

## „Fighting Over the Front Experience: Communist and Socialist Claims to the *Frontkämpfer* Legacy, 1918-1919

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**Cultivated during the Third Reich, the Myth of the *Frontkämpfer*, or Front Fighter, as an ardent rightwing supporter, became a central pillar of National Socialist political life. However, there is ample evidence to show that German veterans of the First World War did not exhibit such political unity, before and especially after the war. This paper argues that the *Frontkämpfer* identity had remarkable political flexibility as reflected by Communist and Socialist claims to represent the community of Front Fighters.**

Fifteen years after the end of the First World War, former private Kurt Wolff described the war as “the great experience that was unique for hundreds of thousands of the Front Generation, and would be definitive for their entire life.” [1] However, within this generation of young men who fought in the Great War, Wolff went on to argue, one group stood apart. “There exists no doubt,” he declared, “that the Field Soldier, the soldier on the front, in the trenches, was entirely distinct from the soldier of the Heimat, the soldier of the garrison.”[2] In conclusion, Wolff stressed the unity of the Front Soldiers in the face of the violence of the front. “The prospects were all the same; the enemy machine gun bullets and grenades made no distinctions. The Kameradschaft was the important factor, it grew into the gigantic, unbreakable bond, an iron hard cement for all.”[3] Wolff’s comments, which reflected the sentiments of a wider community, focused on the key theme of indivisible unity among *Frontkämpfer*, or Front Fighters.

While work by historians, such as Robert Nelson and Scott Stephenson,[4] have demonstrated a degree of unity during the war, particularly on the Western Front, Benjamin Ziemman’s work demonstrates a significant degree of conflict within the world of the *Frontkämpfer* before November 1918, and especially after the signing of the armistice. Thus an examination of the events and sentiments of front line troops in the early revolutionary period of the Weimar Republic indicates that the Front Soldiers were just as divided as the rest of German society after the war was over, highlighting the narrowness of the National Socialist dominated narrative of the Myth of the Front Fighter. Numbering well over five million by late 1918, Front Soldiers were courted by, and lent support to, various political causes and

organizations, which effectively questions the image of unity within the Frontkämpfer community, which was so ubiquitous in fascist descriptions of the veterans of the trenches. This paper will explore the Rightwing conceptions of the Front Fighter during the interwar period, before examining the Communist and Socialist activities in the world of Front Soldier politics, as well as exploring Frontkämpfer political expressions that did not neatly align with contemporary political parties or reflect the Myth of the Front Fighter perpetuated during the Third Reich.

### **From Technocrats to Romantics: Changing Definitions of the *Frontkämpfer***

In early April 1933, the Reich Ministry of the Interior passed the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, which aimed to produce a “national” civil service and remove any non-Aryans and opponents of the new Nazi Regime from office.[5] It had an unintended impact, however. The law included a series of exceptions at the insistence of President, and former Field Marshall, Paul von Hindenburg, granting a reprieve to civil servants who lost a father or son in combat during the Great War, or who had been in the civil service continually since the start of the war. One other category was included for protection from the purges of the ranks of the civil servants: Veterans of the Great War who had served at the Front. This sparked a substantial debate within the German bureaucracy. Who was a Front Soldier? How does one distinguish a Front Soldier from a Heimat soldier? And most importantly for the bureaucrats, how can Front Soldiers be classified and regulated?

By the 10th of August 1933 and after three rounds of revisions, Franz Vahlen, a co-author of the Civil Service Law, was compelled to produce a commentary explaining this new piece of legislation and providing a technical definition of the Front Soldier. Under the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, the Front Soldier or Frontkämpfer is anyone “who in the World War (in the period from 1 August 1914 to 31 December 1918) took part with combat troops in a battle, a skirmish, or a positional battle or siege.” [6]

Collaborating evidence concerning the soldier’s involvement in any engagement had to be found in the War Army List (Kriegsrangliste) or in the War Personnel Register (Kriegsstammrolle).[7] Vahlen added two stipulations to his definition of a Frontkämpfer. First, to be classified as a Front Soldier it was “not enough” to merely be in the combat area

during the war, instead the person in question must have actively engaged in combat.

Secondly, Vahlen stated “participation in the battles in the Baltics, in Upper Silesia against the Spartacists and Separatists, and also the enemies of the national rising are to be treated as equal to the battles of the World War.”

Through Vahlen’s commentary on the Civil Service Law, “Combat Troops” were now defined as “formations of a military kind,” including units taking part in the battles in the Baltics in late 1918 and early 1919, against the Spartacus Uprising in Berlin, liberating Munich from the Council Government, or fighting against the Red Army in Central Germany. These troops were to be treated as Frontkämpfer and were explicitly given equal status to veterans of Verdun, Flanders or Tannenberg.

The political Right was swift in its reaction. Over the next five months numerous articles appeared in the *Vossische Zeitung*, the *Kreuzzeitung*, *Berliner Tageblatt*, the *Berliner Börsen Zeitung* and other newspapers, generating a passionate public discourse on the nature of the Frontkämpfer identity. Many vocal veterans rejected Vahlen’s technocratic, legalist interpretation of the nature of the Frontkämpfer, instead arguing that the Front Fighter Community was defined through emotional and spiritual characteristics that were not reflected by the new law. Although the authors against Vahlen’s definition critiqued it for a variety of reasons, there was a common underlying theme: the Frontkämpfer community could not be divided. They argued:

“Petty distinctions [of the new law] show that they do not understand the Spirit of the Front. In danger, in emergency and death to close ranks and stand together as one in the spirit of the Frontkameradschaft ... that is the mark of the Front Soldier. There is no differentiation in battle, therefore the honour of the Front Spirit and the Frontkämpfer should not be stung with differentiation.”[8]

Unity, among the rightwing Frontschweine, or Front Pigs, especially in the face of death, was presented as indivisible. The *Stahlhelm Press Service* echoed these sentiments on 13 November 1933, declaring “Comradeship was one of the most important pillars for what awaits the soldiers on the front,” and that “the Kameradschaft ... grew into a gigantic and an unbreakable bond, an iron hard cement for all.”[9]

However, none of these Rightwing critics, writing fifteen years after the end of the First World War, raised any issue with the inclusion of volunteer ‘nationalist’ military units, commonly known as *Zeitfreiwilligenkorps*, or *Freikorps*, formations, in the legal definition of the *Frontkämpfer*. As shown by the article in the *Berliner Tageblatt* the period after the armistice, November and December 1918, was included to specifically allow for the inclusion of troops engaged in domestic conflicts, not merely formations that were delayed in demobilizing. The additional instructions for interpreting the Civil Service Law explicitly specified that *Freikorps* formations fighting in the Baltics, Upper Silesia, as well as against the Spartacus League and aspiring ‘Separatists,’ were to be given equal status to Great War veterans under the law.’[10]

This caveat faced no opposition from Rightwing groups on spiritual or qualitative grounds. The acceptance of *Freikorps* units into the Front Soldier identity undermines the narrative of unity so pervasive in the 1933 Rightwing discourse on the attributes of the *Frontkämpfer*. Many of the victims of the *Freikorps* in late 1918 were self-identifying *Frontkämpfer*, fighting alongside the Spartacus League and separatist groups. Therefore Rightwing portrayals of unity among the veterans of the trenches were only possible through the deliberate marginalization of Socialist and Communist Great War veterans from the *Frontkämpfer* identity.  
war.

### ***Trench Genossen***

The Rightwing image of a unified community of *Frontkämpfer* is easily contested through an examination of the prolific outpouring of communist and socialist discourse on soldiers and the military. Open association between Leftwing political groups and soldiers developed alongside the revolutionary events in November 1918.[11]

As early as 10 November, *Die Rote Fahne*, presenting itself as the official organ of the Spartacus League, reported on the creation of combined Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils in Berlin and across Germany, but also instructed soldiers in barracks and posts throughout the Imperial army to begin electing representatives. Additionally the Spartacus League, under

Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg's leadership, set clear tasks for the "reorganization of authority." To create a "proletariat socialist peace," soldiers were instructed to:

1. Disarm the police and all officers and soldiers who did not accept the revolution.
2. Assume authority in all command posts through local workers' and soldiers' councils.
3. Take control over the direction of returning soldiers to the Heimat through regional Workers' and Soldiers' Councils.[12]

The communists were quick to extend their influence in garrisons in Berlin and across Germany, including offering free copies of *Die Rote Fahne* for distribution in barracks. Every single edition of the *Spartacus* newspaper in November and December 1918 contained articles specifically addressed to soldiers, urging them to support Soldiers' Councils, to attend congresses and council meetings, and most importantly extolling the revolutionary and socialist virtues of the German soldier.

On 24 November, the *Spartacus League* refined their appeals to Leftwing soldiers, publishing a newspaper, "Rote Soldaten," heralded as the "first newspaper of the Revolution for our Feldgrauen." [13] For a mere five pfennig soldiers of the former Kaiser's army could read *Spartacus* critiques of the Soldiers' Councils' proceedings, articles discussing the association between Soldiers' Councils and the USPD (Independent Social Democrats), as well as editorials seeking to "bring together the soldierly masses with the [communist] ideals." [14]

Amidst the broader communist appeals to soldiers, there was also a clear recognition that the Front Soldier was on some level distinguished from soldiers of the Home Army and this gave them particular political value. [15] While general addresses to all soldiers began immediately after the declaration of the Republic in Berlin on 9 November, specific appeals to the Frontkämpfer were evident less than two weeks later. Front Soldier-specific content appeared in leaflets, magazines and particularly in *Die Rote Fahne*.

In an article entitled "The New Burgfrieden," Rosa Luxemburg called for solidarity between the exploited victims of the "Social Imperialist war," namely workers and soldiers, who she argued were united by the common goals of peace and demobilization. [16] Seeking to nurture connections between the organized working class and Great War veterans, Communist nomenclature repeatedly referred to Front Soldiers as "proletariat in Feldgrau," particularly in

articles praising the Soldiers' Council movement as a sign of a growing class-consciousness within the rank and file of the army.

Most importantly, the Spartacus League stressed the bond between Frontkämpfer and revolutionary workers through the mutual glorification of action. Just as active participation in the war at the front distinguished a Front Soldier from a Home Soldier in the eyes of the Frontkämpfer, the Spartacists declared that the true socialist revolutionary was similarly defined by his active efforts rebelling against the bourgeois capitalist order. Therefore, the Spartacus League called for unity between revolutionary workers and veterans of the trench to carry on the revolutionary movement in its task of clearing away the counterrevolutionaries and final remnants of the imperial "hegemonic classes." [17]

Efforts to organize the Frontkämpfer through the Spartacus League were first evident through the declaration of a specific Front Soldier Assembly, held on 22 November in Berlin, with Karl Liebknecht acting as 'advisor.' [18] Several resolutions were passed including a petition for the creation of a formal and permanent Soldiers' Council of Front Soldiers, which should then seek incorporation into the Greater Berlin Soldiers' Council. Liebknecht and the new Front Soldiers' Assembly decreed all officers and counterrevolutionary elements should immediately be removed from the councils and protested the efforts of the National Assembly under Friedrich Ebert and Hugo Haase to 'hinder' the revolution. [19] Following the creation of specific Front Soldier Councils, the Frontkämpfer began to demand a greater say in the future shape of the Reich, issuing a press statement in Die Rote Fahne on 25 November, demanding the "democratization and Socialization of our land." [20]

While exact numbers of representatives at the first two meetings of the specific Front Soldiers' Assembly in Berlin are unavailable, if the election regulations governing the structure of the Soldiers' Council elections in front line formations are used as a model for the Front Soldiers' Assembly, there would be 43 delegates from Armies, Army Divisions and Army Groups, with additional delegates from each unit over 1000 men, potentially generating a body of several hundred men. [21] While it is unlikely that Liebknecht was able to assemble hundreds of delegates for a specific Frontkämpfer Assembly so rapidly, the creation of this body nevertheless demonstrates the Front Soldiers' political capital in revolutionary politics.

However, Liebknecht and the Spartacus League were not the only ones to recognize the potentially decisive political role of the veterans of the Front. Spartacus attempts to mobilize the Frontkämpfer occurred alongside concerted attempts by the Social Democrat-led government to raise new, politically reliable formations of Front Soldiers to serve the Republic.

### **Contesting the Contested: Socialist and Other *Frontkämpfer***

The polarizing lenses of National Socialism and Communism initially dominated historians' view of the Frontkämpfer community. However, a closer examination of the actions and sentiments of Front Soldiers, particularly through Benjamin Ziemann's work on the Republican Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, demonstrates a mosaic of political creeds representing more of the political spectrum than just the far left and right. Additionally, many politically active Frontkämpfer organizations did not necessarily neatly align themselves with the existing and emerging political parties of the fledgling Republic.

Apart from the Communists and National Socialists, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) delivered the most concerted and well-organized efforts to mobilize Front Soldiers over the course of the Republic and in the revolutionary period specifically. In the first days of the revolution in Berlin, more so than future President Friedrich Ebert or Chancellor Philipp Scheidemann, Otto Wels came to forefront of revolutionary soldiers' politics as Commander of the Berlin Garrison, the de facto military commander of the capital for the new SPD government. To "restore peace and order" in Berlin, Wels advocated for the creation of a "Schutzwehr der Ordnung" of 150 Defensive Battalions of 1000 men each.

Wels' actions were part of wider government initiatives to restore order in the capital and democratize Germany. Government promises, offering peace, stability and democratic representation, seemed to have resonated with at least some portion of the Front Soldiers, many of whom combined this support of the Ebert-Haase regime with an explicit rejection of the "Bolshevism" of the Spartacists.[22] Despite being actively courted by the Spartacus League, and later the Communists, many bodies of revolutionary soldiers chose to stand behind the socialist government.

A letter to Gustav Noske on 19 November from the Soldiers' Council in Lübeck praised the commitment of the Non-Commissioned Officers from various returning units for their open support of the Social Democrats.[23] On 24 November in Kowno, the Soldiers' Council of the Eastern Front declared itself for the SPD-led government, stating "we support the democracy. We do not want a dictator deciding over our fate and the National Assembly." A further declaration from the Delegation of the Eastern Front on 1 December announced, "In the name of the 750,000 Kameraden on the Eastern Front we warmly greet the resolutions of the Government. We position ourselves behind the Government on their way to [creating] the National Assembly with all of our power."[24]

While further research is necessary on the composition and size of the forces that were assembled to defend the Republic after January 1919 under Gustav Noske's leadership, to determine how many Great War veterans did in fact join pro-republican paramilitary units, it is nonetheless possible to assert that the Social Democrats were active in Frontkämpfer politics, clouding the Rightwing, nationalist interpretation of the Front Fighter promoted during the Third Reich.

Additionally, there are numerous examples where revolutionary organizations did not neatly align with established ideologies or newly created Reichstag political parties. The Greater Berlin Soldiers' Council was shocked by the well-documented presence of former imperial officers, generally of lower rank, in numerous Soldiers' Councils across western Germany. Exemptions were created for officers able to demonstrate a history of active support of the Social Democrats before the end of the Great War, temporarily allowing them to participate in Soldiers' Councils.[25] General Sixt von Arnim, no friend of the revolution, personally created a 'Soldiers' Council' in the Fourth Army in order to preempt the creation of a revolutionary council body in his army of over 500,000 men. This officer-led 'Soldiers' Council' passed a resolution to suppress Bolshevism with all available powers.[26]

General von Arnim's 'Soldiers' Council' was not the only example of council bodies with membership comprised of revolutionary soldiers and former monarchical officers. The 5th Squadron of the 1st Guard Dragoons Regiment reportedly contained a Soldiers' Council composed largely of noble officers in early December, while the 1st Guard Field Artillery Regiment continued to operate under its former commander and his staff of officers, but under the new title of 'Soldiers' Council.' The Berlin Soldiers' Council, shocked by these

‘abnormal’ councils included a rule specifically excluding all officers from the elections that occurred on 16 December.[27]

The creation of the so-called ‘Iron Division’[28] provides another example of the periodic mixture of military training and revolutionary zeal. Created by the Central Soldiers’ Council of the Eighth Army and the President of the Soldiers’ Council, a volunteer Kampfarmee was placed under the direction of monarchial officers and deployed in the Baltics in order to “prevent the overflow of the Bolshevik waves through the weapons in their hands.”[29] While the Army Supreme Command stationed in Riga oversaw this plan and directed the deployment of the division in the Kurland region, even the Spartacus League was forced to admit that the impetus for the ‘Iron Division’ had clearly come “from below.”

## **Conclusion**

Therefore, the contemporary right-wing image of the Frontkämpfer as a pro-Nazi, Rightwing, proto-fascist ideological soldier can be quite effectively challenged. Certainly, many Front Soldiers supported the Nazi Party in their rise to power and one only needs to examine the early NSDAP membership to see this connection. Of the 236 Great War veterans serving as Reichstag deputies in 22 January 1931, 58 were members of the NSDAP. Yet, 34 were members of the SPD, and another 8 were Communist delegates.[30] Over 16 different political parties included Great War veterans as Reichstag deputies. Frontkämpfer were spread throughout the political spectrum, and their existence and political activities in the early revolutionary period of the Weimar Republic in 1918 and 1919, serve to contest the Rightwing master narrative that shaped the contemporary Frontkämpfer identity.

In conclusion, the Frontkämpfer identity was in a state of flux during the November Revolution. Narratives from Great War veterans, penned years later, stressing unity among Front Soldiers may have been accurate during the war, as Scott Stephenson suggests in his work on soldiers on the Western Front in 1918, but after the war, this unity rapidly broke down. In late 1918, a murky landscape of unclear divisions and distinctions developed in the world of the Frontkämpfer. At times soldiers were divided along established political lines, but they would also create formations rooted in their experiences and training in the former imperial army. Established through regional identities or unit cohesion between veterans from

the same company or regiment, para-military formations dominated by Frontkämpfer often combined elements of revolutionary rhetoric with military practices and patterns of operation, which differentiated them from the numerous untrained bands of armed civilians with impressive sounding titles but little military capability.

Stephenson suggests that the Frontkämpfer primarily supported the council movement as an expression of war weariness, exhaustion, and above all a desire for peace, and that any political capital or potential democratizing power was a mirage. For the majority of soldiers, this representation was fairly accurate. Millions of soldiers did not return to Germany seeking to play a decisive role in the political affairs of the realm. But some did. Although they formed a relatively small percentage of the millions of men returning to Germany from the front, this nonetheless meant that there were as many as 300,000 to 500,000 politically active Great War veterans during this time period. [31] Additionally, these veterans from across the political spectrum recognized that their identity as soldiers, often as Front Soldiers, gave them significant political capital.

The leaders of political parties and movements, both large and small, also exhibited a significant appreciation for the potentially decisive role soldiers could play, and accordingly sought to mobilize Frontkämpfer and soldiers in general to support various causes. Above all, this reflected the new reality of political life in Germany's first republic; the hallmarks of Imperial political life, election campaigns, rallies, and speeches, all transferred into Weimar politics, however they were now inseparably altered by violence and professionalized organization of armed force. Certainly Weimar political culture was more complex than a reductive "might equals right" thesis, however the rifle, machine gun and even artillery piece were fixtures of the political landscape alongside speeches, rallies, ballots and Reichstag deputies and must be included in any analysis of Weimar political life.

## Notes

[1] Bundesarchiv-Berlin (Lichterfelde) R 72-1174. "The Front Soldier," Stahlhelm Press Service, 13 November 1933.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] See Robert Nelson, *German Soldier Newspapers of the First World War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); also Scott Stephenson, *The Final Battle: Soldiers' of the Western Front and the German Revolution of 1918*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[5] For more on the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service see, Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in Power*, (New York: Penguin, 2006), 14-15.

[6] BA-B R72-1174. 11 August 1933, *Berliner Tageblatt*, "Wer gilt als Frontkämpfer?"

[7] BA-B R 72-1174. Article in the *Berliner Tageblatt*, 373, 3 December 1933, "Wer gilt als Frontkämpfer?"

[8] BA-B R 72-1174. 3 December 1933 edition of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, "Frontgeist und Frontabzeichen."

[9] BA-B R72-1174. 13 November 1933, *Stahlhelm Press Service*, "Frontsoldaten."

[10] BA-B R72-1174, 11 August 1933, *Berliner Tageblatt*, "Wer gilt als Frontkämpfer?"

[11] See Ulrich Kluge, *Soldatenräte und Revolution: Studien zur Militärpolitik in Deutschland 1918/19*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975).

[12] *Die Rote Fahne*, 10 November 1918, "Notice to the Workers and Soldiers of Berlin."

[13] *Die Rote Fahne*, 24 November 1918, "Die Roten Soldaten."

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Both the political Left and the Right recognized the potential political value of Frontkämpfer. Former Artillery officer Dr Ulrich Trautmann wrote in the *Kreuzzeitung* on 4 February 1934 that "if a position in the community of the Volk deserves to be heard before all others, this is the position of the Frontkämpfer." BA-B R72-1174

[16] *Die Rote Fahne*, 19 November 1918, "Der neue Burgfrieden."

[17] *Die Rote Fahne*, 19 November 1918, "Seid auf der Hut!"

[18] *Die Rote Fahne*, 20 November 1918, "Front Soldiers' Assembly."

[19] *Die Rote Fahne*, 2 December 1918, "Arming of the Revolution."

[20] *Die Rote Fahne*, 25 November 1918, "Aus den A.- und S.-Räten."

[21] BA-B R 201- 27, "Richtlinien für Soldatenräte."

[22] A delegate meeting of the Front Soldiers of 300 representatives from over 220 front line divisions sat in Ems on 3 December, including several officers. This delegation of Frontkämpfer, meeting without Karl Liebknecht's influence, declared themselves simultaneously in support of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils as well as the National Assembly and Ebert-Haase Government. Furthermore, the Ems meeting of Front Soldiers stated that it "wanted to know nothing of the Dictatorship of the Spartacus Group." *Die Rote*

Fahne, 4 December 1918, “From the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils – Delegate Meeting of the Front Soldiers in Ems.”

[23] Gustav Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Revolution*. Berlin: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 29.

[24] *Die Rote Fahne*, 1 December 1918, “A Declaration from the Eastern Front.”

[25] By the end 1918 this exemption was largely overturned and the majority of officers were barred from elections and participation in Soldiers’ Councils. However the decision to remove officers was not unanimously approved and only implemented after a lengthy debate in the Vollzugsrat of the Greater Berlin Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council. BA-B R201-24, bl.19. December 1918.

[26] *Die Rote Fahne*, 2 December 1918, “Arming of the Revolution.”

[27] *Die Rote Fahne*, 15 December 1918, “Election Regulations – Great Berlin Soldiers’ Council.”

[28] This Soldiers’ Council sponsored ‘Iron Division’ should not to be confused with another ‘Iron Division,’ the 7th Reserve Infantry Division, which also served on the Eastern Front, but was transferred to southern Bavaria in late October to protect the Reich’s southern flank in the event of the collapse of Austria-Hungary. The 7th RID was also active in the revolutionary era. It was ordered to march on Munich on 9 November to combat revolutionaries in the Bavarian capital. Upon entry into the city, contact with revolutionaries quickly destroyed rigid Prussian discipline as almost all troops laid their rifles on the street. Scott Stephenson, *The Final Battle: Soldiers of the Western Front and the German Revolution of 1918*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 100-103.

[29] *Die Rote Fahne*, 1 December 1918, “The Conspiracy Against the Socialization.”

[30] BA-B R 72-1174. *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22 January, 1931, “über 200 Kriegsteilnehmer im Reichstag.”

[31] There are no precise statistics for Freikorps participants from November 1918 to late 1923, due to the fluid membership in such formations. However several authors have proposed estimates based on documented sizes of units who worked with the Reichswehr at various times, as well as reviewing the anecdotal, and often inflated, records of the Freikorps themselves. James Diehl estimated that 1.5 million men participated in volunteer organizations of some kind during this period, with approximately one-third of those men enlisting in Freikorps formations for at least some period of service. Alternatively Robert Waite set the number of Freikorps troops around 200,000 to 400,000. Harold Gordon accepted the latter number as generally accurate, while Hagen Schulze argued that there were

no more than 250,000 recorded volunteers in volunteer units. When incorporating the work of Erwin Könnemann on Zeitfreiwilligenverbände and the Einwohnerwehren, the 200,000 figure appears quite low. Thus an average composite of these studies yields the 300,000 to 500,000 estimate used in this work.