MATERIAL FOR AGITATION

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When we think of pamphlets, we think of rapidly circulating short texts that tend to agitate huge masses of people. But who agitates the agitator? How is knowledge passed on and what enables political agitation structures to work self-sufficiently? How are slogans intended for high circulation developed, formed and passed on to the public sphere? What types of media and artifacts carry slogans, and by what other means do slogans materialize? I would like to explore these questions using examples of pamphlets and brochures published by the German Communist Party (KPD) from 1920 to 1930, and now held by the *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv* (SAPMO), known in English as the Foundation for the Archives of the Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the German Federal Archives.[1] The archive is so named because its collections were assembled and organized in the GDR but also contain a large number of artifacts produced by the KPD in the Weimar Republic.[2]

Having designed what follows as a close reading material presentation, I will focus on the production and style of slogans and political positions that appeared in everyday literature addressed to the agitprop cadre, whose task it was to agitate the masses in their districts, factories and enterprises through mass demonstrations or educational trainings. First, I will show what the agitprop cadre's practices aimed to do and how the KPD constructed specific slogans and targeted them toward specific groups. The focus, subsequently, will be placed on the circulation and everyday use of slogans within three contexts: party press, public locations, and group recitation or "choral speaking" settings.

Finally, I will consider the military implications of the daily routines and fomenting practices connected to the slogan as a form. Slogans are originally tools of military practice: translated from the Gaelic word of origin, slogan means "battle cry."[3] In German the military connection is even more obvious: "Parole," the word for slogan, also denotes a military password or word of honor.[4]

STRUCTURES

Who were the principal agents involved in developing and spreading political slogans in the German communist workers' movement of the 1920s? Mass mobilization and organization were central aims of all communist organizations and were primarily carried out by agitprop departments. My first example, a small pocket-sized-pamphlet titled *Praktische Winke für die Arbeit der Agitprop-Funktionäre in den Wahlkämpfen 1928* ("Practical hints for the work of agitprop functionaries in the 1928 election campaign"), lists the concrete tasks of the KPD agitprop department. According to this document, frequent meetings of the

1 The translations of the German archival material presented are my own.

2 See *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO)*, Berlin, https://www.bundesarchiv.de (→ SAPMO).

3 "Slogan", in: *Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, https://www.dwds.de/wb/Slogan.

4 See "Parole", in: *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm*, vol. VII, Leipzig: Hirzel (1889).

agitprop department should be held on "*how to work through all the members of the party to popularize the party's politics amongst the masses*", "*educational work within the party...*", "*mass agitation*", *"agitation at workplace/plants*"*,* "*workers' correspondent movement*"*,* "*work within sympathizing and other mass organisations*"*,* and "*distribution of literature*".[5] This illustrates the fact that agitprop practices contained different tasks, including personal dialogue and education as well as a wide distribution of political positions within the populace and factories via newspapers and political literature. Alliance work, meanwhile, enabled group members to strengthen connections with other organizations and gain new comrades from other contexts. The KPD itself built up a remarkable network of party-affiliated and mass organizations, from sports, theater and photography groups to singing clubs.[6] In addition to illuminating the ideological theoretical discussions surrounding the cultural policy of the KPD, workers' literature and the mass novel, Gerhard Friedrich traces the history of literary institutions in the KPD's environment, such as the Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller (League of Proletarian-Revolutionary Writers).[7] It was not uncommon for these subordinate organizations to provide an entry point into communist politics or associate more apolitical people with the KPD as an organization in order to keep them in the sphere of influence and win them over as voters.

The core strategy of the agitation process was the creation and use of slogans. Brochures addressing agitprop functionaries and political cadres not only explained how to structure the political organization and practices of agitation, but also how the textual work was to be done: that is, how to articulate positions and derive slogans from them. The brochure *Richtlinien für die Wahlkämpfe 1928* suggests that effective agitprop texts must combine a current up-to-date slogan that speaks directly to the worker with the articulation of an ultimate goal. Short-term and long-term objectives are intertwined:

> Only through this conjunction of the current demands with the transitional demands and the ultimate goals can we make concrete propaganda to bring about our main goal: *Against the bourgeois coalition for the fighting block of workers in urban and rural areas, for the workers' and peasants' government!*[8]

5 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke für die Arbeit der Agitpropfunktionäre in den Wahlkämpfen 1928*, Berlin (1928) (= *Für die Wahlarbeit! Material* 3), p. 5. Highlighting as in the original.

6 See Ludwig Hoffmann, Daniel Hoffmann-Ostwald: *Deutsches Arbeitertheater 1918–1933*, Berlin: Henschelverl. Kunst und Gesellschaft (1972). This two-volume work tells the history of proletarian theater in the Weimar Republic through the lens of individual plays and songs by agitprop groups or performative phenomena such as the mass performances and choruses of the trade unions in Leipzig from 1920 to 1924.

7 See Gerhard Friedrich: *Proletarische Literatur und politische Organisation: Die Literaturpolitik der KPD in der Weimarer Republik und die proletarisch-revolutionäre Literatur*, Frankfurt am Main: Lang (1981); and Almuth Püschel: "Die Arbeit der KPD mit dem Film und mit Filmkünstlern während der Weimarer Republik", in: *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 27/4 (1985), pp. 510–517. Püschel's text was written in the GDR and features corresponding socialist rhetoric and terminology, somehow emulating the SPD and working-class movement tradition.

8 Central Committee of the KPD: *Richtlinien für die Wahlkämpfe 1928*, Berlin (1928), p. 13. Highlighting as in the original.

The text calls for a system change before listing current demands, which include an eight-hour day, a 45-hour week, a wage increase, and healthy homes for every working-class family. In a sign of the First World War's still-vivid presence in collective memory, the authors also demand the end of legal and illegal armament.[9]

This material shows that the KPD's mass agitation was rooted in addressing the mundane and specific problems of the masses of wage earners. Yet the texts the KPD produced for mass audiences also contain slogans that use daily socioeconomic conditions to link them with the ultimate goals and positions of the KPD. In other words, the KPD embedded its political positions in short texts that suggested solutions for common problems people faced on a daily basis. These texts were kept as short as possible, reflecting the KPD's attempts to reach busy audiences whose life was governed by the rhythms of a wage-earning job. This was also apparent in the organizational structure of the KPD, which was basally developed around cells that covered different streets and similarly sought to address people in their everyday environment.[10]

DISTINCTION AND RECODING

I would like to turn now to the construction of slogans themselves by focusing on a characteristic form I call *distinction and recoding. Distinction* denotes positional assumptions through demarcation and opposition, *recoding* signifies the reinterpretation of attributions in other rhetorical patterns of interpretation.[11] This form appears across agitprop literature, including in a brochure from 1930, which constitutes the first publication from the series *Instruktionen für die Wahlarbeit* (Instruction for election campaigning).

> The slogan Against the Young-Plan, mass misery and fascism, for a free, socialist Germany!' connects our fight against German capitalism with the fight against the international financial capital and world imperialism and is expressed clearly. [...] We must oppose the bourgeois umbrella slogan Against Marxism! with the slogan against social democratic treason against Marxism! Against the anti-Marxist front of servants of capital! For revolutionary Marxism! For unforgiving class war, power to the working class, for communism![12]

9 See Central Committee of the KPD: *Richtlinien für die Wahlkämpfe 1928* (1928), pp. 13–14.

10 See Heinrich August Winkler: *Der Schein der Normalität: Arbeiter und Arbeiterbewegung in der Weimarer Republik 1924 bis 1930*, Berlin/Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz (1985), p. 451.

11 The positive appropriation of insults can also be seen as a subversive practice, see Christian Vasili Schütze: *Die Subversion verletzender Worte: Grundlagen einer Politik des Performativen*, Frankfurt/New York: Campus (2022), p. 21. David Bebnowski describes the recoding of certain central concepts of the labor movement and their appropriation by the National Socialists, referring to Stuart Hall, see David Bebnowski: "Die Umkodierung des Proletariats: Druckerzeugnisse im Kampf der NSDAP um die Arbeiterschaft", in: *Kleinformate im Umbruch: Mobile Medien für Widerstand und Kooperation (1918–1933)*, ed. by Caroline Adler, Maddalena Casarini, Daphne Weber, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter (2023), pp. 37–58.

12 Central Committee of the KPD: *Gegen Young-Plan, Massenelend und Faschismus: Für ein*



1 Guidelines for the 1930 election campaign, edited by the Central Committee of the KPD. The title denotes "Against the Young Plan, mass misery and fascism: For a free, socialist Germany."

This structure, as we see, is regular and redundant. It suggests that a successful KPD slogan is made up of two parts. The first component of a slogan marks a distinction or reappropriates established terms (e.g., "Against the Young-Plan" or "Against social democratic treason against Marxism"). The second part articulates the political position ("For unforgiving class war"). The first part can also be

freies, sozialistisches Deutschland (Richtlinien für den Wahlkampf 1930), Berlin (1930) (= *Instruktionen für die Wahlarbeit* 1), p. 7.

implicitly contained in the second one. As this example demonstrates, slogans are unifying stances: by demarcating positions they are for and against, slogans standardize and concentrate political views in concise phrases. The short length of slogans is therefore not only a practical aid to circulation, but also a feature that helps this form consolidate thought. At the same time, we can observe that the KPD tailored every position text or slogan to a specific target group. This is evident in the brochure *Sonderanweisungen für die Wahlkämpfe 1928* ("Special instructions for the election campaigns 1928"). In addition to passages that give recommendations for specifically addressing women, there are also those aimed at young people or rural populations. Addressing women, the brochure states: "In the foreground we put our female workers' demands – Equal pay for equal work, protection of women workers, etc."[13] Only then do the general sociopolitical demands follow, led by the demand for protection of mothers and children. Well before digital tools made targeted advertising commonplace, the 1920's KPD agitprop cadre was highly specialized in applying marketing techniques tailored to target groups.

What can we conclude? The materials I have examined emphasize that the political slogan cannot be random, since it then misses its aim of mass agitation. First, slogans are up-to-date political messages; second, they target specific social groups. It is necessary to differentiate between short sentences and slogans. Short phrasings can be slogans, but short phrasings don't have to be slogans. Positions and demands supply slogans with specific content. The slogan is a mere rhetorical form that can be adapted to a topic such as housing, wages, or rights. The difference between a pamphlet and a slogan, indeed between a leaflet and a slogan, is quite simply the amount of text. Pamphlets and flyers, however, can consist of slogans or contain slogans.[14]

CIRCULATION

Having looked at the theory governing the construction of slogans as texts, we are now going to examine how the circulation and material form of slogans affected their function and audience. How do mediums and artifacts materialize and format slogans? What broadened a slogan's range of recipients and how did slogans come into general use beyond the cadre? I offer three examples, starting with the party press.

13 Central Committee of the KPD: *Sonderanweisungen für die Wahlkämpfe 1928*, Berlin (1928) (= *Für die Wahlarbeit! Material* 2), p. 19. Original German: "In den Vordergrund stellen wir unsere Arbeiterinnenforderungen – Gleicher Lohn für gleiche Arbeit, Arbeiterinnenschutz usw."

14 See Gillian Whiteley: "The Allure of Pamphilos: The Radical Art of Pamphleteering", in: *Art, Politics, and The Pamphleteer*, ed. by Jane Tormey, Gillian Whiteley, London: Bloomsbury Academic (2021), pp. 5–28, p. 10. Whiteley reflects on pamphlets and states that a simple slogan like "Down with Mussolini" does not make a pamphlet.



ist, wenn sie in der Hand die Waffe, im Kopf und Herz den Gedanken des Kommunismus hat. Am 1. Mai mögen die deutschen Arbeiter sich sammeln unter den Losungen:

Keine Teilung der Macht mit der Bourgeoisie!
Keine Waffen in der Hand der Bourgeoisie!
Keine Parlamente, sondern Arbeiterräte!
Und alle Macht den Arbeiterräten!

Werden sollen die deutschen Arbeiter am 1. Mai die internationale Verbrüderung in Festen und Reden feiern. Diese Internationalität der Feste und Reden ist zerbrochen, die zweite Internationale wurde zur willfährigen Dienerin des Imperialismus und zur Kuppelerin der Gegenrevolution, sie ist in Schmach und Schande untergegangen.

Heute zählt nur noch die Tat, die für die Internationale und die Weltrevolution in die Wagschale geworfen wird. Heute zählt nur noch die Internationale der Tat, deren Vorkämpfer Räte-Rußland ist.

Räte-Rußland hat alle seine militärischen Feinde, die das Weltkapital nacheinander gegen es aufgeboten hat, mit stählerner Faust niedergeworfen. Aber das Weltkapital hat darum den Kampf nicht aufgegeben, es verlegt ihn nur auf ein anderes Gebiet. Der Sieg, den Kulver und Blei und Hunger nicht erfochten haben, den sollen die Warenballen und die Wirtschaftsverträge Englands und Amerikas mit Sowjet-Rußland erfechten. Das englisch-amerikanische Kapital hofft, Räte-Rußland ebenso finanziell und wirtschaftlich und damit auch politisch zu unterjochen, wie etwa Mexiko oder Persien oder irgend ein anderer „antipolitischer" Staat durch friedliche imperialistische Durchdringung unterjocht worden sind.

Die Arbeiter der Westländer und Mitteleuropas haben demgegenüber die revolutionäre Aufgabe, die Kapitalmacht in den eigenen Ländern zu brechen. Nur so kann Rußland geschützt, aber auch nur so kann der Neuaufbau der europäischen Wirtschaft gesichert werden.

Mit dem neuen revolutionären Anstieg, den der 13. März Deutschland gab, rückt aber auch die deutsche Revolution selbst in den Brennpunkt der internationalen Aufgaben der Weltrevolution.

Es gilt für die Arbeiterklasse der Westländer, mit den Anstrengungen der deutschen Arbeiterklasse gegen die Gegenrevolution im Innern ihre eigenen Anstrengungen zu vereinigen, damit die Anschläge und Zettelungen des englischen, französischen und amerikanischen Imperialismus gegen die deutsche Revolution vereitelt werden. Mögen die Arbeiterklassen aller Länder sich vereinigen in den Rufen: die am 1. Mai die deutschen Proletarier erhoben:

Hände weg von Räte-Rußland!
Hände weg von der deutschen Revolution!
Engste politische und wirtschaftliche Verbindung mit Räte-Rußland!
Es lebe die dritte Internationale!
Es lebe die Weltrevolution!

Politische Uebersicht.

Das Ruhrrevier.

Die Nationalversammlungsdebatte über die Einwohnerwehren, die Bewaffnung der Bourgeoisie, eilt über in eine Debatte über die Bewaffnung der Arbeiterschaft den Papaya der Bourgeoisie, und wurde zu einer Generaldebatte über das Ruhrrevier. Denn dort sind die Gegensätze am schärfsten zusammengeflossen, dort ist die Arbeiterschaft am machtvollsten aufgetreten, dort hat sie sich selbst bewaffnet und hat im Ruhrrevier bei sich die konterrevolutionäre Soldateska auf Arbeiterleichen neue Machtpositionen erobert. Im Ruhrrevier hat sich der neue Kurskurs der Regierung am besten offenbart. So wurde die Debatte zu einer Debatte über die Gesamtpolitik der Regierung.

Severing, der die undankbare Aufgabe hatte, diese Politik zu vertheidigen, wurde gleich von Anfang von seinem Parteigenossen Steinbrink Lügen gestraft. Steinbrink stellte fest, daß die Reichswehr es war, die das Bielefelder Abkommen gebrochen hat. Severing wagte es, eine halbe Stunde später die alte Lüge von der Beschießung Wesels aufzuwärmen. Dann erzählte er die Märchen von den Plünderbanden.

Es steht fest, daß es im Westen und eine Reihe Provokateure gab, die im Dienste Watters Putsche provozieren wollten, und noch jetzt provozieren wollen. Die Arbeiterschaft hat sich von diesen Leuten nicht einfangen lassen. Die dunklen Elemente sind noch immer an der Arbeit. Die Reichswehr hat noch nicht genug an den unzähligen Erschießungen und Verhaftungen. Man will weiter marschieren. Darum wird fieberhaft daran gearbeitet, damit es schließlich der Ruhr zu Putschen kommt. Die Putsche wollen sich sammeln, so schwärmt man Abkommandirten, unterstützt von der rheinisch-westfälischen Bourgeoisie und den Stadtverordnetensitzungen, in denen diese Bourgeoisie dominirt. Das rheinische Bürgertum hat mit dem richtigen Bourgeoisinstinkt nur der Lowaltneten Arbeiterschaft nur, daß die Bewaffnung den Exzessen der [illegible] Einhalt gebieten würde. Sie [illegible] Sie [illegible] Sie [illegible]

> On the 1st of May the German workers may gather under the slogans:
> *No to sharing power with the bourgeoisie*
> *No to weapons in the hands of the bourgeoisie!*
> *No to parliaments, workers' councils instead!*
> *All power to the workers' councils! [...]*
> *Hands off Soviet Russia!*
> *Hands off the German Revolution!*
> *Closest political and commercial relations with Soviet Russia!*
> *Long live the Third International!*
> *Long live the world revolution!*[16]

The parts printed in italicized type, originally printed in bold letters, are the slogans. One can see that the logic of this page is both rhetorical and visual. The syntax indicates that these short and snappy exclamations are commands rather than explanations or descriptive contributions to a debate. The bold type, meanwhile, implicitly instructed readers to memorize these passages. The exclamation marks not only stress that these slogans are the most important parts of the text but invite readers to imagine the slogans being shouted. Beyond that, a dichotomy of "for" and "against" comes into focus – once again communicated visually as well as textually. The points the party supports and the points it opposes face each other on the page. Here, the newspaper is turned into a means of organizing and agitating, as demonstrators can take the slogans from the front page as their mottos for the day of demonstration.

How did slogans and party politics materialize beyond the party press? The brochures that address agitprop cadres also included short handouts on how to popularize slogans and positions in the public sphere:

> [...] 06. Writing slogans on the wall.
>
> Another form of effective agitation at the workplace is writing certain slogans on the wall at busy spots within the plant using chalk and paint [...] It's suitable to purchase a set of letters made of rubber, so the particular slogans, messages and demands addressing the workforce can be compiled and inconspicuously stamped. [...] After work people carrying posters and banners have to stand in front of the plant. Here it is usually necessary to use comrades who aren't working in the same plant, because otherwise they will likely be subject to dismissal.[17]

Slogans that are placed in high-traffic locations and therefore seen by as many passers-by as possible have the highest likelihood of circulating widely and being picked up. In this context, the workplace is also a central agitation site since it is there that a particularly large number of workers can be reached as a target group. The caution and implicit repression to which communists were subjected in the

16 "Zum 1. Mai", in: *Die Rote Fahne* (May 1, 1920), pp. 1–2, p. 2.
17 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), p. 8.

Weimar Republic is at the same time evident from the quote. The advantage of banner carriers who stand in front of the factory gates at the end of the working day is that they can offer direct personal contact in the event of inquiries.

The instructions that working-class families received from the Central Committee via agitprop cadres reached deep into the private sphere and personal space. Windows become show windows, personal beliefs become advertisements for the party and its politics. Working-class families were instructed to hang banners from their windows or otherwise decorate their homes with flags during election campaigns.[18] The public and private spheres were transformed in their entirety into a living propaganda show to encourage as many people as possible to vote for the KPD. The masses of adherents became active campaigners who themselves went on to agitate with tremendous creativity. Election campaigns in the Weimar Republic were veritable paper battles in terms of the number of leaflets distributed, with the communists conducting their street campaigns most intensively.[19] Due to reduced financial means and various cultural and political exclusions, the communists were interested in mobile, agile and, above all, inexpensive agitation practices, which were particularly applicable during election campaigns.[20]

Sometimes the streets would be transformed into theaters, complete with people dressed up in costumes as stereotypical figures. In one instructive drawing, one first sees a Nazi, then Hindenburg with a spiked helmet, and then a bishop, followed by a worker in simple workers' clothes with a sign reading: "Worker, what did they do for you?"[21] The text surrounding the drawing gives more examples of how the stage might be filled. The same brochure also instructs the cadre on how to do linocuts for perfect results on posters, how to write letters the same size on banners, and additionally how to scale them.[22] A small picture book from 1924 communicates solely via photographs illustrating how to produce proper agitation and propaganda in the public sphere. From poster pasting and backyard agitation to mobile advertising columns, processions, and bicycle demonstrations, various forms of protest are explained pictorially. Even animals become carrier media for slogans, as in a cow with a sign around it that says: "I vote SPD." Every wall, every window, every moving body, and every cow is used as advertising space here, transforming private space into public space where the fight for hegemony can be fought. Slogans gain particular importance in this work to articulate basic stances. As short texts, they are easy to vary, to adapt to different media, and to circulate rapidly.

18 See Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), p. 11.

19 See Thomas Mergel: *Propaganda nach Hitler: Eine Kulturgeschichte des Wahlkampfs in der Bundesrepublik 1949–1990*, Göttingen: Wallstein (2010), p. 51.

20 See Dirk Lau: *Wahlkämpfe der Weimarer Republik: Propaganda und Programme der politischen Parteien bei den Wahlen zum Deutschen Reichstag von 1924 bis 1930*, Baden-Baden: Tectum (2018), p. 224.

21 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), p. 18. The original German reads: "Arbeiter, was haben euch diese gebracht?"

22 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), pp. 28–31.

The slogan's short length also affords its use as a chant: slogans create rhythms that regulate bodies and unite individuals into groups. This leads me to my third setting of circulation: choral speaking. A brochure giving practical tips and tricks for agitation work states:

> [...] 16. Choral speaking as means of agitation. [...] Short mass choral speaking is even more effective at demonstrations. Therefore, it is necessary to shout short slogans that are intelligible to all and easy to pronounce according to a marching beat. [...]
>
> Of course there are a lot of slogans that can be shouted like this while marching. But they always have to be short and easy. [...] Also at gatherings this can be practiced and it is an essential contribution to strengthen the collective will of an agglomerated crowd.[23]

Here, the acts of marching in step and speaking in time aim to organize, unify and standardize a group of people. Or as William McNeill puts it: "Moving our muscles rhythmically and giving voice consolidate group solidarity by altering human feelings."[24] Short, rhythmical slogans are suitable for agitational practice via media like banners, posters, street theater and mass choral speaking. Because choral speaking is bound to specific rhythms and marching beats, the practice is well-suited for standardizing political articulation. As McNeill writes, "muscular bonding" activates community formation.

The materiality of the slogan thus includes not only its diverse material formats (pamphlets, posters, etc.) but also its material consequences: slogans order practices and embodied performances. Moreover, the material forms of slogans script and regulate these embodied practices, revealing slogans as versatile and important political organizing tools.

MILITARIZATION

Tight organization implies a certain military rigor and discipline. On the one hand, creativity can be acted out in agitprop; on the other hand, the slogans have to follow the protocols of the party line. The military implications of organizing the cadre and the masses within the party increased from the middle of the 1920s. It is not by chance that this coincided with the tenure of Ernst Thälmann, who led the party and the Red Front Fighters' League, the paramilitary unit of the KPD, in personal union.[25] More generally, all kinds of different groups and pre-political

23 Central Committee of the KPD: *Praktische Winke* (1928), pp. 20–21.

24 William H. McNeill: *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1995), p. viii.

25 See Norman LaPorte: "The Rise of Ernst Thälmann and the Hamburg Left, 1921–1923", in: *Weimar Communism as Mass Movement 1918–1933*, ed. by Ralf Hoffrogge, Norman LaPorte, London: Lawrence and Wishart (2017), pp. 129–149; Klaus Kinner: *Der deutsche Kommunismus: Selbstverständnis und Realität*, vol. 1, Berlin: Dietz (2012), pp. 79–89.

organizations within the working-class movement, including sports groups, militarized during the 1920s. This took place in the context of the "Stalinization" of the KPD promoted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), with which the anti-Stalinist, "ultra-left" faction around Ruth Fischer and Arkadi Maslow, as well as the "reconciliators" around Heinrich Brandler, Ernst Meyer and August Thalheimer, were ultimately cut off.[26]

This also manifested in the language of the party press, which used increasingly military and martial vocabulary: It was a confession to the revolutionary class war under the banner of the communist party. Their banners called: "Working sportsmen are soldiers of the revolution, Being a working sportsman means being a class warrior."[27]

Here, the aggressive, military-style wording transforms sport from hobby to war activity. It is but a small step from sports to the paramilitary group known as the *Rote Frontkämpferbund*, Alliance of Red Front-Fighters, a reservoir for communist soldiers from World War I. The Alliance walked at the front of KPD demonstrations like a military unit:

> *RFB* [Alliance of Red Front-Fighters, DW] *marching at the forefront*
>
> *Mannheim, 1 May.* [...] The KPD's demonstration was carried by fighting spirit, of which evidence was given by the fact that the Alliance marched in full uniform at the head of the demonstration.[28]

In his PhD thesis, Kurt Schuster states that the "revolution had vanished into demonstrations," equipped with military aesthetics, "[i]n a sense, the army of the party is nothing other than a mass demonstration that is always available."[29] Alliance members demonstrated strength and unity and served as role models for the rest of the organized comrades. The ideal of a political formation that speaks through language and slogans manifests itself in the testosterone-charged paramilitary parade of the Red Front-Fighters. Here, the vision of armed revolution and a Soviet state lives on in the costume of uniform.

CONCLUSION

Slogans are tools that originate in military practices. The daily use of slogans, especially in centralized political organizations like the KPD, is related to the original meaning of the term, and slogans continue to bear some military attributes. Spoken in unison, slogans unify, standardize, and exert discipline over a crowd,

26 See Winkler: *Der Schein der Normalität* (1985), pp. 418–425; and Hermann Weber: *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus: Die Stalinisierung der KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt (1969), pp. 161–164.

27 "Der Marsch der 20 000 roten Sportler", in: *Die Rote Fahne* (May 3, 1930), p. 2.

28 "Riesenbeteiligung im ganzen Reiche", in: *Die Rote Fahne* (May 3, 1930), p. 2.

29 Kurt G.P. Schuster: *Der Rote Frontkämpferbund 1924–1929*, Düsseldorf: Droste (1975), p. 44.

similar to military formations. The distribution of slogans via pamphlets and other publications, like the press, posters, and banners published by the Central Committee of the KPD, further abet centralization and standardization. Slogans are flexible and variable textual forms that adapt to different media easily and circulate quickly. When extracted from or embedded within longer texts, slogans preserve and circulate essential short phrases on streets, posters, in shouting voices, on living advertising columns, or printed on cattle. In the case of the slogan, we see that the use of short and punchy communications to organize masses of people is not necessarily a willful shortening or reduction, but a requirement that is conditioned by media ecology and circulation technology.

PICTURE CREDITS

POSTURES

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2 Robert Seymour, *The March of Intellect* (ca. 1828), London: British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum

REPRODUCING FREDERICK DOUGLASS

1 Unknown, *Frederick Douglass* (ca. 1877), Washington, D.C.: Brady-Handy photograph collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division. Online: https://loc.gov/item/2017895330/.
2 Unknown, *Howard Univ., Washington, D.C., ca. 1900 – Law library* (ca. 1900), Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Online: https://loc.gov/pictures/collection/anedub/item/2001705791/.
3 Frances Benjamin Johnston, *African American Schoolgirls in Classroom, Learning to Sew* (ca. 1899), Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.
4 Unknown, *Hon. Fred. Douglass on platform in [the] Pavilion* (26 March 1892), Washington, D.C.: Booker T. Washington Collection, Library of Congress. Online: https://loc.gov/item/98500648/.

BORN-TRANSLATED MANIFESTO

1 Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels: *The Communist Manifesto*, adapted by Martin Rowson [Graphic Novel], London: SelfMadeHero (2018), pp. 13–14. Reproduced by permission of selfmadehero. Artwork © Martin Rowson.
2 Stefanie Kremmel, *Der Lebenslauf der Übersetzung. Die Transkulturalität des Kommunistischen Manifests*, Vienna: University of Vienna (2022), p. 325. © Stefanie Kremmel.
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MATERIAL FOR AGITATION

1 *Gegen Young-Plan, Massenelend und Faschismus: Für ein freies, sozialistisches Deutschland (Richtlinien für den Wahlkampf 1930)* (= Instruktionen für die Wahlarbeit), Heft 1, Zentralkomitee der KPD: Berlin (1930), frontmatter.

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MASS VIOLENCE IN PAMPHLETS

1 2014 propaganda poster urging Crimeans to vote in the Crimean status referendum. Source: Andrew Lubimov, AP images.
2 Eugène Atget, *Rue de la Montagne – Sainte Geneviève*, Paris (n.d.). Source: ImageZeno.org, ID-no. 20001850032, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=64881668.
3 Unknown, propaganda poster (1944), Digital Center, Institute for Contemporary History Belgrade.
4 Unknown, Serbian anti-NATO poster, https://www.reddit.com/r/Hasan_Piker/comments/17slihf/nato_serbian_antinato_poster_1990s/.
5 Juliane Prade-Weiss, Mural in front of bombarded Serbian state TV headquarters, Belgrade (15 August 2021). © Juliane Prade-Weiss.
6 Juliane Prade-Weiss, Monument commemorating the death of employees during a 1999 NATO air raid (15 August 2021). © Juliane Prade-Weiss.
7 Unknown, *Querdenker* protesting anti-COVID-19 policies. © picture alliance / SULUPRESS.

IDA WELLS'S PRINT ACTIVISM

1 Miss Ida B. Wells: *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law In All Its Phases*, New York: The New York Age Print (1892), cover, in: Ida B. Wells, *The Light of Truth: Writings of an Anti-Lynching Crusader*, ed. by Mia Bay, New York: Penguin (2014), p. 57.