-war employment legislation. By the spring of 1929 it had "virtually emasculated" the social democratic trade unions in its plants and promoted in its place the "Independent" Trade Union controlled by the Heimwehr (33). Lewis attributes this "failure of Styrian labour" to a number of factors. Foremost in her argument is the particular structure of the Upper Styrian metal industry, which contributed to the development of a weak trade union movement. The emphasis in the region was on the production of raw materials and basic metal products which did not require a highly skilled workforce. Unskilled workers generally have a lower propensity for trade union organisation; this was exacerbated in the late nineteenth century when the emergent social democratic metalworkers' union concentrated its efforts on organising the less numerous, but more amenable skilled workers. It was less attentive to the concerns of the unskilled, and thus failed to develop a strong presence among them. As a result, there was no deeply engrained tradition of union organisation to draw from in the First Republic and membership levels and organisational densities remained low. The nature of Upper Styrian industry also proved disadvantageous for the development of strong trade unions in two other respects. In the first place, the production of raw materials and basic products is generally more vulnerable to economic fluctuation than the manufacture of finished products. The Upper Styrian metal industry in fact faced constant crisis conditions after the currency stabilisation of 1922. The consequent unemployment, aggravated by progressive rationalisation measures, compounded the weakness of the social democratic unions. Secondly, the geographical dispersal of the industrial centres along the valleys descending from the Alps made united action by the trade unions difficult. A final factor which militated against these unions was the consistent and
determined anti-union attitude taken by the Alpine management (34).

It is evident that the above factors combined to produce a situation in which management could dominate the social democratic trade unions. The balance of power between unions and management was also loaded against the social democrats in other areas. In Vorarlberg for instance, the most industrialised Land outside Vienna, the social democratic trade unions were especially weak. Again, this reflected the particular nature of the industry in the area. The dominant industry in Vorarlberg was textiles, characterised by decentralised production by a predominantly unskilled workforce in a proliferation of small-scale workshops. Social democratic trade unionists were thus faced with the problems of securing a united organisational front in a dispersed industry with a workforce whose propensity for union organisation was inherently low. This basic weakness was heightened by unemployment and the competition posed by christian trade unions in a deeply conservative region. As a result, the social democrats proved unable to assert themselves in the face of anti-unionist employers and an anti-unionist Land government, which was ever ready to use force to suppress industrial action (35). A similar situation existed in the Tirol. The employers, aided by the christian unions and the security forces of the Land government, were able to win their very first confrontation with the social democratic trade unions in 1921 and thus established their dominance at an early stage (36). Even in a social democratic stronghold like Wiener Neustadt, the social democratic trade unions were relatively weak. The local metal industry, which had been geared solely to the war effort, proved unable to adapt well to peace-time production, resulting in long-term, large-scale unemployment in the town. In view of this, the local MAV had found it difficult to maintain its position in the firm, and by 1928 the local employers' association had begun to follow the example of the Alpine in Upper Styria and was actively encouraging the
Heinrich's "Independent Union" to displace the social democrats (37).

The situation at the Steyr-Werke was entirely different. The firm had switched swiftly and successfully from war-time weapons production to car production after 1919. Large-scale unemployment did not therefore debilitate union strength in the early years of the republic. On the contrary, the MAV was able to draw on a tradition of skilled worker unionisation extending back into the nineteenth century, and quickly recruited a large membership in the works. Also to the MAV's advantage was the concentration of Steyr-Werke production in one town and largely on one massive site. This centralised economic structure enabled the MAV to develop a strong, central union authority able to control a disciplined and united organisation. These factors combined in the early post-war period to give the MAV a decisive advantage in the works. The MAV was able to use this advantage to extract major concessions - in the form of its extra-statutory rights - from management. On the one hand, these effectively excluded other unions, notably the christian metalworkers, from the shopfloor. The MAV was therefore never plagued by the directional splits in the workforce which had weakened social democratic unions elsewhere. On the other hand, the MAV's rights consolidated and extended its dominance in the works, both directly in the personnel and finance offices and on the shopfloor, and indirectly in the strengthening of the social democratic network in the town.

In view of the strength of the MAV, the management of the Steyr-Werke was never able to pursue a consistent anti-union policy. Its only attempt to do so in the 1920's foundered on its tactical miscalculations, the financial weakness of the firm and the extra resources the MAV was able to draw on via the network. It did not repeat its attack on the trade union until 1930, when mass unemployment had established a wholly different framework for industrial relations at the works. Until then, the balance
of power in the firm, with all its implications for social democratic hegemony in the town, was firmly in the MAV's favour.


As noted in Chapter One, car production at the Steyr-Werke was completely shut down between late August 1929 and the start of July 1930. The "false boom" of 1928-29 was abruptly replaced by mass unemployment. This collapse of the local economy underlay the redefinition of the local milieu within which the social democrats had operated in Steyr between 1927 and 1929, thus fundamentally altering the framework for social democratic, and therefore MAV activity in the town. In addition, two new factors entered the equation, reflecting the fact that social democratic activities in Steyr were conditioned less and less by local factors in the 1930's, and more and more by the implications of national trends. Firstly, the takeover of the Steyr-Werke by Rothschild's Credit-Anstalt in October 1929 resulted in the dismissal of the existing management at the works and its replacement by a new, and more determinedly anti-trade unionist Rothschild management team. Secondly, new federal legislation served to restrict trade union activities and thus to bolster the position of the employers in industrial relations. This section examines the ways in which the interaction of economic collapse, new management ideas and national industrial relations legislation reversed the balance of power between MAV and management in the Steyr-Werke after 1929, and indicates the broader implications of this development for the social democratic movement.

The Credit-Anstalt had been forced to overreach itself financially in taking over the BCA, and consequently placed stringent financial restrictions on its industrial holdings, in
particular the previously profligate Steyr-Verke. Credit-Anstalt firms also had a reputation for aggressive anti-union policies (38). These factors inevitably had an impact on the conduct of industrial relations in the Steyr-Verke. When negotiations opened in June 1930 on the pay and employment conditions which would apply on the resumption of production, the new management at the works immediately sought to weaken the position of the MAV in the works. It served notice to terminate the existing collective agreement, announced its intention to cut costs by reducing top wages by 10% and, most significantly, its commitment to abolish all extra-statutory rights enjoyed by the Works Council. Given the importance of the extra-statutory rights to the MAV and the whole social democratic movement, management's terms were, as in 1925, immediately rejected (39). However, the MAV's ability to resist management had been drastically weakened in several respects in the ten months when car production had been shut down in 1929-1930.

The single most important factor in undermining the MAV's position was the vastly different local economic situation introduced by the economic collapse of the car works. Well over three thousand MAV members had been unemployed for ten months by June 1930 and had no obvious alternative local sources of employment in view of the dominance of the Steyr-Verke over the local economy. In these circumstances, the overriding concern of the average car worker was no longer the privileged position of the Works Council or exemplary working conditions, but, simply, the possibility of employment. Long-term, mass unemployment inevitably sapped the commitment of the membership to preserve the MAV's strong position within the firm. This was underlined by the fact that the MAV had automatically lost its powers of patronage (i.e. its influence over manual worker staffing matters) as long as there was zero employment in car production. The union thus no longer enjoyed a "hold" over the non-social democratic instrumentalists previously forced to join the MAV just to get work. Instrumentally motivated membership inevitably
loses its raison d'ètre when the reason for joining the organisation no longer exists. When the MAV proved unable to provide employment, the minimal, conditional commitment of instrumentalist members disappeared. Similarly, it was noted in section 2.1 that even parts of the MAV's functionary apparatus may have been instrumentally motivated in their commitment to the union by the financial rewards made available by the Works Council for functionary work. By mid-1930 it was evident that the financial restrictions placed on the Steyr-Werke and the general reduction in demand during the depression would mean that the works could not operate at full capacity for the foreseeable future. With a reduced level of employment, the Works Council would have less income and would not be able to afford to fund an extensive functionary network. It is possible that this served to undermine the commitment of instrumentalist functionaries to their union. A reduced commitment of both ordinary members and activists inevitably undermined the MAV's bargaining strength.

The MAV was further handicapped in that the length of the shutdown meant that the supply of funds distributed by Works Council and MAV to other social democratic organisations had long dried up. Consequently, the social democrats no longer had the means to launch a support operation by mobilising an amply funded network. The MAV thus lacked the back-up resources of Kinderfreunde, co-operative etc. which had proved so crucial in 1925. The MAV's position was made still worse by the extensive rationalisation of the production line which had taken place between 1929 and 1930. This had reduced the dependence of the firm on the skilled workers the MAV had traditionally organised, and increased the significance of unskilled workers, with their generally weaker attachment to trade unionism. The new management at the works recognised this and adjusted its position accordingly, displaying a tactical acumen which contrasted strongly to its predecessor's tactical ineptitude in 1925. Management sought to exploit the implications of
rationalisation and drive a wedge between unskilled workers and their skilled worker-oriented trade union. It added the promise of a substantial increase in minimum wages — i.e. those of unskilled workers — to its original terms in an attempt to "divide and rule" and thereby undermine the unity and resolve of the MAV (40).

The "divide and rule" tactic was repeated a few days later in an act of calculated coercion designed to circumvent the right of the Works Council to negotiate on behalf of the workforce. Management appealed directly to those workers (also members of the MAV works organisation) still at work in the small bicycle and ball-bearing factories which formed part of the Steyr-Werke complex, to accept its conditions for the resumption of car production. If an overwhelming majority of the bicycle and ball-bearing workers accepted the stated conditions on behalf of the car workers, they would be "permitted" to continue working for the Steyr-Werke; otherwise their jobs would be at risk (41). The pursuit of such aggressive tactics indicates the confidence of the new management and the bargaining power it now enjoyed as a result of the shutdown in car production. It also emphasises the commitment it had brought to Steyr to eliminate the privileged position the MAV had established for itself in the works.

The next stages of the conflict are unclear, but it seems that the National Executive of the MAV intervened without consulting the local union, overruled its stand against management and accepted management's conditions on behalf of the local MAV. This provoked open criticism at the National Congress of the MAV in September 1930. Both the President of the manual workers' Works Council in the Steyr-Werke, August Moser, and his fellow Works Councillor Franz Schrangl attacked the National Executive's apparent capitulation in the face of economic difficulties (42). Moser felt that wage cuts and the elimination of trade union rights were not to be accepted without resistance
just because of economic problems; on the contrary, it was still possible for unions in certain firms (i.e. the MAV in the Steyr-Werke) to assert themselves and hold their own against the employers (43). But, he continued,

it often happens that the Works Councillors are shut out of negotiations and that only the more senior functionaries are involved. We Works Councillors wish to protest against such tactics and therefore appeal to the Executive to ensure that such things do not happen again in the future ... Day-in, day-out we do the spadework, but when it comes to the moment when the cause should be decisively defended, someone brings up the catchword of "crisis", and the battle is given up without a determined struggle (44).

The protests by Moser and Schrangl at the MAV National Congress in 1930 were the first indication of opposition within the social democratic movement in Steyr to the increasingly pessimistic and fatalistic outlook displayed by the national leadership of the movement. The genesis of their protest has a much broader background than the narrow area of industrial relations, and is thus examined further in the more appropriate context of Chapter Seven. However, it is unlikely that Moser's and Schrangl's defiant attitude and their calls for a more activist and offensive approach to industrial relations would have prevailed had the National Executive of the MAV not intervened in Steyr. Their defiance was based in an illusory assessment of the MAV's strength in the works which failed to take into account the massive changes in the background to industrial relations which had occurred since the suspension of car production in August 1929. Ten months' unemployment had undermined the rank and file will to resist, had exposed the limited commitment of instrumentalist members, and had eliminated the extra resources previously made available to the MAV through the network. Rationalisation had further undermined the MAV's bargaining hand by reducing the works' dependence on skilled workers. These factors combined to shift the balance of power in the works away from the MAV.
The reversal in the balance was completed by two further factors which illustrate what might be termed the "nationalisation" of the framework for social democratic activities in Steyr after 1929 following the redefinition of the local milieu: i.e. the displacement of local determinants of the nature of (in this case) industrial relations by factors which derived from economic and political developments at the national level. The first of these derived from the collapse of the BCA and its takeover by Rothschild's Credit-Anstalt. This resulted in the appointment of a new management at the Steyr-Verke which distinguished itself from its predecessor in its assertiveness and tactically astuteness, its determination to deprive the MAV of its extra-statutory rights and in its confidence in its ability to do so. The second non-local, or national factor which directly impinged on the nature of industrial relations at the car works was the so-called "Anti-Terror Law" of 5th April 1930.

The "Anti-Terror Law" was designed to ensure a "negative right of association" at the workplace i.e. the right of the individual not to have to join a particular organisation (i.e. a social democratic trade union) in order to get work and not to have to pay any kind of (social democratic) trade union subscription or political levy. It was thus aimed specifically at undermining the unity of the social democratic trade unions at the workplace and reducing their financial strength. Its implementation obviously had severe implications for the balance of power in industrial relations at the Steyr-Verke. It made the veto right of the Works Council over staffing matters illegal if that right was used (as it certainly had been) to promote and favour the employment of social democrats. The inability to use the staffing veto in a "party-book" sense potentially undermined the unity of the MAV organisation on the shopfloor (although there is evidence to suggest that the MAV was able in some way to circumvent the new legislation and to maintain a 100% organisation on the shopfloor until February 1934). The
"Anti-Terror Law" also abolished the practice of the central deduction in the works finance office of MAV dues and the Kinderfreunde Kindergroschen. This inevitably reduced the efficiency of dues collection, and, by implication, cut the amounts raised, undermining not only the financial basis (and thus an important factor in the industrial strength) of the MAV but also of the organisation which had given it such valuable material support in the industrial conflict of 1925. In this way, the "Anti-Terror Law served to further cement the balance of power in the Steyr-Verke away from the trade union and in favour of management.

The new power relations in the Steyr-Verke resulting from local economic collapse and the impingement of national factors were confirmed when a mass meeting of car workers was called early in July 1930 to vote on management's terms for reopening production, as accepted by the national MAV. Only ten of those present rejected the terms (47). Top pay rates were cut and minimum wages increased and the remainder of the MAV's catalogue of extra-statutory rights was abolished: political activity on the shopfloor was proscribed, no newspapers or other publications could be hawked and no political notices could be posted in the works. The Works Council levy on wages was reduced to the statutory level, and Works Councillors now had to carry out their tasks in their own time with no financial support from the firm (48).

Just as a pro-MAV balance of power in the Steyr-Verke, as epitomised in the union's extra-statutory rights, was a vital precondition for the assertion of social democratic hegemony in the late 1920's, so the reverse is true. The reversal of the balance of power and the loss of those rights as a result of "Anti-Terror Law" of April 1930 and the management-MAV conflict of June/July 1930 had tremendous significance for the future of social democracy in Steyr. As was noted briefly in section 2.2 and is examined in more detail in the following chapter, the
MAV's rights formed a crucial part of the network which had formed the basis of social democratic hegemony in the town in the late 1920's. By mid-1930 the MAV had lost its ability to raise funds and distribute them throughout the social democratic movement. In addition, its powers of patronage were severely constrained, both by the provisions of the "Anti-Terror Law" and by the fact that the workforce of the car works was much reduced on resumption of production. Even though the MAV had apparently found some mechanism for retaining a closed organisation in the works, the potential of its powers of patronage was much reduced: in June 1929, 59% of the local labour force was employed as a manual worker at the Steyr-Werke, and was thus dependent on MAV patronage; in June 1930 the equivalent figure was 22%, and in June 1933 it was only marginally more than 10% (see Table 5). The loss of its fund-raising abilities and its powers of patronage meant that the MAV could no longer act as the mainstay of the network. As a result, the network disintegrated, thereby eliminating the basis of social democratic hegemony in Steyr. The reversal of the balance of power in the Steyr-Werke was, in this way, a central element in the decline of social democracy in Steyr after 1929.

The balance of power in the Steyr-Werke remained in favour of management for the rest of the First Republic. This was largely due to the continuing economic problems which afflicted the works and maintained local unemployment at a high level. Having overcommitted itself in taking over the BCA in 1929, the Credit-Anstalt itself collapsed in May 1931. After the Austrian National Bank had assured its future, its financial assistance to industry, which had not been especially bountiful before May 1931, was drastically curtailed. This ensured for example that the level of car production at the Steyr-Werke had to be reduced in July 1931 to six per day when seventeen had been made per day a few weeks beforehand, and when fifty per day could have been produced if the works operated at full capacity (49). In view of the continuingly high local unemployment which resulted from
undercapacity at the car works, there was always a reservoir of unemployed workers willing and able to replace current employees. In the face of this, the MAV was at a severe disadvantage and thus never had the chance to regain any of the bargaining power lost in 1930.

The long-term strength of the MAV had been further eroded by the process of rationalisation at the car works. In 1925-26 a new system of overhead chains was introduced, which largely automated the car assembly process, and in 1929-30 similar production-line methods were introduced at all stages of car production. This had important long-term effects: in 1931-32, 4,776 vehicles were produced by 3,526 workers; in 1923-24 just over half as many vehicles were produced by over twice as many workers (see Table 2). Rationalisation thus created structural unemployment, adding to the unemployment problem which had greatly weakened the MAV (50).

Rationalisation not only affected the quantity, but also the quality of the workforce by extending the division of labour. Workers tended more and more to perform just a few simple, repetitive tasks at their place on the production line, without needing any particular skills. The implications of this were raised by Moser and Schrangl at the MAV National Congress in 1930. More and more unskilled women and young men were being employed; these were often difficult to organise and were not readily amenable to the principles of trade unionism (51). Moreover, they gradually displaced the skilled workers who had long constituted the backbone of the MAV organisation in the works. Hence, although the MAV was able, despite the "Anti-Terror Law", to maintain a closed organisation in the works after 1929, the workforce tended towards a lesser commitment to the trade union. Over time this too served to undermine the bargaining power of the MAV.
The management of the Steyr-Werke exploited the MAV's weakness and its new-found dominance in industrial relations to further undermine the influence and morale of the trade union. In the following years it rejected any form of consultation and ruled, in effect, by decree in the works. The MAV was forced to accept unilaterally imposed wage cuts and changes in working conditions, and if it attempted to oppose management's dictates, members were indiscriminately sacked (52). Management was obviously supremely confident, in view of the reversal of the balance of power in the works in 1930, in its ability to impose its will on the MAV. By February 1934, it even felt able to ignore the MAV completely and to take up negotiations on a new collective agreement with the Viennese (1) Christian Metalworkers' Union. It was confidently announced that the MAV would be "decisively finished off" and rumoured that there would be a forced enrolment of manual workers into the christian union (53). However, the negotiations between management and the christian union provoked a passionate response from the previously acquiescent union and workforce. The meetings held by the MAV to protest against management's actions and the terms acceptable to the christian union were the best attended for years and produced unanimous opposition to management's intentions. As a result of the apparently determined mood among the workforce, management abruptly dropped negotiations with the christian union (54).

This must not, however, be seen as a reflection of the restoration of MAV bargaining power in the works. Indeed, the MAV was probably at its weakest point in conventional terms of union strength. In February 1934, there were only around a thousand manual workers employed in the works, whereas there were 3,600 registered unemployed in the town and another 4,000 in the surrounding area (55). This "reserve army" of unemployed, many of them experienced metalworkers, was quite able to carry out the jobs of those employed at the Steyr-Werke if management were to follow its practice of recent years and dismiss
dissenters. The MAV's successful defiance of management in February 1934 must be assessed rather against the broader political background in Austria in 1933-34.

By early February 1934, the dictatorship of the Christian Social Chancellor, Dr. Engelbert Dollfuß, had been established for over ten months. These months had seen a gradual, systematic, "salami-tactic" suppression of the bases of social democratic power and influence in Austria (parliament, Schutzbund, the social democratic press, the Chambers of Labour, "Red" Vienna etc.). The increasingly fatalistic national leadership of the social democratic movement acquiesced passively in the erosion of social democratic power. This provoked increasing dissatisfaction throughout the movement and led to calls for a more active defence of social democracy. During 1933, this dissatisfaction was reflected in Steyr in the gradual development of an inner-movement opposition, which unconditionally rejected the passivity of the national leadership and of a similarly minded local party leadership. The opposition was led by Moser and Schrangl, who had first displayed their opposition to passive acquiescence in the MAV-management conflict of June-July 1930, and had its support in the workforce at the Steyr-Verke, the Schutzbund and the social democratic youth movement. By early 1934, the inner-movement opposition in Steyr was willing, even determined - given sufficient provocation - to put up violent resistance to dictatorship (see Chapter Seven).

The conflict over the right of the MAV to negotiate on behalf of the manual workforce at the car works in February 1934 must be seen in this light. For Moser and Schrangl and their supporters on the shopfloor, this was not an issue limited to the confines of the works, but was part of wider political developments in Austria. At the turn of the year, Dollfuß had issued a further series of anti-social democratic decrees, one of which sought to eliminate social democratic influence in the
works councils. Management’s actions at the start of February 1934 were presumably an attempt to put the new decree into practice. This was very much the last straw for Moser, Schrangl and the opposition; the MAV’s control over the Works Council was effectively the last bastion of social democratic power in Steyr, and any attempt to remove that power was certainly sufficient to provoke the violent resistance the opposition was determined to offer:

as long as the workforce is behind us, the unreasonable course taken by management will be rejected. It will come to a strike, and we will, of course, set up a picket line. This could cause clashes with the police, the gendarmerie and other reactionary elements. We have a certain police official in Steyr ... who is a suspected national socialist. If there is any trouble, he will certainly join in with his people. And then there is the Heimwehr, which would of course intervene immediately, and that will trigger hostilities. And we expect the support of the whole Austrian working class (August Moser) (57).

For this reason, i.e. the determination of the MAV to resist violently any further attacks on the social democratic movement, management backed down in early February 1934. It was unwilling to take responsibility for beginning a conflict which, given the mood of the workforce, could easily escalate into civil war. This certainly does not mean that management’s position of strength in the firm had been weakened. The MAV was at its weakest point in conventional terms in February 1934, and given a less tense political background, management would almost certainly have implemented their plans. In any case, under the prevailing political circumstances, management could reasonably expect that the Dollfuß government would remove the remnants of social democratic trade union power in the near future. This expectation was fulfilled just days later in the aftermath of the Civil War, when Dollfuß decreed the abolition of the social democratic trade unions and thus ended the MAV presence in the Steyr-Werke.
This chapter has attempted to analyse and explain the changing balance of power in MAV-management relations in the Steyr-Werke in the First Republic and to relate this to the wider experience of social democracy in Steyr. It has been shown that the MAV was able, unlike other provincial social democratic trade unions, to establish and maintain a decisive advantage in industrial relations in the works throughout the 1920's. This derived from certain factors inherent in the local economic structure (e.g. a centralised and skilled workforce), and was cemented both by the extra-statutory rights attained by the MAV in the early post-war period and by the tactical and financial weaknesses of management (as demonstrated in 1925). The MAV's extra-statutory rights were also a central foundation of the social democratic network in Steyr. Within the extraordinary framework of the local milieu in the late 1920's, this network was able to expand its influence to form the basis of social democratic hegemony in Steyr. The superiority of the MAV in the Steyr-Werke, and the defence of that superiority in the 1925 lockout, were therefore quite crucial preconditions for the establishment of social democratic hegemony in the late 1920's.

Similarly and logically, the reversal of the balance of power and the establishment of management superiority after 1929 were also central to the disintegration of social democratic hegemony and helped precipitate the decline which beset the movement in the 1930's. The central significance of the balance of power in the Steyr-Werke in the ability of the social democrats to assert their hegemony over other political movements in the town is addressed further in the following chapter.

The reversal of the balance of power in the car works, or more precisely the reasons for it, are instructive in a wider sense. The foremost element in the reversal was the shutdown of car production between August 1929 and July 1930. This created mass unemployment in the town and directly undermined the MAV's strength in relations with management. However, other factors...
intervened to tip the balance even more decisively towards management. These – the assertiveness of the new management at the works and the "Anti-Terror Law" – derived from "outside" factors: the emergency takeover of the BCA by the Credit-Anstalt and the demands of business circles and the Heimwehr for a statutory restriction of trade union activities. These "outside" factors epitomise the progressive "nationalisation" of the framework for industrial relations, and more broadly for politics in Steyr after 1929. In the 1920's the development of social democracy had been conditioned above all else by local factors: the social and political isolation of the town, the insularity this produced and the economic fluctuations of the Steyr-Werke. After 1929 this was no longer wholly the case. While the instability of the Steyr-Werke still exerted its considerable influence over local politics, Steyr's insularity was lost as non-local factors, primarily the mounting national confidence and assertiveness of the Austrian Right, increasingly determined the framework for social democratic politics in the town. The social democratic reaction to this challenge from the Right in the 1930's is a theme which is addressed further in Chapter Three and throughout the remainder of the thesis.
Between 1927 and early 1930, social democracy enjoyed a comprehensive hegemony over the political of the Right in Steyr. The dominance of the social democrats extended far beyond the formal local political arena of elections and town hall politics to encompass normally unpoliticised aspects of everyday life and to become an inherent part of the political culture of the town. Both the social democrats and their opponents acknowledged the status of the town as a "rote Hochburg", a red "fortress", a "bastion" and "bulwark" of social democratic supremacy (1), which, from the non-social democratic point of view, could only be broken with outside help (2). The purpose of this chapter is to examine the mentality which underlay social democratic domination, the forms which this domination took, and the conditions under which it was achieved.

The chapter is concerned with the social democratic ethos in Steyr. It was noted in the Introduction to this study that this ethos arose from the consciousness and experience of Steyr's isolation as a working class, social democratic town in a conservative, rural region. It comprised an insular, inward-directed "stronghold" mentality, whose overriding concern was to emphasise and further build up Steyr's status as an enclave of social democratic strength and to reject any "outside", non-social democratic incursions into the stronghold. This mentality underlay the concern to consolidate the stronghold internally by means of the extension of the organisational influence of the social democratic movement. Primarily by making use of the various and considerable powers
of the MAV and of the town hall, the social democrats were able to build up a network of organisational influence, through which they could control and manipulate vital aspects of daily life in their own interests. This network formed the basis of a social democratic hegemony in Steyr which contrasted strongly with the growing predominance of the Right and the increasing subordination of social democracy in Austria as a whole.

A by-product of social democratic hegemony was the development of widespread instrumentalist tendencies within the movement. Non-social democrats established nominal commitments to the movement, boosting its numerical strength, in order to secure for themselves some of the benefits and perks available to the social democratic membership through the network. The limited, nominal commitment of social democratic instrumentalists had profound implications for the cohesion and strength of the movement if the movement could, for any reason, no longer provide the benefits for which they had joined in the first place. Once again, this emphasises the dependence of social democracy in Steyr on a certain combination of local conditions. Instrumentalist commitment to social democracy, and more broadly the network and social democratic hegemony with which instrumentalism was associated, were tied to the particular local milieu which dominated politics in the town in the late 1920's. In particular, the powers of MAV and town hall were directly dependent on the level of employment at the Steyr-Werke. When car production at the Steyr-Werke was shut down in 1929, the powers of MAV and municipality disintegrated and the network collapsed, removing the basis of social democratic hegemony in the town and hastening the departure of instrumentalist members from the movement. The social democratic movement abruptly entered a steep decline whose counterpart was the rejuvenation of the local Right, which was able increasingly to challenge the traditions of local social democratic supremacy.
3.1: The Network.

The social democratic ethos, the mentality of the stronghold, underlay a fixation with the expansion of the basis and influence of the movement's organisational infrastructure in Steyr. This fixation resulted in the evolution of a network, a political "machine" which harnessed and mobilised the strengths of individual social democratic organisations in the service of the wider interests of the movement. This network had three major constituent branches: the MAV's ability to raise funds for other parts of the social democratic movement; powers of patronage in the local labour market; and the ability to manipulate the offices and organs of the municipality.

The MAV's extra-statutory rights in the Steyr-Werke were a crucial mainstay of the network. As discussed in Chapter Two, the union had the right to hold political collections on the shopfloor and to have an extraordinary union subscription levied centrally in the works finance office for the Kinderfreunde. It was also able to raise twice as much money as was decreed by law from the manual workforce in order to fund the activities of the Works Council. Much of this was then passed on to other social democratic organisations (see Table 4). In 1928 and 1929 the Works Council granted total subsidies of over 295,000 shillings to other organisations (3). In all, the MAV was able to provide a very solid financial basis for the rest of the movement.

The second major element of the network was the control exerted by the social democrats over the local labour market. It was noted in Chapter Two that the MAV enjoyed massive powers of patronage in Steyr via its closed shop at the Steyr-Werke and its collusion with the municipal Unemployment Office. At the peak of employment at the car works in 1928-1929, between five and six thousand manual jobs at the Steyr-Werke depended on the patronage and goodwill of the MAV and/or the favour of the
Unemployment Office. In addition, municipal jobs were filled very much on party-book lines (4). If the full-time jobs provided privately by social democratic organisations in Steyr are added to municipal party-book and Steyr-Verka union-book jobs, the full extent of employment dependent on social democracy can be assessed. Table 5 shows that social democracy had an influence over around 56-62% of jobs in the town in 1928-1929. The majority of the local labour market was thus controlled by the social democrats in this period. Through the MAV in particular, social democracy in Steyr had, in effect, a large-scale, pro-social democratic employment agency at its disposal - especially when employment was at its highpoint at the car works in 1928-1929.

The third major part of the network resulted from the social democratic dominance of municipal politics. As noted above, municipal employees were recruited on party-book lines. In turn, the administration of the municipality was carried out with social democratic concerns in mind. Municipal departments and organs were quasi-social democratic institutions. Ferdinand Häuslmayr, Director of the Magistrat, the municipal "civil service", and primary adviser to the mayor, was a member of the SDAP's District Committee. The Unemployment Office liaised with the Works Council in the Steyr-Verka in order to put social democrats forward for jobs at the car works. The manager of the Municipal Enterprises, Franz Mellich, was both President of the local social democratic Crematorial Association and military leader of the Schutz bund. The municipality supported the Schutz bund in several ways - renting out an explosives store, lending out lorries to transport weapons etc. - and much of the military activity of the Schutz bund was carried out under the cover of the Municipal Enterprises' operations (5). It is instructive that when the Schutz bund called for an economic boycott of Heimwahr sympathisers in December 1929 without the backing of the SDAP, the boycott posters appeared on the advertising hoardings owned by the Municipal Enterprises (6).
Such was the overlap between the two organisations that when Kollich was replaced as manager of the Municipal Enterprises, his successor also took over as military leader of the Schutzbund (7).

The most significant aspect of social democratic control over the municipal administration was the fact that the police in Steyr were a municipal force. In this respect, Steyr was unusual. In most other towns, the federal police kept law and order, and in rural areas, the provincial gendarmeries. Steyr's independent police powers derived from a Habsburg Imperial decree of 1862 (8) and were jealously guarded by the social democrats after the First World War (9). Although no direct evidence exists, it seems that the social democrats were able to purge the local police force of non-social democratic elements during the 1920's. By 1926 the local police force also functioned as the eleventh Section of the Steyr SDAP (10). In the late 1920's, according to reports of the federal police in Linz, only party functionaries were recruited into Steyr's police. Of eight officers in Steyr, only the leader of the force could be assessed as a "solid bourgeois type". The remaining seven officers and most of the fifty plus constables were card-carrying social democrats (11).

The whole police force was responsible and answerable to the social democratic mayor, Franz Sichlrader, who used his influence over the police to intervene in the penal process to the benefit of social democrats who had committed minor offences (usually in fracas with Heimwehr members) (12). Sichlrader reduced fines to minimal amounts and then even let them be paid off in instalments. Short periods of detention were also reduced and files necessary for the prosecution of offenders were "lost" in the town hall. It was reported in mid-February 1930 for example that around twenty-five cases pending since 20th October 1929, when social democrats clashed with the Heimwehr, were still awaiting a hearing (13). There existed a particular,
social democratic conception of law and order in Steyr. The events of 15th July 1927 in Vienna had shown how the police could be used as a weapon against social democracy. This was - as Steyr's Christian Socials immediately recognised (14) - not possible in Steyr. On the contrary, the police could be and were in the following years used to defend the position of social democracy in Steyr from the ascendant Right in Austria (see section 3.5).

The network thus channelled and exploited to the full the patronage and powers of MAV and municipality so that the influence of the social democratic movement extended far beyond the shopfloor of the Steyr-Werke and the local council chambers to permeate even such everyday matters as individual employment prospects and the practice of law and order in Steyr. In this way, the local dominance of the social democratic movement was firmly underlined. This dominance was particularly clear-cut during the years of the "false boom" at the Steyr-Werke. The "yields" of both MAV and town hall powers were both directly dependent on the level of employment at the car works. As employment levels rose consistently between 1927 and 1929, so, naturally, did the level of funds the MAV was able to raise from the workforce and the extent of MAV influence over the local labour market. Similarly, the town hall was dependent for much of its income on the local direct taxes levied from the Steyr-Werke workforce. As the size of the workforce grew during the "false boom", so did municipal income and, in consequence, the range and extent of municipal activities. The economic boom conditions characteristic of the local milieu in Steyr in the late 1920's thus fed directly into and boosted the network. At this time the influence exerted through the network was at its peak and formed the basis of social democratic hegemony in the town.

The network did however have two significant inherent weaknesses. The first was, paradoxically, the source of its
strength in the late 1920's: its relationship to the level of employment at the Steyr-Werke. If this was substantially cut back, social democracy was bound to face difficulties in maintaining its dominant position in Steyr. The financial bases of the social democratic movement and the municipality, both extracted largely from the Steyr-Werke workforce, would dry up and the level of control over the local labour market would fall in proportion to the decline in jobs at the car works. This was indeed the case after August 1929 and is examined below in section 3.4. The second weakness forms the focus of the next section.

3.2: Instrumentalism and the Network.

In several different ways the constituent elements of the network encouraged an instrumentally motivated commitment to social democracy. A significant part of the organisational strength of social democracy in Steyr was thus founded in the instrumental commitment of non-social democrats or indifferents to the social democratic movement. Such a commitment was conditional upon the continued receipt of certain benefits associated with membership in the movement. This section aims to examine the extent of instrumentalism in Steyr and to assess its implications for the development of the movement.

The extent of social democratic patronage in the local labour market was the most important factor which encouraged instrumentalism in the movement in Steyr. The proportion of the local labour force dependent for its employment on social democracy is shown in Table 5. In the boom years of 1928-1929 at the Steyr-Werke, over half of the labour force in Steyr was in a job dependent on social democracy. In this situation some non-social democrats were inevitably forced to join social
democratic organisations to get a job. This applies especially for recruitments into the expanding Steyr-Verke workforce. In September 1928 for example, a christian worker organised in the christian metalworkers' union was taken on at the works. Subsequently he was asked by a Works Councillor about his trade union membership. The worker declared that he was in the christian union, but was nevertheless quite prepared to pay subscriptions (einzuzahlen) to the MAV (15). In other words, this worker's proposed commitment to the MAV was stated purely in formal, financial terms. Also instructive is the information supplied by Alois Zehetner, Steyr-Verke Works Councillor in the 1930's:

When manual workers were taken on, the person concerned also had to get a signature from the Works Council. This decided 'Yes' or 'No'. In the process, the recruitment into the trade union was completed if the person concerned was not yet organised (16).

On the basis of Zehetner's information, it seems that the MAV itself was unconcerned if non-social democrats were organised in the union; recruitment into the union was a mere formality that went with the job. This must especially have been so in 1928-1929 when the reserves of social democratic unemployed were nearing exhaustion as the workforce at the Steyr-Verke grew; the MAV increasingly had no choice but to accept the employment of non-social-democrats. There is certainly evidence to suggest that even Heimwehr sympathisers had been recruited into the workforce - and by implication the MAV - by mid-1929 (17). The exact extent of instrumentalism in the MAV is uncertain; the fact that Heimwehr sympathisers, loathed by the social democrats and certainly their last choice as workmates, had been taken on at the car works despite the MAV's recruitment veto indicates that it was widespread.

Instrumentalist tendencies extended into the MAV's functionary network through the practice of remunerating
functionaries at the Steyr-Werke. As noted in the previous chapter, MAV functionaries were remunerated at a nominal, inflated rate for wages they supposedly lost for carrying out MAV work in the firm's time. MAV functionaries were thus a semi-professionalised, privileged caste, particularly susceptible to an opportunist commitment inspired by the perks on offer. The lack of opposition among the car workers to the Steyr-Werke's attack on the MAV's extra-statutory rights in 1930, at a time when it was clear that the Works Council would no longer be able to fund a large-scale functionary apparatus, indicates that opportunism did indeed play a role (18).

The exemplary pay of the municipal workforce also helped create an atmosphere which appealed to the instrumentally motivated. Municipal manual workers had in some cases considerably higher wages than equivalent workers in private firms. Municipal Angestellte worked relatively short hours, received early pensions and high pay (more than federal Angestellte). Pensions were assessed at 100% of normal salary - unique in Austria - and the municipality paid its employees' income tax and pension contributions (19). As Michels noted, the association of economic existence (e.g. employment prospects, MAV functionary or municipal perks) with dependence on the social democratic movement can produce a commitment to social democracy not informed by conviction but by instrumentalism:

it is ... indisputable that to the average man the close association of his own economic existence with his dependence on the socialist party seems a sufficient excuse for the sacrifice of his own conviction in order to remain in a party with which he is in truth no longer in full sympathy (20).

This could be reinforced by what he called "proletarian assurance" (21), the provision of material benefits to members of the social democratic movement as a means of mobilisation. Four social democratic organisations fall into this category in
Steyr: the Consumer Co-operative, the Tenants' Association, the Crematorial Association and the District Health Insurance Fund. All these were private organisations although the health insurance fund had semi-state status. All offered material benefits to their members. In 1927 for example, the Co-operative granted a 1.5% rebate on goods sold to members; the rebate increased with extra turnover in the following year (22). The Tenants' Association could offer invaluable aid at rent tribunals and other housing disputes: during 1929 it legally represented members in housing disputes on 915 occasions and scored a 95% success rate (23). The Crematorial Association offered free cremations and burials and free maintenance of graves in perpetuity for a contribution per member of 0.1 shillings per month (24). Health insurance funds were private organisations which carried out certain statutory duties. They were generally organised on political lines and all had to provide a basic level of health care. The social democratic fund in Steyr however went further than its statutory obligations, providing extraordinary sick pay and occasional allowances for unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged members and their families (25).

Michels predicted a "considerable accession of strength" to the social democratic movement from such "proletarian assurance" (26). This was borne out in Steyr. All the above-mentioned organisations had a rising membership at least until the Great Depression made its mark (27). The real issue though is the nature of the new members of the 1920's. Inevitably many of them were attracted not by the broad aims of social democracy but by the material benefits on offer; many had an instrumental motivation.

Although the exact extent of instrumentalism in the social democratic movement in Steyr is not easily quantifiable, the existence of so many instrumentalist tendencies - derived from the control over the labour market, financial perks and
"proletarian assurance" - indicates both that the nature of the network as a kind of mutual benefit society promoted instrumentalism and that the phenomenon was widespread. Having established this, the discussion can now turn to the implications of instrumentalism for the movement, in particular its effects on the real strength, the internal structures and the tactical cohesion of the social democratic movement.

The social democratic movement had an unquantifiable but significant number of instrumental members whose support was conditional upon the continued receipt of material benefits. By direct implication, the numerical strength of social democracy was itself conditional upon the continued ability to provide those benefits. Obviously this ability was intact and at its greatest extent between 1927 and 1929 during the "false boom" at the Steyr-Werke when the network was at the peak of its influence. In this situation there was every reason for the instrumentally motivated to join social democracy. The situation was however fundamentally changed in 1929 by the collapse in employment at the Steyr-Werke and the onset of general economic depression in the town. Thereafter social democratic/MAV powers of patronage in the labour market were much reduced (see Table 5); the social democratic "employment agency" simply had far less jobs on its rolls. The municipality - financially dependent on high levels of employment at the Steyr-Werke - was also forced to cut back its workforce and its pay scales. The MAV too was starved of funds by the cut-backs at the car works and could no longer afford to distribute perks to its functionaries. The general economic crisis resulted in a fall in the number of jobs available in social democratic organisations and a limitation of the resources and benefits of the "proletarian assurance" associations.

In other words, the material benefits available from the social democratic movement were, like the network from which they were derived, dependent on the economic performance of the
Steyr-Werke. Instrumentalism thus heightened the dependence of social democracy on the buoyancy of the car works. When material benefits fell with the Steyr-Werke after 1929, the instrumentally motivated were deprived of their motivation, so that they retracted their conditional support and hastened the decline of social democracy.

Instrumentalism also affected the structure and tactics of the social democratic movement, albeit in a negative sense. The existence of a significant instrumental membership meant that a section of the movement was, on the whole, inert and indifferent to what the leadership of the movement did. The passivity and docility of the instrumentalists (negatively) legitimated the leadership's policies, reduced the potential for opposition and thus reinforced the authority and position of that leadership. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapter. For now it is sufficient to note that social democratic leadership was an entrenched, inflexible, bureaucratic elite which proved incapable of adapting to new circumstances in the 1930's. The seeds of this inflexibility were sown during the prime days of the social democratic network in 1927-1929. Set against the background of boom at the Steyr-Werke, this was social democracy's most successful period. The network provided a flourishing basis of power and influence in the town. In addition, as discussed in Chapter One, the reformist strategy of the social democrats was also, apparently, vindicated at this time. The potential for inner-party opposition was reduced both by the apparent success of existing policies and by the docile instrumental membership. In consequence the policies pursued became institutions as entrenched as the leadership and the social democratic movement in general entered a rut in which it would become increasingly stuck in the 1930's.
3.3: The Social Democratic Stronghold Mentality.

However, the negative implications of instrumentalism did not become apparent until after the collapse of the Steyr-Werke. Until then the hegemony of social democracy in Steyr, as guaranteed by the network, remained intact. This localised dominance further reinforced the stronghold mentality which was central to the social democratic ethos in Steyr. The insular ethos of the social democrats incorporated a narrow and blinkered frame of reference which amplified the importance of local events and developments and devalued the relevance of the "outside" world. In this frame of reference, the existence and maintenance of social democratic hegemony in Steyr was of supreme importance. On the other hand, events and trends of great importance for the national social democratic movement had only minimal impact in Steyr. This is well illustrated by the lack of local impact made by the general advances made by the Austrian Right after 1927. Even the events and aftermath of 15th July 1927 had little effect on the social democratic movement in Steyr. By 19th July it had become clear that Austrian social democracy in general had suffered two massive setbacks in quick succession. The vulnerability of social democracy to the power of the executive had been bloodily illustrated, of all places in "Red Vienna", its heartland and showcase, as the police shot indiscriminately into the workers' demonstration on 15th July. And, in addition, the railway strike called in protest by the SDAP's national executive had been broken with alarming rapidity by a combination of Heimwehr intimidation and the security forces of right wing Land governments. The ultimate weapon of a movement dedicated to the use of peaceful means was patently ineffective. Mid-July 1927 was thus a turning point for Austrian politics as a whole and for social democracy in particular. The social democratic movement had been able to maintain a strong position in Austria since it left government in 1920 largely by virtue of the potential, or latent strength implied by its huge...
membership and organisational structure. This strength had been challenged and proved illusory in July 1927 by the guns of the Viennese police, the Heimwehr and the provincial gendarmeries. The balance of power in Austria had shifted decisively to the right and social democracy was forced onto an explicitly defensive footing.

Apart from temporary agitation and outrage and a short burst of organisational activity, Steyr's social democrats remained largely unaffected by the events of July. When news of the shootings in Vienna reached Steyr in the night of 15th-16th July the Schutzbund was immediately put on alert. Its leadership and the SDAP District Committee sat in permanent session taking the "necessary precautions" against "unforeseen eventualities" (28). However, after a mainly informative open-air protest meeting on 16th July, the response of the social democrats took on a markedly superficial character. On the 20th July a tokenistic fifteen minute strike of mourning was held at the Steyr-Verke and a number of other local firms and on 25th the mayor spoke briefly in mourning to the town council (29). But on the whole, the social democratic movement carried on as normal. There was no evident feeling in Steyr that social democracy had suffered a great setback. The challenge to social democracy from the Right had no repercussions in Steyr. Mayor Sichlrader's words in the council meeting on 25th July are instructive: "We are all still under the shocking impression made by the dreadful events which have befallen the population of the federal capital." (30) In other words, the shootings in Vienna may have been "shocking" and "dreadful", but their effect was, in Sichlrader's eyes, restricted to the population of Vienna; Steyr was not affected. Sichlrader's attitude was that of a concerned, but detached onlooker. This was no doubt encouraged by the subsequent lack of impact of the failed transport and communications strike - there was no large railway community in a town isolated away from the major railway lines, so there were no local feelings of humiliation when the strike was broken.
The detachment of the social democrats in Steyr from the events and implications of July 1927 does however have a more basic quality. July 1927 did not pierce the stronghold mentality of social democracy in Steyr. The insularity of the social democratic movement in Steyr meant that events were perceived predominantly in local terms. In local terms, July 1927 had had little effect. There had been no explicit challenge to the hegemony of social democracy in Steyr. Steyr was still an apparently impregnable social democratic stronghold. The strength of social democracy had not been proved illusory in Steyr as it had in Austria in general. The events of July 1927 had conclusively shown that the latent strength implied by the massive organisational infrastructure of Austrian social democracy was worth little when faced by hostile and determined federal and provincial governments backed by an active extra-parliamentary Right. Steyr's social democratic movement was different in that its organisational infrastructure was tied to real local power. The local strength of social democracy was not latent, or potential, but very real and active and diffused by the network throughout local politics, economy and society. The consciousness of this was unimpaired and insulated the social democrats from the implications of the nationwide upsurge of the Right after 1927.

The insulated development of social democracy in Steyr was enhanced by the lack of Heimwehr activity in the Steyr area. The increasing prominence of the Heimwehr was the most obvious manifestation of the changed power relations in Austria after 1927. In helping to break the railway strike in July 1927, the Heimwehr was thrust onto a pedestal as the saviour of the bourgeoisie from "red revolution". With the material support of foreign governments and Austrian heavy industry it became "something approaching a popular movement" (31). In Upper Austria, as elsewhere, a large-scale recruitment drive was begun. However, the leader of the Upper Austrian Heimwehr, Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, initially concentrated his propaganda and
organisational work in the Mühlfertel around Linz (32). The Traunviertel, the area around Steyr, remained largely untouched by Heimwehr activity until late 1929. In other words, there was no explicit challenge to the local hegemony of social democracy. The social democratic movement was able to continue undisturbed its insular, insulated existence.

While the insular mentality of the social democrats in Steyr cushioned them from the effects of national trends, it also amplified the perceived significance of events within Steyr. In particular, the social democrats would not tolerate even a symbolic challenge to their hegemony in the town. The open appearance of a militant opposition on the streets of the town - considered an exclusive social democratic domain - was especially vehemently rejected. This applied mainly to the Heimwehr, which launched a concerted challenge to social democratic hegemony in 1929-1930. The response of the social democrats to the attempts by the Heimwehr to gain a political foothold in Steyr is examined in section 3.5 below. The issues raised by the Heimwehr challenge were foreshadowed though by the events surrounding a gymnastics festival held by the local German (i.e. Pan-German nationalist) Gymnastics Club in July 1928. The festival provides a significant insight into the mentality of the social democrats in Steyr, in particular the importance attached to the social democratic "monopoly of the streets", the sole "right" of the social democrats to march and parade through Steyr.

The gymnastics festival provoked a considerable furore in the social democratic movement. Some of the festival's participants represented the extreme in German nationalism, sporting national socialist regalia and parading with German military flags. This was perceived as a provocation and caused great indignation among the social democrats. It was felt that the "monopoly of the streets", symbol of social democratic hegemony in the town, had been challenged by the open display of
German nationalist emblems. The social democrats responded on two levels. The first involved an unofficial (but officially approved) spontaneous reaction of younger social democrats and centred on confrontation and violence. Several scuffles broke out between nazis and young social democrats, and during the festival parade a group of young social democrats, allegedly incited by high party functionaries, stole one of the German flags and almost started a mass brawl (33). According to a christian social councillor, the already excited mood of some social democrats then degenerated into a "scarcely believable witchhunt for non-social democrats" as various people, including uninvolved passers-by, were beaten up (34).

The official SDAP response had a substantially different character but was directed at the same end: the deterrence of a repeated challenge to the monopoly of the street. At extraordinary meetings in the party sections the party sought to mobilise the network against the perceived nationalist challenge. The party responded with the scarcely veiled threats of expanding the paramilitary Schutzbund and boycotting the businessmen and shopkeepers who took part in and cheered on the festival in favour of the social democratic co-operative (35). The social democratic membership was urged to "punish" those who supported the opposition through an economic boycott. Similarly, the Works Councillors and MAV functionaries from the Steyr-Werke demanded that the twenty-five or so Steyr-Werke Angestellte who marched in the festival parade should be sacked (36).

The two types of social democratic response to the gymnastics festival - militant, belligerent confrontation and a purposeful mobilisation of the network - both reflect the intolerance of social democracy in Steyr to a challenge to its monopoly of the streets in the town. This was the essence of social democratic stronghold mentality. The view was that Steyr was a "red" stronghold in which other movements had no legitimate place and which could and would repel any challenges.
The dual response to the outside challenge seen at the gymnastics festival was to be repeated on several occasions in 1929 and 1930 when the Heimwehr attempted to break into the stronghold (see section 3.5).

3.4: The Collapse of the Network.

In the late 1920's the social democratic movement in Steyr enjoyed an unusually strong position. On the basis of a network which harnessed the powers of the social democratic organisational infrastructure, the movement was able to establish a comprehensive hegemony over the political opposition in the town. This was complemented by a stronghold mentality in the movement which insulated it from negative political trends and actively rejected any challenge to its hegemony. However, all three main branches of the social democratic network - the MAV's fund-raising powers, social democratic powers of patronage in the local labour market and the manipulation of municipal powers - were basically dependent on employment levels at the Steyr-Werke. It was because the workforce of the Steyr-Werke expanded steadily between 1927 and 1929 that the influence of the network increased to lay the basis for social democratic hegemony in Steyr. This section analyses the effects of the shutdown of car production at the Steyr-Werke in August 1929 on the network and social democratic hegemony in Steyr.

The collapse in employment at the Steyr-Werke immediately decimated the financial basis of the municipality. As unemployment grew, municipal income from direct taxes naturally fell, and fell further as the crisis in an economy dominated by the Steyr-Werke "knocked-on" through the town. Despite severe cut-backs in both workforce and policy programme, the municipal budget forecast for 1930 still projected a deficit of over
250,000 shillings (37). The financial straits of the municipality hastened the implementation of a municipal asset-stripping programme. In 1930 an important part of the network was lost as the municipal Unemployment Office was passed under the jurisdiction of the District Industrial Commission in Linz. Any future co-operation between Unemployment Office and Works Council in the Steyr-Verke to direct social democrats into available jobs was precluded.

The worsening municipal financial position also led to the federalisation of the municipal police force, a vital part of the network, in 1930. The decision to negotiate for the federalisation had been taken - with reluctance - for financial reasons as early as 1928 (38). Negotiations had dragged on slowly until the collapse of municipal tax income made savings - from whatever source - a matter of urgency. After a federal government investigation, Steyr's police force was federalised with effect from July 1st 1930 (39). The potential savings for the municipality were considerable: in 1929 for example, the upkeep of the municipal police accounted for a sixth of all municipal expenditure (40). The political loss was larger. Steyr's independent police powers had created a unusual situation in Austria in that the police force was friendly to and steered by social democrats. The partisan nature of the local police also helped social democracy maintain its "monopoly of the streets" in Steyr until after every other major industrial town had been subjected to a symbolic Heimwehr parade. After federalisation in July 1930, the police - with a force three times the size of the old municipal one - "veered off into the bourgeois Lager" and became "particularly dangerous" for social democracy (41). Within a month of federalisation the Heimwehr's application to hold a rally in Steyr had been accepted and within two months the Heimwehr had realised its much-vaunted "March on Steyr" (see section 3.5).
The Heimwehr rally at the end of August 1930 signalled the final demise of social democratic hegemony in Steyr. By then, the social democratic movement had already been intrinsically weakened. Its financial base, provided through the MAV's extra-statutory rights in the Steyr-Werke, had been destroyed. Although the rights of the MAV remained formally intact until July 1930, they were dependent on high employment levels at the Steyr-Werke for their effectiveness in raising funds to pass into the social democratic movement. Without high employment the rights were immaterial. Low employment meant low receipts from Works Council subscriptions, the Kindergroschen and the political collections on the shopfloor. The financial situation of social democracy worsened further as the effects of high unemployment in the town began to make an impact. In 1930 for example, the number of SDAP subscription stamps issued reflected a general membership decline and fell by 5,000. Closer analysis reveals also that the number of "full payment" stamps issued fell by 31,000 and the issue of reduced price "unemployed" stamps rose by 26,000 (42). The SDAP's income was falling rapidly and the same must apply for the self-raised income of the other social democratic organisations. The loss of MAV-raised and decline in self-raised finance meant that the social democratic movement gradually became starved of funds and unable to maintain its normal level of activities (43).

The third main branch of the network - control over the local labour market - was even more clearly a direct function of the level of employment at the car works. Although it seems that the MAV retained its influence over recruitments after its other rights were removed by the new management in July 1930 (see Chapter Two), the size of the workforce was a fraction of the 1929 level. What is more, it continued to decrease steadily until after the MAV was banned in 1934. Similarly, the municipal workforce was also progressively reduced after 1929 as municipal finance dried up. Taking into account those employed by social democratic organisations as well, the number of local jobs
dependent on social democracy fell from 6,201 in 1929 to 2,421 in 1930 and 1,164 by 1933. Almost two-thirds of the total labour force in Steyr had been in a job dependent in some way on social democratic patronage or favour in 1929. A year later less than a quarter was (see Table 5).

There was now no real reason for those instrumentalists among the four thousand or so ex-car workers who had joined the MAV just to get a job to remain involved in the union. Membership of social democratic organisations was no longer a potential passport to a job. Intrumentally motivated members began to retract their conditional support and to weaken the social democratic movement. This tendency was enhanced as the financial incentives associated with social democracy disappeared. The relatively high pay of municipal employees was downgraded as part of various municipal austerity measures (44) and the Works Council in the Steyr-Werke was unable to fund an extensive functionary network. The social democratic "proletarian assurance" organisations were also less able to provide previous levels of material benefits in the general economic crisis. There was less and less reason for those with instrumental motives to remain even a nominal social democrat.

It is however difficult to quantify the effect of revoked instrumental support. The social democrats were not neatly divided into "instrumentalists" and "idealists". Some indication of the decline in support for social democracy is though given by the attendances recorded at various social democratic events in 1930. The celebrations on Mayday in 1930 were attended by around 3,500 people; this compares poorly with the 5,000 present in 1929 (45). When Otto Bauer, the highly respected leader of the SDAP spoke to a mass meeting in July 1930 in Steyr, some 900 attended. In September 1929, a lesser known party leader, Wilhelm Ellenbogen, attracted over 2,000 (46). Furthermore, only a handful of those present at a mass meeting of car workers, also in July 1930, rejected the terms of the Steyr-Werke which
eliminated the MAV's special position in the works (47). By this time it was clear that the workforce would be much smaller than in 1929, reducing the possibilities of MAV patronage, and that the Works Council would not have the funds to support and reward a large functionary network.

After August 1929 the social democratic network began to disintegrate. The shutdown of car production at the Steyr-Werke had radically altered the socio-economic framework for politics in the town. As a result the mainstays of the network in the MAV and town hall crumbled, eroding the basis of social democratic hegemony. Social democratic decline was hastened by the collapse in instrumentalist support for the movement. This left a power vacuum in Steyr, which the forces of the Right, led by the Heimwehr, eagerly filled.

3.5: The Challenge of the Right and the Social Democratic Response.

On 10th August 1929 a Heimwehr section was founded in Steyr. Its aims were made clear at the inaugural meeting: the "red foremen" were to be ejected from the Steyr-Werke and social democracy in Steyr was to be "overthrown" as in Vienna [on 15th July 1927] and Donawitz, the Upper Styrian town where the Heimwehr's "Independent Trade Union" had all but eliminated social democratic influence in the works of the Alpine-Montan-Gesellschaft (48). A series of parades and meetings were held in the second half of 1929 in the villages around Steyr both to drum up support and symbolically to "approach" and "encircle" the town. By December 1929 the Heimwehr felt confident enough - and the implication is that social democratic hegemony had weakened sufficiently to allow it as the network crumbled - to hold regular, fully uniformed
"Sunday strolls" on Steyr's main square. These were intended explicitly as a challenge to the social democratic "monopoly of the streets". If the Heimwehr could establish the right to walk freely and openly in Steyr, social democratic hegemony would be visibly and symbolically broken.

The social democratic response was informed by the stronghold mentality which doggedly rejected any challenge to their hegemony. As shown over a year earlier at the German gymnastics festival, this had two aspects: the official, purposeful mobilisation of the network against the challengers, and militant, even violent confrontation which was unofficial but with the sanction of higher authority in the movement. Confrontation was encouraged in late 1929 by the fiery pronouncements of the party newspaper, the Steyrer Tagblatt (49), and by the militant rhetoric of high party functionaries. The vice-mayor, Julius Rußmann, is reported at one point to have said: "We simply do not let the Heimwehr into Steyr. It must be spelled out once and for all that Steyr is a workers' town" (50).

The SDAP's District Leader, Franz Schrangl, went further, emphasising that if the Heimwehr attacked the social democratic movement, "then nothing can hold us back. Get in there and thrash their skulls in" (51). Subsequently local farmers present in Steyr for the weekly market who wore the characteristic cock's feather or other livery of the Heimwehr were persecuted and intimidated (52). At least twenty-five social democrats were arrested for incidents during and after the passage of Heimwehr vehicles through Steyr en route for a rally in a nearby village. Two social democrats even fired live shots at Heimwehr members returning from the festival (53). Social democratic confrontation reached its highpoint between December 1929 and February 1930 when the Heimwehr held its regular "Sunday strolls". Several hundred, mainly younger social democrats
insulted and often assaulted the forty or so intrepid "strollers".

The challenge to the social democratic monopoly of the streets posed by the Heimwehr was thus emphatically rejected. This was once again complemented by a more subtle official response. This centred on a mobilisation of the network to help protect the symbolic "monopoly of the streets" and maintain social democratic hegemony in the town. The municipal control of the police proved especially useful in this respect. The local police, a numerically weak force of some sixty officers and constables, was largely powerless to protect Heimwehr members, was disinclined to anyway because of its affiliation to the SDAP, and was prevented from any concerted intervention by its social democratic municipal masters. Mayor Sichlrader allegedly reprimanded some constables for trying to take action against social democratic offenders (54). He refused to arm the police, even with truncheons, and turned down offers to bring in reinforcements of gendarmes to help keep order (55). Finally, he used his powers to intervene in the legal process to the benefit of those few social democrats actually convicted of public order offences (56).

The inaction and ineffectiveness of the municipal police ensured the success in the short term of militant, youthful confrontation in the defence of the monopoly of the streets. There is evidence however to suggest that stronghold mentality took on its own momentum as the social democratic youth and the Schutzbund, as if in anticipation of their key role in the developing inner-movement opposition in the 1930's, began to evade the control of the social democratic leadership. The social democratic youth increasingly cooperated with the local communists in their attempts to deny the Heimwehr access to the town (57). Just before Christmas 1929 the Schutzbund too moved onto a more confrontational footing. Acting on its own initiative, it issued a call to boycott the shops of certain
Heimwehr sympathisers in Steyr. Bright red placards announcing the boycott in inflammatory language were posted on to the advertising hoardings owned by the Municipal Enterprises, leaflets were distributed naming the shopkeepers to be boycotted and detachments of Schutzbündler kept guard over their shops to ensure the boycott was upheld (58). The boycott proved highly controversial and led to the decision of the bourgeois parties to quit the next municipal council meeting. For the first time Mayor Sichlrader explicitly renounced the strategy of confrontation and distanced himself from the actions of the Schutzbund. The social democratic leadership began to shy away from confrontation, perhaps in recognition of the declining real power of social democracy as the network underwent progressive erosion.

The loss of social democratic leadership authority became fully apparent at the end of January 1930. The Heimwehr announced its intention of holding a "stroll" on 2nd February attended for the first time by Heimwehr supporters from outside (from some twenty-six nearby villages) (59). This "stroll" subsequently took on the character of a showdown over the future of the social democratic "monopoly of the streets". In the preceding week there were "unusually strong" gatherings of young social democrats and communists in the town centre who were "in fighting mood" and of the opinion that "Steyr is a pure workers' town, where the Heimwehr had no business to be" (60). The Schutzbund then heightened the confrontational atmosphere by announcing its intention of holding a rival "stroll" on 2nd February. 300 Schutzbündler were only prevented from confronting the Heimwehr on Steyr's town square by the last-minute intervention of Mayor Sichlrader (61).

Sichlrader was evidently disturbed by the fact that the tension in the town in the week preceding 2nd February had come to the notice of outside authorities. Since mid-December 1929 there had been a persistent outcry in the Upper Austrian
bourgeois press against the partisan nature of the municipal police and social democratic aggression against the Heimwehr in Steyr. Bourgeois delegations demanded the federalisation of the police in Steyr and, in the short term, police reinforcements in meetings with local, Land and federal authorities (62). The Land government eventually obliged and ordered the dispatch of reinforcements of police to Steyr on 2nd February (63). This act effectively abrogated the autonomy of the town in security matters. The extra police presence on 2nd February largely kept the 400-500 social democratic and communist protesters away from the 100 or so Heimwehr supporters. Sichlraeder's intervention to restrain the Schutzbund, presumably aimed at preventing a bloody confrontation which might have been put down by force by the potentially unfriendly outside police presence, then ensured that the Heimwehr could walk the streets relatively undisturbed.

The usurpation of local security responsibilities by the Land showed that the social democratic "monopoly of the streets" could be breached. The monopoly was dependent on the complicity of the partisan municipal police force. The militant confrontation of the youthful Left and the Schutzbund in the end backfired on the social democrats by drawing Steyr to the attention of outside security authorities. Sichlraeder's intervention signalled his acceptance that the network and he himself had nothing left to offer in the fight against the mounting Heimwehr challenge once his police powers had been undermined. As the network disintegrated, it could logically no longer be employed in the struggle to maintain social democratic hegemony. The official, network-mobilisation response to the Heimwehr challenge fizzled out when it became apparent that its major weapon, which would in any case soon be federalised, was inadequate to contain the Heimwehr. Sichlraeder's actions in restraining the Heimwehr on 2nd February and the subsequent social democratic exhortations to moderation (64) announced the capitulation of social democratic hegemony in Steyr.
The role played by the local, non-Heimwehr bourgeoisie in the demise of social democratic hegemony in early 1930 is significant. Since the end of the monarchy, the bourgeoisie had bowed before the dominance of the social democrats in Steyr. The bourgeois parties, the christian socials and the pan-Germans, had been unable to challenge this dominance and were forced to accept the prevailing, heavily pro-social democratic political culture of the town. Only with the surge in Heimwehr activity in 1929 did the bourgeoisie stir. It regarded the Heimwehr as an ideal instrument with which to break social democratic domination in Steyr and threw its full weight behind it (65). Once the Heimwehr had made its initial incursions into Steyr in December 1929, the established bourgeois parties felt confident enough to act on their own. As the social democratic "hold" over Steyr weakened as the network crumbled, the bourgeoisie enjoyed increasing room for manoeuvre. In an unprecedented step, the bourgeois parties quitted the municipal council meeting on 20th December 1929 in protest at the shopping boycott called by the Schutzbund. They even called on the Land and the federal government to ban the Schutzbund for actions which exceeded its legal statutes (66).

The increased confidence of the bourgeois parties was reflected further in the delegations sent by them to demand the federalisation and/or reinforcement of the local police (67). As was noted above, this proved a decisive development in the breaking of social democratic hegemony, resulting eventually in the dispatch of outside police to Steyr. This set a precedent. Future militant protest against the appearance of the Heimwehr in Steyr could easily result in the intervention of a potentially unfriendly police force controlled by right wing politicians. Although some social democrats initially refused to renounce their confrontational stance (68), the social democratic movement by and large acquiesced. Social democratic stronghold mentality also collapsed once it was clear that the organisational basis of the movement's hegemony - the network -
had crumbled. By mid-March 1930, Heimwehr members were able to go about their business in Steyr openly and without interference (69). On 1st July the new federal police force took over in Steyr. In approving a mass rally of the Heimwehr on 31st August and effectively banning a planned counter-rally of the Schutzbund on the same day, it merely formalised the broken hegemony of the social democrats (70).

This chapter has illuminated the preoccupation with organisation which was central to the social democratic ethos in Steyr. The powers and functions of individual centres of organisational strength in the movement were harnessed, channelled and reinforced through the network so that the strength of the whole of the network was far greater than the sum of the organisational strengths of the individual parts could ever have been. This concentration of organisational strength formed the basis of social democratic hegemony in the town. A key feature of the network was that, in many respects, its strength and influence served the material interests of the social democratic membership (e.g. the provision of employment, financial perks, "proletarian assurance" etc.). Inevitably, this materialistic emphasis invited the danger of attracting "fellow travellers", opportunist instrumentalists with no more than a shallow material commitment to the movement. These were only "paper" members, whose commitment disappeared immediately the network could no longer generate material benefits. The instrumentalists also contributed, via the passivity of their commitment, to the consolidation and ossification of the policies and position of the movement's leadership. This took on great significance in the early 1930's when the inflexibility of the leadership led to increasing dissatisfaction in the movement, and eventually to the crystallisation of an active and organised left wing opposition. A foretaste of this was given by
the temporary militancy of the Schutzbund and younger social democrats in late 1929/early 1930.

The chapter has also shown how the successful pursuit of the social democratic preoccupation with organisation and the assertion of social democratic hegemony was conditional on the particular circumstance of the local milieu in the late 1920's. Without the boom at the Steyr-Werke the social democrats would not have been able to consolidate and concentrate their organisational strength or, therefore, to establish their local hegemony. This point is underlined by the rapidity with which the network and social democratic hegemony disintegrated after the shutdown of car production at the Steyr-Werke in August 1929. The efficacy of the social democratic preoccupation with organisation was contingent on local economic prosperity; it was thus inherently flawed and unreliable as means to serve social democratic interests consistently and effectively. However, as discussed in the following chapter, the preoccupation became more and more engrained as the single tactic of an increasingly inflexible party leadership.

Nevertheless, the hegemony of the social democrats in the late 1920's, however impermanent its foundations, blatantly contradicted the broader trend in Austria towards the predominance of the Right and the increasing subordination of social democracy. The social democrats in Steyr remained impervious to this trend; they were insulated by the stronghold mentality which was central to their ethos. This mentality ensured that national developments had little resonance in Steyr, whereas local events had supreme importance. The Heimwehr's challenge to social democratic hegemony in late 1929/early 1930 was thus, initially at least, vigorously rejected. However, even the energetic defiance encouraged by this mentality could not forever ignore the fact that the collapse of the Steyr-Werke had undermined the basis of social democratic hegemony. By the spring of 1930, the Heimwehr
challenge was successful. At this point, the social democrats found themselves newly realigned with the national trends from which they had previously been insulated.
CHAPTER FOUR

PARTY STRUCTURE AND THE POLITICS OF THE SDAP

This chapter contends that the internal structure of the SDAP in Steyr was a major determinant of the political strategy of the social democratic movement. In the 1920's, the party structure became increasingly bureaucratic and ossified. It was governed by a strong sense of hierarchy and discipline and was devoid of any meaningful democratic input either from ordinary members or from the ranks of the party activists. The party was dominated by a small, unchallenged leadership elite, which, annually confirmed in its position as if by right, remained virtually unchanged throughout the period under examination. In this position, the leadership elite developed an attitude which increasingly saw the extension and consolidation of the organisation as self-justification, as their primary political concern. The activist members of the SDAP were similarly imbued with a passion for organisation. Their energies were fully consumed in the petty, administrative tasks necessary for the smooth running of the organisation. Organisational work became the centrepiece of their lives; for the activists too, organisation became an end in itself.

Thus both the party leaders and activists had a fetish for organisation for its own sake. This had profound implications for the nature and flexibility of the party strategy. The size and welfare of the organisation became the raison d'être of political life. The organisation was therefore never to be jeopardised, it had always to be preserved and consolidated. This was reflected in prudent, moderate policies and a tactical caution which rejected innovation and relied on established
methods and practices. One of the major themes in the remainder of this study is the caution and inflexibility of social democratic policy and tactics in Steyr in the early 1930's. This chapter seeks to establish that this caution and inflexibility derived from the nature of the party structure in Steyr.

The internal structure of the SDAP in Steyr is examined below in a critical comparison with the theories of Robert Michels as set out in his seminal work on the sociology of political parties (1). Michels' work concerned the nature of expanding and/or large-scale organisations. He suggested that any expanding organisation will inevitably develop an unwieldy bureaucratic structure, dominated by an oligarchy with a fetish for organisation for its own sake. As has been argued throughout this study, the social democrats in Steyr had a basic preoccupation with the expansion of the movement's organisational infrastructure. This preoccupation reflected the nature of the social democratic ethos in Steyr. The expansion of organisational strength was the insular reaction of a movement isolated within a hostile social and political environment; it was a means to underline the nature of Steyr as a stronghold of social democracy set within a region dominated by the Right. Since the fundamental orientation of the social democratic ethos in Steyr was directed towards organisational expansion, it is argued that the SDAP was especially prone to conform to the syndrome discussed by Michels.

Michels was convinced of the inevitability of oligarchical rule in any expanding organisation. He held that as the scale of an organisation expands, it becomes impossible for every member to be able to oversee all its activities. A division of labour and specialisation of function become a technical necessity. Representatives of the membership are thus entrusted with the direction of the organisation. An organisational hierarchy of directors and ordinary members is created, which
can become more and more complex as functions are sub-divided and specialisations narrowed as the organisation expands. A bureaucratic superstructure develops, which wrests effective control of the organisation away from the ordinary members. Every division of labour represents a diminution of the control of the membership, and by implication, an accession of power for those performing the specialised functions:

The more extended and the more ramified the official apparatus of the organisation ... the less efficient becomes the direct control exercised by the rank and file, and the more is this control replaced by the increasing power of committees (2).

In theory, those delegated by the membership of a political party to direct the organisation are usually subject to the criticism and democratic control exercised by the membership. In practice, the ordinary members are incompetent; they do not possess the specialised knowledge and expertise needed to be able to criticise and control. Furthermore, with each division of labour and each incremental specialisation, the delegates, or leaders, become more and more indispensable. There are only a limited number of people able to perform specialised functions, so that ultimately, the party cannot do without the leaders:

This special competence, this expert knowledge, which the leader acquires in matters inaccessible, or almost inaccessible to the mass, gives him a security of tenure which conflicts with the essential principles of democracy (3).

In other words, no matter what formal arrangements are provided for the election and re-election of the leaders, their indispensability will automatically secure for them an indefinite tenure. This, and the inability of the rank and file to criticise and control the leadership must mean that inner-party democracy is a sham. There is a fundamental
incompatibility between the specialisation of function and hierarchy inherent in any large-scale organisation and effective democratic control. Inner-party power is concentrated firmly and uncontrollably in the hands of the leadership.

Having attained this position of power, Michels asserts, the party leader undergoes a "psychological metamorphosis" (4). He who has attained power "will not readily be induced to return to the comparatively obscure position which he formerly occupied" (5). The consciousness of power encourages vanity and greed, which is reflected in the attempt to consolidate and extend further the basis of that power. This includes the accumulation of various party functions and the attempt to give the party organisation an ever wider base and an ever increasing sphere of influence. New paths of activity are opened and pursued with vigour and new specialisations are taken on. In the process, sight of the "immortal principles" of socialism is lost, and the "fanatical advocates of the organisational idea" become "stuck in a purely bureaucratic mode of thought, with no insight into wider political concerns" (6).

The party leader/bureaucrat also tends to identify his own interests with those of the party organisation; the fanatic of organisation takes on the attitude of "le parti c'est moi" (7). This fusion of party interest and self-interest is furthered by the material dependence of many of the leaders, increasingly employed by the party, on the organisation. The leaders become highly conservative in an organisational sense; the organisation is the party's and their primary concern and must therefore never be endangered in any way. This is reflected in the political arena by policies of prudence, caution and responsibility, of piecemeal, incremental reform. Michels concluded:
The party becomes increasingly inert as the strength of its organisation grows; it loses its revolutionary impetus, becomes sluggish, not in respect of action alone, but also in the sphere of thought. More and more tenaciously does the party cling to what it calls the 'ancient and glorious tactics', the tactics which have led to a continued increase in membership. More and more invincible becomes the aversion to all aggressive action (8).

The value of using Michels' views of the party organisation as a framework for this chapter is that he describes a real situation which bears many similarities to that within the party organisation in Steyr. Michels' theories are developed from the situation he observed in the German SPD from around 1890 to 1915 (with less frequent references to other socialist parties in the same time period). He thus differs from the other major socialist theorists of the party organisation (Lenin, Luxemburg, Gramsci etc. (9)), who took a prescriptive orientation. They put forward what they would ideally like to see in the organisation of the party. Their outlook was optimistic, suggesting alterations or improvements in the way the party organisation, especially its leadership, should be conceived, in order to ensure the development towards "revolution". Michels was essentially pessimistic and was unconcerned to suggest improvements. He chose to describe what already existed and to claim a universal validity for these findings - excessive, cumbersome bureaucracy and the inevitability of oligarchical rule. He describes an attitude which elevates the "organisation" from a means to an end, while on the other hand, the "idea" or "immortal principles" of socialism are relegated in favour of a tactical caution which relies on tried and trusted methods. This chapter proposes that the SDAP in Steyr conformed to this model and seeks to establish that the caution and inflexibility of the party derived from oligarchical and bureaucratic tendencies similar to those described by Michels.
The SPAP in Steyr was an organisation of considerable size and diverse function. It could rely on around 60% of the votes at elections and was the ruling party in Steyr's town council. Apart from its municipal policies and responsibilities, the town council majority played a major role in the social democratic network, as discussed in the last chapter. The SDAP was also the centrepoint of a district organisation with thirty-seven sections and almost 10,000 members in Steyr and the surrounding villages in the late 1920's (10), and had a supervisory role with regard to the various local social democratic auxiliary organisations. The scale of the organisation is reflected in a basic, hierarchical division of labour in the formal party structure; it had three levels: section, activist meetings/conferences and district organisation. The district organisation represented not only the town, but also the social democratic sections in the nearby villages. In practice though, it was dominated by the nine party sections in Steyr itself (11), which comprised around 5,000 members in the late 1920's.

At section level, the level of the ordinary, non-activist member, there was a continuous round of organisational, informational and educational meetings and events as well as some light entertainment. Section life was organised by a network of petty activists, who were responsible for basic administrative tasks such as advertising meetings, collecting subscriptions, hawking the party press etc. It is unclear exactly how many of these activists there were. An informed estimate would be 150 (12). These met regularly in general activist meetings and in the more exclusive conferences of the section leaders.
The sovereign body of the district party was the annual District Conference. This consisted of delegates from the party sections and auxiliary organisations and the whole district leadership. The conference annually elected the District Committee which was responsible for the day-to-day running of the party and the co-ordination of the whole district's activities. The District Committee, consisting of around twenty social democrats, formed the top, and dominant level of the social democratic organisational hierarchy in Steyr. The formal structure of the party might seem to provide opportunity for influence to percolate up from the members and activists to the leaders. In reality though, the level of rank and file and activist participation in party affairs was low and the quality of this participation was limited. Power within the party was concentrated firmly in the hands of the district leadership.

At section level, participation was not encouraged. After dispensing with administrative formalities at section meetings (minutes, financial report etc.), the assembled members were then lectured by one of the local party notables. There was not much room for creative discussion. As Josef Mayrhofer, member of the SDAP in the First Republic notes: "If it was a purely informative meeting, inspired by some current happening, then of course there was not much discussion (13). In a survey of 246 section meetings between 1928 and 1932, 155 or 63% of the lectures were of such an "informative" nature about some aspect of current affairs (14). The role of the member at a section meeting was purely receptive. He or she was there to hear and take in, but not to question what a representative of the leadership had to say. This was also the case at so-called "discussion evenings" in the sections. These were instituted to provide - according to the party newspaper - occasions when current events in politics, economics and social policy could be discussed in the intimate atmosphere of the section (15). The need for special discussion meetings implies (and confirms the above analysis) that normal section meetings were not
forums suitable for reasoned debate. However the discussion evening were no improvement. They distinguished themselves from normal section meetings only in that the evening was begun and ended with some form of entertainment and that two party notables instead of one gave a lecture. The two lectures were then summarised by the section leader. At no point were contributions from the floor sought or encouraged (16). Discussion evenings and section meetings alike were inner-party disciplining agencies, directed not at increasing popular participation, but at instilling in the rank and file the views and outlook of the party leadership. At the basic level of the party, conformity, rather than diversity of opinion, was encouraged.

In 1929 the style of party meetings was attacked (for the first and only time). Under the Steyner Tagblatt headline: "An End to Boring Meetings!", a functionary suggested a new format for social democratic meetings in an attempt to stimulate greater interest among the members (17). He proposed a much less formal type of meeting, abandoning a fixed agenda and long, "dry" reports and lectures for brevity, humour and entertainment. The official party response in the Steyner Tagblatt vehemently rejected such innovation. The writer (presumably the editor, Josef Kirchberger, a member of the SDAP District Committee) emphasised the necessity and superiority of the established meetings format in candid and, for the purposes of this thesis, instructive terms. In his eyes, social democratic meetings bore the major responsibility for the rise and successes of the SDAP; they were, he continued, the most effective means of proletarian education and enlightenment and promoted class consciousness, "iron discipline" and "unconditional solidarity and party loyalty" (18).

In other words, party meetings were conceived of as a means to educate the rank and file to the qualities of unity and discipline. They were not thought of as a means by which to
assess and take account of rank and file opinion in the development of party policies. The virtues Kirchberger mentioned - unity and discipline - were furthermore reiterated and reemphasised constantly in the rhetoric of the SDAP in Steyr. Any challenge posed to the party - e.g. the German Gymnastics Festival of 1928, the Heimwehr campaign in Steyr in 1929-1930 and the surges in local communist strength in 1931 and national socialist strength after 1932 - was met by calls for discipline, solidarity and unity (19). The emphasis on inner-party discipline was accentuated by repeated rhetorical recourse to militaristic terminology: the youth movement was the "cadet school of the party"; the tasks facing the party necessitated a "well-drilled and disciplined army of functionaries"; the activist dues collectors were the "unknown soldiers in the positional war of the proletariat, who conscientiously collected month after month the ammunition for the great army of class warriors". (20). The emphasis on discipline generally and the allusions to military discipline in particular reinforce the impression of a local party which functioned according to the dictates of the top of its hierarchy. At section level there was certainly no democratic input; section life was directed towards the dissemination from above of information and discipline.

The social democratic activist in Steyr had a far greater intensity of involvement in party life than the ordinary, non-activist member. There were far more meetings of the activists than of the ordinary members. These were on the whole of three types: meetings of individual section committees, district-wide activist assemblies and district conferences of section leaders only. Meetings of the section committees reflected the nature of activist work in the sections and concentrated exclusively on organisational matters. The district level activist gatherings had a wider remit, taking in not only organisational matters but also current political events and trends and local municipal politics. Meetings
concerning the latter two subject areas were however, as at section level, characterised by the domination of proceedings by representatives of the district leadership and by the lack of creative input by the other participants. The function of the activists was either to agree to and thereby legitimate municipal policies already decided at higher level (21) or to receive tactical instructions (22).

Only in petty inner-organisational matters did the activists respond - with some vigour - to the suggestions of the local leadership (23). This was a pattern repeated at the annual District Conferences and reflects, in Michelsian terms, the bureaucratic nature of the party: as the scale of the party organisation and the division of labour increased, specialised, inner-organisational tasks were delegated to the activist network. The activists, as will be seen in section 4.3 below, were totally preoccupied with these tasks. They were the archetypal "fanatical advocates of the organisational idea", with "no insight into wider political concerns" (24).

The professed tasks of the District Conference were to review the previous year's work whilst at the same time discussing "thoroughly and profoundly" the tactical direction to be followed in the coming year (25). Not surprisingly, given the lack of inner-party discussion at section and functionary levels, the conferences did not even approach the fulfilment of these tasks. The review of the past year took the form of detailed reports by the Party Secretary. These reports were a dry, organisation by organisation guide to membership, the amount of meetings held etc. and refrained from any attempt to prescribe a future course from past experience. What is more, they were accepted by the 150 or so assembled delegates uncritically, without debate and even "with great satisfaction" (26).
There was no discussion of future tactics at the conferences. The debating energies of the conference delegates were fully consumed in the discussion of internal organisational matters, usually concerning the setting of higher party subscription rates. The intensity and liveliness of these debates contrasted strongly with the usually receptive and reactive role of the party faithful. At the 1928 conference for example, some fourteen delegates, around one tenth of those present spoke in the annual subscriptions debate (27). The Steyrer Tagblatt saw such debates as an indication of "inner healthiness" and of the primacy of freedom of expression in the party (28). This view needs considerable qualification. The debates may have shown the undoubted healthiness of a strong organisational ethos in the SDAP, but this hardly equates with freedom of expression. The range of topics freely discussed below the leadership level of the SDAP was minimal. The majority of issues, especially those concerning the tactics and policies of the party in Steyr, were decided within the ranks of a limited leadership circle and then transmitted without contradiction to the rest of the party. The leadership was not under the effective control of the party membership or even of the activists. Authority in the party flowed clearly from the top downwards.

This compares closely with the analysis of Michels, who predicted a progressive diminution of the powers of the rank and file as functions were hierarchically divided and sub-divided. As functions became more and more specialised, the lower levels of the party hierarchy did not have the knowledge and expertise to exercise control over the leaders. The specialised knowledge of the activists in inner-organisational matters was perhaps an exception, but it was limited. Their knowledge did not extend to broader tactical or policy concerns and the ordinary, non-activist members were even worse placed. Inner-party decision-making power was concentrated firmly at the top of the party hierarchy. This situation was consolidated
both by the propagation of inner-party discipline, as discussed above, and by the developing indispensability of the leaders. The concentration of tactical and policy decision-making in the hands of the leadership had the inevitable corollary that the leaders were the only party members qualified to make tactical and policy decisions, and thus to lead the party. The lack of a credibly qualified alternative ensured the existence of a stable and unchanging leadership with potentially unlimited tenure.

Although the District Conference annually elected the members of the higher party committees, the elections had no more than a "rubber stamp" function. Between 1928 and 1933, there was no instance of controversy in the elections. No candidates put themselves forward to challenge the incumbents; the official slate of candidates, put forward by the conference elections committee, was the only slate to vote on. This was either accepted by acclamation or with a unanimous vote. 1928 provides the exception, when some of those on the official list attracted "only" an overwhelming majority of the votes cast (29). The elections were not elections in a competitive sense, but existed to confirm and legitimate the authority of the established local leadership. As a result, the membership of the District Committee remained highly stable. Table 6 shows that the only changes in the membership of the "inner" District Committee between 1928 and 1933 were a formal alternation of the two luminaries of the women's organisation, Erna Schwitzer and Fanny Pammer, and the departure (death?) of Franz Huber. The membership of the "outer" committee of ordinary and supervisory members was only slightly less ossified.

Power in the SDAP in Steyr was thus concentrated very firmly in the hands of the leadership elite of the party. The leaders were secure and unchallenged in their positions; they presided over a hierarchical, highly disciplined party structure, with no real democratic content. Having said that,
it is doubtful whether many in the party actually desired any real level of democracy in inner-party affairs. Michels noted that the majority of party members in the pre-war SPD was completely indifferent to decisions the party might make; they voluntarily renounced their formal democratic rights (30). And in his examination of the organisation of the Austrian SDAP, Peter Kulemann makes the point that, as a mass party, it theoretically accepted anyone as a member as long as he or she was prepared to pay party dues (31). Entrance into the party does not automatically equate with a commitment to participate and demand an active role in the party decision-making process. This is especially pertinent in Steyr because of the existence — as established in the previous chapter — of such a large instrumentally motivated membership in the social democratic movement. Many party members joined not out of political commitment or the desire to help formulate party policies, but for basic reasons of personal, material interest. These party members were simply not interested in inner-party democracy. They were essentially passive and indifferent to political issues in the party. This helped, in a negative sense, to legitimate the authority of the leadership and reduced the potential for opposition within the party. The instrumentalists thus further secured the dominant position of the party leaders.

4.2: The Nature of the Party Elite.

The party elite in Steyr consisted of the twenty or so members of the District Committee in Steyr. As Michels suggested, the elite had a highly developed organisational mentality. It sought to extend both its own power base within the party and social democratic movement as well as the general sphere of influence of the party in the town. According to the
party's annual report of 1928: "The magic word for all progress is organisation!" (32). Organisational advance was the raison d'être of the party elite. Because of its dominant position in the party, this was naturally reflected in the political outlook of the party as a whole. The social democrats in Steyr followed a politics of "small steps", or "partial achievements" (33). Advances should be made where possible, but under no circumstances should they be detrimental to the organisation.

Although any verification or rejection of a Micheilsian "psychological metamorphosis" of the party leaders is difficult to establish, there is evidence to suggest that the party elite had a certain "greed" for power. The elite was concerned to broaden its inner-organisational power base where possible. This was achieved primarily by an accumulation of functions, either vertically in the party, or horizontally in the town hall, the MAV or other social democratic organisations. Of the members of the District Committee in 1932, only one, to my knowledge, held no other social democratic office at the time; the remainder held at least two and usually more. This was, in part, a result of the elite's monopolisation of delegated positions in higher party bodies by mutual nomination. This was certainly the case for delegates to the Upper Austrian and national party conferences. These were elected at the District Conference (unanimously, as was the practice) "according to the proposal" made by a member of the District Committee (34). Other accumulated functions reflected the individual's "career" in the party. Julius Rüßmann, for example, was a "local statesman", whose various functions derived from his membership of the town council (see Figure 3). August Moser on the other hand (Figure 4) was primarily a trade unionist, and Franz Sichlarer's interests were fairly evenly spread (Figure 5).

The party elite sought to "collect" functions and the power associated with them. This indicates that the members of the elite received some kind of personal, psychological benefit
from performing the functions and exercising the power. If this is so, the implication is that the level of personal benefit received was related to the extent and health of the organisation and the number of functions available. The party elite thus developed a narrow, bureaucratic, organisational mentality which identified personal interest with the interests of the party organisation. The identification of self-interest with party interest was intensified by the material dependence of most of the elite on the social democratic movement. Of the twenty-three members of the District Committee in 1932, sixteen were in a job directly or indirectly dependent on local social democracy (see Table 7). Two, Witzany, the local M.P., and Sichlrader, Steyr's mayor, owed their existences to social democratic votes. Five were employees of social democratic organisations (Tribrunner, Klement, Kirchberger, Heumann and Drašl) and another five had passed through the MAV's recruitment veto at the Steyr-Werke (Schrangl, Moser, Schopper, Sperl and Sieberer). Ferdinand Mayrhofer was an employee of the municipality and the three teachers Roithner, Azwanger and Schwitzer worked under the administration of the social democratic town hall majority. The material existence of these sixteen party leaders was largely dependent on the existence of the organisation. Because its personal interests were intertwined with the successful development and continued existence of the organisation, the party elite tended towards a phlegmatic organisational conservatism.

The organisational mentality and conservatism of the elite was expressed in several ways. It promoted, for example, "a tendency towards an exclusive and all-absorbing specialisation" to the detriment of an awareness of wider political concerns (35). Franz Sichlrader, mayor of Steyr and holder of the finance portfolio in the town hall, presents for the impression of total self-immersion in the particular problems and details of municipal finance. Sichlrader was the author of numerous articles on Steyr's financial situation in the local press and
national journals. He gave many speeches on the subject in the council chamber and the Upper Austrian Landtag, and was involved in regular financial discussions with the Upper Austrian and federal governments (36). Anton Azwanger, vice-mayor after 1930, had a similar preoccupation with his municipal welfare portfolio (37). Party leaders were immersed in the technicalities of their respective organisational fields. They tended thereby to lose sight of wider issues and to develop a narrow-minded and rigid outlook, lodged in the perceived importance of their particular organisational functions.

Organisational mentality and conservatism was also reflected strongly in the reports prepared by the full-time Party Secretary and Deputy Treasurer on the District Committee, Karl Klement, and given to the annual District Conference. In the late 1920's, a period of growth for the social democratic movement, these were punctuated with calls to develop, extend, consolidate and intensify the organisation and to preserve any advances that had been made (38). In the decline of the 1930's, the emphasis changed towards attempting to establish — unconvincingly — the general strength of attachment and commitment to the organisation and towards making good any losses (39) (made largely, it must be assumed, by widespread defections of instrumentalists). Whatever the background conditions, the organisation was always the centrepiece of the elite's considerations. A quote from Klement's 1928 report depicts this attitude:

The more solidly we build up the organisations of the proletariat, the better each individual is integrated, the stronger we are, the better we can gather together the revolutionary energy and creative forces of the Austrian proletariat into a unified will (40).

It is instructive that at no point in the report did Klement elaborate on the goals to be striven for by the
"unified will" which would develop from stronger organisation. His "revolutionary" and "creative" phraseology was empty rhetoric. The sincerity of his report lay in the professed desire to build up the organisation. Organisation had become self-justification. The party elite was remote from what Michels called the "immortal principles" which guided the social democratic movement in its early days. It was distracted by its material dependence on the movement, the personal/psychological benefits gained from exercising party functions and its narrow and bureaucratic functional specialisations. Organisation was no longer a means by which the "immortal principles" would be realised; it had become an end in itself for the party elite.

The party elite's preoccupation with extending and/or defending the party organisation was reflected in the wider political strategy of social democracy in Steyr. Overall political advance was equated directly with organisational advance. This notion had practical local relevance in the late 1920's in the form of the network. The exploitation of fruitful avenues of organisational influence in the Steyr-Werke and the municipality created a unique situation of localised social democratic hegemony. Although this situation was only temporary, and conditional on an extraordinary upswing at the Steyr-Werke, it provided local evidence of the potential success of a strategy of incremental organisational advance. This potential provides one reason for the tenacity with which the elite adhered to this organisational strategy in the 1930's.

In broader terms, the elite had a very mechanistic conception of political power: it held that the SDAP would gradually evolve into power as the social democratic membership and voters approached the critical point of 51% of the electorate. After the April 1927 federal elections, which saw
the SDAP's national vote increase from 39.6% to 42.3%, this conception was clearly defined:

An intensive recruitment of new members and subscribers to our press must be begun, so we can achieve at future elections that which was not yet possible in the election campaign which has just finished (41).

Isolated within the local milieu and insulated from broader political trends in Austria, the social democrats in Steyr persisted in directing their activities towards expanding their electoral base, in preparation for the final victory they confidently expected, the conquest of power in the state (42). The recruitment of new social democrats - usually particular target groups like women, small businessmen, female youth, rural youth or the rural population in general (43) - was the centrepoint of local social democratic activity. Every new vote, every new member, every new mandate etc. was regarded as a step towards ultimate political power in Austria. This notion was seemingly validated as the SDAP's national vote gradually increased. A premium was thus placed on the sheer size of the organisation. The larger the organisation, the nearer were the social democrats, by implication, to power in the state.

In this sense, the SDAP in Steyr was a microcosm of the party at national level. The national party aimed to see the whole of a broadly defined (44) Austrian working class organised in the party. This it sought to do by widening the appeal of the party, especially in relation to the peasantry and the religious electorate (45). The national party had a distinct fixation with its upward electoral "trend" in its "search for majority" (46), and a distinct antipathy for anything which went beyond this essentially moderate, evolutionary strategy for power. Kulemann notes in this respect that the national party leadership "put the brakes on" whenever militant or radical tendencies gained influence in the SDAP (47). He attributes this to a conservative tendency in the
"party bureaucracy" or elite at national level. The national party structure was, like the local level in Steyr, characterised by a lack of inner-party democracy and an ossified leadership group, virtually unchanged since the end of the First World War. This group enjoyed its formative political experiences before the war, at a time when the SDAP was making slow, but seemingly irrepressible progress (48). As a result:

They tended especially to view the further expansion of the party and its structure, the occupation of public offices and the winning of positions of power in society as laboriously achieved successes. Because of this, they also tended ... to conservatism with regard to organisation and tactics (49).

Furthermore, the national party elite was dependent on the party organisation, both in material terms and in terms of prestige. This reinforced a conservative mentality which subordinated the quest for new achievements to the defence of what already existed (50). This became most evident during the Dollfuß dictatorship, when the national leadership sought to appease Dollfuß in a fruitless attempt to preserve the remaining achievements of the republic and of "Red Vienna" (51).

The party elite in Steyr was bound by a similar obsession to defend existing achievements at all costs. After the network collapsed in the wake of the Steyr-Werke in late 1929/early 1930, this obsession became particularly acute, as the elite had by then little left to conserve but the core party organisation. Its overriding concern was to avoid any controversy which might be detrimental to part of, or even the whole organisation. This first became apparent late in 1929, when the Heimwehr was trying to establish a foothold in "red" Steyr. On the one hand, confrontation with the Heimwehr was encouraged on the streets of Steyr. This was "safe", because the municipal police force could be relied upon to favour the
social democrats. On the other hand, when the Heimwehr held parades in nearby villages, or when it was merely travelling through Steyr, the party leadership advised the avoidance of confrontation (52). In these situations, security was the responsibility of the provincial gendarmery, a force broadly sympathetic to the Heimwehr. Any confrontation with the Heimwehr under these circumstances would likely develop into a confrontation with armed and unfriendly gendarmes. The intervention of Sichirader to prevent the Schutzbund confronting the Heimwehr in Steyr on 2nd February 1930 (see Chapter Three) must be seen in the same light. A clash between the two paramilitary forces might have been put down with force by the outside police presence, whose right wing tendencies would ensure that the social democrats bore the brunt of their intercession.

The social democratic leadership would not risk bringing the wrath of the state down on the party organisation. Party discipline, "the strongest dam, the safest stronghold of the proletariat" became increasingly important in "preventing the 'wild', one-off actions of formless groups" (53). This was especially so after the permanent installation of a strong, anti-social democratic federal police force in Steyr in July 1930. Thereafter, the party leadership was to issue the order: "Do not let yourselves be provoked!" with monotonous regularity when faced by controversy in the politically tense atmosphere of the 1930's. Faced by the provocations of the Heimwehr and increasingly repressive central governments, the social democrats withdrew timidly into their organisational shell, avoiding any confrontation which might damage the organisation.

Even after the fundamental changes in the local political framework which took place in 1929-1930, the activities of the SDAP remained much as before. Efforts were still directed towards the recruitment of new members in an effort to win an electoral majority. During the November 1930 federal elections
campaign for example, a few days after social democratic buildings in Steyr had been officially searched for weapons for the first time, the workers were advised to maintain discipline and calm and not to provide any excuse for the intervention of the executive: "All our forces must be gathered for the 9th November [election day], so we are able then to give the government the right answer" (54). The elite adhered adamantly to a politics of persuasion, an attempt to amass enough social democratic support to gain influence over the state. Signatures were enthusiastically collected in support of initiative legislation drawn up by the national SDAP on social insurance in 1930 (55). The coincident 1931 Landtag and municipal elections were approached with an unusual vigour (56) as was a recruitment drive in October 1932 (57), which was held with the following aims in mind:

Every party comrade is to win a new fellow fighter! A battalion of social democratic party members ... means a regiment of social democratic voters. And many social democratic voters mean successful defence against reaction, protection of the achievements of the revolution and a better future for the workers of Austria: Socialism! (58).

Admirable though the commitment of the Steyr party elite to the democratic electoral process may have been, it was no longer attuned to the Realpolitik of Austria in the 1930's. The Austrian Right had been committed to the abandonment of the republican constitution of 1919 at least since the late 1920's. The preference was for an authoritarian, corporatist alternative derived from catholic social theory. This, of course, left no room for the class-oriented politics of the SDAP. In March 1933, the aims of the Right approached fruition, as Chancellor Dollfuß by-passed parliamentary rule and began to govern by emergency decree. The SDAP - in Steyr as at national level - had lost the democratic arena to which its whole outlook and activity was directed. As Otto Leichter points out, as long as the Austrian Right adhered to the democratic
constitution, the SDAP had a reasonable chance of defending its achievements. Its tactics had developed within and were best suited to a relatively open democracy. However, as soon as the governments of the Right abandoned competitive parliamentary politics for authoritarianism and dictatorship, the SDAP was "lost":

For the semi-visible battleground of illegality, of half and three-quarters fascism requires forces different from those the mass party would have been able to deploy in the bright light of democracy (59).

The strategy of the party elite in Steyr was increasingly outmoded in the 1930's. Its mechanistic conception of political power and adherence to tried and trusted political methods were exposed as inadequate in the struggle to maintain past achievements in the face of a dominant, authoritarian Right. As at national level, the local party was afflicted by an inflexibility of tactic and a rigidity of response to the new background conditions of the 1930's. The elite's evolutionary strategy, conditioned by its preoccupation with organisation, was established decisively during the 1920's. Its apparent success in the insulated environment of the local milieu - steady electoral advance and the local hegemony derived from the network - gave it a legitimacy which, in the absence of inner-party democracy, remained unchallenged. The elite's strategy became just as engrained, ossified and institutionalised as the elite itself. As discussed above, the elite's self-interest was identified with the interests of the party organisation. The overtly organisational strategy the elite followed - expansion in the favourable circumstances of the 1920's, defence and preservation in the 1930's - was logically self-serving. It would not be changed as long as the elite retained the psychological and material benefits derived from its position at the head of the party.
But the strategy followed by the party elite was a patent failure in the 1930's. Neither was the rise of the right stemmed, nor was the social democratic organisation successfully preserved: membership in the SDAP slipped from around 5,000 in 1928-1929 to a mere 3,737 in 1931 (60). It is therefore not surprising that an opposition faction emerged in the movement in Steyr between 1930 and 1933, which rejected the established strategy of the party elite. This faction drew on dissatisfaction among the ranks of the MAV, the Schutzbund and the social democratic youth. Although the leaders of the faction were, to some extent, prominent party figures, the opposition was centred outside the party. Explicit inner-party opposition remained minimal. A partial explanation for this lies in the strict inner-party discipline propagated by the elite. More significant though is the nature of the activist caste in the SDAP in Steyr.

4.3: The Nature of the Party Activists.

As the party expands, a group of active members is drawn in to perform tasks which are relatively menial, but indispensable for the smooth functioning of the organisation. They form a layer in the hierarchical party bureaucracy between the leaders and the rank and file, non-activist members. In Steyr, as elsewhere (61), the activists were highly conscious of their status as a differentiated caste within the party organisation. There was an explicit inner-party demarcation between activists and ordinary members. Activists were privy to special "Activist Meetings" and there were also exclusive "Conferences" for the section leaders (62). Party "Schools" were set up for the training and education of the activists (63). And every year at the District Conference, the activists were singled out for special praise for their tireless and self-sacrificing work on
behalf of the party (64). In short, the activists were accorded a prestigious and respected rank within the party hierarchy.

Michels attributed the decision to enter the party hierarchy and take on this prestigious rank to materialistic motives. Working within the socialist party offered the worker a chance to secure a rise not just in inner-party but also social status: "For an intelligent German workman there is hardly any other way which offers him such rapid opportunities of 'improving his condition' as service in the socialist army (65). Activist work was the first step towards a paid position in the party leadership or bureaucracy, the first step in leaving behind the proletarian lifestyle of the manual worker and becoming a "deproletarianised" member of the petty bourgeoisie. Work in the party bureaucracy raised the activists above their original social position. Entry into the party hierarchy was therefore an aim of proletarian social ambition (66).

In this respect, Michels' analysis is not applicable to the local party in Steyr. It has a highly materialistic bias and neglects the more psychological factors he elsewhere finds important. Although the activist caste in Steyr did represent a recruiting ground for the party leadership, this role was limited. In absolute terms there were relatively few leadership positions to rise into. The positions which existed were, in any case, largely unavailable due to the inertia of the leadership elite. Assuming though that the activists did have petty bourgeois aspirations, there was no guarantee that these would have been fulfilled even if they did eventually attain membership of the elite. Of the members of the District Committee in 1932, only eight out of twenty-three (Witzany, Triburunner, Klement, Kirchberger, Sichlraer, Mayrhofer, Haumann and Drelll - see Table 7) had jobs which might be considered higher on the social scale than typical manual working class employment and which were also related to their
position in the social democratic movement. "Deproletarianisation" and petty bourgeois aspirations in the party hierarchy were not significant phenomena in the SDAP in Steyr.

Josef Buttinger provides a much more convincing interpretation of activist commitment in Austria. In his discussion of the hypothetical "Frau Meier", the archetypal social democratic activist, he assesses why the commitment of the activists to the SDAP remained so strong even after the dissolution of the party in February 1934 (67). For Frau Meier, the party was "home, fatherland and religion". She identified her life completely with that of the party. In doing so, she was able to feel as significant, respected and powerful as the party was. Her dedication to serving the (social democratic) community gave her a worthiness, importance and sense of purpose denied her in her normal daily life. Socialism for Frau Meier was not a question of a utopian future society, but consisted of nothing more than her present life and work in the party. Her activist work did not bring with it social mobility, but a sense of significance and self-importance unavailable elsewhere. This produced a tenacious adherence to the party as a centre of personal life.

Sources of information on activist commitment in Steyr are limited. Josef Mayrhofer, social democratic youth activist in Steyr in the First Republic, provides an exception, asserting that the community spirit of party life was the major motivation for involvement (68). More broadly, social democrats in Steyr were dominated by the consciousness and experience of their isolation within a non-social democratic region. In this situation, it may be assumed that active involvement in party life (and that of other social democratic organisations - see Chapter Five) provided compensation and reassurance. Party work thus became, as for "Frau Meier" a focal point of daily life. It can therefore be assumed that the activists in Steyr largely
conformed to Buttlinger's stereotype. Among the activists there was therefore both a great personal satisfaction derived from working for the party and an intense self-identification with the party. Like the party elite, the activists received certain personal/psychological benefits from their role in the party. They too had something to conserve. They thus shared the organisational conservatism of the elite.

The organisational conservatism of the activists in Steyr was accentuated by the type of tasks they carried out. They were charged with the maintenance and operation of the organisation: "The party organisation stood and fell with the activists and their enterprise" (69). They provided essential contact between mass membership and the party. Party meetings were advertised personally by the activist network and party subscriptions were likewise personally collected. This was perhaps their most crucial task. Without income, the party obviously could not exist. Great importance was thus lent to the work of the "sub-treasurers", the dues collecting activists (70). This is reflected in the intensity of debate on the level of subscriptions at the District Conference and at functionary meetings which was noted in Section 4.1. The activists were also responsible for hawking the party press, recruiting new party members at every possible opportunity and making sure that existing members remained in the party (71). They were experts in general inner-organisational affairs. The whole of their energy was consumed in administrative and organisational matters.

This was what Otto Bauer characterised in a famous and influential speech in 1928 as "revolutionäre Kleinarbeit" (72), literally "revolutionary work of minute detail". Bauer's terminology implied that every minute detail of activist work, every subscription, every new recruit etc., was a step towards "revolution", or, in less rhetorical terms, the ultimate electoral success of the Social Democratic Party. For the
activists too, organisational advance was directly equated with political advance. The strength of the organisation was directly related to the social democrats' perceived proximity to power. The activists shared not only the elite's organisational conservatism, but also its mechanistic conception of political power. Both groups thus had a fetish for the extension, consolidation and preservation of the organisation. This identity of outlook, strengthened by the personal benefits activists and elite drew from the existence of the organisation, explain why protest over the inflexibility of party tactic in the 1930's did not originate from within the party hierarchy.

The SDAP in Steyr was politically circumscribed by a fetish for organisation. The organisational preoccupation central to the social democratic ethos in Steyr was intensified by the organisational conservatism inherent in oligarchical rule, so that organisation was increasingly regarded as an end in itself.

The nature of the party structure in Steyr largely conformed to the model elaborated by Michels. The party was dominated by an inert elite which was tied to a self-serving political strategy based in organisational advance. Its interests were equated with those of the organisation. The result was moderation and inflexibility. The elite was dedicated to evolutionary organisational advance both in local and in national terms. In the unique local milieu of the 1920's, when local economic boom was complemented by insulation from wider political trends in Austria, this strategy seemed successful. Locally, network and social democratic hegemony provided proof of its efficacy. Nationally, the steady electoral advance of the SDAP bore witness to the apparent correctness of the perpetual drive to recruit new members and
voters. The apparent success of the organisational strategy in the 1920's promoted its institutionalisation. Under completely different local background conditions in the 1930's - collapse in the local economy and realignment with national (i.e. authoritarian and anti-social democratic) political trends - the strategy remained the same: "The sentiment of tradition, in cooperation with an instinctive need for stability, has as its result that the leadership represents always the past rather than the present" (73).

Some reason for this may be provided by an understandable recourse to "tried and trusted" methods in an era of upheaval. More pertinent is the fact that the organisational strategy served the personal interests of the party elite. They depended on the organisation for the personal benefits they received from the exercise of inner-party power and from employment by the party or related organisations. The inflexibility of the organisational strategy derived primarily from the organisational conservatism of a party elite whose interests were intertwined with those of the party organisation. This inflexibility was consolidated by the existence of an activist caste which had much the same preoccupation. The activists were "Frau Heiers"; the party and their petty organisational work were the centrepoint of their lives. Personal interest merged once again with party interest and produced an deep organisational conservatism.

The internal structural characteristics of the SDAP in Steyr produced a cautious, moderate and evolutionary outlook distinguished by an intense inflexibility. The implications of this outlook as regards social democratic strategy and the development of inner-movement opposition are assessed in Chapters Six and Seven.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SUB-CULTURE.

Excluding party and trade unions, there were over fifty other social democratic clubs and organisations in Steyr. The estimated aggregate membership of these organisations is over 20,000 (see Table 8). Although this figure obviously includes many multiple, overlapping memberships, it is quite clear that a great deal of social democratic energy was expended on activities outside the realm of formal party politics and trade unionism. These are usually referred to as "cultural" activities. This is taken to mean not just culture in its narrow sense of intellectual and artistic enlightenment, but also in the wider sense of the behavioural patterns of a specific social group, in this case the social democrats. This chapter is based on the assumption that the nature of social democracy cannot be deduced solely from an examination of the social democratic party the trade unions, but that it was also derived from, and reflected in, the activities and values of these fifty plus "cultural" organisations.

The chapter contends in particular that this sub-culture of social democratic organisations reflected the moderate, reformist strategy of social democracy in Steyr. As noted in the Introduction of this study, this strategy incorporated a strong commitment to parliamentary democracy. The parliamentary political system of the republic was regarded, in an essentially evolutionary strategy, as a forum within which, over time and with a gradual electoral advance, social democratic aims could be realised. A critical examination of the sub-culture illustrates social democratic republican commitment both in the
conviction with which the anniversaries of the founding of the republic were celebrated, and in the determination to defend, physically if necessary, the constitution of the republic. The social democratic strategy also incorporated a qualified acceptance of the Austrian social and economic order. While accepting the basic parameters of the existing order, the social democrats also rejected and sought to reform certain of its features. They thus had an ambivalent relationship to the existing order. The sub-culture provides ample evidence of this ambivalence. Certain elements were radically and consistently opposed to bourgeois-capitalist society, others conformed largely with existing norms, while others still took an intermediate position.

As established in the previous chapter, the Social Democratic Party in Steyr became increasingly ossified in both its organisational structure and its tactical outlook. This became particularly apparent in the 1930's. The immobilism of the party provoked the development of a left wing, oppositional faction in the social democratic movement, which emerged as the decisive social democratic force in Steyr during 1933. The roots of this opposition derived partly - as is examined below - from elements within the social democratic sub-culture.

The pursuit of activities in the various cultural organisations served for many to breed a sense of emotional security based in the solidarity of collective experience. This was important in providing some compensation for the generally disadvantaged socio-economic position of the social democratic membership and in particular for the feelings of social and political isolation inherent in the situation of the social democratic stronghold of Steyr within a rural and conservative region. However, the sheer organisational diversity of the sub-culture also encouraged Vereinsmeierei, a "mania" for establishing and joining the proliferation of social democratic clubs. Energies were consumed in activities which did not
necessarily have anything to do with the political struggle of the social democratic movement. In this way, the sub-culture tended to distract from politics by further reinforcing the organisational preoccupations of the movement. It thus contributed to the political inflexibility of the movement and thereby to the development of opposition in the early 1930's.

At this point, it is necessary to elaborate on exactly what is meant by the term "sub-culture". This study employs the typology developed by Dieter Langewiesche, who defines a sub-culture in its relation to the dominant culture of a society. He sees the dominant culture as a system of mutually recognised and interlinked partial cultures, each reflecting the specific conditions of existence of different social groups. These partial cultures are fully integrated within the dominant culture. Their opposite is a counter-culture, which rejects the dominant culture in its entirety, and aims to replace it with a completely new form, in effect a new dominant culture. A sub-culture lies between the two extremes; it is a group culture which combines elements of conformity with others of opposition to the dominant culture (1). As noted above, the relationship of the social democratic cultural organisations to the existing order of Austrian society, i.e. the dominant culture of that society, was ambivalent. This is typical, in Langewiesche's terms of a sub-culture.

The analysis in this chapter is based upon the cultural organisations listed in Table 8 and consciously excludes detailed reference to the activities of Social Democratic Party and trade unions despite their undoubted influence on the "specific conditions of existence" of individual social democrats. Although this distinction is therefore somewhat arbitrary it does reflect the differentiation made by leading social democrats in the First Republic between the political, trade union and cultural aspects of social democratic activity (2).
The diversity and proliferation of these cultural organisations in Steyr is indicative of the attempts made by social democrats throughout Austria to demarcate as many activities undertaken by social democrats as possible from the influence of the dominant culture of Austrian society and to place them in an exclusively social democratic context. After its exit from coalition in 1920, the social democratic movement was isolated away from national political power. It was also denied the opportunity to wield any significant influence in the management and direction of the economy by the failure of the 1918-1919 revolution to effect any real change in the capitalist pattern of ownership of the means of production in Austria. The only practical opportunity for significant social democratic influence throughout Austria was the organisation of the free time and private lives of the membership (3). The SDAP sought therefore, convinced of a gradual, electorally-based return to political power in the near future, to build up among its followers an organised social democratic "state within the state" or sub-culture, which was intended both as a preview and as a nucleus of a future socialist society and culture (4).

The dominant culture in Austria was highly conservative, based upon the values and institutions of a relatively backward, predominantly agricultural, capitalist economic system and of a reactionary Catholic Church which exerted great influence over Austrian state and society. The interests of Austrian capitalism and clericalism were bound together by a dual aversion to both the parliamentary-republican state form established after the First World War and the social democratic movement intimately associated with it (5). In political terms, this dominant culture was reflected in the position of the clericalist-conservative Christian Social Party as the major force in the national government between 1920 and 1938.

It was from this dominant anti-republican, capitalist and catholic-clericalist culture that the social democrats sought to
demarcate themselves. They sought to replace it with an alternative based around a commitment to the constitutional procedures of the republic and permeated with secular and collectivist values. The stimulus towards cultural demarcation was strengthened in Steyr by the status of the social democrats as a "ghetto" movement; their town was a "red" stronghold in a predominantly "black" region, whose piety and conservatism in many respects epitomised the dominant culture in Austria. This conditioned the emergence of a local ethos whose essence was an insular, inward-looking stronghold mentality. This not only underlay the development of the network (see Chapter Three), but also heightened the concern to demarcate the movement from outside influence. The cultural Abgrenzung (demarcation) attempted by the social democrats in Steyr thus had two motive forces. On the one hand they adhered to the broad cultural strategy of the Austrian SDAP which sought to create the nucleus of a future order within the existing one. On the other, Abgrenzung was also an instinctively defensive response to their social and political isolation, a reflex of their stronghold mentality.

Previous studies have tended to concentrate almost exclusively on Vienna as an example of a demarcated social democratic sub-culture in Austria. These studies generally propose that the municipal policies of the social democrats in the Vienna town hall complemented and extended the cultural aspirations of the myriad social democratic cultural organisations to produce a near-complete "state within the state" (6). The preoccupation with Vienna has tended to obscure the fact that the social democrats in the provinces were also culturally active. Steyr in particular had certain unusual preconditions which were highly favourable for the development of a social democratic sub-culture. Foremost among these was the general status of the town as an isolated, encapsulated enclave of social democracy. In addition there were particularly dense concentrations of manual workers, the prime constituency of the
SDAP in Steyr, in certain areas of the town: in the Wehrgraben, around the network of streams and water channels which provided power for the early factories, and in the Ennseleite, an estate built next to the expanding Steyr-Verke in the First World War, which was a particular stronghold of car workers in the First Republic. These areas were 75-90% social democratic in electoral terms (7) and represented ideal base for the development of a closed and demarcated sub-culture.

This chapter examines the extent, consistency and implications of social democratic Abgrenzung in Steyr from the dominant culture in Austria. In the first two sections, aspects of the sub-culture are discussed in their relationship to the dominant culture. In section 5.3, the effects of the social democratic cultural activity on the tactical flexibility of the social democratic movement are critically assessed. A constant concern is to draw out the implications arising from the commitment to Abgrenzung in as far as they relate to the reformist strategy of the movement, as examined in Chapter Six, and the rejection of that reformist strategy by an emergent inner-movement opposition after 1930, as examined in Chapter Seven.

5.1: Republicanism and Wehrhaftigkeit.

The commitment to the processes and form of the parliamentary republic established after the First World War in Austria was the most clearly defined aspect of the social democratic sub-culture in Steyr. Thousands of social democrats displayed their unequivocal support for the republic in the annual "Day of the Republic" celebrations. They correctly saw themselves as the only significant political force in Austria committed to the republic and parliamentary democracy. In a
state which contained few other committed republicans and many committed anti-republicans, they were (despite their position as opposition party at national level) the "state party" of the Austrian First Republic. The republic was identified with the social democrats; it was seen as their creation, arising from turmoil in the aftermath of the First World War and the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy, and was regarded by the social democrats as a forum within which they could realise their aims. This epitomises the social democratic commitment to a gradual, evolutionary strategy for power, based on an allegedly irrepressible upward electoral trend.

However, despite this optimistic outlook, the social democrats were aware, especially given the nature of the region which surrounded Steyr, of the scale and militancy of opposition in Austria to "their" republic. In view of this, great importance was attached in Steyr to the concept of Wehrhaftigkeit, the capability and readiness to undertake physical self-defence. Since social democracy was largely identified with the republic, social democratic Wehrhaftigkeit embodied not only self-defence, but also the defence of the republican constitution against the authoritarian tendencies of the Austrian Right. Wehrhaftigkeit in Steyr was reinforced by the local stronghold mentality, by the local consciousness of isolation within a hostile environment. This was reflected in the militancy and violence with which the social democratic "monopoly of the streets" was upheld, initially at least, against the incursions of the Heimwehr in 1929-1930 (see Chapter Three). This was the defensive, wehrhaft response of an isolated "ghetto" movement to a dominant culture, represented by the Heimwehr, which was unremittingly hostile to social democracy and the parliamentary democracy of the First Republic. The establishment of social democratic territory as a "no-go-area" for the Heimwehr in 1929-1930 was an act of social democratic self-assertion away from the unwanted norms of "outside" society.
... was viewed however very much as a last resort; the cultivation of an attachment to the principles of the republican constitution was the first priority of the social democrats. This was an attitude encouraged from an early age. Every year for example, the social democratic Kinderfreunde in Steyr organised children's "holiday colonies" in the Alpine countryside. The children were encouraged to practice self-administration at the colonies, using the processes and institutions of the First Republic as a model. Each dormitory elected "town councillors", who in turn elected a "mayor", a "public prosecutor", a "judge" and a "policeman". A "constitution" was drawn up, and any law-breaker faced a trial (defended by his own "lawyer") and a sentence of punishment (8). This experiment in self-administration undoubtedly had general educational merits; in a more specific sense it equally undoubtedly had considerable effect in developing in impressionable children in their early teens and younger a lasting attachment to the constitutional processes of the First Republic.

The celebrations on 12th November, the "Day of the Republic" were the most striking manifestations of social democratic republicanism in Steyr. They also illustrated vividly the lack of bourgeois enthusiasm for the republic, and underscored in highly visible terms the nature of the town as an enclave dominated by social democratic norms. The cleft between dominant culture and social democratic sub-culture, in this case between anti-republicanism and republican commitment, was visualised in the intensity of festive decoration on the buildings of the town. The commercial centre of the town in and around the town square, catholic church buildings, the police station (after the federalisation of the local police) and predominantly non-social democratic residential areas remained undecorated. The town hall, co-operative businesses and social democratic residential strongholds like the Vehrgraben and the Ennsleite were...
other hand, festooned with state and party flags, colourful bunting, and impressive night-time illuminations (9).

The Republic Day Festival ranked behind only the traditional Mayday celebrations in terms of importance in the social democratic calendar of festivals. Festivities extended over two days and attracted mass attendances in a carnival atmosphere, at least until government restrictions were applied to public marches after 1930. In 1928, probably the peak in Republic Day participation, around 6,000 attended a torch-lit procession of the social democratic youth movement and gymnasts on the evening of 11th November. On the following day, a massive 8,000 marched in procession to the town square to hear speeches by Mayor Sichlraer and SDAP District Leader Schrangl (10).

The Republic Day celebrations of the social democrats were intended as a "mighty and powerful" demonstration of their commitment to the democratic republic, a "vehement manifestation of the republican idea" (11). It was held that the republican constitution was the only possible way forward in the development towards socialism (12). Consequently, Republic Day was not just a celebration of the founding of the republic, but also served as a deterrent show of strength and defiance by the social democratic stronghold against local opponents of the republican state form. This function naturally grew in importance as politics became increasingly polarised, especially in the 1930's, between the constitutionalist social democrats and assorted anti-constitutional movements and parties on the Austrian Right. Republic Day became a protest against the growing dangers of Heimwehr or clericalist dictatorship (13). It also became an expression of social democratic will in Steyr to defend the republican state form. For example, the 1931 Republic Day Festival took place two months after an abortive Heimwehr putsch (the Pfrimer Putsch). It was, in these circumstances, a particularly sober and serious occasion, far removed from the
more carnival atmosphere of the celebrations in the mid to late 1920's:

Steely determination lay on the faces of all those who declared to the world on 12th November their willingness to defend the republic with all the means at their disposal. The deep seriousness and conspicuous silence, which lasted for the whole of the procession, typified the readiness of the workers in Steyr to fight and impressed a special character on the demonstration. (14).

The willingness of the social democrats to fight physically to defend the republic and its constitution was expressed primarily in the existence and values of their defence organisations: the Schutzbund, whose full name was, characteristically, the "Republican Defence League", and the military gymnastic (Wehrturner) sections of the social democratic gymnastics clubs, which cultivated the Wahrhaftigkeit of the social democratic youth. The Schutzbund was created all over Austria in the first half of 1923 in response to the fascist takeover of power in Italy in 1922 and the increasing activity of right wing militias in Austria at around the same time. It brought together, in a more systematic and disciplined structure, the various social democratic "stewards' formations" (Ordnerschaften) which had developed since the end of the First World War (15). The founding of the Schutzbund in Steyr in June 1923 was accompanied by the establishment of a group of "Young Stewards" in the youth movement (Sozialistische Arbeiterjugend, or SAJ). This was later integrated into the formations of the military gymmasts (16), who were, in turn, under the command of the Schutzbund.

Christine Vlcek identifies three goals which the Schutzbund was to fulfil. The first two, the development of both psychical and physical Wahrhaftigkeit, of both the mental qualities and the basic physical abilities needed in a physical struggle for the aims of the movement, were prerequisites of the third. This third goal proposed that the Schutzbund should act as a support
for the SDAP in the internal power politics of Austria; it was intended to deter potential and, if necessary, to repel any real bourgeois attacks on the social democratic movement or the republic (17). This conception was given theoretical support in the SDAP's Linz Programme of 1926 (18) and practical relevance in July 1927 with the brutal suppression of the workers' demonstration in Vienna, and the mobilisation of provincial executive and Heimwehr against the subsequent social democratic communications strike.

Thereafter, and especially in light of the increasing activity and influence of the Heimwehr in the region around Steyr from the second half of 1929, far more attention was paid to Wahrhaftigkeit in Steyr. Recruitment into the Schutzbund was stepped up and military gymnastics training (marching, fully clothed running, obstacle course, hand-grenade throwing and shooting) was intensified (19).

The increased emphasis placed in the social democratic movement on paramilitary activities was interpreted, or at least portrayed in the local clerical press as "feverish" preparation for offensive civil war and "bolshevist" dictatorship (20). This was certainly not the self-perception of Schutzbund and Wehrtaerner in Steyr. In the first place, the Schutzbund was conceived as "a purely defensive organisation"; the notion of defensive force, as embodied in the Linz Programme of 1926, was fully accepted in Steyr. The social democrats would only resort to force if they had first been attacked with force (21). Furthermore, the paramilitary organisations in Steyr had no ambition to erect a dictatorship of any kind. They were concerned to emphasise their commitment to the democratic republic and to democratic methods. They regarded the intensification of paramilitary activity from the late 1920's onwards as an unfortunate, but necessary response to the anti-republican aggression of an expanding Heimwehr (22). The strength of social democratic republican commitment in Steyr
made the effort to counter the Heimwehr by military means a self-evident and logical extension to more orthodox political activity. This view was represented forcefully by Ferdinand Mayrhofer, military leader of the Schutzbund in Steyr, at the SDAP District Conference in February 1932:

He emphasised the peaceableness of the working class, but explained that strong defences are also necessary to defend the rights of the workers and to ensure the safety of the republic and of democracy. To stormy applause, he stressed that we are not preparing and arming ourselves to attack, but to defend (23).

However, the undoubted depth of republican feeling in the social democratic movement in Steyr and the readiness and determination to defend the constitution by physical means, was restrained until February 1934, by which time effective resistance to the anti-republican Right was no longer possible. Both at local and at national level, the leaders of the social democratic movement were captives of a tactical caution and inflexibility, which refused to release Schutzbund and Wehrturner to perform the job they had been trained for, namely the physical defence of the republic. The commitment of the social democratic leadership in Steyr to the form and processes of the republic was undoubtedly consistent and unwavering, even during the Dollfuß dictatorship. It was, however, rarely (and after the Pfrimer Putsch never) prepared to underscore this republican commitment - at a time when the electoral process and other basic democratic rights were being progressively undermined - by sanctioning the physical defence of the system. As will be seen in the subsequent chapters, this led to dissatisfaction in Schutzbund and Wehrturner/SA ranks, which resulted in defections to the less inhibited communists and national socialists and contributed to the development of opposition on the left of the social democratic movement in the early 1930's.
5.2: Ambivalence towards the Social and Economic Order.

The previous section of this chapter examined aspects of the social democratic sub-culture which stood in clear and direct opposition to the dominant culture in Austria. This section seeks, on the other hand, using selected examples from the sub-culture, to examine the ambivalence of the relationship between social democracy in Steyr and the economic and social order of capitalist, catholic-clericalist Austria.

This ambivalence was exhibited most obviously by the co-operative movement. Co-operatives were regarded in Steyr as a "precondition for the reorganisation of capitalism" by acting simultaneously as producer, distributor and consumer, and thereby eliminating the bourgeois middleman and cutting off capitalism's supply of funds (24). In other words, they had an explicitly counter-cultural aim, directed at the replacement of capitalist with co-operative economic principles. However, until such time as "capitalism" had been starved of funds and could be "reorganised", the co-operatives necessarily had to compete with the capitalists under all the usual principles of capitalist competition (25). The aims of the co-operatives in Steyr were therefore, in the short term, indistinguishable from those of their capitalist rivals: "to attain a decisive position in the distribution and production of goods" (26). Despite its counter-cultural aims, the co-operative movement's day-to-day activity remained inevitably conformist.

However, this section refers on the whole less to matters directly concerning the capitalist economy - over which the social democrats, co-operatives apart, had little or no influence - than to the order of society in Austria. This is a somewhat "catch-all" category, conceived to cover the attempts by the social democrats to influence and direct the spare time activities and private lives of their supporters away from those
characteristics of the dominant culture which were considered detrimental or unsuitable. These included basic characteristics such as the influence of the church in secular matters, the propagation of competitive individualism, more prosaic matters like the reliance on alcohol to "enliven" spare time activities, or even just the pursuit of relatively innocuous activities in a non-social democratic environment.

The general concern of the social democrats was to set up, separate from, but within the existing order, the elements of the new social order which would come into being after the SDAP had conquered state power. However, the Abgrenzung which was attempted in this respect in Steyr was only partially in opposition to dominant norms; in many respects social democratic activity remained, or even aspired to be in conformity with elements of existing society. There was a spectrum of relationships between sub-culture and dominant culture, ranging from outright conformity to radical opposition. Abgrenzung was only pursued in a consistently oppositional sense, with view to the establishment of completely new cultural norms, in the anti-clericalist sentiments and activities of the social democrats and in their children's and youth organisations. On the other hand, many of the minor social democratic cultural organisations (e.g. canary breeders, allotment gardeners, chess players, philatelists etc.) lacked any distinct culturally oppositional orientation. They simply catered for a formal demarcation from similar bourgeois clubs. Other social democratic cultural organisations, like the Women's Organisation, offered little opposition to dominant cultural norms. Others still sought to take over those elements of the existing culture which were considered worthy and useful. These organisations were separated from the dominant culture in their social democratic environment, but acted alongside and not against it.
Of the major social democratic cultural organisations in Steyr, the Women's Organisation conformed most to dominant norms. Social democratic women's activities were generally traditional or stereotypical women's activities. Even though some social democratic women in Steyr had become town councillors, party or trade union functionaries, school or welfare officials and lay magistrates (27), no attempt was made by the Women's Organisation to build on the emancipatory trend. On the contrary, the Women's Organisation adhered to traditional, household-based concerns. It ran courses in sewing, crochet, knitting etc., and sought to mobilise women around stereotype issues, particularly with regard to shopping and the cost of living, and, with the onset of economic depression, welfare activity (28). Women were also seen to have an especially important function in the co-operative movement; their traditional role in the household as housekeeper/shopper deemed them to be particular targets for co-operative propaganda and for recruitment into co-operative work (29).

The apparent lack of ambition of social democratic policy towards women can be derived from several factors. In the first place, at a time of high unemployment and poverty (after 1929-1930), there were not the material resources available for the development of new, perhaps more emancipatory lines of activity for women. Secondly, women in Steyr tended to be more attached to religious beliefs than men (30) and, if at all social democratic, then less strongly committed to the movement than men (31). For both these reasons, a minimalist and traditionalist women's programme was a sensible and realistic tactic for a movement dedicated to the conquest of power by force of numbers: it was less likely to "frighten off" morally and socially conservative religious women and, in terms of mobilisation, could prove attractive to the relatively indifferent female social democratic sympathisers.
A final reason for the limited scope of women's policies in the social democratic movement was almost certainly the attitude of men. Langewiesche notes in the general Austrian context, that social prejudices still exercised a strong restraint on any women's activities which transcended the boundaries of the home. Even in supposedly progressive social democratic working class families, the traditional view of a woman's role in society (children, housekeeping etc.) still prevailed. This explained the relatively low propensity of political organisation among women (32). Such social stereotypes became particularly potent in Steyr after the collapse of the Steyr-Werke and onset of mass unemployment and poverty in the town. Women's political activity was immediately a superfluous expense in the eyes of many men, who frequently refused to allow further political involvement, even though reduced subscriptions for the needy were available (33). In this case, the social democrats were unable (or unwilling) - despite their rhetoric about sex equality and the emancipation of women (34) - to break down the patriarchal-authoritarian family relationships inherent in the dominant Austrian, and indeed European cultural tradition.

The cultural conception of the social democrats in Steyr made specific provision in other areas for the qualmless assumption of bourgeois cultural tradition. This concerned "culture" in its narrow definition of artistic and intellectual enlightenment, or "high" culture. The social democrats were keen to gain access to and "pry loose" those elements of the high culture which had "immense value", like the works of the great classical composers, poets and authors and so on (35). According to the social democratic Arts Centre, set up in 1928 to promote "genuine art" in Steyr, the "cultivation of art and literature was part of the programme of socialist education" (36). Similarly, the social democratic Workers' Library sought to open up the literary achievements of European culture to the social democratic membership in Steyr. Despite occasional complaints about the library members' lack of enthusiasm for books on
socialist theory and the social sciences in general, it was recognised that the library's purpose was to provide a service with a general cultural rather than specifically socialist educational content. Indeed, over 90% of the demand for library books was in the category "Fiction, Drama and Poetry" (37). Much as the choral and musical organisations strove to attain a high cultural level in their performances, measured in terms of the cultural tradition in Austria (38), the library strove to raise the qualitative level of its fiction, drama and poetry holdings. So while the worst popular literary kitsch was excluded, any works of high quality, even by clerically oriented authors, were acceptable and desirable (39).

In respect of artistic culture, of music and literature, the opposition of the social democrats to the existing order was qualified by the quality of what the existing order had to offer. The social democrats in Steyr were striving to overcome a kind of cultural inferiority complex; in the recollection of one social democratic functionary in the First Republic, it was important for them to be able to say: "Look here, we have this culture, we have the ability to master it" (40). They felt the need to climb up to a cultural level qualitatively higher than that traditionally open to the lower classes in society. In doing so, they accepted existing, bourgeois parameters of quality and thus conformed wholeheartedly with bourgeois high-cultural tradition.

The cultural conformity of the Women's Organisation and the positive acceptance of existing cultural norms in music and literature contrasted starkly with anti-clericalist tendencies in the sub-culture and the aims and activities of the social democratic children's and youth organisations. These retained a consistently and explicitly oppositional, counter-cultural orientation. Anti-clericalist feeling was a strong undercurrent in the social democratic movement in Steyr. Its strength was a potent reflex of the local social democratic stronghold
mentality. The Catholic Church was especially influential in the type of rural society which surrounded Steyr and was deeply hostile towards social democracy. In this situation, social democratic hostility towards the influence of the Catholic religion was a fairly logical response. This hostility was represented organisationally in the local Crematorio Association and in a strong Free Thinkers' Movement which saw its primary task in the attempt to reduce the influence of the church, and whose attempts to do so have been criticised by sources both friendly and hostile to the social democratic movement as "regrettably low" and "primitive" (41).

However, the persistence of clerical influence in society was recognised, especially in providing, through the annual calendar of church festivals (Christmas, Easter, Corpus Christi etc.), temporal points of identification imprinted in the minds of the whole population. As a response, social democratic festivals were set up throughout Austria in direct competition with (and often modelled on) Catholic festivals (42). The strength of anti-clericalism in the social democratic movement in Steyr was illustrated in the explicitly and confrontationally anti-church character of certain of these festivals. This applied particularly to the ostensible celebrations of the summer solstice at the same time as Corpus Christi, despite exhortations from higher social democratic bodies to tone down the confrontational stance (43).

The provision of education and entertainment untainted by Catholic church influence was also one of the main aims of the Kinderfreunde in Steyr. This organisation in particular was concerned to enforce the "totalitarian" (44) ideal of social democratic cultural activity. Every possible children's activity was to take place in an exclusively social democratic, Kinderfreunde milieu, completely sealed off from outside influence:
Our concern remains the same: to hold the child as far as is possible away from all bourgeois events and influences, to bind it to our ceremonies, festivals and meetings, to our work and institutions so strongly, that they become an indispensable need (45).

This is characteristic of the social democratic commitment in Steyr to an evolutionary strategy for political power. The SDAP would, it was held, come to power in the near future, and the younger generation would then have the task of completing the process of Abgrenzung from the old order and establishing the content of a new socialist order of society (46). Children and youth were seen as the cultural avant-garde of the social democratic movement. The Kinderfreunde had a central role in preparing the younger generation for this highly important task by shielding these nascent social democrats from the influences of bourgeois society. A massive network of facilities and activities was established in an attempt to provide comprehensive demarcation (47) (at least until the supply of funds dried up after the collapse in employment at the Steyr-Werke in 1929-1930). Evidence of the importance attached within the social democratic movement to the aims and activities of the Kinderfreunde is given by the level of funds made available to them in the 1920's. The MAV's Kindergroschen and the Steyr-Werke Works Council's annual subsidy gave the Kinderfreunde an income which far exceeded that of the Social Democratic Party in the Steyr district (48). Evidence of the ensuing success of Kinderfreunde Abgrenzung is in turn displayed in the envious and even admiring comments of clericalist sources in Steyr, which persistently advocated the imitation of social democratic methods in the organisation of children and youth (49).

The activities of the Kinderfreunde were directed above all at the development of a basic collectivist spirit among the children. Little more could be attempted until the children were older, and had developed stronger critical faculties (50). The
youth movement, the SAJ, could though be more ambitious in its objectives. In the evolutionary outlook of the social democrats, youths were seen as the "combatants of the future" and as the "builders of the coming world" (51) of socialism. This was reflected in the mid to late 1920's in a low key and largely unpolitical, but in cultural terms, highly idealistic role for the social democratic youth in Steyr (52). A dogged and puritanical abstinence from alcohol and nicotine was encouraged which has held firm among ex-SAJ members still alive today. This was accompanied by an indulgence in physical fitness, sporting and rambling activities. SAJ activity was directed above all at producing the mental strength of character and the physical stamina needed in the perceived future role of the social democratic youth. Alcohol and nicotine were seen as both physically and spiritually harmful, while outdoor activities not only cultivated physical health, but also provided the mental challenges necessary for the development of strong socialist characters (53).

The social democratic youth in Steyr also built on the collectivist, community spirit encouraged from an early age in the Kinderfreunde. The youth movement arranged a full programme of events and activities for weekday evenings and weekends, all of which were undertaken in an explicitly collective atmosphere (54). Sporting activity, primarily undertaken in the gymnastics clubs, sought for example to negate the competitive individualism and sensationalism of "record-chasing" bourgeois sport. Openly competitive sports, like football were frowned upon (55). Instead, a down to earth collectivist approach at an average level of competence was preferred, epitomised in eurhythmic displays of dance and gymnastics intended to portray the historical struggle and future victory of the working class (56).

Like the Kinderfreunde, the youth movement's attention in Steyr was on the future; its activities - the development of
mental and physical strength and of a collectivist outlook - were aimed at that point when the SDAP was to conquer power in Austria, when the "builders of the coming world" would be released to fulfil their task. In the meantime, the SAJ was to perfect, in an relatively unpolitical and peripheral role, the new cultural ideals which would permeate the future society. The SAJ was faced here by a somewhat paradoxical situation from around the turn of the decade. In the late 1920's, in the then favourable conditions of the local milieu, the social democratic movement in Steyr was enjoying its most successful period. In this position, it was quite reasonable that the SAJ should concentrate on its future role, as the prospects for the future were still, apparently, good. With the redefinition of local political circumstances after the shutdown at the Steyr-Werke, the situation was however very much different. The future was now far from promising and the outlook became worse as time progressed and as the Austrian Right consolidated an increasingly authoritarian rule. The inevitable question facing the SAJ was whether to stay on the sidelines and continue preparing for a future which was becoming more and more unlikely, or whether it should enter the political arena and try to arrest the slide of the movement.

As elsewhere in Austria, the youth movement opted for the second alternative and abandoned the "surrogate politics" (57) represented in its idealistic cultural activities. It embarked instead on an innovative and active politics of protest and, increasingly, confrontation directed against the various local and national opponents of social democracy. After 1929, the SAJ became the politically most active element in the social democratic movement. In doing so, it demanded a change in tactic in the face of the fundamentally different background conditions facing the movement in the 1930's. The Social Democratic Party was shackled by its ossified and bureaucratic internal structure and proved unable to respond. The activism of the SAJ was therefore both an implicit rejection of and a focus of
opposition to the inflexibility and passivity of the party. It developed its new, politicised role on two fronts. The first concerned the infusion of more innovative practices into some of the established activities of the SDAP. Satirical humour, derived from the "political cabarets" of the Viennese Sozialistische Veranstaltungsgruppe (58), was harnessed for use in electoral agitation and recruitment drives, and proved to be an extremely popular and effective mobilisation tool (59). The SAJ also held many open debates with provocative titles like "Disunity to the Left, Destruction to the Right" and "Soviet Star or Swastika - the Solution?" designed to attract new members and retain the support of old ones by confronting and undermining the arguments of the local communists and national socialists in open debate (60).

The SAJ was also prepared to forsake the intellectual battleground to take direct, sometimes physical action in defence of the organisations and principles of the social democratic movement. A first indication of this was provided in late 1929/early 1930, when the youth led the way in defending the social democratic monopoly of the streets in Steyr against the incursions of the Heimwehr. Aggression and violence were also part of the SAJ's anti-nazi activities in the early 1930's (61). More fundamentally, the social democratic youth played an important and increasing role in the republican defence organisations in Steyr. This was evidenced in the generally increased activity of the youth-based Wehrturner organisation and also in the fact that many Schutzbund members reappeared in the ranks of the SAJ after the dissolution of their own organisation in March 1933 (62).

As noted above, the activism of the SAJ in the 1930's derived from an implicit rejection of the essentially passive stance and inflexibility of the SDAP in Steyr. The SDAP, like the rest of the social democratic movement, was convinced that the republican state form was the forum within which the
movement's aims could be achieved. Its commitment to the republic is beyond doubt. However, it refused, or was unable to attempt positive action in defending the republican constitution against the Austrian Right - either by, for example, seeking the support of the (admittedly few) other pro-republican forces in Austria, or, ultimately, by physically defending the republic. This was an inconsistency which led to opposition within the movement, of which the SAJ was an integral part. The SAJ had long been conceived as the cultural avant-garde of the social democratic movement, seeking to develop the cultural values which would dominate future socialist society. This socialist society would supposedly be achieved from within the framework of the parliamentary republic. The inability of the SDAP to defend the parliamentary republic, and by implication, the future socialist society, effectively robbed the SAJ of its raison d'être. The youth movement was forced, in opposition to the passivity of the SDAP, to take the defence of the republic and all it had worked for into its own hands. The other oppositional element examined in this chapter, the Schutzbund, derived its opposition from a similar process. It was prepared for years for a task (the physical defence of the republic) which it was never released to perform. Its opposition too was a logical consequence of the immobility of the Social Democratic Party in Steyr, and, in wider terms, in Austria as a whole in the 1930's.

5.3: The Sub-Culture as a Selbstzweck.

The social democratic sub-culture in Steyr was, with its aggregate (overlapping) membership of over 20,000, evidently a highly important sector of social democratic activity. It was, in terms of input of time and energy, a massive investment by the social democrats. This section examines the "returns" -
positive and negative - received from this investment, both by
the individuals involved and by the social democratic movement
as a whole.

Pfoser suggests that the cultural activity of the Austrian
social democrats served to counter the often anomic experiences
faced by the social democratic membership in the First Republic.
The primarily manual working class social democrats,
underprivileged and disadvantaged in society, could compensate
for their individual problems through their collective
experiences in social democratic organisations. A collectivist
social democratic consciousness was built up, which contributed
to a process of self-realisation, eroded inferiority complexes
and raised self-esteem (63). This view is verified by
Buttinger's personal recollections of the myriad activities of
the social democrats in the First Republic:

They felt important selling badges, performing gymnastic
displays, reciting poetry, embroidering flags, pasting
posters in display cabinets. In the choral rehearsals, in
decorating their windows for Mayday, wearing party and club
insignia, stewarding the Kinderfreunde open air party, and
even in applauding the 'appearance of the M.P. Dr.
Ellenbogen' they had for years felt a worthiness and
importance, which even the poorest are not denied when they
place themselves in the service of a community (64).

In other words, the social democrats, from abstinent to
zither player, from child to old age pensioner, benefitted from
a consciousness of being part of a collective in their
respective organisations, which relieved them from the burden of
their day-to-day problems. This collective consciousness took on
particular importance in Steyr because of the town's social and
political isolation in a highly conservative and strongly
anti-social democratic region. In this situation, the
sub-culture could offer a solid emotional security to the social
democrats. Collective experiences in the cultural organisations
could create a sense of self-assurance not necessarily open to the social democratic individual in such a hostile environment.

Josef Mayrhofer provides evidence of how collective activity could compensate for the anomie of isolation and socio-economic disadvantage in his reminiscences of his experiences in the Kinderfreunde, SAJ, gymnastics clubs and Wohrtturner/Schutzbund in Steyr in the 1920's and 1930's (65). Mayrhofer is perhaps a somewhat untypical example because of the great intensity of his commitment to the cultural organisations; he represented very strongly the culturally idealistic direction of the SAJ in the mid to late 1920's. However, his recollections of the great joy, the sense of fulfilment and the strength of character derived from his experiences give a valuable insight into the personal benefits derived from collective activity at a time of individual material hardship (Mayrhofer was, like much of the Steyr youth, unemployed for several years from the late 1920's onwards).

Of great importance in the development and maintenance of the emotional security provided in the sub-culture was the social democratic programme of festivals, the Festkultur. The festivals, especially the major ones with their mass attendances, were intended to "enthuse thousands of proletarians" and make them "confident of victory" (66). The traditional Mayday and the newer Republic Day festivals in particular were displays of strength, directed not only at the opponents of social democracy, as discussed in section 5.1, but also inwards, at the membership. The scale of participation in the great parades, the colourful festive decoration of the predominately social democratic housing estates and the self-assured speeches delivered to rapturous applause from the town hall balcony were of great significance in establishing and maintaining self-confidence among the social democrats (67). Equally important was the need to "give the people a few hours of enjoyment" (68) away from the problems of everyday life. All
the festivals thus had a programme of entertainment - music, song, theatre, dance or sport - supplementary to all the demonstrative parades and speeches. As Weidenholzer notes, "just to enjoy oneself, to laugh" was a major priority of the social democratic Fastkultur in Austria (69).

Social democratic festivals also provided, as shown in the previous section, a focus for social democratic anti-clericalism. In many respects the catholic church provided a Feindbild for the social democrats in Steyr, a negative point of reference around which social democratic sentiment could organise and against which it could identify itself (70). Clericalist influence in Austria was a focal point for negative emotions of hatred and anger etc. which cemented the positive emotional security derived from the social democratic sub-culture.

The preceding discussion throws up the question whether the social democratic sub-culture, in providing a feeling of collective emotional security which compensated for the problems of everyday life, distracted from the causes of these problems and helped to dullen the political impetus of the social democratic movement. The answer remains uncertain. This was certainly a danger of which the cultural theoreticians and practitioners in the Austrian social democratic movement were aware, and which they sought to counter (71). There is evidence to suggest however, that this was not necessarily, or at least not universally, the case in Steyr. For example, the SAJ was one of the focal points in the development of new political impetus in the social democratic movement in the 1930's, despite its past politically peripheral role and idealistic cultural orientation. There can therefore be no unequivocal conclusion in this context.

Less ambiguous in its effect on the political impetus of the social democratic movement is the more tangible issue of the
time and energy expended in work for the various cultural organisations. Weidenholzer writes of the conflicts of interest and conscience which could arise, especially for the more active social democrats, who were prevailed upon from all quarters to join the most diverse organisations. Membership in several organisations then inevitably led to "a shallow level of organisational life and to a superficial political commitment" (72). It must be assumed that a considerable number of social democrats in Steyr were simultaneously members of several organisations if the aggregate membership in all the cultural organisations was over 20,000 in a town with only around 8,000 social democratic voters. There were certainly complaints that there were often several meetings or events taking place at the same time (73) and that the movement in Steyr was afflicted by a superfluous Vereinsmeierei (74). Inevitably, the supply of energy and commitment available for the pressing political problems facing the social democratic movement was reduced in proportion to that expended in the cultural organisations.

A further problem, like that which prevailed among the party activists (see Chapter Four, section 4.3), was the sense of personal satisfaction the activist members of the various organisations derived from their functions and duties. Like the party activists, the cultural activists developed deep and strong attachments to their respective organisations. In each organisation there developed an introspective conservatism directed towards organisational self-maintenance and extension (75). There was a danger that activity in the cultural organisations would become a Selbstzweck, an end in itself, which demoted politics to a peripheral role. Guttsman talks in the German context of the "centrifugal tendencies" of the cultural organisations, and of the growing danger that these organisations might become entirely self-absorbed so that the one will seek to solve the social question with song, the second through gymnastics and the third with music and the performance of plays. And
if the unions or the party do not fully support such a drive, they are regarded as ignorant bureaucrats (76).

This was true for example of the social democratic gymnastics clubs in Steyr. These treated the plans made in 1928 to incorporate all the local sports clubs into an overarching federation with a distinct lack of enthusiasm (77). Their "organisational patriotism" in this respect was later subject to a public rebuke by the SDAP, which emphasised that a proletarian cannot be a sportsman alone, that he cannot regard the sport movement as a "universal panacea", but that he must be first and foremost a socialist (78). Nevertheless, some years later, the gymnastics clubs were still involved in "territorial disputes", this time with the Schutzbund, over the question of which organisation should have responsibility for the Wahrturner (79).

Thus, it can be seen that while the returns from the cultural investment of the social democrats were, at an individual, psychological level, generally positive, at the broader level of the movement as a whole there was a potentially negative effect. For many of those who were actively involved in the cultural organisations, the maintenance of their own organisational fief was the primary goal. The cultural organisations developed their own individual momenta, which were self-centred and conservative. Energies were distracted from the political arena by a series of organisational fetishisms. As Kulemann notes, cultural activity, theoretically regarded as a means in the development towards socialist society, became an end in itself, with serious implications for the political struggle of the SDAP:

The question of how reforms in the conduct of life and club activities could be built ... into a strategy of class struggle was replaced by the question of how the system of the sub-culture could be further extended. It thus took on, in part, the character of a surrogate strategy for the economic and political struggle (80).
The above examination of the social democratic sub-culture in Steyr has served to illuminate four themes. Firstly, the character of Steyr as an isolated enclave of social democracy has been reemphasised. The commitment to cultural Abgrenzung in Steyr, though a common element throughout Austrian social democracy, was intensified by this isolation. Abgrenzung in Steyr derived from two stimuli: on the one hand, it reflected the attempt to create, in advance, the bases of future socialist society. On the other, it was the defensive reflex of a movement which dominated its own "ghetto", but whose values, and ultimately whose domination were threatened by a capitalist, clericalist, anti-republican culture which dominated elsewhere, particularly in the rural region surrounding Steyr. The Abgrenzung of as many activities as possible within an exclusively social democratic context provided a feeling of collective security against the threat from outside. The drive towards cultural demarcation in Steyr was, in this respect, part of the social democratic ethos in Steyr; it was part of the insular mentality which sought to deflect outside influence and build up Steyr as Hochburg of social democracy.

Secondly, the assessment of social democratic Abgrenzung, of the relationship between sub-culture and dominant culture, has provided an insight into the gradualist, reformist strategy of the social democratic movement in Steyr (see Chapter Six). This was illustrated in the strength of attachment to the constitution of the First Republic; social democratic aims were most definitely to be achieved on the basis of electoral advance and the control of the Austrian parliament. In this conception, the children's and youth organisations had a central role: the younger generation was to be prepared now for its future task of Vollendung, of completing the transition to social democratic society once the decisive electoral victory had been won. However, the relationship of social democracy to the existing order was, in the meantime, thoroughly ambivalent. Only the youth organisations and social democratic anti-clericalism
remained consistently and unequivocally opposed to existing norms. In other respects the social democrates were willing to take over some of the "worthy" aspects of the existing order, or even, in the case of the co-operatives, to use its methods. A similar orientation can be seen in the following chapter in the municipal economic and social policies of the SDAP in Steyr. While the party rejected certain outputs of the capitalist economic system - unemployment, the inadequate provision of social welfare etc. - it responded not by seeking the abolition of capitalism as a whole, but by attempting to reform and manage it according to different social priorities, even if that incorporated the use of capitalist methods.

A third feature of the sub-culture in Steyr was the organisational conservatism it encouraged. It hereby complemented similar tendencies which existed in the Social Democratic Party (as seen in Chapter Four). The various cultural organisations became, for some of their members at least, ends in themselves. Energies were diverted away from the broader political arena and towards narrow organisational self-maintenance. The denial of political input inevitably contributed to the political passivity and tactical inflexibility of the social democratic movement in the 1930's. This, paradoxically, was partially responsible for the fourth theme revealed in the examination of the sub-culture - the development of inner-movement opposition in the 1930's. The inflexibility and passivity of social democracy in the face of unfavourable new background conditions after the turn of the decade pushed both Schutzbund and youth movement towards opposition. Both were effectively robbed of their raisons d'être by the passivity of the SDAP. In the 1930's, the increasing ascendency of the Austrian Right constantly jeopardised the constitution of the First Republic; the Schutzbund was, however, not allowed to perform its primary task, the protection of that constitution. In response, it moved gradually to a position independent of and opposed to the passivity of the SDAP. The
strength of the Right also made the prospects for a social democratic conquest of power. Moreover, the social democratic leadership was apparently doing little to stem the rise of the Right. This made the activities of the SAJ, which were directed at that point when the social democrats were to take power, more and more unrealistic and futile. The development of political activism and militancy in the SAJ, increasingly opposed to the passivity of the SDAP, was a logical consequence. The inability of the SDAP to respond to the ascendancy of the Right and attempt to defend the republic was inconsistent with the values of Schutz bund and SAJ and inevitably aroused opposition. The development of this initially sporadic opposition to become the driving force in the social democratic movement after 1932 is analysed in the final chapter of this thesis.
CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC REFORMISM IN STEYR.

The SDAP in Steyr was deeply committed to the procedures of parliamentary democracy as enshrined in the republican constitution, and was deeply opposed to any form of government which rejected democratic freedoms. Its whole outlook was geared to a politics based in the competition for the political allegiance of the electorate. Elections had a prime place in SDAP politics; the party had an explicitly evolutionary strategy for power based on gradual electoral advance and eventual victory at the polls. In the social and economic fields, the party aimed to reform what it saw as the negative aspects and implications of capitalism. It sought to introduce elements of social justice which capitalist society neglected. In particular, the SDAP held that if capitalism could not guarantee the absence of social problems like poverty and unemployment, then capitalist society should exercise a collective social responsibility towards those afflicted by such problems. The SDAP in Steyr thus displayed typical characteristics of moderate, reformist social democracy (1). It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the derivation of this reformist strategy, in particular to show that this strategy was conditioned by the practical local experience and activities of the social democrats.

The chapter begins with an assessment of the ideological bases of the SDAP at the national level in Austria. This provides a basis of comparison which serves to highlight the unique characteristics of social democratic reformism in Steyr. Both the national and the local party were essentially reformist
organisations in the sense that they were committed to the attainment of partial and incremental reforms of the capitalist socio-economic system on the basis of the competition for electoral support within the framework of parliamentary democracy. However, the national SDAP derived its reformist strategy from a systematic ideology, a coherent body of theory which offered a considered critique of the nature of Austrian state and society. Social democratic reformism in Steyr on the other hand had no ideological foundation. The social democrats in Steyr were in no sense theorists; their politics was based above all else on the insights and orientation derived from practical work in the MAV, the municipality and the party organisation and from the experience of local economic instability.

This chapter is, in many respects, an extension of the arguments proposed throughout this study concerning the social democratic ethos in Steyr. This ethos, i.e. the peculiar attitudes and mentality which derived from the local consciousness and experience of social and political isolation, underlay a tendency throughout the social democratic movement to stress the value of organisation. This resulted in the development of major local organisational power bases, particularly in the MAV and the town hall. Having established these power bases within the existing order of Austrian society, the social democrats had effectively acquired a vested interest in the existing order. In consequence, they logically held no anti-system aims; they accepted the basic parameters of Austrian capitalism and parliamentary democracy.

The SDAP's strategy for power within the parliamentary system was also determined by the practical preoccupation with organisation which was central to the social democratic ethos in Steyr. It was shown in Chapter Four that the party leadership in Steyr had a particularly pronounced organisational mentality; it regarded the party organisation as the raison d'etre of
political life. Accordingly, the party's strategy for power was centred around organisational advance, i.e. the quest to recruit and organise a majority of the electorate. Each new recruit to the party would be one small step closer to the "magic figure" of 51% support in the electorate, which, it was thought, would guarantee state power. The SDAP's commitment to the reform of certain aspects of the capitalist socio-economic system was similarly formed by practical local experience. It sought to respond to and ameliorate what it saw as the negative aspects of the capitalist system on the basis of the experience of the local problems which ensued from the instability of the Steyr-Werke. This highly practical orientation contrasted very strongly to the ideological foundations of reformism in the SDAP at national level.

6.1: Ideology and Reformism at the National Level.

After the First World War and the split in the international labour movement, the SDAP in Austria attempted to assume for itself a special role within the international spectrum of left-wing politics. It sought to establish a conciliatory and mediative "Marxist Centre" between the two ideological extremes of the international Left. One extreme was represented by the Soviet bolsheviks, who, inspired by Leninist theory, rejected the pursuit of reform within the state. For them, the state was an instrument of bourgeois class power and exploitation which had to be opposed and destroyed. Participation in the bourgeois state only helped to cover over the contradictions of a capitalist system which was heading inevitably towards its own collapse. However, the workers were unable to recognise the true nature of the state; they were inherently "economist", concerned only with short-term, ameliorative improvements in their wages and working conditions. In view of this, the workers had to be
educated to the requisite level of ideological consciousness necessary for the destruction of the bourgeois state and socialist revolution by a tightly organised, ideologically pure vanguard party (2). The other extreme, that of reformism, was epitomised in the German SPD. The SPD, under the theoretical influence of Karl Kautsky, maintained a deterministic belief in the inevitability of socialism: with an ever-increasing concentration of capital and the concomitant proletarianisation of the middle classes, capitalist development inevitably created a majority in favour of socialism and thus the prerequisite for (non-insurrectionary) revolution. While the socialist party waited patiently until the "time was ripe", it could participate constructively within the state in pursuit of reforms which would accelerate the inevitable path of capitalism towards socialism (3).

According to Friedrich Adler, one of the foremost SDAP leaders, the SDAP rejected both the "naive impatience" of the bolsheviks and the "sceptical unbelief" of the reformists. The bolsheviks were thought generally to overestimate the prospects for social revolution and showed little concern for the violence and suffering involved in revolutionary upheaval. The rigidly deterministic reformists, by asserting the impossibility of revolution in specific historical situations, tended in practice to draw the conclusion that revolution was impossible under all circumstances. Their belief in the necessity of social revolution was replaced by a belief in the absolute efficacy of partial reform (4). The SDAP sought to synthesize the two positions. On the one hand, in sharing the reformist assessment of the present historical situation, it limited its aims for the time being to the attainment of incremental reform. This did not, however, preclude it from retaining the revolutionary perspective of the bolsheviks by adhering to the ultimate aim of social revolution (5). It attempted, according to the later formulation of Otto Bauer, to combine the "sober realism" of the reformists with the "revolutionary enthusiasm" of the bolsheviks
(6). The nature of this Austrian social democratic conception of "revolution" is examined below.

The impetus behind the development of the centrist position derives from a dogmatic fixation with party unity which dominated the party in Austria. Before 1889, the Austrian Left was riven by a fractional strife which was much more complicated than, for example, the cleft in Germany between Lassalleans and Eisenachers. In addition to the disunity between Radical and Moderate wings, the various national labour movements in the multi-national Habsburg Empire contributed their divergent outlooks based on particular national grievances and conditions (7). Against this background, the eventual unification of the various national and fractional strands into a single, supra-national Social Democratic Party at the Hainfeld Congress of 1888-1889 took on the character of a highly sacred achievement. Thereafter, unity became the most important value of the SDAP and a factor which maintained a constant influence on party ideology and practice under both Empire and First Republic.

The centrist position of the SDAP in the First Republic, conditioned by the fetish for unity, was represented and developed by a series of eminent political theorists (8) in the SDAP. Foremost among these was Otto Bauer, whose ideas largely defined the theoretical and practical stance of the SDAP throughout the First Republic. Bauer's centrism combined a programmatical radicalism based in neo-Marxist theory with a moderate, reformist practical strategy in the highly successful effort to maintain the allegiance of both the left and right wings of the party. In this respect it is important to note that the radicalism of the SDAP was largely rhetorical, a "phraseology of integration" (9), which was directed more towards the satisfaction of left wing ideological purity in the party than to the speedy overthrow of the economic and political system in Austria. The most prominent example of this
integrative radikale Phrase was undoubtedly the reference in the 1926 Linz Programme of the SDAP to "dictatorship". This was inserted into the programme at the behest of the Marxist philosopher and representative of the SDAP Left, Max Adler, and concerned the possibility of unconstitutional bourgeois resistance against a hypothetical, democratically elected SDAP government of the future:

If however the bourgeoisie should resist the social transformation which will be the task of the state under the working class, through a deliberate and planned disruption of economic life, by violent rebellion, or by conspiring with foreign counter-revolutionary powers, then the working class will be forced to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie by the means of a dictatorship (10).

Two features of this social democratic "dictatorship" are worth noting. In the first place, it was based on a chain of hypothetical preconditions; their realisation was, at best, highly unlikely. "Dictatorship" was almost certainly destined to remain a nebulous theoretical issue unlikely ever to be seen in practice. More importantly though, dictatorship was conceived in the Linz Programme as a means, in a particular situation, for upholding parliamentary democracy, which had nothing whatsoever in common with Leninist conceptions of a "dictatorship of the proletariat". The whole programme section on the "Struggle for State Power" reveals a strong and unbending commitment to parliamentary democracy in Austria. The SDAP committed itself to a "class struggle" based in the struggle for the support of the majority of the people. On the assumption of power, the SDAP would exercise state power "in the form of democracy and under all guarantees of democracy" (11). Dictatorship was an explicit last resort, intended to defend and realise the will of the people as expressed through the democratic electoral process.

The strength of the SDAP's commitment to parliamentary democracy indicates the nature of its conception of the state. The state was seen by Otto Bauer as a structure which was
essentially autonomous or "class-neutral", and which could be filled with capitalist, or peasant, or proletarian content, depending on which "social factors of power" were prevalent (12). Social democratic activity was thus consumed in the struggle to maximise its "proletarian social factors of power", and thus gain influence over the state. These factors included social democratic influence in the economic arena, but meant above all the struggle for predominance in parliament. Either in coalition - which always remained a tactical possibility for the SDAP - or as a majority government, "pieces of genuine socialism", could be attained which would ensure the transition from capitalist to socialist society (13).

In the Linz Programme, the "pieces of genuine socialism" already achieved by the SDAP were listed: political equality, which gave the working class influence on legislation and administration at all levels of the state; the "social achievements" of the post-war coalition - workplace rights, social insurance and social welfare provision; the role of the trade unions in improving working conditions and the development of co-operative influence in the capitalist economy (14). The policy proposals listed for the future sought to expand, in logical procession, upon those achievements already made. Hence the social democrats would extend and safeguard democracy in the republic, improve working conditions and social insurance and extend the "collective economy" (co-operative, socialised and municipal undertakings) (15).

It is evident that the Austrian social democrats had a thoroughly gradualist outlook in their perceived route towards socialism. Indeed, a gradual transition in the economic sphere was, for Otto Bauer, a necessary precondition for successful socialism. There had to be continuity; the capitalist organisation of the economy could not be destroyed before the socialist replacement stood ready to take its place (16). This concept was refined in the Linz Programme, where it was held
that capitalism produced the preconditions for its own gradual downfall. As the means of production and exchange became ever more concentrated, they became ever riper for socialisation. All the SDAP had to do to create significant collective economic power was to socialise the institutions of capitalist concentration. Furthermore, capitalism had led to the rise of the labour movement. This then developed its own types of economic organisation, like co-operatives and municipal enterprises, which were under collective control. As the strength of the labour movement grew, so did the collective economy. The labour movement was also gaining, through its trade unions, more and more of an insight into management techniques. This made it possible to replace capitalist with collective, socialist control without prejudicing the productive process. As capitalism developed, the opportunities for the evolution of a socialist economic organisation therefore developed with it. This meant that there would be a probably lengthy period of transition where capitalist and socialist firms existed alongside each other before a completely socialist economy could be established (17).

This gradual, protracted transition based on the incremental reform of the existing system was the basis of the "social revolution" envisaged by the SDAP (18). This was the "revolutionary perspective" the Austrian Marxist centrists supposedly shared with the bolsheviks. It had little to do with the violent and abrupt destruction of the capitalist system envisaged by the bolsheviks. The term "revolution" symbolised the aspiration towards a socialist economic and social order which would be achieved in a painstaking process of reform (19). Beneath the surface of Marxist-revolutionary rhetoric, the SDAP had an outlook firmly based in reformist orthodoxy.

However, with its exit from coalition in 1920, this scenario for gradualist reform lost its immediate relevance. Thereafter, the SDAP was confined at national level to the role of
opposition. This opposition was never fundamental; the social democrats remained committed to the realisation of their aims within the system and were even ready to give their support, from the opposition benches, to certain initiatives of the bourgeois governments. These concerned primarily the external security and the economic well-being of the republic and reflect the commitment of the social democrats to the democratic republic as a forum within which the development towards socialism could be ensured (20). Yet the SDAP was never able after 1920 to translate its republican commitment and its reformist strategy into positive participation in the administration of the republic. It was trapped in a politics of "neither-nor"; neither could it fully participate, nor could its opposition be fundamental. Norbert Leser attributes this to the social democratic fixation with party unity. In the attempt to avoid the splits which had weakened the labour movement elsewhere, the SDAP always chose the middle way, the "line of least resistance" (21), whether this was between reformism and bolshevism or between participation and opposition. In choosing neither one definite, perhaps controversial direction, nor the other, the SDAP drifted into a political inertia, reflected in theoretical terms by Otto Bauer's increasingly pessimistic and deterministic, neo-Kautskyan preoccupation with the "primacy of immutable historical forces" (22). The obsession with party unity and the ensuing "theory and practice of non-commitment" (23) condemned the SDAP to political impotence at national level and left it open to the gradual erosion of its power bases under the Dollfuß dictatorship and to destruction in the civil war of 1934.

The SDAP at national level was thus able to draw on a body of doctrine as a guide for its approach to politics; it was very much an ideological party whose strategies and actions were based on a systematic theoretical conception of Austrian state and society. On the other hand, the social democrats in Steyr in no sense had a systematic, codified ideology as a basis for
their politics. Whereas the national party was able to call upon
the ideas and writings of eminent political theorists like
Bauer, Karl Renner, Max Adler and so on for ideological
guidance, the SDAP in Steyr was quite bereft of theorists. Its
outlook, its reformist strategy and policies were based firmly
in practical local experience.


The fundamental political orientation of the social
democrats in Steyr was conditioned by their ethos. It has been a
constant theme throughout this study that this ethos
incorporated a predisposition to emphasise the value of
organisation. Organisation was the means by which the social
democratic stronghold in Steyr could be consolidated and
insulated from a hostile external environment. As discussed in
Chapter Three, the major organisational power bases of the
stronghold were the MAV and the municipal administration.
Together these represented the mainstays of the social
democratic network in Steyr, which harnessed and concentrated
the movement's organisational powers to form the basis of social
democratic hegemony in the late 1920's. The social democrats
thus enthusiastically embraced the potential of trade unionism
and local government to secure their domination of the
stronghold. The nature of their activity and experience as trade
unionists and local councillors was crucial in determining the
fundamental orientation of the movement in its relationship to
the existing order of Austrian state and society.

In general terms, social democratic trade unions, especially
in Central Europe, assumed for themselves a special role within
the capitalist system by taking on the function of representing
the interests of workers vis-à-vis the representatives and
interests of business. Their role was to protect, within the framework of the capitalist system, the interests of their membership. The more they became attached to this role, the more they attached themselves to the system and society within which they worked. They developed a socially conservative mentality which rejected the idea of revolution and pushed them towards a practical policy of reform within the framework of existing society. This social conservatism was enhanced in Austria by the various statutory functions assigned to the trade unions in works councils, Chambers of Labour, conciliation offices and so on. The social democratic trade unions had a large functional domain which they were concerned to conserve and extend within existing society (24).

The MAV in Steyr conformed very strongly to this model. It was seen in Chapter Two that the MAV had a particularly significant functional domain in the Steyr-Werke (at least until 1930). It had enthusiastically embraced the potential of the post-war works council legislation and exploited its strength in industrial relations in the immediate post-war era to establish for itself a dominant and privileged position on the shopfloor of the car works. And, as shown during the 1925 lockout at the works and again in the conflict with management in 1930, the MAV was determined to hold on to its functional domain (see Chapter Two). Similarly, social democratic councillors carried out functions assigned to them by the constitution of the republic. They too performed a role intrinsically tied to the existing system, and, as argued below, they were committed to retaining this role at all costs. Thus, both the MAV and the local municipal administration were deeply attached to performing roles which derived from the existing socio-economic and constitutional order. They had made a considerable investment in the capitalist socio-economic system and the political system of parliamentary democracy. As a result, they were thoroughly committed to those systems. This commitment was based on their practical experience as trade unionists and local councillors;
it had no foundation in any theoretical/ideological analysis of Austrian politics and society.

This non-theoretical outlook, based in practical local experience, is further illustrated in the social democratic strategy for power. The social democrats were committed to the potential of parliamentary democracy, as enshrined in the constitution of the First Republic, to achieve their ends. Democracy was the arena in which social democratic objectives would be achieved in an explicitly evolutionary process of undefined duration (25). Crucial to this classically reformist, gradualist strategy was the electoral process; the improving electoral performance of the SDAP was apparent evidence that it was ever nearer, no matter how slow the progress, to achieving power (i.e. 51% of the vote) in the state (26). However, this strategy was not based on any ideological conception of democracy and the state; as seen in Chapter Four, it derived rather from the extreme organisational mentality of the party leadership in Steyr. The party leadership valued the size and welfare of the party organisation as their primary political concern. Organisational advance was equated fully with global political advance. Social democratic activity was thus dedicated to increasing the size of the party organisation, towards winning new members and voters, new councillors and M.P.'s. Each of these incremental organisational advances was seen as a further step nearer state power. Social democratic commitment to the democratic process was thus based in the practical experience of the party leadership at the centre of the party organisation.

The commitment to the democratic process also reflected the fact that the transition to a democratic form of government had been made only recently, in the aftermath of the First World War. For social democrats in particular, the establishment of a form of electorally accountable, democratic government, constrained by the rule of law, was a vast improvement over the
previous autocratic and repressive imperial regime. Hence, many thousands of social democrats in Steyr were willing each year to join in the celebrations of the anniversary of the founding of the democratic republic. Moreover, many others were prepared to participate in the physical defence of the republic, whether against external threat, or internal anti-democratic forces (see Chapter Five, section 5.1). Democracy in the Austrian republic was therefore not only worth defending in its perceived function as a forum where social democratic objectives could be achieved on the basis of organisational advance, but also on its own merits (27). In contrast, all forms of dictatorship were rejected. This applied equally to monarchist restoration, Heimwehr aspirations to a dictatorship on the model of fascist Italy, clericalist yearnings for an authoritarian corporate state and to dictatorships of the communist left (28). The SDAP in Steyr had a genuine abhorrence of communist methods and goals. When challenged in the early 1930’s by concerted local communist attempts to recruit from social democratic ranks, the SDAP sought to assert itself by emphasising its democratic commitment against the “revolutionary romanticism” of the communists. The SDAP contrasted its constitutionalism with the illegal, anti-system aims pursued by the communists. Rather than overthrow the existing system, the party strove to rally social democratic opinion around the defence of those advances already made in the democratic republic and ultimately around the defence of democracy itself (29).

The adherence to the democratic process was vigorous and strong. Evidence of this is provided in both the municipal politics of the SDAP in Steyr, and in the party’s reaction to developing repression at the hands of bourgeois national governments. The social democratic municipal administration faced a permanent local financial crisis, so that especially in the 1930’s, it became virtually impossible even to fulfil the basic statutory requirements of local government. This crisis was caused partly by irreversible local factors (30) and partly
by the policies of successive Christian Social Federal Finance Ministers. In particular, the redistribution of federal tax income to the municipalities favoured rural communities over urban ones with far greater municipal obligations. In this situation, the social democrats were forced to apply regularly for emergency aid from the federal government. Their persistence was dogged; between 1926 and 1931, some thirty-four municipal delegations made unsuccessful pleas for aid from the federation (31). Despite the fruitlessness and apparent pointlessness of their efforts, the social democrats never lost the belief that the system would come to Steyr's aid. Only once did they consider laying down their mandates in protest at the reticence of federal authorities, but this course of action was rejected (32). Ultimately, the social democrats' commitment to the system and procedures of the First Republic precluded them from relinquishing their municipal responsibilities. Their sense of constitutional responsibility to the population of the town which elected them into office was paramount.

The persistence with which the social democrats applied for federal financial aid reveals a belief in what might be called a "sense of fair play"; the social democrats were convinced of the merits of their case and continued to believe that it could be won by force of persuasion. A similar attitude was displayed on several occasions in the 1930's when it seemed that Austria was operating a system of "class-justice" which penalised social democrats for the same things the Heimwehr could do with complete impunity. A case in mind would be the massive arms searches ordered by the then Minister for Internal Affairs, the Heimwehr leader Starhemberg, in Steyr and other social democratic strongholds throughout Austria on 4th November 1930. The searches were blatantly one-sided and were presumably ordered to provoke social democratic retaliation and provide a pretext for suspending the federal elections due to take place five days later (33). The social democratic leadership in Steyr appealed for discipline and the avoidance of confrontation, and
that Starhemberg be answered in "correct" manner on election day. The final few days of the election campaign thus evolved into a protest based on the themes of impartial justice and equality before the law (34). The social democrats were convinced of their ability to use the democratic process to bring about a balanced and just solution.

This basic faith in the potential of the democratic process remained a key theme for the social democratic leadership in Steyr in the early 1930's despite the increasingly and openly partisan application of the law by the federal government and its security forces. The activities of the party remained firmly attached to democratic norms: recruitment drives, electoral agitation, the organisation of petitions and so on. Similarly, the protests of the local leadership against the attempted Heimwehr putsch of September 1931, against local anti-social democratic police brutality, and even against the elimination of parliament by Dollfuß in March 1933 all retained a basic optimism about the efficacy of the democratic process (35).

However, the democratic faith of the social democrats grossly overestimated the democratic potential of the system when it was under the control of semi and later fully authoritarian, anti-democratic forces. This reflects the inability of the SDAP to respond to the new problems posed by clericalist authoritarianism. It was a large, unwieldy mass party, whose strategies were developed for and attuned to use in an open, democratic system. At national level, its inability to respond was, according to Norbert Leser, conditioned both by the immobilising fixation with party unity, and by the inflexibility of a hierarchical, conservative and strictly disciplined party organisation (36). This latter factor was especially pertinent in Steyr. It was seen in Chapter Four that the organisational structure of the SDAP was highly bureaucratised and that the leadership both completely dominated the local party and that it was ossified in its position. Its strategy had been established
decisively in the late 1920's. Furthermore, in the insulated setting of the local milieu, which shielded the social democrats in Steyr from the implications of the growing strength of the anti-democratic Right, this strategy seemed an eminently feasible basis for the attainment of political power. This apparent feasibility ensured that the social democratic strategy, centred in organisational advance, became just as ossified and unalterable as the leadership itself. Moreover, as was noted in Chapter Four, the personal interests of the leadership elite were bound up and identified with the scale and well-being of the party organisation. The elite was therefore inherently unwilling to endanger the organisation it had so painstakingly built up, and with which its own interests were associated, by changing course and embarking on a different, perhaps more confrontational strategy. The elite thus retained a faith in the potential of organisational advance within the parliamentary system even after the redefinition of the local milieu in the late 1920's had exposed the social democratic movement in Steyr to the fact that the institutions of democracy in Austria were under anti-democratic and anti-social democratic control, and thus that a parliamentary strategy was increasingly unrealistic. The implications of this inflexibility are examined further below and in the following chapter.


It has been established that the social democrats in Steyr were firmly committed to working within the existing social and constitutional order and had a typically reformist, majoritarian strategy for power. This section assesses precisely what the social democrats sought to reform in the existing order. This revolved primarily around the reform of certain limited aspects of the capitalist socio-economic system. The social democrats
aimed to introduce a progressive and redistributive tax and benefit system, whereby all citizens in need would have an explicit right to adequate social welfare facilities and benefits. They were also committed to a mixed economy, directed by an active, interventionist economic policy whose aim was the elimination of unemployment. Once again, these policy aims were not based in any sense on a theory of capitalism, on a rigorous and rational critique of the bases of the capitalist system, but rather on a further dimension of practical local experience. This stemmed from the economic dependence of Steyr, for over half a century, on the often wildly fluctuating commercial fortunes of the Steyr-Werke (37). Local economic instability apparently condemned the working class to a life interspersed with unemployment, poverty and suffering. It was this local economic instability which the social democrats in Steyr sought to relieve. They lacked a wider perspective on the capitalist system as a whole, developing rather, as can be seen in the following examination of their municipal policies, a reactive, "fire-brigade" approach to economic and social policy: wherever the local economy failed, the social democrats immediately rushed to the scene to patch it up.

Steyr was afflicted by some of the worst social deprivation and poverty in Central and Western Europe (38). This reflected, in the eyes of the social democrats, failings whose roots ran deep into a (local) capitalist economic system whose primary concern was profit and not social welfare. The municipal "fire-brigade" was thus forced to assume the social responsibilities which the capitalist economy neglected (39). In doing so, the social democrats rejected the notion of private charity as a remedy for social problems. The provision of social welfare was regarded as the duty of the whole population, and anyone who was poor, unemployed, homeless etc. was entitled to adequate aid as an explicit social right rather than as some paternalistic act of grace. The social democrats promoted the idea of collective social responsibility as the duty of a
society whose economic failings were seen as the root cause of the various social problems (40).

The commitment to provide relief for the disadvantaged in Steyr was balanced by the attempt to raise income via the principles of progressive taxation. While the municipality had relatively little financial autonomy, the only locally raised tax of any real note and financial significance was highly progressive. It was based on property values, split into twelve groups, each of which was taxed at a higher rate than the previous one. In addition, a 50% surcharge was added from the eighth group upwards. In these higher brackets, the property tax was up to eight times greater than its highly controversial equivalent in Vienna and was the highest such tax in Austria. On the other hand, in the lower brackets, representing cheap, predominantly working class housing, Steyr's residents paid less than was charged in towns of similar size (41). Seen in tandem with the sums raised by the progressive property tax, the sums spent on the provision of welfare (cash benefits, medical aid, the provision of accommodation for the homeless) represent a significant, if, in absolute terms, small redistribution of income in Steyr. Those who were affluent enough to afford more valuable property in the town largely paid for the welfare of the socially disadvantaged (42). This redistributive effect is amplified when other municipal policies are taken into account. The social democrats were keen, for example, to provide incentives and subsidies for local building co-operatives to build low-cost local (working class) housing (43) and also ran a subsidised local bus service between 1927 and 1930 (44). Their overall strategy was to provide an improved standard of living for the town's poor, the costs of which were charged as much as possible to those who were more affluent. In effect, they sought to impose on the more affluent classes, which, on the whole, benefitted from local capitalism, the sense of collective social responsibility that capitalist society otherwise lacked.
The social democratic attitude to unemployment was derived on a similar basis. Unemployment was seen as a basic characteristic of a local capitalist system which was inherently susceptible to periodic crisis. Since, however, capitalist society assumed little responsibility for the social consequences of unemployment apart from limited unemployment benefits, the social democratic municipality was forced to react and assume the responsibility itself. This took the form of general welfare provision as discussed above as well as various measures designed explicitly to combat local unemployment. These included the takeover of local "lame duck" enterprises, which would otherwise have folded (45), and the (unsuccessful) campaign to enlist federal aid in major local public works schemes (46).

These policies indicate a commitment to the idea of active state intervention in the economy to meet certain social objectives, like the reduction of unemployment, which would otherwise have remained unfulfilled. However, the outlook of the social democrats regarding the combatting of unemployment was highly pragmatic. They were willing to use a variety of methods to realise their employment objectives. The commitment to state intervention certainly did not rule out the utilisation of private enterprise to meet the same objectives. The main reason for the susceptibility of Steyr to large-scale unemployment was the town's dependence on one major employer, the Steyr-Werke. If employment levels fell at the works, unemployment levels were increased not only directly by unemployed car workers but also indirectly as the general reduction in local purchasing power "knocked-on" and plunged the whole local economy into recession. The social democratic municipal administration therefore sought to support and build up alternative local industries which could provide an economic counterbalance to the Steyr-Werke. This led it, for example, to invest several hundred thousand shillings in shares in local firms in 1925 and 1926 (47). The municipality was also involved after 1926 in a long-term campaign to develop
the local tourist industry as a counterpoint to the economic influence of the car works (48). In other words, the stimulation of successful capitalist private enterprise was just as legitimate a weapon against unemployment and/or the threat of unemployment as state economic intervention. Both were potentially fruitful means to ensure the achievement of an important end. The social democrats thus embraced - on the basis of local experience and without theoretical foundation - the concept of a mixed economy. This emphasises that while the social democrats rejected the negative outputs of the system (unemployment etc.), they did not fundamentally reject the system as a whole. In more contemporary terminology, they sought to manage the existing system in a different, better way, according to objectives alternative to those otherwise employed.

The social democrats thus followed a practical reform programme, based on local experience and conditions, which strove for the ameliorative reform of certain outputs of the capitalist system. It is important to note that the efficacy of this programme was heavily dependent on local economic circumstances. In particular, the financial means for local reform was largely derived from local tax income, in particular the income tax levied on a local workforce whose size, and therefore financial productivity was defined above all else by the current level of employment at the Steyr-Werke. The implications of this dependence are indicated below.

It has been shown that the social democrats in Steyr were fully committed to the procedures of competitive parliamentary democracy and to the realisation of a limited, pragmatically oriented reform strategy which remained within the parameters of the existing Austrian social and economic order. This reformist strategy had, apparently, good prospects for realisation in the local milieu of the late 1920's. The local economy entered a boom period after 1927, which fed tax income into the redistributive and employment policies of the municipality. In
addition, the insulated nature of the local milieu shielded the social democrats from the implications of broader political trends in Austria, enabling them to maintain unimpaired confidence in the feasibility of a parliamentary strategy for power. Reformism was thus an eminently feasible and realistic strategy. However, the local preconditions for reformism vanished after 1929-1930. The local milieu was redefined in the aftermath of the collapse of the Steyr-Werke. Economic collapse eliminated the financial basis of the municipal social and economic reform programme and exposed the dependence of municipal reformism on the economic success of the capitalist economy in the local form of the Steyr-Werke. Furthermore, Steyr's insulated development was undermined as factors in national politics increasingly impinged on the local context. Steyr became exposed to the progressive subversion of the bases of competitive, parliamentary politics by the Austrian Right, which culminated in the establishment of dictatorship in 1932-1933. The social democratic confidence in the efficacy of a parliamentary strategy for power was thus revealed to be illusory.

After 1929, the reformism of the SDAP in Steyr was no longer a realistic political strategy. It had become outdated and anachronistic, increasingly inconsistent with the realities of local and national political circumstances. On the whole, though, the party leadership adhered to its established positions and policies. The all-consuming preoccupation of the leadership with the consolidation and preservation of the party organisation was reflected in a tactical inflexibility and political passivity which proved wholly inadequate in defending the party and its preferred political arena of parliamentary democracy against Austrian authoritarianism. The failure of social democratic reformism in Steyr in the new circumstances of the 1930's and the inability of the established leadership to adapt stimulated the search for a different political approach. This culminated in the emergence of a left-wing opposition
within the local social democratic movement which rejected the passive acquiescence of the established leadership and sought to mount an activist and offensive resistance to dictatorship. The emergence of opposition and of its radical, anti-dictatorial strategy are discussed in the following chapter.

It is clear in the above discussion that the character of social democratic reformism in Steyr was distinctive in several respects. Most fundamentally, the social democrats had a pragmatic approach which contrasted strongly with the ideological foundations of reformism at the national level. The SDAP in Steyr was profoundly non-ideological. Its reformism was based in practical activity and experience at the local level. A key feature of this practical orientation was the preoccupation with organisation which was central to the social democratic ethos in Steyr. On the basis of their practical experience in building up local organisational power bases in the HAV and the municipality, the social democrats developed deep-seated attachments to the existing order. Their political activities were therefore oriented towards the existing framework of Austrian state and society. In addition, the extreme organisational mentality of the party leadership conditioned an obdurate adherence to a parliamentary strategy for power based in gradual organisational advance. And finally, the experience of local economic instability inspired a commitment to modify and relieve certain locally perceived failings of the capitalist economy.

In comparison with the SDAP at national level, the party in Steyr was decidedly moderate. Although it shared with its mother party a deep attachment to the democratic process and to competitive party politics, it diverged significantly in other respects. Unlike the national party, for example, the local SDAP had no conception of a fundamental reorganisation of the
economy. The national party aimed (albeit very gradually) to replace the capitalist system with a socialist-collectivist alternative. In Steyr, the emphasis was placed on the improvement of the existing system - either by reacting to and ameliorating the social implications of local economic instability, or by attempting to manage the capitalist economy with a greater concern for social welfare. Furthermore, the national party remained something of a "closet" reformist organisation, following a reformist practice, but forced to maintain a radical phraseology for fear of alienating its sporadically influential left wing. There was no influential left wing in Steyr until the early 1930's; the local SDAP was an unambiguously reformist party.

However, just as the SDAP's reformism in Steyr was based in practical local experience, the potential for the realisation of its reformist goals was also rooted in local conditions. It was geared to the unique local milieu for politics which existed in the late 1920's and was singularly inappropriate to the new political framework which existed after the redefinition of the local milieu in 1929-1930. The preconditions for the SDAP's reformism disappeared after 1929. However, a bureaucratically entrenched and self-interested party elite was unable to adapt to the new circumstances of the 1930's. As a result, the SDAP in Steyr disintegrated as a credible political force and stimulated the oppositional tendencies which are the focus of the following chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DEVELOPMENT OF OPPOSITION IN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT 1929-1934

By late 1933, the only significant political force in the social democratic movement in Steyr was a strong left wing, based in the Schutzbund, the SAJ and the MAV, which was fundamentally opposed to the reformist strategy previously pursued by the SDAP. The elected leadership of the party, both local and national, had lost its credibility, legitimacy and authority among important sections of the movement. This chapter examines the reasons for the eclipse of the established leadership and analyses the background to the development of the inner-movement opposition of 1933, its strategical conception and its participation in the active resistance to dictatorship in the civil war of February 1934.

As established in the previous chapter, social democratic reformism in Steyr was intimately bound to certain preconditions. It was dependent on both an expanding capitalist economy and on a system of open and competitive parliamentary politics. These preconditions were fulfilled in the unique local context of the local milieu which existed in the late 1920's. In the early 1930's however, Steyr was afflicted by deep local economic crisis and was exposed to the anti-democratic tendencies of an increasingly dominant Right. The redefinition of the local milieu after 1929 produced a new economic and political background which was inappropriate for the successful implementation of the reformist strategy discussed in the previous chapter. Section 7.1 examines the failure of reformism in the context of the 1930's.
The SDAP in Steyr was unable to adapt to this new context. The bureaucratic structure of the party and the extreme and self-interested organisational mentality of its leadership inhibited effective response. The party thus adhered to a political strategy which was anachronistic and ineffectual in the face of mass local unemployment and political repression. This was reflected in the disintegration of the social democratic movement. Many members were lost as long-term unemployment eroded their political commitment, while others transferred their allegiance to the communists, attracted by their more innovative and effective agitation among the unemployed. Other members left the movement in protest at the acquiescent attitude of both local and national party leaderships to state repression. Both advocated the avoidance of provocation and the passive acceptance of partisan arms confiscations, restrictions on political activities etc. This passivity was justified at the national level by Otto Bauer in an elaborate theoretical determinism which looked only to the future and prescribed a "wait-and-see" attitude for the present. Locally, it reflected the intense organisational preoccupation of a bureaucratic party leadership, which, under no circumstances would risk jeopardising the existence of the organisation by sanctioning protest against repression.

The SAJ and, in particular, the Schutzbund were unwilling to accept domination and repression by the Austrian Right without some kind of resistance. They became increasingly opposed to the passivity and acquiescence of the established leadership of the party, and many left to join the more activist and resolute communists or national socialists. Others displayed their opposition in a semi-independent political activism within the social democratic movement but directed against the tactics of the leadership. SAJ and Schutzbund thus formed two aspects of a strong oppositional potential in Steyr. They were complemented by a developing opposition in the MAV. This was centred around two Works Councillors at the Steyr-Verke, August Moser and Franz
Schrangl, Moser and Schrangl were linked to a nascent national left-opposition in the SDAP, which sought to impose a more activist and confrontational strategy on the party. They were able to use the respect and authority they commanded in the workforce at the car works to exert a political influence which ensured that the MAV became a third centre of oppositional potential (see section 7.2).

The disillusionment with the tactics and leadership of the SDAP intensified after March 1933, when the party evaded a decisive confrontation after Chancellor Dollfuß had circumvented parliamentary politics. Over the following months Moser and Schrangl developed an unsophisticated, but distinctive opposition strategy. This rejected the basic principles upon which the politics of the SDAP in Steyr had been founded: the partial reform of the existing system on the basis of a parliamentary strategy for power centred in organisational advance. However, the opposition strategy went even further than rejecting the particular nature of the local Social Democratic Party. It also incorporated a rejection of the broader characteristics of social democracy in general. The new strategy abandoned the whole concept of participating in the state in the pursuit of reforms which would gradually modify and/or replace the capitalist organisation of society. Instead it proposed an activist, extra-parliamentary politics, whose aim was the abrupt and violent overthrow of the existing order, and its replacement by a revolutionary, quasi-bolshevik regime (section 7.3)

Late in 1933, the oppositional potential of SAJ, Schutzbund and MAV coalesced under the leadership of Moser and Schrangl to form a broad local opposition movement which proved to be a decisive influence in the decision to mount active resistance to dictatorship in the civil war of February 1934. It is the contention of this chapter that the participation of some 600 social democrats in the civil war in Steyr was the culmination
of a process of alienation and emancipation from reformist social democracy and all the assumptions which went with it.

7.1: The Failure of Reformism and the Disintegration of the Social Democratic Movement.

The membership of the SDAP grew steadily after 1926 and reached a highpoint of around 5,000 in 1929. The growth in membership coincided with the growth of the local economy after 1926, and the peak membership with the height of the false boom at the Steyr-Werke in 1928-1929. The general surge in membership levels is partly ascribable to a rise in instrumentalist support for the party. As employment at the Steyr-Werke increased, so did the influence of social democratic patronage in the local labour market. This encouraged the proliferation of "fair-weather" social democrats, who joined the party only for the potential material benefits available from membership (see Chapter Three). The rise in membership also reflects, however, a more genuine and deep-seated increase in social democratic popularity in the town. Electoral support for the SDAP was firmly on an upward gradient (1), and the many social democratic auxiliary organisations, most of which did not offer any instrumentalist incentives, were flourishing (see Table 8). This more genuine popularity was indicative of the apparent success of social democratic reformism in Steyr in the period 1927-1929. This apparent success reflected the peculiar conditions which existed in the local milieu in the late 1920's. The local insularity which derived from Steyr's social and political isolation enabled the social democrats to maintain their confidence in the efficacy of a parliamentary strategy for power based on the gradual expansion of the size of the party organisation and electorate. In addition, economic boom at the
Steyr-Werke boosted municipal tax income and provided the funds for local welfare reforms.

The period between 1927 and 1929 was therefore both a highpoint of social democratic popularity and of social democratic reformism in Steyr. After 1929, however, the party began to disintegrate. By 1931 it had lost around a quarter of its 1929 membership; the losses in its women's organisation and some of its sections were even greater (see Table 10). The loss of previous instrumentalist support after the collapse of social democratic patronage in the local labour market in the aftermath of the shutdown of the Steyr-Werke accounted for an initial, one-off fall in membership levels. The decline continued however, excepting a temporary upswing late in 1932 due to an intensive recruitment drive, right through to the official dissolution of the party in February 1934 (2). This continued decline reflected the failure of social democratic reformism in Steyr in the 1930's. The SDAP's reformist strategy was suited to, and was relatively successful in, the late 1920's. At the turn of the decade a massive change in local circumstances set in. The collapse of the Steyr-Werke in 1929 led to a sudden and radical redefinition of the local milieu. The resultant local economic crisis and mass unemployment undermined local welfare reforms, while at the same time, Steyr's insularity was pierced and eroded as factors in national politics encroached on the local context. In particular, the social democrats were forced to accept that successive federal governments were beginning to abandon and subvert the principles and institutions of Austrian democracy, and therefore that their parliamentary strategy for power was becoming increasingly unrealistic.

The SDAP in Steyr was unable to respond effectively to these new circumstances. It was an unwieldy, bureaucratic party with an ossified internal structure, whose leadership elite was tied to a self-serving organisational strategy for power. It was unable to take account of new conditions and mobilise around new
issues. It thus remained fettered to the politics of the 1920's. This section assesses the negative effects of social democratic inflexibility on the cohesion of the social democratic movement in the early 1930's.

A fundamental problem of the 1930's with which the SDAP in Steyr was unable to come to terms with any measure of success was mass unemployment. Measured against the size of the workforce in the town as cited in the census of 1920, unemployment rose from a low point of just over 5% in June 1929, to 21% by the end of that year, and continued to rise until its peak of 33% at the end of 1932. The decline in unemployment levels thereafter was slow and had reached only 28% by the start of 1934 (3). Major first-hand studies of inter-war unemployment have generally come to similar conclusions as to its effects on the unemployed (4). These were invariably ruinous for the social democratic movement. Long-term unemployment ushered in a process of gradual personal and social disintegration, which progressed through several stages of deterioration to leave the subjects in a state of resigned apathy. The long-term unemployed lost all self-confidence and progressively withdrew themselves from all extra-familial social relationships. This naturally affected the level of political activity. Jahoda, Lazarsfeld and Zeisel's study of near-100% unemployment in the Lower Austrian village of Marienthal revealed a steady withdrawal of the unemployed from political activity over the whole political spectrum. This did not, however, reflect any changes in political allegiance; electoral results remained remarkably constant before and during the period of mass unemployment. Politics lost only its power to shape the content and relationships of everyday life (5).

The findings in Steyr corroborate those of the Marienthal study. There is evidence of a high degree of hopelessness and resignation among the unemployed in the town (6). That this led to a decline in political commitment is indicated by the steady decline in the membership of the SDAP throughout the period of
high unemployment. On the other hand, the voting strength of the party, allowing for the effects of emigration, remained relatively stable, except for some small losses to the communists (7). Unemployment gradually eroded the propensity of social democratic supporters to participate with commitment and enthusiasm in the day-to-day life of the party.

The decline in social democratic political participation in Steyr was exacerbated by a wave of emigration from the town. The *Kinderfreunde* in Steyr had lost around a thousand members due to emigration by the end of 1930, and the party almost five hundred in 1931 (8). The loss was not just quantitative; the quality of the social democratic membership was also affected. In an earlier wave of emigration from Steyr in 1925, the bulk of the emigrants had been skilled and qualified workers, traditionally the most able representatives of the working class. Despite the absence of an occupational breakdown of post-1929 emigrants, it can be assumed that the same type of workers were again involved in the emigration movement. Rationalisation at the Steyr-Werke had created a surplus of skilled labour, and workers with skills and qualifications were more likely to get jobs elsewhere (9). Moreover, in Marienthal it was found that younger people were over-represented among those who emigrated. The village lost some of its most energetic and vital forces (10). Again, although there is no direct evidence, it is probable that the same applied in Steyr. Emigration inevitably involved considerable material and psychological rigours; younger people were far more likely to undergo such rigours than their older colleagues. Steyr and the social democratic movement in particular were thus drained of the vitality of young, skilled workers by the upsurge in emigration.

The effects of unemployment - political apathy and a high emigration rate - presented disadvantages for the social democratic movement inherent in the local economic situation of the early 1930's. These were compounded by the inability of the
social democrats to adapt their tactical outlook to the needs of the unemployed. At the end of 1932, over 70% of the membership of the District SDAP were unemployed (11). But although the party leadership realised that many of its supporters had become "weary" in the economic crisis (i.e. presumably had withdrawn from active party life) (12), it was unable to devise a coherent and attractive strategy to articulate and represent the particular problems facing the unemployed, and thereby maintain their political interest and commitment. It adhered to its established parliamentary orientation. Social democrats from Steyr helped, for example, to formulate a series of eloquent resolutions in the Upper Austrian Landtag which condemned cuts in state unemployment support (13). They also collected signatures with great enthusiasm for a popular initiative law designed to improve social insurance (14). Such tactics had no immediate relevance to the day-to-day concerns of the average unemployed person, and once again they tended to over-estimate the potential of democratic methods when the federal government of the democratic republic was in increasingly anti-democratic hands. The SDAP was adhering to its established reformist methods, which were relevant in the insulated local milieu of the 1920's, but which had now become increasingly unrealistic.

The Communist Party in Steyr sought to address the needs of the unemployed directly rather than indirectly through the democratic process. The communists carried out campaigns for the unemployed on the streets, in close contact with those who were out of work. This contrasted with the detached and remote parliamentary tactics of the SDAP. The Communist Party was able to draw on guidelines issued by its national executive for agitation among the unemployed. These recognised the danger that the unemployed were likely to withdraw over time into a self-imposed social isolation and emphasised that the unemployed must be integrated into "normal" party organisations (15). The attempt to integrate the jobless aimed to create the sense of purpose in life which tended to evaporate in long-term
unemployment. This was complemented by the provision of material relief, which, albeit modest, proved to be an important mobilisational tool. Between 1930 and 1932, the communist movement enjoyed several surges in support which were due, according to police reports, to the effectiveness of its agitation among the unemployed (16). Social democratic activities among and for the unemployed were never integrated into the mainstream of party activity; the potential of up to 70% of the party membership and many more who had already withdrawn from political life was not exploited. The social democrats remained very much behind the communists in both the scale and the impact of their work with and on behalf of the unemployed. The SDAP was not a party of mobilisation like the KPD; it was a bureaucratic organisation, unable to respond quickly or adequately to new challenges. It lapsed into a political inertia, using methods which were relevant to different circumstances, and which were ineffectual in coping with contemporary problems.

The SDAP also lost a considerable number of younger members to the communist and national socialist movements in the early 1930's. The attractiveness of extremist political movements to youth in the inter-war era has been interpreted as a consequence of youth unemployment (17). Young people tended to be less easily "broken" by unemployment and are less likely than older colleagues to fall into a state of resigned apathy. Then, "as poverty at home drove unemployed youth on to the streets, devoid of either money or self-respect, they became ready recruits for street gangs which, in turn, were manipulated by extremist political parties" (18). These parties, and especially their paramilitary wings, provided meaningful structure for the daily life of their youthful recruits, a sense of comradeship and belonging and, perhaps most importantly, a sense of mission directed against the system which had, so far, failed them (19).
The radicalisation of younger social democrats in Steyr and their defections to the KPö and the NSDAP were also related to the attitude of the SDAP leadership, both local and national, to the onset of state anti-social democratic repression. The reaction of the SDAP to the various arms searches, bans on meetings and marches, increasingly partisan and violent treatment by the police and Dollfuß' dictatorial rule by emergency decree was essentially passive. The party continued to hope for an improvement in its treatment either from the results of the electoral process or from some compromise formula which could be worked out with the government. The commitment to a democratic solution was increasingly illusory and only served to legitimize a passivity, which, in the eyes of disaffected elements, amounted to a progressive surrender of social democratic strength. That the social democratic youth in Steyr should number strongly among such disaffected elements was explained in Chapter Five, section 5.2. The social democratic youth movement, the SAJ, had been educated for a function which would only be activated when the SDAP had conquered power in the state. It was, however, forced to sit and watch as the party seemed, through its passivity, to be slipping further and further away from state power. Its planned future function seemed more and more distant and unrealistic. This provoked a disaffection with party passivity which culminated in defection to movements which were more ready to take action in support of their aims.

A similar argument explains the regular defections of Schutzbündler, at first to the communist Arbeiterwehr, and later to the national socialist SA and SS. The Schutzbund existed primarily to ensure the physical defence of the constitution of the republic. The passive responses of the SDAP meant, however, that it had to stand by and watch as its raison d'être, the constitution, was progressively dismantled by the Austrian Right. Waves of protest and defections were a logical result of the passivity of the leadership and its continued reliance on an
expiring democratic system to act as saviour to the movement (see Chapter Five, section 5.1).

After 1930, the social democratic movement in Steyr was gradually being weakened both by the erosive effect of long-term, mass unemployment and by initially sporadic, but later consistently applied government repression. The party leadership proved unable to respond, remaining unadaptable in its outlook, unable to recognise that its established parliamentary tactics were less and less relevant as successive federal governments gradually subverted the bases of parliamentary democracy. It had long been established as an unchallenged elite which presided over a party devoid of constructive input from its lower levels. It had thus become remote from the concerns of many of its followers and was unable to respond to their calls for the pursuit of a different, more activist strategy. Those who demanded a change in strategy began to turn away from the leadership. This was expressed not only in defections to other political movements, but also in a developing opposition within the social democratic movement. The following section analyses the development and the concerns of inner-movement opposition in Steyr between 1929 and 1933.

7.2: The Opposition Potential After 1929.

The development of opposition in the social democratic movement between 1929 and 1933 is illustrated in Table 10. The incidence of oppositional trends after 1930 increasingly reflects disaffection over national rather than local issues and events; in other words, the attitude and policies of the national social democratic leadership gradually overtook those of the local leadership as the primary focus of oppositional sentiment (although both had the same reputation for
inflexibility and passivity). This indicates two things. Firstly it stresses that the local context for politics was increasingly "nationalised" after 1929. Steyr no longer experienced an insulated political development after the redefinition of the local milieu in 1929-1930. The local milieu was now realigned with national political developments. For example, referring to Table 10, there was now a new framework for industrial relations at the Steyr-Werke resulting from the installation of the Credit-Anstalt management at the works and the application of new national industrial relations legislation (see Chapter Two). Similarly, state repression (arms searches), the rise of the Heimwehr and the national socialists to political prominence (the Pfrimer Putsch and the threat of nazi putsches) and the partisan application of justice (the acquittal of the Pfrimer putschists) increasingly dominated the local political scene.

Secondly, the growth of local disaffection over essentially national issues and developments also denotes that the social democratic opposition in Steyr was developing a wider perspective on politics than had hitherto been the case. The emergence of opposition after 1929 represents in this respect the emancipation of at least parts of the movement from the insular, localised consciousness and ethos which had previously dominated the social democrats. This theme is explored further below.

The loci of opposition after 1929 were the SAJ, the Schutzbund and the MAV in the Steyr-Werke. That the SAJ figures only once in Table 10 as an independent source of opposition reflects its increasing role in the social democratic paramilitary organisations. SAJ opposition was often identical to and subsumed in the opposition displayed by the Schutzbund (20). The youth movement was also the proponent of a new, aggressive activism after 1931. This was a more implicit criticism of previous tactics which did not directly challenge
the party, but which did coalesce with the more offensive strategy demanded by other oppositional elements.

The waves of opposition emanating from the ranks of Schutzbündler were virtually all directed at what they saw as the excessive moderation of their local and national party leaderships in the face of provocation by the Heimwehr and central government. This tended to culminate in weak and humiliating capitulation. The starting point here was the surrender by Mayor Sichlrader of the local social democratic monopoly of the streets in February 1930 (see Chapter Three, section 3.3). In doing so, Sichlrader overrode the determination of the Schutz bund (and the social democratic youth) to uphold the monopoly by force against Heimwehr incursions. According to the police reports, this caused such dissent that 130 men had left the Schutz bund by the end of February and had, temporarily at least, joined the communist's paramilitary Arbeiterwehr (21). The dissenters were unwilling to see a position of strength, such as the monopoly of the streets represented, to be surrendered without a struggle. In broader terms they demanded an active, confrontational resistance against the anti-social democratic actions and plans of Heimwehr and, increasingly, the dominant force in the federal government, the Christian Social Party.

For a brief period in the autumn of 1930, when the Heimwehr was brought in to prop up a weak christian social government, and more or less continuously from the beginning of 1932, the Austrian social democrats were subject to official, state repression. After March 1933 they faced the "salami-tactic" of Chancellor Dollfuß, which gradually eliminated social democratic positions of strength in the state apparatus, muzzled the party press and progressively restricted the range of permissible party activities (22). The response of the SDAP at national level to state repression was conditioned by the increasingly fatalistic and pessimistic outlook of Otto Bauer. In a series of
theoretical articles grounded in deterministic Marxism, Bauer developed the thesis that Austria had entered a "pause" between the revolutionary developments of 1918-1919 and a future revolutionary crisis. The revolution of 1918-1919 had been a "bourgeois revolution" in that it had not changed the pattern of ownership of the means of production. This meant that the role of the SDAP in government in 1918-1920 and its strong political influence in the republic, at least up to 1927, were temporary phenomena. These necessarily gave way to the restoration of bourgeois power in what Bauer termed the "bourgeois republic", as the Austrian "political superstructure became adjusted to the economic basis" (23). This resigned and deterministic analysis allowed no scope for an offensive strategy for the SDAP; that would logically have to wait for the next revolutionary crisis. The SDAP was left with a defensive strategy whose top priority was the maintenance of the democratic constitution, and which had, for the time being, abandoned the goal of socialism. It sought only to ameliorate the anti-democratic tendencies of the bourgeois parties through creative compromise and to appease them as a "lesser evil" than the strengthening national socialist movement (24).

Creative compromise and appeasement amounted, in real terms, to passive acquiescence to repression. The social democratic movement was gradually robbed, without resistance, of its positions of strength. The acquiescent and submissive attitude of the party leadership was a twofold stimulant to opposition in the Schutzbund throughout Austria. In the first place it allowed the bourgeois parties and the security forces to subvert the democratic constitution the Schutzbund was supposed to protect. Secondly, it allowed them to strip the Schutzbund of the means to protect the constitution: weapons. The passive surrender of their weapons in the increasingly frequent arms searches carried out by the security forces was particularly humiliating to the Schutzbündler. As Ilona Duczynska argues, it caused a festering resentment in their ranks:
With every search for weapons, with every confiscation grew the rancour, the suppressed anger with a government infested with Heimwehr influence and with a party and Schutzbund leadership which silently put up with every provocation. Many Schutzbündler entered a state of dangerous instability which swung between not wanting to bother any more and wanting to take to arms immediately (25).

Between November 1930 and February 1932 the waves of opposition in the Schutzbund in Steyr were all concerned with the question of weapons: either the confiscation of their own, or the ability of the Heimwehr to use theirs, even to putsch with them with apparent impunity (see Table 10). The Schutzbündler condemned the moderation of the social democratic leaders and their inaction over arms searches, and even called for the deposition of the national party leadership. They were deeply embittered by the preferential treatment accorded to the Heimwehr and demanded offensive action against the government and violent resistance to future searches (26).

In practical terms, the response of disaffected Schutzbündler to the inaction of the SDAP leadership took on a new form after 1930. Instead of displaying their opposition by defecting to the communists, they increasingly tended towards cooperation with the communists in a united front of Schutzbund and communist Arbeiterwehr (see Table 10) (27). The most dramatic product of this cooperation was a detailed battle plan (see Figure 6) for the occupation of Steyr which was drawn up in July 1932 to be put into effect in the event of a national socialist putsch in Austria (28). Even though Schutzbund-Arbeiterwehr co-operation ceased after mid-1932 (due to internal problems in the communist movement), the willingness of the Schutzbund to ally with the communists gives an indication of the direction its opposition was taking. The flirtation with the communists indicates a rejection not just of the passivity and acquiescence of the social democratic leadership, but also, more fundamentally, a rejection of the nature of social democracy in general. In cooperating with the
communists, the dissident Schutzbündler effectively rejected the concept of the democratic mass party and its commitment to a parliamentary stage. This type of party, as discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis, tended towards the tactical unwieldiness and inagility born of a cumbersome and bureaucratic organisational apparatus. The Schutzbündler were demanding a less complex, tactically more mobile and responsive political organisation. They were edging - instinctively, without theoretical underpinning - towards the model of a Leninist vanguard party, with a small, highly active, cadre-based membership, which was able to act quickly and decisively at an appropriate time to mobilise the masses in support of revolutionary actions (29). In doing so, they were heading in the same direction as (while remaining separate from) the developing opposition in the MAV.

The opposition in the MAV centred around the Chairman of the Works Council at the Steyr-Werke, August Moser, and his fellow Works Councillor Franz Schrangl. Moser and Schrangl became leaders of a militant and organised left-opposition within the social democratic movement in Steyr in 1933-1934. The roots of the Moser-Schrangl opposition lay in the negotiations between MAV and Steyr-Werke management on the new wages and working conditions which would apply at the works on the resumption of production in July 1930. The newly-installed management was determined to eliminate the privileged position the MAV had established for itself in the works after the First World War. The MAV was equally determined to defend its privileges, but was preempted by the intervention of the national executive of the union, which accepted the terms laid down by the Steyr-Werke management without involving the local MAV in the decision (see Chapter Two).

Moser and Schrangl reacted with anger at the 1930 MAV National Congress. They accused the union of not fulfilling its duties; it seemed to be cowering irresponsibly and
over-pessimistically before the apparitions of "crisis" and "rationalisation" (30). According to Moser, it was sad "that whenever a member turns to me in desperation, I have to explain again and again: 'I can't help, the crisis is too great', or: 'That's the result of rationalisation'". He saw no reason why the union could not still mount an aggressive wages policy. Although the chances for success may have been limited, the membership needed to see that the union was working on their behalf (31). Moser resented the fatalistic intervention of the national MAV executive in the recent negotiations in Steyr, where, when it came to the critical "moment when the cause should be decisively defended, someone brings up the catchword of 'crisis', and the battle is given up without a determined struggle" (32). Schrangl considered the constant evocation of the image of crisis as a feeble excuse; the union was evading its responsibility for defending the interests of its members (33). Both he and Moser demanded a more active and offensive approach to industrial relations, whatever the economic situation. Furthermore, they demanded a greater adaptability in union tactics. In this sense, for example, rationalisation and its effects were seen as a potentially fruitful challenge to the union, not a presage of shopfloor impotence. Rationalisation meant, among other things, that more unskilled workers, above all women and younger workers, would be employed. The MAV would have to take account of this. It would have to move with the times and abandon its traditional preoccupation with the situation of adult, male, skilled workers and begin to address the concern of women and young workers, who faced a far greater danger of exploitation (34).

Moser and Schrangl thus rejected the pessimistic and fatalistic attitude which had begun to afflict their national union executive, and which was to grip the local and national SDAP to an increasing extent in the 1930's. While the social democratic movement lapsed into inflexibility and passivity,
Xoser and Schrangl retained an innovative, activist and offensive stance.

The thoughts and activities of Xoser and Schrangl between the MAV Congress in September 1930 and the autumn of 1932 are unknown. By autumn 1932, however, they were identified as members of a nascent left-opposition in the SDAP at national level (35). This emerging faction, whose leading personality was the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* editor Ernst Fischer, then consisted only of a loose network of social democratic activists spread throughout Austria. It is known that Fischer was already planning to build up an oppositional force within the SDAP as early as 1931, but not if Xoser and Schrangl were involved at that stage (36). The left-opposition of autumn 1932 had developed a position which rejected the assumptions upon which social democracy (not just in Austria, but in general terms) was based. It was opposed to the traditional, "petrified, archaic and conservative" organisational structure of the Social Democratic Party (37), and favoured communist/Leninist organisational principles. It conceived of itself as a vanguard of capable and committed political "shock troops" within the SDAP, which would mount an active battle against "reaction and fascism" (38). It also held "an ideological opposition to reformism" (39), whose limitations resulted in the "capitulationism" (40) which dominated the SDAP in the 1930's. The left-opposition was thus effectively an anti-social democratic, quasi-communist faction within the social democratic movement.

The left-opposition was organised throughout Austria on an uncoordinated, local basis whereby individual activists were to take on a "revolutionising role" in their area of activity (41). It can be assumed that Xoser and Schrangl sought to use their local influence to gain support for left-opposition ideas within the Works Council at the Steyr-Werke and in at least parts of the workforce. They and the other Works Councillors were held in
very high esteem in the works in view of the consistency and
determination with which they had sought to uphold the interests
of the workforce. The respect which they thus enjoyed enabled
them, as one ex-Works Councillor recalls, to exert a decisive
political influence over the workforce (42). There is certainly
strong evidence to support this view in the increasing militancy
of the workforce in the last few weeks before the Austrian Civil
War (see section 7.4), and some indication of a radical
potential in the workforce before 1933 (43). The developing
opposition of Moser and Schrangl was thus reflected in the
emergence of the manual workforce at the Steyr-Verke as a locus
of opposition to the passivity and "capitulationism" of the
social democratic leadership.

The third "ingredient" of the developing opposition within
the social democratic movement in Steyr was the SAJ. This
reflected a nationwide trend of militancy in the social
democratic youth movement in 1931 and 1932. In Vienna and Styria
in particular, a new, semi-autonomous organisation of social
democratic youths and young adults, the Jungfront, sprang up.
The Jungfront emerged as a focus for a militant anti-fascist
activism and for dissatisfaction with the leadership of the
SDAP. In many respects it was a forerunner of the Fischer
left-opposition of 1932, and indeed provided much of the support
for it (44). Although there was no Jungfront organisation in
Steyr, the SAJ developed a similar militancy. It is possible
that Franz Schrangl played a significant role here. He was a
recent Chairman of the local SAJ and still exerted a strong
influence over the youth organisation (45). His influence may
have been a driving force behind the adoption by the SAJ of new
and innovative methods and a highly confrontational attitude
towards the Austrian Right from 1932 onwards. The SAJ introduced
political satire, with considerable success, into social
democratic agitation and sought an intense political debate with
the local communists and national socialists. It also embraced
the use of physical force as a political tactic, both in its
confrontations with the Heimwehr and the nazis, and in its increasingly significant role in the social democratic paramilitary organisations (see Chapter Five, section 5.2). The newly found political activism of the SAJ, which contrasted strongly with its previous preoccupation with politically detached cultural Abgrenzung, represented an implicit rejection of the SDAP's passivity and capitulation in the face of continued repression. The SAJ thus joined the Schutzbund and the NAV as a third oppositional force.

7.3: The Opposition Strategy in Steyr.

The opposition potential in the social democratic movement in Steyr, as assessed in the previous section, remained sporadic and isolated in its impact before 1933. However, the events surrounding the parliamentary crisis of March 1933 signalled a turning point. The parliamentary crisis proved for many to be the final straw of disillusionment with the SDAP and ushered in a period in which an oppositional left wing became the dominant force in the social democratic movement in Steyr.

On 4th March the Austrian parliament had become deadlocked on a procedural technicality. The christian social Chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuß exploited the situation of procedural confusion as a pretext for abandoning "unworkable" parliamentary government and commencing government by emergency decree. Initially the SDAP National Executive displayed a determination to mobilise the masses and take up battle in defence of parliament and the constitution (46). The "showdown" would be on the 15th March, when a parliamentary sitting, which Dollfuß promised to prevent forcibly, was to take place. However, the uncharacteristic commitment to face the full consequences of a confrontation soon weakened. On 13th March the party executive
began to prevaricate, alleging the unreadiness of the masses for battle. The showdown on the 15th then became a "great evasion", as the social democratic and pan-German M.P.'s crept into parliament before the allotted time, thus avoiding the police who were to have prevented the sitting. The sitting was formally opened, immediately closed and it was then loudly and triumphantly proclaimed that a genuine parliamentary sitting had taken place (47).

The events of 15th March 1933 were, in the words of one party executive member, tragicomical (48). After preparing its followers for a decisive confrontation, the SDAP executive contented itself with a farcical evasion of conflict and even claimed "victory" for ensuring that parliament did indeed "sit". This resulted in a wave of disappointment and disillusionment throughout the Austrian labour movement. The majority of the movement had been ready, both psychologically and in terms of concrete preparations, to fight. The Schutzbund in Steyr and in Upper Austria in general was mustered, weapons at hand, ready to act. "The working class waited for the signal which would announce the general strike. The Schutzbändjer for the call to support the general strike with armed force" (49). The news that the party leadership had, at the last minute, evaded the confrontation was received with anger, indignation and derision. There was great disappointment in Steyr, especially in the Schutzbund, that the national leadership of the party lacked the consistency and conviction to take the final step towards confrontation after concentrating its forces, apparently so decisively, for action on 15th March (50). This was the point at which the national party leadership lost all respect and authority, all legitimacy among oppositional circles in Steyr. It had for so long held up parliamentary democracy as the remedy for all ills, but, at the decisive moment, proved to be incapable of defending it. In the eyes of the opposition it was now a discredited and spent force. Much the same applied to the local leadership, which was also associated with a politics of
passivity and acquiescence. Even after March 1933, the local leadership remained committed to a parliamentary style of politics and strove to avoid confrontation at all costs (51).

The farcical events of 15th March gave a decisive impetus to the inner-movement opposition in Steyr by revealing unequivocally that the party leadership was a "paper tiger", whose predominant instinct was prevarication and not action. Although the opposition did not yet take on a definable organisational form, it effectively usurped the authority of leadership in the local social democratic movement; its adherents now represented the only significant and credible political influence, the only driving force in the movement in Steyr. In the following months, inspired by the events of 15th March, the two leading oppositional figures in Steyr, Moser and Schrangl, elaborated a new and distinctive, albeit unsophisticated, political strategy. This strategy encompassed a fundamental rejection of the democratic reformism which had hitherto held sway in the SDAP, and which had patently failed in the 1930's to be a vehicle for the achievement of social democratic goals or for the conquest of power in the state. Instead, Moser and Schrangl developed a militant, activist strategy for power, pursued by a more dynamic organisational apparatus, which would culminate in a "social revolution".

The Moser-Schrangl strategy was based on an analysis not only of the failings of Austrian social democracy at local and national level, but also compared these with the fate of social democracy in Germany in the early 1930's. This demonstrated the emancipation of Moser and Schrangl, and more broadly the emerging opposition in Steyr, from the narrow, localised mentality which had previously been the foundation of social democratic politics in the town. It was also indicative of a fundamentally new approach to politics, based not in practical, local experience, but in a rudimentary theory drawn from the comparison of the broadly similar experiences of Austrian and
German social democracy. The implications they drew did not therefore concern just their attitude towards the nature of Austrian social democracy, but related to the character of social democracy as a broader political tradition.

Kosser was deeply critical of the determinism of the SDAP leadership, its insistence that the party should sit tight in the expectation that a policy of negotiation, or perhaps even the intervention of foreign powers would solve the political crisis in Austria. He dismissed this argumentation as "just a hope, and even a very vague hope" and referred to the fate of the German labour movement under Hitler as a logical consequence of such a "wait and see" attitude (52). The situation in Germany had a profound influence on the oppositional social democrats in Steyr. They read and heard of nazi crimes, especially against the labour movement, and determined to avoid the same fate (53). Schrangl emphasised the need to avoid the mistakes that had been made in Germany, and which the SDAP seemed now to be repeating in Austria. The social democrats had to learn that a politics of tolerating the "lesser evil" (i.e. appeasing the Dollfuß regime in the hope of preventing a nazi takeover in Austria) was fundamentally wrong: seeking compromises with the "lesser evil" was one of the reasons for the current predicament of the German working class. Schrangl then widened his attack to reject the basic principles of social democratic reformism. Reformism had become patently impracticable; it was because of its adherence to a philosophy which professed that socialism could be achieved by "occupying legislative and administrative positions", that German social democracy had "fallen into the abyss" (54).

Kosser's and Schrangl's ideas thus incorporated the repudiation of a reformist strategy for power. Parliamentary methods were emphatically rejected (55). Moser and Schrangl subscribed to the view that only a broad front of extra-parliamentary actions - protests, demonstrations, strikes and so on - could provide the basis from which to end the
dictatorship. These were gradually to be escalated, with the mobilisation of the whole working class, into a general strike which would signal the battle for power in the state (56). This was complemented by a vision of "social revolution", which remained theoretically undefined, but whose practical model was the Russian Revolution of 1917. Schrangl attacked the restraint the SDAP had exerted on the working class in the revolutionary upheaval of 1918 to prevent the establishment of an Austrian Soviet Republic. If the "methods of the Russian proletariat" had been used throughout Central Europe after the First World War, there could never have been such a brutal fascist regime as now existed in Germany, and which threatened to take hold in Austria. Austrian social democracy therefore now had to embrace these "Russian methods", the violent and total overthrow of the existing system, to ensure the "social revolution" in Austria (57).

However unsophisticated the terminology of Moser and Schrangl may have been, it is clear that they had decisively rejected the principles on which social democracy as whole was based - in Steyr, Austria, Germany and elsewhere. They had abandoned the concept of reforming the existing system from within and now sought its complete abolition and substitution with a revolutionary order based on Soviet-style communism.

The existing type of party organisation, the classical mass party, could not be the instrument of such violent, revolutionary change. Its leadership was seen by the oppositional social democrats as far too remote from the concerns of the average member and its internal machinery as far too cumbersome to be able to reach and take responsibility for speedy, possibly momentous decisions. This latter point was regarded as partly responsible for the prevarication of the party leadership on 15th March 1933 (58). Moser and Schrangl suggested the party could become less remote and more agile if its leadership was not so materially dependent on the party
organisation (59). The implication was that the existing leadership was unwilling to order decisive action against the Dollfuß dictatorship in case its material existence (as M.P.'s, full-time party and trade union functionaries etc.) was lost if the action was defeated. This also implied a fundamental criticism of the particular nature of the leadership of the party in Steyr, the majority of which was, in some form, materially dependent on the social democratic movement (see Chapter Four, section 4.2).

It was also suggested that the party leadership had become unrepresentatively over-aged and needed an infusion of younger ideas to help overcome its tactical inflexibility (60). Further than this, however, the Moser-Schrangl opposition did not suggest new organisational principles. This reflected a wider, national ambiguity within the left-opposition over its organisational self-conception. While it tended towards, and professed the necessity of a tightly organised Leninist vanguard organisation, it also sought to remain within, and even "under the strict proletarian discipline" of the existing SDAP. This was partly a tactical consideration. Even though the left-opposition had, by mid-1933, effectively declared itself "for communist principles", it had to stay within the social democratic movement to have any chance of mass support; the KPÖ had long been lambasted as the pernicious destroyer of a sacred "proletarian unity". Not surprisingly therefore, it "did not enjoy a great reputation" among the social democratic masses (61).

However, the desire to remain inside the social democratic movement also derived from the belief that the party held within it a latent potential for the violent and revolutionary tactics demanded by the opposition. As noted in Chapter Six, section 6.1, the Austrian SDAP combined a moderate reformist practice with a radical programmatical rhetoric. This was reflected in the SDAP's Linz Programme of 1926, which set out party tactics
in case of a bourgeois counter-revolution which destroyed democracy: "... then the working class could only win power through a civil war" (59). The left-opposition held that, in demanding active, and ultimately violent resistance to dictatorship, they were upholding the party programme. This was certainly the case in Steyr. Alois Zehetner, a close colleague of August Moser and a prominent member of the inner-movement opposition in Steyr, vehemently rejects the characterisation of oppositional elements in any way as "radical": "These people were merely adhering consistently to the party programme and its decisions" (63). The opposition in Steyr felt that its strategy was fully consistent with the established aims of the movement; the leadership of the movement was out of step in the particular circumstances of the early 1930's, not the opposition.

7.4: The Opposition and the Austrian Civil War.

Although the events of 15th March 1933 stripped the established local and national leadership of the SDAP of its legitimacy and authority, and thus gave a decisive impetus to oppositional tendencies, these did not coalesce into a coherent opposition movement in Steyr until the autumn of 1933. Until the last quarter of 1933, the opposition "ingredients" discussed in section 7.2 remained largely uncoordinated. Three factors served to bring together the opposition potential of Moser and Schrangl, their supporters in the MAV and the discontented within the ranks of the Schutzbund and SAJ: the fate of the labour movement in nazi Germany; the gradual, "salami-tactic" erosion of social democratic strength in Austria by Dollfuß; and the accelerated disintegration of the social democratic movement in late 1933, as more and more social democrats defected to the NSDAP.
The repression of the labour movement in Germany since Hitler came to power in January 1933 acted as a constant reminder to the social democrats in Steyr of its possible fate if the Austrian dictatorship was not resisted. Dollfuß' salami-tactic repression, especially the regular searches for Schutzbund arms (64), was also gradually reducing the ability of the social democrats to resist such a fate:

We can no longer "wait and see" any more, otherwise we will be unarmed and at the mercy of the enemy. Without weapons we are helpless, and then the same will happen to us as happened to the workers in Germany (65).

The inaction of the SDAP, its continued passivity in the face of Dollfuß' decrees, provoked continued dissatisfaction among the social democrats in Steyr. Schutzbündler and younger social democrats in particular demanded some kind of offensive action by their national leadership. The failure of such action to materialise resulted increasingly in defections to the national socialists, whose dynamism, radical policies and willingness to undertake military-style actions were attractive compared to the constant prevarication and passivity of the SDAP (66). In the last year of its existence, the SDAP in Steyr faced a steep decline in support; although no exact figures are available, police reports indicate that a "quite considerable" proportion of its membership shifted its allegiance to the national socialists (67).

In this situation, there was a widespread feeling that if the remaining social democrats did not undertake decisive action soon to resist further decline and repression, there would be, in simple terms, no social democratic organisation left to fight back with: "Don't you [the national party executive] see the dangers as they smash our great movement to pieces? There is no longer much left, just like it happened in Germany" (68). This thoroughly realistic appraisal of the parlous state of social democracy promoted a unity of purpose among the oppositional
tendencies still loyal to the movement. The commitment of Schutzhand and SAJ to mount active, physical resistance against the Austrian Right thus coalesced with the local left-opposition strategy of Moser and Schrangl. The special influence of Moser and Schrangl among the workforce at the Steyr-Werke also ensured that the MAV constituted an important element in a now broadly based opposition movement in Steyr (69). In late September 1933, the local police noted that the "greatest part of the [social democratic] activists is very radically minded and is dissatisfied with its highest leaders" (70). Schutzbündler, social democratic youth and metalworkers at the Steyr-Werke combined in a movement, led by Moser and Schrangl, which was no longer prepared to accept repression submissively, and which demanded that the social democrats move onto an offensive footing (71).

The opposition did not, however, move towards concrete actions against the dictatorship until January 1934. Between 1st December 1933 and mid-January 1934 there was an official "Christmas peace", which was modelled on the "civil peace" (Burgfrieden) of the First World War: all parties were, at least temporarily, to suspend their partisan interests (72). While the Christmas peace was largely observed by the acquiescent social democratic leadership, the Dollfuß government issued a further series of emergency decrees directed against remaining remnants of social democratic influence in state and society. Social insurance programmes were cut, the finances of Red Vienna were curtailed and the government made decisive moves to eliminate social democratic influence in the Chambers of Labour and Works Councils (73). The decrees issued during the Christmas peace were evidently very much the last straw for Moser, Schrangl and their colleagues on the Works Council at the Steyr-Werke. MAV dominance of the Works Council and its closed organisation on the shopfloor of the car works were effectively the last bastion of social democratic strength in Steyr. The latest decrees threatened even that. The Works Councillors became determined
not to accept this final humiliation in the style which had become usual since March 1933:

We asked ourselves, how much longer are we going to sit by and watch this situation? There was one day (around 20th January 1934) when we distributed twenty-five rounds of ammunition to the leading committee members of the Works Council ... and to reliable Schutzbündler who were still employed at the works ... We also told them, that if the party ... does not make a response to all the events of the past weeks, then we will attack ourselves, and hope for solidarity and support (74).

The determination to fight, possibly to spark civil war rather than relinquish the final position of strength, was again illustrated a few days later. Encouraged by the latest anti-labour decrees, the management at the car works sought to ignore the MAV in negotiating a new collective agreement, and instead opened negotiations with the Viennese Christian Metalworkers' Union. The Works Councillors responded, with the full, passionate support of the workforce, with the threat of a strike. This threat was made in full recognition of the fact that violent clashes with the security forces and the Heimwehr could easily occur on the picket lines, and that this could well escalate into serious hostilities. In this case, the MAV expected, somewhat optimistically given the demoralised and weakened state of the social democratic movement, the support of the whole Austrian working class in an armed, nationwide struggle (75).

The confrontational attitude of Moser and his colleagues was a genuine reflection of the feeling which prevailed within the remaining social democratic rank and file: there was a widespread mood of desperation and indignation about the passivity of the party. Many called for violent action to be taken (76). The confrontational atmosphere was deepened further by extensive arms searches in Steyr on 8th and 10th February,
which were accompanied by on-the-spot searches of passing pedestrians and vehicles (77), and the demands made by the Heimwehr in the same week for the installation of a Heimwehr-nominated government commissioner to take over municipal administration in the town (78). The tense mood which existed among the social democrats in Steyr provides an important background to the meeting called by Richard Bernasek, the Upper Austrian Schutzbund leader, on 11th February 1934 in Linz. Bernasek summoned Moser, Schrangl, Mayor Sichlrader and the military leader of the Steyr Schutzbund, Ferdinand Mayrhofer, as well as social democratic activists from elsewhere in Upper Austria, to discuss the threat posed in the statement made on 11th February by the Heimwehr Vice-Chancellor, Emil Fey, that: "I have seen Dollfuß and I can tell you quite definitely that he is now our man. Tomorrow we shall go to work and we shall make a thorough job of it" (79).

Bernasek wanted to discuss Fey's statement, assess the mood of the social democrats in Upper Austria and plan a response in case Fey carried out his scarcely veiled threat. Bernasek himself felt that any provocation on the following day - arrests of social democrats, arms searches and the like - should be resisted and that social democratic forces should be mobilised to develop this active resistance into an offensive against the dictatorship (80). Bernasek's proposal received unanimous support, and a letter was drafted to be sent to the party executive in Vienna, informing it of the Upper Austrian decision. It was then discussed what would happen if the party executive rejected and tried to put off the course of action chosen by the Upper Austrians. August Moser believed this was definitely what the executive would do, but proposed that the Upper Austrian social democrats should nevertheless ignore the executive and still resist any future provocations. This proposal was also unanimously accepted and the decision was sent by courier to Vienna (81). Subsequently, Otto Bauer did indeed try to get the Upper Austrians to postpone their initiative; his
plea was ignored, and civil war was sparked on 12th February when Schutzbündler in Linz resisted the attempt by the police to enter the local SDAP headquarters by force.

It is not the intention here to discuss the course of events in the civil war, which broke out in the late morning of 12th February in Steyr. The two days of battle fought by heavily outnumbered and underarmed social democrats have been adequately discussed and analysed elsewhere (82). To be assessed here is the significance of the willingness of the social democrats to take to arms. This was much more than a protest against repression and dictatorship; it was also the climax of the inner-movement opposition which flared sporadically in the MAV, the Schutzbund and the SAJ between 1930 and 1933, and which developed after March 1933 towards a tangible opposition movement within social democracy in Steyr. The military actions of the social democrats in February 1934 were largely led by August Moser (83), and the participants in battle were largely based in the three areas noted above for their oppositional potential. Police reports and the records of court proceedings show that of 174 people arrested for participation in the civil war, over 40% were under thirty years of age, 70% were Schutzbündler, and around 60% were metalworkers (84). SAJ, Schutzbund and MAV brought their opposition to a logical conclusion in the civil war of February 1934. This opposition had a dual focus: it was not just a reaction against the nature of social democracy in the Austrian context, it also rejected social democracy as a broader political tradition.

On one level the armed resistance of the social democrats represented the culmination of a progressive process of alienation of parts of the social democratic movement in Steyr from what was seen as a weak, acquiescent local and national party leadership unable to adjust itself to the new political "rules" laid down by a resurgent Austrian Right. The SDAP, attuned to a gradual evolution into power on the basis of
attracting more members and voters than its competitors was quite unsuited to the conditions of restricted legality under authoritarian government. But it was also too cumbersome, too bureaucratic to be able to change significantly. August Moser's recollected reaction to a report of a meeting of the national SDAP Executive late in January 1934, at a critical time, when civil war could have broken out at any moment, illustrates very aptly the inagility of the SDAP:

I could only shake my head. The party executive had ... nothing nothing else to do in a meeting held at a very serious point in time, than to occupy itself with the question whether new membership stamps should be issued and a few other administrative items. I said 'haven't you read what is going on out there, did nobody talk about the mood in the party? The people are already running away from us. The party does nothing, it is not even alive any more. When will the party finally issue a call for resistance!' (85).

The role of Moser, Schrangl and the others at the meeting with Bernasek on 11th February, and the participation of around 600 men on the side of the social democrats in the civil war in Steyr also represented a final, definitive rejection of the broader characteristics of social democracy as a whole. The armed social democratic resistance on 12th and 13th February was effectively the opposition strategy, as discussed in section 7.3, put into practice by the opposition movement. It embodied the final rejection of the constitutionalist, parliamentary orientation and mass party organisation of reformist social democracy and its replacement by the use of violent, extra-parliamentary tactics, carried out by a dedicated vanguard, in a decisive battle for power in the state which, if successful, would usher in a process of social revolution.
The participation of social democrats from Steyr clearly played an important role in reaching the decision in Linz on 11th February 1934 to end the practice of acquiescence to state repression. August Moser may even have made the decisive intervention by proposing that the Upper Austrians ignore any official party exhortations to abandon their plans. This was the culmination of a process which had begun in the social democratic movement in Steyr at the turn of the decade. It was increasingly clear to certain elements in the movement that the established strategy of the party in Steyr had become anachronistic and irrelevant under the political conditions of the early 1930's. An approach which aimed for the partial reform of the capitalist system on the basis of a parliamentary strategy centred around organisational advance was inadequate to meet the challenges posed by economic decline and political authoritarianism. Moreover, as national political circumstances increasingly came to dominate the local milieu after 1929, the emerging opposition in the local movement was "liberated" from the localised consciousness and frame of reference which had hitherto dominated the movement. To an increasing extent it began to direct its criticism towards the persistence of the national party in adhering to its traditional, but largely ineffective parliamentary orientation in responding to the authoritarian challenge.

Both locally and nationally the SDAP was inherently inflexible and proved wholly unable to reconsider and adapt its outlook in the light of the particular political conditions of the 1930's. Nationally, the party lapsed into a rigid ideological determinism which condemned it to political passivity. In Steyr, the bureaucratic structure of the party and the extreme and unbending organisational mentality of its leadership elite prevented effective adaptation and response. As a result the movement in Steyr gradually disintegrated after 1930; members were lost both as a result of economic crisis and of the passive, and, for many, humiliating and infuriating
acquiescence of the party to state repression. Social democratic reformism and its commitment to parliamentary democracy was seen as a failure, a wholly inappropriate guide to social democratic activity in the early 1930's. Its final ignominy was the farce surrounding the parliamentary crisis of March 1933.

From the beginning of 1930 there arose a oppositional potential within the social democratic movement in Steyr which was based in its youth, paramilitary and metalworkers' wings. This potential was reflected only sporadically in tangible actions until 1933, but the concerns raised were all aimed in the same direction. A strategical renewal in the movement was demanded, which would abandon the passivity and overcome the inflexibility which dominated in the SDAP in the 1930's, and which would embark on an aggressive defence of the movement against the authoritarian Right. August Moser and Franz Schrangl played an important role in codifying this strategy after the final discrediting of the established party line in March 1933. The Moser-Schrangl strategy was inspired by the perceived need to overcome the inflexibility and immobilism of the local and national SDAP leaderships. More than this however, by drawing from the experiences of local, all-Austrian and German social democracy in the early 1930's, Moser and Schrangl established a rudimentary theory which suggested that social democracy in general was incapable of adequately representing and defending working class interests. The Moser-Schrangl strategy signalled a fundamental rejection of social democracy and all the assumptions associated with it. The notion of reform by the mass party within and through the parliamentary system was abandoned for a concentration on extra-parliamentary tactics, designed ultimately to introduce a process of social revolution on the communist model after a violent struggle for power in the state.

The oppositional potential exhibited since 1930 by MAV, Schutzbund and SAJ finally coalesced behind this strategy late in 1933 and quite consciously opted for civil war in an attempt
to resist and overcome the Austrian dictatorship. The determination to resist was, however, not directed towards the restoration of parliamentary democracy or the reassertion of the past principles of the SDAP. It was conceived as a tactical prerequisite for the achievement of a social revolution. The armed resistance in Steyr in February 1934 was the climax of inner-movement opposition, the culmination of the process of alienation, both from the SDAP and from social democracy as a whole, which had begun in Steyr in 1930. The decision to take to arms on 12th February was "like being freed" (86) from the social democratic past. It represented the definitive emancipation of the opposition from social democracy, and, for many of the participants, the beginning of a new politics in the Communist Party (87).
CONCLUSION

This study is based on four propositions. The first of these suggested that the social democrats in Steyr had a distinctive ethos which was conditioned by the peculiarities of the local milieu. It has been shown that this ethos was shaped by the nature of Steyr as an isolated, working class, social democratic stronghold located within a socially and politically opposite region. It comprised a narrow and insular "stronghold" mentality whose central feature was a preoccupation with organisation. The social democrats were concerned to consolidate their hegemony within the stronghold by building up and extending their organisational apparatus within the town. This preoccupation was reflected in one respect in the network, the organisational "machine" which harnessed and exploited the powers of patronage the MAV derived from its domination of industrial relations at the Steyr-Werke and manipulated local government to secure social democratic domination of the stronghold. Moreover, it was shown in Chapter Four that this preoccupation also made the SDAP especially susceptible to the syndrome described by Michels in his observations on the oligarchical tendencies of large-scale organisation (1). The SDAP developed a hierarchical and bureaucratic organisational structure, dominated by a narrow leadership elite which increasingly identified its own personal interests with those of the party organisation. In this way, the party elite developed a narrow and conservative organisational outlook which held the size and health of the party organisation to be the uppermost concerns of social democratic politics.

The social democratic preoccupation with organisation had a formative influence on the development of the moderate reformist strategy of the SDAP in Steyr. The SDAP was committed to the reform of certain limited aspects of the existing socio-economic order on the basis of the parliamentary-democratic process. The
aims of social democratic reformism were therefore highly limited and accepted the basic parameters of the existing order. This can be related to the practice of machine politics in the network and the organisational outlook of the party elite. Machine politics was based in the exploitation and manipulation of the roles of trade unionist and local councillor - i.e. roles which derived from the existing economic and constitutional order. By embracing these roles, the social democrats acquired a vested interest in, and, by implication, a positive commitment to that existing order. Similarly, the party elite's narrow organisational outlook provided the rationale for an evolutionary strategy for power within the parliamentary system; the party strategy was based in the quest to organise enough of the electorate so that the party could form a majority in parliament. Social democratic reformism in Steyr was therefore rooted in the practical local experience of administering trade union, municipality and party organisation. In no sense was it ideologically based, unlike the reformism of the SDAP at national level. Dominated by their narrow and parochial stronghold mentality, the local social democrats lacked any wider theoretical conception of Austrian state and society. This practical, experience-based outlook was also central to the SDAP's commitment to the ameliorative reform of certain aspects of the capitalist system. This commitment had no grounding in any ideological critique of capitalism, but was based on the insights derived from the local experience of the unstable economic development of the Steyr-Werke.

The social democratic ethos therefore encapsulated an approach to politics which was centred around organisation and machine politics and which, through these, conditioned a moderate and non-ideological reformist strategy. The second proposition upon which this study is based suggested that this approach had a certain logic and internal consistency under the conditions which existed within the local milieu between 1927 and 1929, but that it lost this logic and became outdated and
inconsistent with the new and vastly different conditions which dominated the local milieu after 1929. The key here is the economic history of the Steyr-Werke. The sustained expansion of the car works from 1927-1929 generated the resources for local reform measures. It also fed into and boosted the machine politics of the network and thus underlined social democratic hegemony in Steyr. At the same time, the insular stronghold mentality of the social democrats denied the relevance of national political trends to the local context, in particular, the implications of the events of July 1927. Together, insularity and the experience of local hegemony bred an illusory local optimism quite at odds with the political situation elsewhere in Austria, such that the social democrats in Steyr could maintain an unimpaired confidence in the parliamentary system and an evolutionary strategy for power. The conditions within the local milieu between 1927 and 1929 thus supported and promoted the reformist strategy and machine politics of social democracy in Steyr.

However, the local milieu in Steyr was fundamentally redefined after 1929. The shutdown of the Steyr-Werke both slashed the resources available for local reform and decimated the network, thus undermining social democratic hegemony in Steyr. As a result, the movement now became exposed to the national political dominance of the bourgeois parties, which aimed and were increasingly able to subvert and debilitate the bases of parliamentary democracy in Austria. This revealed the illusory nature of local social democratic confidence in an evolutionary parliamentary strategy for power, and signalled the decisive collapse of the extraordinary local conditions which had hitherto supported the politics of the SDAP. Machine politics and reformism became unsustainable under conditions characterised by economic crisis and anti-democratic, authoritarian rule.
The third proposition suggested that the SDAP was unable to respond and adapt to the new political conditions which existed after 1929. It remained attached to the now anachronistic approach developed in the 1920's. This inflexibility reflected the nature of the party structure in Steyr and the mentality of its leadership. The structure of the SDAP conformed strongly to the model proposed by Michels (2). As noted above, it was a bureaucratic and hierarchical organisation, dominated by a small leadership elite. There was no effective inner-party democracy, so that neither the leaders nor their policies were subject to scrutiny or challenge. Both elite and policies thus became entrenched and ossified, remote from and unresponsive to changes in political circumstances.

The resultant inflexibility was intensified by the party elite's material and psychological dependence on the social democratic organisational apparatus. Some two-thirds of the elite were in a form of employment dependent on one or other of the social democratic organisations in the town. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that the members of the elite also derived considerable psychological benefit from the exercise of their organisational functions. The personal interests of the party leaders thus became intertwined with, and were increasingly perceived as identical to, the interests of the organisation. Organisation became self-justification, an end in itself. As noted above, the social democratic approach to politics was centred around the merits of organisation, both as an integral part of machine politics and as the basis of an evolutionary strategy for power within the parliamentary system. For the party elite, this approach was therefore self-serving; it would not change as long as the elite derived material and psychological benefit from its position at the head of the organisation.

The party leadership in Steyr thus continued to stress the value of organisation and of a parliamentary strategy, even as
that organisation and parliamentary democracy were gradually being destroyed by the increasingly repressive and authoritarian governments of the 1930's. This relates to the final proposition of this study, which suggested that the adherence of an inflexible party leadership to an anachronistic approach stimulated the emergence of an opposition faction within the movement after 1929. Certain parts of the movement were unwilling to accept the repressive and anti-constitutional measures of successive federal governments without effective resistance. They sought instead to mount an active and aggressive defence of the movement. The focus of opposition was not however restricted to the nature and policies of the local leadership. Following the redefinition of the local milieu and the increasing significance of national factors in local politics after 1929, the political perspective of the emerging opposition broadened; it became emancipated from the narrow stronghold mentality which had previously dominated social democratic politics in Steyr. This was reflected in a widening focus of opposition. Especially after the Austrian parliamentary crisis of March 1933 and the consolidation of national socialist rule in Germany throughout that year, leading opposition figures began to draw implications about the apparent failure of social democracy in general to defend the interests of its adherents. As a result, they evolved a new, and radically different political strategy which abandoned the central principles of the social democratic tradition for the methods and goals of inter-war communism. This strategy formed the basis of social democratic resistance to dictatorship in Steyr in the Civil War of February 1934.

It is evident that the nature and experience of social democracy in Steyr between 1927 and 1934 was highly distinctive. In this respect, this study has a wider relevance. It offers a qualification and differentiation of the existing literature on Austrian social democracy. The need for such qualification and differentiation is particularly acute in the Austrian context in
view of the tendency in past scholarship to focus on social democracy in the narrow context of Vienna, an impressive showcase for municipal socialism and the arena where the ideas and policies of the party leadership were formed. This narrow focus has contributed to an overgeneralised, monolithic depiction of the social democratic movement. The findings of this study offer a partial corrective to this overgeneralisation. Indeed, Steyr presents an especially fruitful setting for a differentiative case study. The extreme and exaggerated background conditions of the local milieu provided a unique framework which shaped the distinctive characteristics and experience of the local social democratic movement. In certain key respects this distinctiveness raises questions about some of the assumptions which have hitherto held sway in the study of Austrian social democracy.

The first of these is the widespread assumption that the events of 15th July 1927 in Vienna represented a general, all-encompassing turning point for social democracy in Austria, after which the movement was increasingly subject to the domination of the bourgeoisie: "The 15th July was seen as a defeat for social democracy and as the first victory of the bourgeois counterthrust" (3). However, it was shown in Chapter Three that the impact of the events of July 1927 was negligible in Steyr. Events in Vienna held no significance for the stronghold mentality of the social democrats in the town. Moreover, there was no local "bourgeois counterthrust" after July 1927; on the contrary, local conditions enabled the social democrats to dominate politics and society in Steyr without challenge until late 1929. There was thus no consciousness whatsoever in Steyr of having passed any "turning point". This, however, is not to suggest that July 1927 was not a critical point in the development of Austrian social democracy, but that its significance, when viewed from the perspective of social democrats outside Vienna, has been overstated and overgeneralised. In a similar vein, the experience of industrial
relations in the Steyr-Werke does not conform to the "norm". It is generally held that the social democratic trade unions in Austria were forced onto the defensive from the mid-1920's, as slow economic growth and relatively high unemployment weakened the unions and strengthened the bargaining hand of the employers (4). As shown in Chapter Two, the balance of power between trade union and employers in the Steyr-Werke was the exact opposite; a peculiar local framework for industrial relations enabled a dominant union to hold the upper hand over a weak management until the sudden onset of mass unemployment in 1929-1930. The point is, in other words, that it is both impossible and misleading to overgeneralise, and thus stereotype and homogenise the history of the social democratic movement. The experience of the movement inevitably varied according to the different background conditions, or milieux, which conditioned political development in each region and each town.

The tendency towards overgeneralisation is perhaps most commonplace in ideological/organisational histories of the SDAP. Such studies (5) tend implicitly to assume that the theoretical preoccupations and controversies of the foremost national party leaders served as a guideline for social democratic activities and policies at all levels of the party. However, it seems unlikely that the average SDAP member sought his or her political inspiration in, say, Otto Bauer's theory of the "equilibrium of class forces" (6). As Kulemann has argued, "the theoretical questions of social democracy ... never really reached the mass membership" (7). Indeed, it has been a constant theme of this study that the nature of social democracy in Steyr was conditioned by local factors. In particular, the reformist strategy of the local SDAP was derived from practical local experience and had no relation to the ideological considerations which formed the basis of reformism at the national level. This again underlines the fact that Austrian social democracy was a heterogenous movement; any study which restricts its focus to
the deliberations and actions of the party executive in Vienna cannot hope to do take account of its full diversity.

One of the major focal points of research into Austrian social democracy has been "Red Vienna". Vienna's status as a Land gave the social democratic city administration sufficient political and financial autonomy to embark on the most ambitious and successful experiment in municipal socialism in inter-war Europe. A series of studies, written largely from a sympathetic viewpoint, has examined in considerable depth the creative fiscal policies of the city administration and the social welfare programmes which these funded (8). Insufficient attention however has been paid to a less savoury facet of municipal socialism: the extent to which patronage was used to favour card-carrying social democrats in the distribution of housing, municipal employment etc., and the extent to which such practices attracted the support of instrumentalist "free-riders" to the social democratic movement. As was shown in Chapter Three of this study, patronage and instrumentalism were important phenomena in municipal politics in Steyr, a town with far less financial and political autonomy than Vienna. Their importance in the Viennese context remains to be determined.

The wider value of a local study need not however be restricted to the qualification of some of the assumptions which have dominated the literature in a certain field, or to pointing towards neglected areas of research. The local study can also confirm and add fresh insights into existing trends in the relevant literature. One such trend in the study of Austrian social democracy is to attribute the causes of social democratic inflexibility and immobilism at the national level in the early 1930's to the excessively cumbersome and bureaucratic organisational structure of the SDAP (9). This study has shown quite conclusively that bureaucratisation was also a characteristic feature of the party structure in Steyr, and that it similarly prejudiced the tactical flexibility of the local
SDAP. This study has also offered confirmation to the view that the inner-movement opposition which emerged throughout Austria after 1932 was not only directed against the inflexibility and immobility of a bureaucratic party leadership, but increasingly embraced a wholesale rejection of social democracy as a political tradition (10). However, this is not to suggest categorically that bureaucratisation was a feature at all levels of the party structure throughout Austria, or that the inner-movement opposition always and everywhere abandoned the social democratic tradition. This study may add weight and fresh evidence to these arguments, but no definitive conclusion can be advanced until the full diversity of the Austrian social democratic movement has been adequately researched in further local and regional studies.
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Table 1: Elections to the Municipal Council in Slavín in the First Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Social Democrats</th>
<th>Christian Socials</th>
<th>Pan-Germans</th>
<th>Communists</th>
<th>National Socialists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>7096</td>
<td>2220</td>
<td>1067</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>7599</td>
<td>4331&lt;sup&gt;(a)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>7828</td>
<td>3405</td>
<td>1278&lt;sup&gt;(b)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>7229</td>
<td>2866</td>
<td>1073&lt;sup&gt;(c)&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>622</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:  
(a) "Einheitsliste" - christian socials and pan-Germans  
(b) "Volkischer Wirtschaftsblock" - pan-Germans and national socialists  
(c) "Deutsche Wahlgemeinschaft" - pan-Germans and Heimatblock (Heimwehr)

Sources:  
### Table 2: Production and Employment at the Steyr-Verke 1920-1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Vehicles Production</th>
<th>Employment&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920-1922</td>
<td>1719</td>
<td>6436&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>4520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1492</td>
<td>4070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>2363</td>
<td>3408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>2524</td>
<td>4662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>4621</td>
<td>4392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>5555</td>
<td>6018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>6005</td>
<td>6648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2988</td>
<td>2163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1778</td>
<td>1363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>739</td>
<td>1287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:  
(a) The employment figures for 1922-1926 refer to the average employment level over the year; those for 1927-1933 refer to the employment level recorded at the end of June in each year.  
(b) 1922 figure only.

Sources:  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Net Profits (1,000 Sh.)</th>
<th>Dividends (1,000 Sh.)</th>
<th>Dividends as % of net profits</th>
<th>Debts (1,000 Sh.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1,217</td>
<td>1,008</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>11,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1,585</td>
<td>1,512</td>
<td>89.7</td>
<td>16,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>1,512</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>29,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>1,914</td>
<td>1,512</td>
<td>79.0</td>
<td>35,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>57,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>-24,160</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>93,306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: The Expenditure of the Steyr-Werke Works Council for the First Half of 1929.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>In Shillings</th>
<th>As a Percentage of Total Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>120,813.05</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursement of wages of Works Councillors and functionaries</td>
<td>35,454.03</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy to the social democratic housing co-operative</td>
<td>15,271.00</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy to the Kinderfreunde</td>
<td>18,993.00</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy to the Verein Arbeiterheim</td>
<td>18,993.00</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational expenditure</td>
<td>3,172.00</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare expenditure</td>
<td>5,544.80</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegation costs</td>
<td>4,157.63</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reimbursement of wages for magistrates' and jury duty, rent tribunal attendance etc</td>
<td>1,590.23</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery, telephone etc</td>
<td>2,087.50</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>394.74</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
<td>15,155.12</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120,813.05</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Social Democratic Influence over the Steyr Labour Market 1927-1933

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Approximate Total Workforce&lt;sup&gt;ab&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Steyr-Verke Manual Workers&lt;sup&gt;cd&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Municipal Workforce</th>
<th>Jobs in Social Democratic Organisations</th>
<th>Total Social Democratic Jobs</th>
<th>Total as Percentage of the Workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>3,757</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>3,956</td>
<td>39.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>5,316</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>5,550</td>
<td>55.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>5,891</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>6,201</td>
<td>62,01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>2,198</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2,421</td>
<td>24,21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>1,734</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1,923</td>
<td>19,23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>1,057</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1,195</td>
<td>11,95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1,164</td>
<td>11,64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(a) All jobs figures are for 31st June in the relevant years, excepting the 1929 municipal workforce, which is the December figure. All figures are for firms or institutions with five or more employees; some municipal departments and social democratic organisations employed less than five, so that these figures are slightly underestimated.
(b) This is an estimated figure. At the end of June 1929, 8,516 people were employed in firms employing five or more employees. At the same time there were 719 unemployed receiving relief in the town. This gives a total of 9,235. If the numbers of unemployed not receiving relief and workers in firms employing less than five employees are taken into account, a total of 10,000 seems a fair estimate.
(c) Including apprentices employed at the works.

Sources:
Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte in Linz a, Donau, Verzeichnis inner Betriebe in Oberösterreich, welche über Fünf Kassenumlagepflichtige Beschäftigten, 1927-1933 editions (Linz, 1927-1933).
STB 9/7/1929, p.11.
Table 6: The Stability of the SNAP District Committee 1928-1933.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chairman</th>
<th>Deputy</th>
<th>Chairman</th>
<th>Deputy</th>
<th>Treasurer</th>
<th>Treasurer</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Schrangl</td>
<td>Wiltzany</td>
<td>Schwitzer</td>
<td>Tribrunner</td>
<td>Klement</td>
<td>Kirchberger</td>
<td>Huber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Panzer</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Schwitzer</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Panzer</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Roithner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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</table>

Year Ordinary Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ordinary Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Hafner, Rußmann, Dedic, Frölich, Sichler, Mischko, Pfaff, Häuslmayr, Azwanger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Moser, *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year Supervisory Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Supervisory Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Dedic, Dreßl, Huenler, Sieberer, Kohler, Hubmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: STB 12/2/1928, p.11; 10/2/1929, p.11; 16/2/1930, p.14; 18/2/1931, p.8; 23/2/1932, p.10; 28/2/1933, p.3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Schrangl</td>
<td>Metalworker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Pammer</td>
<td>Public servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Witzany</td>
<td>M.P., for Steyr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Tribrunner</td>
<td>SOAP health fund employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Klement</td>
<td>SOAP district party secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Kirchberger</td>
<td>Steyrer Tagblatt editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Roithner</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Members;</td>
<td>Moser</td>
<td>Metalworker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schopper</td>
<td>Metalworker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dedic</td>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sperl</td>
<td>Metalworker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stichrader</td>
<td>Mayor of Steyr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mayrhofer</td>
<td>Manager of the municipal enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Azwanger</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heunann</td>
<td>MAV district secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schöner</td>
<td>Metalworker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members;</td>
<td>Dedic</td>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greßl</td>
<td>MAV chamber of labour representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Konrad</td>
<td>Metalworker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sieberer</td>
<td>Metalworker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sippl</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hubmann</td>
<td>Forestry Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schützer</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8: Social Democratic Cultural Organizations in Steyr

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Membership (Year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstinenh</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpine Costume and Folk-Dance Preservation</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Protection</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists and Sketchers</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass Band (Stadkapelle)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canary Breeding (two clubs)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chess</td>
<td>91 (1927)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choral (three clubs)</td>
<td>230 (1927)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Co-Operative</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crematorial</td>
<td>4,172 (1927)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyclists</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Library</td>
<td>446 (1929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Arts Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esperantists</td>
<td>35 (1930)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying Sports</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football (three clubs)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free-Thinkers</td>
<td>1,042 (1927)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasts (three clubs)</td>
<td>1,403 (1928)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Students</td>
<td>72 (1930)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House-Building Co-Operative</td>
<td>1,000 (1929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinderfreunde - adults</td>
<td>1,521 (1929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- children</td>
<td>2,046 (1929)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandolin Players</td>
<td>64 (1928)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Gymnasts (Wehrturner)</td>
<td>360 (1930)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motocyclists</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioners (Accident)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioners (Old Age)</td>
<td>268 (1930)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philatelists</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Cabaret</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Enthusiasts</td>
<td>300 (1930)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Falcons</td>
<td>88 (1930)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samaritans</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savers and Annuilants</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schutzbund</td>
<td>650 (1930)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shooting and Hunting (two clubs)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeepers and Small Businessmen</td>
<td>142 (1928)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiers</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Animal Breeders and Allotment Gardeners</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>1,434 (1929)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists (Naturfreunde)</td>
<td>817 (1929)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watersports</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weightlifting, Wrestling and Tug-o-War</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1,582 (1931)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>605 (1929)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zither Players</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aggregate Total Membership: 17,190

Note: The aggregate total membership of 17,190 must be treated with caution, since the membership figures for the individual organisations - as far as they are accessible - do not all originate from the same point in time. However, it can be assumed that the total aggregate membership of the cultural organisations in the years of social democratic expansion in the mid to late 1920's was around 20,000. The Consumer Co-Operative alone had a membership in the Steyr District of 3,000 at the end of 1928; at least half of these could be assumed to live in Steyr. In addition, there are also some twenty-six organisations mentioned above for which no exact membership figures are available. At least three of these (Abstinenten, Cyclists and Footballers) had memberships running into hundreds.

Sources:
- OÖTB 1928, pp.57; 1929, pp.33, 56; 1930, pp.38, 51.
- VFA Parteiaarch Raphael Mappe 67/2.
Table 9: The Decline in Party Membership 1928-1931

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>1928-1929 Membership</th>
<th>1931 Membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steyr SOAP</td>
<td>ca. 5,000 (1929)</td>
<td>3,837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women's Organisation</td>
<td>1,532 (1929)</td>
<td>1,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOAP Section 5</td>
<td>737 (1928)</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOAP Section 6</td>
<td>393 (1928)</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOAP Section 9</td>
<td>1,471 (1929)</td>
<td>1,157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: The Incidence of Inner-Movement Opposition 1929-1932

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause and date of Opposition</th>
<th>Source of Opposition</th>
<th>Cooperation with the Communists?</th>
<th>Defections to the Communists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of monopoly</td>
<td>Schutzbund</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the Streets:</td>
<td>SAJ</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1929-Jan 1930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAV-Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiations at the Steyr-Werke:</td>
<td>MAV</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 1930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms Search</td>
<td>Schutzbund</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 1930</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinwehr Putsch</td>
<td>Schutzbund</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1931</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquittal of</td>
<td>Schutzbund</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heinwehr Putschists:</td>
<td>MAV</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 1931</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of National</td>
<td>MAV</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Putsch:</td>
<td>Schutzbund</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June-July 1932</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: AVA BKA Inners 13/6 Karton 2382; 195,315-30; 238,347-31,
AVA BKA Inners 22/genere Karton 4867; 214,060-30,
AVA BKA Inners 22/genere Karton 4868; 230,754-31,
AVA BKA Inners 22/genere Karton 4673; 145,062-32,
AVA BKA Inners 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5100; 160,710-29; 110,119-30;
110,546-30; 111,425-30; 111,427-30; 111,430-30; 121,881-30,
AVA BKA Inners 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5101; 190,931-31; 199,871-31;
220,723-31; 106,243-31,
AVA BKA Inners 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5102; 190,484-32
STB 18/12/1932, p.10,
See also Chapter Three, section 3.5,
Figure 1: The Structure of Employment in Steyr 1927-1933

Note: The statistics upon which this figure is based include only those employees whose firms employed five or more employees subject to subscriptions to the Chamber of Labour. The statistics refer to the numbers employed at the end of June in each year.

Note: Steyr unemployment rates are those recorded at the end of June in each year; Austrian rates are the yearly average.

Figure 3: The Functions Held by Julius Rußmann, SDAP Vice-Mayor, in 1930.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>UNION</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPPER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRIAN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOCAL

Vice-Mayor

Municipal Portfolio:
- Municipal Enterprises,
- Unemployment Office

President of the Welfare Committee
Chairman of the Tourism Centre

Chairman of the Museum Committee
Member of Municipal School Council

Councillor ——— District ——— Leader of the Union of Industrial Employees

Chairman of Football Club "Vorwärts"
Figure 4: The Functions Held by August Moser, Chairman of the Works Council of the Steyr-Verke in 1932

**FUNCTIONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>UNION</th>
<th>OTHERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>Austrian Trade Union Federation Executive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National NAV Executive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Delegate to NAV Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPPER AUSTRIA</td>
<td></td>
<td>Delegate to Provincial Congress</td>
<td>Provincial NAV Executive</td>
<td>Provincial Health Fund Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NAV Executive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leader of the Works Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Councillor District Committee Works Council at Steyr-Verke</td>
<td>Schutzbund Health Fund Executive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5: The Functions Held by Franz Sichlerer, SAP Mayor, in 1932.

FUNCTIONS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>UNION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATIONAL</td>
<td>Parliamentary Candidate</td>
<td>National MAV Executive</td>
<td>Delegate to MAV Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPPER AUSTRIA</td>
<td>Member of the Upper Austrian Parliament</td>
<td>Provincial Executive</td>
<td>Provincial MAV Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Delegate to Provincial Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCAL</td>
<td>Mayor</td>
<td>MAV Chairman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal Finance Portfolio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Councillor</td>
<td>District MAV Executive Committee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6: The Schutztroup/Arbeiterwehr Battle Plan for the Occupation of Steyr (July 1932).

Source: AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5102; 190,484-32.
FOOTNOTES

Abbreviations used

AVA  Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv
AVA BKA  Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv Bundeskanzleramt
AZ  Arbeiter-Zeitung
DKAARW  Dokumentation der Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte in Wien
DÖW  Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes
IFZ  Institut für Zeitgeschichte
LTP  Linzer Tagespost
LVB  Linzer Volksblatt
LVS  Linzer Volksstimme
ÖMA  Der österreichische Metallarbeiter
ÖGÖZ  Oberösterreichische Arbeiterzeitung
ÖGÖLA  Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv
ÖÖTB  "Oberösterreichischer Tätigkeitsbericht" (Annual reports of the SDAP in Upper Austria)
ÖÖTZ  Oberösterreichische Tageszeitung
ÖÖVW  Der österreichische Volkswirt
Rote Saat  Rote Saat. Berichte des Sozialdemokratischen Erziehungs- und Schulvereins "Freie-Schule-Kinderfreunde" Reichsverein österreich (Annual reports of the Austrian Kinderfreunde)
SGUK  Illustrierter Steyrer Geschäfts- und Unterhaltungskalender
SJ  Der Starhemberg-Jäger
STB  Steyrer Tagblatt
STZ  Steyrer Zeitung
VGA  Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung

Introduction


3. See for example Karl R. Stadler, "Arbeitergeschichte und Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung in Österreich", in: Gerhard


8. Ibid., p. 414.


12. For details of the regional breakdown of party membership, see Jahrbuch der österreichischen Arbeiterbewegung 1926-1932 editions (Vienna, 1927-1933).


23. Ibid., p.67.
25. The Steyr-Werke operated under the name österreichische Waffenfabrikgesellschaft until February 1926. However, to avoid unnecessary confusion, the post-1926 name will be used throughout the thesis, even when referring to the period before 1926.
34. Ibid., pp.2-5.

Chapter One

1. For example, the industrial census of June 1930 showed that 63.2% of the employed workforce in Steyr were manual workers. See Bundesamt für Statistik, Gewerbliche Betriebszählung in der

2. In 1930, 65.5% of manual workers were skilled or semi-skilled and another 15% were in training; only 19% were unskilled. See ibid.


6. This “fortress” mentality is illustrated in particular in the social democratic response to the attempts by the Heimwehr to gain a foothold in Steyr in late 1929/early 1930 (see Chapter Three, section 3.4). It is summed up in the words of the SDAP Vice-Mayor, Julius Rüßmann, in January 1930: "We simply do not let the Heimwehr into Steyr. It must be spelled out once and for all that Steyr is a workers' town". Quoted in: AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5100: 111.425-30.

7. öVW Bilanzen 27/7/1929, p.489.


17. STB 21/7/1931, p.10.

Chapter Two


2. Ibid., pp.79-95.

3. For an account of the progressive debilitation of the social democratic trade unions in the works of the Alpine-Kontan-Gesellschaft in Upper Styria during the 1920's, see Lewis (1984).

4. ÖÖAZ 21/12/1925, p.3.

5. The workforce elections which established the composition of the Works Council were consistently dominated by the electoral list put up by the MAV. See Stockinger (1986), pp.74-76.

7. Industrial relations in the Steyr-Werke is the area least well covered by available source material. There exist to my knowledge no copies of local MAV reports and no records of MAV or Works Council meetings.


11. OÖAZ 12/12/1925, pp.2-3.

12. See Chapter Three, section 3.2.


16. See the Kinderfreunde annual reports Rote Saat, 1926-1929.

17. See for example STZ 1/10/1925, p.2; LVS 3/10/1925, p.2.

18. STB 30/9/1925, p.1 reproduces the dismissal notice for the twenty-eight manual workers. See also STB 1/10/1925, p.1; AZ 30/9/1925, p.8; 7/11/1925, p.7; ST Z 1/10/1925, p.2.


20. Bericht des Vorstandes des österreichischen Metallarbeiterverbandes (1927), p.156; STB 2/10/1925, p.3; 28/11/1925, p.1. All four conflicts are reported in AZ and ÖMA throughout September and October 1925.


22. Kammer für Handel, Gewerbe und Industrie in Linz, Bericht über die Wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse in Oberösterreich im Jahre 1926 (Linz, 1927) explains the competitive nature of the market for cars in Austria.


26. Sechzig Briefe der Solidarität (Vienna, 1926).

27. AZ 13/11/1925, p.7.


29. OÖAZ 5/12/1925, p.2.

30. STB 9/10/1925, p.2; 13/10/1925, pp.1, 7; 15/10/1925, p.3; 3/11/1925, p.4.

31. The full terms of the settlement are reprinted in Bericht des Vorstandes des österreichischen Metallarbeiterverbandes (1927), p.163, and are discussed in STB 28/11/1925, pp.1-3.
32. STZ 6/2/1930, p.1; For Kinderfreunde income, see Rote Saat 1926, pp.42-43; 1927, pp.61-62; 1928, pp.59-60; 1929, pp.22, 58.
34. Ibid., especially pp.295-300.
36. Oberkofler (1979), pp.186-188.
38. STZ 3/1/1932, p.4.
39. STB 17/6/1930, p.4; STZ 17/6/1930, p.5.
43. Ibid., pp.146-147.
44. Ibid.; Cf. Interview with Josef Mayrhofer, 4/7/1986.
47. ÖÖAZ 12/7/1930, p.3.
51. Ibid., pp.144-148, 156-158.
52. In March 1931, manual workers were indiscriminately sacked for refusing to accept management's decrees on working hours and conditions. See ÖÖAZ 28/3/1931, p.6. In December 1931 both manual workers and Angestellte were given an ultimatum over current wage negotiations to the effect that "the works will be completely shut down if the Angestellte and manual workers do not unconditionally accept the proposed wage and salary cuts by 4PM". After the MAV called management's bluff, 80 manual workers were sacked and a further 170 were promised the same fate. See DKAAW Kommunalpolitik 1928-1932/33: Neues Wiener Tagblatt 30/12/1931; AVA BKA Inneres 13/6 Karton 2382: 104.738-32.
54. Ibid., p.1127; STB 6/2/1934, p.5.
55. STB 8/2/1934, p.5.
56. For the most comprehensive account of Dollfuß' "salami-tactic", see Gulick (1948), pp.972-1265.

Chapter Three

1. See sections 3.3 and 3.5 of this chapter for the social democratic perception of the "fortress". The subordination felt by the opponents of social democracy is expressed especially strongly in the near-hysterical outbursts of relief when the social democratic "fortress" was finally breached in 1930. See for example STZ 2/9/1930, pp.1-3; LVB 2/9/1930, pp.8-9; SJ 5/9/1930, pp.7-9.
5. See for example AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5101: 216.507-31; 232.007-31; Karton 5102: 120.680-32; 134.958-32.
6. LVB 25/12/1929, pp.6-7; LTP 21/12/1929, p.5.
7. LTP 21/12/1929, p.2.
9. See for example LTP 21/12/1929, p.2.
12. STZ 17/12/1929, p.3; LTP 25/12/1929, p.2.
14. This was reflected in the Christian Social Party faction's call to federalise the local police in the town council sitting of 25th July 1927. See STZ 31/7/1927, p.6; STB 29/7/1927, pp.7-8.
15. ÖStZ 15/9/1928, p.5.
18. Only ten of those present at a mass meeting of car workers rejected management's terms in July 1930. See ÖStZ 12/7/1930, p.3 and Chapter Two, section 2.3.
21. Ibid., p.118.
22. STB 4/5/1928, p.3; ÖStB 1928, p.37.
23. STB 14/2/1930, p.8.
28. STB 20/7/1927, p.8.
29. STB 22/7/1927, p.8; 28/7/1927, p.8.
32. Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, Memoiren (Vienna, 1971), p.68.
33. See STB 12/7/1928, p.10; 3/8/1928, p.8; STZ 12/7/1928, pp.3-4; 17/7/1928, p.5; LTP 10/7/1928, p.7; Magistrat der Stadt Steyr, Registratur Faszikel J/d 25-45 Vereine: J53/d 15591-1928.
34. O5AZ 21/7/1928, p.4; STZ 17/7/1928, p.5.
35. STB 17/7/1928, p.10.
37. STB 24/12/1929, pp.1-2; 15/2/1930, pp.9-10.
38. See STB 27/11/1928, p.9; 21/12/1929, p.2; 1/7/1930, p.9.
39. See STB 19/12/1929, p.1; 21/12/1929, p.2; 1/7/1930, p.9; LTP 17/12/1929, pp.1-2; ÖSTZ 17/12/1929, p.3.
41. Such was the verdict of Franz Mellich, military leader of the Steyr Schutzbund in December 1930, Quoted in: AVA BKA Inneres 22/Öberösterreich Karton 5100: 227.275-30.
42. ÖSTB 1930, p.11.
43. The reduction in social democratic activity is illustrated by comparing the annual reports of social democratic organisations in Steyr from 1929 with those of 1930. See STB 9/2/1930, pp.13-14; 11/2/1930, pp.9-10; 12/2/1930, p.9; 14/2/1931, pp.7-8; 15/2/1931, p.11; 17/2/1931, p.12; 19/2/1931, p.9.
44. OSLA Bezirkshauptmannschaft Steyr Präs. Faszikel 8: "Die Finanzlage der Stadt Steyr" von Dr. Josef Walk.
45. STB 4/5/1929, pp.7-8; AVA BKA Inneres 22/Öberösterreich Karton 5100: 144.375-30.
46. STB 11/9/1929, pp.8-9; STZ 15/7/1930, p.5.
47. See Chapter Two, section 2.3.
49. See for example STB 18/10/1929, p.12; 3/11/1929, p.11.
52. See for example Magistrat der Stadt Steyr, Registratur Faszikel B/a 12509-1929.
53. STB 26/10/1929, pp.7-8; STZ 22/10/1929, p.1; 27/10/1929, p.11; AVA BKA Inneres 22/Öberösterreich Karton 5100: 115.035-30.
54. STZ 10/12/1929, p.4; AVA BKA Inneres 22/Öberösterreich Karton 5100: 103.821-30; 114.424-30; 115.035-30.
55. ÖSTZ 17/12/1929, p.3.
57. See AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5100: 111.430-30.
58. LVB 25/12/1929, pp.6-7.
59. SJ 7/2/1930, p.3.
60. SGUK 1931, p.296; AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5100: 110.113-30; 110.119-30; 111.424-30; 111.430-30; STB 4/2/1930, pp.6-7; SJ 7/2/1930, p.3.
61. AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5100: 111.430-30.
62. See for example STB 20/12/1929, pp.1-2; STZ 17/12/1929, p.3.
64. See for example AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5100: 111.430-30; 118.776-30.
65. This view had been expressed as early as July 1927, and was reiterated on several occasions during 1929. See STB 2/8/1927, p.8; STZ 5/5/1929, pp.1-2; 18/8/1929, p.2; 20/8/1929, p.7; 15/10/1929, p.9.
66. STB 24/12/1929, pp.1-2; STZ 24/12/1929, p.3.
67. STB 20/12/1929, pp.1-2; STZ 17/12/1929, p.3.
68. For example, some 130 Schutzbündler left the Schutzbund for the communist paramilitary Arbeiterwehr in February 1930. See AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5100: 121.881-30. See further Chapter Seven, section 7.2.
70. AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5100: 190.414-30.

Chapter Four

2. Ibid., p.33.
3. Ibid., pp.83-84.
5. Ibid., p.206.
8. Ibid., p.372.
10. ÖSTB 1928, p.9; ÖSTB 1929, p.12.
11. Before June 1930, there were ten sections. However the federalisation of the municipal police force on 1st July 1930 led to the dissolution of Section Eleven (municipal police force). See AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5100: 165.832-30.
Stockinger also notes the existence of a twelfth section in 1922 (Stockinger (1986), p.48). However, no records exist of this section in the 1927-1934 time period.

12. Activist contact with ordinary members was always at personal level. See Interview with Josef Mayrhofer, 4/7/1986. With such an intimacy of contact, it is unlikely that each activist would have much more than fifty members on his or her personal list. It can then be assumed that, with around 5,000 members in the late 1920's, there were then roughly 100 activists. To these must be added the six members of the nine party section committees, producing a total of around 150 activists.


14. In a five-year survey of the Steyrer Tagblatt column "Partei- und Vereinsnachrichten", 246 meetings were recorded where the content of the lecture was given. Of these, 155, or 63% dealt with current affairs, 59, or 24% with organisational or other internal party matters, 23, or 9% with some form of entertainment and 9, or 4% with matters of socialist theory. While this list does not claim to be comprehensive, it does give a general overview of the nature of life in the party sections.

16. Ibid.
18. STB 21/4/1929, p.11.
19. See for example STB 12/7/1928, p.10; 17/10/1929, p.7; 7/12/1929, pp.9-10; 6/2/1930, p.8; 20/8/1931, p.8; 28/10/1931, p.1; 25/10/1932, p.3.
21. For example, the unanimous decision by the activists to agree to the municipal austerity programme composed by the municipal finance committee in November 1928 (STB 27/11/1928, p.9; 2/12/1928, p.1). The legitimising function of the activists in municipal policy matters was expressed even more forcefully in January 1933: "... the attitude of the social democratic fraction in the town council was approved without reservation, and it was voiced that the whole working class stands, now as before, behind its municipal representatives (STB 8/1/1933, p.5).
22. On one occasion, for example, the District Leader of the SDAP, Franz Schrangl, spoke about recent political developments, and then "set out the tactics for the activists of our party to follow in this district". Quoted in: STB 9/4/1930, p.10. See also STB 20/10/1929, p.10.
24. See p.112 and note 7 of this chapter.
25. STB 14/2/1932, p.11.
32. STB 5/2/1928, p.10.
34. See STB 10/2/1930, p.14; 23/2/1932, p.10.
37. STB 1/1/1932, p.6; 1/1/1933, pp.1-2; 2/1/1934, p.6; SGUK 1933, pp.307-308.
39. STB 14/2/1931, p.7; 15/2/1931, p.11; 14/2/1932, p.11.
40. Quoted in: STB 5/2/1928, p.10.
42. STB 4/2/1928, pp.6-7; 20/4/1929, p.8.
43. For example STB 24/5/1927, p.7; 15/11/1927, p.10; 4/2/1928, pp.6-7; 17/2/1928, p.1; 9/2/1929, p.9.
44. According to Otto Bauer, national leader of the SDAP, the "working class" was defined as all those not owning the means of production and forced to sell their labour. This excluded only landowners and capitalist employers. See Sully (1982), p.42.
46. Ibid., pp.683-713.
47. For example the January Strike of 1918, the early postwar months, July 1927 and the period 1932-1934. See Kulemann (1979), p.322.
49. Ibid., p.315.
50. Ibid., pp.322-323.
51. Ibid., p.324.
52. See for example STB 27/9/1929, p.8; 17/10/1929, p.7.
53. STB 5/2/1928, p.10.
54. STB 7/11/1930, p.10.
55. See STB between 7/9/1930 and 8/10/1930.
57. See STB throughout October 1932.
58. STB 1/10/1932, p.1.
60. VGA Parteiarchiv Mappe 67/2.
62. See the daily column "Partei- und Vereinsnachrichten" in STB.
63. For example STB 5/2/1928, p.10; 3/2/1929, p.3; Interview with Josef Mayrhofer, 4/7/1966.
64. STB 6/2/1927, p.1; 3/2/1929, p.2; 14/2/1931, p.7; 14/2/1932, p.11; 2/3/1933, p.4.
66. Ibid., pp.271-282.
68. Interview with Josef Mayrhofer, 4/7/1966.
71. For example STB 12/5/1927, p.1; 3/2/1929, p.2; 30/7/1929, p.6; 14/2/1932, p.11.

Chapter Five

5. See Gulick (1948), pp.84-133.

7. See the election results for wards 3,4,5,11,12 and 13 in the 1927 municipal and federal elections in STB 28/4/1929, p.9.


11. STB 6/11/1928, p.11.


14. STB 15/11/1931, p.11.


23. STB 23/2/1932, p.10.

24. STB 5/2/1928, p.6; 10/5/1928, p.9.


26. STB 5/2/1928, p.10.

27. STB 15/2/1931, p.11.


31. In 1931 for example, almost 40% of male social democratic voters in Steyr were party members, whereas less than 15% of
female voters had joined the party. See VGA Parteiarchiv Mappe 67/2.


33. See for example STB 15/2/1931, p.11; 14/2/1932, p.11.
36. STB 18/1/1928, p.9.
38. See for example STB 18/1/1928, p.9; 5/2/1928, p.11; 16/10/1928, p.10; 3/2/1929, p.3; 13/2/1929, p.8; 10/4/1929, p.9; 14/5/1932, p.8.
40. Interview with Josef Mayrhofer, 4/7/1986.
43. For example, the income of the Steyr District SDAP in 1927 was 44,358.85 shillings, while that of the Steyr District Kinderfreunde was 123,550.96 shillings. STB 4/2/1928, p.6; Rote Saat, 1927, pp.61-62.
44. For the usage of the term "totalitarian" in this context, see Weidenholzer (1981), p.88.
45. STB 20/3/1929, p.9.
46. STB 21/3/1938, p.8; Interview with Josef Mayrhofer, 4/7/1986.
47. STB 5/2/1928, p.10; 9/2/1929, p.10; 11/2/1930, p.9; 15/2/1931, p.11.
48. For example, the income of the Steyr District SDAP in 1927 was 44,358.85 shillings, while that of the Steyr District Kinderfreunde was 123,550.96 shillings. STB 4/2/1928, p.6; Rota Saat, 1927, pp.61-62.
51. Otto Felix Kanitz, Kämpfer der Zukunft... Für eine Sozialistische Erziehung (Frankfurt, 1970); Neugebauer (1975).
Chapter Six

5. Ibid., p.332.
6. Ibid., p.421.
8. These are often characterised as representatives of an "Austro-Marxist" school. This may have been apt in the period before 1914, when the "Austro-Marxists" represented a distinctive style of Marxist thought and research, but hardly applies after 1914. The question of participation in the Habsburg war effort and the practical problems associated with political activity in the new democratic state after the First World War produced intellectual divisions so that the "Austro-Marxists" no longer represented a coherent intellectual movement. See Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode (Eds.), Austro-Marxism (Oxford, 1978), pp.1-7.
15. Ibid., pp.253-256.
27. STB 14/11/1928, p.4; 14/10/1930, p.9.
30. In the mid-1920's, the social democrats had lost vast sums of municipal funds in a series of industrial misinvestments. Moreover, at the turn of the decade, the collapse of the Steyr-Verke deprived the municipal budget of a major source of income - the income tax levied on the Steyr-Verke workforce. See
OÖLA Bezirkshauptmannschaft Steyr Präs. Faszikel 8: "Die Finanzlage der Stadt Steyr" von Dr. Josef Walk. See also STB 22/5/1928, pp.11-12; 30/3/1930, p.8; 21/7/1931, pp.9-10; 19/6/1932, pp.13-14; 31/12/1932, pp.1-2; 30/12/1933, p.8.
35. See for example STB 18/9/1931, p.8; 28/10/1931, p.1; 3/5/1933, p.3.
This was particularly true after the collapse of the Steyr-Werke in 1929. See STB 23/4/1930, p.2; 7/1/1932, p.5; 1/1/1933, pp.1-2; 2/1/1934, p.6; MA 19/4/1930, pp.1-2; Der Kuckuck 12/1/1930, pp.1, 8-9; 17/1/1932, pp.3, 5; AZ 1/1/1932, p.1; Hans Habe, Leben für den Journalismus. Band 1: Reportagen und Gespräche (Munich, 1976), pp.33-40.
42. Receipts from the property tax accounted for 105% of municipal welfare expenditure in 1929, 97% in 1930, 73% in 1931, 61% in 1932 and 50% in 1933. The proportional decline reflects increasing welfare expenditure at a time of mass unemployment rather than any reduction in tax receipts. See OÖLA Bezirkshauptmannschaft Steyr Präs. Faszikel 8: "Die Finanzlage der Stadt Steyr" von Dr. Josef Walk, pp.21, 23.
43. See STB 20/12/1927, p.2; 14/2/1928, p.10; 28/7/1928, p.8; 17/3/1931, p.11; 4/5/1933, p.8.
44. See STB 29/5/1927, p.11; 15/7/1928, p.10; 19/7/1930, p.9.
45. OÖLA Bezirkshauptmannschaft Steyr Präs. Faszikel 8: "Die Finanzlage der Stadt Steyr" von Dr. Josef Walk, p.3; STB 15/7/1928, p.10.
47. OÖLA Bezirkshauptmannschaft Steyr Präs. Faszikel 8: "Die Finanzlage der Stadt Steyr" von Dr. Josef Walk, pp.3-4.
Chapter Seven

1. The local social democratic vote had risen from 7,237 in the 1925 Landtag elections to 7,828 in the 1927 municipal elections and 8,001 in the national elections of the same year. Even the slight drop in votes to 7,950 in the national elections of 1930 must be seen as a continuation of the upward trend if the effects of emigration during the 1929-1930 shutdown at the Steyr-Verke are taken into account. See STB 26/4/1927, p.9; 4/5/1927, p.8; 11/11/1930, p.12; 26/4/1931, p.10.

2. Stockinger sees the recruitment drive of late 1932 as an indication of a more lasting upward tendency in SDAP membership levels. It seems more likely however, that many of the new recruits in 1932 were "paper" members, who soon lost interest in the party again. This is indicated in the way that the number of monthly subscription stamps issued in 1932 by the Steyr District SDAP actually fell by over 17%, despite the presence of some 795 newly recruited members. Subsequently, membership levels resumed their downward trend, as evidenced in low attendances at party meetings and in police estimates. See Stockinger (1986), p.53; DöV File 12302; ÖTB 1931, p.12; 1932, p.14; STB 28/12/1932, p.1.

3. The stated unemployment rates are slightly inaccurate in that population and workforce rose after 1920 (but fell again to roughly the same level in the early 1930's). Also, the rates for before 1930 are underestimates in that they refer only to those unemployed who were in receipt of state unemployment support. See Statistische Zentralkommission, Beiträge zur Statistik der Republik Österreich. 6. Heft. Ergebnisse der Außerordentlichen Volkszählung vom 31. Jänner 1920. Alter und Familienstand, Wohnparteien (Vienna, 1921), pp.42-43; STB 4/7/1929, p.11; 11/1/1930, p.7; 7/1/1933, p.1; 10/1/1934, p.5.


8. STB 22/3/1931, p.12; 14/2/1932, p.11.
9. See AZ 20/11/1925, p.7; Magistrat der Stadt Steyr, Registratur Faszikel J/o 2731-31 Arbeitsamt. Stiefel underlines this point in his assessment of emigration throughout Austria in the First Republic: the labour market was "denuded" of its "best and most productive elements", the qualified, skilled workers who constituted the bulk of the emigrants. See Stiefel (1979), pp.110-116.
14. See STB throughout October and November 1930.
20. For example, the membership of the communist Arbeiterwehr, which was made up almost exclusively of Schutzbund defectors, had an average age of just 26.4 years. This indicates a high level of SAJ involvement in Schutzbund opposition. See Stockinger (1986), p.135.
22. For a typically exhaustive account of Dollfuß' "salami-tactic", see Gulick (1948), pp.905-921, 951-1265.
31. Ibid., p. 147.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., pp. 157-158.
34. Ibid., pp. 144-148, 156-159.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., p. 101.
40. Ibid., pp. 101-102.
42. See Letter to the Author from Alois Zehetner, 19/11/1987.
43. For example, the communist "Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition" received 191 votes in the Steyr-Werke Works Council elections in December 1931. See STB 18/12/1932, p. 10; AVA BKA Inneres 13/6 Karton 2382: 238.347-31. In June 1932, the local police reported talks between social democrats and communists with regard to establishing "surveillance committees" in important firms, which would observe local nazi activities in the event of a nazi putsch in Germany during or after the Reichstag elections of July 1932. One such committee was set up in the weapons department of the Steyr-Werke. See AVA BKA Inneres 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5102: 174.258-32.
44. See Rabinbach (1983), pp. 66-86.
45. See Interview with Josef Mayrhofer, 4/7/1986; DÖW File 12202.
51. This is reflected in the local party leadership's continued commitment to local government and to participation in the Upper Austrian Landtag. See STB 30/4/1933, p. 7; 3/5/1933, p. 8; 10/7/1933, p. 4; 11/11/1933, p. 5; 30/12/1933, p. 8; 2/1/1934, p. 6; 3/1/1934, p. 5; ÖSLA Landtagsakten Schuber 36. The most vivid illustration of the non-confrontational stance of the local party leadership was when SDAP Vice-Mayor Anton Azwanger attempted to lock August Moser in his office in January 1934 in
order to prevent him coordinating resistance to the Dollfuß dictatorship. See Kammerstätter (n.d.), pp.1116-1117.

52. Quoted in: VGA Parteiarchiv Mappe 65, pp.9-10.


54. See STB 21/6/1933, p.2; AVA Sozialdemokratische Parteistellen Karton 175a: Antrag Schrangl und Genossen.

55. For example, according to the testimony of Dr. Franz Jetzinger, member of the Upper Austrian Landtag, deputies should lay down their mandates and relinquish all associated responsibilities. See DöW File 12200a.

56. AVA Sozialdemokratische Parteistellen Karton 175a: Antrag Schrangl und Genossen.


58. See VGA Parteiarchiv Mappe 65, p.9a.


60. Ibid.


64. Between November 1930 and the dissolution of the social democratic movement in February 1934, the social democrats in the Steyr district lost 588 guns and gun stands of various kinds, 30,475 rounds of ammunition and eight hand grenades in arms searches. See Stockinger (1986), p.130.

65. Thus Alois Zehetner at a party activists meeting addressed by Otto Bauer in October 1933, quoted in: Letter to the Author from Alois Zehetner, 19/11/1987; see also Kammerstätter (n.d.), p.1121.


67. See DöW File 12202.


69. As Moser later recalled, although the party was, by the end of 1933 (as he put it) "out of it", there was still a closed trade union organisation with around 1,000 members in the Steyr-Werke: "We still had them at the works, we therefore had influence over them". Quoted in: Kammerstätter (n.d.), p.1116. Cf. Letter to the author from Alois Zehetner, 19/11/1987.

70. Quoted in: DöW File 12202.

71. See for example Letter to the Author from Alois Zehetner, 19/11/1987; Interview with Josef Mayrhofer, 4/7/1986; DöW File 12202; Kammerstätter (n.d.), pp.1116-1135.


73. Ibid., pp.155-156.


75. Ibid., pp.1127. See also STB 6/2/1934, p.5 and Chapter Two, section 2.3.

76. See for example Kammerstätter (n.d.), pp.1119-1121.
77. AVA BKA Inners 22/Oberösterreich Karton 5104: 119.651-34; 121.580-34.
81. Ibid., pp.1132-1134.
83. See Kammerstätter (n.d.), pp.1136-1143; DöW Files 12200a and 12172. Many of those arrested during and after the Civil war in Steyr also talked of the prominent role played by Moser. See especially ÖSLA Kreisgericht Steyr Politische Strafakten 1934-1941 Karton 1.
84. This is not a comprehensive survey of those arrested in 1934; it encompasses only those whose records are still preserved. Of the 174 whose records are available, 156 gave details of their age, 80 of whether or not they were Schutzbund members, and 164 of their occupation. Of the latter only 55.5% stated their occupation as "metalworker"; however, another 11.6% categorised themselves as "factory worker". It is likely that the majority of these were in fact metalworkers at the Steyr-Werke. See IFZ Microfilm A/259; DöW Files 12160-12172, 12174, 12196, 12200a, 12201, 14520 and 17112; ÖSLA Bezirkshauptmannschaft Steyr Faszikel 112 and 117; ÖSLA Kreisgericht Steyr Politische Strafakten Karton 1; Kammerstätter (n.d.), pp.1344-1347, 1353-1354.
85. Quoted in: ibid., p.1118.
86. Ibid., p.1136.
87. For example, the subsequent political activities of Steyr-Werke Works Councillors August Moser, Alois Zehetner, Karl Viplinger and Leopold Heumann, and the military leader of the Steyr Schutzbund, Ferdinand Mayrhofer, were in the Communist Party, either inside Austria or in exile. On the other hand, other prominent social democrats switched allegiance to the NSDAP (e.g. Franz Schrangl, Franz Sichrader and Emmerich Schopper) or to the clericalist Fatherland Front (e.g. Josef Kirchberger). See Letter to the Author from Julius Böhm, 27/11/1987; Letter to the Author from Karl Kaulich, 27/11/1987; Letter to the Author from Alois Zehetner, 19/11/1987; DöW File 10705. See further Stockinger (1986), pp.160-162; Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (Ed.), Widerstand und Verfolgung in Oberösterreich 1934-1945 (Vienna, 1982).

Conclusion
2. Ibid.


5. For example Fritz Kaufmann, Sozialdemokratie in Österreich. Idee und Geschichte einer Partei von 1889 bis zur Gegenwart (Vienna, 1978); Leser (1968); Sully (1982).

6. See Otto Bauer, Die österreichische Revolution (Vienna, 1923), especially pp.243-244.


8. See for example Czeike (1958); idem (1962); Gulick (1948), pp.355-582; Lewis (1983); Pelinka (1977).

9. This theme has been pursued by Leser (1968), especially pp.408-409, 496-505, and in particular by Kulemann (1979), pp.295-332.

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This study is principally based on first-hand primary sources. The few secondary sources available on Steyr are of limited value; most tend towards a rather trivial, excessively parochial and generally uncritical Heimatkunde. An exception is Josef Stockinger, Die Entwicklung der Arbeiterbewegung in der Stadt Steyr und ihrer Umgebung von 1918-1934 (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Salzburg, 1986), which provides a valuable orientation for this study in terms of basic information on the history of social democracy in Steyr and as a guide to further source materials. With very few exceptions, there exist no local SDAP or trade union records from the First Republic. These were generally, and understandably, destroyed in the political upheavals which followed the Austrian Civil War in 1934 and the Anschluss in 1938. The study therefore relies heavily on the contemporary local and Upper Austrian (social democratic and non-social democratic) press and on police (and to a lesser extent judicial) records for relevant information on the social democratic movement. The latter are preserved in the Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, the Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes and the Institut für Zeitgeschichte in Vienna, and the Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv in Linz. Also useful for information on local social democracy are the various published reports and conference protocols of social democratic organisations at regional and national level. Essential information on the social and economic background to politics in Steyr is contained in the various reports of the Federal Statistical Office, the Viennese and Linz Chambers of Labour, the Linz Chamber of Commerce and in the records of the registry of the Magistrat der Stadt Steyr.

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