

REDEFINING REALITY: FRIEDRICH WOLF AS COMMUNIST MOVEMENT
RHETOR

BY

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Abstract

This dissertation examines how Friedrich Wolf crafted his dramatic work in the last years of the Weimar Republic to serve as rhetoric for the Communist movement in Germany. Analyzing these plays as social movement rhetoric affords new insights into Wolf's dramatic works during the late 1920s and early 1930s.

Wolf demonstrated with these plays that the "reality" his audience perceives is only a definition of reality, one imposed upon society by its most powerful members. This revelation was the first part of his task as Communist movement rhetor: to re-define reality, that is, provide new perspectives on current and future events and situations which better matched Communist views. This dissertation examines the extent to which Friedrich Wolf provided a complete and coherent redefinition of society. Inasmuch as Wolf intended to use his dramas as "Waffen" for the Communist movement, such an analysis is long overdue.

The study focuses on Wolf's dramatic works from the years between 1928 and 1933, encompassing four stage dramas, two radio plays and three agitprop works. An initial examination of the theatrical and political and of Wolf's personal background reveals that the Communist message was itself unclear during the time Wolf wrote these plays, both in the literary world and within the movement as a whole. The following chapter demonstrates how Wolf established himself as a capable rhetor for the Communist movement through these plays, which he did by the use of facts and statistics, among other means. Subsequently, this dissertation shows how Wolf

changed perceptions of current events and situations by his presentation of the working class as a victimized collective in his plays. How he presented the victimizer is analyzed in the following chapter, one which uncovers how Wolf's efforts in this area were almost as thorough as those to establish both a victim group and his own credibility as a rhetor. Finally, the analysis reveals that Wolf's efforts to re-frame society's future were largely unsuccessful, due in part to the Communist movement's own relative lack of focus on the future.

This dissertation demonstrates that Wolf's suasive efforts were largely, if not wholly, compatible with the dramatic form. It also sheds light on factors affecting Wolf's ability to craft his rhetorical efforts within these dramas, prominent among these being the challenges and requirements of the dramatic genre. Conclusions drawn from this dissertation further reveal that Wolf's ability to craft his message depended on his familiarity with each of the different types of play he used to convey his message: it depended both on his experience in writing for each of these sub-genres and on his expertise crafting the Communist message within them.

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Redefining Reality: Friedrich Wolf as Communist Movement Rhetor

1 Introduction

The playwright Friedrich Wolf (1888-1953) joined the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1928. He quickly became a prominent and active Communist, lecturing at the *Marxistische Arbeiterschule* and even running for office for the KPD in Stuttgart (Stuttgart 161, 259). Wolf's strong political convictions also affected his literary work, which one might well expect, as according to his son Markus the elder Wolf lived by the maxim that “... der Mann so sein muß wie das Werk, das er schreibt, und das Werk wie der Mann selbst” (Gittis 1605). Furthermore, in his well-known 1928 essay “Kunst ist Waffe,” Wolf had called for a political theater which would spread socialist thought, a sentiment he would repeat over the next decades. From the time he joined the party until his forced flight from Germany in 1933, Wolf wrote four stage plays, as well as two radio plays and three agitprop plays. His Communist political convictions are easily discernible in most if not all of these works. Wolf himself stated in 1931 that the bourgeois public had realized he was a Communist because of his recent plays Cyankali and especially Die Matrosen von Cattaro (Ausgewählte XIV: 42).

All four of Wolf's stage plays from this period were arguably pro-Communist dramas, even Cyankali (1929) and were perceived as such. According to Ulf-Rüdiger Sacksofsky's 1972 dissertation Friedrich Wolfs Dramatik von 1924 bis 1931 und ihre

Beurteilung in der Kritik, “Abgesehen von der kritischen Beurteilung in der ‘Süddeutschen Arbeiterzeitung’ ... glauben alle linksradikalen Zeitungen, die Klassenkampfidee gemäß den Forderungen der Partei dargestellt zu sehen” in Cyankali (127). Thus, many critics from leftist papers saw even the earliest of these four stage plays as a pro-Communist work, as did some critics from newspapers with centrist or rightwing leaning (Sacksofsky 145, 191). It is true that Wolf’s more obvious political objective with this play is changing the abortion law, *Paragraph 218*. However, later statements by Wolf about this abortion law demonstrate that—at least by 1931—he saw it as a part of a greater, systemic problem. He claimed that “Die Frage des Paragraphen 218 ist nur eine Teilfrage des ganzen heutigen kapitalistischen Wirtschaftssystems” in the 1931 essay “Sturm gegen § 218,” and he made the similar statement in 1947 that ““Der § 218 sollte nicht abgeschafft, sondern überflüssig werden ...”” (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIV: 38; qtd. in Müller, Dramatiker 188). It is much easier to determine Wolf’s pro-Communist intentions for his other three stage dramas of this period, because he wrote brief essays about them. Wolf concluded his 1935 essay “Weshalb schrieb ich ‘Die Matrosen von Cattaro?’” with the following words: “... überall werden und sollen die Arbeiter aus diesem Stück die Lehre ziehen: Macht es *nicht* wie diese Matrosen von Cattaro, wenn ihr einmal begonnen habt, sondern macht es wie die *Matrosen von Kronstadt* im Oktober 1917! Deshalb schrieb ich das Stück” (italics in original) (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 368). In light of this statement, one sees that it was this playwright’s intention with this play to lead his audience to the tactics of these Kronstadt revolutionaries in order to repeat

their success. In the similarly titled “Weshalb schrieb ich ‘Tai Yang erwacht’” (1949/50), Wolf made the following assertion:

Ich wollte am Beispiel Chinas zeigen, wie dort ein Volk begann, sich gegen eine kapitalistische Ausbeutung mutig und konsequent zu wehren. ... Jetzt schien es mir an der Zeit, der deutschen gespaltenen Arbeiterschaft am Beispiel der tapferen chinesischen Klassengenossen einen Spiegel vorzuhalten: wie man kühn kämpfen kann und kämpfen muß (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 370, 372).

Wolf clearly wanted to help spread the Communist movement with his play Tai Yang erwacht (1930), as had been the case with the earlier Die Matrosen von Cattaro (1930), and as with his Cattaro play, he wanted to provide his audience with a model of behavior. In his 1932 essay “Die Jungens von Mons” concerning the play of the same name, Wolf provided his assessment of the global political situation in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Like Cyankali, the main thrust of this play is a particular socio-political problem, in this case fascism. But as with the abortion law problems in the earlier play, Wolf considered the individual problem only a small part of a larger one: “Das Wesen des Faschismus als bewaffnete Schutzgarde des Kapitals in dem großen Endkampf zwischen Kapital und Arbeit ist in allen Ländern das gleiche” (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 376). With the play Die Jungens von Mons (1931) Wolf called for a fight against fascism, a fight which he equated in this essay to the workers’ struggle against capitalism.

Wolf also sought to spread the Communist movement with his radio plays and agitprop plays from this period. In a letter to fellow playwright Georg Pijet in 1930, Wolf indirectly but indubitably reveals that his radio plays were written to support the Communist movement (Wolf, Briefe 121-123). More directly, Wolf calls his radio play John D. erobert die Welt an “etwas kitzliche marxistische Sache” in a letter to the *Arbeitersender* in the same year (Wolf, Briefe 126). Of course, the agitprop dramas were clearly works with which Wolf sought to spread the Communist movement. Indeed, he formed his agitprop troupe “Südwest” under orders from the KPD, and he consulted with the Party regarding the agitprop works he wrote for the group before producing them (Hammer, Lesebuch XLV; Ko 191). In light of his desire to spread the Communist movement through his dramatic works of this period, the question arises: how successful was Friedrich Wolf’s attempt to serve as a social movement rhetor by creating dramatic works which fulfill suasory functions for the Communist movement at the end of the Weimar Republic.

1.1 Thesis

This dissertation examines Friedrich Wolf’s persuasive efforts in his dramatic works from the late 1920s and early 1930s. This period is chosen because it corresponds to the time between Wolf’s joining the German Communist Party in 1928 and his being forced to flee Germany after the National Socialists had come to power in 1933. The purpose of this study is to examine the political aspects of these plays in order to ascertain whether the playwright thoroughly presented a Communist

worldview through them, that is, offered a new, Communist depiction not only of the then-current situation in the Weimar Republic, but also of a better future and a plan to attain it.

Wolf was well aware that hegemonic forces wield enormous influence on one's consciousness and outlook; he and other prominent theatrical figures during the Weimar Republic, "... maintained that Germany's political problems were due as much to the habits of mind and instinctive behavior inculcated by centuries of monarchical rule as they were to current party political battles or unjust legislation" (Riley 12). In essence, Wolf believed perceptions of reality forged under classed society to be a problem of considerable importance. Reality as most people perceive it, is merely a definition of reality: a definition which has been created by societal elites and their institutions, such as government and the church. To act as a rhetor for the Communist movement, Wolf had to counteract those "centuries of monarchical rule" and the resulting contemporary social and political problems by creating a coherent rhetoric (Riley 12); he had to literally redefine reality by providing an alternate interpretation of society, specifically a Communist interpretation, because providing a new interpretation of reality is a responsibility for any social movement rhetor. According to Sacksofsky, presenting the Communist worldview was furthermore a fundamental goal for Wolf: "Politische Aufklärung der proletarischen Massen aus marxistischer Sicht, Darstellung der politischen, die Masse betreffenden Wirklichkeit und Aufruf zur revolutionären Tat sind auch im wesentlichen Inhalt und Zweck ..." for the four stage plays of this era (49). This statement applies to the

radio plays and agitprop works as well, although Sacksofsky did not include them in his dissertation because they were outside the scope of that study. Once Wolf had made it his goal to deliver the Communist worldview within his dramatic works, it became a rhetorical necessity to depict not only contemporary situations through the Communist perspective, but also the Communist path for the future. This study argues that Wolf's attempts to act as a rhetor in the Communist movement through his dramas were complex and skilled, but that there still existed fundamental flaws, particularly in his depiction of the future of society.

1.2 State of Research

Despite a small number of scholarly studies on Friedrich Wolf, there exists no research to date investigating Wolf's depiction of society in his attempts to further the Communist social movement with his plays. Both scholarly publications and multiple published reminiscences have cast light on Wolf's political endeavors. Richard Sheppard's "Straightening Long-Playing Records: The Early Politics of Berta Lask and Friedrich Wolf," Birgit Freitag's "Friedrich Wolfs 'Bauer Baetz' als Beispiel des antifaschistischen Kampfes vor 1933," and Heinrich Graf von Einsiedel's "Meine Arbeit mit Friedrich Wolf im Nationalkomitee 'Freies Deutschland'" are three examples of works dealing specifically with Wolf's political endeavors in different ways. Indeed, most of the scholarship on Wolf discusses his political leanings and endeavors in some form. However, even in the research centered on the politics in his writing, none have focused on the means with which

Wolf accomplishes his goals. Inasmuch as Wolf was "... zeitlebens ein Politikum" (Müller, Wer 8), such a perspective is long overdue, and this dissertation intends to fill that void in Wolf scholarship.

A study of Friedrich Wolf's Communist movement rhetoric is necessary for two principal reasons. First, Wolf and his literary works have been decidedly under-researched in the field of German Studies. Though he is regarded as one of the two most important German socialist playwrights in the first half of the twentieth century (Barker 146; Müller, Theater 56), and was, as Alfred Kantorowicz stated, one of the most often produced dramatists in the world at one point (28), there exists only a small amount of research on Friedrich Wolf. Second, most Wolf scholars have noted his politics, and many of these have focused their attention specifically on various political aspects as they appear in his literary works. However, none of these have thoroughly examined how Wolf uses his literary works as instruments of social—and here specifically Communist—movement rhetoric. A thorough investigation of Wolf's suatory endeavors proves important, as it not only shows how Wolf overcame—or failed to overcome—the formal problems of presenting his ideology in the genre of drama, but also helps point out reasons why his persuasive efforts were in some areas lacking from a rhetorical point of view. It thereby contributes to the understanding of Wolf as a political playwright.

This dissertation is based on the groundwork laid by the books and essays of earlier scholars, of which two dissertations have been of particular importance. The first of these is Robert C. Reimer's "The Tragedy of the Revolutionary: A Study of

Ernst Toller, Friedrich Wolf, and Bertolt Brecht: 1918-1933.” In this work, Reimer examines what he translates as “dramas-of-revolution.” The aspects of the dramas that he examines include the need for revolution, the function of the leader, and the different levels of intensity of the endeavors for change, i.e., reformist or revolutionary, among movement members. These are topics which Communications scholars often examine in their studies of the rhetoric of social movements. However, despite similarities to “movement rhetoric” studies in his dissertation, Reimer is actually examining a particular type of drama (the “drama-of-revolution”), not the persuasive elements therein. Brecht, Toller, and Wolf were all leftists, but they were not all fighting for a particular movement in the plays Reimer analyzes—not even all of Wolf’s dramas-of-revolution examined in the study were intended to spread Communist ideology, as some were written well before he became a member of the KPD. Reimer states that the “dramas-of-revolution” he investigates are dramas about revolution (1). In this sense, his dissertation is similar to Susan Joy Conover’s 1991 dissertation Social Movements in Selected Plays of Rachel Crothers inasmuch as both examine social movements which are presented in plays, rather than how the playwrights performed political functions through their dramatic works.

Similarly, Kurt Merkel’s dissertation “Der Beitrag Friedrich Wolfs zur proletarisch-revolutionären deutschen Dramatik” touches on issues common in the scholarship on the rhetoric of social movements, with Merkel observing how Wolf tackled such issues as depicting social and political problems and providing solutions to them. His dissertation is an examination of Wolf’s development into a socialist

dramatist (4), and as such provides considerable political insight into his literary works from the late 1920s and early 1930s. Nonetheless, Merkel does not examine in any consistent way how Wolf's endeavors furthered the Communist movement. He instead focuses mainly on Wolf's depiction of proletarians and the proletariat.

The present dissertation does not focus specifically on the proletariat, revolutions, or social movements as they appear in Wolf's plays, but rather on the way in which the plays serve as a rhetoric to further or intended to further the Communist movement. A Communist redefinition of society will naturally involve the depiction of the proletariat (the present) and revolution (the future). However, whereas both Reimer and Merkel in their dissertations concentrate on different political aspects in Wolf's dramas, they do not focus on the way—or the extent to which—these works provide a Communist worldview.

1.3 Approach

As a social movement persuader, Wolf's essential mission was to spread his movement's ideology. A movement's ideology frames, that is, redefines or restructures, a given social situation: "Statements of ideology must provide definition of that which is ambiguous in the social situation, give structure to anxiety and a tangible target for hostility, foster in-group feelings, and articulate wish-fulfillment beliefs about the movement's power to succeed" (Simons, "Requirements" 5). Movement rhetors must redefine reality for their audience: transform how the audience perceives both the present and the future (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 52;

Stewart, “Evolution” 436). This dissertation examines Wolf’s attempts to create a movement rhetoric—a Communist redefinition of society—in the dramas under investigation.

Limiting this study to the dramas between 1928 and 1933 allows the focus to remain on the relatively brief period when Wolf was attempting to garner support for the Communist movement. He wrote his subsequent plays either in exile, where he was largely unable to reach his target audience, or under the vastly different social circumstances after World War II. Germany was then divided into two new states: in the Federal Republic of Germany, a “Western” style democracy, and in the German Democratic Republic, a Communist state. The former would not accept his persuasive efforts, and they were redundant in the latter.

By applying methodological criteria from the field of “movement rhetoric” studies to the analysis of Wolf’s dramatic work of the period 1928-1933, this dissertation frames these dramas in terms of their function as a part of a Communist redefinition of society. Such a framework provides a clearer perspective on these plays than merely noting that Wolf was a distinctly pro-Communist writer and that his works reflected his politics. Inasmuch as Wolf was, and perceived himself to be, writing overtly political dramas, one should look at his stage, agitprop, and radio plays in terms of the way they functioned as Communist movement rhetoric. At the same time, one should note the ways that Wolf’s political efforts were or were not compatible with the dramatic forms in which he worked. This dissertation will examine the ways in which Wolf aggressively promoted the Communist movement in

the nine plays for stage and radio from 1928-1933 and in so doing performed necessary suatory functions for the advancement of this movement: seeking to bring more people to Communism and to deepen the commitment of those who already shared his views. "Movement rhetoric" studies provide a key to understanding the persuasive elements in Wolf's works, enabling us to detect the strengths and weaknesses in Wolf's efforts to win over his audience to the Communist cause.

2 Methodology

All social movements attempt to redefine society in order to reach their goals. This attempt is often referred to as “propaganda,” a term defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as “The systematic propagation of a given doctrine or of allegations reflecting its views and interest: *Marxist propaganda*” (992). While the word “propaganda” had a positive connotation in the Weimar Republic (Brunner, Conze, and Koselleck 70), it bears the opposite, negative connotation today, both in the United States and in Germany. This dissertation, however, gives preference to the terms “rhetoric” or “persuasion” for a social movement’s redefinition of reality and likewise “rhetor” or “persuader” for a person attempting to create such a redefinition. These terms not only help prevent value judgments, because they are more neutral than “indoctrination” and “propaganda” on the one hand, or “enlightenment” and “education” on the other, and they are furthermore the prevalent terms in studies of the way social movements spread their message. The present study attempts to prevent the reduction of Wolf’s persuasive effort to a purely negative or positive view through the use of this more neutral terminology.

To analyze the Communist movement rhetoric in Wolf’s dramas is therefore to examine the extent to which they provide a new, Communist, definition of reality. Wolf’s 1928 essay “Kunst ist Waffe” provides evidence that he himself knew that providing such a redefinition was a political necessity. He uses variations of the word *Weltanschauung* numerous times, many of these italicized for emphasis, and he twice

refers to a political *Weltanschauungskampf*. Wolf clearly saw contemporary politics as a struggle of competing worldviews: "... *heute* [stehen] ganze Wirtschaftsmächte und Klassen einander gegenüber; und hinter diesen beiden Fronten agieren ... zwei große *Weltanschauungen* ..." (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 157). Perhaps unknowingly, he also presented instances of an "establishment" definition of society in this work and then proceeded to challenge it. After praising the Peasant's Revolution (as well as other events, people, and proto-Communist communities from centuries past), Wolf wrote:

Ein paar Jahrhunderte lang ward diese *wahre* Heldengeschichte unseres Volkes von höfischen und akademischen Geschichtsklitterern totgeschwiegen oder umgefälscht, wurden die Vitalienbrüder und "Likedeeler" (Gleichteiler) zu Seeräubern, die kämpfenden Bauern zu Mordbrennern, ihre Führer: der Geyer, der Münzer, der Hutten – ganz wie die heutigen Revolutionäre –, zu Hetzern gestempelt ...
(Ausgewählte XIII: 153).

This quote demonstrates Wolf's awareness that the institutions of the upper class such as the government and education ("höfischen und akademischen") define the perception of people and events, or conceal their existence or importance, and have done so throughout the centuries. By comparing the treatment of Geyer, Münzer and Hutten to late-Weimar Republic revolutionaries, such as the members of the Communist party, he further emphasized how much the definition of society by the institutions of the societal elites is an ongoing process. The consequence of this

situation for Wolf as a rhetor is the need to address such ongoing problems as they affect people's daily lives—that is, he must focus on contemporary events.

Before completing a single play as a Communist writer, Wolf thus revealed his knowledge of his political task: to present the Communist's movement's viewpoint to his audience. Wolf also realized he would have to convey that worldview in such a way as to include not only the present but also the future. He considered art and particularly drama to be “Scheinwerfer,” “Waffe,” and “Werkzeug” (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 164, 215-218). Wolf's dramas acted as “Scheinwerfer” by casting light on flaws in capitalist society, “Waffe” by helping to break down that corrupted society, and “Werkzeug” by helping to build a new, Communist society. This dissertation will therefore examine Wolf's late Weimar-era dramas in terms of what Wolf himself perceived his task to be: redefining both the present and the future of society and the Communist movement.

Wolf's dramas had to fulfill several functions in order to meet this task. He had to define the social situation of class inequality as a problem by specifying who its victims were and identifying the cause of that problem. Wolf further had to put forward a plan to overcome the problem and present an image of a future utopia where that plan succeeds. In his late Weimar-era dramas, Wolf provided a convincing reevaluation of contemporary times by exposing relationships of victimage between the upper class and the working class. The interrelated tasks of defining the victims and the victimizers are the essential parts of shaping the audience's perception of the current state of society.

Although Friedrich Wolf had his own conception of the Communist movement (as does every member of every movement), it must be made clear that he was not acting on an individual agenda, but rather his intention was to serve as a rhetor for this movement. No two people have identical backgrounds. Every individual is different, and one person's understandings of any particular social movement will never be exactly the same as that of others. Furthermore, social movements are constantly in flux, gaining or losing rhetorical ground, proposing new and disregarding existing rhetorical strategies. Wolf was likewise changing, his knowledge of the Communist ideology and his expertise as a Communist rhetor growing and expanding rapidly in the years between 1928 and 1933. Although his conception of the Communist movement has been labeled "quite idiosyncratic" (Riley 277), he was in fact presenting the Communist case in many of his dramatic works.

No social movement rhetoric is ever universally effective, whether stemming from a movement's ruling body or from an individual rhetor. Communist movement rhetoric during the Weimar Republic was no exception. In his failure to thoroughly present the future of the movement, Wolf's rhetorical efforts were flawed, but they were flawed in a way typical of the movement and of other writers who were trying to support the Communist movement at that time.

2.1 Problematizing the Present

Without raising awareness of class inequality as a problem, Wolf could obviously not indicate a course of action to correct that problem. In order to aid the

Communist party in bringing members of the working class together, Wolf had to both convince them that they had a problem and clearly show what that problem was. Ralph E. Knupp states: "... that there are no social movements when there are no perceived social problems" (382), and the actual "perception" of a social problem is a key factor here. A state of affairs is not a social problem until considered as such: social problems are not objective entities, but rather social situations which have been defined as problems (Blumer 298, 300; Johannesen, Allen and Linkugel 169). Wolf had to make the members of the audience of these plays' see themselves as a victimized collective. He was especially adept at performing this task. Although Wolf and his fellow Communists saw capitalism and its effects on mankind as a definite, correctable problem, that does not mean that many others viewed it as such. For instance, although the working class was the group worst off socially and financially in the Weimar Republic, they were also the group most loyal to the republic (Fischer 195). They were thus supporting a government which at least allowed—if not exacerbated—their suffering. By means of defining class inequality as a problem, Communist rhetors foster existing discontent. This is the necessary first step towards prompting members of the working class to join the KPD in order to change their victimized status and correct the problem.

A further element of Wolf's attempts to re-frame reality, an element closely linked with depicting the working class as the primary victim of this problem, is the establishment of a victimizer: an entity which causes the problems of the victim group and one against which the victim group must fight. According to Hoffer,

victimizers are necessary for all social movements: “Mass movements can [never] rise and spread ... without belief in a devil” (89), because a victimizer is necessary to unify social movements such as the Communist movement (Burke 173-174). The process of designating a victimizer serves several purposes. When a rhetor depicts a victimizer while he or she also establishes a problem and a victim group, the rhetor demonstrates the cause behind the effect. Doing so supports the rhetor’s definitions of the problem and the victim group by presenting the victimizer that is the source of that group’s problem. Such a definition helps alter perceptions of current social relationships. In depicting a problem, a victim group, and a victimizer, Wolf reveals “who” has been doing “what” to “whom.”

For a social movement and its rhetors, showing the victimizer(s) also contributes to the re-framing of the future: the victimizer(s) becomes “them” against which or whom the movement as “we” must struggle. Not only does revealing or constructing the victimizer give a target upon which the movement can focus its energies, it also unifies the movement itself: a common enemy is the basis on which even the most varied and diverse group can be united (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 168; Carter 20; Burke 165; King and Anderson 243-244; Hoffer 90). This process also boosts the ego of movement members by framing the cause of their plight as something or someone outside of themselves, rejecting any self-guilt and instead supporting members’ conceptions of themselves as “... victims of evil forces beyond their control ...” (Stewart, “Championing” 91). Just as the main character in Wolf’s Die Jungens von Mons (1930) realizes that she has been the tool, the “Spielball,” in

the hands of those more powerful than she (Haarmann 21), members of the audience must realize that others are victimizing and manipulating them. This ego-enhancement is important, as movement protestors must have healthy egos when confronting powerful institutions and firmly established social norms (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 59). Thus, by establishing a victimizer, movement rhetors not only reveal the group that must fight, unite that group, and bolster the group's confidence in their ability to win the fight, but they also show the "devil," i.e. common enemy or victimizer, against whom (or what) it must fight, and focus the group's energies in that direction.

2.2 Prescribing The Future

Redefining the future is as important for a social movement as redefining the present. This task includes the essential function of prescribing courses of action which will enable the movement to achieve its goals (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 51). Without focus, a movement dissipates its energy as various factions within the movement attempt multiple—sometimes conflicting—solutions. A social movement rhetor must present the audience with both the near future—that is, propose a plan to overcome the established problematic situation—and a distant future, the image of how society would be after this plan has been successfully completed.

From a movement-rhetoric point of view, Wolf's suasive efforts are severely flawed inasmuch as he does not devote sufficient attention to redefining the future to better fit the ideals of the Communist movement. Without a focus on the future, the

rhetoric is incomplete, and Wolf's representation of the future is inconsistent. In some cases the implications for the future in his plays work against a positive depiction of a Communist future in which all conflict is resolved. This suggests that Wolf considered redefining current events and society a greater priority than altering perceptions of the future.

Wolf knew that half-measures accomplish little in persuading an audience. He wrote in 1927: "Gerade auch bei meinem künstlerischen Schaffen habe ich bemerkt, wie Halbheiten lähmen und zu nichts führen, wie Ganzheiten selbst den Gegner mitreißen" (Briefe 108). He further knew the necessity of describing both the world the way it has become and the way it will be, calling for writers to be not only "Spiegelhalter unserer Tage" but also "Propheten" (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 144). Wolf only sporadically acts as a "prophet." He occasionally proposes methods of escaping the capitalist society, but seldom presents an image of the future. Without portraying the future in a clear and consistent manner, Wolf is necessarily guilty of providing the type of half-measures he well knew to be inadequate.

Wolf knew that the masses needed direction, and he wanted to provide it to them. Scholars have mentioned Wolf's desire to address the future, Haarmann and Siebenhaar for instance claiming that Wolf always wanted to be an "... aktiver, teilhabender Chronist und Wegweiser ..." (120), while Uwe Berger refers to the "revolutionäre Zielklarheit" in Wolf's plays (83). Wolf's own assertions prove that he was indeed thinking about the future of the movement. He wanted to create "... Stücke, die die Menschen vorwärtstreiben, die die Menschen packen, erregen, ihnen

Wege zeigen, Stücke, die die klare Linie, wohin der Kurs geht, beleuchten, Stücke, die Kompaß und Fackel sind” (Wolf, Gesammelte 15: 134). Despite such comments by Wolf and others, Michael David Richardson makes the claim that Wolf focused on the present instead of the future in his dramatic works: “For Wolf, the key was presenting an individual experience that was representative without being prescriptive” (136). An analysis of Wolf’s dramas of this period bears out Richardson’s assertion. Few of these works focus on the future of society for the Communist movement.

As opposed to the strong and often intricate ways in which Wolf’s plays work to change perception of the present, there is no consistent pattern of Wolf’s depiction of the future throughout these works. He neither delivers a uniform representation of the future, nor does he show a development or an increasing awareness of the importance of the future in his dramas. He makes advances, for instance with Tai Yang erwacht (1930) where he indicates a clearer, though still incomplete, picture of the future than in the previous play Die Matrosen von Cattaro (1930), then he retreats, once again delivering an unclear future in Die Jungens von Mons.

Wolf exhibited both an interest in redefining perceptions of the future as well as a skill in reframing then contemporary society in these plays. This being the case, Wolf’s failure to clearly define a future can best be attributed to a different emphasis on his part. As will become apparent, such a lack of focus on the future—especially the distant future—was typical of Communist writers during the Weimar Republic. Because of the lack of such a focus, Wolf usually pointed to the future with strategies

he had used before his commitment to the Communist party, even as far back as his Expressionist period. Unfortunately, Expressionist tactics of depicting the future were not suitable to spread the Communist message. Although many Expressionist writers did present “ecstatic visions of an improved mankind,” they did not present the means to reach that new state of mankind, and “... Communists condemned the empty rhetoric ...” the Expressionists produced (Reimer 5).

2.3 Demonstrating Credibility as a Rhetor

For a social movement rhetor such as Friedrich Wolf to effectively persuade an audience and win it over to his perspective, that audience must consider him someone sufficiently authoritative to present his opinions (Simons, “Requirements“ 5). Therefore the first essential task for a movement rhetor is often to establish his competence and authority. An audience will be hesitant to accept even the best advice if the person offering it appears unintelligent or unknowledgeable regarding the topic on which he is writing or speaking. Wolf, in his capacity as a social movement rhetor, was trying to redefine his audience’s perceptions of current and future society, and solve problems that some of the audience did not even know existed. Consequently, he had to present himself as a person capable of handling this immense task (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 117). Capitalist society has thoroughly stamped what members of the audience perceive as “reality” and “truth,” and Wolf had to overcome these pre-conceived notions and fashion a suitable alternate reality for them—one corresponding to the beliefs of the Communist movement. This would

be a particularly difficult task for Wolf, due to his “outsider” status as a member of the bourgeoisie acting as a rhetor in the predominantly proletarian Communist party. Wolf’s definition work therefore necessarily had to include that of redefining himself as a competent rhetor for this movement.

Wolf had to appear truthful and have political and social ideas which were reasonable to the audience of the works. If he appeared deceptive, whether from distorting or withholding pertinent facts or from outright lying, he could not as effectively convey his solution to the movement’s problems, no matter how fitting the suggested solution might be. Arthur Eloesser wrote of Wolf’s drama Tai Yang erwacht: “Herr Friedrich Wolf weiß von China nicht mehr als ich; und das ist leider sehr wenig” (in Rühle, Republik 1066), while Franz Servaes, in his review of Wolf’s play Cyankali (1929), commented: “Wolf konstruiert einen krassen Ausnahmefall, auf den er sämtliche nur denkbaren Mißstände zusammenhäuft, dem er gleichwohl typische Bedeutung zu verleihen sucht” (in Rühle, Republik 959). These were the types of charges that Wolf had to prevent or protect himself against: the perception of ignorance or obfuscation would significantly weaken the potential effect of his role as a movement rhetor.

A social movement is by definition an uninstitutionalized collective (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 5; Simons, Mechling, and Schreier 800), and this uninstitutionalized status “... presents leaders with ‘extraordinary rhetorical dilemmas’ in the rhetorical requirements they must fulfill, [and] the problems they will face ...” (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 6). One of these dilemmas is that

movement advocates are necessarily at a credibility disadvantage in relation to the rhetors for the institution the advocate is trying to alter or overturn (Simons, “Terms” 308-309). Therefore the movement rhetor often has to present proof of his authority—a step an advocate for an institution will rarely have to take. Establishing one’s authority is particularly necessary when the movement is not well established to the audience, if the speaker is unknown to the audience (or unknown to them as a speaker for the movement), or if the audience is especially varied. A play’s possible audience is definitely a heterogenous group, consisting of people from many different backgrounds, who furthermore can receive the playwright’s material in two distinctly different ways: as part of a theater audience watching a performance, or as an individual reader.

A movement rhetor must convince the audience that he is an expert. Such a task would prove difficult for Wolf as a dramatist. He could not simply state that he had been a sailor to prove his knowledge of sea life for Die Matrosen von Cattaro, just as he could not state that he was a doctor (for Cyankali) or a former soldier (for Die Jungens von Mons); even in a dedication such claims would appear too blatant a case of bolstering his own credibility. Though he could have given his title “Dr. med. Friedrich Wolf” as author of Cyankali to show his experience in the medical field, by doing so he would have run the risk of being labeled a dilettante playwright, especially by those who were not familiar with the body of literary work he had already created, and thus he would possibly lose credibility as an artist. Wolf had to find ways to overcome these difficulties, especially in the earlier works. Despite

moderate success as a playwright before 1929, it was Cyankali and Die Matrosen von Cattaro which brought him renown and notoriety. After that point, a large part of his audience knew his name and his politics, making the process of proving his credibility as an artist and a political activist less necessary.

When expertise in one area is proven and re-proven to an audience, that audience is likely to accept that this expertise extends to other areas as well. If a person appears exceptionally knowledgeable on one topic, such as a particular historical event, or in one field, such as medicine, he or she by extension appears to be a generally knowledgeable person. Thus when Wolf establishes his credibility on abortion beyond any reasonable doubt as he does in Cyankali by his experiences as a medical doctor and his research on the subject (by presenting a significant amount of proof in the foreword before the play has even begun), the audience can believe that he is also an expert in the other areas in which he is trying to persuade, and this in turn significantly raises Wolf's ability to sway his audience to his point of view.

Over the course of these plays, Wolf used several strategies for proving his credibility as a rhetor. He used sources and statistics to provide his expert knowledge either on a topic or about a particular historical situation, and he also presented an accurate depiction of the working class milieu in order to show his knowledge of the poor and their environment. Though proving his credibility as a Communist rhetor was especially important in the earlier plays before he was a well-established artist and Communist, he continued to use these strategies which support his credibility well after he and his politics were widely known.

2.4 Redefining Reality in Drama

Wolf had to accomplish all of his suatory goals inside the dramatic genre, which gave him many advantages and a few disadvantages over most social movement rhetors. Although the typical mode of communication for a rhetor is an oration, drama is a perfect fit for movement rhetoric. Social movement rhetors must present the movement as constantly progressing toward its goal (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 77). Drama is by its nature much like that of a successful social movement: there must be an onward motion, movement in an inevitable direction. Thornton Wilder noted as much: “Drama on the stage is inseparable from forward movement, from action” (7). Furthermore conflict, from which all drama arises (Nicoll 92), is inherent in every social movement: a conflict of the movement against the institution it hopes to change or overthrow. The dramatist has a much wider palette than an orator, as the latter is largely confined to a single form of address: the monologue. The dramatist, on the other hand, has dialogue between multiple actors onstage available to him, by which he can much more easily argue multiple points of view to bring an audience to his way of thinking, yet also has the monologue available as an accepted part of the drama if he desires to use it. The dramatic form has an even greater advantage when it is produced: a visual side. No speech can build a world and set it in front of an audience the way a staging can accomplish. Wolf knew this well. Discussing radio and radio plays in 1929 after the transmission of “Krassin” rettet “Italia”, he declared his belief that “...man optisch rascher und unmittelbarer aufnimmt als akustisch” (Walter 439). This quote shows that his radio work had led

him to consider not only the requirements of the radio play sub-genre, but also the merits of the visual—and indeed its superiority over the auditory—at a time when he was creating his Communist rhetoric.

An orator can, of course, talk about events—or for that matter an environment—and great orators can indeed conjure up an image inside the minds of their listeners. Nonetheless, oration cannot have the same effect as a produced play in which the audience sees and hears a projected present or future. In 1931, Alfred Durus, writer for the Communist periodical *Rote Fahne*, stated that no other art form has the ability to grip and revolutionize the masses like the theater, apart from film (Nössig, Rosenberg, and Schrader 607). Perhaps even Durus's one exception should be qualified. Though dramas do not have all the technical means that are available to film, such as camera movement and editing, a stage production has an advantage over even a movie, as the theater audience knows that there are real people in front of them, people who are acting (doing): actions which could range from embracing to killing. These are not merely images of people and their past actions as is the case with film, rather the actors are in physical proximity to the audience, and are acting in the present in real time.

Specifically with regard to the future, Wolf's ability to physically depict it onstage in all but the radio plays is a great boon for him. Nonetheless, the dramatic form does have some disadvantages in the representation of a utopian future. It is difficult to present such a future in a dramatic setting, as it inherently lacks drama. Conversely, the conflict necessary for drama would undermine the utopia.

Nonetheless, other Communist playwrights were able to accomplish this task. Franz Jung's 1922 play Annemarie contained a utopian epilogue: "Das Nachspiel versetzt die Zuschauer unvermittelt einige Generationen weiter. Alle lachen über den Großvater, der davon erzählt, wie alle gegeneinander standen. Keiner glaubt ihm. Es herrschten eitel Freude, Jauchzen und Wohlstand" (Merkel 21). Similarly, Brecht later fashioned a utopian prologue for Der kaukasische Kreidekreis (1944-45), a prologue in which the people under a Communist society settle their differences and work together for the greater good. Still, these utopias had to exist outside the body of the play. Because of the advantages and disadvantages of spreading the Communist message in the dramatic genre, one must consider the generic restrictions imposed upon Wolf as a social movement persuader in presenting this message in the nine dramas under investigation.

3 Political, Literary, and Personal Background

The German Communist Party (KPD) was a significant political power both nationally and internationally during the Weimar Republic. The KPD consistently received around ten percent of the vote in elections until the Great Depression, at which time its electoral support grew (Weitz, “Power” 253). Though the KPD’s electoral strength lagged behind that of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), it was among the stronger of the many parties in Germany at that time. Internationally, the KPD was the first non-Soviet Communist party to have a mass base, and it was the one which most Communists worldwide believed would help take the international Communist movement to the next stage of the proletarian revolution (Kozlov and Weitz 400; Weitz, “Power” 253). The KPD, being a significant party in both German and world terms, had to be mindful of both its national and international commitments. In 1928, the year Wolf joined the KPD, the Communist International proclaimed capitalism to be in a “third period” of post-war capitalist crisis (Worley 1; Kozlov and Weitz 387). The KPD, like the other Communist parties around the world, had to devise rhetorical tactics to respond to this situation.

Friedrich Wolf’s decision to join the KPD does not necessarily indicate a radical departure from his earlier political views. He had long held liberal beliefs, having been an active member of the SPD—though not of the Independent Social Democrats (USPD) as he later claimed—before taking the further step to the left (Sheppard 283). Although his commitment to the Communist movement is not in

question, it is unlikely that Wolf's knowledge of the goals and methods of the KPD was initially as solid as it would later be. One can in fact still note vestiges of his more moderate leftist past in the first works with which he functions as a rhetor for the Communist movement. Nonetheless, Wolf's personal background, professional interests, and political concerns—such as revolution, active social involvement, and the betterment of society—affirm his compatibility with the demands of the Communist party.

Of course, the economy and politics of the Weimar Republic were also important for the general rhetoric of the KPD, as well as for Wolf as an individual rhetor. When Wolf joined the KPD, the Weimar Republic was nearing the end of its mid-1920s “golden age.” “Golden age” must be considered a relative term due to its being flanked by the hyperinflation of the early 1920s and the Great Depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s; in 1926—the middle of this golden age—there was virtually no economic growth and unemployment peaked at over 20 per cent, although the other years in this period from 1924 to 1927 were stronger economically (Ferguson 39). During the late 1920s and the 1930s the worldwide Depression took a great toll on Germany, starting there much earlier than the Stock Market Crash and hitting Germany harder than any other industrialized country, with the possible exception of the United States (Balderston 77). Near the end of the Weimar Republic, with millions out of work (Abraham 249) and the economy in ruins, Germans became increasingly open to the more extreme parties on the left and right of the political spectrum. Both the KPD and the National Socialists (NSDAP) made

significant gains in membership and electoral support during this time. The positive input of the KPD's growth and the negative input of the increasingly serious threat of fascism were two elements which would necessarily influence how Communists would have to convey their message, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Wolf was only one of a number of Communists and other leftists active in the theater of the Weimar Republic. Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht, two of the most important names of any era of German theatrical history, gained prominence during this time. Several problems faced the Weimar theater, so much so that less than half of Berlin's 45 theaters were still in business by 1931, with many more theaters closing the following year (Schmiester 72). The theater found in the emerging power of the cinema a new rival which would draw away both the theater's audience and its best talent (Willett, Art 150; Patterson 30). Furthermore, the economic hardships prevalent in the country obviously affected the theater. Even before the Depression, a visit to the theater was a luxury for many. In 1927-28, for instance, the average civil servant and or salaried employee had less than twelve Reichsmark to spend on "cultural needs and sociability" such as "newspapers, magazines, and books as well as tickets for theaters, cinemas, sporting events, and dances," while the the average working family had roughly half as much to spend on the same materials (Führer 738-739). In addition to these difficulties, leftist theater struggled not only against censorship (Schmiester 43), but also against threats of violence and scandal which made it difficult for Communist plays to be produced in regular theaters in the last years of the republic (Knellessen 234). Nonetheless, the leftist theater persisted in

various forms until the National Socialist takeover in 1933, and artists such as Wolf, Brecht, Piscator, and Gustav von Wangenheim attempted to spread a Communist message through their works.

3.1 KPD Rhetorical Demands and Weaknesses

The twin goals of the KPD were the revolutionary overthrow of the then current social and political conditions and the establishment of an egalitarian society. Upon closer inspection, the latter is the true goal, while the former is the means to that end. However, the KPD largely lost sight of its ultimate objective. The emphasis in much of the Communist rhetoric was on the revolution itself instead of the utopia which followed it. As Eric Weitz stated: "... the party sought to make even the most basic working-class struggles work toward the larger and virtually ever-present goal of revolution" ("Power" 254). One should keep in mind that the post-revolutionary society was not at the forefront of the minds of the KPD members, but rather the revolution itself; indeed the revolution was often a "goal" instead of a means to an end.

3.1.1 Communist Message

Despite Communist rhetors often focusing more on the revolution, the subsequent utopian society was always of great importance to the movement's ideology; this end goal determined KPD politics as a whole (Hagen 15). The world had developed to a dismal state, but it could still be changed for the better. According

to the works of Marx and Engels, and thus to the basis for Communism in the first half of the twentieth century, workers are slaves under the capitalist system, but in the new classless society they would “lose ... their chains” (Marx and Engels 39).

It is in the very nature of a Communist party to be committed to the “overthrow of the capitalist state” (Fowkes 73), so it is not surprising that KPD rhetors focused on a revolution in Germany (Weitz, “Power” 254; Weitz, Strategies 6). The Bolsheviks gave the KPD an example of revolutionaries who not only wrested control of power, but also remained in control, unlike the rebels in short-lived revolutions in Kiel, Cattaro, Berlin, and Munich during and shortly after World War I. A rhetorical emphasis on the revolution itself would naturally tend to attract revolutionaries, and with the number of people discontent with the Weimar Republic (Heberle 484-485), such an emphasis was reasonable. Furthermore, Marx and Engels themselves stated that the Communists should not conceal the way to their goal: “They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions” (39). The Communist movement during the Weimar Republic was simply proclaiming its goals and the means to that end.

Another important facet of the KPD’s ideology was the active participation of its members. Joining the movement meant making a strong commitment to its community and making Communism an essential part of one’s identity (Weitz, Creating 233). The movement’s leaders were fundamentally committed to fostering mass activism, believing it to be the way to the social transformation they desired (Weitz, Strategies 6). They encouraged active participation in the events of the day,

repeatedly called for strikes (Sacksofsky 39), and promoted the formation of workers' organizations. Inasmuch as the Communist movement's supporters were the ones who would bring on the revolution, no sloth or passive membership was acceptable. The KPD "... emphasized the voluntaristic element in the revolutionary transformation, the active and conscious participation of the party and its supporters in transforming existing conditions ..." (Weitz, "Power" 254). The KPD attempted to form the working class into a powerful, single force. Only the active involvement of all members of the Communist movement could start the revolution which would bring about the utopian Communist community (Weitz, "Power" 293). Clearly, an active membership was not only desired, but required.

The move to revolution to form a better society and the push for personal activity were constants for the Communist movement throughout the Weimar Republic. However, during Wolf's time as a member of the KPD in Weimar Germany, a particular type of rhetoric was prevalent: the "Third Period" rhetoric which played such an important role in international Communist thought during the late 1920s and early 1930s:

The Third Period formed a part of what the Communist International (Comintern) recognised as a 'series of historical phases of development' passed through by the international labour movement in the wake of the Great War (1914-18). Each phase encapsulated a different stage in the 'general crisis of the capitalist system', the third

of which was officially proclaimed at the Comintern's sixth world congress in July-August 1928 (Worley 1).

The Third Period policy prompted the German Communist Party to regard and depict the reform-minded Social Democrats ("Social Fascists" as per the rhetoric) as their "main enemy," even more so than the right-wing parties such as the NSDAP (LaPorte 38). Third Period tactics served as the basis for Comintern policy from 1928 until early 1933 (Worley 2).

The time between Wolf's joining the party and his leaving Germany coincides closely with the Third Period. The KPD rhetoric during these years was much further left than in the years before or after this period: during the "period of relative stabilization" the Communists had flirted with reformist, SPD tactics (Fischer 81), and during the mid-1930s, this type of more inclusive rhetoric re-appeared (Burghardt 242). The flaws in the Third Period approach have been analyzed repeatedly since the early 1930s, yet its influence during the late years of the Weimar Republic may not be disregarded. While the Third Period ideology could not have influenced Wolf's decision to become a Communist, as he had become a KPD member several months before this ideology took hold (Pollatschek, Leben 109), its tactics, by virtue of Wolf's party membership, necessarily affected the way he constructed the suatory elements of his plays.

3.1.2 Difficulty in Establishing a Rhetoric

Due to many circumstances, both within and outside the party, the KPD had difficulty formulating any consistent message. Though the German Communist Party had been in existence less than a decade when Wolf became a member, it had already seen many great changes. From the very beginning, the party found itself on unsteady ground. In January 1919, the KPD's first leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, were assassinated just weeks after the official founding of the party. The impact of the loss of these two strong leaders is incalculable, not only in German but in world terms. In the coming years the hyper-inflation and the period of relative stabilization which followed changed the KPD's rhetorical landscape significantly. The assassination of their leaders and the drastic economic changes were only two reasons why the KPD had a difficult time consistently defining and confirming its message during the Weimar Republic era.

National concerns and internal KPD matters caused many of the ideological and rhetorical shifts for the party, but they were not the sole sources of change. One significant factor was the KPD's relationship to the Soviet Union and the international Communist movement, from which the Weimar-era KPD cannot be separated. The KPD not only accepted, but also promoted the identification of the party and its members as a part of an international movement (Weitz, Strategies 3). The Comintern had immense influence over the KPD, as it did over Communist parties in other countries (Maehl 297). This was particularly the case after the "hard-line Stalinist" Ernst Thälmann became leader of the KPD in 1925 (LaPorte 40). By

1929, the “Stalinisation” of the German Communist Party was complete, with the authority of all its leaders coming from Moscow (LaPorte 39, 42; Leviné-Meyer 9). However, the goals of the Russian Communists did not necessarily correspond with those of the German Communists, each naturally wanting the outcome most favorable for its own country. Clearly, many of the goals were held in common by these two parties, but sometimes they were in fact diametrically opposed. For instance, the Soviets did not want a revolution in Germany for fear of the international consequences (LaPorte 59), while the members of the KPD clearly desired a revolution. Due to the great Soviet influence on the KPD and its party leadership mentioned above, the KPD could never come up with an independent plan of action (Maehl 297). External pressures such as these were a serious obstruction to the KPD in establishing and conveying a uniform message.

The Communist movement during the Weimar Republic had further difficulties that were caused by the make-up of its membership and its oppositional forces. The movement had more control over these factors than over their subjugation to the Soviet Union and the economic upheaval during the 1920s, but not significantly more. The bourgeoisie and the societal elites were naturally opposed to the Communist movement. At the beginning of the Weimar Republic, German business leaders went as far as to join forces with the Socialist trade unions to fend off the far left (Ferguson 47). At the end of the republic also, great sections of the populace joined other parties and movements in order to stop the Bolshevik threat. When the Communist movement gained rapidly in number during the Great

Depression, many middle-class Germans turned to the NSDAP in hopes of staving off a Communist revolution (O'Lessker 68). While opposition from the higher classes is to be expected, the lack of support from members of the working class is somewhat surprising. The rural areas especially were difficult ground for the Communist movement. The KPD was able to gain precious little support in the countryside (Weitz, Strategies 14), with the rural workers staying "overwhelmingly hostile" to the Communist movement (LaPorte 48). A lack of support among the working class was apparent in the urban communities as well. In general, the working class was the social class which most supported the Weimar Republic (Fischer 195). With the KPD's major target audience loyal to the state the party was trying to overthrow, the KPD had a difficult time establishing its ideology. The Communist movement had trouble finding a foothold in any of the social classes during a large part of the Weimar Republic.

By the last years of the republic, the KPD was a party overwhelmingly composed of the unemployed (Weitz, "Power" 289); by 1932 almost 90 per cent of the membership was jobless (Weitz, Strategies 12). Apart from the fact that these unemployed men and women wielded little political power under a capitalist system, two other major problems existed. The first of these is the emotional state of the unemployed. The high levels of unemployment often resulted in political apathy, resignation and cynicism (Fischer 139). Apathy is a burden for any social movement—much more so for the Communist movement which stressed activism on a personal level. The little activism the unemployed displayed was "sporadic and

inconsistent” (Weitz, “Power” 292). The second great problem is the lack of social contact with others: the unemployed “... were deprived ... of organizational links with the trade unions and the legally constituted works councils ...” (Weitz, “Power” 285). Unemployed followers of the Communist movement were unable to spread their message at the workplace and within worker organizations. That inability was a great loss for the German Communists, as these areas formed a central backdrop for spreading their message (Weitz, “Spheres” 281). Not only was the bourgeoisie pleased by the Communists’ inability to spread their ideology, but it was also a main cause of it. There was an exceedingly high turnover in labor during the mid 1920s, which afforded employers the opportunity to greatly re-structure their work force (Fischer 97). They exploited this opportunity, ridding their factories and mines of Communists and other militant workers (Weitz, Strategies 11-12).

After massive shifts in party membership due largely to schisms in the KPD and later in the USPD, KPD membership remained relatively stable at roughly 125,000 throughout the golden years of the Weimar Republic (Fischer 30). During this period the Communist movement therefore had the opportunity to better establish a consistent program aimed at a steady audience, but the relative prosperity of this era simultaneously undermined the movement’s ability to do so. When the economic downturn came, party membership once again increased sharply. During the last months of 1930, KPD numbers almost doubled and by 1932 nearly tripled (Flechtheim 347; Fischer 130). Albeit desirable, the sheer staggering growth necessarily created new challenges for the party leaders. The impermanence of these

new members, due to party splits, great gains, and deep losses all added to the burden of the Communist rhetors. Under the best circumstances, a social movement's message is constantly changing: acting, reacting and adjusting to developments both good and ill for the movement. Because of the great upheavals in membership, Communist rhetors had to constantly re-examine its in-groups and its out-groups—in some cases having to re-frame former enemies as friends and vice versa, and strengthen the commitment of party members both new and old. These tasks demand much rhetorical effort, making it more difficult for Communist persuaders to convey the KPD message which was constantly changing due to these great upheavals in membership.

Despite such difficulties, the German Communist Party during the Weimar Republic was on many levels a success. First of all, the KPD remained a significant political force, consistently receiving 10 per cent of the electoral vote in a time and place "... virtually seething with political and social schemes, creeds, sects, and parties ..." (Weitz, "Power" 253; Heberle 484). In international terms, it also was important, being the strongest, largest, and first mass-based Communist party outside of the Soviet Union (Weitz, "Power" 253; LaPorte 40; Kozlov and Weitz 400). While the Communist movement in Germany had difficulty establishing and conveying a clear message for many and varied reasons, the ideas they were able to communicate—in however flawed a manner—helped keep it a political power until the NSDAP took power.

3.1.3 Communist Ideology in Literature

While the Communist movement as a whole had difficulty forming and disseminating a consistent message, the literary component of the movement faced similar difficulties. The problems in establishing literary strategies resulted not only from the obstacles facing the movement in general, but also from others which specifically affected literature. Many of the problems simply stemmed from the Communist theorists and authors knowing neither how Communist writers should form a unified aesthetic nor how the movement as a whole should proceed.

Despite a large demand for tendentious drama during the Weimar Republic and a “deep affinity for leftist political ideas” among the theatrical community (Reimer 5, 6; Riley 1), there was not a consistent Communist rhetorical practice depicted on stage at that time. In the final years of the Weimar Republic, authors and intellectuals formed different theories about how to best use drama and other forms of art and literature for suatory purposes, yet none became prevalent among the leading Communist dramatists of the time (Nössig, Rosenberg, and Schrader 414). There was no binding artistic doctrine like that of the later Socialist Realism, and at the time such a doctrine was viewed as neither necessary nor useful by many (Gallas 27-28). Johannes R. Becher, in his essay “Unser Bund” delivered at the founding meeting of the *Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller* in October 1928, stated: “Die Anwendung des Marxismus auf die Literatur, marxistische Kritik, marxistische Ästhetik, ist ein Gebiet, das auf weite Strecken noch völlig unerforscht ist und auf dem es noch reichlich zu schaffen gibt” (83). This lack of a clear literary theory was

on one level positive; it allowed great freedom for individual writers to fashion their own political dramas as they saw best. However, there were two significant drawbacks which went hand in hand with this freedom. A cohesive Communist-dramatic theory could have given direction to those authors weak in Communist ideology. By taking bits and pieces from the many different theories in the air in the late 1920s and early 1930s, writers ran the risk of their literary creations being politically weak and confusing. Second, due to the lack of a clear ideology, authors expended too much time in theoretical debates and proposals. Such writers as Becher, Brecht, and Georg Lukács clearly recognized the importance of grounding their works in a sound political ideology. However, the energy expended arguing against fellow Communists could have been used arguing for the movement. As a result, there was not a single Communist literary theory, there were only a few rhetorical tendencies.

One can clearly see the extent of the vacuum in Communist literary ideology at the time Wolf joined the party by the fact that Wolf himself quickly formed a substantial part of this ideology. In his 1928 essay “Kunst ist Waffe!” he called for Communist writers to use their artistic works to infuse their art with propaganda for the Communist cause, to be “*Zeitgewissen*,” “*Seher*,” and “*Trommler neben der Fahne*,” to make art “*Scheinwerfer und Waffe!*” (italics in original) (*Ausgewählte* XIII: 149; 159; 164). Friedrich Albrecht has noted that at the time Wolf wrote this essay, German literature trailed behind the political demands of the day (180). This is likely the reason that “Kunst ist Waffe!” quickly became one of the most quoted

political-literary *Programmschriften* in German Communist circles, with its title becoming a well-known slogan (Nössig, Rosenberg, and Schrader 461). Some of the ideas from this essay were derived from Upton Sinclair's Die goldene Kette oder Die Sage von der Freiheit der Kunst (original title: Mammonart) which itself was influential among Marxist writers in 1928 (Nössig, Rosenberg, and Schrader 540). The simple fact that the ideas of an American writer and a neophyte German Communist could be so significant for German Communist literary circles in 1928 demonstrates the lack of a strong theoretical base for literature at that time.

One area where German Communist writers consistently failed was in the area of promoting a vision of society's future. In "Kunst ist Waffe," Wolf wrote: "An den großen Zeitwenden, da *Ideen sich verwirklichen* wollen, an diesen Höhepunkten der Menschheitsgeschichte wird Weltanschauung zur 'Politik', wird der *Dichter* in letzter Steigerung zum Seher, zum *Mahner*, zum *Propheten*! Das heißt vom Spießer aus gesehen: zum 'Hetzer' und 'Bilderstürmer'!" (italics in original) (Ausgewählte XIII: 158). Wolf was clearly cognizant of the necessity of presenting a new path and guiding his audience. Nonetheless, German Communist writers—Wolf included—never sufficiently steered the audience toward the future. This weakness both was caused by and betrayed their lack of a general Communist literary ideology. Writers were often unable to distinguish those possibilities and necessities which were imminent and those which pointed to events in the future (Nössig, Rosenberg, and Schrader 520). This is symptomatic of the KPD in general, which was "... always prone to mistake the fourth for the ninth month of revolutionary pregnancy" (Maehl

297). The result is that while Communist theorists condemned the Expressionists' portrayals of revolution with their "poorly defined goals" (Reimer 4), the Communists' own depictions of the events surrounding the forthcoming revolution were often no less vague.

Just as Communist literary activity inherited ideological and rhetorical problems from the movement as a whole, so did Wolf's dramas betray certain suatory and ideological weaknesses which were indicative of Communist literature as a whole. The insecure foundation of Communist literature during the Weimar Republic was in part due to the unsteady rhetorical foundation of the KPD in general, which was facing turmoil from several fronts. Although he wrote the highly influential "Kunst ist Waffe!," Wolf himself was not obsessed with theory (Mittenzwei 324-325), and in his dramatic works he mostly used to good effect the freedom which the lack of a cohesive Communist literary theory allowed.

3.2 The Leftist Political Theater of the Weimar Republic

Despite the lack of a coherent Communist literary ideology, the theater of the far left prospered in the 1920s and 1930s. Brecht and Piscator both developed works and theatrical styles which became popular, while the dramas of Wolf and other prominent political artists also met with much success during this time. Even in the last years of the republic, with both censorship and economic pressures increasing, actors' collectives (*Schauspielerkollektive*) emerged, playing the works of Wolf, Lampel, and others. The Communist agitprop movement also developed around this

time. Even with the emergence of the political right, some of these agitprop troupes continued performing well into 1933.

By the mid-1920s, Expressionism on the Weimar stage was being replaced by the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, an artistic movement which was more realistic, socially critical and focused more on contemporary themes (Gray 60; Willett, Weimar 85; Speirs 143). This literary movement during which Wolf wrote his late Weimar plays, was a very diverse one, much like the political ideology for which he wrote them. The term *Neue Sachlichkeit* is awkward and vague (Speirs 143): “[*Neue Sachlichkeit*] had no special features except ... a matter-of-fact realism in contrast to the heady ecstasies of the [Expressionist] movement. There was no programme, no manifesto, no theory, no representative author, rather a reversion, in many cases, to the methods of the Naturalists ...” (Gray 60). Despite their both having an emphasis on realism, Naturalism should not be equated with the *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The latter movement bears a more positive perspective. As Wolf noted in 1935:

Das naturalistische Stück sagt: “Ja, ja, so ist nun einmal die Welt, so war sie, so wird sie bleiben!” *Das realistische Stück* wird den Entwicklungsprozeß zeigen oder andeuten. “So ist heute dieses Stück Welt, aber dieses Heute trägt schon in sich den Keim und die Bedingungen des Morgen; so ist die Welt, aber wir werden sie verändern!” (Ausgewählte XIII: 295).

Despite the lack of a cohesive artistic program and theory, the *Neue Sachlichkeit* was nonetheless well-suited for a change-oriented political artist such as Wolf because of its positivity.

A director who influenced Wolf and many other politically minded artists during the Weimar Republic and beyond was Erwin Piscator, a pivotal figure in the theater of the Weimar Republic. He directed plays by Wolf and Ernst Toller, worked with Brecht, and at one time ran two *Piscatorbühnen* in Berlin. His productions also broadened the palette of the theater through his use of film, projections, simultaneous stage, and even treadmills. He was furthermore a prominent influence on the German agitprop movement in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

After World War I, Piscator founded the Proletarian Theater in 1920, where he created a type of theater which would prefigure the agitprop troupes. He used lay actors and played to a mainly proletarian audience in halls instead of theaters using primitive sets (Rühle, Deutschland 495; Brandt 46; Piscator 49). In 1924 he co-wrote and produced the Revue Roter Rummel which itself greatly influenced agitprop (Knellessen 261). He later directed versions of Hoppla, wir leben! and Die Abenteuer des braven Soldaten Schweik at the first Piscator-Theater which became very well-known. Although these and some other Piscator productions were successful, the *Piscator-Theater* (in all three incarnations) was a financial failure. Piscator continued to direct plays, often with the *Piscator-Kollektiv* until he left for the U.S.S.R. in the early 1930s, his last play in Weimar Germany being Wolf's Tai Yang erwacht.

Piscator developed the “documentary theater” during his years at the *Volksbühne*. With this type of production, he aimed “...to make the theatre into a mixture of lecture hall and debating chamber, where the audience would see a socially relevant play supported by a wealth of documentary material and so be inspired to argue the issues out” (Willett, Art 151). This style of theater enabled him to “... prove the Communist case” while mixing performance and lecture (Rorrison 11; Willett, Weimar 210). Piscator popularized the use of projections and film excerpts, and also used a commentator to break down the barrier between stage and audience in his first play at the *Volksbühne*, Alfons Paquet’s Fahnen (Williams 314; Willett, Weimar 88). His 1925 political revue Trotz Alledem! continued and intensified these efforts. Piscator described this latter play as “...eine einzige Montage von authentischen Reden, Aufsätzen, Zeitungsausschnitten, Aufrufen, Flugblättern, Fotografien und Filmen des Krieges und der Revolution, von historischen Personen und Szenen” (73). Piscator and his documentary theater influenced Brecht, Wolf, and many other theatrical artists.

Piscator also popularized the use of the simultaneous stage, a particularly significant theatrical device for Wolf. Perhaps most famously, Piscator used the simultaneous stage in his production of Toller’s Hoppla, wir leben!. He also used the simultaneous stage in the Kaufmann von Berlin and Des Kaisers Kulis and it became part of what has been referred to as “Piscator-Stil” (Knellessen 179; Trommler 94; Schmiester 58). The simultaneous stage allowed Piscator (and later Wolf and others) to demonstrate relationships—often relationships of power or class—and differing

sides of a single situation onstage in front of the audience. In Wolf's words, a simultaneous scene "... [veranschaulicht] gleichzeitig den 'doppelten Boden der Ereignisse ...'" (Ausgewählte XIII: 23). To this end, Wolf used stage techniques he discovered through Piscator, especially after their work together in 1931.

Despite the great fame and influence of Erwin Piscator, Bertolt Brecht is probably the most famous figure to emerge from the Weimar theater. He won the prestigious *Kleistpreis* in 1922, and became known for his plays Baal, Mann ist Mann, and Die Dreigroschenoper. Brecht was not only a writer, but he also began producing plays, often his own works. He began crafting a form of "epic theater:" one which distanced the audience from the production and impelled them to view it critically (Patterson 153). Elements prominent in Brecht's conception of epic theater include a montage-like structure, direct address to the audience, and the use of songs (Willett, Weimar 210). Although Wolf, who supported identification and catharsis in the theatrical experience and followed Aristotle's theory of catharsis in most of his plays, did not approach drama or political theater from the same perspective as Brecht (Richardson 13; Müller, Dramatiker 186); the latter playwright's work and ideas were in such circulation that Wolf and the rest of the Weimar theater community could not help but be aware of them.

During the last five years of the republic, the agitprop movement played an increasingly prominent role in German theater and politics. Agitprop troupes consisted of amateur actors presenting agitation and propaganda in the service of the KPD (Bodek, "Twenties" 55). The agitprop troupes were "a favorite form of

entertainment on the working-class scene” and the KPD considered them a very effective means of spreading their message (Bodek, “Twenties” 69; Ko 145). The many measures the government took to hinder or halt their programs likewise verify how effective it considered the troupes to be (Knellessen 278). These troupes were mobile and inexpensive to maintain, generally using makeshift stage equipment and therefore able to travel to courtyards, the streets, factory meetings, strikes, and the countryside to play their programs to their proletarian audiences—and quickly evade the authorities if necessary (Mally 331; Knellessen 277; Bodek, Proletarian 81; Innes 25).

The agitprop movement arose quickly. A great impetus for the development of the movement was the guest visit in late 1927 of the Soviet “living newspaper” the Blue Blouses (Knellessen 275), and by the next year, every German town had at least one agitprop troupe (Innes 24). The Blue Blouses employed short scenes, song, dance, satire and even acrobatics in their programs (Mally 326; Knellessen 276), and many of the German troupes which soon formed, modelled themselves on this group (Bodek, Proletarian 103). Piscator’s similar mid-1920s work also proved to be a strong influence on the troupes (Innes 55), and his *Revue Roter Rummel* “... established standards by which later agitprop productions were measured ...” (Rorrison 15). The agitprop programs were generally primitive—largely due to the abilities of the amateur actors—using sloganeering, stock characters, and simple premises (Innes 23, 25-26; Mittenzwei 309). The agitprop movement proved to be influential even on the professional stage. For instance, although Wolf later criticized

agitprop in its prevalent format (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 27), he nonetheless personified the idea of the living newspaper in the character Kuckuck from Cyankali years before he formed the *Spieltruppe Südwest* and wrote his agitprop works (Kopfermann 68). At the end of the Weimar Republic, Wolf was forced from both the professional stage and the radio airwaves, and he therefore devoted himself fully to agitprop. While his 1933 essay “Schöpferische Probleme des Agitproptheaters” clearly proves that Wolf saw flaws in the agitprop form, he nonetheless attempted to craft works which would spread his Communist message in this sub-genre, using the best elements of agitprop and attempting to use his theatrical expertise to overcome or lessen agitprop problems.

3.3 Wolf’s Personal Background, Professional Interests, and Political Concerns

Considering Wolf’s background, it is surprising that he would eventually become a member of and rhetor for the Communist party. Wolf’s parents were quite prosperous, his father being a respected merchant, well able to afford to have Friedrich go to *Gymnasium* and eventually study medicine at university (Pollatschek, Biographie 9; Jehser 16). When World War I broke out in 1914, Wolf joined the army and was sent to the front as a military doctor. A year later, he was still clearly swept up in the militaristic-heroic spirit of the times, describing the epoch as the “heroischsten aller Zeiten” in a letter to his wife Kaethe dated July 31, 1915 (Wolf, Briefe 14). Nonetheless, like many other young men and artists, his attitude about the war quickly changed; according to Alexander Abusch, “Im Kriege reifte Wolf zum

Kämpfer gegen dessen Verantwortlichen” (254). By January 1916 Wolf wrote his first anti-war poem (Pollatschek, Biographie 30), and by October of the same year he complained that this war had not made people better, freer, braver or more honorable; it had not changed them at all: “... alles ist beim Alten geblieben” (Wolf, Briefe 28). Although he later characterized himself—in what Walther Pollatschek and Else Wolf deem a great exaggeration—as having been a “wilder Hurra-Krieger” until 1917 (Wolf, Gesammelte 15: 120, 562), he publicly declared himself to be opposed to the war and became a member of the SPD the following year (Neitzert 21). Despite being a prosperous merchant’s son, a doctor himself, and at one time an enthusiastic soldier, Friedrich Wolf came out of the First World War with a liberal—pacifist and “Idealist”—perspective (Wolf, Briefe 43).

By the later part of the War, a major priority for Wolf had become improving society, a desire he carried with him the rest of his life. Wolf joined Heinrich Vogeler’s Barkenhoff commune in northern Germany in 1921, spending the summer there and later basing his drama Kolonne Hund on his time there (Neitzert 21-23; Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 85). His time at the Barkenhoff was not only a retreat from typical Weimar society, but also an attempt to change that society for the better. Wolf later recognized that such a commune was doomed to failure with the political and economic situation of Germany at that time (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 86). The Weimar government promised the commune settlers support—in lieu of their war pensions—but reneged on this promise (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 85-86). Such treatment naturally engendered distrust and even antipathy towards this new government which

was already unpopular with a large part of German society (especially after the terms of the German reparation payments to the Allied powers became known in May of that year), and increased Wolf's desire to better this society.

Wolf biographer Walther Pollatschek noted that Wolf saw medical topics as socio-political topics ("Aufsätzen" 465). As a practitioner of homeopathic medicine, Wolf naturally saw social conditions—such as insufficient food, lack of personal space, and harsh working conditions—as contributors and causes of sickness. He also viewed politics through his perspective as a doctor. Throughout the early years of the Weimar Republic, Wolf continued to practice medicine, even acting as doctor during his time as a worker in the Worpsswede commune (Haarmann and Siebenhaar 115). Medicine was not just a vocation to Wolf, it was a large part of his identity. The doctors in his dramatic works bear testimony to this: Ohm Kay from Die Schrankkomödie, Dr. Möller in Cyankali, and the titular character from Professor Mamlock are only three examples of the many doctors in Wolf's plays. Scholars have stated that Wolf's dramatic, political and medical works were interrelated, one even going so far as to claim they were an "Einheit" (Deutsche Akademie 16). The Soviet writer Sergej Tretjakow furthermore stated that Wolf's medical books are reminiscent of "Agitationsschriften" (Stuttgart 86). As a doctor, Wolf's job was to help improve his patients' physical states. As a politically-minded individual, his goal was to improve social well-being. Conrad Felixmüller perceived this relationship when he noted: "Friedrich Wolf war ja Arzt von Beruf, aber er war mehr noch ein Erzieher des Menschen" (7).

Wolf's popular 1928 book of homeopathic medicine Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer is a key to understanding the relationship between Wolf's social, scientific, and artistic activities. By dint of this work being a medical book, both Wolf the doctor and Wolf the writer are naturally in evidence, but his political side is also present. Wolf saw social and environmental factors behind many common diseases (Kubik 88), and in this book he dedicated himself not only to typical medical concerns, but also to matters such as living conditions, child-rearing, work and school (Müller, Dramatiker 186). Wolf saw that societal and medical problems were interrelated and showed how the one set of problems must be changed in order to change the other. In Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer, Wolf not only supported environmental change in order to better the health of the individual, but he also called for change in personal habits: "Ohne Übertreibung: Fünfzig Prozent unserer 'Kulturkrankheiten' kommen 'aus dem Bauch', wurzeln in falscher Ernährung!" (10). Hence, improving the individual and society is a definite focal point in Wolf's artistic, medical, and political work.

Wolf had a deep desire for a new and better future for humanity (Mayer 371), and in much of his written work he served as an advocate for change—often with the ultimate goal of improving both the individual and society. Although this goal of universal improvement remained the same, the method with which he tried to accomplish this end changed. Wolf wrote to Gustav Gerstenberger on October 12, 1916: "*Der Mensch muß sich von Grund auf ändern, nicht die Menschheit!*" (italics in original) (Wolf, Briefe 29). Wolf's earliest, Expressionist, dramas from the late

1910s and the early 1920s, reflected this ideology, "... present[ing] visions of '*Der neue Mensch*,' the individual who was to be 'born again from within' ..." (Fetz 259). The world would change, but this would only come about as a result of the change in the individual (Pollatschek, Bühnenwerk 57; Haarmann and Siebenhaar 116; Mittenzwei 284). By the mid 1920s, Wolf's focus broadened, and with Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer, he sought to change man from both without and within. By the late 1920s he would attempt to change society through his works (Klein 30; Hecht 540), which in turn would result in changing the individual for the better. Wolf kept this belief for decades, stating in 1947: "Ich bin überzeugt, daß nur eine bessere Gesellschaftsordnung 'Brot für alle Menschenkinder' schaffen kann und also auch Lebenssicherheit, Lebensfreude ..." (Ausgewählte XIII: 190). He came to see societal change as a necessity to attain the improvement for the individual instead of the reverse.

This desire for fundamental societal change fit well with his dramatic style, as the theme of revolution had already been prominent in his plays for years. As Alfred Klein notes, Wolf repeatedly explored different possibilities of a change for the world in his early dramas (27). Robert C. Reimer, examining "Revolutionsdramen" from the Weimar Republic, analyzes in depth five of Wolf's plays from this era, almost half of his stage output of this time, as well as the agitprop play Von New York bis Schanghai. Wolf wrote most of the plays Reimer examined before he joined the KPD. Furthermore, Reimer does not mention Das bist du, Wolf's first performed play. This Expressionist drama also features a revolution in the last scene: one of the

unnamed *Wesen* topples the *Ewig-Gleiche*, as a result of which a fire breaks out (Wolf, Gesammelte 1: 111-115), simultaneously destroying and cleansing the entire stage. This “ever-same” society has to be changed in order to end the suffering of the individual (Pollatschek, Bühnenwerk 52). Just by noting the sheer frequency with which the theme of revolution appears in Wolf’s literary work—beginning with his first play almost a decade before he joined the KPD—it quickly becomes clear how important this theme was for Wolf in his dramas.

The theme of revolution was not merely a handy literary tool for Wolf, since he was genuinely interested in revolution and societal change. In 1920, well before joining the Communist party, he published an account of that year’s failed Kapp-Putsch, an analysis of the Russian Revolution, and a poem about the German Revolution in 1918 (Sheppard 283-284). Wolf’s use of the theme of revolution not only in the dramatic genre, but also in verse and analytic prose, demonstrates an importance well beyond that of merely a useful dramatic device and illustrates this theme’s greater significance to Wolf.

Wolf was very active politically. Klaus Hammer notes that it was not only the impetus for change, but also the principle of activity which determined Wolf’s idealism (“Konzepte” 1943). Indeed, though Wolf’s social involvement was more prominent after he joined the KPD, it had been present much earlier. Heinrich Friedemann, a close friend of Wolf’s, remarked upon Wolf’s “serious activist nature” in a 1907 letter preserved in the Friedrich-Wolf-Archiv (Riley 283). Wolf always wanted to be an “... aktiver, teilhabender Chronist und Wegweiser ...”

(Haarmann and Siebenhaar 120). He had been active as a member of the SPD, serving as a Social Democratic representative on the Langebrück *Gemeinderat* in 1919, and speaking for the SPD at a tri-partite (KPD, SPD, and USPD) demonstration in Remscheid in 1920 (Sheppard 283-284; Fey 59). In 1921, he attended an international pacifists' congress in the Netherlands (Pollatschek, *Leben* 70), shortly after which he joined the Barkenhoff commune. Between the end of his disappointing experience at the Barkenhoff and his joining the Communist party, his political involvement diminished, though he did become a member of the "Verein sozialistischer Ärzte" during this time (Neitzert 23). After he joined the KPD however, his political activity increased again. He was very active in his new home Stuttgart, where he not only taught courses in that city's *Marxistische Arbeiterschule* (MASCH) from 1930 until 1932, but he also ran as a KPD candidate for the Stuttgart municipal council in 1931, receiving more than 47,000 votes (*Stuttgart* 161, 259). During the late 1920s and early 1930s, he also began to consistently use his dramatic works for a specific, focused purpose: spreading and strengthening the Communist movement. Under instructions from the KPD, Wolf helped found the *Spieltrupp Südwest* in 1932 (Pollatschek, *Leben* 147), an acting troupe which would go on to perform his agitprop plays near the end of the Weimar Republic. His political involvement did not end when he was forced to leave Germany in 1933, but rather it lasted throughout his life. He helped found the *Nationalkommittee Freies Deutschland*, performed propaganda work for the Soviet Union during the War, and became East Germany's first ambassador to Poland. Political activities were a large

part of Wolf's life for the majority of his adulthood, from World War I until his death in 1953.

The KPD presented a perfect fit for Friedrich Wolf. The Communist movement offered him the opportunity—in fact, it required him—to be politically active. It furthermore gave him the chance to help better both society and the individual. Wolf was liberal politically by the end of World War I, a fact shown by his becoming a member of the SPD in the early days of the Weimar Republic. However, Wolf's disappointment with the Weimar authorities, at least partially due to the government's treatment of members of the Worpswede commune, and his view that a revolution was required necessarily led him to seek another party. The SPD was decidedly not a revolutionary party; it was in fact the party most closely identified with the Weimar Republic (Weitz, Strategies 42), with one of its major deeds during the Weimar Republic being that of holding the “basic unity of the Reich” intact (Maehl 300). Being both a liberal and a revolutionary, the obvious party for Wolf was the KPD, and this party gave him a political focus he had not had before. Using this new political focus, which he spread both as a dramatist and as a lecturer for the KPD, he was able to continue affecting positive change in society as he had long been doing as a medical doctor. With very little thematic change to his dramas, he used his plays for political ends: to help change society by spreading and strengthening the Communist party, actively calling for a revolution that would better the situation of the individual by improving society.

4 Wolf's Authority as Physician and Rhetor

4.1 Difficulties and Changing Demands in Establishing Credibility

When writing the first dramas under investigation here, Wolf could not as yet prove, or he was unable to find a way to represent, extensive experience with the Communist movement and its ideology, as he had not long been in the KPD. Wolf's task in this respect was particularly demanding with Cyankali (1929), the earliest of these dramas. His attempts to write a play about abortion date back prior to his joining the party, and Cyankali was Wolf's third known version after the two unpublished dramas Alltagslegende and § 218 (Merkel 84, 87). Furthermore the possibility existed that the play would not fit in with Communist ideology—a main theme of this play is the call for a change in the abortion law, i.e., a form of evolution instead of revolution. The way Wolf conveyed his medical gave the appearance that he was likewise an expert in Communist theory. Later he was able to establish knowledge more directly, for instance, knowledge of the Communist revolution in the Bay of Cattaro and the socio-economic intricacies in working class China in Die Matrosen von Cattaro and Tai Yang erwacht, respectively.

In terms of his credibility, by the time he wrote Tai Yang erwacht (1930-31), Wolf's persuasive task was much different than it had been previously. He had gained much greater knowledge of the Communist movement and had become more involved in it, even lecturing at the *Marxistische Arbeiterschule* (MASCH) in Stuttgart starting in early 1930 (Stuttgart 161). After the successes of his plays

Cyankali in 1929 and Die Matrosen von Cattaro the following year, the public recognized Wolf as a Communist author (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIV: 42). Inasmuch as Erwin Piscator directed Wolf's play Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf automatically received a boost in credibility within both proletariat and dramatic circles. His credentials as a Communist were becoming more and more visible and impressive, and his fame had grown immensely as well. Wolf relied less on transferring expertise from one field to another—though he still did so to a certain extent—and for a time he expended less rhetorical energy to prove himself in general, as shown by the much abbreviated prefatory material in Die Jungens von Mons and the total lack of such material in Wie stehen die Fronten?. Then, in early 1931, the production of Tai Yang erwacht failed, and Wolf was soon after arrested and imprisoned for allegedly helping women obtain illegal abortions.

By the time he wrote Die Jungens von Mons in late 1931, Wolf was more knowledgeable in both the ideology of Communism and the practical aspects of being a Communist in the Germany of the early 1930s. After his release from prison he was invited to the Soviet Union, where he travelled in Spring 1931, visiting with prominent Soviet artists and with other German Communist artists and writers there.

Wolf's arrest naturally changed his level of credibility as a rhetor for the movement. Being marked by the government as a criminal, as Wolf now was, could negatively affect the way audience members who were aware of his arrest would see him, but an arrest is not solely a negative experience for a social movement persuader or the social movement. The movement receives a boost, as the arrest of a famous

movement persuader not only brings attention to the movement, but is also proof of the repressive nature of the system the movement is attempting to change (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 75). For the movement rhetor himself, an arrest can also be a positive experience, as the public can perceive him as a martyr for his cause. Furthermore, if the arrest is perceived as being politically motivated, it provides proof of Wolf's (and the movement's) efficacy, as an institution would not squander time and resources to arrest a movement rhetor unless the rhetor and the movement were effective (Stewart, "Championing" 101).

The attempt to defame Wolf and Dr. Else Kienle (who was arrested with Wolf for allegedly committing illegal abortions) "... als 'gewerbsmäßige' Abtreiber und Volksmörder 'nach sowjetrussischem Vorgang' ... schlug fehl! Er schlug in das Gegenteil um!" (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIV: 27). For Wolf, his "... highly-publicized arrest gave him him access to a national audience ..." (Riley 333), and it was a positive boon not only because of his increased prominence, but also in terms of credibility. At least in the perceptions of Communist party members, i.e., those who were most likely to be aware of the arrest, he gained in stature as a movement rhetor. Wolf saw his arrest as politically motivated and framed it as such for the public, as shown by the statement—soon afterward included in Wolf's 1931 essay "Sturm gegen § 218: Unser Stuttgarter Prozeß"—which he released from prison:

'1. Ich wünsche, daß der Prozeß so bald wie möglich und in aller Öffentlichkeit geführt wird und daß die Bewegung gegen den Paragraphen 218 als ein *politischer Kampf* eine wirkliche

Volksbewegung werde, aber nicht um meine Person, sondern um die Sache.

2. Ich bekenne mich rückhaltlos zur Kommunistischen Partei.

3. Meine marxistische Weltanschauung, wonach alle politischen und gesellschaftlichen Vorgänge aus wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Ursachen bedingt sind, veranlaßt mich, diese Stellung konsequent einzuhalten' (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIV: 7-8).

Wolf's depiction of his arrest as politically motivated was successful: a critic from the late 1940s would say that Wolf was imprisoned for his subversive ideas, not mentioning the putative crime of providing abortions at all (Neveux 428). The case against Wolf never came to trial, although the action remained active until January 1933 and would later be reinstated after he had fled Germany (Stuttgart 246; Pollatschek, Biographie 148).

It was particularly the nature of his alleged offences which helped Wolf gain increased credibility, certainly within the Communist movement and likely outside the movement as well. If, as he claimed, he was innocent of the crime of helping women have abortions, then the state was harrasing an innocent man for purely political motives. If, however, Wolf did provide abortions, then he had the courage of his convictions, breaking what he perceived as an unjust law in order to help poor women, at the risk of his reputation and personal freedom. By arresting Wolf, the Weimar government established his credibility as a Communist as well as—or even better than—he could have done for himself, helping spread his fame and ideology

and producing quite the opposite of the desired effect of stifling him. Because of the arrest, Wolf became an even more prominent figure in the Communist movement and would therefore have a much easier time convincing people of his credibility as a speaker for the movement. Ulf-Rüdiger Sacksofsky attributed the failure of Tai Yang erwacht in 1931 to the political conditions of this time (93), one in which the right was rapidly gaining substantial ground and therefore strongly pro-Communist plays, writers and directors were increasingly driven from the professional stage.

Sacksofsky further notes that the reviews of the production and the play itself were generally negative (164). Taken in light of Wolf's arrest however, the failure of Tai Yang erwacht would also be more readily seen as the government's attempt to quash the spread of Wolf's (and Piscator's) supposedly dangerous ideas. Likewise, the arrest could be seen as retribution for the anti-authoritarian attacks in his earlier plays, and specifically Cyankali, the drama with which Wolf took an aggressive stand against the anti-abortion law *Paragraph 218*. Despite his renown, Wolf continued to supply at least some proof of his competence to address the subject of social change to those who did not know his history or his earlier works.

Wolf clearly knew the need to provide evidence of his authority, and he often used statistics and sources to do so. In Die Jungens von Mons, he showed a character who used a number of facts in order to bolster his credibility. Miller, as secretary of the trade unions, visits the industrialists Ramsbotton and Craik. He comes to the meeting armed with his statistics:

MILLER: Wir unterstützen gerechte Forderungen unserer Mitglieder.

– Meine Herren, Sie haben die Tarife gekündigt, Sie wünschen die Löhne im jetzigen Zeitpunkt zu senken; ist das möglich? *Zieht ein Notizbuch, feierlich:* Meine Herren! Es kommen auf den sogenannten “Durchschnittsmann” – auf den Bergarbeiter mit 0,8 Frauen und 3,4 Kindern – im Jahre 1914 etwa 6,34 Schilling Lohn, 1928 dagegen 6,85 Schilling...

RAMSBOTTON: Na also.

MILLER *feierlich:* Der Lebensmittelindex dagegen ist in der gleichen Zeit um volle dreiundfünfzig Prozent gestiegen, von hundert auf hundertdreiundfünfzig; demnach beträgt der Reallohn...

RAMSBOTTON: Reallohn, Index... erzählen Sie uns doch keine Märchen! Nehmen Sie vielleicht zur Kenntnis, daß unser Syndikat in den letzten Jahren über achtzig Millionen in Neuanlagen und Kokereien investiert hat, bloß um den Arbeitern ihre Lebensbasis zu erweitern... (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 226-227).

Miller’s reading from his notebook is reminiscent of the speaker at the beginning of the first scene who reads the newspaper. The act of reading from a source—even if it is self-written—gives Miller’s statistics the appearance of truth just as it does with the speaker and his paper. Showing written documentation—as Miller does here, as Dr. Möller does in Cyankali, as Franz does in Die Matrosen von Cattaro—is important on two levels: from the author to the play’s audience, and from character to character

within the play. Not only is Wolf doing this to appear truthful to the audience in his argument, but also Miller is consciously doing so in order to appear knowledgeable to Ramsbotton and Craik. This is clear proof of Wolf's knowledge and use of the authority-enhancing effect of the outside resources he provided in these plays. Miller is aided in the above attempt to establish his knowledge by the precise figures he uses to place his argument, as is Wolf in his concurrent attempt to convince his audience of his credibility and the correctness of the Communist movement.

Wolf also provided proof and arguments for his expertise outside the realm of his plays. For instance, he gave extensive lectures and radio addresses on birth control and abortion, and he wrote the essay "Zur Sache" in which he gave current abortion statistics (Riley 331, 312; Abusch 261). Such lectures and speeches furthered the cause against the abortion law *Paragraph 218* and established his credibility as a writer on the topic, as he did in Cyankali.

These efforts were warranted, as becomes apparent from a survey of the criticism of this play. As Robert Reimer notes: "The critics of [the Weimar] period judged plays not so much on their merit as art and entertainment as on the political philosophy they contained" (149), and—intentionally or not—the press often revealed their political leanings to the extent that they helped establish Wolf as an authority. Wolf used his expertise as a medical doctor to affect the perception of his expertise in Cyankali, as will be discussed shortly, and this tactic to prove his authority clearly worked: Kimberley Page Riley notes that "Wolf's professional work as a doctor was frequently cited in the reviews of 'Cyankali' as proof of the truth and persuasive

power of the play” (281). One notices that the critics perform a similar function, either positively or negatively: whether or not the reviewer mentioned Wolf’s medical expertise in reviews of Cyankali often corresponded with the reviewer’s opinion of the play. In Cyankali (§218) von Friedrich Wolf: Eine Dokumentation, Emmi Wolf and Klaus Hammer collect, among other documents, almost thirty reviews of this play from Weimar Germany. In explaining the criteria for their set of selections, Wolf and Hammer recount that many Weimar reviews were unavailable to them because many magazines were burned in the Second World War and they state that:

Die Herausgeber beschränkten sich auf zeitgenössische Kritiken, journalistische Kommentare und Broschüren, die im Tageskampf erschienen sind, und verzichteten auf wissenschaftliche Arbeiten. Manche Beiträge wurden gekürzt, um allzu häufige Wiederholungen von Besetzungslisten und Inhaltsangaben zu vermeiden, andere nur teilweise wiedergegeben, wenn der Gesamtbeitrag über den Gegenstand unseres Bandes hinausging (483).

While noting these limitations inherent in such a necessarily incomplete selection, one does discern a clear pattern. In the reviews presented there exists a distinct correlation between the reviewers’ opinion of the play and whether they noted that Wolf was a doctor. This subtle, perhaps even unconscious, means of framing Wolf as an expert (or not) on the subject of abortion holds up equally well for both positive and negative reviews of the play: whereas reviewers agreeable to the play tended to

mention Wolf's medical credentials, negative reviewers rarely did so. Of the twenty-two positive Weimar-era reviews of Cyankali supplied (excluding the five "Arbeiter als Theaterkritiker" reviews from the *Rote Fahne*), seventeen note that he was a doctor. Indeed, the number of positive reviews mentioning this fact repeatedly is higher than the number of positive reviews not remarking on it at all. Ludwig Marcuse goes so far as to give a brief biographical sketch of Wolf, providing his credentials as a doctor, patriot, worker and dramatist (228). The *Rote Fahne*'s Alfred Durus is, not surprisingly, the most explicit in presenting Wolf as an expert: "Der Autor, Friedrich Wolf, als Kassenarzt und früherer Stadtarzt im Ruhrgebiet, kennt die Schmach des § 218 aus der Praxis" (133). Of the six who gave Cyankali a negative review, four made no mention of Wolf as a medical doctor and a fifth only intimated any medical connection, calling Cyankali "Wieder eine Ärzteattacke gegen den Paragraphen 218 ..." (159). Only one of six negative reviews states clearly that Wolf was a physician. The positive reviewers are well over twice as likely statistically to note that he was a medical doctor, which in turn gives his opinions extra credibility on the topic of abortion. The negative reviewers tend not to mention the medical expertise which would help validate his ideas and enhance his credibility.

4.2 Accurate Depiction of the Working Class

As a dramatist, Wolf establishes his credibility and reliability in large measure by creating a realistic depiction of the working class people, their surroundings, and their problems. Having his plays appear faithful to reality not only furthers their

emotional—and therefore their persuasive—capacity, but it also establishes Wolf as an authority in matters of this social class: he must know these people and the way they live if he can accurately depict how they act and how they are affected by the pressures of society. A convincingly realistic portrayal of the working class also demonstrates artistic skill, especially in a *Neue Sachlichkeit* work. Wolf believed that political art has to be good art in order to effectively convey the political message; he states in “Kunst ist Waffe:” “... ein Arbeiterstück, *gerade dies*, muß ‘*gekonnt*’ sein! Es muß mit einem Wort *gut* sein! Kein gutgemeinter gefärbter Schmarren, sondern ein so blutvolles und zugleich *gut-gekonntes* Werk wie Eisensteins ‘Potemkin’. Ein solches Werk wirft auch den Gegner um, haut hausbreite Breschen!” (italics in original) (Ausgewählte XIII: 162).

The social accuracy of Cyankali was widely counted among its greatest strengths, and several contemporary reviews accepted the play as a “literal reproduction of reality” (Riley 279). Even those opposed to the political content, such as the critic from the Catholic Rhein-Main-Zeitung had to admit “... daß Friedrich Wolf nicht nur ein ehrlicher, von seiner Sache überzeugter Mensch, sondern ... auch ein mitreißender Dichter ist. Sein Werk trägt den Stempel der Echtheit ...” (Pollatschek, Bühnenwerk 339).

A large part of Wolf’s realistic depiction has to do with the characters’ dialogue. Wolf’s faculty for writing realistic dialect speech was well established by the time he wrote Cyankali; the language in Der arme Konrad helped convince at least one critic (Karl Holl) that Wolf had been born and raised in Swabia

(Pollatschek, Bühnenwerk 328) and one critic similarly believed that the songs Wolf wrote for that play dated back to the time of the play's setting over four centuries earlier (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 357). The working class characters in Cyankali not only have a language that is noticeably true to their social class, but each different character has a distinctive manner of speaking (Pollatschek, Bühnenwerk 133). However, Wolf had to be careful with his use of language. If it was not correct, the working class people he was trying to depict would view Wolf as an outsider, an interloper, or simply a “phony” and they would be repelled from both the rhetor and the rhetoric.

Wolf also depicts the class leanings of the other characters by their type of speech. For instance, the police inspector (*Kriminalkommissar*) in Cyankali only appears in the play's last scene, but his manner of speaking easily reveals that his political sentiments do not lie with the lower class. His language is different from all of the other characters in this play; with the exception of the *Dame*, an upper-class woman, his is the only language that never once deviates from the standard. His language is official, standard German which is barely—if at all—colored by any dialect. After he finds Mutter Fent, he explains why he has come: “Frau Fent! Es sind im Laufe des gestrigen Tages Gerüchte zu uns gedrungen, die sich zu einer Anzeige verdichtet haben: Es soll in Ihrer Wohnung ein Verbrechen wider den §218, ein Verbrechen wider das keimende Leben begangen worden sein...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 338). This is not merely a typical, procedural form of speech he uses as an explanation when he arrives at a new location; the police inspector consistently

talks in this formal, even stilted, manner during his time onstage, indicating a bond to authority (the elite class) and an indifference to the lower class.

Two other dramas from this era have Germany as a setting, Wie stehen die Fronten? and Bauer Baetz. Both are agitprop plays. Accuracy of language must prove particularly important in agitprop work. The minimal visual stimuli, due to agitprop's inherent lack of extensive stage setting, forces the audience to focus on the language. The agitprop audience will furthermore be predominantly working class, and would therefore notice mistakes in language usage. Wolf provided fine class-specific dialogue in both these works. Wolf's use of colloquial language even extends to an alternate title of the earlier play, Wie stehn die Fronten?, a title used by Wolf both in his essays and letters, as well as by later scholars (cf. Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 29; Wolf, Briefe 145; Pfützner 7; Ko 187; Merkel 184).

The nature of the remaining dramas made it more difficult for Wolf to establish authority and knowledge through the accurate use of the language of lower class characters. The main characters are indeed from the working class in most of these plays, but as they are from different countries, Wolf could hardly present these in their original tongues. Even if Wolf had used a typical Austrian dialect for Die Matrosen von Cattaro, three very possible results would be that the audience would find the language amusing, disturbing, or even unintelligible. Wolf instead uses a conventional lower class German dialect to represent the lower classes of any society: an obvious, but also very sound, choice in view of the fact that the setting for these plays was in fact clearly meant to represent conditions in the contemporary Germany

of the late 1920s and early 1930s. He does, however, use isolated English words or expressions in Die Jungens von Mons, Italian among the stranded explorers in “Krassin” rettet “Italia”, and he uses German and Italian side by side as he has one group of the protesters yell “Hunger! Hunger!” while others cry “Fame, Fame!” in Die Matrosen von Cattaro (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 44). But Wolf likely used these foreign words and expressions mainly as local color or to support other themes in his plays.

Another way in which Wolf establishes credibility through language appears in the first scene of Die Matrosen von Cattaro. The *Leutnant* uses the phrase “Backen und Banken” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 20), which exhibited Wolf’s knowledge of sailor jargon. The same phrase appears again in the play (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 43, 55), although the theatergoers will be unaware of it, as it appears only in the stage directions. Sascha Kiefer notes that some of the maritime language Wolf uses in this play was taken from earlier literary sources, such as Jack London’s Seewolf or B. Traven’s Das Totenschiff (183), but such knowledge could also have been partially acquired through experiences Wolf claimed to have had at sea in his youth and early adulthood in his 1931 essay “Wie ich zur revolutionären Arbeiterschaft kam” (Ausgewählte XIV: 40). Using this sailor terminology, whether gained at sea or read in other literary works, helps Wolf establish his credibility: if the audience sees, hears, or reads something in a play which reflects knowledge of specialized terminology, belief in the truthfulness of the play and its creator increases.

Wolf rarely used this technique of establishing credibility through the use of professional jargon in other plays. For instance, he had displayed no particular naval knowledge in his prior work, the radio play "Krassin" rettet "Italia", despite the prominence given the ship "Krassin" and its crew. Furthermore, Wolf knew what it was like to be a military man like the sailors in Die Matrosen von Cattaro and the soldiers in Die Jungens von Mons, having served in the army in World War I. More importantly for the latter play, Wolf knew what it was like to be an ex-soldier forgotten by the state, an experience gained during his tenure at the Worpswede commune, where he lived and worked for several months in 1921, and to which the government had offered support but did not follow up on that promise (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 85, 86, Neitzert 21,23). Yet he showed his knowledge sparingly, as when it comes to the language that his characters use in Die Jungens von Mons: for instance, when Captain Campell recalls, or pretends to recall, the slogan "Sturmriemen lang!" from the days in Mons (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 230).

Wolf does not in any way indicate that he himself had been both a soldier and a sailor in the prefatory material for Die Matrosen von Cattaro. Doing so would convince the audience of his authority in this area, as he had done by indirectly establishing that he was a doctor in the earlier Cyankali. Granted, Wolf became a much better known personality after the success of this play than before it became well-known. However, more people would have known him as a doctor before Cyankali than as a former military man before Die Matrosen von Cattaro or Die Jungens von Mons, as he had previously published his popular book on homeopathic

medicine, Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer. Despite not specifically letting the audience know he was a former sailor and soldier, he did on occasion demonstrate his knowledge of these men's lifestyles through the use of their particular jargons.

Lastly, Wolf was writing about topics which suited not only his own interests, but also those of his potential audience. His starting point was to work with familiar facts and reality, and he sought themes which were already of interest to the public (Klatt 318, 355). Several authors treated the themes of "§218," sailor's uprisings, and China around this time (Stuttgart 19). Credé's §218 – Gequälte Menschen and Rehfish's Der Frauenarzt for instance were produced at roughly the same time as Wolf's Cyankali, while Plivier's Des Kaisers Kulis and Toller's Feuer aus den Kesseln appeared around the time of Die Matrosen von Cattaro. The Chinese Revolution had also appeared repeatedly on German stages (Rühle, Republik 1062)—the agitprop Hände weg von China and Tretjakov's Roar China both being major successes (Richardson 129)—when Wolf produced his China plays. Even Die Jungens von Mons shared with Zuckmayer's Hauptmann von Köpenick the theme of a poor person disguising her/himself as a military man in order to survive.

Wolf knew the value of public interest for the financial and the political success of the play. Public interest in the plays' topics would naturally attract the audience to the play itself. It would also reinforce Wolf's authority as a rhetor—not only for the social causes in these plays, but also for the Communist movement—if the audience had the same political outlook as Wolf, or if they had read the works Wolf quoted in his introduction to the play. However, if a member of the audience

thought him- or herself better informed than Wolf on these subjects, or if he or she simply were not of the same mind as the author, that person could be disinclined to Wolf and his persuasive work, much the same as if the person could see flaws in Wolf's use of dialect for different social classes. At the very least however, Wolf was getting his views across to a public obviously interested in the topics of abortion and social conditions. When the views espoused were perceived as well reasoned, Wolf's credibility rose and the possibility of his convincing his public increased significantly.

4.3 Sources and Statistics

4.3.1 Proving Knowledge of the Topic

In all four stage plays and in Bauer Baetz, Wolf uses some form of prefatory material, be it the reference to newspaper articles in Die Jungens von Mons—which is re-delivered in a more expansive form at the beginning of the play itself—or the book and newspaper excerpts and statistics at the beginning of Cyankali. Wolf was clearly influenced by Erwin Piscator's Documentary Theater, which used factual evidence to convey a message (Innes 78-79). It is not coincidental that the first stage play in which Wolf used a collection of facts and quotes to verify his claims, is the first one, Cyankali, which he wrote as a Communist rhetor. Simply providing this factual material lends these plays veracity. Aristotle notes in his Poetics that: "... we are disinclined to believe that what has not happened is possible, but it is obvious that what has happened is possible – because it would not have happened if it were not" (16). Establishing credibility is clearly important for Wolf not only as a dramatist,

but also as a social movement rhetor. The act of demonstrating proof, even the “illusion of proof,” is often important for a rhetor, especially at times when a society or audience has developed some sophistication and understanding of persuasion and is “... inoculated against the more flagrant persuasive devices,” such as “... name calling, card-stacking, [and] the glittering generality ...” (Baskerville 237).

Furthermore, Wolf often cites his sources to prove they are not his own invention. One can indeed verify the existence of many, if not all, of these reports. Of the several sources the author of this dissertation was able to find, he was unable to verify Wolf’s claim in only one instance: in Das neue China und seine sozialen Kämpfe, the overabundance of numbers and percentages made it impossible for this author to either prove or disprove Wolf’s statistics. Other works available however, fully bear out Wolf’s claims. He renders his quotes verbatim or with only minor changes of little significance. Even the translation from the English-language “Chinese Economic Journal” is reasonable and legitimate. The statistics and sources that Wolf presents, many of which appear in the foreword, serve many tasks and strengthen the impact of these plays. In a letter from 1933 to the Theatre Union in New York regarding a possible production of Professor Mamlock, Wolf stated:

Statt der Zwischenszenen können Sie die Tatsachen des Manuskripts nehmen, die offiziellen deutschen Zeitungen entstammen, und sie mit exakten Erscheinungsdaten der Zeitungen auf den Vorhang projizieren. Man kann uns dann nicht vorwerfen, daß wir übertrieben,

gefälscht und phantastische “Greuelpropaganda” betrieben hätten
(Briefwechsel 259).

It is possible that he wrote these lines as a response to charges of lying and exaggeration in his plays from 1929 to 1932. Nonetheless, it is clear that by 1933 he was concerned by the possibility of such accusations. His proposed action to defend himself and his work against these types of possible charges was to bring in facts from official German newspapers and provide the exact date of their publications. As this was also an action he had started using with Cyankali, his first political drama as a member of the Communist party, one can more easily believe that he used these facts and sources in order to verify the credibility of his drama and of himself as a social movement rhetor in subsequent years.

In Cyankali's foreword (1929), Wolf quotes reports from three newspapers which recount three different cases in which, Wolf implicitly argues, the German anti-abortion law resulted in harm to individuals and entire families. Wolf's quoting from three different newspapers, especially as they were newspapers from two different parts of Germany, demonstrates a competence on the subject of abortion that goes beyond the incidental. After the three newspaper stories, Wolf quotes “Berichterstatter Lönne im Preußischen Landesgesundheitsamt” from 1928, providing state figures on abortions in Germany, showing that Wolf also has more than merely anecdotal information on which to base his arguments, using official statistics along with concrete cases. The figures from this report and the newspaper stories complement each other, giving both a greater impact than they would have alone.

The fifth and last item quoted in the foreword comes from Margaret Sanger's book Zwangsmutterschaft: a "Brief einer New Yorker Arbeiterin 1928 an die Fürsorgerin von New York, Margaret Sanger ..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 272). Quoting this translated American book shows that his knowledge of the abortion issue goes well beyond the German national borders, thereby firmly establishing his expertise in this field.

These reports are clearly an important part of his rhetorical effort. Wolf cites these sources largely, if not solely, for the purpose of making himself appear knowledgeable and truthful, and by extension lending his play and rhetoric credibility and veracity. Naturally, for the quoted reports he placed in this foreword of Cyankali, Wolf chose those which would best convey his message. Furthermore, instead of a chronological organization, he ordered his quoted sources in a certain way for his audience to read, either in print (in a copy of the play or in a theater program) or via some staging technique. Wolf wanted them to see these particular reports in this particular order. The order Wolf created started by showing a need for information on the topic of birth control, followed by emotional episodes and factual information in order to show the severity of the problems caused by the anti-abortion law. The conclusion of this section once again demonstrates the need to inform the public, and it provides comments which indirectly lead the audience to discover that Wolf is a medical doctor, and therefore someone who is qualified to fill the need of providing that information.

The first report, which comes from the June 26, 1928 “Berliner Tageblatt,” concerns a woman who threw her two babies into the Spree River and was stopped by passers-by from doing the same to her three older children. ““Dr. Alice Vollnhals, die Leiterin der Schwangerenfürsorge der Krankenkassen Berlins ...”” deems this an act of desperation and calls for ““... Geburtenregelung im weitesten Sinne des Wortes, Zerstörung der Unwissenheit in diesen Dingen!”” (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 271). With this quote, Wolf presents the facts of the matter alongside a learned opinion. He includes Dr. Vollnhals’ title and credentials, thereby proving the authority of her opinions. By placing this news story as the first words the reader reads or an audience is exposed to, Wolf places himself in the position of filling some of the gaps noted by Dr. Vollnhals inasmuch as Wolf’s play is informing, i.e., “destroying the ignorance” of, the audience about the tragic consequences of the lack of birth control in Germany throughout the rest of the foreword and in his play. This in turn places Wolf in the role of an educator as well as an expert.

The second story, from the May 21, 1929 “Schwäbische Tagwacht,” is that of a seventeen-year-old girl who died under suspicious circumstances. An examination of the body revealed that an illegal abortion had been attempted, and furthermore, the girl’s mother was arrested on suspicion of helping her in this attempt. This story is useful in combination with the third one, which Wolf quotes from the March 1, 1929 “Süddeutsche Arbeiterzeitung.” This story reports of a pregnant woman who died “nach schwerem Todeskampf” after an abortion attempt with the poison potassium cyanide (*Cyankali*) (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 271). The latter two stories together

present the consequences of illegal abortion, whereas the first one presents another desperate consequence of the lack of available birth control. Wolf also uses the second and third stories to support the veracity of the plot of Cyankali. They show that events in the play, such as a mother being arrested for helping her daughter have an abortion, the use of potassium cyanide for abortion and deaths due to its usage in fact do occur.

Even if Wolf is presenting an extreme case in this play, the case is well within the realm of possibility, as the statistics of his fourth quote establish: “Der 45. Deutsche Ärztetag in Eisenach schätzt die Zahl der jährlichen Abtreibungen in Deutschland auf 500 000 bis 800 000, darunter 10 000 Todesfälle und 50 000 Erkrankungen. ‘Man rechnet in Deutschland jährlich mit 50 000 Erkrankungen nach Fehlgeburten’” (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 271-272). This quote, which Wolf had previously cited in his “Kunst ist Waffe” speech and his medical book Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer, is the first instance of Wolf bringing material from the prologue into the body of one of his dramas, and he later repeated such prefatory material, either as statistical information or in a dramatized form in the body of other plays as well, perhaps most notably in Tai Yang erwacht (1930). Apart from the sheer value of the numbers in their own right, which show the human consequences of the abortion law, the statistical figures serve another function. Their presence in the foreword proves that Wolf is not simply manufacturing statistics for the play. These figures are presented four times in the play by three different characters. In the second scene, Kuckuck, the newspaper vendor, is the first character to bring these statistics into the

play. Kuckuck is a useful figure for Wolf, because this newspaper salesman "... repeats his statistics ... as interesting facts in themselves ..." (Riley 319). He allows Wolf to bring various pieces of information into the play in an unforced way: the audience can accept that Kuckuck is a talkative news agent who likes to tell other people what he has read in the newspapers and magazines he sells. This character allows Wolf to easily bring "Imposante Zahlen, was, tolle Zahlen ..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 291) into Cyankali. Another character, Dr. Möller is also able to bring these statistics onto the page and stage in a natural way. When Hete, the play's working class protagonist whose downfall is caused by the abortion law, requests his help in the fourth scene, he reads the *Paragraph 218* to her from the German penal code, the *Strafgesetzbuch*, as a means of rebuffing her request. Wolf's set-up for Dr. Möller to use these statistics and the utterances of Kuckuck were cleverly constructed inasmuch as they allow Wolf to bring facts and figures into the body of the play without breaking the dramatic illusion. While Wolf would slowly increase his use of epic means, he used them only sparsely in this play. By not "alienating" his audience, he makes Hete's downfall more emotionally, and thus persuasively, effective.

In an exchange between the Doctor and Paul, the abortion statistics are repeated twice in the final scene. Repetition is clearly vital when providing information to an audience, and this information was important to Wolf not only in his representation of the abortion problem, but also in demonstrating his knowledge on the subject. Having his characters provide these statistics several times for different purposes impresses them on the mind of the audience and also re-affirms

Wolf as an expert and further lends credibility to the conditions and actions depicted in the play. The audience could see that Wolf was clearly well-informed on the problem of abortion from many sides, knowing abortion statistics, the personal side of abortion, and the language of the abortion law itself.

The fifth quote from the foreword—from Sanger’s book—brings several issues in terms of the play’s theme to the fore. The letter Wolf chose from Zwangsmutterschaft states: “Ich verstehe nicht, daß die armen arbeitenden Menschen ein so schreckliches Leben führen müssen, während die Reichen, die Kinder haben können, entweder keine oder nur ein paar haben” (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 272). Wolf was not, of course, the first person to see the connection between poverty and the birth control problem in the 1920s, nor even the first prominent author; the writer and neurologist Alfred Döblin, for instance, had stressed in early 1928 the class aspect of “Paragraph 218,” noting that it mainly affected working class women (Rühle, Republik 956). In Cyankali, Wolf likewise depicts abortion as a class problem, not only in the body of the play—especially in the fourth scene where the upper class *Dame* gets her desired abortion and the lower class Hete does not—but even here in the foreword. Wolf also presents this quote as a challenge to his audience to which he responds in the play. The letter continues: “... Ich wollte, ich könnte mich auf die Dächer stellen und den armen Frauen verkünden, was sie tun müssen” (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 272). Wolf’s writing of the play thus functions as a response to a call, inasmuch as this passage—along with the first report—depicts the act of informing the public as a necessity. Because he is responding to the calls of

others, his bias is to some degree mitigated. Wolf also shows that the problem of abortion is an international one, inasmuch as the book he quotes from was written in the United States. In turn, the Deutsche Verlagsanstalt's 1929 publication of Rudolf Nutt's translation of Sanger's book underscores the relevance of the abortion problem in Germany: it would hardly be necessary if there were not a problem in Germany as well. Those familiar with the book Zwangsmutterschaft likely knew that its foreword was written by "Dr. med. Friedrich Wolf," which reconfirms his knowledge on the subject as a physician. His mention of Sanger's book also serves as publicity for it, which could further the commitment of the reader against the anti-abortion law.

As alluded to above, arguably the single most important proof of Wolf's expertise on the subject of abortion is the simple fact that he was a practicing medical doctor. Even a negative reviewer of Cyankali such as Franz Servaes remarks that Wolf's opinion on this matter was relevant because he worked in the medical field: "Was er als Arzt aus seinem Erfahrungskreise dagegen zu sagen hat, wird stets anhörens-wert sein und mag der Regierung und dem Parlament zur Erwägung anheimgestellt werden" (Wolf and Hammer 128). Members of the audience could also recognize in the name Friedrich Wolf both the author of this anti-abortion play and of the successful book of homeopathic medicine Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer (1928). Wolf once again indirectly points to his profession in the preface of Cyankali inasmuch as he uses the provocative question "Da können Sie noch Arzt sein?" – which stems from the play's fourth scene – as the introductory motto (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 269). By placing this question before the play, Wolf not only points a

disparaging finger at the play's Dr. Möller and other self-serving and duplicitous doctors like him, but also recalls that Wolf himself is a doctor and therefore an expert on medical matters such as abortion—an expert who finds the birth control situation at that time to be untenable. Furthermore, in view of the conditions quoted in the preface, this question directs attention to his medical obligation to try to bring about a positive change.

In his play Die Matrosen von Cattaro (1930), Wolf also demonstrates a clear understanding of the political circumstances within the body of the drama. As in Cyankali, he again uses a newspaper during the play to establish both background and his authority when Franz brings a copy of the “Arbeiterzeitung” on board to inform the others about the strikes in Austria and even in Germany. Franz presents the demands of the strikers, and when Mate asks what the government says, Franz answers “Graf Czernin erklärt: ‘Ich hafter dafür, daß der Friede nicht an Eroberungsabsichten scheitern wird!’ Zugleich aber stellt er die ‘Arbeiterzeitung’ unter verschärfte Zensur; er verbietet sie für Heer und Marine...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 15). Inasmuch he presents Franz as his surrogate, a bringer of knowledge to the masses, and depicts as untrustworthy the government in societies whose primary tenets are class and gain, Wolf shows clear familiarity with the political situation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the end of the First World War. Further proof appears when his characters talk about the cut-backs in rations in Vienna, while Wolf's naval knowledge comes to the fore when the sailors discuss how their cannons have a range three kilometers shorter than those of the British Navy.

In Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf once again demonstrates his mastery of the topic at hand before the play begins. Wolf provided "... many details about China with great factual accuracy, indicating that he knew a lot about that country ..." (Berg-Pan 209). Hence, Arthur Eloesser's criticism cited earlier (2.3)—"Herr Friedrich Wolf weiß von China nicht mehr als ich; und das ist leider sehr wenig"—is erroneous. The production Eloesser saw was Erwin Piscator's world premiere of the play in which:

... Die Schauspieler kommen – in Zivil als "Schauspieler" – auf die Bühne, schminken sich, sprechen von ihrem Alltag, der auch der Alltag des Publikums ist, von den politischen Tagesereignissen, die sie erregen und die auch die politischen Tagesereignisse der Zuschauer sind – und ganz allmählich, während sie sich schminken und kostümieren, leitet ihr Gespräch zu den Ereignissen in China über (Pollatschek, Bühnenwerk 150).

Eloesser's concern that the purportedly Chinese characters seem too German is at best misguided, as Wolf meant the actions in this play to be a reflection of contemporary Germany, a fact which Piscator clearly underscored in this production by emphasizing that the people onstage were not Chinese but Germans.

Nonetheless, Wolf furthermore proves factual knowledge of the Chinese political and economic situation both in the foreword and in the body of the play. In the play's foreword, consisting of material he gathered in 1930 and 1931, Wolf presents statistical figures on the economic conditions in China:

Mao Chi-chun schätzt nach den Gewerkschaftslisten die Zahl der Arbeiter von Schanghai auf 800 000. (“Chinese Economic Journal” Bd. III, Seite 921, 1928.)

Ein Bericht des Munizipalrats von Schanghai stellt fest, daß in den Fabriken der Stadt 168 885 Kinder tätig sind. (Col Malone, Das neue China und seine sozialen Kämpfe, Berlin 1928.) (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 97).

There are several advantages to presenting these statistics in this manner. First, Wolf’s citing of these other works as references lets the audience realize that he is not just inventing these figures. Numbers can often be easily manipulated, especially by political writers, and by this time Wolf was well-known as a dramatist with prominent political leanings. By quoting his sources, he forestalls any potential criticism of falsifying numbers and gives the necessary impression of neutrality and expertise. The audience, seeing that he has done research, can much more easily believe that he is an authority in this field. Wolf presents further statistics for his readers and for a stage production during the foreword, providing information about wages and the minimum cost of living in China:

Die Löhne einer Weberei in Hankau (Provinz Hupeh) betragen 1928 im Durchschnitt täglich 30 Cent = monatlich 9 mexikanische Dollar = 18,— Mark im Monat. Die Regierungsberichte im “Economic Bulletin” Bd. XII, 1928, über die Streiks in Schanghai im Jahre 1928

geben Monatslöhne von 2,25 bis 4,50 Dollar = 4,50 bis 9,— Mark Monatslohn an... für elfstündige Arbeit in den Betrieben.

Dabei erträgt nach den genau spezifizierten Berechnungen Tsos in “Present Labor Conditions in China” das Existenzminimum einer mittleren Arbeiterfamilie 30 mexikanische Dollar = 60,— Mark (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 97-98).

With these statistics, Wolf shows that a weaver, like the ones in Tai Yang erwacht, receives a wage which is only a fraction of the *Existenzminimum* for an average-sized working class family in Shanghai. With even the highest estimate given above (nine marks per month), a family would need to have seven people working simple in order to survive. These statistics clearly condemn wage-givers for not providing a fair wage to their workers, and these numbers also supply the reason why children make up almost a quarter of the working population in Shanghai.

After presenting the initial statistics on the number of children working in Shanghai, Wolf shows the reasons behind them with the wage statistics, dividing the two sections by a large “WARUM?” capitalized and set off by spacing from the other sections (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 97). He provides the reason behind what he considers a problem, then gives the solution. In this respect, the foreword of Tai Yang erwacht is similar to that of Cyankali. In Cyankali's foreword, he showed the existence of a void to be filled or posed a question to be answered—to inform the public about the problems with the abortion law and the state of birth control—which he did in the body of the play. In Tai Yang erwacht, he provides the answers immediately.

As the foreword comes to an end, Wolf quotes a short summation from a newspaper report about the financial situation of the workers in China: “Agnes Smedley kommt in einem Bericht zu dem Ergebnis: ‘Die chinesischen Arbeiter erhalten nicht einmal genug Lohn für ihren nackten Lebensunterhalt.’ (‘Frankfurter Zeitung’ vom 16. Januar 1930.)” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 98). Everything is recapitulated, and the conclusion which Wolf positioned the audience to draw for themselves is verified. Furthermore, taken together, the works he quotes in his preface demonstrate an extensive knowledge of the economic situation of the people in China. He not only has the German version of the story which is available in the “Frankfurter Zeitung,” but also has delved into works with foreign titles such as the “Chinese Economic Journal” or L’outré d’Ecole [sic]. The international breadth of Wolf’s research should impress upon the audience his knowledge of the subject.

Along with his extensive prefatory material in Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf provided numerous facts and figures within the body of the play, interweaving them into the text. In fact, most of the statistics given in the foreword find their way into the play proper, and having these figures and situations repeated by various characters on stage reinforces the effect of the foreword, provided that the prefatory material was reproduced for the production. In the first scene of this play, he describes his family’s financial situation:

FENG: ... Die Mädchen verdienen jedes dreißig bis vierzig Cent den Tag, beide zusammen also achtzehn mexikanische Dollar im Monat.

TOCKY *ebenfalls mit Notizbuch*: Sehen Sie, Miß Lund, das
Existenzminimum dieser Leute stellt einen gewissen Rekord der
Armut dar (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 110).

This dialogue provides a direct link to the foreword with references to Mexican dollars and “Existenzminimum.” Tocky’s reaction to these numbers also mirrors the Agnes Smedley quote which concludes the foreword. Similarly, when Ma tells of her scalded hands in both the first and second scenes, it reminds the reader and potentially the theater audience of another of Wolf’s quotes from the foreword: “‘...Den jungen Arbeiterinnen verbrüht man, wenn sie einen Faden zerreißen, die Hände mit kochendem Wasser’ (‘L’outré d’Ecole [sic], Seite 446.)” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 98). The foreword also mentions babies and small children being in the factories close by the machines, and Wolf depicts this in the body of the play when Han picks up her baby out of a little basket and feeds him. Beatings mentioned in the foreword are also evident in the play. Thus, Wolf uses three different means of bringing the information from the foreword into the main body of the play. With Feng and Tocky, Wolf brings the statistics into the play almost unchanged. With Ma’s scalded hands, Wolf transfers quotes from the foreword into the character’s personal experience. This is more immediate and emotional to the audience than hearing numbers. Even more immediate than the character’s telling about abuse is Wolf’s depiction of Han nursing her baby and the beatings Han and Hai receive for talking instead of working. The audience at the play’s production was thus actually exposed to the information from the foreword, as it was portrayed in action onstage.

In the seventh scene, Tai makes the following exclamation after the Communist worker Peer mentions that ninety per cent of the workers in the factories are women, implying that they will be little or no help because of their sex:

TAI *erregt*: Und die, meint ihr, werden sich hinter ihre Röcke verkriechen, oder in den Erdritzen verschwinden, neunzig Prozent Frauen und Mädels, die an den Webstühlen und Spindeln stehen, sieben Tage die Woche, zwölf Stunden den Tag, mit Prügelstrafen, verbrühten Händen, kranken Lungen, mit ihren Säuglingen unter den Maschinen... (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 172).

In this small section, Wolf brings several of the threads from the foreword together in summation. The scalded hands, beatings, long work hours, and endangered babies under the machines, after first being presented in the foreword, are thus repeated in various ways onstage and are reprised together by the title character towards the end of the play. With this exchange between Peer and Tai, Wolf also uses statistics which had not been in the foreword or previously mentioned in the play. He does not restrict himself to the information given in the foreword, rather he occasionally uses other statistics, such as the weavers and spinners being predominantly female.

Von New York bis Schanghai (1932) was the agitprop play with which Wolf most elaborately demonstrated his authority and mastery of his material. Though he did not provide statistics and information about the topic in the foreword, he did use such material extensively in the body of the play. As an agitprop play, Von New York bis Schanghai naturally stems from a different tradition and thus has different

limitations than a stage drama such as Tai Yang erwacht. Because Communist agitprop troupes at the end of the Weimar Republic were not well-funded and because they had to travel extensively, they had to manage their productions on a much smaller scale than with a stage drama, making the presentation of extended prefatory material much more difficult. Nonetheless, Wolf provided such material in the body of this play.

As was the case in his earlier China play, Wolf frequently uses a variety of different sources to expose his audience to facts in Von New York bis Schanghai, although he does not present the material in a preface as in Cyankali and Tai Yang erwacht. Apart from bringing important facts and figures into the play, these sources prove Wolf to be well-read on the subject at hand. In Von New York bis Schanghai, he even uses the class enemies' own sources against them: "WANG: Im Jahre 1927 waren – nach bürgerlichen Zeitungen – in China 9 Millionen dem Hungertod ausgesetzt, 1929 waren in China 54 Millionen an der Grenze des Hungertodes, 1930 wieder 34 Millionen ..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 187). Using these sources, such large numbers cannot be discounted as mere left-wing propaganda, and it also shows the middle- and upper-class awareness of these problems and thus their negligence in acting to feed the hungry. He cites German newspapers, and unsurprisingly for a play set in several different countries and for one spreading the ideology of an international movement such as Communism, Wolf cites several sources from outside Germany: The New York Times, The Times (London), and the Osloer Morgenblatt, along with reports from Reuters (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 209, 209-210, 200-201, 209,

219). By referencing so many sources from both within and outside of Germany, as well as those from different classes within Germany, Wolf demonstrated a broad understanding and great mastery of his material and presented himself as an expert. Wolf furthermore presents his information in two striking ways. First, he has his actors hand out brochures to the audience in the middle of the play (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 188). This gives the audience members something to take home, materials which could verify the ideas onstage and perhaps make the information more relevant to their daily lives. Second, he often has actors or speakers go to the front of the stage and directly address the audience or read to them from these newspapers (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 194, 200-201, 201, 209-210). Such epic elements as direct address and the “... Einbeziehung des Zuschauers ins Spiel zum aktiven Mitspieler und Mitarbeiter ...” were common in agitprop (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 23). Because these form elements were typical of agitprop—and because it was a straightforwardly political form, agitprop drama allowed Wolf to present statistical material within the body of the play without it appearing as jarring to the dramatic qualities of the work. Wolf therefore used them more often than in his stage plays. For instance, only in Die Jungens von Mons did Wolf have a speaker read a newspaper report directly to the audience, and that was an isolated incident, placed at the beginning of the play to set up the story which followed immediately (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 199; 7: 47-48).

In his last play of this era, Bauer Baetz (1932), Wolf again uses newspaper citations to support his credibility. Wolf cites different newspapers within the play:

the “Badischer Beobachter,” the “Mannheimer Tageblatt,” and the “Bauernbote” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 258, 271). He also uses the character of the *Rechtskonsulent*, an authority-figure himself, to bring in government statistics, similar to his use of the character Kuckuck in Cyankali (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 253, 264). He even has the character Lutz read from a brochure called the “Der Wirtschaftsaufbau” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 250). Wolf goes as far as to point to the page—and the part of the page—from which the quote stems. The quotation is accurate in all but a few minor, non-essential instances. The full title of the quoted work is Der Wirtschafts-Aufbau im Dritten Reich and it was written by a member of the “Reichswirtschaftsrats der NSDAP” (Pfaff 1). Though Wolf had presented his facts and figures and cited his sources several times before, he had never gone so far as to quote National Socialist literature in his attempts to prove his point and demonstrate a knowledge of all sides of an issue.

Wolf’s conspicuous use of sources in the bodies of the agitprop plays Von New York bis Schanghai and particularly Bauer Baetz is far removed from his use of sources in the stage play Cyankali, in which he provided reasons for quoting newspaper stories or reading from a lawbook. Even though these two works are agitprop plays and political and suatory materials were more typical than in stage plays, Wolf’s abundant use of these sources, as well as other typical epic elements, prompts the audience members to remove themselves in a Brechtian sense from the events on the stage. If, like Brecht desired with his epic theater, the audience “... watch the play in a detached, critical frame of mind” (Esslin 64), then Wolf’s

audience would take notice of the facts presented onstage and also consciously perceive the great variety and number of these sources, and realize that the author must be very knowledgeable in the particular area concerned. As a result, they could find Wolf to be a credible writer and rhetor.

4.3.2 Expert Knowledge of a Historical Situation

Whereas Wolf supported his authority with facts and statistics in such works as Cyankali and Tai Yang erwacht, thereby demonstrating a thorough knowledge of a particular topic, such as the abortion issue or the Chinese revolution, in other works, such as Die Matrosen von Cattaro (1930) or Bauer Baetz (1932), he presented knowledge of actual historical events. Wolf often chose such events for his dramas, several from within living memory to bolster the appearance of truthfulness. As with his depiction of the lower classes, this knowledge could be verified or dismissed by someone who knew these historical events well, which would strengthen or weaken Wolf's rhetorical efforts respectively. He used the same means, documentation, to prove his knowledge about the events as he did his expertise on a particular situation.

Wolf twice presents the historical events behind Die Matrosen von Cattaro in prefatory material. First, he relates the results of the actions in the play:

Am 11. Februar 1918, 6 Uhr früh, wurden an der Friedhofsmauer von Skaljari bei Cattaro als Rädelsführer der Flottenrevolte wegen Empörung nach § 157 des österreichischen MStG standrechtlich erschossen:

der Bootsmannsmaat	FRANZ RASCH
der Deckmatrose	ANTON GRABAR
der Geschützmeister	JERKO SISGORIC
der Geschützmeister	MATE BERNICEVIC (Wolf, <u>Gesammelte</u> 3: 6).

Both the information and the way in which Wolf presents it are important in this excerpt. The tone seems neutral, giving the impression that Wolf is only presenting the events like an impartial observer, although he definitely had an agenda: he wants to show his audience the flaws in this revolution and direct them to the methods of the more successful one in Kronstadt in October 1917, as he states in “Weshalb schrieb ich ‘Die Matrosen von Cattaro?’” (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 368). Using the passive voice here, he does not assign blame for these events. This first synopsis of events helps clarify the more complex language of the second, in which Wolf further bolsters his impartiality by providing a reproduction of a document (albeit expurgated, cf. Frei 30-31) enumerating the details of the situation which prompted the mutiny (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 7). Finally, Wolf presents a succinct third version of the story, the comment: “*Es war eine Kundgebung beabsichtigt, und es wurde eine Revolte,*” made by Dr. Koball, the Staff Doctor of the St. Georg, the ship which serves as the scene of Die Matrosen von Cattaro, at the Cattaro trial on February 8, 1918 (italics in original) (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 7). This comment delivers both an official aspect (as a part of the trial) and a personal aspect (as part of an eyewitness account). By thus presenting official materials which he apparently had no part in creating and which

lend veracity to the play itself, Wolf attains the appearance of a truthful, impartial observer, knowledgeable in many aspects of the events in Cattaro in 1918. These factors help establish him as an expert on these events to the audience.

Wolf also uses facts and sources to demonstrate his familiarity with the events in Die Jungens von Mons (1931), and he once again starts before the beginning of the play itself: “*Die Dokumente zu dieser seltsamen, aber realen Episode fanden sich in ‘The Evening News’, London, 5. bis 30. März 1929, und in der Photoreportage vieler englischer und deutscher illustrierter Zeitschriften*” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 198). The events behind the play are extraordinary, as Wolf points out, so he definitely had to provide background material here. By showing, or reminding, his audience that the story is real and by naming the sources where they can find more details about the story he presents to them, he could avoid the charge of bringing an improbable topic on the stage (in case the audience had not heard of the story), while at the same time proving his knowledge of the events. As Wolf noted, this story was well-known at the time. It was covered by several British newspapers, including the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Sketch and the Daily Express among others (Vernon 41), received a two page spread in the AIZ (Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung), and even appeared in four different editions of the U.S. Time magazine. The prefatory material for this play was much briefer than that in any of the earlier stage plays under examination, however the information is repeated almost as soon as the play starts:

DER SPRECHER *mit einer Zeitung, er liest*: The Evening News,

London, vom 5. März 29 berichtet: “Das in Erstaunen setzende

Leben einer Frau als Mann! Unter dem Namen eines Captain Campell war sie Führer der ‘Nationalfaschisten’ in London. Sie hatte in der Krise Existenz und Arbeit verloren. Als Captain Campell wurde sie Empfangssekretär im Palace-Hotel. Sie gründete den Klub der Jungens von Mons, organisierte den faschistischen Werkschutz und war mit einer Dame der Gesellschaft verlobt. Schließlich wurde sie verhaftet...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 199).

Wolf repeats information in much the same manner as in Die Matrosen von Cattaro. Even though both versions of this information do not occur in a foreword as in that earlier play, they are both presented before the action in the play begins. In both works, the first version clarifies the second version, which in turn elaborates on the first. Wolf once again gives the information in a factual tone, the first version in Die Jungens von Mons being a single sentence regarding the documentation of the story and the second version bearing the curt style of a newspaper article.

John D. erobert die Welt (1930) is the only other Wolf drama of the period under consideration to have a speaker address the audience before the action starts. The Speaker provides information on the play’s subject: John D. Rockefeller. Wolf provides for instance the date and place of his birth and the date of his retirement, showing the efforts of his research and investigation. He wrote this radio play in 1930—between Die Matrosen von Cattaro and Die Jungens von Mons—yet he presents information in a very different tone than in those two other plays. Whereas

these other works bear a formal tone, the Speaker here uses more colloquial language: “DER SPRECHER: Hallo, Freunde! Man hat euch ein Funkporträt versprochen ... ein Hörphoto von John D., der die Welt eroberte. John D.? ... wer ist John D.? Wozu John D.: Es gibt viele John D.s! Pause, Freunde; es gibt nur einen John D. ...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 47). The Speaker uses the familiar “euch” form of address and twice calls his audience “Freunde.” This could be an attempt to approach the audience more closely and thereby win them over to Wolf’s perspective or it could serve to distance the radio audience from the Speaker if they believe him to be an outsider trying to ingratiate himself to them. This would make members of the audience question what the Speaker says here and any positive perspective on the events that he provides. Wolf’s political standpoint comes through much clearer than in the other works as well: “DER SPRECHER: ... John D., das ist der Vater der Syndikate und des Monopols; er ist der Entdecker der anonymen Aktiengesellschaft und der Vernichter der individualistischen Kleinbetriebe. Zehntausend Existenzen hat sein Vormarsch zerstampft ...” (Wolf, Gesammelte Wolf 7: 47). These images, especially the one of Rockefeller trampling down ten thousand other people, are clearly negative, as is the indirect image of Rockefeller being a rat when the Speaker poses the question “Verließ er ein sinkendes Schiff?,” referring to Rockefeller’s stepping down from the leadership of Standard Oil (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 48). The intent of this foreword appears to be predominantly one of providing background for the audience and psychologically preparing them for the play rather than presenting proof of his authority. This use of a prefatory speaker in John D. erobert die Welt

therefore stands in contrast to that use in Die Jungens von Mons, a play in which the prefatory material and also the opening speech could be discarded without perplexing the audience. However, the Speaker in each of these plays has the same function of providing veracity, as someone outside the action of the play commenting on the events. By placing these speeches at the beginning of the play, Wolf assures that they will not disrupt the flow of the dramatic illusion of the play and “alienate” the audience. The action in John D. erobert die Welt occurs over a period of more than fifty years, and Wolf uses the prefatory material to give a preliminary timeline, showing Rockefeller’s age and wealth at various points in his career. While the Speaker does provide information that demonstrates Wolf’s knowledge of his subject, the way he delivers that information does little to establish Wolf as an expert on the actual events in Rockefeller’s life.

The agitprop play Bauer Baetz (1932), like Cyankali and Tai Yang erwacht, was a work for which Wolf provided extensive statistics and sources before the play. Just as the forewords to those other two plays would help protect the middle-class Wolf from accusations as a class interloper, presenting his information in such a manner with Bauer Baetz would counteract possible charges of Wolf being a dilettante in agricultural affairs, since his recent dramas had largely been set in urban areas. Before the play, he provides a section called “EINIGE TATSACHEN,” in which he collects reports from different newspapers and figures about agriculture in Württemberg/Süddeutschland and Germany as a whole, demonstrating his cognizance of the plight of the small farmer, especially in comparison to the great landowners

(Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 239-241). This section ends with a case in point: a recount of the true story of the farmer Karl Bühler in the sub-section “Der Fall des Kleinbauern B.” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 240-241).

Wolf’s use of this material to establish his authority on these events is particularly effective due to two new features which further give him the appearance of being an expert. First, this material shows that Wolf undertook his own investigations. In it, he presents the case of farmer B[ühler] “...*nach dem Bericht des ‘Badischen Bauern-Anzeigers’ und nach meinen persönlichen Ermittlungen am Tatort ...*” (italics in original) (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 240). Wolf thus demonstrates a new depth of research: he is not merely conveying facts others had printed before, but he held his own investigation. The other novel aspect is the inclusion of material from the ultimate source: the person on whom the play was based. At the end of the foreword section, Wolf briefly quotes a letter from Bühler himself. Before this play, Wolf supplied many sources as proof of his expertise, but he never quoted the actual people the works were based upon, despite the fact that many of his plays are based on real events.

Wolf’s first attempts at writing a pro-Communist radio play and agitprop play were both deficient with regard to establishing his knowledge about the events on which they were based. In 1929, Friedrich Wolf wrote “Krassin” rettet “Italia”, his first radio play after joining the Communist party (although Lutz Neitzert mentions that Wolf had written one earlier radio play, Äther, in 1926) (85). “Krassin” rettet “Italia” portrays the true story of the rescue of Italian general Umberto Nobile’s ill-

fated expedition to the North Pole in the airship “Italia” and his crew’s rescue by the Soviet icebreaker “Krassin” in 1928. The story was well-known, as the events inspiring this play had captured the attention of the world at the time (Pollatschek “Hörspielen” 483). Wolf provides no material to the printed version of this work other than a single paragraph containing a synopsis and brief commentary of the events. Perhaps he did not do so because the story was so well known, or because of Wolf’s concern about censorship: “Meine beiden Hörspiele sind *indirekte* Stücke, die unter der Maske des Literarischen alles das sagen, was heute durch den Funk direkt noch nicht zu sagen ist” (Wolf, Briefe 122). Furthermore, extensive prefatory sources and statistics would naturally be difficult to include in a radio play. However, Wolf could have used a speaker at the beginning of the play, as he did the following year in John D. erobert die Welt. Wolf wrote “Krassin” rettet “Italia” after Cyankali and before Die Matrosen von Cattaro. In light of the measures Wolf took to establish himself as a credible rhetor for the Communist movement in these and later works, his failure to do so in this play is particularly notable. At the time Wolf wrote this radio play, he was not as well-known as he would be a few months later with the premiere of Cyankali, and few of those who knew his work also knew him as a Communist when this radio play first appeared. Inasmuch as he devoted considerable effort to establish his expertise and credibility in Cyankali and many works afterwards, it is odd that he did not do so in this play, although this oddity can perhaps be explained by the events being so well-known

In Wolf's first agitprop play, Wie stehen die Fronten? (1932), he put relatively little effort into the task of establishing his credibility as a rhetor, in great contrast to the effort he made to do so in his stage plays. In the essay "Schöpferische Probleme des Agitproptheaters" Wolf later stated about this play: "... ich schrieb von dem konkreten Fall der 'Pausa-Werke' aus, der sehr bekannt war ..." (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 27), yet he makes no mention whatsoever of basing the work on this case. The audience obviously cannot believe that Wolf is an expert on a particular event if they do not know that this event is real. He likewise made no effort to appear to be the master of his topic as he had done with other works such as Cyankali (the problems with the anti-abortion law) and Tai Yang erwacht (the political situation in China). It is true that by the time he wrote Wie stehen die Fronten?, it was far less necessary for Wolf to prove his Communist credentials. It was entirely possible that members of the working class and especially members of the Communist party had heard of Wolf from his dramatic works, his book on homeopathic medicine Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer, or his highly-publicized abortion case by this time. However, inasmuch as he used a variety of facts and documented sources in his next play, Von New York bis Schanghai, their relative paucity here becomes notable, though Wolf perhaps realized that he could not possibly prove himself more expert on the material than the workers who experienced those events.

A definitive explanation of why Wolf failed to construct his own authority in Wie stehen die Fronten? is not clear, but two additional reasons exist, one artistic and one political. First, Wolf might have thought that it was no longer necessary for him

to establish his credibility in 1932 when he wrote this play. He was by this time a famous writer and a well-known communist who had done substantial work for the KPD in many different forms and had traveled to the U.S.S.R. However, his fame might not have reached the people who made up the audience of an agitprop play, and if they did know about Wolf, his class position as an outsider—middle class, artist and working in the medical profession—might have in fact put his credibility into question. This would explain why he developed his authority extensively in his next play. A second possible reason why Wolf did not meaningfully construct his authority in Wie stehen die Fronten? is that he was working in a new form. He had to conform his art and his politics to limitations that were different from those of the professional stage he knew so well or even those of the radio play. He might have simply found it impossible to establish himself as an expert in his first agitprop drama. The inability to demonstrate his authority in a new medium explains why Wolf later returned to doing so in Von New York bis Schanghai and Bauer Baetz when he was more familiar with this sub-genre. It also explains why he did not establish his credibility in the radio play “Krassin” rettet “Italia”: he was not yet familiar enough with this form to do so. While neither of these reasons can be established definitively, they do present two plausible reasons why Wolf failed to establish himself as a credible rhetor in Wie stehen die Fronten? (and perhaps also “Krassin” rettet “Italia”) when he took such pains to do so in the other dramas of this period.

5 The Victim Group

An essential task for Wolf as a rhetor for the Communist movement in the late 1920s and early 1930s was to establish that a society divided by class was a distinct problem. One part—though not the only part—of framing a social situation as a social problem is making the negative effects of that situation known. Presenting a victim is the most productive—and perhaps only—way to demonstrate these negative effects. For a Communist rhetor such as Wolf, the victim he must reveal to his audience is the working class. Wolf expends considerable effort to depict members of the working class as victims in his plays of this period, thereby redefining the social situation of classed society as a social problem and thus providing a new interpretation of current events and circumstances.

5.1 Depiction of the Working Class's Meager Conditions

One of the most basic ways, and one of the most effective, of depicting the plight of the working class as a victim group is to present the living conditions of these poor people on the stage.

The actions and conversations take place before our very eyes; or, if there are actions in the play so violent or distressing that they cannot be represented on the stage, they can be described by characters who are present on the stage and show all the appropriate signs of horror and revulsion. Even this is more violent in emotional impact than the

experience of merely reading a description in the third person (Boulton 4).

A playwright's use of a messenger or of teichoscopy can function as well as or often better than a stage depiction of an event or action (Price 6), but an atmosphere or social milieu tends to be more effective when shown rather than described. This applies not only to the depictions of harsh conditions, such as those under which the poor suffer in a capitalist society, but also to idyllic conditions, such as those of a projected post-Marxist-revolution community. For readers of the play, who obviously do not have the opportunity to see the drama's staging as a theater audience would, Wolf's clear and precise stage directions provide a substitute. While showing poverty and impoverished working class surroundings onstage is not in itself Communist propaganda, it can be a part of it. In his stage plays, Wolf used his settings to establish class inequality as a definite problem which must be corrected. Due to the limited setting and staging equipment available for agitprop works and the total lack of a visual element in radio plays, it was difficult if not impossible for him to do so in those sub-genres.

Wolf thoroughly depicts the miserable surroundings of working class men and women in these stage plays. The first image Wolf presents in Cyankali, Tai Yang erwacht and Die Jungens von Mons is the poverty of these working class characters. He does so in a consistent fashion, having the main character's home environment as the setting for the first scene in each of these three plays. The fourth stage play, Die Matrosen von Catarro, set at sea and with its emphasis on the characters' absence

from home and family, does not allow Wolf to show the main character's home. He does however show the group quarters in the first scene, the place where several sailors are all lodged together.

Wolf depicts the material need of the proletariat in Cyankali (Merkel 81).

Stage directions set the scene at the beginning of this play:

Küche bei Mutter Fent: Tisch, Bank, Hocker, Herd. An der Rückwand eine alte Chaiselongue; darüber Vergrößerung eines Photos von Vater Fent mit Medaille 'Für 25jährige treue Dienste' ... Hete, zwanzigjährig, kocht am Herd, nimmt dann drei bis vier Paar Kinderstiefel und beginnt sie zu reinigen ... (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 281).

According to the stage directions, the room is sparsely furnished, and the only piece of furniture given any type of description is the chaiselongue, simply described as old. Thus the first image the audience sees is an ill-furnished room. Furthermore, the only touch of decoration in the room is a picture of Hete's father, whose 25 years of faithful service gives evidence of long-term employment, forming a contrast to the rampant unemployment later in the play and in the later years of the Weimar Republic in general. By Hete's action of cleaning four pairs of children's boots, the audience learns that several children live in these modest surroundings. As this scene is also the setting for the third, seventh and eighth scenes in which Hete's family interacts with neighbors and friends, Wolf does not allow the audience to forget the social environment in which these poor people live. Concerning the availability of food,

Walther Pollatschek notes: “Wenn das erste Wort Minna Klees, das erste Wort auf der Bühne, nach einem Blick auf den Herd die Frage ist: ‘Dachhase oder Hottehü?’, dann sind sofort Not und Lebensweise des Proletariats in den zwanziger Jahren deutlich dargestellt” (Bühnenwerk 135). Inasmuch as these working class characters have become so hungry that they are forced to eat housecats, Wolf demonstrates the extent of working-class poverty. Wolf used similar means to show the poverty of the people of Vienna in his next stageplay, Die Matrosen von Cattaro: “LEUTNANT *umhergehend*: ... Jawohl, in Wien kann man mit keinem Hundel mehr über die Straße gehn, schon ist’s weg, futsch, perdu! Rin in die Pfanne...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 21). The poverty and need of these working-class characters in Cyankali is unmistakable and, as indicated by Pollatschek’s observation, an audience can easily take the short step to generalization: this situation is not only bad for a small group of people, but rather for an entire class.

In the first scene of Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf presents the “*Schanghai 1927. – Elterliche Hütte der Arbeiterin Tai Yang: ärmlicher Raum mit Feuerrost, Lagerpritschen, niedrigen Hockern, verschiebbaren Zwischenwänden aus Bambus; auf dem Boden Bast- und Rohrmatten, Gefäße; in einer Ecke der Ahnenaltar ...*” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 101). Tai’s home is a hut, consisting of only a single, impoverished looking room: a home worse than, though similar to, the Fent apartment. Despite the difference in the culture in which this play is set, i.e., China as opposed to Cyankali’s Germany, the living conditions of the working classes in each country are the same: little space and few materials for too many people. A reader

will immediately notice that there are three generations (*Mutter, Großvater, Urgroßtante*) of the family in this hut at the beginning of the play, while a fourth generation (Tai and Ma) arrives soon. As in *Cyankali*, these meager dwellings will serve as the setting of a later scene, which serves to emphasize the poverty of these characters to the audience.

The first scene of *Die Jungens von Mons* is also set in the home of the protagonist. The description of the family's quarters likewise reveals the characters' poverty: "...*Wohnküche der Ellen Celloc. Kleiner Raum mit Tisch, Stühlen, Schrank, Gaskocher, an der Wand Bild des im ersten Weltkrieg gefallenen Sergeanten Celloc ...*" (Wolf, *Gesammelte* 3: 200). This family does not have enough money for an individual kitchen or dining room, and the *Wohnküche* they do have is itself small. Here again there is little room for several generations of the same family—three generations in this instance, living in a small space. Furthermore, the rent for these accommodations is in arrears, as it is in the case of the Fent family in *Cyankali*. The working class characters' hold on their shelter and their few possessions in these plays is tenuous.

5.2 Work and the Ubiquitous Threat of Unemployment

Wolf examines in great depth the problems of unemployment and the lack of job security in his plays from the time of his joining the KPD until his flight from Germany. That he does this is hardly surprising, considering the abysmal unemployment in Germany during the late 1920s and early 1930s when these plays

were written. The 1925 unemployment figure of 700,000 doubled to 1.4 million by 1928, and that latter number quadrupled to 5.6 million by 1932 (Abraham 249). Wolf held a mirror to the society for which he was writing.

At the beginning of Cyankali, both Hete and Paul have stable jobs (Schutkowski 169). Wolf initially emphasizes Hete's and Paul's job security strongly. Hete's neighbor Frau Klee tells her:

FRAU KLEE: ... Sieh mal, Hete, ... das [ist] 'ne absolut sichere Sache. Ob Streik oder Aussperrung, auf den Büros ist immer Betrieb. Du bist also Dauerverdiener! Warum? ... weil die Herren vom Büro was Sauberes brauchen für die Pupille ... So 'ne Visage wie deine, so 'ne Figur, das ist 'n Kapital ... (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 281-82).

If Frau Klee's opinion that Hete's job is safe is accurate, she will become a *Dauerverdiener* just like her late father, whose picture hanging on the wall shows him wearing his medal for 25 years of faithful service. Hete's boyfriend Paul also believes that his job is secure; he states this opinion unequivocally: "... die Gewerkschaft hat den Tarif gekündigt... mir kann ja nichts passieren, keine Bange, ich bin Spezialarbeiter, verstehste, 'werkständig' ..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 283). He does in fact have special qualifications that should keep him employed, even when others might be fired or laid off. Paul "... ist doch gelernter Heizer. Die Öfen blasen sie so schnell nicht aus, auch wenn mal zwei Wochen gefeiert wird" (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 282). Paul is making a good salary—he jokingly says that he is in "gehobener Stellung" (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 286)—indeed, because he belongs to

the specialized labor force, he has gotten a promotion of sorts—a position of responsibility policing the canteen. Paul's and Hete's eventual unemployment will serve the dramatic purpose of making their fall all the more tragic and the functional purpose of creating the need for an abortion, because the couple will not have the financial means to raise the child. Furthermore, their unemployment and the concomitant need for abortion serve the rhetorical purpose of showing how even the seemingly most secure jobs for the working classes are easily taken away by the capriciousness of industrialists under the capitalist economic system, helping establish classed society as a social problem and Paul and Hete (and by extension their class) as its victims.

In the Shanghai of Tai Yang erwacht, almost universal employment is necessary for the survival of the working class characters. The youngest character in the play (Ma) as well as the oldest (*Urgroßtante* Tse Tse) are forced to work to maintain what little they possess. Although almost all the working class characters in Tai Yang erwacht do in fact have jobs, Wolf makes clear that these jobs can be taken from them at any time, as the threat of unemployment is present from the beginning of the play:

TSE TSE: ... Noch gut habt ihr's hier in Schanghai

MUTTER: Solange die Fabriken gehn und Tai und Ma verdienen

(Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 103).

It is true that these women have enjoyed relative job security for a long time, but so had Hete and Paul in Cyankali, though they ultimately lose their jobs. The financial

and political situations, both of which are caused by the capitalist structure of their society, have changed and are continuing to change the workers' circumstances. Furthermore, there exists the real danger that the factories in which these women work will be shut down or destroyed by the civil war raging in China.

Another reason why these workers' jobs are not secure is that the jobs themselves are killing them. As Robert Reimer notes, the working environment is "detrimental to the health" of Tschu Fu's employees (62). Job conditions are in fact making the workers physically unable to work. The workers must work long hours for little money in unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, not to mention the scaldings and the beatings at the hands of their superiors. These people have a limited working life and therefore a potentially limited life span, and Wolf shows this onstage in the case of Han, a worker in Tschu Fu's factory. Broken pipes drip water down on her, and as a result she has developed a respiratory illness. The audience sees her constantly coughing, and after a beating in the fifth scene she starts spitting up blood. It was not the first time she had done so: "HAN: ... Ich hab schon lang nicht mehr Blut gespuckt, du!" (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 151). Even if, as she claims, she has not spit up blood for a long time, the problem was still there lingering underneath the surface. In that respect, her illness is much like the problem of job instability itself, one small push and the problem surfaces. When her illness does become apparent and it begins to affect her work, she might have to go to the hospital, and by doing so she would put her job at risk. Even if she were able to get well at the hospital, upon her return someone else would have taken her place. Han's

plight is hardly a unique one, as Tai notes: “Ein Drittel meiner Kolleginnen spuckt sich die Lungen aus in den Dampfhöllen und Wäschereien, nicht Tausende, Hunderttausende wurden so gemordet!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 173). The work these women do thus wrecks them physically, to the point where they can no longer work or even to the point of death. Both Wolf and the character Tai, by using strong terms such as “Dampfhöllen” and “gemordet,” are framing this kind of abusive class interaction as class war, one which already has a huge number of casualties.

Han’s treatment at the hands of the *Aufseher* also leads to a turning point in the play, as it leads to Tai returning to her own class. Because Han is bleeding once again, Tschu Fu tells her to go to the hospital. Tai, whom Tschu Fu has made his *Freundin* (that is, he has forced her to become his lover), wants him to help Han: “TAI mit Tschu Fu etwas abseits, leise: Der Aufseher hat sie geschlagen, eine kranke Frau, ich kenne sie, sie ist fleißig, sie hat ein kleines Kind, ihre Lunge ist schwach, du mußt gut zu ihr sein, hör mich; gib ihr Geld, sie soll zu Haus sich erholen!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 154). Tai, through this quote, relates Han’s need for this job, while also noting that Han is a hard worker. Nevertheless, Tschu Fu does not help Han and furthermore does nothing to fix the working conditions which caused her to become sick, as Tai recommends soon afterward. By the end of this scene, Tai leaves her purse behind with the workers which symbolizes a change in her class loyalty. By having Li, one of the workers, go after her to return the purse, Wolf emphasizes Tai’s having left it while simultaneously depicting Li’s working-class honesty. Another worker, Sy, tells Li that Tai heard her calling, which also indicates that Tai’s leaving

the purse behind was intentional, perhaps because she wanted her former co-workers to have the money or simply because she did not want it anymore. After being called, Tai comes back and Li gives her the purse. Tai embraces her, showing solidarity with former colleagues before quickly exiting the stage. The audience sees Han's treatment by both the *Aufseher* and Tschu Fu, as Tai does. It is evident that Wolf presents Tai here as a model for the audience: if members of the audience react the same way as Tai or follow her example, ties to the upper classes can be shaken or ties to the working class can be strengthened, depending on where the loyalties of the audience members initially lie.

In Die Jungens von Mons, job security is not even a factor for several characters at the beginning of the play. They, like a quarter of the population, are unemployed (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 203-204). The main character, Ellen Celloc, is at a particular disadvantage in her job hunt, because she is a woman: "ELLEN: Kann ich mehr als herumrennen... ist alles besetzt, kein Bedarf, sie stellen nur männliche Kräfte ein, selbst in den Hotels sind statt Aufwaschfrauen jetzt Aufwaschfritzen, für 'n Hundegeld" (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 203). Because of widespread unemployment, men have to take menial jobs and jobs that would hurt their pride, such as those typically regarded as women's jobs. This in turn leaves more women unemployed. The financial problems of one section of society are visited upon the people below them socially, whether the difference between these groups be class-based, gender-based, or otherwise.

In the second scene of this play, Cibber, Garrik and Wood appear onstage. Cibber is an ordinary worker, Wood is a former student, and Garrik is a former banker. None of these men have jobs. Wolf shows here how people from very different educational and professional backgrounds all face unemployment. Even Wood with his schooling and Garrik with his former white-collar job are put on the same level as Cibber, a common worker. All three are now forced to vie for the same jobs—indeed the most basic ones, much as men and women are vying for the same work. When people in a position of relative rank have their positions (in the sense of both status and work) removed, they are taken down to the same social level as others who were previously beneath them. Wolf demonstrates that under a capitalist system, such as Germany's during the Weimar Republic, an economic problem on any level will be passed on to the level below it, which in turn is visited on the level below it, etc. When one is at the bottom of a social scale, such as women or the working class, there is no one to pass this problem on to or share it with. Therefore those on the lowest rung of a social ladder ultimately bear the brunt of any and every financial problem. When one is at the bottom level of more than one social scale, such as the female working-class protagonists in Cyankali, Tai Yang erwacht, and Die Jungens von Mons, one's position is simply untenable.

In Wie stehen die Fronten?, Wolf depicts a more explicitly political aspect of employment. Communist workers were in particular risk of unemployment, as employers would often fire Communist and other militant workers and use that threat to control their workforce (Weitz, Strategies 11-12). Franz, a member of the

Revolutionäre Gewerkschafts-Opposition (RGO), the Communist trade union during the last years of the Weimar Republic, is a casualty of such action and Wolf thereby demonstrates to his audience that such politically-motivated firings do occur.

Obermeister Wuttke fires Franz at even the intimation of trouble:

FRANZ: Vorher ein Kuhhandel, ohne die Arbeiterschaft, ein
Kuhhandel zwischen Gewerkschaft und Direktion hinter
geschlossenen Türen...

WUTTKE: Sie sind erledigt! Verlassen Sie sofort den Betrieb! (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 129).

Wuttke then threatens to fire the remaining employees if they do not disperse immediately. Wolf emphasizes here that the workers are subject to the whims of their social superiors, and he is therefore taking a risk here. He shows that political action can quickly lead to unemployment. To counteract this risk, Wolf contrasts the two possible actions: acquiescence and activism. Whereas Wolf depicts the politically active Franz in a positive fashion, the lying sycophant Müller, called “Leichenmüller” by some of the workers, is probably the least likeable character in the play, more so even than Wuttke, with whom he is in league.

It becomes evident in the play why Wuttke and other factory owners fire politically militant workers: the owners know the workers’ strength and they are scared of them, as one worker declares in a meeting: “ZWEITER ZURUF *Marie*: Schiß haben sie alle, der Leichenmüller und die Bonzen!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 144). Societal elites know that committed Communist workers can bring the working

class together and work together against the upper classes. When the members of the working class join together at the end of Wie stehen die Fronten, they remove Müller and call the strike which will negatively affect Wuttke and his business. By proving to working-class audience members that they have power and also by revealing the tactics and motives of the upper classes, Wolf presents a primary reason for the unemployment prevalent among the working class—particularly its more political members—and thereby gives the working class members of his audience an incentive to either start or continue their class struggle.

5.3 Class Inequality in Die Matrosen von Cattaro

Wolf's play Die Matrosen von Cattaro is fundamentally dissimilar to the other stage plays from this period. For instance, the dramatic structure here is noticeably different from the stage plays Wolf wrote immediately before and after it. A single main objective on the part of the characters drives the action in those plays: Hete's attempt to get an abortion in Cyankali and Tai Yang's progression from an apolitical worker to a revolutionary in Tai Yang erwacht. Die Matrosen von Cattaro, however, is divided into two distinct phases which heightens the dramatic conflict, each with a different plot and a different set of dramatic conflicts. The first distinct phase, consisting of the first three scenes of the play, is the story of the events leading to and including the revolt of the working-class sailors against their officer superiors in the Bay of Cattaro in 1918. The second phase of the play, scenes four through six, is the tale of the downfall of the revolution. Scholars have correctly noted that a conflict

develops between the protagonist Franz Rasch and the politically less committed members of the *Matrosenrat* (Merkel 114-115; Załubaska 87), and this conflict dominates the second half of the play, not the earlier class conflict between the sailors and their superiors. This dual structure allows Wolf to fulfill his intention of presenting an analysis of the Western political situation in the early decades of the 20th century and demonstrate that the initial victory was not the end of struggle for the working class; it was instead the beginning of an even greater struggle to ideologically cement that victory (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 366-367).

The setting, however, is more important for the analysis of Wolf's ability to convey a victim in Die Matrosen von Cattaro and it heightens the play's distinction from the other stage plays Wolf wrote in this period. Most of the characters in this play are sailors on their ship, the St. Georg, and therefore cut off from the largest part of society. Yet, like the audience, the mutineering sailors recognize that they belong to the working class and that their problems are the same. When the subject of having to fight against striking Viennese workers is broached, Franz claims "... was sind wir Soldaten und Matrosen denn? Arbeiter mit Waffen!" (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 15). By having this sailor explicitly point out these sailors' connection to the working class onstage in this first scene, Wolf demonstrates this same connection to his audience, thereby equating the mistreatment of the sailors to the mistreatment of the working classes in general.

Wolf could not portray the plight of the working class in Die Matrosen von Cattaro in the same ways as in the other stage plays under examination. To some

extent, the sailors' financial situation is in fact better than that of characters in those works. They all have jobs and a place to stay, and both their employment and accommodations are secure, at least as long as the war lasts. Of course, the continuation of war is by no means certain—as this play is set in 1918, the audience will know that this “employment” is soon to end. Furthermore, most of these characters are equal, socially if not in military rank. Of the characters the audience sees onstage, only the *Leutnant*, *Fregattenkapitän* and *Offizier* are on a different, higher social level. Wolf does, however, manage to sidestep the hurdles his setting causes, and he finds other ways with which he can further the Communist movement in Die Matrosen von Cattaro. For instance, Wolf is able to depict the sailors' maltreatment at the hands of the officers—whom the sailors call “Goldonkels,” “Goldstreifenonkels” or “Goldbortenonkels” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 11, 29, 38, 43), emphasizing rank and the higher and clearly privileged financial and social status of the officers.

Inasmuch as employment, housing, food and clothing (uniforms) are the requisites of sailors aboard their ships, Wolf has the officers take from the sailors the one necessity where they can make a cut: food. The latter yell out ““Hunger! Hunger!”” and claim that their rations have been sold for the sake of the upper officers. The sailors still have somewhat better food than the workers in Vienna. Sepp says the latter will soon be eating the soles of their shoes and the *Leutnant* later conveys the poverty of the Viennese people by saying that they cannot take dogs on

the streets anymore or someone will take the dogs and eat them (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 11, 21).

Wolf's representation of the plight of the sailors here is less effective than his characterization of the working class in the other stage plays. The sailors are not in any physical peril for their existence at present, except as a result of their own mutiny. Despite their hunger, they throw away leftover barley and dried vegetables. They do not have the meat rations which are due them and which they desire, but they do have food, albeit a monotonous diet. The audience only hears of the Viennese workers who are truly suffering by the indirect means of newspaper reports. While Wolf does manage to make connections in this manner and associate the sailors with the suffering workers, the former being "Arbeiter mit Waffen," Wolf is unable to show the want of necessities onstage. Only through these tertiary means of equating the sailors with the working class and then referring to the latter group's dire circumstances is Wolf able to present the economic problems of the working classes. Such indirect means will make less of an emotional impact on the audience than the more direct portrayal of poverty onstage might accomplish.

Wolf does however depict another aspect of the class struggle in Die Matrosen von Cattaro: the sailors' total subordination to the officers. Not only do the sailors' superiors take their rightful rations and punish them severely for minor infractions, but they also expect the sailors to die for them if necessary. Like every worker under a capitalist system, the sailors are fighting and dying for the profit of their social superiors. For a sailor, as for a worker (though for different reasons), the threat of

death is ever-present. On the ship sailors can suffer death in many ways, and during war the most obvious death comes from the enemy. Wolf shows that their own superiors are an even more dangerous and immediate enemy. Almost from the beginning, Wolf shows the sailors' cognizance of the threat of death. In the first scene they tell about another ship where, in order to save the ship after an enemy hit, several soldiers were left to drown on orders from the ship's commanders. Later, other "internal" threats include the fire on the mutineer sailors from their country's own land bases and the court-martial, the threat of which permeates the entire play (and is also in the thoughts of the characters), Wolf having revealed this outcome in the foreword.

5.4 Representation of Crime and its Causes

Especially in his depiction of crime, Wolf shows how society moulds people, how society forces people into acts from which they would otherwise refrain. Revealing the forces which cause people to act contrary to their nature is a strong point in Wolf's Communist movement rhetoric as it appears in these plays, because a solid movement rhetoric should address members as "innocent, blameless victims of oppression" (Stewart, "Championing" 92). It can be argued that people will not have cause to commit crimes once those negative societal forces are removed. They will furthermore be less conflicted psychologically, as they will not be pressured into acts they consider wrong.

Die Matrosen von Cattaro contains the most prominent single crime in any of the four stage plays: the mutiny on the *St. Georg*. Wolf shows that the mutineers do not undertake this deed lightly. The action that prompts the mutiny is the imprisonment and impending execution of a fellow sailor for trivial reasons. The sailors already proved themselves to be longsuffering, having endured severe conditions before without mutinying. Their compulsory service keeps them away from their homes and families, their superiors steal their food, and they face harsh punishment for any infraction of the rules. They do not take over the ship out of a lust for power, or even out of anger against their commanders, but rather because they find themselves in an intolerable position. By means of their mutiny, the sailors cast off their collective identity as an object of their superiors' abuse and they assert their own will. Thus Wolf frames this mutiny—and by extension, other Communist revolutions—as the claiming of subjecthood for these rebels, a subjecthood Wolf underscores by making these sailors the dramatic protagonists.

While mutiny was the central event for Die Matrosen von Cattaro, a different crime is at the heart of Wolf's last Weimar drama. In Bauer Baetz, the titular Christian Baetz kills a public official who has come to take his last cow. Baetz has sold off almost all of his land, and has to lease his old land back at high interest (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 276). He works hard: about sixteen hours a day in summer, yet he still sinks deeper and deeper into debt, already owing more than 600 Mark (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 269, 271, 276). Nevertheless, all this does not drive him to premeditated murder; it is the *Gerichtsvollzieher* himself who brings the gun which

ultimately causes his death. Baetz comes armed only with a book proving that what the *Gerichtsvollzieher* is trying to do is illegal. The audience understands that Baetz's desperation leads to the shooting and Wolf shows onstage that Baetz is in a state of shock thereafter. Wolf emphasizes that Christian Baetz does not want to commit murder or any other crime when Baetz says before the shooting: "CHRISTIAN: Ich will nix Unrechts, Herr Gerichtsvollzieher; aber ich will auch nit, daß mir Unrecht geschieht ..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 290). Like the sailors in Cattaro, Christian is merely fighting for what rightfully belongs to him. Wolf therefore frames him as someone seeking justice, not as a killer.

By having him bring a book concerning his rights when he meets the *Gerichtsvollzieher*, Wolf emphasizes Christian Baetz's faith in morality, the capitalist system, and the Weimar government. Wolf establishes Christian's belief in these three entities through his frequent usage of platitudes: "Mit Geschwätz und Gered / Man keinen Wagen auflädt," and "Frieden ernährt, Unfriede verzehrt!" (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 269, 270). Wolf had already used such sayings in the same ironic fashion in the "Sprichwortsong" of Wie stehen die Fronten? (Wolf, Gesammelte, 7: 123-124). In the essay "Schöpferische Probleme des Agitproptheaters," Wolf claimed that most aphorisms—which are forced upon the public "durch die Kalender und die Schule"—express the mentality of the ruling class (Ausgewählte XIII: 44). These platitudes further the cause of the societal elites by promoting the idea that one should be quiet and obedient. A third platitude which Christian cites (and which his wife Anna later mentions), "Wer recht sich müht, dem Recht geschieht!" (Wolf,

Gesammelte 7: 276, 285), circulates the thought that life is fair, so people should remain “good.” Christian loses confidence in the system when the *Gerichtsvollzieher*, the official whose title literally means the fulfiller of the law, ignores that law and demands to take the cow which was Christian’s last source of income.

The mutiny in Die Matrosen von Cattaro and the murder in Bauer Baetz are clearly caused by the sailors’ treatment at the hands of their officers and Baetz’s treatment by the government, respectively. Likewise, Tai’s fratricide in Tai Yang erwacht is predicated by her brother’s actions of torturing her friend Wan and blocking their escape from Tschu Fu’s house, and that murder in turn hastens and solidifies her turn to the revolutionary working class—although the motivation for this transformation has been labeled unconvincing (Sacksofsky 161; Załubska 90), as will be shown. Ellen’s crime of writing a bad check in Die Jungens von Mons, like her eventual disguise as a man, was prompted by the *Verwalter’s* threat to evict her and her family from their apartment immediately if she could not delay him by writing the check. Wolf wrote his plays in a manner that made it virtually impossible to draw any conclusion other than that poor characters are forced into the crimes they commit for the sake of survival, as portrayed onstage. Because they have no choice but to act as they do, these poor characters are not ultimately responsible for their deeds. The root cause is their treatment by the higher classes under the capitalist system. Without the unfair treatment of the lower classes in these works, there would often be no play, as such treatment forces them into the actions which they would not

otherwise undertake and these actions propel the plot. The dramatic importance for these crimes in Tai Yang erwacht and Die Jungens von Mons is mentioned above, but these plays are not the only ones in which a crime that a working class character is forced to make is fundamental to the play itself. For instance, Christian Baetz would not have killed the *Gerichtsvollzieher* if Baetz had not been pushed to an extreme of poverty and despair; the sailors in Die Matrosen von Cattaro would not have mutinied had they been treated fairly; and Hete in Cyankali clearly did not want to have an abortion until she saw that she could not afford to raise a child, which Wolf makes clear by her initial decision to keep the child when she and her boyfriend Paul were still employed (Wolf Gesammelte 2: 286). At the beginning of almost all of Wolf's dramas from this period, the lower classes have lost their subjecthood and have become objectified; they are not so much acting as being acted upon, which mirrors Wolf's perception of the actual political situation of the working classes in the last years of the Weimar Republic.

In Cyankali, crime is very prominent, much more so than in the other plays. The poor characters in Cyankali are often driven to crime. They commit these acts not because they are inherently inferior or immoral; as is the case in Bauer Baetz and Die Matrosen von Cattaro, the poor characters in this drama commit crimes, because they are forced to do so in order to survive. By revealing the social forces which cause the poor to commit crimes, Wolf exculpates these characters. The number of crimes or "criminals" Wolf presents in this play helps impress upon the audience the reality of the crimes and imposing statistics presented in the foreword, such as the

500,000 to 800,000 abortions a year, and 50,000 cases of illness resulting from *Fehlgeburten* (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 271-272).

The most obvious crime in Cyankali is the abortion which Hete seeks for the greater part of the play and finally receives. Hete initially wants to have the baby, but when both Paul and she lose their jobs, she knows they cannot financially support a child. Cyankali is "... keine Rechtfertigung von Abtreibungen, sondern es tritt statt dessen für eine soziale Ordnung ein, die Abtreibungen überflüssig macht. Dazu meint Wolf noch 1947: 'Der § 218 sollte nicht abgeschafft, sondern überflüssig werden ...'" (Müller, Dramatiker 188). Wolf is partially attempting to change the abortion law, but in a more fundamental sense, his goal is to reveal that society forces its members into certain roles and into acts which they would otherwise not undertake.

Hete's abortion is not the only crime the working class characters commit in Cyankali, and Wolf shows that society also drives them to these crimes. Almost every character in the play, whether working class or not, commits some type of crime: theft, receiving stolen property, or taking some part in an abortion. The last of these dominates the play. Sabine Schroeder-Krassnow notes that four of the six female characters in Cyankali are pregnant, while "... all of the women in the play somehow or other face the question of abortion" (36). Furthermore, Hete, the Doctor, Paul, Madame Heye, Prosnik, the *Dame*, and Mutter Fent are all guilty of having, or helping with abortions, though these characters have different motivations for breaking the anti-abortion law. Madame Heye, Prosnik and the Doctor all use their

ability in facilitating abortions to profit from the abortion law. The *Dame* does not want to have to undergo the burden of a pregnancy, while Hete and Paul feel that Hete needs to have an abortion because they cannot afford to raise a baby. The cumulative effect of these abortions and the large percentage of characters who engage in the abortion process in some fashion demonstrates the extent to which the abortion law *Paragraph 218* is problematic under the capitalist system. Pregnant women may want or need to have an abortion, and the financial incentive to help facilitate abortions tempts many people to do so, thereby becoming criminals. Kurt Merkel notes that the anti-abortion law as a practical matter only affected the proletariat—the ones who often needed abortions the most (79-80). Wolf depicted this disparate application of the law in the play itself inasmuch as the *Dame* had easy access to the desired abortion via the Doctor, while the working-class Hete was unable to obtain one from this same physician due to her poverty (Schutkowski 170). Through the depiction of the flawed and inherently unjust application of this *Paragraph 218*, Wolf demonstrates the need to change the abortion law and the class system under which this law functions.

In this same play, Wolf devotes considerable space to the crime of theft and shows how it is at times linked with the abortion problem. Such is the case with the pregnant Frau Klee. She is a thief, taking first some bread, potatoes and an egg from Hete, then later in this first scene she steals milk from Paul, even though he had just given her some food. Wolf establishes that she does this because of her children's and her own hunger. Similarly, Max goes to the doctor in the fourth scene, claiming

to be injured in order to get disability money after not working for several weeks. The doctor therefore believes that he, and the other seven men who had already seen him for the same reason that day, are stealing from the state. Also, while Paul is the victim of Frau Klee's minor theft in the first scene, in the third scene he is the one who steals, robbing the canteen with Max in order to feed himself and his neighbors.

While Max and Paul's theft is important as a further example of poverty forcing these people into criminality, Mutter Fent's reaction to this theft is even more enlightening. When Paul and Max come in with a large amount of food after not having worked for weeks, Mutter Fent is naturally suspicious and asks Paul whether they stole the food. When she discovers that the food was stolen, she stands up from the table and protests: "Fünzig Jahre bin ich ehrlich gewesen;" "Und jetzt haste Hunger" is Frau Klee's reply (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 305). It is also Frau Klee who later notices that Mutter Fent is quite heartily eating that stolen food. Mutter Fent is a woman who has been "honorable" her whole life, but in just a few weeks, as the hard times become harder still, she is at the point where she knowingly and willingly takes stolen property. Mutter Fent's claim that she has been honorable for fifty years further reminds members of the audience or the reader of the photo of Vater Fent, wearing his medal of service that is described in the stage directions at the beginning of the first scene. The picture gives Mutter Fent's claim of respectability here extra credence, as her husband had been honored for 25 years of faithful service. The audience sees that she eats the stolen food even though, as a product of a bourgeois morality, she is against it on principle (Sacksofsky 52). Wolf here portrays the

difficulty of remaining moral when “... die Rippen durch die Haut spießen!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 302).

As in Cyankali, financial pressures force characters in Die Jungens von Mons to illegal acts. Ellen Celloc is the character most prominently driven to desperate measures by her financial status in the latter play, but she is not the only one. Wood tells about himself, depicting how he also was driven to crime: “WOOD: ... acht Semester studiert, altem Herrn geht plötzlich die Luft aus... Wood junior macht Hilfsheizer, das Werk schließt... Eintänzer in der Gloriabar, die Garderobe genügt nicht... schwarze Möbelfuhren, wurde von Kollegen verpiffen...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 208). In this brief section, Wolf once again reveals the instability inherent in a capitalist society. He shows a character destined for a stable profession and high social position who has his future taken away from him by a stroke of fate. Taken alone, the simple telling of this story would leave some impression on the audience, albeit not as much as showing such acts onstage. It does however serve excellently to reinforce Ellen’s acts, interpreting and underscoring both her and Wood’s criminal acts as ones committed out of necessity, while also demonstrating that it is not only the poorest members of the working class who are affected by the caprice of a capitalist economy. Furthermore, in having Wood be a former *Heizer*, Wolf draws parallels to both Paul and Christian Schulze in Cyankali, intertextually emphasizing the financial instability in capitalism. Inasmuch as Cyankali had been very popular and controversial (and because there were barely two years between the premieres of these two plays), many audience members would be able to make this

connection, as well as the further connection to the relatively numerous instances in the earlier play in which the characters are driven to crime by circumstances that are beyond their control. Wolf was very adept at reinforcing and repeating his main points intratextually as well, particularly in Cyakali and Tai Yang erwacht. A cumulative effect of several themes, such as poverty, hunger, and unemployment, in these dramas builds upon and emphasizes those themes.

Wood's story also contributes to the theme of prostitution common to many of the plays. Just as Wood was forced by his financial straits to become an *Eintänzer*, the protagonists of Cyankali, Tai Yang erwacht and Die Jungens von Mons are all pressured to become prostitutes. In Tai Yang erwacht, Tschu Fu regularly takes a girlfriend whom he selects from among his workers, sleeps with her, and gives her money and gifts. Tai has to become factory owner Tschu Fu's *Freundin* in order to take the place of her sister Ma, whom Tschu Fu had initially chosen. He then takes Tai from her family's tiny hut to live with him in his bungalow, gives her beautiful clothes to wear, any present she wants, and enough money to hold a feast for her family and friends and give them presents. Tai assumes this role fully aware of its consequences and benefits: Tai, Ma and their fellow workers all know what happens to Tschu Fu's girlfriends. Despite all the financial benefits, Tai does not take this job willingly. She does so in order to save her 12-year-old sister Ma from Tschu Fu and clearly she does not want to do it. Her co-workers deride her for trying to catch Tschu Fu's attention:

TAI:... wenn ihr mit mir tauschen wollt? Na, Sy, Li, Han... Bitte!?

HAI: Sie hat Recht, wenn sie muß! (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 115).

Tai's becoming a type of prostitute here demonstrates the control the upper class has over the lower class. Both Tai and Ma need to earn money in order for their family to survive. They cannot quit working in Tschu Fu's factory because of their family's financial situation and must yield to the pressure that he asserts. One of these two girls has to become his mistress, and Tschu Fu places Tai in a position where she has to sacrifice her body and act against her will in order to protect her sister.

Dramatically, Tai becoming a type of prostitute provides part of the motivation for joining the Communist side by the end of the play. She becomes close enough to Tschu Fu to witness how he has her friend Wan tortured, and she despairs when she discovers that she was unable to save her sister, as Tschu Fu has taken Ma as one of his girlfriends. If perhaps Wolf does not supply a universally convincing motivation why Tai Yang becomes a Communist by the end of the play, Wolf at least provides a motivation for her to hate and to act against Tschu Fu, which at least tactically aligns her with the Communist party.

In Die Jungens von Mons also, societal forces exert influence on the main character to become a prostitute. *Verwalter* Donnog pressures Ellen to sleep with him in order to stop him from evicting her. If she has sex with him, he will forgive the back rent, or more likely give her a reprieve. This extra time gives her an opportunity to get a job, and Donnog in fact offers a recommendation for a job he has in mind if she will sleep with him. Furthermore, the implication is that the job for which the *Verwalter* offers his recommendation is that of a prostitute. Thus he intends not only

to sleep with her in exchange for possible financial remuneration, but also to turn her into a prostitute in the truest sense of the term. If Ellen had employment and sufficient money to pay for her meager dwelling and other basic needs, the *Verwalter* could not hold this type of force over her. As opposed to Tai Yang, Ellen does not submit to the pressure to exchange sex for financial gain, but she has to take drastic measures to resist this pressure. She first has to commit the alternate crime of passing a bad check, and she later has to forfeit her own sexual identity and pose as a man in order to support her family and avoid prostitution. Despite fending off becoming a prostitute, she is called one nevertheless in the third scene. The *Verwalter*, who has let himself be deceived and embarrassed by Ellen, tells her son Jim: “Du gehörst ins Gefängnis wie die Schlampe!” (Wolf, *Gesammelte* 3: 219). In the world of Wolf’s drama, and especially in *Die Jungens von Mons*, names and what people are called are of great importance. The fact that Ellen is called a *Schlampe*, even though she makes it clear that she neither is nor will become one, is therefore particularly notable. She is, in a sense, made into a prostitute despite all her efforts not to be one. Furthermore, in becoming Captain Campell and helping the wealthy industrialists Ramsbotton, Craik et al. against the working classes, she morally prostitutes herself to the upper classes. Through the prostitution theme in *Die Jungens von Mons*, Wolf demonstrates how members of the working class are forced to act against their will. Even when trying not to break the law or moral code, Ellen is compelled to do so.

As in *Tai Yang erwacht* and *Die Jungens von Mons*, economic pressures in *Cyankali* bring the protagonist to the verge of prostitution. When Hete is desperately

trying to find a way to get an abortion, Prosnik offers her his assistance if she will let him have his way with her. Even though she hates him and is disgusted by him, she is at the point of agreeing to his offer when Paul comes in and attacks him.

Furthermore, the idea of Hete's body being a commodity is evident from the first moments of the play, as cited earlier in this chapter: Frau Klee believes that Hete will be a *Dauerverdiener* because she is attractive and the men in power will keep her employed because of that (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 281). Her opinion is confirmed when Hete tells her mother of the praise of the *Generaldirektor* and his invitation to come with him to the sea, ostensibly as help for his wife. Inasmuch as Hete's pregnancy will make her gain weight, she will become less attractive to men, thereby endangering her job. Therefore she will likely get fired or demoted back to the *Sortierband* or the *Packraum* in order to make room for the next attractive young girl, just as Tschu Fu uses one girlfriend for as long as she is desirable to him, then abandons her for the next one.

Not only women, but rather all workers are forced into prostitution in a metaphorical sense. One of the few wares, perhaps the only one, the lower classes possess is their body. They invariably hire out that ware in some form, generally as workers who have to live off their manual labor, such as the women in Tai Yang erwacht or the "stramme Jungen" Paul and Max in Cyankali. In the words of Marx and Engels: "... labourers [...] must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce" (9). Military service, like that of the Jungens von Mons or the sailors in "Krassin" rettet "Italia" and Die Matrosen von Cattaro, is

another means of renting out or even giving one's body—at the meanest and most objectified level as cannon fodder. In Wolf's words: "Für den werktätigen Menschen des Maschinenzeitalters ist die Erhaltung der Gesundheit, die Erhaltung seiner Nerven- und Arbeitskraft Voraussetzung jeder Leistung. Sie ist sein einziger wirklicher Besitz (Ausgewählte XIV: 62). However, obviously and invariably, the body breaks down, whether due to old age, sickness, hunger, accident or other factors. The body becomes less and less useful with time. Wolf portrays several times over the course of these plays what occurs once a person is considered of no further use: the elites cast them aside: "labourers [...] live only so long as they find work, and [...] find work only so long as their labour increases capital" (Marx and Engels 9). When Han becomes sick in Tai Yang erwacht, Tschu Fu sends her away, to have her job taken by another worker. Tschu Fu treats his *Freundinnen* the same way: "LI: Der schwarze Gorilla nimmt die Mädchen, preßt sie wie Orangen und wirft die trockenen Schalen weg" (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 115). When the *Jungens von Mons* have accomplished their task in the play of that title, the industrials disband this organization, leaving its members poor and unemployed just as they were before joining the group, reconfirming that the individual is only valuable to the degree that she or he serves the purposes of the upper class.

With the "Christian-Schulze-Lied," a song sung several times in Cyankali, Wolf most clearly depicts the way in which financial circumstances can lead a person to crime and ruin. The titular character has similarities to Paul and other characters in this play:

Der Heizer Christian Schulze, sonst ein rechtlicher Mann,
 Eines Tages er zu seiner Arbeitsstelle kam;
 Betriebseinschränkung! – Er ward nochmals entlohnt ... (Wolf,
Gesammelte 2: 302, 330).

Like Paul, Christian is a stoker who loses his job. Like Max and several other workers, Christian's solution is to try stealing money from the state. Max pretends to be disabled in an attempt to receive disability money, whereas Christian legitimately receives disability money because of an illness, but he changes the dates in order to get more money. Christian's future looks dark for him once it is known that he is a criminal:

Der Heizer Christian Schulze, ein Betrüger von Rufe,
 Schnell sank er jetzt tiefer von Stufe zu Stufe:
 Er stahl, stach, schoß, bekam sehr schlechte Manieren,
 Drei Schupos killte er, hatte nichts zu verlieren (Wolf, Gesammelte 2:
 306).

Christian's life goes into a downward spiral after he is sent to trial for fraud. Once he gets a reputation of being a criminal, he ends up becoming a proper criminal: stabbing, robbing, shooting and murdering. This man who had to go on the dole in order to care for himself, his wife and his children—surviving for a year on eighteen Marks a week for seven people—was driven to an act of desperation which ruined his life. While it only takes Max a few weeks of hunger before committing criminal acts in the play, his fate will be similar. Even when half of the workers are let back on the

job in the seventh scene, he knows that they will not allow him to work there again: the people who were with Paul during the break-in at the canteen have little chance of employment (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 331). Fitting for a man whose future is likely to follow a path similar to Christian's violent life, Max's last words in the play are a death threat to Prosnik: "Und Sie Arsch mit Ohren, Sie knistern die nächsten Tage vielleicht im Sarge! Mahlzeit!" (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 331).

Wolf associates Christian Schulze with the characters in the play as well as with the audience, and he makes the association explicit in the refrain:

Klar Mensch!

Mit Christian Schulze die Operation begann,

Morgen kommen auch du und ich daran ... (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 302, 303).

After everyone stops singing at the second refrain, Frau Klee reacts to one of the song's lines, saying: "Morgen kommen auch du und ich daran... Du, das ist schon kein Lied mehr" (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 303). She alludes to the analogy between events in the song and the situation of herself and the other characters onstage. The song reminds those onstage and in the play's audience that the economic situation of the characters in this play are not exceptional cases, but quite common (Riley 319). While the verses of the song are being sung, the audience connects the song with the characters in the play. With the refrain, the play's audience or readers connect themselves—the "du und ich"—with the song, as do the characters onstage, as Frau Klee shows. This process of multiple associations interlocks three levels of

identification: it joins Christian Schulze in the song, the characters in the play (which also make up the song's audience), and finally the play's audience. This multi-leveled effect reinforces and heightens the identification between all three. By thus intensifying identification between the play's characters and its audience, Wolf increases the dramatic impact of the play which can in turn increase the persuasive impact of the work.

6 The Victimizer

The preceding chapter examined the means with which Friedrich Wolf helped establish the victim status of the working class in the dramas he wrote between the time he joined the Communist party in 1928 and his flight from Germany in early 1933. He did so by depicting the meager conditions of the poor, the threat of unemployment, class inequality, and crime and its causes. Such a depiction is crucial for Wolf in his attempt to establish classed society as a problem, however it is only a part of that effort.

To have an actual victim, one requires a victimizer (Stewart, “Ego” 250): an entity—a person, group, thing, or system—which causes the plight of the victim, which in the case of Wolf’s plays of this period is the working class. If there is no victimizer, there is no pattern of victimage, and therefore no social problem which can be solved by the Communist party. Framing a victimizer is an essential component of a social movement rhetoric, but in the earliest plays of this period, Cyankali and “Krassin” rettet “Italia”, Friedrich Wolf pointed to a victimizer only implicitly, if at all. Soon, however, the author began to represent the upper class as an entity which caused the victimized status of the working class. His attempt to portray the upper class as a victimizer continued and increased until his last play of the Weimar Republic, Bauer Baetz, in which he framed the capitalist system itself as the victimizer.

6.1 Inequality as the Cause of the Plight of the Working Class

In Wolf's attempts to support the Communist movement in his dramas, his efforts to depict a victimizer initially become significant only with Die Matrosen von Cattaro. The class make-up of Die Matrosen von Cattaro is different from that in Wolf's earlier dramas of this period. The presence of the upper classes is greater than in Cyankali or "Krassin" rettet "Italia"—though still minimal, and only one character represents the middle class here: the Lieutenant. This character plays much the same role as Prosnik and Dr. Möller play in Cyankali, acting as thorns in the side of the lower classes. Like Prosnik, the Lieutenant is ready to punish any supposed affront to his authority, and like Dr. Möller, he is eager to curry favor with members of the upper class, represented here by the captain. The middle-class characters in both plays make a bad situation for the poor even worse, while not exactly causing it. Wolf however at least begins to reveal that unequal distribution—not only of money, but also of power, space and time—benefitting the upper classes is a cause of the plight of the poor with Die Matrosen von Cattaro.

The higher level officers have a much better life than do the sailors: "... Rapport... Frühstück... Deckdienst... Mittagessen... Rapport... Abendessen... Wein, Weib, Gesang, und das jeden Tag von vorne ..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 43). Wolf does not argue that there is anything inherently wrong with pleasure. He does not portray the good food that the captain eats, the cigarillo he smokes during his first entrance, or the wine that he and the lieutenant drink (while the latter is on duty) negatively. They serve chiefly as markers of the higher classes. In the third scene,

Wolf demonstrates that these pleasures are nonetheless enjoyed at the expense of the lower classes. The sailors scream out that they are hungry, making enough noise to bring the captain on deck to make the lieutenant silence them. The sailors confront the captain, charging that their meat rations have been malappropriated, either sent to the officers' mess or sold off in order to line the officers' pockets with the proceeds of the sale. The captain questions the sailors for specifics, probing them for details he knows they cannot give, while never denying the veracity of the claim. As he does in the case of the wealthy Lady in Cyankali being able to obtain an abortion, Wolf demonstrates in Die Matrosen von Cattaro once again how the upper classes are able to circumvent the law—the law they in fact created—and he simultaneously intimates that social inequality is inherently unfair. Through this scene between the captain and the sailors, Wolf shows in a clear and straightforward manner how the former's surplus causes the latter's deficiency, while he also shows the corruption of the captain and therefore villifies him, which increases the audience's sympathy for the mutineers. By having the captain cause the sailors' impoverished condition, Wolf clearly establishes him, and by extension the elite class as a whole, as a victimizer.

Wolf's attempt to frame a victimizer in Tai Yang erwacht differs greatly from attempts to do so in his earlier plays. An upper-class character, Tschu Fu, is much more prominent than any in Cyankali, "Krassin" rettet "Italia", or Die Matrosen von Cattaro. Tschu Fu is also more pronounced than any of the middle-class characters in Tai Yang erwacht, having much more time onstage and many more lines than either Feng or the *Aufseher*. Except for Rockefeller in Wolf's prior play, the radio drama

John D. erobert die Welt, Tschu Fu is the first character from the upper class to receive significant stage time in any of Wolf's dramas of the period under discussion. Whereas Rockefeller was the focus of John D. erobert die Welt and the play rarely strayed outside of Rockefeller's milieu, Tschu Fu is an outsider in the predominantly lower class environment of Tai Yang erwacht. This contrast allows Wolf to more directly depict the upper class as victimizers for the problems of the lower classes. Tschu Fu directly causes many of the problems of the poor, subjugating his workers both financially and sexually, and a verse of the song which begins the second scene emphasizes Tschu Fu as victimizer:

Sagt, wer schwingt das Bambusrohr,

Huhu?

Und zieht uns das Fell übers Ohr?

Tschu Fu! (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 114).

According to this verse, Tschu Fu is the direct cause of the problems of these workers. He is the one they name as their victimizer, despite the fact that they also face Tschu Fu's representatives such as the *Aufseher*, Feng, and—for a time—Tai.

Wolf depicts the unequal distribution of wealth among the classes in Tai Yang erwacht, as he does in many of these plays. As mentioned earlier, Tai Yang and several generations of her family live together in a single hut. The factory owner Tschu Fu, on the other hand, has a large house complete with tea room and parlor. He furthermore has a house in the country, and of course he also owns the factory. Apart from showing a distinct financial inequity between the classes, this comparison

also demonstrates that money and other physical possessions are not the only materials which the upper-classes possess in surplus in stark contrast to (and to the detriment of) the working classes. In this instance Wolf shows the uneven distribution of living space, and he similarly shows leisure time to be unequally distributed. These disparities are related to the universal social differences just as much as is financial disparity. In Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf more forcefully underscores these various inequalities which were already present to a lesser degree in the earlier two stage plays.

The rich, for instance, have living space in abundance whereas the poor have little. Tai's home is not the only place in which the poor are cramped together; the workplace is similarly crowded. Several people work packed together in Tschu Fu's factory, just as several people live crowded in Tai's tiny home. By contrast, Tschu Fu appears to live alone in his home, and a country home is a double excess. Land and space are valuable commodities, especially in the city of Shanghai in which the play is set, as Shanghai was (as it still is today) one of the most heavily populated cities in the world and is also bordered on two sides by water. Space is a commodity which is more finite than money, especially to Wolf's target audience who lived during the hyperinflation years of early 1920s Germany. The way that one person's surplus leads to another person's want is even easier to understand through space than through money. When a person takes more than his share of space, he is necessarily taking that space from others. Unlike with money, there is no more space to make.

The working classes were cramped and crowded in Wolf's earlier stage plays as well. Cyankali opened with Hete polishing several sets of children's shoes, showing that many people are living together. Living space is a clear concern for Hete. In the fourth scene when she asks the doctor for help, she gives him her reasons for wanting to terminate the pregnancy: "... Hilfe! Es darf nicht kommen: Es hat keinen Fleck zum Liegen, keine Windel, keinen Korb, keine Nahrung..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 314). A main concern—in this quote her sequentially first concern—is space. Wolf portrays the working class's lack of living space from the outset in Die Matrosen von Cattaro as well. The sailors all have to live and work together, while the captain lives apart from them. The "*Matrosenlogis unter der Back des Kreuzers 'St. Georg'*" serves as the setting for the first scene, with five adult men in what the stage directions describe as a "nieder[er] Raum[]" (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 9). However, there are two weaknesses in Wolf's depiction of the inequality of space in Die Matrosen von Cattaro. First, there is a reason for the captain to live separately: a captain of a warship would clearly need individual quarters in order to review material and consider command decisions privately. Second, Wolf does not provide a contrast for the sailors' cramped living conditions by depicting the captain's or the officers' quarters in the play, which would better establish the discrepancy in the minds of the audience.

Whereas in Cyankali Wolf presents nothing about the lady's home or homes, although he does present her ability to travel, and he likewise reveals little about the captain's or other officers' quarters in Die Matrosen von Cattaro, in Tai Yang erwacht

he shows a clear inequality between the situation of the poor and that of the rich.

With such a contrast, Wolf more distinctly depicts how the rich have an overabundance of space to live leisurely, which necessarily comes at the expense of others. This depiction of inequality not only bears a function in Wolf's rhetoric by establishing a victimizer, but it also solidifies the working class versus upper class dialectic as protagonist and antagonist, respectively. In doing so, Wolf further cements his social definition of the working class as an active protagonist working against the antagonistic forces of the societal elites.

Wolf also shows in Tai Yang erwacht that the working classes possess a short supply of another essential substance: time. As is the case with space, time—in terms of the number of hours in a day, days in a week, etc.—is a finite commodity. The workers have no free time, because they must always work in order to survive. This was a very topical idea during the years of the Weimar Republic. Work hours were a major point of contention for German workers at that time, who legally won an eight-hour workday at the beginning of the Weimar Republic, only to lose it again in 1923 when employers tried to gain more control of their businesses (Weitz, “Power” 281-282). The play mentions four times that these workers must labor twelve hours a day, and Tai states that they have to work these long hours seven days a week. Furthermore, Han, one of Tai Yang's co-workers, cannot even take the time necessary to recover from her lung disease. She needs to go to the hospital, but she will not go because she knows that Tschu Fu will replace her the moment she leaves. Han became sick at Tschu Fu's factory, because she has to sit under a leaking pipe.

Tschu Fu will not fix the pipe because doing so would cost him money: both the money it would take to fix it, and the profits he would not be able to make because the workspace would have to be empty during the time the pipe is being fixed. Furthermore, by presenting Han's illness and its consequences, Wolf also points to how the working class have to take jobs which can shorten their lifetimes, due to poor working conditions or inherently dangerous jobs.

Whereas his workers cannot even take a day off for rest, relaxation, or even recovery, Tschu Fu is able to plan a nice stay at his country house in the third scene. He also has a hobby: he studies the esoterica of making tea. In all four of these stage plays, Wolf makes clear that the upper classes have ample amounts of time. Upper-class characters in all four of these plays have their own leisure time activities. Even though the *Dame* appears only briefly in Cyankali, the audience learns that she plays hockey and travels, while Hope Ramsbotton from Die Jungens von Mons is interested in breeding and racing greyhounds. In Die Matrosen von Cattaro, the captain has the time necessary to lead his life of "Wein, Weib und Gesang" (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 43). Wolf illustrates the phrase "Time is money" onstage. The rich have time because they have money, while the poor have no time because they need to earn enough money to live. Wolf depicts, albeit in a tangential way, that the lack of time is due to the lack of money: the poor have no time because of the unequal distribution of wealth. In Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf fully illuminates how the lack of space, time and money for the working class are all interrelated and all due to the

abundance of these assets possessed by the rich. By taking and having more than their share, they leave less for others.

Wolf continues the theme of disparity in time with his next play, Die Jungens von Mons, though to a lesser degree. While Hope has her greyhounds, the workers still have no leisure time despite being unemployed; they spend much of their time looking for work. An emphasis on spatial inequality continues here as well. As in the three earlier plays, Wolf establishes the paucity of space for the working class from the very beginning of the play. The setting for the first scene is the “Wohnküche,” the “[k]leiner Raum” where Ellen Celloc lives with her son and her mother (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 200). As with the Fent’s apartment in Cyankali, the rent on Ellen’s “Wohnküche” is past due: even the little space the working class characters have is in jeopardy. By contrast, the audience learns that Ramsbotton is staying in a suite at the Palace Hotel, has a country home, and has a farm in Mayfair. In Die Jungens von Mons, Wolf presents the great spatial contrast to Ellen’s dwellings by setting scenes in both Ramsbotton’s hotel suite and his country home. Wolf therefore physically shows the disparity between the poor and the rich onstage in this play, as he also does in Tai Yang erwacht, though not in the earlier stage plays of this period.

6.2 Upper-Class Indifference

In his agitprop works of this period, Wolf depicts how the upper classes retain their social privileges, even though they cause ill consequences to the poor and to

society as a whole by doing so. At the beginning of Wolf's first agitprop work, Wie stehen die Fronten?, the *Mitteltrupp* sings "Wir haben kein Brot, doch wir haben Kultur! / Die Kinderspeisungen mußten schwinden, / Um die Fürsten mit Millionen abzufinden" (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 110). These lines provide another example that the surplus of one person or group leads to a lack for others. Soon afterward, Wolf shows that the rich do not care if the matters and situations that are beneficial to them are injurious to others. He demonstrates that the upper class desire inflation and war, because they are good for business:

DIREKTOR *erregt*:... dachtet ihr auch, daß unsere Warenpreise
infolge der hohen Arbeitslöhne noch über dem Weltmarktpreis
liegen, daß England mit seiner Halbinflation jetzt billiger liefert als
wir, daß wir im Export schon längst nicht mehr konkurrenzfähig
sind, daß unsre Fabrikneubauten, die stilliegen, jährlich Millionen
Zinsen fressen, daß, wenn nicht eine neue Inflation kommt oder
Waffenlieferungen nach Japan, um unser unglückliches Volk aus
dem Sumpf der arbeitslosen Müßiggänger wieder
heraufzuführen... (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 121).

The *Direktor* does not care about the human toll a greater inflation or a war would take, especially inasmuch as the costs will be paid by the working class. First, the rich do not become soldiers (cf. Die Matrosen von Cattaro, Die Jungens von Mons and Von New York bis Schanghai). Second, Wolf shows that the upper classes remove themselves from any great financial loss, and they can decrease wages (in this

play by a proposed fifteen per cent) instead of losing money themselves. The societal elites victimize the lower classes by pursuing their own ends regardless of the consequences to others.

The song “Arbeiternot ist Bauertod,” which appears in Wolf’s second and third agitprop plays, several times in the latter, also depicts the upper classes as the victimizer. In Von New York bis Schanghai, Wang sings “Wer bekommt die Kredite? Die Großen im Land! / Wer bekommt Steuerstundung? Der Fabrikant! / Wer bekommt die Steuer vom Lohn abgezwickelt?” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 186). Here Wolf demonstrates how the wealthy get even wealthier on the backs on the poor. Also in this play, the *Sprecher* reads from the “Osloer Morgenblatt:”

“Es klingt vielleicht brutal; aber aus Gründen der Konjunktur wäre ein Krieg im Osten sehr erwünscht. Ein Krieg wird den Bedarf an Schiffstonnage vergrößern, das Risiko der Warentransporte wird steigen, die Preise ziehen ebenfalls an, und mit ihnen wird die Spekulation sich beleben! Hier schwarz auf weiß!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 200-201).

Whereas the *Direktor* in Wolf’s first agitprop play expressed similar sentiments, in Von New York bis Schanghai there is no profiteer wishing for it; it is merely an economic fact. Its appearance in the newspaper brings with it the sheen of truth, as the *Sprecher* points out. Wolf also shows many times in this play—as he did in earlier ones—that soldiers are simply workers in military uniforms (Wolf,

Gesammelte 7: 170, 179, 229, 231). Workers are the ones who must fight and die in these wars in order that the economy can improve and make money for the capitalists.

A pattern of victimage between upper-class victimizer and working-class victim is also apparent in the simultaneous “LAUFBAND-SZENE,” in which Chinese workers, unemployed German workers, and the *Fabrikant*, Reporter, and Lady appear in three separate groups. In this scene, Wolf depicts how the actions of the *Fabrikant* have caused the unemployment of the German workers while further causing workers in China to be overworked and underpaid: the fact that the Chinese workers work for eight cents an hour, ten hours a day is repeatedly mentioned (Wolf, Gesammelte 172). The actions of the *Fabrikant* are caused by the capitalist market: “FABRIKANT *unwillig*: Natürlich gibt es Arbeitslose! Bin ich vielleicht schuld an der Wirtschaftskrise?! Kann ich auf dem Weltmarkt konkurrieren, wenn wir die Produktionskosten nicht senken?!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 171-172). Wolf demonstrates here how the demands of the market turn the upper classes into victimizers of the working classes and how these victimizers appear indifferent to the results of their actions on others. By insisting that the German workers will hunger without jobs and that the Chinese workers are working for “Hungerlöhne” (Wolf, Gesammelte 172), Wolf once again demonstrates that a surplus (here a monetary surplus) causes a deficit for others, proving that the *Fabrikant*—and by extension all societal elites—are victimizers. Inasmuch as this character is fully aware of these consequences, his action emphasizes his indifference to the suffering of the poor.

The wealthy are victimizers in these works, because they not only take more than a fair share of available material (money, space or time), an act which necessarily causes a deficit of these assets for others, but they also advocate war and inflation—from which they profit while others suffer and die. Whether the societal elites necessarily intend these actions to hurt the working class is inconsequential; they do in fact turn members of the working class into victims, and further, they are often cognizant of the negative consequences for others, yet they act regardless of these consequences.

6.3 One-Sided Class War

Inasmuch as the tactics of the upper classes cause the problems of the poor, Wolf is setting them up as the devil against which the the victim group—the working class—must fight. Wolf also demonstrates that the upper classes already know their opposition, Craik stating: “... nur einer gespaltenen Arbeiterschaft gegenüber haben wir eine Chance” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 251). With this statement, Wolf reveals that a class war is already taking place. The upper classes are not merely indifferent to the working classes, rather they already see them as a collective opponent which they must keep divided and weak; they actively operate against the workers.

In Die Jungens von Mons, Wolf presents more upper class characters and presents them to a greater extent than in any of his other plays from this period except John D. erobert die Welt. By no means does Wolf neglect the other classes in Die Jungens von Mons; half of the characters belong to the working class, and other

characters represent different levels of the middle class. However, in the earlier plays set in a primarily working class milieu, Wolf represented the elite class by mainly or exclusively one character. In this play, three characters who represent the upper class appear throughout the play: Ramsbotton, Craik and Hope. Already in Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf makes—perhaps has to make—a change: Wolf

... mußte ... seine bisherige Beschränkung auf die Darstellung der Unterdrückten und sich Empörenden, die den Klassenfeind nur als Randfigur zuließ, verlassen und versuchen, ein umfassenderes Bild von der kapitalistischen Gesellschaft zu vermitteln (Merkel 142).

Having even one prominent upper-class character (Tschu Fu) in that play opens up much more rhetorical ground for Wolf than was available in earlier plays because, in Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf is able to depict in depth the social inequality between Tschu Fu and the others. The audience sees what others think of that character, and how he treats others. Having three members of the upper class in Die Jungens von Mons once again makes it possible for Wolf to draw the contrast between classes, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Wolf also demonstrates the differences between the classes in this play: the concerns and interests of each class comes out in the content of their speech. On the one hand, Wolf has the unemployed characters tell their stories of poverty and describe the depression the country finds itself in; one character even mentions the unemployment rates. On the other hand, the upper-class characters talk of dog-racing and cars, while their financial positions are sufficiently secure that Hope can

mockingly say: “Oh, ich weiß, ‘düstere Wolken hängen über unserem schwergeprüften Land... eine Wirtschaftskrise von nie-gekanntem Ausmaß...’” when asking her father for money (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 215). Hope’s saying this in such a sarcastic tone shows that she does not take these economic matters seriously because she is so far removed from them or indifferent to them, which the lower classes are not and cannot be.

Wolf goes less into depth about the effect of social disparity and focuses more on its cause in Die Jungens von Mons, demonstrating how the societal elites manipulate the middle class in order to guard and increase their financial advantage. Members of the upper classes are able to exploit even the supposed guardians of working classes for their purposes, such as trade union secretary Miller. This character first appears in the third scene, when he comes to confront the industrialists Ramsbotton and Craik. Soon however he reveals the weaknesses of the union to them, and in the seventh scene he purposefully relates the plans and tactics of the Minority Movement, the Communist party. The wealthy are easily able to turn this guardian of the poor against them, and Wolf provides an example of them doing so in the following exchange:

RAMSBOTTON. ... *In ‘heiligem Zorn’*. Jetzt, da die Nation von einer Wirtschaftskrise geschüttelt wird auf Tod und Leben, jetzt fallen Sie unserem schwergeprüften Volk in den Rücken, jetzt wollen Sie Ihr Parteisüppchen kochen? Sind Sie noch ein Brite, oder gehören Sie vielleicht auch schon zu jenen Roten?

MILLER *gekränkt*: Mr. Ramsbotton, ich bin ein Funktionär der Trade Unions (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 227).

Ramsbotton employs the weapon of name-calling, strongly questioning Miller's patriotism in the above quote, and he further draws the false dichotomy patriotism-Communism which is a further attack on the latter. At this point, Miller can only put up a weak defense. Soon afterward, Miller once again attempts to plead his case:

MILLER: Eine gerechte Lohnpolitik aber ...

RAMSBOTTON: Lohn, Lohn, Lohn? Was unserer Wirtschaft in erster Linie not tut, Verehrtester, das ist ein neuer Geist, eine neue Spar- und Arbeitsdisziplin!

MILLER: Stimmt, bloß bedenken Sie, meine Herren, daß heute die Lebenshaltung des Arbeiters... (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 228).

In this section, Ramsbotton attacks Miller with moral weapons. Although Miller simply desires a "gerechte Lohnpolitik" here, Ramsbotton charges that the only thing that concerns Miller is money: "Lohn, Lohn, Lohn." Ramsbotton condemns this demand as the vice of greed while simultaneously demanding the virtue of discipline—a morality which the upper class have thrust upon others without actually following it themselves in the play. Miller has to at least partially acquiesce here. By the time the conversation between Miller, Craik, and Ramsbotton is finished, the upper class characters have converted Miller into an agent against the working class:

RAMSBOTTON: ... Bevor die Streikposten nicht zurückgezogen, bedingungslos zurückgezogen sind, ist keine Verhandlung möglich.

MILLER: Die Gewerkschaft wird ihr möglichstes versuchen.

RAMSBOTTON: Versuchen? – Bringen Sie Ergebnisse! (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 228).

In Wolf's next play, Wie stehen die Fronten?, he brings back a very similar trade union character, bearing the likewise similar name "Müller," and he too supports the upper classes as they demand wage decreases for an already underpaid workforce. In Die Jungens von Mons however, Wolf more effectively portrays how the upper class actively manipulate others to achieve their own ends: Ramsbotton and Craik turn Miller into one of their agents before the eyes of the audience, whereas Müller in Wie stehen die Fronten? has already made that conversion. Inasmuch as the audience does not see the ways in which the societal elites manipulate others onstage in this agitprop play but only the end result of their efforts, Wolf's portrayal of their attempts to work against the working class is not quite as effective as in Die Jungens von Mons.

Wolf reveals the range of the upper class manipulation in Die Jungens von Mons much more than in the earlier plays. The most obvious way the upper classes use others to maintain their wealth is the creation of the titular army, which they form in order to crush opposition and get their workers back to work without having to bow to their pressure. Wolf demonstrates other types of manipulation as well. For instance, the upper classes also indoctrinate children from an early age by way of the

educational system. Marx and Engels noted that the “influence of the ruling class” in education is a problem (22), and Wolf likewise depicts the problems of the capitalist educational system in Die Jungens von Mons. At the proper beginning of the play, Ellen’s son Jim is made to learn his school lesson by rote: every adjective and verb tense must be repeated precisely as it is stated in the book or it is considered wrong. His grandmother chastens him: “Jim! Man sagt seine Schulaufgaben richtig her; sag es richtig auf, wie es sich gehört” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 200). Children receive a set knowledge which must be learned, and it must be learned fully and without deviation: no outside information, such as the Mons-Lied or Ellen’s first-hand accounts of the war, is allowed to challenge the primacy of the official view of history as given in the schoolbook. The books, of course, bear only the perspective of the upper classes, who own the printing presses, establish the publishing companies and pay the writers. Like Müller does later in the play, the grandmother in this instance acts as an agent of the wealthy and powerful through her attempt to spread the perspective of the societal elites, although she does it unwittingly.

The upper classes also attempt to control the government. Craik suggests that he and the others ignore the workers who are striking at their mines, thinking that they would either get bored or violent. If the latter happens, Craik surmises the government would take the industrialists’ side against the strikers and loan them millions of pounds at no interest. In this situation, Craik acts as a chess player. He knows the possible moves his opponents will make, and the possible consequences of those moves. The upper classes are not powerful merely because of their wealth or

their social standing, but because they can manipulate the other classes and control institutions like the government, the army and even the educational system, as shown above.

Wolf perhaps portrays most clearly in Die Jungens von Mons that upper-class control is based in subtlety, silence and obfuscation. He had shown manipulation by the upper classes in earlier plays and the captain's "psychological" means of controlling the sailors in Die Matrosen von Cattaro return in Jungens, here labeled as the "subtilere Methoden" of the rich (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 274). Craik states: "... die Industrie braucht die Lautstärke des Konferenzzimmers; was darüber ist, ist vom Übel" (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 251). Soon afterwards he repeats to Ramsbotton: "... bloß jetzt keinen Lärm machen, keinen Lärm" (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 251), when the latter gets excited in the middle of a crowd. He further states that "... keinesfalls dürfte die Sache [die Jungens] so aussehen wie eine 'faschistische Schutztruppe der Grubenbarone' ..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 226). Craik realizes that the upper classes work in secret, and must do so, to maintain their power and privilege. If and when the lower classes realize how their social superiors manipulate and use them, they will rebel against them.

Wolf understands and conveys the upper class need for secrecy in Die Jungens von Mons, depicting what can happen when the working classes grasp how they are being manipulated. Wolf shows this from the opening scene of the play, mentioned above, in which Ellen's son Jim is doing his homework: learning his school lesson, the boy spots an apparent contradiction and sees that the schoolbook is flawed. In

response he stands up, thereby physically severing the link to the propaganda of the rich. Furthermore, the word Wolf uses here for standing up, *aufstehen*, has an important second meaning: to rise up in rebellion. This is precisely what Craik and *Oberleutnant* Sharpe, the retired military officer who is working with Craik and Ramsbotton to bust the mining strike, wish to prevent. They want to keep their machinations secret for the very reason shown in this episode with Jim. Sharpe states: “Weil das Ganze anonym bleiben muß, keinesfalls Staub aufwirbeln darf; was glauben Sie, wenn die Presse davon Wind bekäme, die ganze Arbeiterschaft würde rebellisch ...” (Wolf, *Gesammelte* 3: 274). Through the comments of Craik and Sharpe, Wolf reveals that the upper classes work actively and stealthily against the lower classes. In this play, the power of the societal elites lies in ability to manipulate, and this ability to manipulate depends on the poor not realizing that they are being controlled.

In *Die Jungens von Mons* more than the other three stage plays, the upper class works to keep their social advantages, and they thereby show a disregard for their social inferiors. They form a militia—the Jungens von Mons—to break the strike and thereby bring their business troubles to a close, and they support violent means to accomplish these ends. Furthermore, Craik is ready to terminate the militia’s services as soon as the group is no longer useful, once again leaving its members unemployed. Most tellingly, Ramsbotton had suggested a wage decrease for the workers because times were hard for him and his fellow industrialists. Although he has immense amounts of wealth and power, he has no qualms about

taking money away from the less fortunate in order to maintain his social position. Wolf further demonstrates that this incident is not an isolated occurrence. Miller, the trade union leader, tells the industrialists that real wages for workers had decreased significantly in the previous 14 years; the upper classes were increasingly and steadily becoming wealthier at the expense of the workers. Yet, having just heard Miller's report, the upper-class characters continue to push for the wage cut.

Die Jungens von Mons is not the only—nor the first—play in which Wolf uses the idea that the upper classes attempt to control government and thought; this idea features prominently in the earlier John D. erobert die Welt. In this radio play, Rockefeller becomes extremely powerful. He eventually controls almost everything and everyone, even to the point of flouting government authority. The seventh scene of this play depicts the conflict between two opposing forces through a simultaneous scene; this scene fades back and forth between a debate in the United States Congress on the one hand and a discussion between Rockefeller and his Standard Oil partners in his study on the other. Wolf thereby demonstrates how Rockefeller works against any obstacle in his way, even the main legislative body of the land, and this play as a whole verifies his success. Rockefeller's principal opponent in this scene, Senator Sherman, states: "Der Dollar ist mächtiger als der Staat und mächtiger als die Justiz!" (Wolf Gesammelte 7: 89), and Rockefeller's boundless wealth makes him infinitely powerful. In the following section, Wolf shows how Rockefeller maintains his power:

JOHN D.: Kid!! – Also fünfundsiebzig Millionen sind noch auf dem Wohlfahrtsfonds. Schreibe davon sofort zehn Millionen ab für die Volksschulen in Pennsylvanien und Ohio, zehn Millionen für religiöse Zwecke, zehn Millionen für die Universität Chikago und für den Ankauf eines Rembrandt oder Raffael für die Galerie New York (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 96).

Giving these institutions such vast sums also affords him a great deal of control over them. In one sentence, Wolf shows Rockefeller gaining influence in religion, education (both higher and elementary), and art: perhaps the three fields which most affect an individual's perspective. Rockefeller is clearly attempting to control public opinion. He calls these enormous financial donations his "... stärkste Waffe" at the very end of this same scene (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 97). Wolf clearly considered this revelation of the victimizer's methods of controlling the lower classes to be so important that he used this section—in a minutely changed version—as the motto which precedes the opening of this play.

Wolf most directly demonstrates how the upper classes are already fighting against the working class in the agitprop play Wie stehen die Fronten? The proletarian factory worker Franz realizes that a class struggle is already taking place, although much of the working class is unaware of this situation. When trade unionist Müller attempts to tell the workers not to take any other action for fear of provoking a class war, Franz states:

FRANZ: “Den Klassenkampf pro-vo-zieren!” Hört ihr’s Genossen?
 Wir provozieren den Klassenkampf! Und es ist kein
 Klassenkampf, wenn das Kapital euch Hiebe auf den Magen
 versetzt; es ist kein Klassenkampf, wenn man euch wegen
 rückständiger Miete aus den Wohnungen wirft; es ist kein
 Klassenkampf, wenn man die Nazi horden [sic] kaserniert, bezahlt
 und bewaffnet?! (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 143).

Here Franz informs the other workers onstage, and of course the audience members, that the upper classes are already fighting “Klasse gegen Klasse,” in the words of the song which appears throughout the play. The last section of this quote also points to events more thoroughly portrayed in Wolf’s previous play, Die Jungens von Mons. Soon afterward, Marie reveals another tactic that members of the upper class use against the working class: “ZURUF Marie: ... uns wirft man auf die Straße, wenn wir kämpfen wollen!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 145). This quote refers specifically to Franz’s having been fired, while it simultaneously points to a broader practice of employers dismissing the more radical elements in the workforce (Weitz, Strategies 11-12). It also frames employment as a political issue. The elites and their agents do not want the workers to realize that financial matters are political. Müller in fact attempts to separate these two ideas: “MÜLLER: Politische Fragen stehen in einer Gewerkschaftsversammlung nicht zur Diskussion! Wir haben uns hier lediglich mit ökonomischen Fragen zu beschäftigen“ (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 143). Of course, the audience knows not to trust him from the beginning of the play. Not only does he

bear a name and position similar to Miller from Die Jungens von Mons—his name is also similar to Dr. Möller in Cyankali—but Wolf literally groups him together with *Obermeister* Wuttke and the *Direktor* in the opening song “Klasse gegen Klasse,” demonstrating on which side his loyalties lie.

In his second agitprop play, Von New York bis Schanghai, Wolf continues to uncover the means with which the upper classes retain their societal privileges. “Information and facts are always ordered into interpretive frames ...” (Gamson 65), and as the most powerful group in society, the upper class defines reality. The *Fabrikant* reveals that he knows how malleable reality is when he addresses the public: “... was heißt das: ‘Stimmt das?’ Alles stimmt und stimmt nicht!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 202). Earlier, Wolf showed the Reporter in league with the *Fabrikant* and the Lady (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 167-168). He spreads the views of the upper classes and the bourgeoisie, telling the audience:

REPORTER *drängt* [den Sprecher] *zurück, zum Publikum*:
 Meine Herrschaften, hören Sie nicht auf diese Hetzfanfaren!
 Damit Sie alles richtig erfahren,
 Hören Sie auf mich, vertrauen Sie mir!
 Denn ich biete Ihnen das Wichtigste und Aktuellste
 Von der ganzen Welt ohne Tendenz
 Auf's genaueste und schnellste! (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 168).

The Reporter's statement is obviously false, and the announcer discredits him immediately afterwards. Here Wolf depicts the upper class creating the official

version of reality: the wealthy use the many means at their disposal to spread their views, while—in this case literally—pushing back alternative perspectives. Another attempt to eradicate any alternate view occurs when the *Arbeiterin* begins handing out brochures. The *Bäuerin* asks “Warum haben wir bis jetzt das nicht gelesen und gewußt?!” to which Wang replies “Weil es verboten ist, die Wahrheit zu lesen und zu wissen!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 188). Similarly, Wolf had already shown authorities forbidding the *Arbeiterzeitung* to the sailors in Die Matrosen von Cattaro (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 15). Social movements, such as the Communist movement in Germany during the end of the Weimar Republic, “... are engaged in ‘meaning-work’—that is, in the struggle over the production of ideas of meanings” (Snow and Benson 136). Wolf would later recount his goals with this play:

... es [war] notwendig, die breiten Massen der Kleinbauern, verarmten Kleinbürger und reformistischen Arbeiter über die sehr nahe Gefahr des imperialistischen Krieges und Faschismus aufzuklären, sie wachzurütteln, ihnen ihre eigene Lage sichtbar vor Augen zu führen und ihnen den revolutionären Ausweg zu zeigen. Das Agitpropstück “Von New York bis Schanghai” sucht diese Aufgabe zu lösen (italics in original) (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 153).

This proves that Wolf knew his task as a rhetor involved redefining reality, and that he knew this task was in fact “necessary.” He provides an alternative perspective in this play and proves that “... meaning is not intrinsic in events, facts, people, or ‘situations’ ... meaning is not discovered in situations, but *created* by rhetors” (italics

in original) (Vatz 156-157). By demonstrating onstage that the societal elites have fashioned what the workers perceive as reality in John D. erobert die Welt, Die Jungens von Mons, and Von New York bis Schanghai, Wolf shows that they control the lower classes in order to maintain their social privilege.

Wolf also depicts the class struggle visually in Von New York bis Schanghai, and indeed in a way that the audience can see throughout the play. Among the stage props—and props were necessarily limited in agitprop plays—the first mentioned are: “Zwei größere Standmasken. Doppelmaske: japanischer und weißer Unternehmer unter einem Zylinder auf Stange, weiter: enthaupteter Kulikopf, aufgespießt auf Stange, (große, flache Attrappenmasken), diese Standmasken als Bühnenrahmen, auch für Freilichtaufführungen” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 161). The fact that the Japanese and white entrepreneurs—the latter described soon after as a “Wallstreet-man” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 166)—are under the same hat clearly illustrates that they are in league with one another. The victimizer-victim dialectic is also prominent in the use of the masks, inasmuch as the worker who, because he is decapitated, has no head, stands in contrast to the capitalist, who has two heads as well as the top hat.

Wolf draws a distinct line between the classes. By showing a double-mask for the entrepreneur, Wolf avoids portraying a struggle along national lines, depicting instead the conflict between classes. Wolf soon repeats this division with living actors: “*Fabrikant, Lady und Reporter, bzw. Agent sprechen ihre Sätze nach vorn ... sie bilden gleichsam die rechte Seitenkulisse (später vor dem Seil), während die Arbeitslosen links hinter dem Seil die Gegenkulisse darstellen* (Wolf, Gesammelte 7:

167). Wolf also demonstrates through the use of masks that conflict exists only among class lines. With these masks, the actors can switch race or nationality at will, in order to become Chinese, Indian, or European workers. After several mask changes within a very short period, the *Spieler* states: "... Man beutet euch nicht aus, weil ihr Japaner oder Inder, nicht weil ihr Neger und Chinesen, – *einfach* – weil ihr euch weniger wehrt, raubt man euch den Lohn! *Deutet auf die Unternehmermaske*" (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 169). Furthermore, taking advantage of the capabilities of these masks, Wolf developed an inversion of the beginning of Piscator's production of Wolf's earlier China play, Tai Yang erwacht, in which the actors dress and put on their make-up on stage. If the authorities began steps to end a performance of Von New York bis Schanghai, the lead actor would take off his mask and say:

"Genossen, bewahrt die Ruhe, bewahrt die Besonnenheit; denn dieses unser Spiel spielt ja nicht in Deutschland, dem Lande der Ruhe und Ordnung, sondern ganz weit in China, in Schanghai!" Inzwischen hatten alle chinesischen Spieler – rein zufällig natürlich – die Masken abgenommen und standen als deutsche Proleten da (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 18).

Piscator established a clear link between the events in Germany and those in China through his opening, and Wolf visibly attempts to achieve similar ends in Von New York bis Schanghai: he not only used the masks to avoid censorship, but also to establish a connection between the proletariat of Germany and China. As Michael Richardson states:

Race is reduced to a single visual performative gesture – taking off and putting on a mask – where the absence of a mask signifies not a lack of race, but the “real” identity behind the “illusion” of race: the figure of the proletariat (153).

In multiple plays, Wolf attempted to represent class types which demonstrate that—although other factors were involved—“... identity was fundamentally created by class difference ...” (Richardson 137). Perhaps Wolf established this best at the end of the play, in which he provides a wordless montage portraying in brief *Bilder* workers from Calcutta, Detroit and Marseille. This is an intensified reprise of the longer “ARBEITER-HUNGERSZENEN” montage at the end of the first *Teil* which shows images of the oppression of the working class in these three cities.

Furthermore, the incalculable influence of class mentioned by Richardson is not only true for the working class. Wolf also has the *Fabrikant* and Lady appear in several different countries: China, India, and the United States (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 167, 194, 197), thus representing that their power and influence extend well beyond national borders. Like the poor, the societal elites are not primarily defined by race or nationality, but by class.

6.4 The Victimizer in Bauer Baetz

In his last work of this period, the agitprop drama Bauer Baetz, Wolf focuses on a different victimizer than the one he depicted in earlier works: not the upper

classes, but rather the entire capitalist system. The following exchange occurs early in this play's *Vorspiel*:

HAUTH: Jeder von uns kommt heut unter die Quetsche.

LUTZ *schneidig*: Und was ist schuld daran, Herrschaften?! Die
Dividendenwirtschaft, das Börsengeschrei...

WINZ: Das ganze kapitalistische System, das seine eigenen
Sklavenheere nicht mehr ernähren kann! (Wolf, Gesammelte 7:
248).

Here Winz states explicitly that the capitalist system is at fault for the victimization. Having this exchange appear so early in the play colors the rest of the play for the audience. Victimizers do not have to be living beings: "The devils may be *things* such as demon rum, nuclear power plants, cruise missiles, commercial developments, acid rain, pesticides, leghold traps, and guns" (italics in original) (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 162-163). "Things" or systems, such as the capitalist system, can be very effective victimizers for a social movement rhetoric.

Wolf continues to develop the capitalist system as a victimizer—the entity which causes the plight of the working class—later in the play, shifting responsibility away from those people and groups who oppress the poor. In the third act of the play, Christian's brother Hans indicates that their social superiors are not responsible, but rather forces behind them. While discussing how his brother Christian shot the *Gerichtsvollzieher*, Hans asks the rhetorical questions: "Konnt der Gerichtsvollzieher was dafür, daß er pfänden muß, daß die kleinen Bauernwirtschaften heut unrentabel

und zu Tausenden kaputtgehn? Kann der Richter dafür, daß er ihn verknacken muß?" (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 301). Here Hans is removing the blame from those people who appear to be responsible for the impoverishment of the working class. Hans, as a well-versed Communist, knows that it is the capitalist system that bears responsibility for the plight of the poor. Wolf shows this indirectly in court:

AMTSRICHTER: Ihr Bruder war kurz vorher bei Ihnen?

CHRISTIAN: Ja.

AMTSRICHTER: Er war Metallarbeiter in der Stadt; hat er mit Ihnen über Politik gesprochen?

CHRISTIAN: Er fing so mit Sprüch an über die Bauernnot und Arbeiternot, Arbeiternot sei Bauerntod [...]

AMTSRICHTER: An allem sei das jetzige Wirtschaftssystem schuld?

CHRISTIAN: So ähnlich (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 303-304).

When blame is assigned to individuals in Bauer Baetz, Wolf generally deflects that guilt immediately. At the same time he twice indicates that the blame in fact lies with the capitalist system. Whereas in Wolf's earlier dramas, the upper class assumes culpability and thus serves as the victimizer, the victimizer in Wolf's last agitprop play is more explicitly classed society itself, though one could hardly contend that Wolf characterized the upper classes very positively in this play. Even when Christian himself points his finger at the government and *Graf Neveu*, (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 305), shortly after the passage quoted above. Wolf indicates through another dialogue that even their guilt is mitigated. The *Amtsrichter* tells Christian:

“... Es erleichtert Ihren Fall ja erheblich, wenn Sie zugeben, daß Sie unter fremdem Einfluß standen ...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 304). The guilt of the politicians, officials and societal elites is likewise mitigated by their status as products of the capitalist system which compels them to act as they do. Because Bauer Baetz is the last drama Wolf wrote before leaving Germany in 1933, it is unclear whether he would have returned to establishing the upper class as the victimizer of the working class as he did in many of the plays of this period or whether he would have continued to more explicitly condemn the capitalist system as he did in this play.

7 The Future of Society

Acting as a Communist movement rhetor in his dramas between 1928 and 1933, Friedrich Wolf had the task of redefining his era in a way which would spread the Communist message. He performed this task in the period under discussion here by creating a rhetoric within his dramas which established the working class as a victim group and by further portraying this group's victimizer in order to frame the capitalist class system as a social problem. However, although these dramas provide ample evidence that Wolf was attempting to redefine contemporary society in these plays, they also reveal that he paid relatively little attention to redefining society's future. From the examination of these plays, one can see that Wolf did not expend much rhetorical effort in creating either a Communist plan of action, which would teach the audience what must be done and who should do it, or a vision of the utopian future which would assure them that efforts made for the Communist movement would be successful and result in a society better than the present one.

7.1 Plan of Action

With regard to presenting a Communist plan of action in his plays, Wolf had a problematic start. He was mainly addressing the specific social concern of the anti-abortion law in Cyankali. In an outline to this play, Wolf wrote:

“Kritik am Verhalten der Arbeiterschaft selbst, die selbst in puncto
218/ egoistisch, feige, neidisch, angeberisch/würde sie in diesem Punct

– den doch jeder von ihnen versteht – einmütig sein, 40 Millionen Einmütige würden den alten verlogenen Paragraphen wegfegen wie ein vertrocknetes Blatt” (qtd. in Merkel 101).

These lines prove that Wolf was thinking about the specific problem, the anti-abortion law, facing members of the working class rather than the larger, capitalist plight which faces them. Merkel correctly claims that Cyankali is a proletarian play—which makes sense, as Wolf had joined the Communist party not long before writing this play—but that it is not a revolutionary play (101). “Wolf unterstützte eine taktische Forderung der KPD, ohne daß es ihm zugleich gelungen wäre, das strategische Ziel: Sturz des kapitalistischen Staates, Errichtung der Diktatur des Proletariats – damit zu verbinden” (Merkel 106-107). Inasmuch as a main purpose of this play was the changing of the abortion law, the play is fundamentally flawed as Communist rhetoric. It attempts to change a situation within society instead of trying to change society itself. This flaw perhaps prompted Kimberley Page Riley—who was researching primarily Cyankali and not Wolf’s other plays of this period—to claim that “[w]hile he advocated proletarian revolution, Wolf simultaneously believed in the possibility of modifying the existing system through democratic means” (277). Altering individual elements of society for the better is tantamount to reinforcing it; it is indeed a valid course of action—one that the Social Democrats strived for—but it is not the one endorsed by the Communist party. Improving individual parts of society for the better gives others the impression that the society as a whole is improving, which is a common thought (Stewart, Smith, and Denton 56). Changing

the abortion law is merely a short-term remedy for a single part of a complex problem: unequal distribution of wealth under a classed society. A small improvement in society furthermore stops people from looking for the true remedy to society's ills. Almost twenty years later, Wolf claimed that "Der § 218 sollte nicht abgeschafft, sondern überflüssig werden ..." (qtd. in Müller, Dramatiker 188). Upon examining the play Cyankali itself, that claim seems to indicate either an unsuccessful attempt to depict the type of Communist society in which the anti-abortion law (*Paragraph 218*) would be superfluous—as the play focuses much more directly on fighting the individual law than fighting the system—or perhaps this claim is an instance of Wolf re-writing his personal history. The play, which focuses to a much greater extent on the abortion law and problem of birth control than it does on more sweeping social changes, tends to affirm the latter. Wolf's essays are also unclear about this subject. He indeed positions himself in the 1931 essay "Wie ich zur revolutionären Arbeiterschaft kam" against "reformistische Versuche" in the struggle against the abortion law (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIV: 47), but by addressing a particular law instead of the overriding system, Wolf appears to be inherently reformist in Cyankali.

Despite any suasive failings in this play, Wolf provides a course of action in Cyankali which matches Communist ideology: "MAX: Verrückt, diese Welt sollte man in Klump hauen, wo man schießen und krampfen muß, um zu seinem Fraß zu kommen..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 306). With Max's words here, Wolf depicts contemporary society negatively, and he provides instructions about what to do to this

society: destroy it. This is, unfortunately, the vaguest of directions on how to proceed. Further, Max and Wolf do not call on anyone in particular to enact this plan, using the impersonal “man” form. Similarly, Hete’s call at the end of the play “Hilft... uns... denn niemand?” is not addressed to anyone in particular, and is therefore unlikely to activate anyone, despite the emotional ending in which the audience can see that this character’s downfall was caused by an anti-abortion law which is often unfair or at the very least imperfect (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 345). Wolf implicitly calls for help, but because he does not specify who should answer this call, he will probably only generate action from the grammatical subject of this question—and the last word of dialogue in the play: “niemand.”

Inasmuch as Die Matrosen von Cattaro was the first stage play that Friedrich Wolf wrote in its entirety after joining the German Communist party, it is perhaps no surprise that the action depicts a Communist revolution onstage. With this play, Wolf wanted to fulfill a pedagogical function, to teach the proletariat how to take action during and immediately after a Communist revolution. He states in his essay “Weshalb schrieb ich ‘die Matrosen von Cattaro?’”: “... überall werden und sollen die Arbeiter aus diesem Stück die Lehre ziehen: Macht es *nicht* wie diese Matrosen von Cattaro, wenn ihr einmal begonnen habt, sondern macht es wie die *Matrosen von Kronstadt* im Oktober 1917! Deshalb schrieb ich das Stück” (italics in original) (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 368). Wolf saw a lack in political leadership which led to the defeat of this and similar Communist uprisings in the late 1910s and early 1920s (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 367), and he wanted to help provide this leadership or at

least raise awareness of its necessity. His intention is plain enough, and many scholars (among others: Burckhardt 791; Sacksofsky 72; Pollatschek, “Dramen” 427) have considered Wolf’s suatory methods of spreading the Communist movement in this play to be effective. Nonetheless there exist serious flaws which must not be overlooked with regard to Wolf’s conceptualization of the future of Germany and the world as a whole.

Die Matrosen von Cattaro is the only one of Wolf’s plays from this time period to depict a successful revolution onstage, albeit only a temporarily successful one. This depiction is the great strength of the play in establishing the future of the Communist movement. Wolf provides a remedy for victimization, and he does not stop at the beginning of that revolutionary course of action as he did later in Tai Yang erwacht. In depicting the revolution onstage in his Cattaro play, Wolf uses the sensory means the stage provides: people can see, hear and experience a Communist uprising. Such a direct experience—unavailable to readers of a novel, poem, or even the play, and likewise unavailable to an orator—can cause a great intensity and concentration of emotion (Boulton 4). By showing this revolution onstage, Wolf not only instructs the audience about the necessity of rebellion as a step towards the ultimate goal of a classless Communist society, but he also visually provides them with a template for action. The next step, in terms of social movement rhetoric, would be to present that utopian goal of a successful classless society.

However, instead of depicting this utopia, Wolf proceeds to undermine this course of action. With the second half of the play, he reveals how even an apparently

triumphant revolution is still unstable and how any gain can still be lost. Wolf sought thereby to provide a bad example for his audience: to teach them how not to act. It was Wolf's intent in Die Matrosen von Cattaro, according to Eva-Maria Burckhardt, "... auf diesem indirekten Wege die politisch-ideologischen und organisatorischen Voraussetzungen einer siegreichen Revolution zu zeigen" (788). Robert Reimer likewise reads the mutiny's ultimate defeat as Wolf's attempt to instruct and inspire: "The defeat will merely help those who come later to plan a better revolt ... perhaps others will also be inspired by the deaths of the four revolutionaries" (118). One can easily understand that assessment of Wolf's intentions. Wolf himself stated:

... dieser "Sieg" war nicht das Entscheidende. Der schwerste Kampf begann erst *nach* dem Sieg, als es galt, den Sieg ideologisch zu verankern, als es galt, "bis zum Ende zu gehen", wie Lenin es ausdrückt. Und hier, in der historischen Analyse der Situation des westlichen Proletariats Anno 1920 – in einer Selbstkritik und einer Perspektive – lag für mich der Anlaß für die "Matrosen" (*italics in original*) (Ausgewählte XIII: 366-367).

However, the effect of Wolf's indirect instruction pales in comparison to the loss the audience sees onstage: the audience might learn how to act in case of a revolutionary victory, but they actually see and hear a revolutionary defeat. The mutineers' ultimate failure at the end of the play might be historically and aesthetically correct (Merkel 120), but for suatory purposes it is less than satisfactory. The emotional impact of experiencing this ending significantly weakens the joy of the initial victory

and casts a shadow over the lesson Wolf wanted his audience to take from the work: follow the example of the successful revolutionaries in Brasov instead of the example of the unsuccessful revolutionaries depicted in his play. Furthermore, this negative ending would no longer be necessary in 1930 when Wolf wrote this play. Concerning the short-lived leftist victories in the late 1910s and early 1920s, Wolf states that "... trotz all unsrer 'Siege' und heroischen Kämpfe uns die *politische Führung fehlte ...*", while in the same paragraph he claims that the KPD was a bolshevik party since 1928 under Ernst Thälmann's leadership (italics in original) (Ausgewählte XIII: 367). If the proper Communist leadership had existed by the time Wolf wrote this play—as well as the KPD itself, which was founded within a year after the events in Cattaro—the lesson he tries to teach would be superfluous. This play therefore addresses a lack of leadership which—by Wolf's own admission—was no longer a problem for members of the Communist movement when he wrote Die Matrosen von Cattaro, while it simultaneously undermines the audience's belief that the movement could succeed.

In 1952, Wolf claimed that this play was an "Optimistische Tragödie," which was the title of a 1933 play by Vsevolod Vishnevskii, a Soviet dramatist and close friend of Wolf (Briefe 339). However, the political situations in which these two plays were written differed greatly: in the Soviet Union in 1933, the overthrow of the old order had long since been achieved, but in 1930 in the Weimar Republic, the capitalist society still existed (Hecht 550). The perspective of the German audience, who could not be as sure of an eventual victory as was the Soviet audience, would be

much more likely to regard the failure of this mutiny and the eventual, offstage, execution of its leader much more pessimistically.

Wolf's attempt to present his audience with the path to a classless society in Die Matrosen von Cattaro is ineffective due in large part to his indirectness and vagueness. Although Wolf clearly intended to present his audience with a bad example—and, judging from the success and renown of the play, he admittedly presented the material in a way which artistically satisfied his late Weimar audience—doing so was a fundamentally weaker tactic than giving his audience a good example. At best he was able to present to his audience some mistakes which should be avoided in future. Providing such a positive model, i.e., demonstrating how a revolution should be fought and a victory maintained, would be much more effective. Wolf's target audience for his Communist movement rhetoric is also unclear in Die Matrosen von Cattaro. Franz Rasch's cry of "Kameraden, das nächste Mal besser!" (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 91), is directed to an onstage audience but not to any real group in the play's audience, much like the ending of Cyankali. Moreover, the onstage audience to which Rasch speaks is one with which the theatergoers will not want to identify: a bunch of sailors shown to be failures, traitors, and even, because they listen to the lies of the authorities, fools. The collapse of the mutiny at the end of the play also produces a negative effect on Wolf's attempts to convey to his audience the methods of changing their victimized situation and achieving a Communist utopia. Because "... the mutiny on the St. Georg is meant to change the entire world" by setting the foundations for a Communist society, the failure of this

mutiny is “the failure of the entire revolution” (Reimer 112). The ultimate defeat of the revolution in Die Matrosen von Cattaro and the impending death of the four sailors at the end belie Rasch’s parting line: “Das ist nicht das Ende, Leutnant, das ist erst der Anfang!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 93), and support the Lieutenant’s earlier statement that “Widerstand ist zwecklos!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 92). Wolf’s fellow Communists noted the defeatist ending of Die Matrosen von Cattaro, as did members of the Theater Union in New York who were interested in producing the play (Riley 321, 322). Productions of the play have brought charges of defeatism from both the Daily Worker and the New York Sun (Hammer, Matrosen 264, 281), while the Tagesspiegel compared the leader of the mutiny, Franz Rasch, to Don Quixote (Hammer, Matrosen 324). Even in the Soviet Union, the negative ending proved problematic:

In der Sowjetunion ... wurden *Die Matrosen von Cattaro* 1937 in Leningrad wegen des Niedergehens der roten Fahne am Ende des Dramas von der Bühne genommen, was das Regierungsblatt *Iswestija* zu begründen versuchte: Wolfs Matrosenstück sei “defaitistisch und politisch gefährlich” ... (Müller, Dramatiker 189).

These Soviets clearly perceived not only the defeatism inherent in the play, but also the difficulties it could bring about. Depicting a socialist revolution which initially succeeds but is doomed to failure would be “politically dangerous” even twenty years after the Bolshevik Revolution, as such a depiction could lessen the faith of the people of the Soviet Union in their young nation, and could likewise strengthen a

resistance against this nation. With his play, Die Matrosen von Cattaro, Wolf undermines his plan and does not supply an image of the goal to which they should aspire. Instead, he weakens the fighting spirit of the audience by, unintentionally, showing resistance to the capitalist system to be futile.

The events in the second half of this play leading up to the defeat of the mutineers is Wolf's artistic invention, according to his letter to Bruno Frei (Hammer, Matrosen 117). The circuitous, if not dubious, optimism at the ending is also Wolf's own. He ends this play "... on a note of optimism in the face of defeat ..." according to Robert C. Reimer (117), yet the optimism is hollow. The failure of this revolution, on the other hand, is real—not only in the sense that the action takes place onstage, but also as this failed mutiny was a historical occurrence. Wolf mentioned the connection between the plays Der arme Konrad (1923) and Kolonne Hund (1926) and Die Matrosen von Cattaro (1930): "Es geht jetzt eine direkte Linie vom 'Konrad' zur 'Kolonne' bis 'Cattaro'; diese 3 Stücke sind ein klarer Weg" (Briefwechsel 35). The conclusions for these three plays in particular are very similar (Sacksofsky 72). However, such an ending is at best questionable for propaganda purposes, even if it is dramatically acceptable. Wolf wrote Der arme Konrad at the end of his Expressionist phase which colored the ending of the play. In that play, the main character's dying words claim that the then-defeated revolution would return (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 75). Wolf indicates no way that the revolution will return apart from the continued existence of the story of the "armer Konrad," as shown by the peasants at the end of the play and by the existence of the play itself. The similar ending of Die Matrosen

von Cattaro is just as vague, revealing neither how to reach nor how to revive the movement in either play.

With Die Matrosen von Cattaro, Wolf clearly wanted to be positive and instructive for the followers of the Communist movement, but his efforts were unsuccessful. Just as the topic of abortion in Cyankali was fundamentally unsuitable as Communist rhetoric, much of the weakness in Die Matrosen von Cattaro as rhetoric likewise is due to Wolf's choice of material: the collapse of an initially successful revolution. He was unable to escape the implications of that defeat, able neither to mitigate that defeat with the temporary victory, nor to demonstrate the way to avoid the errors leading to the failure of the mutiny. An air of indecisiveness and even pessimism remains in Wolf's play. The selection of such faulty material lies squarely with Wolf. It would have been logical, even helpful, to dramatize this episode if it were a well-known failure, as movements should create a revisionist history which accounts for past failures (Simons, Mechling, and Schreier 797), but the episode in Cattaro was not a well-known failure. Bruno Frei, in his book Die roten Matrosen von Cattaro: Eine Episode aus dem Revolutionsjahre 1918, on which Wolf based his play, stated that the events about which he wrote were thoroughly forgotten (82). Therefore any light Wolf cast on the subject was merely illuminating a revolutionary failure, which defeated his positive aspirations.

In his next work, the radio play John D. erobert die Welt, Wolf is somewhat more successful in advocating the future of the Communist party by claiming that fighting the problem of class society is at least possible. The announcer at the

beginning of the play gives some background to Rockefeller and his times. He ends this section: "... John D., der scheinbar die ganze Welt damals erobert und gekauft hatte, eines nicht erobern konnte – den mutigen, gerecht denkenden, unkäuflichen Menschen" (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 48). According to this play, capitalism and capitalists can be defeated: no matter how insuperable one's opponent may appear, whether the world's richest man or the capitalist system itself, a man with the knowledge and bravery to face that opponent cannot be conquered. John Reed, the man willing to face his capitalist adversary, meets Rockefeller in the final scene. Reed was a well-known American Communist, whose book about the Bolshevik Revolution, Ten Days that Shook the World, was well-known in Germany by the time of this radio play (Pollatschek, Leben 123). Reed is willing to face Rockefeller and welcomes a trial which he would most certainly lose, because he would thereby be able to inform thousands of workers about his cause. People joining together and working against the upper class and the capitalist system is a thought that scares Rockefeller, as it does the upper-class characters in Die Jungens von Mons. In an exchange between Rockefeller and Flagler—an opponent of Rockefeller who ultimately joins with him—Wolf shows how a concerted effort of resistance frightens the upper classes. When Flagler stands up to Rockefeller in the third scene, threatening group action against him, Rockefeller convinces him to work with him rather than against him. Years later, Flagler asks him why he did so:

FLAGLER: Sag mal, John ... weshalb hast du mich eigentlich damals, bei unserem ersten Zusammentreffen – als ich dich beschimpfte und schon halb draußen war – zurückgerufen? [...]

JOHN D.: Du hattest damals von Versammlung und Zusammenschluß der “Ölgeschädigten” gesprochen; und das gerade war das einzige, was ich fürchtete: Euer sozusagen...Syndikat. (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 85-86).

Instead of continuing with his efforts against Rockefeller, Flagler yields to his offer. In this play, Wolf presents group action—which Flagler threatens and which Reed attempts to incite—as the way to solve society’s problem. With the characters Reed and Flagler, Wolf provides the right and the wrong ways of administering the solution. Rockefeller foresees the outcome of people following the correct way mentioned above: “... ein neues System?” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 104). Wolf sets this phrase at the very end of the play, and this prominent placement shows the importance of the idea to the author.

Tai Yang erwacht continues to demonstrate that a working class revolution has a possibility of success. In “Weshalb schrieb ich ‘Tai Yang erwacht,’” written two decades after the play itself, Wolf states: “Der Autor suchte 1930 der Berliner Arbeiterschaft von der Bühne herab seine Gewißheit zu vermitteln vom Endsieg des großen chinesischen Volkes” (Ausgewählte XIII: 373). Inasmuch as Wolf largely equated the workers onstage in the Shanghai of Tai Yang erwacht with workers in Germany, this likewise meant a victory for the German working class.

Unsurprisingly, considering Wolf's focus on the future, this play has a more positive ending in contrast to the essentially pessimistic ending of his Cattaro drama. As a result, Tai Yang erwacht is the only stage play from this era which is truly positive in its depiction of the future.

Throughout the play, which Michael David Richardson correctly notes is the story of Tai Yang coming to political, i.e., Communist, consciousness (124), Wolf focuses his audience towards a proletarian revolution which the Communist movement perceives as the means to its egalitarian utopia, inasmuch as he depicts the development of Tai Yang from an apolitical worker to a committed Communist ready to fight, risk her life and lead others to revolution. Peer and especially Wan are prominent characters in the play, and they mark themselves as convinced Communists from the very first scene during their interaction with Sen, a relative of Tai who has just arrived in Shanghai, and the others. Wolf also presents a meeting of the Communists in the seventh scene, where they are planning a revolution and creating propaganda material. In the eighth and final scene, the workers in the factory stand up to their boss Tschu Fu and begin the revolution. Whereas Tai Yang initially wants no part in the Communist politics, by the end of the play, she has become a convinced Communist and even a leader of the revolution. As such, Wolf holds her up as an example to his audience.

The revolution that Wolf depicts in this play is a violent rebellion, similar to the one in his earlier play Die Matrosen von Cattaro. With the *Mangobaumlied*, a song that appears several times in Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf reveals that it will be an

armed revolution. In the first scene, Tse Tse begins to sing the Mango Tree Song. Wan, Peer and Sen, a member of the Communist farmer's army "rote Lanzen," then start to sing a new verse which surprises the others (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 107). These three sing about different branches of the Mango Tree: one becomes a spear, one a torch, and one the stock of a gun (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 113). According to this new verse, many weapons will come from the Mango Tree: not a hundred or even a thousand, but ten thousand. The uprising Wolf calls for in Tai Yang erwacht should not be sudden and disorderly like the one in Die Matrosen von Cattaro. In Tai Yang erwacht he prescribes a well-organized venture, hence the torch being one of the weapons, one which can enlighten as well as destroy. Beyond the symbolism, Wolf depicts organization in action through the Communist planning session in scene seven. This well thought-out revolution stands in contrast to the one in Cattaro, whose participants Wolf deemed unprepared ideologically (Briefe 338).

In contrast to his earlier plays, Wolf presents a clear target group to accomplish his task in this drama. This was particularly important, because Wolf had to let everybody know they were being called upon. Wolf is not only sure to define the sailors as "Arbeiter mit Waffen" in the play Die Matrosen von Cattaro as mentioned above (Gesammelte 3: 15), but he also later remarks that the farmers did not realize they were part of the proletariat, so he (as well as other Communist writers) had to make sure that these farmers knew they belonged to proletariat (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 24-25). The characters in the seventh scene, who as Communists attempting to spread the movement can easily be seen as proxies for Wolf, call the

various segments of the working class together: from factory workers to farmers to soldiers. In the seventh scene, Wan, Peer, and other Communists meet to make plans to help spread the movement. Wan starts to read the flyer they are crafting. It begins: “Man muß es wagen! Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen Schanghais!...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 171). Though Wan uses the impersonal and therefore overly vague “man” construction at the beginning of this flyer, he immediately thereafter directs that call to workers. They are the ones who must act for the sake of the Communist movement. Sen later reads from the flyer: “Schon bilden Bauern und Soldaten eine Front! Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen Schanghais, der Kampf der Bauern und Soldaten ist euer Kampf!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 171). Here Wolf has his character name the flyer’s—as well as the play’s—target audience and he joins all different types of workers together, naming each of these separate groups specifically. A third character in this seventh scene of Tai Yang erwacht, Thsin, reads from the flyer: “Auf die Straße Kolleginnen...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 171). Here Wolf directs his suatory efforts specifically at women. He also calls out to them as part of his “Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen,” but with this line he addresses women specifically. By using this simple device of having his characters read a Communist flyer—a form of “propaganda within a propaganda”—he calls on workers in general, then specifically addresses different sections of the working class directly by clearly defined groups: farmers, soldiers, women.

This call is obviously not an appeal to the various Shanghai workers, but rather to the workers of Germany in the early 1930s when the country was in an

economic crisis and was approaching a political one. In his essay “Weshalb schrieb ich ‘Tai Yang erwacht,’” Wolf states that he “mußte ... damals von der Bühne her bereits manches ‘durch die Blume sagen’” (Ausgewählte XIII: 370). Wolf’s experiences with Die Matrosen von Cattaro proved to him that the working classes immediately understood that he meant Germany despite the change of setting (Hammer, Matrosen 113). Wolf called out to various sections of the working class over the course of his stage work in the late 1920s and early 1930s: sailors (Die Matrosen), factory workers (Tai Yang erwacht, Wie stehen die Fronten?), soldiers (Die Jungens von Mons), and farmers (Bauer Baetz). Wolf clearly intended for these groups to portray the individual sections of the German working class, whether he set—or could set—these plays in Germany or not.

Die Jungens von Mons is much more problematic in its depiction of the future than either of the plays preceding it. For instance, in Die Matrosen von Cattaro and Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf defines revolution as the means to the utopian end, but he neglects to do so in Die Jungens von Mons. In the final scene of this play he shows Captain Campell, alias Ellen Celloc, resisting members of the higher classes, but never actively rebelling against them. Sharpe and Ramsbotton give Campell a gun and tell her to kill herself in order to save them from the embarrassment of the public finding out about that Campell is actually a woman in disguise. She resists, but does not use the gun on them. It is true that she does threaten them with it, but she only does this so they will help her escape. In the end, she acquiesces to the will of the system, putting up no struggle when Crabtree arrests her, and returns to her role of

Ellen Celloc. In this play, Wolf only once presents rebellion as the proper plan of action, and this plan is only discernible to a reading audience. In this instance, Jim believes the material in his textbook is wrong. He sees through the people trying to influence him, and he therefore gets up, he “*Steht auf*” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 201). The people in a theater audience will not be able to see the wordplay in this stage direction—*Aufstehen* having the meanings of both “to stand up” and “to rise up in rebellion”—and the reference is so vague that many will not notice it. The single mention of rebellion being only very oblique, Wolf clearly fails to properly prescribe a revolutionary course of action for his audience.

As with the ending of Tai Yang erwacht, Die Jungens von Mons ends just as an important event is about to occur. Whereas the earlier play concludes at the start of a revolution, Die Jungens von Mons ends just before Campell reveals herself as a woman to her troops and addresses them. This play is the only one of the four stage plays whose ending does not point toward the future in any sense. It does not deliver a cry to the public as in Cyankali, it does not contain a rallying slogan as in Die Matrosen von Cattaro, and it does not depict the beginning of a revolution as in Tai Yang erwacht. Campell is simply going to tell “Die Wahrheit, ... nichts weiter als die Wahrheit” (Wolf, Gesammelte 3: 294). Even in its ending, Die Jungens von Mons does not direct the audience to the future. Campell is still trying to reveal the actions of the present instead of making plans for the future. The play ends on a note of defeat for Campell at the end. As Merkel notes, despite a possible “moral victory” for Celloc/Campell and Carr, the representatives of capitalist society are the

immediate victors (175), and there appears to be little chance of a future victory for the anti-capitalist forces. Wolf's extrinsic goal with Die Jungens von Mons—to enlighten the middle and lower-middle classes about the methods of the NSDAP (Wolf, Briefe 138)—can perhaps explain why Wolf focused so heavily on the events in the present to the detriment of guiding the audience to the future: National Socialism was already a great danger in 1931 when Wolf wrote this play. Nonetheless, this explanation does not alter the play's weakness in the intrinsic Communist rhetoric by not focusing on the future.

With the agitprop play Wie stehen die Fronten?, Wolf more directly depicts the need for the working class to join together to fight against the upper classes. The bad financial situation becomes worse for the factory workers. Whole departments are being shut down, and the remaining workers face a 12.5 per cent pay cut. As one of them asks “Was sollen wir denn tun?” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 145), the two most activist characters answer:

ZURUF *Marie*: Endlich die Zähne zeigen, Genossen! ...

FRANZ: Endlich uns wehren, unsre Forderungen stellen,

Kampfausschüsse bilden, Genossen! (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 145).

Franz is not just advocating a strike here, but a revolution along Soviet lines. He wants the unions to become a tool in the revolutionary struggle as Lenin demanded (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 133, 145, 148). Furthermore, with the last words before the closing song, Franz voices a final appeal to the workers onstage and to the audience: “FRANZ: ... Und jetzt, Genossen, kämpft mit uns, ehrlich, hart, mutig, unerbittlich,

in dem großen Kampf unsrer Tage, in dem Kampf KLASSE GEGEN KLASSE, in dem Kampf für den sozialistischen Aufbau dieser Erde, in dem Kampf für ein freies Deutschland der Arbeiter und Bauern!!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 150). As in Tai Yang erwacht, here Wolf once again makes it clear to his audience that revolution is the course of action needed to escape the problems in the class system, and he ends the spoken part of Wie stehen die Fronten? with perhaps the clearest call to class war in any of his plays of this period.

Wolf also shows the way the working class can act to overcome their victimization in capitalist society in Von New York bis Schanghai. He indicates how, when, and why to act if they wish to cast off their victim status, as was his stated goal. This aspect of his focus on the future is not surprising in light of his later statement that one of his tasks in the play had been to show his audience the “revolutionären Ausweg” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 153). Throughout this work he reveals Communism as the path to take in order to overcome capitalism. He reprises the *Mangobaumlied*, which Wolf used to call for an armed revolution in Tai Yang erwacht. He further gives the workers reason to take up arms, because their plight will continue if they do not. The *Spieler* claims that people take advantage of the lowest classes because they put up less of a fight (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 169). This *Spieler* simultaneously demonstrates that members of the working class from different places and backgrounds are fundamentally the same. He does so by changing masks and calling these identities into question, stating that differences of nationality and race are “Illusion” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 169). Wolf further lets his

working class audience know they need to act now. Wang says both: "... wartet nicht bis es zu spät ist..." and "Laßt euch nicht wieder überraschen, Kollegen, morgen kann es zu spät sein, nehmt Stellung, sofort, bildet Kampfausschüsse..." (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 180). Wolf sees the need for immediate action—otherwise any revolutionary zeal is lost. In Wie stehen die Fronten? he writes: "... Immer wird hintenherum getuschelt, bis alles, was heiß war, wieder kalt geworden!" (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 115). Wolf directs his audience to defend themselves against the societal elites by immediately becoming members of the Communist party. Finally, Wolf demonstrates how great a threat this would be to the authorities:

LEUTNANT *aus dem Notizbuch lesend*: "Armeebefehl des Kommandanten der japanischen Land- und Seestreitkräfte vor Schanghai: Jeder Zivilist, der mit einer Waffe auf der Straße getroffen wird, ist sofort zu erschießen! Zu erschießen ist auch jeder, der zum Streik aufruft oder Flugschriften verbreitet!" (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 200).

Here Wolf equates calling for a strike or spreading a revolutionary message with brandishing a weapon, as all of these are dangerous to the authorities. That a political message could be a danger was especially true at the time Wolf wrote this agitprop play in 1932. Unemployment was still a massive problem for the working class, the Weimar Republic itself was unpopular, and the National Socialists had already garnered great political power. At the same time, the KPD was also increasingly gaining support and Wolf's message here empowers and lends hope to the working

class, reinforcing the belief that they can make a change to the system and their lives. Regarding his dramatic works, this quote also implicitly reiterates his call for “*Kunst als Waffe*” in the Communist struggle, and it further lets Wolf define himself as a fighter in the class war, his weapon being his message, as presented in his plays

With his next play, Wolf continued to inform the working class members of his audience how to act politically. In Bauer Baetz, he literally shows the correct course of action by using the two Baetz brothers to demonstrate the right and the wrong way to fight the system. By doing so, Wolf sets up a contrast similar to the one in John D. erobert die Welt, in which Wolf depicts the right and wrong way of fighting the upper classes through the characters of Reed and Flagler, respectively, as mentioned above. In 1933, Wolf stated the intentions he had had with Bauer Baetz:

... die Wirklichkeit gab uns von sich aus auch dramaturgisch die Lösung für den Aufbau des Stücks: *Der falsche Weg und der richtige Weg* des Kleinbauern aus seinem Elend, das heißt: die individuelle Selbsthilfe des einzelnen, oder der Zusammenschluß der Kleinbauern, die Bildung von Bauernkomitees, der Anschluß an die revolutionäre Arbeiterschaft der Städte ... (italics in original) (Wolf, Ausgewählte XIII: 49).

Christian, like the real-life farmer upon whom this character is based, acts alone by shooting the official who attempts to take away his last cow, whereas Hans brings together a large group of people to stand up to the government’s efforts. Thus Wolf depicts onstage the unification of farmers and city workers, and he also combines the

two groups in the song “Arbeiternot ist Bauerntod:” the song from Von New York bis Schanghai which also appears in Bauer Baetz several times. Hans, by bringing together the different sections of the worker community, is the Baetz brother who is able to make progress against the workings of the capitalist system. Christian, however, realizes the error of his ways by the end of this work. Although he is safe from prosecution because he is allegedly insane, he calls for a trial to spread word of these unjust events, even though he knows he will likely be found guilty.

CHRISTIAN: Es soll aber kein Gras wachsen über die Sache!! Es gibt tausendmal den Bauer Baetz im Land, Herr Arzt! Herr Arzt, wenn alle deutschen Bauern wüßten, was ich jetzt weiß, dann lebte der Gerichtsvollzieher Rigger noch, dann, Herr Arzt, würd kein Gerichtsvollzieher mehr nötig sein in unsrem Land! (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 341).

On the simultaneous stage of the play’s fourth and final act, Christian makes an intellectual progression from the false to the correct way to act to fight the unjust system, while Hans forms and enacts a plan to work against that system. The play ends when Christian has reached the same stage of revolutionary consciousness as his brother, emphasized by Christian’s assumption of one of Reed’s functions in John D. erobert die Welt by seeking a trial he knows he will lose, but by which he could spread his revolutionary message.

Wolf clearly knew the importance of presenting his audience with a solid model of the path to the future, and he provided one to them in Bauer Baetz. Like

Die Matrosen von Cattaro, this play is divided into two parts, separated by a central crime which occurs at the end of the first part. In these plays, the protagonist gains insights into his role as a proletarian and fighter in the class war after the crime is committed. By presenting both the “awakening” of Christian and the proper way of acting at the same time, combined with the ending which is positive for both Christian and Hans, it avoids the hollow optimism of Die Matrosen von Cattaro and can therefore be more politically effective.

7.2 Positive Image of the Future

Compared with the efforts Wolf took to establish the other facets of his redefinition of reality, he did a relatively poor job of depicting a Communist utopia, especially in his stage plays. Of these four works, it is only in Cyankali that he presents a scene suggesting a utopian society. In the third scene, Paul and Max bring a bounty of stolen food into Mutter Fent’s kitchen, where she, Hete, the newsagent Kuckuck, and the neighbor Frau Klee are sitting around the table. Paul, Max and Hete are out of work, so there is little money and food available to these people. Paul and Max do not keep the food for themselves, but rather they share it with their friends and neighbors, who are likewise hungry. It is indeed no coincidence that the two characters who bring food and create a community—for however brief a time—are also the ones who are the most consciously proletarian, and are most likely Communists. Merkel claims Paul is definitely not a Communist, though his support for this claim, namely that Paul does not know the “... Methoden

des Klassenkampfes ...” (100-101), is perhaps a fault of Wolf’s characterization or his incomplete knowledge of these methods, having only joined the KPD a year before writing this work. This scene projects a proto-Communist culture. When Kuckuck toasts Max with the words “... Dein Wohl, Max, alter Räuber! ...,” Max responds “... *empfindlich*: Räuber? Wir haben Ordnung geschafft!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 305). Max and Paul do in fact create a different order. Immediately after Max states that they “created order,” Frau Klee proves this order to be one of brotherhood and peace: “FRAU KLEE ...: Still, mein Junge, iß, Bruderherz, mir ist so sanft jetzt, kein Streit! ...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 306). Wolf furthermore demonstrates that this brotherly, peaceful island of plenty is doomed to failure within a larger capitalist society, an opinion he gained through his work in the Worpswede commune in 1921 (Wolf, Gesammelte 2: 86). Paul and Max are soon chased out the house by the police, and the former is later arrested.

The radio play “Krassin” rettet “Italia”, the first drama which Wolf wrote from start to finish as a Communist, is by far the weakest of these works for suasory purposes in many aspects. The play does not provide any discernible evidence of Wolf attempting to establish credibility, demonstrate victimization, or indicate a victimizer. It does however possess one redeeming feature, rhetorically speaking: an extensive depiction of a utopian future. In this play, Wolf presents the Soviet Union as an ideal: an ideal that Germany and the rest of the world could achieve after the success of the Communist movement. In this radio play, Wolf implicitly claims that a new human ideal already existed in the U.S.S.R. at the time he wrote it (Merkel 73).

The utopia Wolf provides here is therefore contemporary Soviet society, but it can and should be the future for the Communist movement in Germany. This play contains an implicit comparison between Germany and the Soviet Union, and Wolf later characterized it as "... eine direkte Propaganda für USSR!!" (Briefe 130). The contrast between Germany and the Soviet Union was common in works from the agitprop movement, with which Wolf had been in contact since 1927 (Bodek, Proletarian 106; Hammer, "Konzepte" 1954). In 1932, with his first agitprop play, Wie stehen die Fronten?, he once again cited the Soviet Union as a utopian model, and he very briefly mentioned its position as the "... ersten Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat der Welt!" in Von New York bis Schanghai (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 231)

In a letter to the *Internationalen Arbeiter Verlag* in 1929, Wolf expressed how important he thought "Krassin" rettet "Italia" could be as a political tool: "Der 'UHU' bringt mit geringen Kürzungen das Spiel im Vorabdruck. Ich halte das für eine wichtige Propagierung dieser Gedanken in Kreise, die sonst nur verfälschte Berichte über R.S.S.R. bekommen" (Briefe 115). The play's publication in UHU magazine, the most popular illustrated monthly in Germany during the late 1920s and early 1930s (Johnson 145), enabled Wolf to reach an audience different and larger than that which his stage works could—just as the radio broadcast of this play allowed him to reach a larger audience. Wolf's attempt to change perceptions of Russia, which he mentions here, is a largely successful example of his more general attempt to redefine society along Communist lines.

Technology was at the forefront of Wolf's thoughts when writing "Krassin" rettet "Italia" (Stuttgart 152). Cecylia Załubska describes this radio play as a "Loblied auf die Technik" (83), while Kurt Merkel similarly refers to it as part of a "Lobpreisung der modernen Technik" from Wolf (72). In Wolf's depiction of the Soviet Union, it is the most technologically advanced country in the world. Where other countries have failed, the U.S.S.R. is able to prevail, saving the lives of many crewmen who were lost after the "Italia's" crash. The technology of the Soviet Union is furthermore improving: the first Soviet icebreaker "Malygin" fails to recover the crew, yet their second effort succeeds. Of course, it was a Soviet amateur radio operator who first contacts the "Italia's" men (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 18). This Russian boy finds these stranded men—through a radio he made himself (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 17)—although professionals from all around the world sought them in vain. Technology is a symbol for the country itself, and as such, one also must note the failure of the airship from fascist Italy.

Not only is the Soviet Union technologically superior to all other countries in this play, its citizens are ethically and socially better. Although Peter Groth claims that Wolf's depiction of the U.S.S.R. as a thoroughly magnanimous country willing to express solidarity with all workers is flawed, describing the Soviet actions depicted in the play at least partially as a result of the "Notwendigkeit des Welthandels" (98), the effort and sacrifice made by individuals at least partially belie Groth's assertion. Many people from around the world risk their lives in order to save the missing crewmen, but the Soviets looking for these men take self-sacrifice to the highest

level. After Tschuchnowski, the pilot of the “Krassin’s” aircraft, and his crew are stranded on a sheet of ice, he tells the ship’s captain to proceed with the search for the crew of the “Italia” before going after him and his men. He tells his radioman:

TSCHUCHNOWSKI: Gib sofort zurück: “Wir haben noch Vorräte für zwei Wochen, sind alle gesund, unser Fahrgestell ist zwar kaputt, doch auf Schwimmkörpern hält sich der Apparat ... ich halte es für notwendig, daß der “Krassin” der Malmgreen-Zappi-Gruppe schnellstens zur Hilfe kommt, ehe er sich um uns bekümmert. ...” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 33).

Even though his men also need to be rescued, they have provisions for the time being, whereas the men from the “Italia” do not. Tschuchnowski considers the whole instead of personal and in-group need or comfort. The Captain concurs and goes after the Italians. However, these airmen and sailors are not the only Soviets to put the greater good ahead of the self—even if it is the good of a group often framed as a class enemy. Factory workers are willing to donate money and work extra hours to prepare for the rescue of these lost Italian pilots. Wolf thought that the sacrifice was important enough to have it serve as the motto before the play: “GENOSSE MESKIN: Genossen, ihr wißt, daß ich dafür eingetreten bin, wir sollten über unsere Gewerkschafts- und Parteiabgaben hinaus noch ein Zehntel unseres Wochenlohnes für die Ausrüstung des Eisbrechers ‘Malygin’ und für eine Polarflugstaffel stiften” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 11). The workers’ decision to work extra hours is doubly important. Not only do the Soviets have the eight-hour work day—which German

workers had lost by the time Wolf wrote this play—but the workers were willing to temporarily give this up, sacrificing themselves for strangers from a country ideologically opposed to them (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 28).

Wolf again indicates a Communist utopia in Wie stehen die Fronten?, using tactics similar to those he used in Cyankali and “Krassin” rettet “Italia”. The first instance of doing so in Wie stehen die Fronten? is reminiscent of the episode in Cyankali when Paul and Max steal food and bring it home to share with everyone. Wolf presents here a model of how to act: after Franz is fired, Marie, Max and Willy bring food and money for him and his family, even though they have little themselves (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 134, 136). As in Cyankali, the poor characters—who have so little—share what they have with those around them. Wolf explains these actions with Marie’s line: “... jeder allein hat so gut wie nischt, aber wir alle zusammen, das ist schon was” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 136). As in the earlier “Krassin” rettet “Italia”, he establishes the Soviet Union as this post-Communist revolution utopia, even using the term “Vorbild:”

FRANZ: Und haben wir vielleicht kein Vorbild, was ein proletarischer Standpunkt, was Mut, Entschlossenheit und Klassentreue vermögen? Was glaubt ihr, was aus Rußland geworden wäre, wenn die Proletarier Leningrads im Oktober 1917 ihren Direktoren und Schlichtern, ihren Noskes und Severings sich so unterworfen hätten wie die deutschen Arbeiter?! ... (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 148).

Franz soon afterward restates the value of the U.S.S.R. as a Communist utopia: it is “... das Ziel und der Weg der Arbeiter aller Erdteile und Länder!” (Wolf, Gesammelte 7: 149). Wolf presents the Soviet Union as superior to his contemporary Germany, and further demonstrates that this superiority is the effect of the Communist uprising. With this agitprop play, Wolf explicitly constructs the contrast between Germany and the Soviet Union, which was only implied in the radio play “Krassin” rettet “Italia”. As in that earlier play, the U.S.S.R. is the embodiment of the utopian goal Germany could achieve through a Communist revolution.

8 Conclusion

In 1928, the same year in which he joined the German Communist Party, Friedrich Wolf famously promoted “Kunst als Waffe” in the propagation of the Communist movement. Before being forced to flee the country in 1933, he wrote two radio-plays, four stageplays, and three agitprop plays in this period, each of which he used to spread the Communist message. Through these dramatic works, Wolf attempted to redefine social reality for his audience. In order to do so, he had to overturn common perceptions of “truth” and provide an alternate perspective of contemporary society, and the future of that society which would better correspond to Communist movement ideology. Wolf’s efforts as a social movement rhetor were in some ways flawed, but those flaws generally reflect common errors in the way in which the Communist message as a whole was transmitted during the Weimar Republic, and Wolf’s efforts were subject to the same restrictions as other Communist rhetors, such as censorship.

Before the public could take Wolf’s message seriously, they had to believe that Wolf was an expert and credible rhetor. Since Wolf was an artist from the middle-class attempting to spread a Communist message, credibility was particularly important. He used the accurate depiction of the working class milieu in his stage plays and, especially, sources and statistics to provide this credibility. The use of statistics was common at the time, because it was a prominent feature of the documentary theater of Erwin Piscator, with whose work Wolf had been familiar by

1927 (Hammer, “Konzepte” 1954). In most of his works from this time, Wolf introduced quotes and facts—often from easily verifiable and widespread sources such as the *A-I-Z*—before or at the beginning of the plays in order to prove the veracity of his assertions and to favorably color the opinion of his audience to the action which followed. Even after he was well-known as a committed Communist, after the premiere of Die Matrosen von Cattaro, he was still developing ways to use this material. He incorporated his sources most intricately in the stage play Tai Yang erwacht, interweaving them in many different ways throughout the play. He continued to supply statistics and quotes well into the time of his agitprop works, most extensively in Von New York bis Schanghai.

Wolf exerted at least as much rhetorical effort in his representation and redefinition of current social conditions as he did in establishing his own expertise. Throughout his dramatic work of the late 1920s and early 1930s, he presented class inequality as a definite social problem. He was especially adept in his depiction of the meager existence of the working class. Wolf depicted the plight of the poor from Cyankali, his first play of the period under discussion, and continued—indeed he increased his rhetorical focus on—this issue throughout his dramatic works during this time. Wolf also began to reveal the victimizer that caused the problems of the working class again and again throughout the course of these plays. As he continued to write plays for the propagation of the Communist movement, he increasingly devoted rhetorical effort to unmasking the victimizer.

Wolf typically depicted the upper class as the cause for the problems of the working class, though he also pointed at the capitalist system itself as the victimizer (instead of the societal elites) in his last dramatic work of this period, Bauer Baetz. Beginning with Tai Yang erwacht, Wolf increasingly gave upper-class characters significant stage time, even though these plays were set in a lower-class milieu. The contrast between the classes allowed Wolf to depict the upper class as the cause of the plight of the working class and thereby present classed society as a social problem. Over the course of these nine plays, Wolf continued to strengthen Communist perceptions of the present conditions in society, and this was the strongest part of his rhetorical message.

The weakest component of Wolf's Communist movement rhetoric as it appeared in his dramatic work of this period is the depiction of society's future. It is important for a convincing social movement rhetor to redefine the future by presenting a goal towards which the movement should strive and a plan of action with which to achieve that goal. Wolf only infrequently focuses on either of these aspects. On occasion, he indicates the revolutionary course of action for the near future, and he would in some brief moments present a utopia which could be the result of the successful completion of that course of action, but he did not construct a connection between the two, or even present them together. An overview of his dramatic work from this time reveals that Wolf did not focus any more of his rhetoric towards altering audience perceptions of the future at the time of Bauer Baetz in 1932 than he did with Cyankali in 1929. Wolf's 1928 essay "Kunst ist Waffe" established his

belief that an artist should be a seer and prophet (Wolf, *Ausgewählte* XIII: 149, 158). He did not mean that an author should be a seer or prophet in a *l'art pour l'art* sense, which he expressly criticizes in this essay; instead he calls for a new order which would appear on this earth and would provide: "... *Brot* und dreimal *Brot*: das *Brot* für unsren Leib, das Brot der Gerechtigkeit hier unten, das Brot des Glaubens an eine *neue* Ordnung, die kommen wird! ... Nur daß wir heute die Verwirklichung unseres Glaubens auf *dieser* Erde wollen ..." (italics in original) (Wolf, *Ausgewählte* XIII: 158, 159). Nonetheless, whereas Wolf's efforts to redefine the present state of affairs in society as a social problem increased over the course of these nine dramas, he only infrequently and non-systematically concentrated his rhetorical attention on the new order in the future in which the problems of the lower class would be resolved.

Some portion of this rhetorical deficiency is due to the Communist movement itself. Wolf's lack of focus on the future was characteristic of the movement in the last years of the Weimar Republic. The movement's rhetoric often focused on revolution as its goal, mistaking this means for an end. Communist writers and artists like Wolf had a difficult time forging a cohesive message because there was not in fact a solid literary-political agenda in this period. This lack was in turn due in large part to the many problems the KPD had in establishing a clear message in general. The party was unable to overcome the challenges which the great political, economic, and membership changes caused them.

A look at Wolf's entire dramatic body of work from this time—conventional stage drama, radio plays, and agitprop works—reveals a series of rhetorical advances

and retreats, when divided up by type of play, with a clear pattern: the more familiar Wolf was with each type of play, whether radio, stage, or agitprop drama, the more effective his rhetoric generally became. Kurt Merkel notes that Wolf had already mastered the stage drama form before he began writing in support of the party, and that “Wolf versuchte, die von ihm bereits gemeisterte Form des großen Dramas mit neuem Inhalt zu füllen und scheiterte zunächst daran” (72). Bearing this in mind, one observes that Wolf’s level of experience with each form affected his rhetoric. His first attempt to craft a Communist rhetoric in each of the forms—the stage play Cyankali, the radio drama “Krassin” rettet “Italia”, and the agitprop play Wie stehen die Fronten? are all the most problematic in that particular form, though rhetorical problems with Cyankali derive largely from the subject matter itself, on which he had been working before joining the Communist party. Wolf had to adapt his rhetoric for these different types of drama, and he was only able to present his message after becoming familiar with the different advantages and challenges inherent in each of the forms. Wolf exhibited at least some, and often substantial, rhetorical progress with each new play in each individual sub-genre.

There were, of course, other factors influencing Wolf’s suasive efforts within these works. During this time Wolf became increasingly better informed about the Communist movement and its message. His research, work with fellow members of the party, a 1931 visit to the Soviet Union, and several other factors all added to his knowledge of Communism. Also, the basic nature of drama influenced how he could form his rhetoric in these nine works. For example, it would be difficult, if not

impossible, to show a true utopia in any kind of play, due to its inherent lack of conflict or “drama.” This was a possible reason, or part of the reason, why Wolf generally failed to present any form of utopia in these dramas. Furthermore, censorship, which was already a concern to Wolf in 1928 before he finished any of these works (Briefwechsel 175), increased near the end of the Weimar era, and this necessarily affected the way Wolf could craft his message in these works.

It is unfortunately impossible to determine the real-world effect of Wolf’s rhetoric, as is the case with any other social movement rhetor. An infinite amount of variables affect how a member of the audience will receive and process a rhetor’s message. Nor is it possible to calculate to what degree Wolf’s dramatic works from the late 1920s and early 1930s led the audience to act for the Communist party or be more inclined to the movement’s message. It is, however, possible to get some idea of the plays’ reception. Ulf-Rüdiger Sacksofsky, for example, investigated the reception of the four stage plays in his 1972 dissertation. He reports that Cyankali and Die Matrosen von Cattaro were mostly praised by critics, with the exception of those from the political right (196). Reviews of Tai Yang erwacht and Die Jungens von Mons, which overwhelmingly came from center and right publications, were generally negative in their assessment of the plays’ artistic and political merits (Sacksofsky 196, 199). Although they are informative, even these findings must be qualified, due to the difficulty of separating the artistic from the rhetorical merits, or either of these from that of the production. They do not necessarily support—and indeed sometimes work against—each other. It is easy to see what the German

Communist Party thought of Wolf. The KPD trusted him and his capability as a rhetor for the Communist movement. The party praised his works highly and even consulted with him on his agitprop plays (Reimer 12; Ko 191).

The nine dramas Friedrich Wolf wrote between 1929 and 1932 all served to support the Communist movement in Germany. Some of these are better able to perform rhetorical functions than others. Wolf never created a perfect, universally effective piece of social movement rhetoric, which is an impossible task in any case, since no social movement rhetoric can ever be perfect. However, the study of his dramatic work from this period as Communist rhetoric helps us understand the persuasive elements in the plays, giving us insight into Wolf's strengths and weaknesses in spreading his message, and ultimately a greater understanding of the author and his works.

9 Appendix

9.1 Friedrich Wolf: Timeline

- 1888 born in Neuwied am Rhein
- 1913 completes medical studies
- 1914-18 war service
- 1919 Das bist du becomes Wolf's first play produced
- 1921 participation in the Woppswede commune
- 1926 publishes Die Natur als Arzt und Helfer, book for homeopathic medicine
- 1928 joins German Communist Party; publishes "Kunst ist Waffe"
- 1929 premieres of Cyankali and "Krassin" rettet "Italia"
- 1930 first of many presentations at the Stuttgart *Marxistische Arbeiterschule*;
premiere of Die Matrosen von Cattaro and John D. erobert die Welt
- 1931 arrest for allegedly assisting with abortions; visit to the Soviet Union;
premieres of Tai Yang erwacht and Die Jungens von Mons
- 1932 founds the agitprop troupe *Spieltrupp Südwest*; premieres of Wie stehen die Fronten, Von New York bis Schanghai and Bauer Baetz
- 1933 flight from Germany
- 1939-41 prisoner in French concentration camp Le Vernet
- 1945 return to Germany (Soviet Zone of Occupation, the later East Germany)
- 1949-51 serves as first East German Ambassador to Poland
- 1953 death in Berlin-Lehnitz

9.2 Synopses of the Plays Discussed

Cyankali (1929): Young workers Hete Fent and her boyfriend Paul lose their jobs and Hete seeks to have an abortion. Because Dr. Möller will not help her do so – though he had just helped the upper class Lady – Hete tries to perform the procedure herself and then tries to get a back-alley abortion and dies as a result of these attempts.

“Krassin” rettet “Italia” (1929): The topic of this radio play is the search for survivors from the 1928 Italian mission to the North Pole and their rescue by the Soviet icebreaker “Krassin.”

John D. erobert die Welt (1930): A fictional radio biography of John D. Rockefeller, this drama chronicles Rockefeller’s economic rise in the years from 1861 to 1914 and the history of his Standard Oil.

Die Matrosen von Cattaro (1930): This stage play dramatizes the events of early 1918, when the St. Georg and many other Austro-Hungarian ships stage a revolt in the Bay of Cattaro. Wolf depicts the events leading up to this revolt, the revolt itself, and finally its downfall, ending with the impending execution of leader Franz Rasch and three other sailors who proclaim the certainty of a future revolution.

Tai Yang erwacht (1930): Tai Yang, a young worker in a Shanghai factory, is forced to become the lover of her boss, the factory owner Tschu Fu, in an unsuccessful attempt to save her younger sister from the same fate. She

briefly accustomizes herself to Tschu Fu's lifestyle, but eventually joins Wan and other Communist workers in order to stage a revolution.

Die Jungens von Mons (1931): Wolf bases his last stage play in the Weimar

Republic on the true story of the British woman who dressed up as a man and started the paramilitary group the Club of the *Jungens von Mons* in the late 1920s. Because of poverty and unemployment, Ellen Celloc is forced to transform herself into Captain Collen Campell to gain employment. She finds work with the industrialists Ramsbotton and Craik, who use her to break the unity of striking workers. Ramsbotton and Craik likewise use the trade union leader Miller to sabotage the workers' interests.

Wie stehen die Fronten (1932): Wolf's first agitprop play depicts unrest in a German

factory when the boss demands still further pay cuts for his workers and the trade union leader Müller works with him against the other workers. Franz, a worker who is fired for representing the workers interests, unites the workers and promotes their struggle "Klasse gegen Klasse."

Von New York bis Schanghai (1932): This work is largely set in China while the

Japanese invade the country, with the revolutionary Wang attempting to spread his Communist message and unite the working class. Wolf depicts the poor treatment of the working class by the upper class in other countries, including the United States and France. Wolf demonstrates how such a relationship is common, if not inevitable, in all classed society.

Bauer Baetz (1932): The first half of this drama, based on actual events, depicts the story of German farmer, here named Christian Baetz, who accidentally shoots a *Gerichtsvollzieher* in a struggle while the latter is attempting to take his last cow. The second half of the play shows Baetz's treatment by the forces of German justice and also the actions of his class-conscious brother Hans to raise awareness among the working class so similar cases will not occur.

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