This dissertation has been microfilmed exactly as received 68-15, 363

NELSON, Otto Millard, 1935-
THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND FRANCE, 1918-1933.

The Ohio State University, Ph.D., 1968
History, modern

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan
THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY
AND FRANCE, 1918-1933

DISSertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By
Otto Millard Nelson, B.S., M.A.

* * * * * *

The Ohio State University
1968

Approved by
Adviser
Department of History
VITA

May 31, 1935 Born - Owatonna, Minnesota
1956 . . . . B.S., University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
1956-1957 .. Graduate Assistant, Department of History, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
1961 . . . . M.A., University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
1960-1961 .. Teaching Fellow, Department of History, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon
1961-1963 .. Graduate Assistant, Department of History, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1963-1964 .. Half-time Instructor, Department of History, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1964-1965 .. Instructor, Department of History, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
1965-1968 .. Assistant Professor, Department of History, Texas Technological College, Lubbock, Texas

PUBLICATIONS

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History

Modern Germany. Andreas Dorpalen
Reformation. Harold J. Grimm
American Social Thought. Robert Bremner
American Foreign Policy. Foster Rhea Dulles

Minor Field: Philosophy

History of Philosophy. Anthony Nemetz
TABLE OF CONTENTS

VITA ......................................................... ii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .......................... v
INTRODUCTION ......................................... 1

Chapter

I. THE HERITAGE ..................................... 3
II. FROM THE ARMISTICE TO VERSAILLES .... 20
III. FROM FULFILLMENT TO RUHR WAR, 1919-1923 ... 70
IV. YEARS OF CONCILIATION, 1924-1930 ........ 179
V. PRIMAT DER INNENPOLITIK .................... 299

EPILOGUE .................................................. 341

BIBLIOGRAPHY ......................................... 349
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SPD: Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands

SM: Sozialistische Monatshefte

LSI: Labour and Socialist International

AR: Alte Reichskanzlei
INTRODUCTION

The Weimar Republic lacked solid political foundations and survived for only fourteen years. Its staunchest defender, the German Social Democratic Party, was unable to cope with repeated attacks from both the extreme left and extreme right and finally witnessed the Republic's complete collapse in 1933 with the appointment of a Nazi-dominated government. The reasons for this failure were essentially internal. But foreign affairs also played a substantial role in molding popular attitudes toward the Republic. The adverse judgment that a sizable minority and at times even a majority of Germans cast upon the Republic's foreign policy was a contributing factor to the Republic's demise. Alternatively, one might assign blame to the Republic's friends for their general lack of vigor and for their specific inability to convince their opponents of either the soundness of republican institutions and domestic policies or of the wisdom of achieving a rapprochement with France, which would be the arch upon which peace in Europe would have to be structured. To far too many Germans, France remained the Erbeind, the eternal enemy. World War I was widely regarded as not the last, but only one in a series of battles between the Germans and
the French. World War II seemingly supported this conclusion, suggesting that the Weimar Era's rather drab and uninspiring Social Democrats who worked for a peaceful accommodation with France had labored without reward, had toiled without fruit. But if the French and Germans have any lessons to learn from the past, the first one must be that any future war between the two peoples will be mutually and totally destructive. All the evidence indicates that this lesson has been learned. If this is indeed the case, then the unsuccessful record of the attitude and policy of Weimar's Social Democrats toward France can be given at least a partially positive assessment. What once appeared to be merely a dreary and unfortunate episode can now be appraised as a first step on the road to reconciliation.
CHAPTER I: THE HERITAGE

The best foreign policy
is none at all.
Wilhelm Liebknecht

The founders of German Social Democracy are Ferdinand
Lassalle and Karl Marx. Lassalle first gave political
organization to German Socialism by presiding over the
establishment of the General Workingman's Association in
Leipzig in 1863, while Marx helped prepare the way for the
German Socialist movement by his prodigious theoretical
labor. Lassalle was preoccupied with winning political
power for the proletariat in Germany. He believed that the
workers could achieve Socialism within the existing state
structure. Marx, however, looked beyond state borders and
anticipated that the class struggle would be fought out on
the international level. He was convinced that the concerted
struggle of proletarians in all countries would ensure the
triumph of Socialism. Thus Marx took the lead in organizing
the International Working Men's Association in 1864.
German support for his views came not from the Lassalleans

1Quoted in Gerhard Schulz, "Die deutsche Sozial-
demokratie und die Idee des internationalen Ausgleichs,"
Aus Geschichte und Politik: Festschrift zum 70.
Geburtstag von Ludwig Bergsträsser, ed. by Alfred
Hermann (Düsseldorf, 1954), 89.
but from the rival Social Democratic Workers' Party, a Marxist group, founded by August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht at Eisenach in 1869.

In their attitude toward France both Socialist parties applauded the Gallican traditions of revolution and republicanism. Neither looked upon France as a traditional enemy. In July 1870 Lassalleans and Eisenachers alike rejoiced at the prospect of the defeat of Napoleon III, usurper of the French Republic of 1848. Yet in the North German Confederation Bebel and Liebknecht, torn between their contempt for Napoleon and their hatred for Bismarck (whom they would not support on any issue), abstained from the war credits vote. After the decisive battle of Sedan, the picture cleared. It became apparent to both Socialist groups that Germany was now fighting with an eye on Alsace-Lorraine, rather than in self-defense. The second round of war credits was therefore opposed by all the Socialist deputies in the Confederation. The subsequent annexation of Alsace-Lorraine was also denounced.

Contrasting with the Socialists' unhappiness over the policies of their own government was their pleasure over the ouster of Napoleon III and the proclamation of the Third Republic, events that caused Liebknecht to weep "tears of joy."² Among German Socialists there was also widespread

sympathy for the Paris Commune of March to May 1871. To some Germans, Paris, and, for that matter, France, stood for the rights of man, whereas Germany represented only brutal power. Karl Kautsky, one of the leading Marxist theoreticians in pre-World War I days, wrote later that the Commune showed him "the way to Socialism." On the other hand, Eduard Bernstein, another famous figure, first developed Socialist sympathies as a reaction to governmental attempts to silence the allegedly unpatriotic Bebel and Liebknecht.

Unsuccessful in preventing the annexation of the two French provinces, widely regarded by the German middle and upper classes as disloyal, and harassed and jailed by Bismarck's police, leaders of the Socialist parties were goaded into settling their differences. At a congress at Gotha in May 1875 they established a unified party, the Socialist Labor Party. Out of the congress came the

---


Gotha Program, which dwelt on proletarian responsibilities within the national state. To Marx this was a Lassallean heresy, which he ardently criticized in his well-known Critique of the Gotha Program. The Marxists had the last word in 1891 when, following a twelve-year period of proscription (1878-1890) under Bismarck, the German Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands or SPD) produced the Erfurt Program. This short doctrinal statement—with the lengthy scholastic gloss by Kautsky—served as the party's theoretical basis for the rest of the pre-war period and also for the Weimar era. The central feature was the great stress placed on the international class struggle. Foreign affairs and even national feelings were declared to be the province of the bourgeoisie. With the seizure of power by the proletariat, state borders and state conflicts would cease to exist.


Very convenient for SPD programs is Wilhelm Mommsen (ed.). Deutsche Parteiprogramme (Munich, 1960). See pp. 313-14 (Gotha Program) and 349-53 (Erfurt Program). Marx's Critique of the Gotha Programme, ed. by C. P. Dutt, rev. trans. (New York, 1938), is also given in Mommsen,
Buttressing this theoretical unconcern for foreign policy was the Social Democrats' preoccupation with domestic developments. To 1890 this was caused by the necessity of merely keeping the party alive in the face of the anti-Socialist laws. But Bismarck's cautious diplomacy also gave the Socialists no immediate reason to concern themselves with questions of foreign policy, since the chancellor avoided issue-provoking incidents.  

In its attitude toward France the SPD remained friendly. German Socialist admiration for French republican institutions took on added enthusiasm when contrasted with Germany's imperial form of government. Up to 1891 the party kept alive the Alsace-Lorraine issue, continuing to urge self-determination for the territory, but dropped the appeal with the adoption of the Erfurt Program. The prolongation of the controversy was not in line with the new theoretical view of foreign policy. As Bebel explained in 1894 the SPD could best serve the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine by concentrating on winning fuller political rights for them within Germany. In any event, to German


7Heidegger, Deutsche Sozialdemokratie, 38.
Socialists, not France but Russia was the enemy. Fear and hatred of despotic tsarism remained a constant SPD attitude up to 1917. Indeed, it was the Franco-Russian alliance of 1894 that caused the first dimming of SPD respect for the French by tending to discredit, in their eyes, the ideal of a democratic France.

Coinciding almost exactly with the abatement of anti-Socialist restrictions in Germany was the establishment of the Second International. Not until the decade before the war, however, with relations between and among the Great Powers becoming increasingly strained, did the International take up questions of war and peace. Marxist theories concerning the inevitability of capitalist wars notwithstanding, the Socialists felt it worthwhile to try to prevent international conflict, wherein workers and their


families, so they thought, would be the greatest sufferers. French and German Socialists, however, disagreed as to means. At the 1907 Stuttgart Congress of the International the Germans acted as a "conservative" force, preventing the adoption of a French demand for the mass strike in the event of a threat of war. Convinced that the interests of the German workers were tied up with the security of the German state, reluctant to endanger his massive and propertied party organization, and skeptical besides of the likelihood of a major war, Bebel, the party chairman, substituted for the general strike a resolution that committed nobody to anything. At Copenhagen in 1910 the fear of war probably had increased, but the delegates seemed tired of the subject. As before, they could agree only on the need to prevent war "by all means."  

In the immediate pre-war years Franco-German relations worsened considerably. The Morocco Crisis of July 1911 heightened war sentiment and solidified the Anglo-French Entente. The German Socialists at first showed little concern, shrugging off an appeal to convene


an emergency international Socialist conference. The SPD went along with the German government in affirming the independence of Morocco, but took issue with the Kaiser's impetuous intervention. Bebel, speaking in the Reichstag, sarcastically characterized the Kaiser as "the strongest support of English-French policy" and declared him to be "the hope of France." The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 also increased tensions. French and German Socialists held large peace demonstrations and exchanged delegations, Frenchmen going to Berlin and Germans travelling to Paris. Numerous pledges of friendship and denunciations of war were reciprocated, but no joint plan of action to prevent war was adopted, or even seriously discussed.

Another source of Franco-German ill-feeling was the Zabern affair of 1913. On that occasion German army officers had demonstrated contempt for the Alsatian townfolk of Zabern (Saverne). Unlike their non-Socialist compatriots, French and German Socialists saw eye-to-eye on this issue. The French Socialists had rejected revanchism in return for

---

12 Schorske, German Social Democracy, 197-200.


an SPD promise to work for autonomy for Alsace-Lorraine (which, in 1911, had been promoted from the status of imperial domain or Reichsland to that of a separate state within the German Reich). However, they naturally resented mistreatment such as that meted out to the inhabitants of Zabern. And in the Reichstag debate of December 1913, SPD spokesmen used the incident to criticize the pervasiveness of militarism in German life and to reiterate their support for a pacification of Franco-German relations.\(^\text{15}\)

To promote such pacification German and French Socialist leaders met at anti-war conferences at Bern in May 1913 and at Basle in the summer of 1914. Tangible results of the conferences included an anti-war pamphlet and the formation of a joint consultative committee.\(^\text{16}\)

The ever-hopeful Jean Jaurès, whose vivid rhetoric and deep humanitarian convictions had raised him to the leading position in the French Socialist Party, was also quoted as saying, early in 1914, that "Four million German Socialists will rise like one man and execute the Kaiser if he wants to start a war."\(^\text{17}\)

---


Jaurès' optimism was soon tested and found wanting. The murder of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, led to general war in five weeks. The Executive Bureau of the International held an emergency meeting in Brussels on July 29, but this confined itself to a resolution calling on workers in all countries to intensify their opposition to war. Hugo Haase, who had succeeded Bebel as SPD chairman in 1913, told of the steps his party had taken to prevent war and strongly implied that the German Socialists would oppose war credits even if Russia attacked Austria. To coordinate policy more directly with the French, the SPD Executive (Vorstand) dispatched Hermann Müller, one of its youngest and ablest members, to Paris. His mission was greatly handicapped, however, by the fact that the Germans had not themselves decided. Müller gave his personal opinion that his colleagues would not vote for war credits but received the discouraging news that the French Socialists would approve the credits if it seemed that Germany was attacking their country. No commitments were made but Müller returned to Berlin convinced that a joint policy of abstention was now the only hope. Events, however, moved too fast for the Socialists. Anti-war demonstrations in Berlin and elsewhere had ended abruptly with the Russian mobilization of July 30. The SPD was presented with a fait accompli on August 2 when the trade unions voted to support the war,
a clear indication to the Socialist leadership that the workers themselves would refuse to answer a call for a general strike. On August 4, 1914, the Social Democratic Party itself voted for war credits in the Reichstag.18

Prompting this decision were numerous considerations: fear of government action against a party that was widely considered to be subversive (thus SPD officials Friedrich Ebert and Otto Braun had been sent to Zurich with the party treasury); apprehensions regarding the possible loss of working-class support; and the desire, as Carl Schorske says, "to escape from the pariah position," of being stigmatized as unpatriotic or even as traitors.19 None of these, understandably, was cited by party leaders in their

18 Of little help in this instance are the recently published protocols of the SPD Reichstag delegation, which summarize the delegation's session of August 3 in fifteen lines. The session of August 4 is capsulated in five lines. Prior to August 3, the parliamentary group last met on May 13. SPD, Die Reichstagsfraktion der deutschen Sozialdemokratie 1898 bis 1918, ed. by Erich Matthias and Eberhard Pikart (Düsseldorf, 1966), II, pp. 3-4. More useful are Joll, Second International, 162-75; Cole, Socialist Thought, III, pt. 1, pp. 91-95; Edwyn Bevan, German Social Democracy During the War (New York, 1919), 8-14; Eduard David, Das Kriegstagebuch des Reichstagsabgeordneten Eduard David 1914 bis 1918, ed. by Erich Matthias and Susanne Miller (Düsseldorf, 1966), 3-13; Merle Fainsod, International Socialism and the World War (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), 25-27; Braunthal, Geschichte, II (Hanover, 1963), 24-26. For the impact of the trade union decision on the SPD see John Snell, "Socialist Unions and Socialist Patriotism in Germany, 1914-1918," American Historical Review, LIX (Oct., 1953), 67-68; and Spalding, "Social Imperialism," Ph.D. dissertation, microfilm, Cornell University, 1949, pp. 120-45.

19 Schorske, German Social Democracy, 290.
explanations of the war credits vote. Rather, fear of
Russia served as the official explanation. It may, indeed,
be the correct explanation.20 Nowhere in the Socialist
Party was there any desire to go to war with France; but
everywhere there was the determination to "defend"
Germany against Russia. In the Reichstag, Haase explained
that it was not a question of voting for or against the war
but a question of "defense" against "enemy invasion." These
sentiments were echoed by Joseph Bloch, editor of the
Sozialistische Monatshefte, who added that Marx and Engels
had justified a war of socially advanced peoples against
tsarist tyranny. Bloch explicitly regretted the necessity
of fighting France, whose cultural development was so akin
to that of Germany, but blamed this on the ambitious
French politicians who had negotiated the alliance with
Russia. Certainly there is no evidence that any German
Socialist voted for war credits because of anti-French
feeling. When Haase said, "in the hour of danger, we
cannot leave the Fatherland in the lurch," he was referring
exclusively to the threat from Russia.21

20 William H. Maehl, "The Role of Russia in German
Socialist Policy, 1914-1918," International Review of
Social History, IV (1959, pt. 2), 177-83.

21 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 306, pp. 8-9;
Joseph Bloch, "Der Krieg und die Sozialdemokratie."
Sozialistische Monatshefte (hereafter cited as SM), XX
(Aug. 13, 1914), 1023-27; Maehl, "Role of Russia,"
International Review of Social History, IV (1959, pt. 2),
177-83; Spalding, "Social Imperialism," Ph.D. dissertation,
As the German Socialists excused their actions on the basis of resisting Cossacks, so their French confreres felt justified in unanimously voting war credits for a defensive war against Germany. This in turn eased the way for the SPD to continue its support of the war, although, as the war progressed, the Socialists lost some of their cohesion and split into majority (pro-government) and minority (anti-government) groups. For many Socialists the war had now become a thing in itself, a condition in which they found themselves entangled and could not get out of. Thus war-weariness provided much of the impetus for


For the SPD during wartime see Berlaü, German Social Democratic Party; Bevan, German Social Democracy; Heidegger, Deutsche Sozialdemokratie; Schorske, German Social Democracy; Spalding, "Social Imperialism," Ph.D. dissertation, microfilm, Cornell University, 1949; and William H. Maehl, "The German Socialists and the Foreign Policy of the Reich, 1917-1922," Ph.D. dissertation, microfilm, University of Chicago, 1946. The extensive chronology in Franz Osterroth and Dieter Schuster, Chronik der deutschen Sozialdemokratie (Hanover, 1963), 156-197, is also useful. Hans Herzfeld, Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und die Auflösung der nationalen Einheitsfront im Weltkriege (Leipzig, 1928), is superficial.
the Reichstag Peace Resolution of July 19, 1917, where the SPD cooperated with the Center Party and the Progressives in expressing a desire for "a peace of understanding and . . . reconciliation." No foreign states were named but the proscription of "forced territorial acquisitions" implied, among other things, an evacuation of northern France.23 A few Socialists, notably Bernstein, rethought the origins of the war, but this was a matter, at least to Bernstein, with which France had little to do. Bernstein, an Anglophile, was saddened mainly over Germany's war with England.24 Others, who clustered around the Sozialistische Monatshefte, grieved more over the struggle with France, and began to elaborate a view called Kontinentalpolitik, which argued that England was the aggressor and that only solidarity of the major continental states could withstand England's drive to world dominance. The major note sounded in the Kontinentalpolitik theme was "no one in Germany hates France." Between these two countries, so writers in the journal contended, there existed merely differences in historical tradition. The

23 The Resolution had virtually no impact on the government. Chancellor Georg Michaelis accepted it only "wie ich sie suffase." No significant follow-up was made, and the Peace Resolution remained largely a gesture. Hans Gatzke, Germany's Drive to the West (Drang nach Westen): A Study of Germany's Western War Aims During the First World War (Baltimore, 1950), 195-202.

24 Gay, Dilemma, 277-87.
two peoples were allegedly pushed into war by English

greed and jealousy of Germany.25

Certainly the Sozialistische Monatshefte was correct

in stressing the need for Franco-German conciliation.

Unfortunately, this central necessity was encumbered with

misrepresentations, such as the undocumented assertion

regarding England's plans for world hegemony. The conse-
quence was that most Social Democrats, along with other

Germans, rejected Kontinentalpolitik.

The Sozialistische Monatshefte only talked about

Franco-German cooperation. A few individuals tried to

achieve it, attending conferences held at Zimmerwald and

Kienthal in Switzerland in 1915 and 1916. The German

representatives, in each case, were drawn from the radical

anti-war wing of German Socialism and were opposed to the

party leadership. At Zimmerwald they joined with the

French in issuing a manifesto declaring that "this War is

not our War," condemning the policies of all belligerents.

---

25 The quotation on France is from August Müller,
"Das europäische Friedensproblem," SM, XXIII (Jan. 17,
1917), 1-7, p. 4. See also, inter alia, Joseph Bloch,
"Wo stehen wir jetzt?" SM, XXI (Aug. 18, 1915), 789-97;
August Winnig, "Russland, Frankreich und Deutschland,"
SM, XXIII (April 25, 1917), 403-07; and Ludwig Quessel,
"Realitäten der kontinentaleuropäischen Politik," SM,
XXIV (Jan. 22, 1918), 65-73.
These sentiments, however, found no echo in the official SPD press.  

Most ambitious in its intentions was the Stockholm Socialist Conference, proposed for the summer of 1917. But questions of war and peace had to go undecided since the Allied governments refused to issue or validate passports for their Socialists to travel to Stockholm. Nevertheless, the SPD leadership had already prepared an important memorandum for submission to the conference. This memorandum was the most authoritative and detailed party statement apropos the war. It called for a negotiated rather than an imposed peace, and declared further that it should be a "peace without annexations and indemnities, on the principle of national self-determination." The question of war guilt was to be waived and all belligerents were to assist equitably in post-war reconstruction. Presumably this implied a large German contribution to the restoration of Belgium and northern France. The memorandum stated explicitly that overrun states were to be evacuated and were to regain their independence, while captured colonies were to be returned to their pre-war owners. Facing the difficult question of minorities within the German Empire, the memo conceded the granting of autonomy to Alsace-Lorraine, North Schleswig, Posen, and West Prussia.

26Fainsod, International Socialism, 61-74, 87-94 (p. 73 for quote); Braunsfeld, Geschichte, II, pp. 50-66.
But Alsace-Lorraine, the SPD argued, was overwhelmingly German in language and culture and had been rightfully restored to Germany in 1871. It could not, therefore, be detached and annexed by France. The best offer was autonomy. No consideration was given to a plebiscite. 27

There is little reason to think that, had it taken place, the Stockholm Conference would have significantly changed the course of the war. Yet it would have ended the isolation of French and German Socialists and would have permitted a useful exchange of views. As it was, the German delegates who had travelled to Stockholm returned to Berlin without a fresh outlook. For the duration of the war they continued to argue for a peace without annexations, for a return to the status quo ante, and for the inviolability of German territory. 28


28 Bevan, German Social Democracy, 243-44; Heidegger, Deutsche Sozialdemokratie, 168-70.
CHAPTER II: FROM THE ARMISTICE TO VERSAILLES

With the Revolution of November 1918, the German working class assumed historical responsibility for the fate of Germany. Vorwärts, April 18, 1920, p. 1

By mid-summer of 1918 Germany had lost the war. The failure of the so-called Ludendorff Offensive was followed by the Allied break-through of August, made possible by the arrival of fresh American troops. When the steady but orderly retreat of the German Army threatened to become a rout, Ludendorff, the Army's spokesman, demanded that the civilian government initiate immediate armistice negotiations. This was on September 29. On October 1, Prince Max of Baden was installed as German chancellor, expressly for the purpose of obtaining more favorable armistice terms. Included in the new cabinet were two Social Democratic ministers, Philipp Scheidemann and Gustav Bauer. As minister without portfolio and minister of labor, respectively, they were the first Social Democrats ever to hold office in a German government. Their entry into Prince Max's cabinet, however, was contingent on a program of internal liberalization and on a foreign policy that would facilitate the conclusion of an armistice. Another demand was for autonomy for Alsace-Lorraine, advocated by the SPD through peace and war since 1891. But while the
Socialists were united in accepting the Fourteen Points as the basis for negotiations, they were equally united in opposing point number eight, which called for the unconditional return of Alsace-Lorraine to France. By mid-October, the party was also suggesting the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II, whose continued presence as head of state was supposedly holding up the armistice. SPD advice soon turned to insistence, but still the Kaiser refused to abdicate. Finally, on November 9, 1918, with Germany shaken by revolution, Scheidemann himself proclaimed the Republic. Later the same day, he joined with his colleagues Friedrich (Fritz) Ebert and Otto Landsberg in forming a new government, which included also three representatives from the Independent Socialists or USPD (Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands), which had been established in 1917 following the defection of the SPD's anti-government minority. It was this government that accepted the harsh armistice terms of November 11. Among other things, the armistice called for the evacuation of France and the return of Alsace-Lorraine; German repatriation (without reciprocity) of all nationals and prisoners of war;

1SPD, Reichstagsfraktion 1898 bis 1918, II, pp. 417-18.

2The SPD attitude during the abdication crisis can be followed best in Erich Matthias and Rudolf Morsey (eds.), Die Regierung des Prinzen Max von Baden (Düsseldorf, 1962); and SPD, Reichstagsfraktion 1898 bis 1918, II.
withdrawal of all German forces behind the right bank of the Rhine, and occupation of the left bank and strategic bridgeheads by Allied and American troops; and the surrender of such guns, ships, trucks, and rolling stock as to render Germany incapable of resuming the war. In addition, the naval blockade of Germany was to remain in force, and Germany was commanded to pay "reparation for damages done."^3

Preoccupied with the restoration of order, the Social Democrats paid scant attention to the armistice conditions. Vorwärts, the party's Berlin newspaper and official mouthpiece, spoke hopefully of a mitigation of the severe armistice terms but asserted that the government, in the interim, would make every effort to fulfill them as best it could.^4 In fact, however, the party found itself unable to give serious thought to the formulation of foreign policy. With the Reich, in the words of Scheidemann,

---

^3Harry Rudin, Armistice 1918 (New Haven, 1944), 426-32.

^4Vorwärts, Nov. 13, 1918, p. 2; Nov. 14, 1918, p. 2. Chief editor of the Vorwarts was Friedrich Stampfer, who assumed his post on November 9, 1916, as a result of a conflict between the Party Vorstand and the then left-wing, anti-government editorial leadership of the newspaper. As the chief party organ within the Reich, the Vorwärts necessarily had to represent the views of the Vorstand. Thus Stampfer attended Vorstand meetings and in 1925 became an official member of the Executive. Kurt Koszyk, Zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur: Die sozialdemokratische Presse von 1914 bis 1933 (Heidelberg, 1958), 79-85.
"simply a madhouse," all SPD energies were focused on restoring constitutional authority. Thus the party hastened the elections for the National Assembly, whose duties would be to conclude peace and to draw up a constitution. In the January 19, 1919 voting, the Social Democrats emerged with a large plurality, but fell short of a majority. This obliged them to organize the first "Weimar Coalition," which consisted of the SPD, the Center Party, and the liberal bourgeois Democrats. The new government was under strong Socialist influence, with seven of fourteen cabinet posts, including the minister-presidency (Scheidemann), going to the SPD.

In the January electoral campaign, the Socialists, like their competitors, had ignored questions of foreign policy. In part this was because the Allied and Associated Powers had not yet made known their peace demands. A second reason was the continuing unsettled domestic situation, which compelled preoccupation with internal problems. These circumstances precluded the forming of a clearly defined foreign policy. As one Socialist observer put it, "a German foreign policy has ceased to exist."
Although unable to formulate a policy, the Socialists nevertheless expressed alarm over French intrusions. The French were already organizing Alsace-Lorraine as a French district without waiting for a peace treaty, and were also expelling German citizens from the territory.\(^8\) (The fact that Social Democratic members of the Alsatian Landtag, early in December 1918, voiced their preference for France, rather than Germany, went unreported in the German Socialist press.)\(^9\) The French also aroused resentment by promoting separatist activities in the Rhineland. In addition, the SPD criticized the French use of colored occupation troops, who, it was alleged, committed "offenses against women and girls." The Socialist press also affirmed that France led the opposition to German Anschluss with Austria. And, as Allied commander-in-chief, Marshal Foch was held responsible for the continued imposition of the Allied blockade. Finally, there was fear of further chastisements, such as a victory march by Foch through the Brandenburg Gate and the occupation of all of Germany.\(^{10}\)

\(^8\) \textit{Vorwärts}, Dec. 4, 1918, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 5, 1918, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 5, 1918, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 6, 1918, a.m., p. 1.


\(^{10}\) \textit{Vorwärts}, Dec. 2, 1918, a.m., pp. 1-2; Dec. 3, 1918, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 14, 1918, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 21, 1918, a.m., pp. 1-2; Dec. 23, 1918, p.m., p. 1.
Of particular concern to the Socialists was separatism. SPD leaders were quick to assert that the Rhenish, Palatinate, and Hessian separatists were all bourgeois and included many clericals but at first were either ignorant of or reluctant to admit that separatism was French-sponsored. Instead, they described it as a composite of anti-Prussianism, a fear of Bolshevism taking over in Berlin, and a suspicion of a new Kulturkampf (of anti-Church measures supposedly threatened by the new leftist politicians.) But by late December there was growing fear of French intervention. "The danger is very great," Vorwärts warned. To help combat French-abetted separatism, the Socialists supported an early convening of the National Assembly, which was expected to reaffirm the unity of the Reich and to provide inspiration and direction.11

The German Socialists also hoped for support from their ideological counterparts abroad. From February 3-10, 1919, eighty delegates from twenty-one countries met in

11Vorwärts, Nov. 23, 1918, pp. 1-2; Nov. 24, 1918, pp. 1-2 (editorial by Scheidemann); Dec. 12, 1918, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 21, 1918, a.m., pp. 1-2. Despite protestations to the contrary a few Social Democrats were apparently involved in separatist activities. See Jere Clemens King, Foch versus Clemenceau: France and German Dismemberment, 1918-1919 (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 39. Wilhelm Sollmann, a prominent Rhenish Socialist, also had to defend himself and his SPD colleague, Jean Meerfeld, against charges of toadyism up to the occupation forces. Sollmann to Redaktion der Bergischen Arbeiterstimme (Solingen), Nov. 27, 1918, Sollmann Papers/Box 2.
Bern for the first post-war gathering of international Socialism. The two purposes of the conference were to reconstitute the Socialist International and to formulate ideas and intentions to be conveyed to the peacemakers at Paris. Yet the main feature of the proceedings was a running verbal battle between the SPD representatives and right-wing French Socialists, whose spokesmen, Albert Thomas and Pierre Renaudel, indicted the German Socialists as supporters of aggression and as criminals and demanded their expulsion from the conference. Otto Wels and Hermann Müller, who were to be elected co-chairman of the SPD in June, both replied that the German proletariat had demonstrated its merit by overthrowing the old regime, by establishing the eight-hour day, and by dedicating itself to world reconstruction. The SPD speakers also disavowed sole German responsibility for the war, and asserted further that the matter was now irrelevant, since the imperial government, in power at the time, had passed into history. An additional bitter exchange between Wels and Thomas naturally brought no agreement, and the matter was referred to a commission, where it was deferred to a future international congress. Because the French were not supported in their motion, the Germans claimed a victory.12

12Labour and Socialist International (hereafter cited as LSI), The Resolutions of the International Labour and Socialist International Conference of Berne
The German Socialists themselves made proposals regarding (1) the return of prisoners of war, and (2) self-determination for Alsace-Lorraine. German POW's, it was asserted, were simply "one million slaves" whose repatriation was being hindered by French militarists. The conference responded by resolving to appeal to the Allied governments to return all sick and wounded prisoners and to work toward the speediest return of all others.

Regarding Alsace-Lorraine, the Germans were less successful. Müller and Hermann Molkenbuhr, the party secretary, argued that self-determination was not only intrinsically just but that it was also the best way to forestall a new revanchism. This conflicted with the long-standing SPD advocacy of autonomy for the districts, a fact that was clearly recognized by an Alsatian, Salomon Grumbach, who, supported by Renaudel, harshly criticized the SPD delegates for their opportunism. Grumbach reminded them that their party had opposed a plebiscite right to the war's end and now derided their plea for self-determination as

---

presumptuous. The SPD position was further undermined when Kautsky, representing the USPD, also challenged its consistency and sincerity and said further that a separate resolution on Alsace-Lorraine was unnecessary, since a general statement supporting self-determination had already been proposed. Kautsky's view prevailed, and the final conference resolution on territorial questions merely declared support for national self-determination, without mentioning specific cases. Despite this setback, the SPD Executive Committee, in its 1919 report to the party, incorrectly interpreted the Bern Conference as a German victory over a handful of trouble-making Frenchmen. A more accurate—or perhaps less misleading—summation was provided by Vorwärts, which cautioned its readers not to be disappointed over developments at Bern since, so it said now, no great triumphs had been expected.\(^\text{13}\)

At the conference, Renaudel had commented acidly on Scheidemann's absence, charging that the SPD had timidly withheld its leading spokesman. The Frenchman should have known that the German National Assembly was meeting for the first time on February 6 and that Scheidemann, as one

\(^{13}\text{LSI, Resolutions, 4-5, 11; SPD, Protokoll, 47-49; Renaudel, L'Internationale, 90-122; Salomon Grumbach (ed.), Elsass-Lothringen vor der Internationalen Sozialisten-Konferenz in Bern: Die Reden von Grumbach, Kautsky, Müller, Mistral, Molkenbuhr and Renaudel (Lausanne, 1919), 30-33; Vorwärts, Feb. 6, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 8, 1919, a.m., p. 3; Feb. 8, 1919, p.m., p. 1; Feb. 10, 1919, p.m., p. 3; Feb. 16, 1919, p. 3.}
of the Volksbeauftragten or people's representatives of the government of November 9, could not have set aside his responsibilities at Weimar to join Müller, Wels, and Molkenbuhr at Bern. This was even more true after February 10 (when the Volksbeauftragten transferred their authority to the Assembly), for on the thirteenth Scheidemann assumed office as minister-president. In his governmental declaration of the same day, he revealed the essentially passive position of German foreign policy. He declared Germany's support for President Wilson's program, for self-determination, for equal participation in the League of Nations (Völkerbund), and for general disarmament. He also called for the immediate return of German prisoners of war and the restoration of German colonies. He refrained, however, from criticizing the French for their detachment of Alsace-Lorraine and for their separatist activities. The stress of Scheidemann's remarks was on Germany's peaceful intentions and her readiness to cooperate with other nations. As a first step, he suggested the speedy conclusion of peace and the rejection of a Gewaltfrieden or forcibly imposed peace. The minister-president also seemed to be thinking in terms of a peace congress, where Germany would negotiate with the other powers.  

14 Vorwärts, Feb. 5, 1919, a.m., p. 3; Germany, Verhandlungen der verfassunggebenden Deutschen Nationalversammlung, Stenographische Berichte, Vol. 326, pp. 36, 44-47.
In the debate that followed, Wilhelm Keil, an SPD deputy from Württemberg, largely echoed Scheidemann's speech. Wilson's principles were again evoked as the basis of a peace settlement, with special emphasis on self-determination, which, as Keil understood it, would permit the union of Germany and Austria and would prevent the loss of German territory in both the east and west. Keil also protested the continuation of the "hunger blockade" and demanded, "in the name of humanity," the release of German POW's. He further supported German entrance in a Völkerbund, declaring that an "international" policy was a truly patriotic policy.  

Keil's comments, like those of Scheidemann, were strongly moralistic. Perhaps many Germans, and even some Socialists, became more conscious of moral imperatives once Germany's power-political status was diminished. But it is undeniable that the Social Democrats continued to hope for a peace based on the Fourteen Points. Unquestionably, there were numerous unfavorable straws in the wind: French-supported separatism, the retention of prisoners of war, the continuing blockade, and Germany's exclusion from the peace conference. Nevertheless, the SPD outlook of early 1919 was guardedly optimistic. Some Socialists may secretly have expected the worst, but publicly they continued to hope for the best.

---

15Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 326, pp. 78-79.
In contrast to this rather sanguine expectation, a small segment of the Social Democratic Party demanded that Germany acknowledge France's superior power and seek a rapprochement with her, based on mutual political and economic self-interest. The outlet for this group was the Sozialistische Monatshefte, still edited by Joseph Bloch. The view, of course, was still Kontinentalpolitik. The magazine's most prominent contributors were Max Cohen and Ludwig Quessel, both ardent Francophiles. They alleged that Germany was following a pro-English policy, which they derided as futile and fruitless. The war, they believed, had established France as the arbiter of the continent. Instead of blindly resisting French dominance, Germans should adopt a cooperative attitude. Cohen and Quessel asserted that France, and not England, would determine whether Anschluss would be permitted between Germany and Austria. Beyond this, they, and other writers in the Sozialistische Monatshefte, painted a rosy picture.

---

16 For brief discussions of the Sozialistische Monatshefte see Heidegger, Deutsche Sozialdemokratie, 353-65; Maehl, "German Socialists," Ph.D. dissertation, microfilm, University of Chicago, 1946, passim; Erich Matthias, Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und der Osten, 1914-1945: Eine Übersicht (Tübingen, 1954), 30-32; Berlau, German Social Democratic Party, 315-17; and Arthur Rosenberg, Geschichte der Weimarer Republik (Frankfurt am Main, 1961), 88. On Bloch consult Anna Siemsen (ed.), Ein Leben für Europa: In Memoriam Joseph Bloch (Frankfurt am Main, 1956), and Bloch's own testament, Vermächtnis: Revolution der Weltpolitik (n.p., n.d.), where from the vantage-point of exile in Czechoslovakia in the 1930's he asserted that Weimar Germany at no time made a sincere effort to fulfill her obligations to France (pp. 43ff.).
of future economic collaboration, especially in the pooling of coal and iron. The Germans were further advised to concentrate on producing machinery for French electrical, chemical, textile, and sugar industries, the products of which could then be exported under mutually favorable arrangements to Germany. Another area of potential cooperation was the rebuilding of devastated areas of northern France, which would be of obvious benefit to the French and which would permit the Germans to discharge much of their reparations obligation. The advocates of continental collaboration warned, however, that Germany's contribution would have to be in the form of labor and materials, since she lacked foreign exchange. Alsace-Lorraine remained a possible stumbling block, since the Sozialistische Monatshefte still held out for a plebiscite, but the journal continued to insist that the provinces should be thought of as a bridge rather than a barrier between the two countries.17

Kontinentalpolitik was thus not without political and economic underpinning. But long decades of antipathy

between France and Germany, climaxing in the war itself, militated against the sudden development of a cooperative attitude. On each side there was too much hatred and distrust, obstacles that the advocates of Kontinentalpolitik were unable to overcome. Kontinentalpolitik, then, remained on the fringe of Socialist politics. Its supporters were quite isolated and had no influence on party leadership or policy. Nor is there any evidence that they had important French contacts. The Sozialistische Monatshefte lacked a party imprimatur and had to be helped along by outside subsidies, notably from Leo Arons, a member of the wealthy Bleichröder family. Outside of the Monatshefte, Kontinentalpolitik was promoted chiefly by Georg Bernhard, chief editor of the Vossische Zeitung.\(^{18}\)

An impediment to the success of Kontinentalpolitik was the determination of the French government, backed by the desire of most Frenchmen, to subdue Germany permanently. Although France was one of the victors, by herself she was no match for Germany. French policy therefore necessitated either (1) a continuation of the war-time alliance, or (2) a formula for keeping Germany weak, or (3) both. Initially France had contemplated detaching the German

\(^{18}\)The information on Arons comes from Ernst Hamburger, a former contributor to the SM. Hamburger to Author, March 13, 1964. Apropos the propagators of Kontinentalpolitik, Hamburger says "they did not influence the policy of the Party and the French knew this."
Rhineland, but gave up this plan in the face of Anglo-American opposition. In return, France was to be compensated with a Treaty of Guarantee, a defensive alliance that would have insured her of Anglo-American help against German attack. The treaty, however, was never ratified by the American Senate and hence not by Britain either, whose approval was contingent on prior American acceptance. Thus the French were left to devise other stratagems whereby they might weaken Germany.

The chief architect of French policy was Georges Clemenceau, about whom the SPD had no illusions. He was distrusted as "an opponent of Socialism and a spiteful enemy of all Germans." Confident of their own good intentions ("Germany has done everything possible to reconcile her opponent"), German Socialists feared that Clemenceau was deliberately sharpening antipathies, perhaps in order to induce a new round of combat that would be fatal for the Germans. "The policy that he represents," asserted Vorwärts, "is the worst danger for the peaceful future of Europe."19

Convinced of French ill will, but desiring to escape a harshly punitive treaty, the Social Democrats, along with the rest of German public opinion, turned toward England. They hoped that the British would intervene to

19Vorwärts, Feb. 13, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2; Feb. 20, 1919, a.m., p. 1.
maintain the continental balance of power that was threatened by French hegemonic aspirations. Vorwärts, as early as January 3, detected major "differences of opinion" between the Anglo-Americans and the French. Hope, however, remained the Germans' chief resource. Disarmed, excluded from the Paris Peace Conference, and with only vague notions as to what the peace treaty would embody, the Germans lacked negotiating strength and could take no initiatives. They might lean toward England, but there was little or nothing they could do in a tangible way to get the strong political support they desired.\footnote{Vorwärts, Jan. 3, 1919, p.m., p. 1. Anglo-French relations are perceptively described in W. M. Jordan, Great Britain, France and the German Problem, 1918-1939: A Study of Anglo-French Relations in the Making and Maintenance of the Versailles Settlement (London, 1943); see also Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France Between Two Wars: Conflicting Strategies of Peace Since Versailles (New York, 1940); Hajo Holborn, "Diplomats and Diplomacy in the Early Weimar Republic," The Diplomats, 1919-1939, ed. by Gordon A. Craig and Felix Gilbert (Princeton, 1953), 159-63; and Harold I. Nelson, Land and Power: British and Allied Policy on Germany's Frontiers, 1916-1919 (London, 1963).} Expecting (on the basis of newspaper reports) that Allied peace proposals would be ready by late March, the party began to face up to the question of acceptance. Vorwärts, on March 14, editorialized against a Diktat, an imposed peace, but counselled that unconditional rejection of Allied terms could mean the resumption of war. "We must be completely clear as to what we risk if we do not sign," was the advice. The proper course,
readers were informed, was to negotiate on the basis of the Fourteen Points. But the first move, Vorwärts concluded, was up to the Entente; Germany could only wait. 21

Waiting brought the Germans no encouragement. As Minister-President Scheidemann lamented in the National Assembly, the press was bringing almost daily reports of new outrages: unheard of reparations demands, purely German lands to be separated from the Reich, numerous financial and military limitations, and a general campaign of threats and intimidation. 22 Now, more than ever, the SPD held to a treaty grounded on the Fourteen Points. Scheidemann reiterated this theme on April 10 in the Assembly, where the demand for a just peace was embodied in a resolution. Two days later the Prussian Landesversammlung, with Socialists Otto Braun, Paul Hirsch, and Robert Leinert taking the lead, also endorsed a "peace of understanding," further specifying that (1) the Wilsonian program be upheld, (2) prisoners of war be returned at once, (3) the blockade be lifted immediately,

---

21 Vorwärts, March 13, 1919, p.m., p. 1; March 14, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2. Editorials of March 24 (p.m., pp. 1-2) and April 9 (p.m., pp. 1-2) also spoke resignedly of waiting. At the same time the Sozialistische Monatshefte was condemning the party's foreign policy as floundering and impotent, devoid of thought and direction. Hans Ehrenberg, "Sozialistische Aussenpolitik," SM, XXV (April 14, 1919), 329-33.

22 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 327, pp. 807-09 (speech of March 26, 1919).
and (4) occupied German territory be evacuated. Failure to heed these reasonable suggestions was seen as placing a heavy mortgage on the future. "If Germany remains as a putrescent corpse in the middle of Europe," wrote Stampfer, the chief Vorwärts editor whose views paralleled those of Scheidemann, "its stench will spoil the entire world."

SPD forebodings seemed confirmed by the Allied telegram of April 18 to the Germans, inviting them to Versailles to receive the text of the peace treaty. Vorwärts protested strongly, insisting that the Germans were ready to negotiate, not to be dictated to. The government's reply was of the same nature, informing the Allies that an official would be sent to convey the document to the authorities at Weimar. Following this gambit, the Germans were permitted to send plenipotentiaries, a development which Vorwärts interpreted as assenting to negotiations, "a turn for the better." On the eve of the departure of the German delegation, the Socialist position remained this: negotiations on the basis of the Fourteen Points. Only such a settlement, it was asserted, could forestall a new spirit of revanche. Germany was ready to discuss and to make sacrifices, but she should not be asked (1) to surrender German territories to foreign

---

23Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 327, pp. 914, 961; Vorwärts, March 24, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2 (Stampfer); April 12, 1919, a.m., pp. 5-6 (report of Prussian Landesversammlung).
domination, (2) to assume financial and economic burdens exceeding her capacity, or (3) to admit sole war guilt, or responsibility for causing the war. As Eduard David asserted in the cabinet: "We are not responsible for what was done by people over whose decisions we had no influence. The moral guilt did lie mainly on the German side. . . . [But] we are not identical with them." For the same reason, David described Germany's position regarding Alsace-Lorraine as "favorable." Because the SPD had supported autonomy for the two provinces for so many years, the French now would have to reciprocate to an SPD-led government and grant Alsace and Lorraine autonomy within France.24 This, of course, marked a step backward from the SPD contention at Bern, i.e., that the future of Alsace-Lorraine be decided by self-determination. Since David was not speaking for public consumption, as the Socialists at Bern had been, one may infer that the Bern demand was something of a patriotic gesture. On the other hand, the intervening six weeks may have seen a serious reconsideration of possibilities regarding Alsace-Lorraine, resulting in a lowering of expectations to autonomy. Even this, however, was unrealistic—at least as David

24 *Vorwärts*, April 20, 1919, p. 1; April 22, 1919, a.m., p. 1; April 24, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Germany, Alte Reichskanzlei (hereafter cited as AR), Kabinett-Protokoll, microfilm (The Ohio State University), March 21, 1919, roll 1665, frame 741796; March 22, 1919, 1665/741815-16; Burdick and Lutz (eds.), *Political Institutions*, 270-78.
formulated it—since France could not predicate her foreign policy on the assumption that a particular German political party would remain in office. If France should award autonomy to Alsace-Lorraine, it would not be out of gratitude to the SPD.

With their various hopes and fears, the official German delegates arrived in Versailles on April 29. The plenipotentiaries numbered six, including two Social Democrats, Otto Landsberg, the minister of justice, and Robert Leinert, president of the Prussian Assembly. Among the large staff of experts accompanying the delegation was Karl Legien, the president of the trade union federation. The two most prominent SPD journalists, Friedrich Stampfer and Victor Schiff, were also present. At Versailles, the German delegation was comfortably housed but greatly restricted in its movements. Both Stampfer and Schiff called it "imprisonment." Schiff says that "there was, above all, the desire to keep those German Social Democrats who were known to be on our delegation from meeting their Socialist comrades in France."

The treaty was finally handed over to the Germans on May 7 in the Trianon Palace Hotel, at Versailles.

Clemenceau, in presenting the treaty conditions, prohibited any verbal discussion and gave the Germans only fifteen days in which to submit written "observations." The French premier's take-it-or-leave-it attitude was crystal clear. There would be no negotiations. Germany would suffer the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, of large territories in the east, and of her colonies. The Saar, with its great coal beds, would be placed under the authority of the League of Nations and within the French customs union. Germany would also be forced to admit sole war guilt. She would be burdened with as yet unspecified reparations. And in other ways she would be despoiled and humiliated. In return, she would be granted peace.26

To the delegates the proposed treaty was "shocking and dismaying." They were unanimously opposed to the treaty and on May 9 began a "war of notes," protesting that the treaty could not be signed until fundamentally revised. The dismay of at least one Socialist at Versailles, Karl Legien, was so overwhelming that he suggested it made no difference if Germany accepted, since the burdens to be imposed were so great as to be patently unfulfillable. Others, such as Otto Landsberg, saw shreds of hope in the League of Nations and in other features.27


27Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 119-20; Schiff in Schiff (ed.), Germans at Versailles, 81.
At home, every segment of Social Democratic opinion expressed astonishment and outrage. *Vorwärts* described the treaty as a "peace of annihilation," reducing the Germans to "slavery." "Such a peace," the newspaper proclaimed, "is nothing other than an active war of destruction." Erich Kuttner, one of the *Vorwärts* editors, called it "a pure product of triumphant imperialism," an almost total victory of Clemenceau over Wilson. Confessing his confusion and distress, Kuttner lamented, "Dear God, one scarcely knows where one should begin." An official declaration, signed by Ebert (elected *Reichspräsident* on February 11), by Scheidemann, and by the cabinet, described the conditions as "unbearable" and "unfulfillable." Scheidemann, in an emotional speech to the National Assembly's Peace Committee, spoke of a "document of hatred and delusion." The treaty, he went on, was a "death sentence," it was the "grave of the German people." Still, Scheidemann promised that the government would negotiate, although he did not say where, how, or when.\(^{28}\)

Even the pro-French *Sozialistische Monatshefte* was astounded by the peace conditions and agreed that they could not be fulfilled. The journal, however, did not

\(^{28}\) *Vorwärts*, May 8, 1919, a.m., p. 1; May 8, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2; May 9, 1919, a.m., pp. 1, 5; Heinrich Cunow, "Die Versailler Friedensbedingungen," *Neue Zeit*, XXXVII (May 23, 1919), 171-77.
explicitly counsel rejection. The difficulties, according to Max Cohen, were attributable mainly to England. "The peace which is before us," he opined, "is in every respect an English peace." England's goal, he argued, was to destroy Germany economically. With more imagination than fact, Cohen declared that England was responsible for impending territorial losses in the east, and would control the Saarland through her influence in the League of Nations. To escape destruction at the hands of England, Cohen asserted that Germany must make an immediate deal with France. In return for a secure place in Europe, Germany should offer France (1) a final renunciation of Alsace-Lorraine, (2) favorable economic arrangements regarding the reciprocal deliveries of coal and iron, and (3) enough manpower to rebuild the destroyed areas of northern France. If England and the United States were left out in the cold, this, Cohen believed, was where they belonged.\(^2^9\)

With the exception of the Sozialistische Monatshefte (which advised neither acceptance nor rejection), the Social Democrats were united in turning down the proposed terms. The only important element of German public opinion

\(^2^9\)Max Cohen, "Was sollen wir auch tun?" SM, XXV (May 19, 1919), 425-32. Point one was freely undertaken by the Germans at Locarno in 1925. Points one and two were both accepted by the West Germans after World War II. Cohen's ridiculous premise regarding England tended to discredit his more responsible goals.
that was willing to accept the treaty unconditionally was the USPD, which viewed any settlement emanating from Paris as transitory, soon to be swept away by an uprising of the peoples in all countries. The SPD, of course, rejected this view as utopian, as a foolish capitulation to naive hopes, and as a disservice to the German people.  

Implied in the general Social Democratic protest against the treaty was the strong feeling that the Germans had somehow been deceived, especially by Wilson. Stampfer said that "We sought peace and have found war." He asserted that the Allies had no intention of debating or of creating genuine peace. "And so the signing of this so-called peace would not end the world war." Clemenceau was clearly recognized as the enemy, but Wilson, it had been hoped, would act as a buffer between Germany and the French premier. Yet, as Vorwärts put it, the Allied terms revealed little of Wilson's "beautiful phrases," of his talk of "justice," and of a "lasting peace." Indeed, "the longer we study the treaty proposal," Kuttner wrote, "the more we see of Clemenceau and the less of Wilson." Scheidemann, as much as Kuttner, viewed the treaty as a victory for Clemenceau. But the cabinet itself was cautioned against personal attacks on Wilson. Yet this

---

did not prevent Ebert, on May 13, from giving the Associated Press a statement in which he declared that Wilson's Fourteen Points were not much in evidence and that Germany had expected better treatment from America.\(^{31}\)

On May 12, speaking to the National Assembly in the Aula of Berlin University, in the Assembly's only session between April 15 and June 22, Minister-President Scheidemann sharply condemned the treaty. He burst out with the declaration that "in the view of the Reich government this treaty is unacceptable" and shouted "away with this organized murder," all to thunderous applause. Scheidemann later insisted that he had drafted a more moderate speech, and that the word "unacceptable" was forced upon him by the cabinet. But the cabinet protocols and Scheidemann's contemporary words and manner belie this, indicating that he was fully in accord with those who viewed the treaty as unacceptable. Certainly the tone of his speech betrayed an emotional commitment to rejection. While Scheidemann subsequently denied that he had any intention of playing to the crowd, his speech contrasted with that of his colleague Hermann Müller, who also spoke on this occasion and whose comments, according to Stampfer, were

\(^{31}\)Vorwörts, May 8, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2; May 9, 1919, a.m., p. 5; May 10, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2 (Stampfer); Germany, AR, Kabinett, May 11, 1919, 1665/742206; Schulthess's Europäischer Geschichtskalender, ed. by Wilhelm Stahl, LX (1919), pt. 1, pp. 215-16.
"much quieter and more temperate." Following this, as Noske says, Scheidemann had to choose either "rejection [of the treaty] or resignation from office." Stampfer was correct when he observed that Scheidemann's speech was "an outcry from a German heart." 

Scheidemann may have been inept in thus committing himself, but Müller, speaking officially for the party delegation, also used the word "unacceptable." This usage had been authorized the day before by the Reichstag delegation (Fraktion) with only five dissenting votes. Scheidemann's speech was also endorsed by Vorwärts. At the same time, the party Vorstand organized a huge protest demonstration in Berlin for May 13, during which Scheidemann gave another "stormy" speech and thundered "It is impossible for us to sign this treaty!" Even though Scheidemann headed the government and not the party, the thousands of assembled Social Democrats who heard him speak undoubtedly continued to think of him as a party spokesman.

Scheidemann's vehemence, while severe, did not quite match that of the German Nationalists, who brought up

---

32 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 327, pp. 1082-84; Scheidemann, Zusammenbruch, 241; same, Making, II, pp. 309-12; Germany, AR, Kabinett, May 12, 1919, 1665/74211-13; and see also May 8, 1919, 1665/742196; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 126; Gustav Noske, Von Kiel bis Kapp (Berlin, 1920), 149, 151.

33 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 327, pp. 1085-87; Vorwärts, May 12, 1919, p.m., p. 1; May 13, 1919, a.m., p. 1; May 14, 1919, a.m., p. 1.
the extreme right-wing of German politics. The main Nationalist spokesman, Count von Posadowsky, not only criticized the treaty provisions, but attacked France in such terms as to leave no doubt that, in his opinion, the two countries were destined to remain enemies. Schultz-Bromberg, another Nationalist, described the treaty as "unbearable, unfulfillable, and also for all time unaccepta-

Even the Independents protested the peace conditions, and characterized them as "for the most part unfulfillable." Still, Haase, the leading USPD speaker, admitted considerable German "guilt for the catastrophe." Convinced that German and Austrian militarists helped plot war in 1914, he refused to condemn the war guilt clause of the treaty. But while he insisted that the war be brought to an end and was willing for Germany to accept the treaty, he told the Assembly that the USPD would have none of it, that the responsibility belonged to those parties that had supported the war.34

Thus, in its initial attitude toward the war, the SPD was closer to the far right than to the far left. And presumably the vast majority of Social Democrats endorsed the position taken by the party leadership. The obvious exception was the Francophile Sozialistische

34Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 327, pp. 1095-1100 (Posadowsky and Schultz-Bromberg), 1102-05 (Haase).
Monatshefte. Yet several other voices were soon questioning the wisdom of rejecting the peace proposals. The non-conformists were Erwin Barth, a party journalist, and the venerable Bernstein, who from January to March 1919 had the unique distinction of dual membership in the two Socialist parties.35 Barth shared the general antipathy toward the harsh peace terms but conceded that there was no genuine alternative to acceptance. To renew the war, to resort to "national Bolshevism," to have the blockade fully reimposed with the consequent "murder of women and children," was unthinkable. Like it or not, Germany was left holding the bag. Acceptance was mandatory. Yet Barth was reluctant to have either the government or the Assembly approve the treaty. He suggested instead a national plebiscite wherein the final tribunal, the sovereign people, would vote for or against the treaty. Müller had offered something similar in his speech of May 12, but with the difference that the Assembly would decide, although the voters would be polled. Regardless of the form in which it was cast, the idea of a plebiscite was unwise. Barth himself did not explain how he proposed

35During the war Bernstein had joined the USPD but now reaffiliated with the SPD, while maintaining his USPD membership. His intention was to encourage Socialist unity, but the USPD soon prohibited dual membership, and Bernstein opted for the SPD. Gay, Dilemma, 290.
to reconcile the necessity of acceptance with the possibility of a negative popular vote. 36

The sixty-nine-year-old Bernstein still possessed great prestige albeit little day-to-day influence in party circles. Vorwärts opened its pages to permit him to criticize the passionate and mistrustful atmosphere in Germany toward the Allies in general and toward France in particular. Bernstein avowed that it was much too early to talk about an unqualified yes or no. He proposed that all available time be used for thinking, talking, and negotiating. Instead of countering with a blunt refusal, Germany should point out the weaknesses of the Allied treaty proposals, e.g., why had a plebiscite been proposed for North Schleswig but not for Upper Silesia or West Prussia? In any event, some sort of treaty would have to be signed, and an unqualified "No," Bernstein intimated, would merely be an heroic gesture. It would not win any concessions.

He also seemed to imply that total rejection of the treaty would be misleading, if not dishonest, for, in his opinion, Germany bore at least partial responsibility for the war and therefore was morally obligated to make reparation. He was also suspicious of Barth's plebiscite proposal, noting that it would require much preparation

---

36 Vorwärts, May 9, 1919, p.m., p. 1; May 19, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 327, p. 1087.
and that the people would have to be fully informed of the possible consequences. He doubted whether the Allied governments would grant the time for it.  

 Bernstein's realism stood in sharp contrast to the bombast and stridency of many of his colleagues. His analysis was eminently rational and sane. And German counter-proposals did succeed in eliciting a plebiscite for Upper Silesia, indicating at least a partial victory for moderation and justice. Yet Bernstein's logic and sense of fair play not only was not shared by most Germans, but was also generally lacking in Allied countries. In England, the "khaki election" of December 1918 had featured a demand to "hang the Kaiser," while in France the slogan "Germany shall pay everything" had gained wide currency. Against the German desire to reject the treaty "come what may," Bernstein's intelligent strictures gained little ground.

 While the party was telling the German people that the treaty was "unacceptable," abroad the appeal was somewhat different. Here the Social Democrats sought sympathy and support from fellow Socialists. This was the theme of the Vorstand's announcement of May 9, castigating the peace terms as imperialistic, and as a

---

37 *Vorwärts*, May 14, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2 (Bernstein guest editorial); May 18, 1919, p. 9 (report of Bernstein speech); May 21, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2 (Bernstein guest editorial).
severe blow against the German Republic, and calling on Socialists and workers outside Germany to exert themselves against a dictated peace. Although welcoming reports of support from everywhere (even from the Communist International), the German Socialists concentrated their efforts on France. Almost daily, *Vorwärts* printed stories of French Socialists protesting a *Gewaltfrieden* or of French workers demonstrating for Franco-German conciliation. As Stampfer said, there were "two Frances," (just as other writers were to assert later that there was "another Germany.") Whereas now the France of Clemenceau was dominant, it was hoped that returning soldiers and militant workers would attain power and restore genuinely peaceful relations. 38

The French response was disappointing. The *Confédération Générale du Travail* called on its members to reject a peace of force, and the French Socialist Party, in an April meeting in Paris, expressed sympathy for the German Republic, and opposed the retention of German POW's and the imposition of oppressive economic measures on Germany. Yet, to the Germans, this was inadequate. Victor Schiff, who knew France well, on May 17 published an open letter to the French Socialists, bitterly

---

38 *Vorwärts*, March 16, 1919, pp. 1-2; April 24, 1919, a.m., p. 3; May 7, 1919, p.m., p. 1; May 10, 1919, a.m., p. 1; May 12, 1919, a.m., p. 1; May 13, 1919, a.m., p. 2; May 16, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2; May 27, 1919, a.m., p. 1.
criticizing them for their inaction. He said that he had read news of protests in *Le Populaire* and in *Humanité* but that he could not understand the general apathy of the French party. A week later, in a second open letter, Schiff told his Gallic counterparts that, to save themselves, to defeat the capitalist "system," they had to prevent "the economic enslavement of the German people."39

What exactly Schiff expected remained unspecified. Presumably he was thinking of some sort of Socialist-led popular groundswell that would irresistibly sweep away the Clemenceaus and the Fochs and that would institute a new era of pacific cooperation. In short, he unrealistically expected the bulk of French public opinion to be as outraged as were the Germans over the harsh treatment accorded Germany. Yet while the Social Democrats entertained such fantasies about support from abroad, they were unwilling to make concessions of such a nature, or at least to speak in such a way, as would convince Frenchmen that their country had nothing to fear from Germany. For example, the French Socialists had made clear to the Germans at Bern that they considered the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France to be irrevocable. Yet Scheidemann, in his May 12 speech, asserted that Alsace-Lorraine was an integral part of the Reich ("We belong together! We

---

39 *Vorwärts*, April 23, 1919, a.m., p. 2; May 4, 1919, p. 7; May 17, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Schiff); May 25, 1919, pp. 1-2 (Schiff).
must remain together!"

Vorwärts railed against French high-handedness not only in Alsace-Lorraine but also in the Saar, sharply condemning proposals to detach this region and to exploit its coal resources. Otto Hue, the head of the coal miners' union, asked how Germany could fulfill the treaty and continue to exist if she lost Alsace-Lorraine, the Saar, Upper Silesia, agricultural areas in the east, and much of her land and sea transport. Another writer went so far as to suggest that these losses might mean "the death of German Socialism." Conversely, Bernstein pointed out that the Alsace-Lorraine Landtag had voted for union with France and that, in no case, would threats or lamentations be of help. In an editorial on the future of the Saar, Bernstein said that chauvinism and military action had failed. "The main task of German foreign policy today," he affirmed, "is to win trust."

But Bernstein was unrepresentative of German Socialist opinion, and most of his party colleagues continued to

---

40 This may have been another of Scheidemann's impromptu and impassioned outbursts. When facing a crowd, he seldom refrained from indulging in histrionics. He could not honestly have expected even a plebiscite in Alsace-Lorraine. When David, in the cabinet session of March 21, expressed the hope that the provinces might be granted autonomy within France, Scheidemann had raised no objection. But the French could have had no knowledge of this. To them, Scheidemann's remarks must have denoted extreme stubbornness. Germany, AR, Kabinett, March 21, 1919, 1665/741796.
expect more sympathy from across the Rhine than what they were willing to offer themselves.41

While the debate at home continued, the peace delegation at Versailles prepared counter-proposals. These were largely the work of Foreign Minister Count Ulrich von Brockdorff-Rantzau and his staff, although meetings with Scheidemann, the Centrist Matthias Erzberger (minister without portfolio), and other government representatives had taken place at Spa, Belgium, on May 18 and 22. As finally submitted on May 28-29, the German reply was in two parts. The first was a general protest against the injustice of the Allied terms. The second and more detailed section dealt with such specific matters as territories and reparations. Concerning territories, the Germans professed themselves ready to relinquish title on the basis of self-determination. Thus, so the note read, "Germany renounces her rights of sovereignty over Alsace-Lorraine, but desires a free plebiscite." The Germans proposed to surrender their colonies but on the condition that they be returned as mandates. Regarding reparations, Germany offered one hundred billion gold marks. This, however, had little

41Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 327, p. 1082; Vorwärts, April 17, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2; May 16, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2; May 18, 1919, p. 9; May 23, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2; May 27, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2; Heidegger, Deutsche Sozialdemokratie, 172-73.
chance of being accepted since the Allies were still unable to agree on an amount among themselves.\(^{42}\)

At home, the presentation of the counter-proposals elicited no optimism. Scheidemann, the head of the government and the party's most prominent politician, and Vorwärts, the day-to-day voice of the SPD, had continued to attack the treaty as "impossible," "unfulfillable," and to be rejected "come what may." "In Paris," Vorwärts editorialized, "reason does not govern, but rather passion." "What she [Germany] wanted, and still wants," the newspaper continued, "are negotiations." But there were no sanguine expectations that these would be introduced. Vorwärts itself flatly predicted that the counter-proposals would be rejected. Formulating objections in more ideological tones was Victor Schiff, the leading SPD observer in Versailles. He condemned "the Clemenceau peace" as "the victory of the international capitalistic bourgeoisie over the international of the workers." Consequently, "the despairing struggle of the German peace delegation against the presentations of the Allied and Associated countries is in reality the decisive struggle between world reaction and world revolution."\(^{43}\) Schiff, a rather


\(^{43}\)Vorwärts, May 17, 1919, pp. 1-2; May 19, 1919, a.m., p. 3; May 28, 1919, a.m., p. 1; May 28, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2; May 30, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2; June 2, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2.
vain individual who prided himself on his knowledge of the French language, was only a journalist and had no political responsibility and could therefore afford the luxury of such pretentious observations.

When the cabinet met on June 4, at the end of a two-day debate, only two of the Socialist members, Noske and David (along with Erzberger), favored signing. Scheidemann proudly reports that he was the first Social Democrat to say "No," and that both he and Justice Minister Otto Landsberg preferred an occupation of Berlin to the signing of such a treaty.44

Yet more might be at stake than an Allied march on Berlin. This was revealed late in May when separatist putsches occurred in the Palatinate and in the Rhineland. These had little popular support and quickly collapsed, despite the connivance of local French authorities. Socialist opinion was strongly critical of the role of the French military in these putsches, but refrained from publicly criticizing the French government. Scheidemann met hurriedly with the Rhenish deputies to the Assembly

44 Scheidemann, Zusammenbruch, 244-51; same, Making, II, pp. 314-16; Matthias Erzberger, Erlebnisse in Weltkriege (Stuttgart, 1920), 373-75. The file of cabinet protocols microfilmed by the United States National Archives has no entries for June 3-4, but Klaus Epstein reports they exist in the Erzberger papers. See Epstein, Matthias Erzberger and the Dilemma of German Democracy (Princeton, 1959), 318.
and consulted with cabinet members to work out a protest to the French. There is no evidence that the latter ever replied.45

Preceding the handing over of the final Allied terms on June 16 was the SPD Parteitag of June 10-15 in Weimar. Although the question of the impending peace treaty hovered ominously over the delegates, there was no formal debate on the advisability of acceptance. This conformed with Scheldemann's desire to avoid provoking the Allies unnecessarily. Thus the comments of the party chiefs on foreign policy were routine and perfunctory. Müller, for example, condemned the "French and English Ludendorffs and Tirpitzes" and looked ahead pessimistically to a harsh peace, but also praised the responsible patriotism of the SPD, as if to imply that the party would face up to whatever decisions were necessary. Wels assailed "the victorious imperialism of the western powers" and suggested that Germany was being made a scapegoat; he asserted that French revanchists had been as guilty as any Germans in fomenting the war. But the bombshell was provided by the aged Bernstein, who told the Parteitag that "nine-tenths" of the Allied treaty demands "are

45 Vorwärts, May 23, 1919, a.m., p. 1; June 2, 1919, a.m., p. 1; June 3, 1919, p.m., p. 1; Germany, AR, Kabinett, June 2, 1919, 1666/742441-43; Luckau (ed.), German Delegation, 408-11; King, Foch versus, 80-88, 101-02.
necessities" (meaning unavoidable and inescapable), and who reminded his comrades that France and Belgium had suffered much more than Germany. The delegates seem to have been somewhat on edge, for Bernstein had barely begun when Gustav Noske, the Reichswehr minister, trumpeted "Germany is nothing to you!" and "That is stupid babble," and Otto Braun, usually a stable and sober-minded man, interrupted with a shout of "Nonsense!" Unintimidated, Bernstein announced his acceptance of the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and observed that Germany's measure of war guilt was not being sufficiently admitted. Following this, a succession of speakers denounced Bernstein, with the attacks assuming a clearly anti-Semitic tone. He was told that he was "stupid," that he "understands nothing," that he practiced a "Talmudic method," and that he resembled the "rabbi of Minsk." Scheidemann, who had tried to prevent any foreign policy discussion, added that it was a "misfortune" that Bernstein had chosen to be so controversial.46

Also disturbing the Parteitag's tranquillity was Max Cohen, the advocate of Kontinentalpolitik. He spoke

very briefly, emphasizing the need for a rapprochement with France along the lines suggested by the Sozialistische Monatshefte. Although he held back from vehement criticisms of party policy, his colleagues attacked him as "unsocialist," and described his ideas as "illusion" and "madness." Vorwärts characterized his performance as "miserable." The reception clearly indicated that Kontinentalpolitik was not highly esteemed by Cohen's colleagues. 47

With the dissenters disposed of, the Parteitag accepted a motion on foreign policy that endorsed the government's position. Primarily it called for self-determination, protested threatening territorial losses, and proposed a neutral and impartial adjudication of the causes, outbreak, and conduct of the war. On balance, then, the Parteitag merely confirmed the course already marked out by the party leadership. No important changes had been intended; none was made. 48

47 SPD, Protokoll, 260-62, 282-84, 286 (Cohen), 265-67 (David); Vorwärts, June 13, 1919, a.m., pp. 1, 8. Cohen harbored no illusions about the general party attitude toward Kontinentalpolitik. Writing in the SM prior to the Parteitag, he castigated SPD foreign policy as exactly the same as that carried on during the war, with France still the "archenemy." While he recognized the futility of openly bucking heads against the SPD chiefs, he also criticized the Independents as having no clear view of foreign policy. See "Was soll der sozialdemokratische Parteitag bringen?" SM, XXV (June 10, 1919), 520-25.

48 Vorwärts, June 13, 1919, a.m., p. 8.
When the final Allied peace terms were transmitted on June 16, the Germans discovered that, with the exception of a plebiscite for Upper Silesia, no important concessions were offered. Further, the practically unrevised treaty had to be accepted unconditionally by June 23. The Socialist plenipotentiaries to Versailles (Landsberg and Leinert) adamantly opposed acceptance and joined with the other delegates in a memorandum to the cabinet advocating rejection. The memorandum, however, failed to consider the consequences of Allied armies marching across the Rhine, a logical sequel to German rejection of the terms.49

The German peace delegation left Versailles amidst a hail of fruit, stones, and epithets. It arrived in Weimar under circumstances only slightly more favorable. Although Minister-President Scheidemann remained a die-hard, other SPD cabinet members, as well as Assembly deputies, were wavering. The uncertainty was clearly reflected in Vorwärts, which now declined to describe the treaty as unacceptable but which contended that neither the government nor the Assembly should assume the responsibility for acceptance. A plebiscite, as suggested earlier by Barth and Müller, was advocated. But no recommendations were offered as to how this might be accomplished within

the time limit. This shift in policy—from adamant rejection to plebiscite—was opposed by Stampfer, the chief editor. He was permitted to reply in print, was then rebuked by the rest of the editorial board, and promptly resigned.\textsuperscript{50} Thirty-seven years later, Stampfer wrote to the historian Kurt Koszyk that he, Scheidemann, and Landsberg considered rejection to be "tactically correct" and that the Allies, having had their bluff called, would have permitted negotiations leading to better terms.\textsuperscript{51}

Stampfer's ouster was followed by the resignation of Scheidemann, on June 20. Scheidemann had not budged at all, despite the growing conviction elsewhere in the party that Germany would have to sign. This change of attitude was due, in large measure, to the tireless efforts of Erzberger. His arguments were responsible for the June 18 seven-seven cabinet vote concerning signing the treaty. This prompted President Ebert to rule that

\textsuperscript{50}Schiff in Schiff (ed.), Germans at Versailles, 123-24; Vorwärts, June 18, 1919, p.m., pp. 1-2; June 19, 1919, p.m., p. 2. Stampfer reassumed the editorship of Vorwärts on February 1, 1920, at the Vorstand's request, as he notes. He occupied this important post for the rest of the Weimar era and from 1920-33 also sat in the Reichstag, where he was a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee. See Friedrich Stampfer, Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse: Aufzeichnungen aus meinem Leben (Cologne, 1957), 242; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 227.

\textsuperscript{51}Koszyk, Zwischen, 131, 235.
the National Assembly must decide. And within the
Assembly Erzberger played the crucial role in winning
Center Party acquiescence for the peace terms.52 Among
the Social Democrats such militant prodding was apparently
unnecessary. Scheidemann was by now out of step. On
June 19 the SPD Fraktion voted 75 to 39 in favor of
conditional acceptance, i.e., minus Articles 227-31,
the so-called "articles of shame," which not only
compelled Germany (in the name of herself and her allies)
to admit sole war guilt but which threatened hundreds of
Germans with being tried as war criminals. Among the 39
who opposed acceptance were Scheidemann and Landsberg.
Since the SPD Fraktion numbered 163, many deputies must
have been undecided and therefore abstained. At the same
time, the Center voted decisively for conditional
acceptance, while the Democrats—the third party in the
coalition—voted unanimously to reject. Deserted by his
followers, Scheidemann thereupon resigned. Ebert was
reluctant to accept his resignation and evidently
considered stepping down himself but was dissuaded from
taking this step by Scheidemann and Landsberg. Since
Brockdorff-Rantzau, the head of the peace delegation, had

52Epstein, Erzberger, 318-20. There is no micro-
filmed cabinet protocol for June 18. Some authorities
give the cabinet vote as eight against and six for;
regardless, Ebert recognized that the final decision had
best be left to the Assembly.
also quit, Germany narrowly missed being without a
government, a delegation to negotiate, and a president.53

Enough has been said about the advocates of
rejection. Why did most Social Democratic deputies favor
acceptance? "Above all," as Hermann Müller, the new
foreign minister, told Victor Schiff, "in order to save
German unity. . . . If once we had refused our signature
and laid ourselves open in consequence to the immediate
advance of Allied arms, it would have meant the end of
[a] united Germany." Similar sentiments were expressed by
Carl Severing, at that time a Rhine-Ruhr party official
who was very close to the trade unionists (especially the
metal workers) of that area. The workers were the persons
who, in all likelihood, would have been the chief victims
of any new Allied moves. Severing writes that "A rejection
would have demanded new sacrifices of property and blood
. . . not only the unity, but also the very existence of
the Reich would have been placed in still greater dangers."
That this was an extraordinarily difficult decision is
also made clear in the memoirs of Wilhelm Keil. But
there was always Clemenceau's ultimatum. The Social
Democrats could read in their own press that Foch was

53 Wilhelm Keil, Erlebnisse eines Sozialdemokraten,
II (Stuttgart, 1948), 182; Otto Landsberg in Schiff (ed.),
Germans at Versailles, 141; Vorwärts, June 20, 1919, p.m.,
pp. 1-2. The memoirs of Scheidemann and Stampfer are
quite disappointing on these events.
planning a new march into Germany, or that the British were preparing bombing raids on the German coastline. Who wanted to see this or to assume responsibility for it? And who wanted to reshoulder arms in the renewed conflict? Soldiers, not to mention civilians, expressed great reluctance to face up to new fighting. This is amply documented in questionnaires returned to the Supreme Command early in June. And how much more reluctant would soldiers be to fight against armies vastly superior in manpower, equipment, and general provisioning? The Social Democratic Fraktion was doubtlessly expressing the feeling of its electors when it bowed to the necessity of acceptance.\textsuperscript{54}

The Fraktion vote ensured the fall of the Scheidemann cabinet. What would replace it? Vorwärts at first (mistakenly) headlined that Müller was forming a new cabinet to sign the treaty. Actually, Eduard David, a

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{54}Müller in Schiff (ed.), Germans at Versailles, 164; Carl Severing, Mein Lebensweg (Cologne, 1950), I, p. 248; Kell, Erlebnisse, II, pp. 182-86; Vorwärts, June 19, 1919, p.m., p. 1; SPD, Bericht der sozialdemokratischen Fraktion der verfassunggebenden Nationalversammlung des Deutschen Reiches, Mai 1919-April 1920 (n.p., n.d.), also explains the party vote in terms of impending Entente military measures. See p. 6. Wilhelm Groener, Lebenserinnerungen: Jugend, Generalstab, Weltkrieg, ed. by Friedrich Freiherr Hiller von Gaertringen (Göttingen, 1957), 496. There is no evidence that domestic political considerations, i.e., the fear of losing popular support to either the right or left, occasioned the change in attitude.}
minister without portfolio, was then trying and failing to put together a government. David had been one of the first cabinet members to recognize the need for acceptance of the treaty, thereby—perhaps—making himself objectionable to too many people. When David bowed out, Ebert commissioned Gustav Bauer, who was uncontroversial and therefore without enemies, to try his hand. Bauer's efforts were successful and he was able to present a new government on June 22, one day before the Allied ultimatum was to expire. The new minister-president had had a career as a trade-union official and was close to the rank-and-file opinion that now favored acceptance. A member of Prince Max's cabinet of October 1918, he had also sat in the Scheidemann cabinet as minister of labor. Vorwärts spoke of his "quiet expertise," but it was apparent that he had little experience in political leadership or diplomatic negotiating. He did, however, have strong support from the unions, and had the further advantage of having strongly opposed the treaty until the last minute, submitting—with most of his colleagues—to the inevitable. 55

Joining Bauer in his new government were six Social Democrats and four Centrists. Since the Democrats still

55Vorwärts, June 20, 1919, p.m., p. 1; June 21, 1919, a.m., p. 1; June 21, 1919, p.m., p. 1; June 22, 1919, p. 1 (biography of Bauer); Schiff in Schiff (ed.), Germans at Versailles, 149.
refused to accept the treaty, they were left out. Erzberger became deputy minister-president and minister of finance, while Müller took over as foreign minister and Noske continued as Reichswehr minister.

The task of the Bauer government was easily defined: to accept the Versailles Treaty, minus the "articles of shame." This is what Bauer told the National Assembly on June 22 when it convened for the first time since May 12. In a depressing, stifling mood, where "everyone longed for the session to be over," Bauer condemned the treaty as hateful and despicable, but confessed that "our power of resistance is broken." Germany must sign, he lamented, to prevent a new war, to preserve national unity, to spare the country's women and children from even greater distress, and to have the German prisoners of war returned. He promised that, upon signing the treaty, the government would "fulfill the conditions"—excepting the hated Articles 227-31. For the SPD, Paul Löbe concurred. He contended that the terms were unfulfillable and that the German counter-proposals had gone the limit. Yet he too asserted that Germany was ready to do "everything" to fulfill the treaty. Lest anyone misunderstand, Löbe underlined his party's patriotism: just as the workers in the Rhineland and Bavaria stood as the unshakable bastion against separatism, so their deputies in Weimar defended
the unity of the Reich. In the vote that followed, the SPD, the Center, the Independents, and a few Democrats rolled up a 237 to 138 margin over the Nationalists, the People's Party, and the bulk of the Democrats. Had not 24 Social Democrats abstained (among them Scheidemann, Landsberg, Hue, Wolfgang Heine, and Otto Braun), the "Yes" vote would have been even larger. One Social Democrat, Valentin Schäfer, a trade unionist from Saarbrücken, broke ranks completely and voted "No."\(^{56}\)

Thus authorized, Bauer informed the Allies that Germany was ready to accept the treaty, minus Articles 227-31. But Clemenceau, who replied in the name of the Allied and Associated Powers, told the Germans that no reservations were permissible and that the 7 p.m., June 23 deadline remained. This reply, received early in the

\(^{56}\)Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 327, pp. 1113-15 (Bauer); 1115-17 (Löbe); 1136-38; Vorwärts, June 23, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Schiff in Schiff (ed.), Germans at Versailles, 149-55; Paul Löbe, Erinnerungen eines Reichstagspräsidenten (Berlin, 1949), 63; and Der Weg war lang: Lebenserinnerungen von Paul Löbe (Berlin, 1954), 92, which is only a slightly expanded version of the 1949 work. Also, Heidegger, Deutsche Sozialdemokratie, 345-46, which points out that Braun, who was minister-president of Prussia for much of the Weimar era, recalls that he bowed to party discipline and voted "Ja," but the official published record shows that he abstained. Cf. Otto Braun, Von Weimar zu Hitler, 2nd ed. (New York, 1940), 70, or the condensed 1949 Hamburg edition (which omits important material), 25. Epstein, Erzberger, 319, unaccountably has Heine voting "Yes" in cabinet meetings as early as June 4 whereas Heine was not in the federal cabinet (he was Prussian minister of interior) and favored rejection to the very end.
evening of June 22, threw the Socialists into confusion. Many SPD deputies who had approved conditional acceptance were extremely reluctant to give total endorsement to the treaty. The Center made approval *in toto* even more unlikely when, in anger and frustration, it voted, in the morning of June 23, to reject any treaty that contained Articles 227-31. Particularly influential in promoting this spirit of rejection had been *Reichswehr* Minister Noske. He feared that the army might not stand by a government that backed down on the "articles of shame."

But when, shortly before noon on June 23, news came from Quartermaster General Wilhelm Groener that the army could not successfully resume the war, thereby implying that Germany had to bow to Allied demands, the dissident Majority Socialists again swung behind acceptance. However, the Nationalists, the People's Party, and the Democrats still said "No." Bauer offered to turn over the government to them but they, as the minority, declined.57 Nevertheless, Rudolf Heinze, a leading member of the People's Party, recognized the impasse in which the Assembly found itself and suggested a face-saving formula whereby the treaty

57 According to Rudolf Morsey, the right-wing parties were so fearful of having the responsibility of government thrust upon them that "they sought instead to influence the Center so that a larger number of Centrist deputies would vote for acceptance." Morsey, *Die deutsche Zentrumspartei, 1917-1923* (Düsseldorf, 1966), 190.
would be accepted as demanded but where nobody would have to go on record as approving of Articles 227-31. The maneuver involved a declaration by the Assembly president that the government, on the basis of the vote of June 22, would remain empowered to sign the treaty. Together with Groener's telephone call, Heinze's formula prodded the SPD and Center deputies into the de facto position of unconditional acceptance. With the necessary understandings hurriedly arranged, Bauer appeared in the Assembly at 3 p.m., on June 23. The deadline for acceptance was a bare four hours away. Bauer read the reply to the German note of the 22nd and then declared that there was no longer time for "protest" or "indignation." "We sign," he commanded. "Sign unconditionally!" And for the same reason as given the day before: "We could not be responsible for a new war." The right-wing parties made gestures of opposition to the treaty but conceded, in a formal statement (as still another part of Heinze's formula) that those who had voted "Yes" on the 22nd were motivated solely by patriotism. As agreed, Assembly President Fehrenbach did not call for a new ballot, but ruled that the vote of the previous day was sufficient. Barely two hours before the scheduled expiration of the
ultimatum, Germany's unconditional acceptance of the treaty was received in Versailles.  

After this only formalities remained. On June 28 Müller and Johannes Bell, a Centrist cabinet minister, signed the treaty in the Versailles Hall of Mirrors. On July 9 the National Assembly approved the treaty, 209 to 116, completing all three readings in one sitting. Müller and Hermann Krätzig, for the SPD, routinely protested but acknowledged that Germany was obligated to do her best to fulfill the treaty; both observed that the lifting of the still-partially extant Allied blockade and the return of the German POW's depended on this. As Müller, the German foreign minister, later observed: "The treaty of Peace had been signed; the struggle for real peace was beginning." 

58 Luckau (ed.), German Delegation, 110, 478-82; Noske, Kiel bis Kapp, 151-53; Keil, Erlebnisse, II, p. 185; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 327, pp. 1139-41; Groener, Lebenserinnerungen, 507-08; and F. L. Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics, 1918-1933 (London, 1966), 37-45, which is helpful on the more general attitude of the Reichswehr at this time.


60 Müller in Schiff (ed.), Germans at Versailles, 172.
CHAPTER III: FROM FULFILLMENT TO RUHR WAR, 1919-1923

Ratification signified 
... no inner consent 
to the content of the 
treaty.¹

Following acceptance, the Bauer government announced 
that the first requirement of the country was "fulfillment 
of the treaty." The second and third requirements were 
"work" and "devotion to duty." The presupposition of all 
three was "order." Everything depended on "order." 
"Without internal order, no work! Without work, no treaty 
fulfillment! Without treaty fulfillment, no peace, but 
resumption of the war!" The official Vorstand pronouncement 
of June 27, while considering the unjust peace to be a 
great misfortune, similarly responded with a call to work, 
to produce, and to refrain from putsches and war-like 
gestures. "We do not dream of a bloody revanche like the 
pan-German fools," wrote Vorwärts. "We unflinchingly hope 
and trust in the victory of justice." The newspaper also 
spoke hopefully of a "struggle with spiritual and moral 
weapons." And Foreign Minister Müller, in an interview 
given to the Svenska Telegrambyran, assured the world that

¹Vorwärts, July 9, 1919, p.m., p. 1.
Germany would honestly fulfill the treaty because "honesty is the best policy."\(^2\)

Fulfillment, of course, was not an end in itself. The SPD adopted the fulfillment policy because military resistance had become impossible (as well as being uncongenial to the Socialist temperament, which was markedly pacifist). And obstinacy, in all likelihood, would only provoke painful reprisals. Finally, the party was prevented from turning east, to Russia, by its continued distrust and fear of the Bolshevik regime. The goal was revision of the treaty. Erfüllungspolitik was designed to win the trust and good will of Germany's former enemies, particularly France. In turn, the Allies would credit Germany's good intentions and grant redress for those treaty provisions that proved patently unfulfillable. Although not articulated as precisely as this in 1919, fulfillment was the policy implemented by the Bauer government. At the same time, the SPD proclaimed its patriotic impulse. Party spokesmen repeatedly asserted that fulfillment was the only policy that would preserve the unity of the Reich and prevent even greater suffering. This view, however, never won approval from the "national" elements. They had conceded, on June 23, that the

\(^2\) Vorwärts, June 25, 1919, a.m., p. 1; June 28, 1919, a.m., p. 1; June 28, 1919, p.m., p. 1; July 8, 1919, p.m., p. 2 (Müller interview); July 9, 1919, p.m., p. 1.
Socialists showed no lack of patriotism in accepting the treaty. But they were never to admit that fulfillment could or should be more than a momentary opportunistic maneuver. Consequently much of the German political right hereafter regarded the Social Democratic Party as the party of betrayal.

For the remainder of 1919 no single issue (such as reparations or mutual security) dominated Franco-German relations. Primarily the SPD was concerned with promoting German participation in the reconstruction of northern France, with obtaining the return of POW's, and with improving relations with French Socialists. All Social Democrats were united on the need to help France reconstruct her war-torn northern districts, especially in the Nord, along the Somme, and in Champagne, around Verdun. Here much of France's textile industry, coal mines, forests, and best farm land had been destroyed or heavily damaged. Some villages and towns had nearly disappeared. To restore all this would require a great effort. The German Socialists viewed this as a legitimate and necessary act of reparation of Germany's part. They were ready to provide money, materials, technical assistance, and a labor force. The workers were not to consist of POW's or indentured servants but were to be ordinary German construction workers, who would labor in France under conditions similar or superior to those in Germany: the
eight-hour day, welfare services and benefits, cultural opportunities, and appropriate family housing. It was hoped that this would pay off much of Germany's reparations debt, eliminate or lessen potential unemployment problems in Germany, improve Franco-German relations, and have salutary moral consequences for the German people.  

This view found expression in the government's note of May 29, which indicated a readiness to contribute to the restoration of Belgium and northern France. On July 23, in an important policy speech, Müller also promised unstinting cooperation in reconstruction. He called on German workers, technicians, and architects to prepare

3Berlau, German Social Democratic Party, rejects SPD fulfillment as insincere and deceptive, as a fraud or hoax designed to lull the French into granting concessions. Social Democratic words and actions to the contrary are simply dismissed as "dishonesty" and "pretense." Although Berlau concentrates on the war-time period and barely introduces the reader to the Weimar era, he nevertheless startlingly asserts that the foreign policy aims of the SPD eventually became indistinguishable from those of the right-wing parties, presumably meaning the People's Party and the Nationalists and perhaps also the Nazis. The point is not proved, only stated. See especially pp. 303, 318, 339.

Koppel Pinson, Modern Germany: Its History and Civilization, 2nd ed. (New York, 1966), also errs in accusing Müller of feeding "the flames of violent nationalism by both act and public pronouncement" as late as 1931 and 1932, when, in fact, Müller died early in 1931 and was, neither by temperament nor conviction, a "violent" nationalist. The acts and public pronouncements are unspecified. Pinson also mistakenly credits the Joseph Wirth government of May 1921 with initiating the fulfillment policy. (pp. 445, 428).
themselves for this task, and further stated that preliminary conversations with the French were underway. He did not yet know that Clemenceau and his successors were not seriously interested in employing German workers in France. What was intended to be a key element in the SPD fulfillment program was virtually ignored by the French.  

Another issue was the return of German prisoners of war which began early in July but which was so halting and sporadic that by mid-August the SPD was staging protest demonstrations, demanding immediate return of the 400,000 POW's supposedly still interned in France. The Germans expected that repatriation would commence with the signing of the peace treaty. But Article 214 of the treaty stated that prisoners of war should be returned when the treaty became effective. This was delayed until January 10, 1920 because everyone (the French included) waited for the

---

4Ernst Hamburger, "Der Wiederaufbau der verwüsteten Gebiete Frankreichs, eine Aufgabe der deutschen Politik," SM, XXV (Aug. 4, 1919), 701-06; and "Neue Tendenzen französischer Politik," SM, XXV (Sept. 29, 1919), 859-67. Hamburger stresses the importance of winning "good will" via the reconstruction program. See also A. Ellinger, "Deutschland und der Wiederaufbau Nordfrankreichs," Neue Zeit, XXXVIII (Oct. 17, 1919), 49-57, which insists on clearly defined and suitable working conditions; Vorwärts, Aug. 16, 1919, a.m., p. 2; Oct. 5, 1919, p. 2; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 328, p. 1854. But the cabinet concluded as early as August 12 that, since discussions with the French were progressing so slowly, it could not count on using German workers in reconstruction, at least not in the near future. See Germany, AR, Kabinett, 1667/742945-46.
United States to act. By late August 1919, however, Britain, Belgium, and the United States voluntarily began returning remaining POW's, whereas the French waited until January. To Vorwärts, this was a policy of "lies," stimulated by "hatred." Rumors told of soldiers who were sick, unfed, and unclothed, of prisoners slated to be tried as war criminals, and of labor battalions being marshalled to work out their lives as slaves. Vorwärts wondered if France might not keep all of the prisoners until they were dead. The government fired off a barrage of notes (disregarded or rebuffed by Clemenceau), while Müller, on October 23, assailed the French premier in the National Assembly, accusing him of showing only a hypocritical concern for freedom in that his speeches about liberty were incompatible with his retention of German soldiers behind barbed wire. The Germans were especially incensed that Clemenceau used the POW's as hostages, in connection with his demands for compensation for the German fleet scuttled at Scapa Flow on June 21. Regarding this event, the German government disclaimed responsibility, assigning the blame to the misunderstandings and confusions of subordinate military commanders. The Germans did not win their point but stubbornly insisted throughout the Weimar era that the scuttled fleet should have been counted as reparations. The only discordant note in the SPD chorus arose from the Sozialistische
Monatshefte, which suggested that Britain was really behind France's failure to return the POW's, since only Britain could hope to gain from strained Franco-German relations.5

If German complaints were brushed off by Clemenceau, they received much sympathetic attention at a conference at Lucerne, where European Socialists gathered early in August for another organizing session. In contrast to the Bern meeting, the Germans were no longer on the defensive. Rather, they now appeared as the aggrieved party and won adherence to their point of view on every major issue. The conference declared that all prisoners and interned civilians be repatriated immediately, and that the Socialists of all countries (meaning France) spare no efforts to help bring this about; that former German soldiers not be reduced to "ignominious slavery" in the reconstruction of northern France but that "free workers" (presumably from Germany) be employed; and that the peace treaties were unjustly harsh and ought to be revised. Balancing things out, the various resolutions spoke of the "necessary restoration of the regions of

5Vormärts, July 14, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Aug. 18, 1919, a.m., p. 3; Aug. 26, 1919, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 27, 1919, p.m., p. 1; Nov. 28, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 3, 1919, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 10, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 16, 1919, a.m., p. 5; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 330, pp. 3357-58; Germany, AR, Kabinett, Nov. 24, 1919, 1667/743457; Herman Kranold in the Rundschau section, SM, XXV (Dec. 8, 1919), 1161-62.
France devastated in a most horrible manner by German militarism," and approved the transfer of Alsace-Lorraine to France and the impending transfer of other German territories to Denmark and to Poland. The conference also decided in favor of self-determination for Austria, for the South Tyrol, for the Sudetenland, and for West Prussia, and protested against French domination of the Saar. Economically, German reparations were to be quickly and reasonably fixed and, when agreed upon, were to be paid to the League and not directly to the Allies. Both Germany and Austria, the conferees advised, should have access to raw materials and economic opportunities; in line with this, a resolution advocated the restoration of Germany's colonies in the form of League mandates.  

Lucerne thus was a success for the German Social Democrats and for Franco-German Socialist relations. It constituted a turning-point. The French Socialists supported the demand for the speedy return of the POW's and announced their opposition to a dictated peace treaty. But Otto Wels' plea to the French Socialists to pursue a more active policy that would influence the French government in favor of Germany received a discouraging reply. Pierre Renaudel answered that "the German proletariat would have

been powerless against a dictated peace of victorious 
Germany," to which the French delegates added "just as 
we are." Lucerne, then, showed a marked upturn in good 
will; but it failed to have a significant impact on the 
countries concerned. The Socialists were talking to 
themselves; the world was not listening. 7

Sometimes the German Socialists suspected that the 
French Socialists themselves were not listening. The 
Social Democrats criticized the French for pressing too 
hard for German disarmament and for not being sufficiently 
critical of Clemenceau's Rhineland policy. While both 
Socialist parties supported general disarmament, the 
Germans accused the French of demanding much more from 
Germany than from their own government. Because of this 
and their silence regarding separatism, the French 
Socialists were accused of supporting "French imperialism."
Victor Schiff penned another of his open letters, appealing 
to his French counterparts to show more sympathy for the 
SPD and less for the Independents, and to be more concerned 
about the well-being of the German Republic. Apparently 
attempting to chide the French into greater activism, he 
gratuitously pointed out that the German Social Democrats 
had 12,000,000 electors whereas the French Socialist Party

7Vorwärts, Aug. 5, 1919, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 9, 1919, 
p.m., p. 3; Aug. 11, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2.
had only 103,000 members. Obviously, this awkward and illogical comparison was not likely to make a favorable impression on the French. In fact, Schiff's rather contemptuous reference to French Socialist membership raises the question as to what he expected 103,000 people to do. It seemed incongruous for Schiff to point out the limited membership in the French Socialist Party and then deride the party for its lack of influence. Certainly it was not a lack of willingness that prevented the French Socialists from waging a more effective battle against the treaty. For example, a Socialist leader like Léon Blum agreed with the Germans that the Versailles Treaty was "a denial, a betrayal" of Wilsonian goals. And only two weeks before the appearance of Schiff's letter the French Socialists had stood alone in the French Chamber in opposing the treaty. Of some 53 "No" votes recorded on October 2, 49 came from the Socialists, while another 33 Socialists abstained and only three voted "Yes."


10Seven French Socialists voted 'No' because, in their opinion, the treaty neither provided for the disarmament of Germany nor for general disarmament. But the remaining "No" votes reflected the conviction that the treaty was too harsh in both its territorial and financial terms. Ernst Lafont, spokesman of this majority group, summarized the criticism thusly: "National egoism
Were not the German Socialists asking too much of their French colleagues? Had Germany been victorious, would the SPD have disapproved of a harsh peace for France? Did Schiff, in criticizing French Socialist ambivalence between the SPD and USPD, fail to recognize the stresses and strains within the French party itself? The splintering of European Socialism was, in fact, a general phenomenon. Its appearance in France was perhaps delayed, but Schiff need not have wondered that some French Socialists felt sympathetic toward German Independents and Communists. Nevertheless, the evident inability of the French Socialists and of the International to come to Germany's aid had profound implications. Because they were practical politicians first and ideologues second, the SPD leaders cast about for some other means of support. They settled on the League of Nations. This was understandable, since the League seemed destined to play an important role in European and world affairs. To be sure, the Social Democrats objected to the League as "a tool of capitalism." In the National Assembly, Müller, Wels, and Scheidemann had derided it as an instrument of the bourgeois Entente governments and in no way representative of the

peoples; thus it was not a true Völkerbund. This
discrepancy, however, could be corrected by the admittance
of the Socialist-led states. "A League of Nations without
Germany and Russia is a parody," Wels had contended at
Lucerne. Müller used almost identical words in the
Assembly but went on to suggest that the League, in time,
might be of great help to Germany. The clear implication
was that the SPD, while disapproving of the League as
presently constituted, believed that the organization
could evolve in such a way as to mitigate some of the
distressing effects of the peace settlement, which was,
after all, what Wilson had intended. The difficulty,
however, was that the Allies still distinguished between
victor and vanquished. Before Germany would be invited to
join the League, the Franco-German "cold war" would have
to end. The German Socialists were therefore bound to
be disappointed in looking to the League to promote harmony.
Rather, the situation was such that harmony between Germany
and France would somehow have to be introduced before the
League could be reconstituted. 11

A phalanx of lesser problems also disturbed the
Social Democrats. They complained about French injustice

11 Germany, Verhandlungen, July 23, 1919, Vol. 328,
p. 1853 (Müller); July 26, 1919, Vol. 329, pp. 1987,
(Scheidemann); Oct. 23, 1919, Vol. 330, pp. 3358, 3363
(Müller and Wels); Vorwärts, Aug. 3, 1919, p. 7; LSI,
International at Lucerne, 4-6.
in the Saar, in Alsace-Lorraine, and in the Rhineland, where the occupying forces were accused of encouraging separatism. They professed outrage over the prohibition of Anschluss with Austria. They resented the Entente request (signed by Foch), inviting Germany to participate in an economic blockade against Soviet Russia, especially since it came when Entente ships were blockading Germany in the eastern Baltic (in order to force the removal of German Freikorsps in that area). They objected to Allied demands to disband such military formations as the Sicherheitspolizei, Zeitfreiwillige, and Einwohnerwehr, asserting, with notable understatement, that these were merely local police units. They were also alarmed by the French parliamentary elections of November, which brought, so Vorwärts lamented, a victory for "military-clerical reaction."12

Conversely, there was general recognition that separatism was not entirely due to the prodding of French generals. Many Catholic Rhinelanders were sensitive about

12 Vorwärts, Sept. 4, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2; Sept. 7, 1919, p. 1; Oct. 11, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 12, 1919, p. 1; Oct. 13, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 23, 1919, p.m.; p. 3; Oct. 24, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 31, 1919, a.m., pp. 1-2; Nov. 21, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Nov. 27, 1919, a.m., pp. 2-3; Dec. 4, 1919, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 30, 1919, a.m., p. 2; Jan. 6, 1920, p.m., p. 1; Germany, Verhandlungen, Oct. 7, 1919, Vol. 330, pp. 2880, 2891, (Bauer and Scheidemann); Oct. 9, 1919, Vol. 330, pp. 2966-67 (Meerfeld); Oct. 23, 1919, Vol. 330, pp. 3357-59, 3363 (Müller and Wels).
church-school questions, especially with a Socialist-led government in Berlin. Others expected that separatism would enable them to escape reparations payments, while some supported separatism because of anti-Prussianism. Cognizant of the Rhineland's separate historical development, *Vorwärts* even went so far as to discuss splitting up Prussia. In addition, some notice was taken of France's anxious search for security, with the suggestion that Germans should occasionally try to see things from the French point of view. There was no enthusiasm, however, for the program of the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, which continued to assert that Germany extend unqualified support to France. Although uninformative, the periodical was sufficiently embarrassing to the SPD to prompt Wels to condemn *Kontinentalpolitik* in the National Assembly. He attributed it to a few "fanciful outsiders," who, since they wanted to erect a Franco-German alliance against England, were really more nationalist than Socialist. Wels spoke harshly but convincingly, for who would credit, for example, Quessel's assertion that France opposed *Anschluss* only because Germany refused to cooperate with France? On the other hand, the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* could and did talk sense about Alsace-Lorraine. Victor Eschbach wrote a series of articles and reviews that effectively dispelled "the legend of German Alsace" and called on Germans to regard the provinces not as a source
of strife but as a bridge or "connection" (Verbindung) between the two peoples.13

Despite these irritations, fulfillment remained the keystone of SPD policy toward France. The heavy Socialist representation in the cabinet also helped ensure that the government would make the Social Democratic viewpoint its own, as when Minister-President Bauer pledged fulfillment on July 23, 1919, in what was his first Assembly speech since June 23. Foreign Minister Müller reiterated this requirement while promising simultaneous efforts toward treaty revision. On October 7, announcing the reentry of the Democrats into the cabinet, Bauer emphasized that Germany would continue to fulfill "all parts" of the treaty with all her "powers." He stressed strict fulfillment of the military conditions, promising that Germany would reduce her army to the required temporary level of 200,000 men within two months after ratification. Asserting that Germany could not afford "the mistrust of the entire world," he warned that

"if we don't come clean, we are lost from the start."

Müller, prefacing an exceptionally sharp attack on Clemenceau and his friends ("the pan-Germans of yesterday"), underlined Germany's good intentions and her "new spirit": "we will do what we are able to do; but no one can demand more than that from us."14

When the treaty went into effect on January 10, 1920, the Socialists were prepared for the loss of territories, which, according to the treaty, were to become French, Belgian, Polish, and Danish, and also for the establishment of various control commissions. More disturbing were the Allied demands for the surrender of alleged war criminals, per Article 228 of the Treaty of Versailles. Little notice was taken of the Allied request of January 16 to the Dutch government to extradite the ex-Kaiser, a request that was denied. Of much greater import was the demand of February 3, calling on Germany to surrender 895 soldiers and civilians for trials by Allied courts. Foreign Minister Müller declared that Germany was still resolved to fulfill the treaty, in so far as this was "humanly possible," but that this demand "exceeded the power of the German government." Müller asserted that "the cabinet is absolutely united" in its resistance to Germans

being tried by Englishmen, Frenchmen, Belgians, Italians, Poles, Rumanians, and Yugoslavs. Of course the SPD had little sympathy for the former Crown Prince, for Hindenburg and Ludendorff, and for the other nobles and notables whose names were listed. Rather, the party's position was that the accused would be denied a fair trial. Party spokesmen also acknowledged that Socialist submission to such an outrage would play into the hands of German monarchists and militarists. The demand had to be rejected, despite the fact that rejection constituted a violation of the treaty. There was also some feeling that the demand was a ruse, designed to provoke Germany into belligerent action that would permit France to intervene and to detach the western provinces. "They do not want Hindenburg," Vorwärts deduced, "but rather the Rhineland; not Ludendorff, but the Palatinate. They do not want to judge, but to rob!" The Social Democrats were so overwhelmingly convinced of the justice of their cause that they showed no surprise and little gratification when the Entente agreed to the transfer of the trials to German courts, while reserving for itself the right of review. The effect of this, in Stampfer's words, was to "dead end" the question of war criminals. Only twelve cases were ever tried, and only six convictions resulted. Had a nationalist government won this concession, Germans would have hailed it as a
triumph. But for the Bauer-Müller government, Stampfer recalls, there was no gratitude at all.¹⁵

Right-wing antipathy toward the Socialist-led government found expression in the Kapp Putsch of March 1920, an insurrection led by military elements (mainly Freikorps) and reactionary civil servants. This perturbed the French, who viewed it as a sign of the revival of militarism in Germany, and also caused the fall of the Bauer government. Bauer felt compelled to resign because of allegations that he was unable to control the Army, units of which had joined the putschists. The Weimar Coalition, however, was not dissolved, but merely reshuffled. The new chancellor (formerly minister-president) was Müller, who also held on to the foreign ministry. Four other Social Democrats, four Centrists, and three Democrats completed the cabinet. Born in 1876, Müller was young for a German political leader, but he was the most skillful and able politician the SPD could offer. Müller was also regarded as the party’s chief foreign policy expert.¹⁶

¹⁵ Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 156-62; Vorwärts, Jan. 20, 1920, a.m., p. 3; Feb. 4, 1920, p.m., p. 1; Feb. 7, 1920, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 8, 1920, pp. 1-2; Feb. 11, 1920, a.m., pp. 1-2; Feb. 17, 1920, p.m., p. 1.

¹⁶ There is no good study of Müller, but see the too critical characterization by Adolf Sturmthal, The Tragedy of European Labor, 1918-1939 (New York, 1943), 36-41; the more balanced comments of Toni Sender, The Autobiography of a German Rebel (New York, 1939), 265; and the generally favorable impressions of Keil, Erlebnisse, II, pp. 338-39; Severing, Lebensweg, II, p. 283; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 128; and Otto Gessler, Reichswehropolitik in der Weimarer Zeit, ed. by Kurt Sendtner (Stuttgart, 1958), 375-76.
What expertise Müller possessed was insufficient to prevent a new imbroglio with France, whereby the French, on April 6, occupied Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Hanau, and Homburg. In the backwash of the Kapp Putsch, a Red Army had been organized in the Ruhr, and had gained control over much of the area. Müller’s response had been to order the Reichswehr into the demilitarized Ruhr, a move that was necessary to quell the upsurge of radicalism and lawlessness there, but which was also a violation of the Versailles Treaty. In reprisal, the French, acting unilaterally, occupied the Hessian cities. The SPD, as well as the German government, protested furiously but futilely. While conceding that the Reichswehr action constituted a technical treaty violation, the Socialists asserted (1) that five million people were saved thereby from "rapine" and "plundering"; (2) French militarists, especially Marshal Foch, were looking for excuses whereby they could continue to promote Franco-German estrangement; (3) in this particular case, the militarists had led France, not Germany, into at least two treaty violations, viz., France acted without the consent of the other signatory powers, and French troops occupied Frankfurt and Darmstadt on April 6 some hours before giving official notice of this action; (4) France’s aggression would backfire, in that it encouraged chauvinism and militarism in Germany; and
regardless of what else she might do, France ought not to use African troops in Germany.17

The presence of armed Africans on German soil inspired particularly bitter complaints. The Socialists, like other Germans, were convinced that Africans were undisciplined and immoral. SPD spokesmen—both men and women—disclaimed any animosity toward colored troops "per se," but explained that differences in morals and customs dictated the removal of the black (Senegalese), brown (Moroccan, Algerian, Tunisian), and yellow (Madagascar) soldiers from Germany. By nature they supposedly were violent, they preyed on women and girls, they patronized prostitution, and they spread the worst kinds of venereal diseases. They were also accused of being trigger-happy, of nervously shooting down innocent German civilians in the streets. French use of Africans was therefore a calculated insult, "a crime," "unbearable," and "a great danger not only for Germany but for Europe." Official protests to France were lodged by Müller and by Dr. Adolf Köster, an SPD colleague who had replaced Müller.

17 Vorwärts, April 6, 1920, p.m., p. 1; April 7, 1920, a.m., p. 1; April 9, 1920, p.m., p. 1; April 13, 1920, a.m., pp. 1-2; April 13, 1920, p.m., pp. 1-2; Werner T. Angress, "Weimar Coalition and Ruhr Insurrection, March-April 1920: A Study of Government Policy," Journal of Modern History, XXIV (March, 1957), 1-20; and Michael Salewski, Entwaffnung und Militärkontrolle in Deutschland, 1919-1927 (Munich, 1966), 112-18.
as foreign minister in mid-April. Later Köster disclosed to the Assembly that the French had assured him that black troops had better disciplinary records than white ones. Köster's comment was that Germans preferred the allegedly less disciplined white troops to "this black plague." Vorwärts was even more incensed when French officials asserted that "easy" German women were a health hazard to the Negroes. "Away with the Blacks!" was the cry. They "are neither French nor French citizens." But the colored troops stayed—as long as the white ones did.18

By mid-May the Reichswehr forces had completed their pacification of the Ruhr and had evacuated the territory. The French left the Hessian cities at the same time, their occupation being limited to a period of about six weeks. The venture seems to have been undertaken to prove to the Germans that France's will could not be thwarted; or the French may truly have believed that the Ruhr did not require

---

pacification and that the Germans were employing deceit.\textsuperscript{19}

Whatever the reason, there is no evidence that the Social Democratic leaders retrospectively considered the Reichswehr action to have been ill-advised. Only the advocates of Kontinentalpolitik saw the recent course of events as warranting a change in SPD policy. To Max Cohen the defiance of France was additional proof that Germany was failing to face up to reality. Herman Kranold, like Cohen a Sozialistische Monatshefte contributor, added that the entire span of SPD foreign policy during the time of the National Assembly had been "short-sighted" and "unproductive." The SPD, he affirmed, followed a "blind Anglo-Saxon orientation," hoping, with England's aid, to alter or circumvent the treaty, whereas Germany's only reasonable course was to institute full-fledged cooperation with France.\textsuperscript{20}

Even before the German and French evacuation in May, attention was turning toward discussions of disarmament and reparations to be held in Spa, Belgium. The French were

\textsuperscript{19}The French told General Allen, commander of American occupation forces, that there was no trouble in the Ruhr until Müller sent in the Reichswehr. But General Allen concluded that the French, not the Germans, were the ones playing games. Henry T. Allen, My Rhineland Journal (Boston, 1923), 100-01.

contending that the German government continued to tolerate illegal military formations, while the Germans, because of internal disturbances, asked for permission to delay reducing the Reichswehr to 100,000 men. Reparations disagreements centered on an alleged German default in coal deliveries and on the value of German payments in kind. The Müller government was also working on "positive proposals" that could lead to an overall reparations settlement.

Given the recent occupation by the French, the German Socialists were pessimistic as to the value of discussions. Heinrich Cunow, a respected economist who edited Die Neue Zeit, told his readers to sweep away illusions, one of which was that the treaty would not be strictly enforced, and another that the treaty could be revised by courting England. Germany, Cunow concluded, could get nothing from either France or England and must look for closer relations with Russia, Scandinavia, and the Americas. Victor Schiff, writing in Vorwärts, expressed the conviction that Germany would be told to pay everything and that there was no chance for civilized relations, much less a freely-negotiated agreement. Mistrust was also voiced by Köster, who expressed bitterness over Germany's republican regime not being allowed enough troops to protect itself against militarists and reactionaries, whereas the Entente powers had not even
begun to disarm. Nevertheless, the Spa Conference offered a silver lining: the opportunity to meet face-to-face in personal discussions with the Allies. This, Vorwärts affirmed, was the long awaited opportunity, the first success. Köster hinted, guardedly, that conversations at Spa could inaugurate "a new era." But before the Socialists could test their bargaining skill at Spa, they had to face the German Reichstag elections of June 6.21

At a Reichskonferenz held on May 5-6 in Berlin, the SPD discussed the upcoming vote. In every respect, the Social Democrats found themselves on the defensive. Dissatisfied and discontented elements on both the right and left wings of German politics blamed the SPD for all the ills of the country. At the Reichskonferenz the party did not adopt a program, but rather charted a course that made vague comments about working-class unity, although this did not imply a coalition with the USPD. Possibly the Social Democratic leaders hoped that the Independents would thereby refrain from attacking them. Because of the lack of foreign policy successes, the SPD understandably had little to say to voters about external affairs. The Reichskonferenz condemned "French militarism, which works

21 Heinrich Cunow, "Das Ergebnis von San Remo und die politische Lage," Neue Zeit, XXXVIII (May 7, 1920), 121-26; Vorwärts, April 19, 1920, p.m., pp. 1-2, April 27, 1920, a.m., p. 1; May 4, 1920, a.m., p. 3; May 18, 1920, a.m., p. 3.
as the unpaid agitator of all reactionary tendencies in Germany." But for the rest of the electoral campaign, Socialist speakers and the Socialist press virtually ignored foreign policy. It was clearly an issue on which votes could only be lost, not gained. Thus the 189-page party Handbuch, which sought to inform and guide voters on all aspects of party policy, made no mention of foreign affairs. Vorwärts discussed it only once, admitting that the party could not point to many triumphs, while the final election appeal of June 5 emphasized defense of the Republic and was silent regarding foreign relations.22

The election was a great setback for the SPD. The party vote fell from 11,509,000 to 6,104,000. The other government parties were similarly hard hit. Large gains were recorded by the USPD, on the far left, and by the People's Party and the Nationalists, on the right. The Social Democrats remained in front but were now closely followed by the USPD, which evidently picked up several million former SPD votes. Many workers resented the lack of socialization, the reluctance to deal sternly with the

22SPD, Protokoll über die Verhandlungen der Reichskonferenz der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands abgehalten in Berlin am 5. und 6. Mai 1920 (Berlin, 1920); same, Handbuch für sozialdemokratische Wähler 1920 (Berlin, 1920); Vorwärts, May 5, 1920, a.m., pp. 1-2; May 7, 1920, a.m., p. 1; June 4, 1920, p.m., pp. 1-2; June 5, 1920, p.m., p. 1.
military, and the Reichswehr's suppression of the leftist uprising in the Ruhr.  

On the other hand, the SPD blamed France for losses to the right. From the signing of the armistice, through the Treaty of Versailles, to the recent occupation of April, French policy was characterized as strengthening German chauvinism and playing into the hands of German militarists and warmongers. In the Reichstag, Müller blamed the SPD loss of the June 6 election on Foch and Clemenceau. Vorwärts described the electoral defeat as "a concrete result" of the "power politics of Compiègne and Versailles." The only dissent came, predictably, from the Sozialistische Monatshefte, which attributed the defeat entirely to a misdirected Socialist foreign policy but which was weak, as usual, in making practical suggestions.

Although the election results forced the resignation of the Müller government, Ebert, on June 11, called on Müller to form a new cabinet. But with the stunning defeat of the Weimar Coalition, a new government under Müller's


lead could be constructed only with USPD participation. The Independents, however, refused cooperation except on a basis of controlling the government and determining policy. And since the right-wing People's Party was opposed to most SPD policies, the consequence was the formation of a bourgeois cabinet (Koalition der Mitte) of the Center, Democrats, and People's Party, with an elderly Centrist, Konstantin Fehrenbach, as chancellor. 25

The new government was the first of many minority governments of the Weimar Republic. In a Reichstag of 459 deputies, it enlisted only 189. But it could remain in office so long as a vote of no confidence was not carried. This meant indirect support from either the Nationalists or the Socialists. After much soul-searching and hand-wringing, the SPD finally decided to "tolerate" the Fehrenbach government. The Spa discussions, which were coming up soon, demanded a government that could speak and act for Germany. Although placing itself in an obviously disadvantageous position from the standpoint of domestic legislation and depriving itself of the benefits of genuine opposition, the party felt it could not endanger

25Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 186-90; Vorwärts, June 12, 1920, a.m., p. 1; June 14, 1920, p.m., p. 1.
the forthcoming negotiations. It thus instituted the policy of toleration.26

Like the recent elections, the Spa Conference (July 5-16) proved a great disappointment for the SPD. Negotiations on disarmament and coal deliveries proved so acrimonious that the hoped-for general discussions regarding reparations were never attempted. The talks on disarmament resulted in a compromise protocol that (1) extended the time limit for the reduction of the Reichswehr to 100,000 men to January 1, 1921, and (2) compelled the disarming of the para-military "security police." The Socialists had wanted to maintain the 200,000 man level but welcomed the extension of the time limit and noted that most of the "security police" had already been disarmed. The reaction to the coal settlement, however, was more adverse. Facing a threatened Allied march into the Ruhr, the Germans agreed to deliver two million tons of coal monthly, beginning August 1. This was slightly below the coal deliveries that had been ordered by the Reparation Commission, but far above what the Germans had actually been delivering.27 Virtually every SPD spokesman described the coal protocol


27 Karl Bergmann, The History of Reparations (Boston, 1927), 28-43; Vorwärts, July 7, 1920, p.m., pp. 1-2; July 9, 1920, a.m., p. 1.
as a "Diktat." It was a "brutal" measure, reducing the Germans to "slavery." Otto Hue, the coal miners' union boss who attended the Spa Conference in an "expert" capacity, argued that France did not need all the coal that she was demanding from Germany. He was convinced that the French had overstated their needs and had underestimated their resources. In the meantime, Vorwärts added, how would Germany run her industries and factories, and earn foreign exchange via coal exports, not to mention warming her homes during the coming winter? "The spirit of Versailles is still not dead" was the conclusion.

France, in attempting to force Germany to "pay everything," continued to endanger the stability and peace of Europe.28

However disagreeable the Spa "Diktat" might be, the Socialists agreed that an occupation of the Ruhr would have been worse. Thus the party conceded that the Fehrenbach cabinet had acted wisely in accepting the protocol. Vorwärts noted, almost with glee, that the People's Party, in the government for the first time and heretofore highly critical of previous governments, now got a taste of accepting unpopular conditions. There was also agreement that Spa was a slight advance in that it had given the

Germans the opportunity of face-to-face negotiations, even though the results were largely unsatisfactory. But summed up, this meant that Spa was only a modified disaster.29

About the same time relations between German and French Socialists reached a nadir. During the Hessian occupation, the SPD protested that it had been deserted by international Socialism in general and by the French Socialists in particular. According to both the Neue Zeit and Vorwärts, their Gallic colleagues believed every lie or distortion propagated by the bourgeois news services or by the German Independents and Communists. The SPD press conceded, however, that it had not made a maximum effort in disseminating the party's point of view. A further indication that communications had broken down was Ernst Hamburger's contention in the Sozialistische Monatshefte that Vorwärts, rather than the French Socialist press, deserved most of the blame. The SPD press, he charged, was poorly informed and thus it distorted Franco-German relations, largely because "it knows the French press only from the excerpts of the Wolff Telegraph Bureau."30

29 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 344, 270-74 (Stamper); Vorwärts, July 11, 1920, pp. 1-2; July 17, 1920, p.m., pp. 1-2; July 21, 1920, p.m., p. 1 (Bernstein in the Reichstag Foreign Affairs Committee); Barth, "Spaa," Neue Zeit, XXXVIII (July 23, 1920), 386.

charge that was analogous to the Vorwärts and Neue Zeit accusation that French Socialists failed to inform themselves adequately about developments in Germany. In fact, there was much truth in both contentions. Socialist news gathering services were quite primitive, depending on the established news agencies, except for an occasional report from a sojourning party member or, more rarely, from a foreign colleague. There seems to have been no exchange at all between the German and French Socialist presses, a condition that both reflected and contributed to the disharmony of the two parties.

The tense European situation of the spring and summer of 1920 prompted a final effort to revive the Second International. The Geneva meeting of July 31-August 5, however, served only to emphasize the disarray of European Socialism. The German Independents and the French Socialists had both voted for disaffiliation. Thus the conference was mainly a British Labour Party—SPD affair. For once, then, Franco-German enmity was not a major theme. The Germans, in fact, made the gesture of unconditionally renouncing Alsace-Lorraine, a decision that perhaps stemmed partly from the waning of Scheidemann's influence but which was due primarily to the general recognition that the issue had been definitively settled, i.e., that it no longer had a future in international politics or in the eyes of the German electorate. Otherwise,
the Geneva Conference achieved nothing. It constituted the last gasp of the International, which now adjourned sine die. 31

By early August the attention of Europe was centered on the Russo-Polish War, now reaching a climax with the Russians at the outskirts of Warsaw. While the Social Democrats detested Poland as a French "colony," propped up only by French political, military, and economic support, they had even greater antipathy toward Bolshevism. Poland was indicted as the aggressor, but the Socialist press advised against siding with Russia, warning that such an action could bring the Bolsheviks to Germany's eastern borders and the French into the Ruhr. The SPD therefore adopted a policy of neutrality, and called on workmen and Socialists to refuse to transport French war materials for Poland across Germany. Such a policy contrasted with the demands of the German Communists and the hopes of right-wing elements, both of whom wanted to lend aid to the Red Army. The Communists were ideologically motivated, whereas the nationalists dreamed of restoring the pre-1914 Russo-German border following a

Red Army victory and the collapse of the Polish state. But the Fehrenbach government, like the Socialists, pursued a neutral course, and the question soon became academic as a Polish counterattack flung the Russians back almost to Minsk, whereupon hostilities virtually ceased.32

SPD resentment of French support for Poland was also reflected in criticism of the French presence in Upper Silesia. Under the terms of the Versailles Treaty, France was entitled to maintain troops in this area, for which a plebiscite was scheduled early in 1921. Germans and Poles maneuvered for position, with the SPD and the rest of German public opinion accusing the French military authorities of encouraging and supporting Polish bandits and terrorists. On August 26 the party officially condemned Polish activities in Upper Silesia and also censured "the partisan position of the Interallied Commission." Several days later irate mobs stormed the Polish and French consulates in Breslau, following which France demanded (and received) 100,000 francs in payment for damages and the punishment of offenders. The increasing tempo of violence and the swift French response

sobered the government and the party. The Fehrenbach cabinet accepted the French demands, and the SPD stopped its overt criticism of French activities, without, however, ceasing to encourage all Germans born in Upper Silesia but living elsewhere to return and vote to save the territory for Germany.33

At the Parteitag in Kassel in mid-October, the party returned to broader themes of foreign policy. In his keynote speech, Co-chairman Otto Wels upheld the fulfillment policy but seemed to imply, by a recitation of German grievances, that it had not yet brought Germany tangible gains. Germans, he pointed out, were being denied self-determination, were being intimidated and pushed-around, and now, according to the Spa Protocol, were being forced to make unsustainable coal deliveries. He then outlined, in order of importance, four goals that would advance Germany's position and help bring peace to Europe: (1) treaty revision, (2) reconstruction of the damaged areas of Belgium and northern France, (3) "an international political general staff," by which he implied an effective Socialist International, and (4) the resumption of diplomatic relations with Russia, which

33Vorwärts, Aug. 16, 1920, p.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 18, 1920, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 24, 1920, a.m., p. 1; Aug. 25, 1920, a.m., p. 3; Aug. 26, 1920, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 1, 1920, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 4, 1920, p.m., p. 1; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 201.
hopewould serverestabilizetheEuropeanstatessystem
and which might possibly havе a pacifying effect on the
Bolsheviks.

Wels' statement was criticized only by Max Cohen,
who wondered how the party could contribute to the attainment
of treaty revision so long as it adopted such a stiff
attitude toward France. "A cheap peace," he avowed, was
not in the cards. "Necessary above all is the right
understanding with France. Either we come to this or we
will never cease to have war in Europe." This challenge to
the Vorstand prompted a rash of more or less irrelevant
rebuttals and insults, with only Bernstein pointing out
the weak link in Cohen's argument: the prevailing political
authorities in France were unwilling to listen to friendly
German overtures. Bernstein attributed this largely to
the present impotence of the French Socialist Party, the
majority of which was then on the road to Moscow.
Bernstein was in full agreement on the need for good
relations with France. "But until the democratic Socialist
element in France wins the upper hand," he warned, "the
hope is slight."

Nor, judging from the discussions, was much expected
from the International. Jean Meerfeld, a newspaper editor
from the Rhineland, reported on "the feeling of brotherhood
and responsibility" that had prevailed at the Geneva
Conference in early August. But he had no clear answer
when asked how this would help Germany. One delegate asserted, with much truth, that what the party needed were foreign correspondents. This might be expensive but would at least dispel illusions by informing readers of the party press as to the state of foreign opinion regarding Germany. Another discussant, Ernst Heilmann, articulated what other speakers apparently felt but had left unsaid: "Our strongest hope rests on the growing influence and the discernment of our English comrades." 

No assistance, however, was forthcoming to help the Germans out of the reparations dilemma that dominated the early months of 1921. Late in January an Interallied Conference was held in Paris, in order to arrive at a definite reparations figure to be presented to Germany. The resulting Paris Resolutions called on the Germans to pay 226 billion gold marks, plus 12 per cent of their

---


On the same day that the SPD Parteitag concluded (October 16), the USPD, meeting at Halle, voted 237 to 156 to join the Moscow-dominated Third International. The right-wing of the USPD, led by Arthur Crispian, thereupon walked out, splitting the party in two.
export revenues for a period of 42 years. The immediate SPD reaction was again to describe such proposals as "impossible," "preposterous," and "unfulfillable." In the Reichstag, the party Fraktion, through its spokesman Müller, gave solid backing to the government's announcement that the Paris Resolutions were unacceptable. Müller strongly protested the 42-year period of payments and the export tax that would, he predicted, price German goods out of world markets. Vorwärts also had harsh words for those who expected future generations of Germans to assume a heavy reparations burden. "The declaration that Germany will pay the last six billion gold marks in the year 1963 is quite simply foolish; and only a fool" the paper contended, "could suggest it." Such belligerence, however, was toned down with the nearing of the London Conference, where the Paris Resolutions would be officially presented and where the Germans would be able to make counter-proposals. Heinrich Cunow, writing in the Neue Zeit, decried the storm of protest that had been raised in Germany and warned that the Allied terms could not be rejected out-of-hand. The Germans, he advised, had better be ready at London to make proposals that the French could utilize and fit into their own plans, even if it did inconvenience Germany. The Sozialistische Monatshefte
also noted German responsibilities to make counter-proposals that would be acceptable to France.35

Like all previous conferences, the London Conference proved disappointing to Germany and to the SPD. Foreign Minister Simons' offer to pay 50 billion gold marks was not only rejected by the Allies but was characterized as insulting and as mockery. Unwilling to accept the Paris Resolutions or to make further counter-proposals, the Germans had therefore to submit to the occupation of Duisburg, Ruhrort, and Düsseldorf, and to suffer the seizure of German customs receipts in occupied territories. Although the sanctions were designed to make the Germans more tractable, public opinion in Germany supported Simons' adamant stand. The foreign minister was cheered upon returning to Berlin, and was given a rousing ovation by the Reichstag as well as a 267 to 49 vote of support, with the Socialists among those who approved. Yet SPD approval was, at best, qualified. The party admitted that no German government could have accepted the Allied demands, that Germany had made a generous offer

35Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 347, p. 2310; Vorwärts, Jan. 29, 1921, a.m., pp. 1-2; Jan. 30, 1921, pp. 1-2; Feb. 1, 1921, a.m., pp. 1-2; Heinrich Cunow, "Die Pariser Konferenzbeschlüsse," Neue Zeit, XXIX (Feb. 18, 1921), 489-95; Ludwig Quessel, "Das Zahlungsprogramm für die Wiedergutmachungsschuld," SM, XXVII (Feb. 14, 1921), 125-31; Max Cohen, "Zur Londoner Konferenz, SM, XXVII (Feb. 28, 1921), 172-78.
in a spirit of good will, and that only British-French 
intrinsogeneity had prompted Foch's occupation of the three 
Rhenish cities. Wels, speaking for the Fraktion in the 
Reichstag, even suggested that the breakdown of negoti-
tiations and the subsequent application of sanctions were 
premeditated by the Allies, especially by France. But 
good will, according to Socialist critics, did not absolve 
Simons from having demonstrated a lack of skill at London. 
While holding their tongues during the course of negotia-
tions, afterwards the SPD spokesmen let it be known that 
Simons was an inflexible and clumsy negotiator. In the 
SPD view, he should at least have kept the discussions 
alive, thereby preventing sanctions. Müller seemed to be 
willimg to avoid sanctions at almost any cost, perhaps 
because he felt, like Heinrich Cunow, that they were more 
easily applied than removed and that they might tempt the 
Entente, particularly the French, to new adventures. The 
Sozialistische Monatshefte, of course, had a field day in 
criticizing not only Simons but also its own party leader-
ship for the latter's alleged Anglo-Saxon orientation. 
Along with Müller and Wels the Sozialistische Monatshefte 
and the rest of the party press were agreed that Simons 
had virtually ignored the main SPD appeal: the recon-
struction of northern France with German labor. In that 
the party lent the Fehrenbach cabinet substantial 
Reichstag support, it did not appreciate neglect. Now it
was putting the government on notice. At almost the same
time that Simons was receiving an apparently impressive
vote of confidence in the Reichstag, Vorwärts was discussing
the deep trouble into which not only Simons but the entire
cabinet had fallen.36

During the succeeding weeks both the Germans and
the Allied powers sought a way out of the impasse generated
at London. Prodded by the SPD, Fehrenbach and Simons
communicated new proposals to the Allies via the United
States. Concurrently, the Reparation Commission, the
agency that was officially charged with working out a
settlement with Germany, began gradually revising
reparations demands downward.

An interlude to the reparations squabble was the
March 20 plebiscite in Upper Silesia. Although the Poles
achieved a majority in some of the industrial districts,
the Germans compiled an overall 59.7 per cent vote and
demanded that they be awarded the entire area. The
dissatisfied Poles and French thereupon proposed partition
of the territory, a prospect that incensed the SPD.

36 Bergmann, Reparations, 63-68; Germany,
Verhandlungen, Vol. 348, pp. 2657-59, (Müller); 2851-58
(Wels); 2884-86 (vote); 3094-97 (Bernstein); Vorwärts,
March 3, 1921, a.m., p. 1; March 5, 1921, a.m., p. 1;
March 8, 1921, a.m., p. 1; March 8, 1921, p.m., p. 1;
March 9, 1921, a.m., p. 1; Heinrich Cunow "Zwangsmassnahmen
und Friedensbruch," Neue Zeit, XXIX (March 18, 1921),
585-89; Ludwig Quessel, "Wiederaufbau und Kontinentals-
wirtschaft," SM, XXVII (March 21, 1921), 217-22; Max Cohen,
"Die Lage nach der Londoner Konferenz," SM, XXVII (April 11,
1921), 281-87; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 225-28.
Vorwärts argued that partition was inadvisable economically and would still leave enclaves. Germany would be glad to extend guarantees to Poles left in Germany. This, the newspaper hinted, would in the long run also be better for Poland. Finally, Vorwärts argued that the industrial districts in question could be utilized more efficiently by Germany than by Poland, a factor that could be important to the reconstruction of France. Still, at such a crucial time, the Socialists were reluctant to press the matter. After publishing a few critical editorials, approving a government note, and waiving parliamentary debate, the party turned again to reparations. 37

In the Reichstag, at the end of April, the SPD heard that the Reparation Commission had set German indebtedness at 132 billion gold marks plus the assumption of the Belgian war debt. On May 5, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers fixed the funding of the debt in the London Schedule of Payments, which was communicated to the Germans along with an ultimatum to accept it unconditionally within six days or face the occupation of the Ruhr. Tired of ultimata, threats, and power plays, the Socialists

37 Piotr S. Wandycz, France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919-1925: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from the Paris Peace Conference to Locarno (Minneapolis, 1962), 226-31; Vorwärts, March 21, 1921, p.m., p. 1; March 22, 1921, p.m., p. 1; April 8, 1921, a.m., pp. 1-3; April 15, 1921, a.m., pp. 1-2; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 348, p. 3625; Matthias, Sozialdemokratie und Osten, 53.
joined their fellow Germans in another howl of anguish. "Nothing can be said about the financial dictate," Vorwärts editorialized, "that hasn't already been said about the peace treaty." It was the same old story. Germany was being commanded to accept impossible conditions at the point of a bayonet. But Friedrich Stampfer, once again the Vorwärts' chief editor, counselled against rejection. French nationalists and militarists, he avowed, wanted Germany to reject. We can be stubborn, he said, and let them occupy the Ruhr and disrupt our economy even more, but when that is finished, we will have to pay anyway. "I am still of the opinion," Stampfer concluded, "that a firm 'No' two years ago would have been an heroic deed. But today it would be only stupidity and evidence of the lack of courage." 38

Stampfer accurately reflected the views of the party leadership. Rather than face up to the new ultimatum, the Fehrenbach government had quit. Once more the SPD, urged on by the same right-wing which itself refused to assume responsibility, stepped into the breach. 39 On May 10 the party's Reichstag Fraktion voted overwhelmingly to participate in a government of acceptance. While of course

38 Bergmann, Reparations, 72-77; Vorwärts, May 7, 1921, a.m., p. 1; May 9, 1921, p.m., pp. 1-2.

39 Keil says that "all bourgeois parties, even the German Nationalists, desired our reentrance." Keil, Erlebnisse, II, p. 233.
opposing the London Ultimatum, the SPD was convinced that rejection would be misunderstood abroad. There was great fear within the party for both the Ruhr and Upper Silesia. The French had to be prevented not only from marching into Germany's western heartland, but also from being given an excuse to detach an excessive part of Germany's secondmost industrialized area, whose future was now being argued in the Allied Supreme Council. 

In the new cabinet of Joseph Wirth, a liberal Centrist, the SPD placed three men: Bauer as vice-chancellor and treasury minister, Georg Gradnauer as minister of interior, and Robert Schmidt as minister of economics. With the dropping of the People's Party, the Weimar Coalition had been reestablished, only now USPD "toleration" was essential for the government's survival. Vorwärts described the new ministry as "an emergency cabinet . . . put together . . . to save the German people from catastrophe." In so doing, the party had administered a defeat to Poincaré, to Tardieu, and to the other "French Ludendorffs." For "France," Vorwärts explained, "did not

want the ultimatum to be accepted; France wanted the Ruhr."41

Acceptance of the London Ultimatum was a significant stage in the development of reparations. Although the Socialists felt that the demands were excessive, they were relieved that a decision had been reached. Encouraged by the energetic leadership of Wirth, who was ably seconded by Walther Rathenau, the minister for reconstruction, the SPD raised its hopes during the late spring and summer of 1921. One optimistic sign was French acceptance of the German offer of 25,000 wooden houses, to be used in the reconstruction of the north. The Socialists saw this "as the beginning of the triumph of reason," an important break-through that could lead to the implementation of the long-standing SPD idea of using German labor, materials, and technical know-how in rebuilding France. Also heartening were the discussions begun at Wiesbaden in June between Rathenau and Louis Loucheur, his French counterpart. The SPD took further hope from the Aristide Briand ministry, which had been in office in Paris since January. Briand was thought to be an advocate of reconciliation, a statesman who admittedly was intent on maintaining France's position of continental leadership, but via cooperation with Germany, rather than by punishment of her. Although

41 Vorwärts, May 11, 1921, a.m., p. 1; May 11, 1921, p.m., pp. 1-2.
occasionally accusing Briand of demagogy, of playing to
the crowd, of being carried away by his own oratory, the
Social Democrats clearly preferred him to leaders like
Clemenceau and Raymond Poincaré. Briand was a moderate,
the SPD thought, a man from whom one could expect under-
standing and concessions, the sort of man who would
appreciate the "fulfillment policy." To be sure, he
would have to make "rhetorical concessions" to the
French nationalists, but he was not a Katastrophenpolitiker.42

Despite encouraging signs, the SPD did not minimize
Germany's plight. Recognition was given to the need for
lessened consumption (particularly of luxury goods),
increased productivity, and a new search for foreign
markets. Accompanying this would have to be a fairer
sharing of burdens, with the government paying more
attention to the demands of the workers. Pessimists could
also point to the clouded situation in Upper Silesia, where
the Poles, so the SPD contended, continued to run wild with
the full backing of the French commander, General Le Rond.
Yet British and Italian support of German claims frustrated
French efforts to have the Supreme Council assign most of
Upper Silesia to the Poles. As a result, the problem was

42Vorwärts, Jan. 17, 1921, a.m., p. 1; Jan. 21,
1921, a.m., pp. 1-2; Jan. 22, 1921, a.m., p. 1; March 20,
1921, p. 1; May 25, 1921, a.m., pp. 1-2; May 27, 1921,
p.m., pp. 1-2 (all on Briand); May 22, 1921, p. 1;
June 15, 1921, a.m., p. 1.
dropped into the lap of the League of Nations early in August. Here was another favorable development. "The German people are slowly beginning to get their feet on the ground again," Wels told a Brandenburg party conclave. On balance, things seemed to be looking up.43

An opportunity to review and consider recent foreign policy developments was provided by the Görlitz Congress of September 18-24, 1921. Apparently the delegates were satisfied, since they approved all the main lines of party policy. There was unanimity regarding the resurrection of the Weimar Coalition, the acceptance of the London Ultimatum, and the Wiesbaden negotiations between Rathenau and Loucheur. And there was equal agreement that the Entente, particularly France, was not reciprocating the cooperation offered by Germany. Major criticisms of France were twofold, applying (1) to the continuation of sanctions originally imposed in March, and (2) to French policy concerning Upper Silesia. Müller, who gave the Vorstand's report on foreign policy, asserted that Germany's acceptance of the final reparations ultimatum should have resulted in the ending of sanctions. Since the Allied demands had been met, what more could be done?

Müller was seconded by a deputation of delegates from the occupied areas, who contended that the French continued to impose sanctions in order to spread cultural and political propaganda, and to promote separatism. In general, the continuance of sanctions was thought of as arbitrary, illegal, war-like, and a hindrance to Germany fulfilling her financial responsibilities, since the French had, in effect, extended their customs boundary to the Maingau, thereby depriving the German government of needed revenues.  

As for Upper Silesia, Müller described the situation there as "just like war." And French on-the-spot support for the Poles was buttressed by strong French political support in the Supreme Council and in the League. Müller's response was to appeal to the League to consider first the inadmissibility of dividing the industrial complexes in the area, and second the results of the plebiscite. Nor did he find acceptable some sort of "free state" status, similar to that of Danzig. Müller's view, endorsed by the congress in a resolution, was that there could be no justice except to restore the entire area to Germany.

---

44 Otto Wels, "Zum Parteitag," Neue Zeit, XXXIX (Sept. 16, 1921), 577-82; SPD, Protokoll ... Görlitz vom 18. bis 24. September 1921 (Berlin, 1921), 270-81; Vorwärts, Sept. 20, 1921, p.m., pp. 1-2 (ed. by Barth); Sept. 23, 1921, p.m., pp. 1, 5.

45 SPD, Protokoll, 270-81, 293-96; Vorwärts, Sept. 23, 1921, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 24, 1921, p.m., p. 5.
Müller was also critical of France's rule in the Saar, which he described as undemocratic and oppressive, and of the League of Nations, whose exclusion of Germany and Russia rendered it, in his opinion, a pliant tool of the victors, serving only to perpetuate the injustices of Versailles. But Müller promised to cooperate when the door was finally opened, when the League would become a true "federation of peoples" rather than a "congress of diplomats." 46

Unquestionably much of the criticism directed against the French at Görlitz was justified. In Upper Silesia, in the Saar, and in the militarily occupied areas of western Germany, the French oftentimes did commit excesses and did utilize their police power to encourage and protect Polish insurgents and German separatists. Also, the continuing difficulties regarding reparations were attributable more to the French than to Germany's other creditors. Yet the Socialists could see only the excesses and failed to take into account the deep-seated French need for security. Defeated in 1870-71, battered and largely occupied from 1914-1918, with a smaller population and with inferior productive capacity, France was mortally concerned about her power-political relationship with Germany. Understandably, this concern at times

46 SPD, Protokoll, 270-81, 285-87; Vorwärts, Sept. 23, 1921, p.m., pp. 1, 5; Sept. 25, 1921, p. 1; Mommsen (ed.), Parteiprogramme, 457-58.
led French generals and politicians into actions that were unwise, unjust, or both, hence the SPD criticism. What was missing from the Socialist rhetoric was recognition of France's legitimate security interests. In part this was due to the traditional SPD focus on economic and social issues, to which had been added the need to defend republican institutions. In part it may also be blamed on unreasonable French demands, which tended to cloud the Socialist vision of France. In addition, the lack of communication between SPD leaders and the French policy-makers was important. Finally, the German Socialists, although moderate and well-intentioned toward France, lacked men of great statesmanlike ability, men who could successfully implement moderate and well-intentioned policies. Reichspräsident Ebert, while remaining sympathetic to the SPD, would not exploit his position to the party's advantage. Thus he could no longer be regarded as a party spokesman. Scheidemann had proven too obdurate. Wels, the co-chairman, was preoccupied with organizational matters. Bauer was inexperienced. Müller was conscientious and able but possessed no great insight, suavity, or flair. Even if he had possessed these qualities, there is no

47 As recognized, for example, by Konrad Adenauer, then mayor of Cologne. Adenauer was fully aware of French support for separatism but he also had a deep understanding of the French concern for security. See Karl Dietrich Erdmann, Adenauer in der Rheinlandpolitik nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg (Stuttgart, 1966), esp. pp. 274-79.
assurance that they would have enabled him to improve Franco-German relations. Yet they might have given Müller—and other Socialists by extension—a less one-sided and more understanding view of France.

Some evidence, however, of a new conciliatory spirit was apparent by early October. By then the much criticized sanctions had been lifted. Even more impressive was the Wiesbaden Agreement of October 6-7, negotiated by Rathenau and Loucheur. This contemplated large deliveries of German industrial equipment to France, to be used in French reconstruction and to be deducted from Germany's reparations bill. This was regarded by the SPD as being not only economically important, but of the highest political significance. As a freely negotiated agreement, unattended by military threats or pressure, it implied an end to "the spirit of Versailles." Financially, the prospect of substituting machinery for gold was very welcome at a time when the rapid fall of the mark was attracting much attention. To the Sozialistische Monatshefte it was Kontinentalpolitik in practice. So enthusiastic was Max Cohen over recent developments that he described the Wirth cabinet as the first German government to seriously do something about fulfillment, implying that previous governments had only talked. The cautious Neue Zeit, however, noted that Germany was still under heavy obligations, and that while the Wiesbaden Agreement
might change the form of payment, it would not do away with payment altogether. To the Neue Zeit there was little likelihood that Wiesbaden was the prelude to a basic revision of the Versailles Treaty. 48

Good news turned to bad ten days later when the League of Nations announced its decision (accepted by the Allied Supreme Council) to partition Upper Silesia. Germany, to be sure, got four-fifths of the territory and two-fifths of the population, but Poland received important industrial districts in the east and the Polish area around Rybnik and Pless in the south. The Poles got all of the zinc, nearly all of the coal, lead, and silver, and two-thirds of the iron. It was a sad day for the Social Democrats, who characterized the decision as a "fraud" and as "contrary to all reason and justice." Müller assailed the League's lack of respect for self-determination and criticized the world organization for acting as the implementing agency "of Franco-Polish secret treaties."

Stampfer also put the finger on France, whose "blind
policy," he said, "seeks its security by making Germany
and Poland eternal enemies." 49

The decision on Upper Silesia forced the resignation
of the Wirth government on October 22, which was, however,
reconstituted on October 26. Since the Democrats refused
to participate, the SPD was allotted an additional cabinet
post, with Gustav Radbruch, a professor of law at the
University of Heidelberg, occupying the ministry of
justice. At the same time, Köster replaced Gradnauer as
minister of interior. But as before, Wirth and Rathenau,
who early in 1922 succeeded to the foreign ministry,
remained the primary formulators of foreign policy. 50

Having weathered one storm, Wirth faced the prospect
of another in requesting a reparations moratorium on
December 14, asserting that Germany could not make payments
scheduled for January 15 and February 15. Acknowledging
that the French were counting on reparations to underpin
their budget and aware that they would regard the request
as evasive tactics, the SPD nevertheless concurred that a
moratorium was necessary. "The objective impossibility of

49 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 351, pp. 4736-39;
Vorwärts, Oct. 16, 1921, p. 1; Oct. 21, 1921, a.m., p. 1;
Oct. 21, 1921, p.m., pp. 1-2; Oct. 24, 1921, p.m., pp. 1-2.

50 Morsey, Zentrumsparthei, 418-23; Stampfer,
Vierzehn Jahre, 248-52; Vorwärts, Oct. 23, 1921, p. 1;
Oct. 26, 1921, a.m., p. 1.
fulfillment," Vorwärts observed, "was stronger than the subjective will to fulfillment." The Neue Zeit noted that Germany was not asking for any decrease in payments, but merely for a postponement. Despite French hostility, the Socialists were hopeful that British and American recognition of Germany's worsening problems of foreign exchange and inflation would have positive results. Such seemed to be the case when the Supreme Council, at the request of British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, called a conference at Cannes to discuss the reparations tangle.51

The Cannes Conference provided Germany with a partial moratorium, a stop-gap payment arrangement of 31 million gold marks every ten days (instead of the 500 million marks due on the fifteenth of each month). This, so the SPD acknowledged, was a "breathing space," even "a success." The big news from Cannes, however, was the recall and defeat of Briand, upon whose moderation the German Socialists had been counting. The famous photograph of Briand playing golf with Lloyd George, seemingly

51Vorwärts, Dec. 6, 1921, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 16, 1921, a.m., p. 1; Artur Heichen, "Ein Moratorium für Deutschland," Neue Zeit, XL (Dec. 23, 1921), 295-98; Bergmann, Reparations, 99-102. On November 8, the mark, under heavy selling pressure as Germany paid her first billion gold marks, was reported at 322-$1. By early December, after evidence of foreign concern and with the looming prospect of a moratorium, the mark gained ground and hovered around 200-$1. Bergmann, Reparations, 112.
listening docilely to his counsel, suggested to many Frenchmen that Briand was too pliable, that he was not the man to make the Germans pay. In fact, President Millerand and Poincaré had been planning Briand's downfall for some time; the golf photograph did not cause it. Still, it was Poincaré's determination to put the German problem before all else that gained him wide support. This was understood by the SPD. The fall of Briand and the ascendency of Poincaré to the premiership was a signal to the Germans to brace themselves for the worst. Poincaré was a hard-liner for whom even the Treaty of Versailles was insufficiently harsh. The SPD expected him to demand every pfennig in payments, to encourage separatism in the Rhineland, and to pursue a ruthless administration in the Saar. Yet the Socialists hoped that Poincaré would be somewhat reined in by existing political "realities," that he would not be able to deviate much from Briand's moderation. It was also predicted that the last had not been seen of Briand. Poincaré might raise difficulties but not for long. "The hardest winters," Vorwärts opined, "are over the soonest."52

The road from Cannes led to Genoa. The French governmental change had meant that Germany's request for postponement would itself have to be postponed, a development that the SPD took in stride since it interpreted the Cannes partial moratorium as a tacit Allied admission that the London Schedule of Payments was indeed unworkable. In deep political trouble at home and therefore in need of a foreign policy success, Lloyd George followed up the aborted Cannes Conference with a call for a general European economic conference to be held in Genoa. That Poincaré was even willing to let France participate was construed by the SPD as a sort of minor triumph. The Socialists knew, after all, that Briand had been angling for an alliance with England and that Poincaré, while not as enthusiastic as his predecessor, was interested in carrying on the negotiations. Despite Poincaré's fearsome reputation as a legalist and grammarian, who would not change a comma or undot an "i," the SPD felt that it might still be able to do business with him.53

If not, the SPD found that it could once again collaborate with French Socialists. From February 25-27, Socialists from Germany, France, England, Belgium, and Italy met at Frankfurt am Main to discuss the upcoming Genoa Conference. Heading the French delegation was Léon Blum, who in the past fourteen months had been reorganizing the French Socialist Party following the party split at the Tours Congress in December 1920, where the majority had voted to join the Moscow (Communist) International and had reconstituted itself as the French Communist Party. The departure of this radical element naturally facilitated the improvement of relations between French and German Socialists. At Frankfurt, Blum acknowledged that Germany ought to make restitution for damages, but added that, in his opinion, Germany's total payments were much too high. Moreover, he opposed the coercive methods used by various French governments against the Germans. Blum's views assured that the Frankfurt Socialist Conference would be a success. Sharp criticisms of the peace treaty, of the existing reparations program, and of the use of force complemented a proposed reparations schema that closely reflected what the SPD had long been advocating. The central feature provided for the reconstruction of war-damaged areas with German materials and labor. Implementing this would be an international control board, which would replace dictation with coordination.
Disputes would be submitted to an international court of arbitration. Germany would also be relieved from direct payment of war pensions, which would be internationalized. Finally, all interallied war debts were to be cancelled.

The sympathy expressed all around for Germany's financial and political ills made a deep impression on the Social Democrats. They were especially pleased with a French declaration expressing confidence in the new republican Germany. The French Socialists, everyone knew, lacked influence on Poincaré. But the conference took heart from having achieved their immediate goal: Franco-German Socialist cooperation.54

Despite this success, SPD attitudes immediately preceding the Genoa Conference were, at best, ambivalent. There were too many ill omens. The Reparation Commission bluntly rejected new German proposals for a moratorium, calling instead on the Wirth government to levy additional taxes of 60 billion paper marks, in order to cover reparations installments. A bad move, "a new Diktat," was the *Vorwärts'* assessment. In the Reichstag, Stampfer endorsed Wirth's bitter, pessimistic speech on the Reparation Commission note but observed that Germany could

---

do little in a concrete sense. We are on the right course, he said. "We will do the possible and forbear with the impossible." "The Reparation Commission note," he concluded, "is not the biggest stone we have found in our way."55

The SPD also regretted Poincaré's refusal to let reparations be placed on the Genoa agenda. Along with this, the French showered Rathenau with a torrent of notes, clearly indicating to the foreign minister that the fall of Briand had basically altered Franco-German relations and leading to the suspicion, shared by Müller, that Poincaré might be trying to sabotage the Genoa Conference. Germany is isolated, the Neue Zeit lamented. The Sozialistische Monatshefte, having emerged from its brief state of euphoria, added that isolation was the result of English (not French) sabotage, abetted by German Anglophiles. Max Cohen reiterated that Germany's difficult situation could be mastered only by a "direct understanding between Germany and France." Poincaré's presence as French premier would even be "an advantage," since his clear conception of French "national interest" would facilitate Franco-German agreements that would transcend the hesitant first steps taken by Wirth and

Rathenau. Only one bright light seemed to illuminate the gloom of the German Socialists on the eve of Genoa: the decision by the Allied Powers to revise the Treaty of Sèvres, imposed on Turkey in 1919-1920, but never implemented because of Turkish victories over the Greeks in Anatolia and because of Franco-British rivalry in the Near East. Momentarily elated, the SPD seized upon the negation of Sèvres as an important precedent, as evidence of Allied flexibility. "The shortest way from Paris to Versailles," Vorwärts said hopefully, "leads through Sèvres." But this was wishful thinking; Germany was not Turkey. A revived Turkey presented no threat to French security, which could not be said of a German freed from the restraints and burdens of Versailles. 56

The Genoa Conference began at last on April 10 and continued to May 19. As Poincaré had demanded, reparations were not discussed. Nor was anything achieved regarding general economic questions. Amidst the interminable talks that led nowhere, one bombshell was dropped: the Treaty of Vienna. 56

---

Rapallo, by which Germany and Russia accorded each other diplomatic recognition and mutually waived any claim to reparations. Seemingly innocuous, the treaty aroused a great storm of protest in Allied capitals. Everywhere inferences were made regarding Russo-German political and military collaboration against the West. The French saw it clearly as "bad faith" on the part of the Germans. If not bad faith, it was at least bad timing. Wirth and Rathenau signed the treaty without prior consultation with or approval by the cabinet and Reichspräsident Ebert. SPD leaders, sitting at home, were stunned. At first non-committal, they soon expressed resentment over the great excitement occasioned by Rapallo. What is all the fuss?, Vorwärts inquired. Why are the French so perturbed?, asked Victor Schiff. Haven't they been trying to sabotage the conference for months? Let them come to their senses. To Poincaré's charges of deceit, the Socialists replied "nonsense." This is "no change of course." "The new Germany does not want to ally with England or even with Russia against France, but rather wants to build, together with England and France, a lasting peace." Surely, with peace the goal, the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Russia "was a step in the right direction."  

57Vorwärts, April 18, 1922, a.m., p. 1; April 18, 1922, p.m., p. 1; April 20, 1922, p.m., pp. 1-2; April 23, 1922, pp. 1-2; May 9, 1922, a.m., p. 1; May 20, 1922, a.m.,
For all their explanations, the SPD had to admit that Rapallo was highly unpopular abroad, and that it thereby further endangered Germany's position. It was not pleasant to contemplate new "adventures" that might be undertaken by Poincaré, possibly in reprisal to Rapallo. Germany's gains, if any, had been slight and had been achieved, perhaps, at the cost of financial relief. *Neue Zeit* was soon calling Rapallo a "tragi-comedy."

Germany, the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* complained, has only estranged herself further from France, sinking even deeper into isolation. Hermann Müller, in the Reichstag, spoke favorably of Rapallo as a real peace treaty, contrasting sharply with Brest-Litovsk and Versailles. But this was faint praise for diplomacy that had engendered so much ill will across the Rhine. The right question, Friedrich Stampfer pointed out, was not "whether" Russia and Germany sign a peace treaty, but rather the "time and place." Because of Rapallo's innocuous appearance, because the party had long urged recognition of the Soviet regime, and because of the party's presence in the government, the Socialists felt constrained to support the treaty.

---

Nevertheless, Rapallo was not of the SPD's making; it was an embarrassment.  

Rapallo presented an additional liability because it killed Franco-German reparations talks then in progress. Following Germany's failure to secure a large foreign loan, the mark dropped steadily (500-§l by early July), prompting the Wirth government to request a three-year moratorium on July 12. The SPD concurred, observing that the value of the mark plummeted with each new payment. Belt-tightening and new taxes at home, the Neue Zeit contended, will not appreciably assist Germany in raising the requisite foreign exchange. The Reparation Commission, however, stalled on the stubbornness of both Poincaré and the Commission's own chairman, the Frenchman Louis Dubois.

Germany's financial distress due to her inability to obtain

---

relief from the Commission was compounded by violently anti-German speeches by Poincaré. On August 23, after the French premier had made a singularly unconciliatory speech at Bar-le-Duc, demanding pledges or guarantees of the Ruhr mines and state forests in exchange for a moratorium, the mark shot down to 1440-§1. "Is this what Poincaré wants?" Vorwärts asked, somewhat rhetorically.

In fact, the Socialists had been saying for some time that they knew what Poincaré wanted: the ruin of Germany. It was even suggested that the French premier desired to exceed the Versailles Treaty, to be bound by nothing except the limits of French military power. Regardless of what we do, Vorwärts deduced, France and Poincaré will always find some excuse to withhold a moratorium, impose sanctions, or demand outrageous pledges.59

Indeed, Poincaré's reference to "productive pledges" called new attention to an increasing SPD concern: French promotion of separatism. Never entirely a dead issue, fear of separatism took on new life with Poincaré's tenure as premier. The main SPD Rhenish spokesman, Wilhelm Sollmann, stated explicitly that Poincaré's goal was identical to that of Foch: to sever the left bank of the

59Bergmann, Reparations, 129-43; Artur Heichen, "Die Ursachen der Markzerrüttung," Neue Zeit, XL (July 21, 1922), 385-90; J. Steiner-Jullien in Neue Zeit, XL (Sept. 1, 1922), 547-48; Vorwärts, Aug. 6, 1922, pp. 1-2; Aug. 16, 1922, a.m., p. 1; Aug. 18, 1922, a.m., p. 1; Aug. 18, 1922, p.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 22, 1922, p.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 23, 1922, p.m., p. 1.
Rhine and to establish there an autonomous state dependent on France. French harassments, pressure tactics, propaganda, encouragement of treason, and sanctions were all directed to this end. The Socialists also took up the case of the Saarlanders, who, it was asserted, were being treated like colonial peoples. French "militarism" and "brutality" in the Saar were allegedly evident in the suppression of free speech, in the limitation of political rights, in the schools, in business transactions, in every sphere of life. Even recent difficulties with particularistic Bavaria, which conducted a sort of guerrilla war with the Reich government over the latter's political and military authority, were attributed at least partially to the French. "No one other than Poincaré," Vorwärts observed, "can be happy about their [Bavarians'] actions."

Most Germans, however, found some relief in a "substitute moratorium" granted by the Reparation Commission on August 31. Belgium's priority claim on the rest of reparations for 1922 permitted her to waive hard currency payments and accept Reichsbank certificates instead. France, it should be noted, granted nothing. But Belgium's gesture, the German Socialists commented, would only temporarily ease the pressure on the mark and was only a

---

60Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 355, pp. 8006-13 (Sollmann); Vol. 356, pp. 8872-73 (Sollmann); Vorwärts, July 28, 1922, p.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 3, 1922, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 7, 1922, p.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 24, 1922, a.m., p. 1.
short-term solution. Something more satisfactory would have to be found for 1923. To the Sozialistische Monatshefte, something better had been found in the Stinnes-Lubersac Agreement of September 5, whereby German and French heavy industry would jointly promote the reconstruction of northern France. Supposedly the unofficial plan had the blessing of President Millerand and Premier Poincaré. The Sozialistische Monatshefte viewed the negotiations as proof of a French desire to cooperate in settling the reparations problem. "Poincaré, even more than Briand," wrote Julius Kaliski, "has now opened the way for cooperation." The chance must not be missed, warned Max Cohen. But most Social Democrats were extremely distrustful of anything in which Hugo Stinnes, a reactionary industrialist, had a hand. The Neue Zeit could see no financial advantages in the agreement, while other Socialists viewed Stinnes' efforts as directed mainly toward ending the eight-hour day for industrial workers. 61

SPD foreign policy worries were mitigated somewhat

toward the end of 1922 as the party scored a significant
domestic success. At a congress in Nürnberg, following
separate congresses in Augsburg and Gera, the SPD
absorbed the sizable USPD remnant that had refused to
join the Communists. With this more congenial preoccupa-
tion, foreign affairs, at Nürnberg, were treated rather
perfunctorily. In his report on the work of the Reichstag
Fraktion, Hans Vogel spoke pessimistically about possible
revision of the Versailles Treaty. Germany had pushed
fulfillment to the limit, he contended, thereby improving
relations with England and Belgium, but had made no
progress with France. French intransigence regarding
reparations was creating a dangerous situation in Germany,
resulting in an ever increasing tax burden and a distressing
inflation. Moreover, Vogel saw no chance for improvement
so long as Poincaré prevailed in Paris. But perhaps the
Americans, he speculated, with their interest in a stable
and peaceful Europe, could use their economic influence
to bring France to her senses.

Once again, however, SPD criticism of France had
been voiced without consideration of French interests. Yet
Vogel's gloomy analysis was not without foundation. The
danger lay in inferring that a Franco-German rapprochement,
even for the time being, was chimerical. Such a negative
attitude could stifle whatever prospects remained of
reaching an understanding.
In contrast to the attitude of hopelessness toward France, SPD speakers gave relatively hearty support to the League of Nations. Hermann Müller, Richard Strecker of Darmstadt, and Valentin Schäfer of Saarbrücken all characterized the League as the instrumentality whereby Germany might eventually receive the justice and fair treatment that had been heretofore denied her. Unfortunately there seemed to be no immediate prospect of Germany becoming a member of the world organization. "The will of France," Müller observed, "stands opposed to Germany's entrance."

France also opposed repeated German proposals aimed at stabilizing the mark and balancing the budget. On October 10, with the mark at 2600-\$1, Vorwärts exclaimed "This cannot go on!" But the mark continued to tumble (Oct. 21: 4441-\$1; Nov. 3: 6190-\$1; Nov. 8: 9500-\$1). Attempting to attain a broader national consensus in the face of financial turmoil, Chancellor Wirth turned to the People's Party. But his efforts to create the "Great Coalition" failed as the SPD, on November 14, rejected entering any cabinet in which the People's Party, the political mouthpiece of Germany heavy industry, was included. Unwilling to go on, Wirth resigned and was

---

62 SPD, Protokoll . . . in Augsburg, Gera und Nürnberg, 1922 (Berlin, 1923), 33-37, 40, 47-48; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 300-03; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 273-78.
replaced by Wilhelm Cuno, the director general of the Hamburg-America Steamship Line, whose cabinet of "experts" included no Socialists.63

Although the SPD declined to participate officially in a Great Coalition, the Reichstag Fraktion voted (60 to 55) to give Cuno a parliamentary vote of confidence. As in the case of the Fehrenbach cabinet, the Socialists opted for a policy of "toleration," as opposed to outright opposition. The justification, of course, was the threatening foreign-political situation. That this was the reason was made clear by Rudolf Breitscheid, a former Independent and a brilliant orator who now assumed the role of chief SPD foreign policy spokesman. Breitscheid, following Cuno's initial Reichstag declaration, underlined the SPD's dislike and distrust of the new cabinet but promised support so long as Cuno worked for "understanding with France."

Specifically, Breitscheid endorsed a German governmental request for a stabilization loan and also Cuno's approving words for a significant German role in the reconstruction of northern France. Though doubtful that Cuno and his colleagues had sufficient "energy and strength" to carry them very far, Breitscheid promised the government "a chance." Reflecting the same point of view, only somewhat

63Vorwärts, Oct. 10, 1922, a.m., p. 1; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 304-07; Erich Eyck, Geschichte der Weimarer Republik (Zurich and Stuttgart), I (1954), 302-04; Morsey, Zentrumspar tei, 484-90.
less threateningly, was Müller, who emphasized that reparations, not party politics, was the immediate question. On the basis of the Cuno government's recognition of the need for a stabilization of the mark, the SPD therefore agreed to resume a policy of "toleration." 64

Cuno had time to make only one fresh proposal—a comprehensive settlement involving a gold loan, stabilization, and a two-year cash moratorium, the last a very objectionable feature from the French point of view. This was brushed aside, however, as Poincaré was now intent on impressing upon the Germans the reality of France's superior military power, which could and would be used to force Germany to live up to all of her contractual obligations. His hand had been strengthened on December 16 by a massive (512 to 76) vote of confidence in the French Chamber, rendering him, as even Vorwärts admitted, a "national hero." By this time rumors were rife to the effect that Poincaré, Millerand, Foch, War Minister Maginot, and other generals and political leaders were meeting to plan an occupation of the Ruhr. A last minute conference of the Allies, held in Paris from January 2-4, achieved nothing as the French turned down British compromise proposals.

64Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 357, pp. 9105-15 (Breitscheid); 9173 (Müller); Noske, Aufstieg, 229; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 310-11. For testimonies to Breitscheid as a rhetorician see Theodor Heuss, Erinnerungen, 1905-1933 (Tübingen, 1963), 37-38; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 482; Sender, Autobiography, 241; Sender to Author, May 13, 1964.
Already, on December 26, 1922, the Reparation Commission, at French urging, had declared Germany in default of delivery of telegraph poles. On January 9, 1923, Germany was declared to have wilfully defaulted on delivery of coal. On January 11, French and Belgian troops entered the Ruhr.65

The SPD did not dispute the fact that Germany had defaulted. Party spokesmen, however, vigorously rejected the imputation that Germany had defaulted intentionally. Sanctions would be imposed, Breitscheid foresaw, with towns and industrial plants being occupied, but not because of Germany's ill will or bad faith. Unfortunately, he prophesied, only the arch-nationalists in each country would profit. Chauvinists in France, Breitscheid contended, longed to see "Germany destroyed," while German nationalists were jubilant at the prospect of a debacle that would discredit the fulfillment policy. Other criticism came from Rudolf Hilferding, one of the party's economic experts who, like Breitscheid, was a recent arrival from the USPD. The French are deluded, said Hilferding, as to the profits they will take out of Germany. Sanctions will only "have the sure result of destroying Germany's ability to pay for many years." But there is nothing we can do, he lamented.

65 Bergmann, Reparations, 157-76; Vorwärts, Nov. 28, 1922, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 11, 1922, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 16, 1922, p.m., p. 1.
"A new war begins."

With French and Belgian troops pouring into the Ruhr, events took on at least the appearance of war. Although Poincaré may initially have intended to dispatch only a small-scale expeditionary force that would protect engineers and other technical experts, he soon committed machine-guns, tanks, and aircraft to coerce what had become an unruly German populace. No one in the SPD believed that the French presence would be confined to mining and transporting coal. The word "pretext" was on all lips. Whatever may, in fact, have motivated Poincaré, Socialist and non-Socialist Germans were convinced that France was now making her major effort to dismember Germany, to break up the Reich by detaching the highly populated and industrialized western areas as she had failed to do in 1919.

How would the Germans fight this war? Active resistance was impossible for a disarmed Germany and was proposed by no one in the Socialist Party. The sympathy

66Vorwärts, Dec. 28, 1922, p.m., p. 1; Jan. 7, 1923, pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); Jan. 9, 1923, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Hilferding).

67Vorwärts, Jan. 10, 1923, p.m., pp. 1-2; Jan. 11, 1923, pp. 1, 3; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 357, p. 9425 (Müller); SPD, Sozialdemokratische Parteikorrespondenz für die Jahre 1923 bis 1928 (Berlin, 1930), 3-4. For varied analyses of Poincaré's motivation see Landauer, European Socialism, I, pp. 955-56; Wandycz, Eastern Allies, 270-71; Miquel, Poincaré, 456-57; Bergmann, Reparations, 221.
of foreign governments and populations might be obtained, but there was little likelihood of receiving tangible assistance from abroad. At first, there seemed nothing to do except fight with words. What might be called the SPD's official denunciation of the occupation was delivered by Müller in the hastily assembled Reichstag on January 13. He unequivocally characterized the French action as a "military adventure" undertaken to seize the Rhineland. Müller held to the fulfillment policy as Germany's correct course, but declared that the "power politics of French imperialism" had undermined the basis for continued reparations payments. In any event, he made clear, France did not care that much about reparations. "Poincaré, to be sure, does not want this economic understanding; he wants to carry on power politics; he wants to carry on a Rhineland and Rhine-Federation policy (Rheinbundpolitik)." But, Müller asserted, he will not succeed. France will squander a fortune in her occupation, she will not get her reparations, and the patriotic German working-class will frustrate her plans to dismember Germany.68

Elsewhere, the SPD laid considerable stress on what it termed the illegality of the invasion. The French were said to be legally in the wrong on three counts: (1) for failing to have requested cash payment in lieu of the

shortages of coal and wood deliveries; (2) for having acted bilaterally, instead of in concert with all the Allied powers; and (3) for having resorted to a military occupation, in contrast to using financial and economic sanctions, the only kind considered legal by the SPD. Admitting that ambiguities existed as to the right to act unilaterally and also to the type of sanctions to be imposed, the Socialists argued that France was seizing upon these doubts as a blank check, using the imprecision of treaty formulations as a blanket authorization to impose all manner of outrageous and brutal measures. As well as being illegal, the occupation was also termed "senseless," in that France would now assuredly collect less reparations than formerly. You can't dig coal with bayonets, observed Otto Braun, the SPD minister-president of Prussia. Another point in the Socialist attack was that France, in her ill-conceived and precipitate action, had isolated herself from her former allies. Belgium, unfortunately, had gone along, but Italy was chary while the Anglo-Saxon powers were adamantly opposed. The SPD did not dare predict the time and manner of France's departure from the Ruhr, but unquestionably expected the French, standing virtually alone, to be worn down and worn out at an early date.69

69 Heinrich Cunow, "Der Bruch des Versailles Friedensvertrags," Neue Zeit, XLI (Jan. 25, 1923), 329-34; Vorwärts.
Despite the overall enormity of the French provocation (including such corollary pin-pricks as commandeering the best hotels wherever they went), the SPD repeatedly warned Germans against revanchism, or any foolish and irresponsible behavior. When French troops fired on youthful members of the Bismarckbund, demonstrating in Bochum by singing "Siegrech wollen wir Frankreich schlagen," Vorwärts regretted the incident and grieved for the one dead and one wounded, but observed that it was not Germany's desire to crush France, and that such juvenile foolhardiness was harmful, rather than helpful. It would be unfortunate, noted both Wilhelm Sollmann and Eduard Bernstein, if Germans now gave way to a mood of hatred, vindictiveness, and blind nationalism, for this could well lead to a dictatorship of home-bred nationalists and racists, which would be no better than what the French were now imposing. What is required above all, wrote Carl Severing in the Sozialistische Monatshefte, is to get France out of the Ruhr. This will not be achieved by breast-beating but only by responsible men making necessary but perhaps unpopular decisions. As early as January 16, Severing advocated the establishment of the Great Coalition as a sort of emergency popular front that could do what

Jan. 11, 1923, a.m., p. 3; Jan. 12, 1923, a.m., p. 1;  
Jan. 13, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Jan. 16, 1923, p.m., p. 1;  
Jan. 20, 1923, a.m., pp. 1-2.
had to be done.70

These sober admonitions, made in a time of great stress, reflect much credit on the SPD. On the one hand, the party attacked what it was convinced was illegal and irresponsible behavior by France. On the other hand, party spokesmen recognized that Germany lacked the power to force France out of the Ruhr. All the verbal attacks in the world would not remove a French army that was determined to stay. Thus the Socialists warned against insults and provocations, and counselled, instead, restraint and moderation, knowing that sooner or later negotiations would have to be initiated. Such a policy was both patriotic and realistic; it represented a love of country that was divorced from demagoguery and sabre-rattling.

Severing's advocacy of the Great Coalition had lacked party endorsement. It appeared in the Sozialistische Monatshefte, rather than in the official publications, Vorwärts and Neue Zeit. Cautious party chiefs like Müller and Wels apparently preferred to wait and see, to let conditions settle down before embarking on a new course.

Acceptable to them was the policy of "passive resistance" proclaimed by Chancellor Cuno on January 20. Not only public officials but also mine owners and operators, their workers, and indeed all loyal Germans were to refuse cooperation to the French. The anticipated effect was to make the invasion financially unsupportable for France. But the French refused to be driven out and began to seal off the Ruhr from the rest of Germany, seizing coal taxes, customs receipts, and state forest revenues in the occupied areas. Recalcitrant mine owners, industrialists, and officials were jailed or deported. Public transportation and banking came under the control of French military authorities. On February 1, France also embargoed coal deliveries from the Ruhr to the unoccupied part of Germany, a move that prompted a sharp SPD reaction, since the coal shortage would be felt first and most severely by the workers. Dismayed by French determination and staying power, Vorwärts declared that France had "played her first trump, but certainly not her last."

Worse might still be in store. And pessimism was everywhere reinforced by the meteoric plunge of the mark, from 10,450-\$1 on January 11 to 39,849-\$1 on January 30. This was due not to reparations, payment of which had been stopped, but rather to passive resistance, the financing of which consumed the government's funds and the
implementation of which ensured a great decline in production.\textsuperscript{71}

Although the SPD was discouraged, it was nevertheless resigned to carry on. French stubbornness, suggested Rudolf Breitscheid, militated against the early settlement of the conflict. The French fail to see, Breitscheid observed, that they are acting against their own interest. Poincaré's Ruhr policy is not only running up a sizable deficit for France, but it also undermines the German Republic and German democracy, while encouraging nationalist reaction in Germany. But Breitscheid did not expect Poincaré to comprehend such matters and therefore advised Germans to steel their nerves—against both French and German nationalists.\textsuperscript{72}

By linking the stability and well-being of the Weimar Republic to an obliging France, Breitscheid seemed to invite charges that he accepted a second class position for Germany. Such, of course, was not the case. Rather, Breitscheid revealed that he had a commitment to democratic government as well as to Germany. He feared not

\textsuperscript{71}\textit{Vorwärts}, Jan. 11, 1923, p.m., p. 3; Jan. 22, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Jan. 23, 1923, a.m., p. 1; Jan. 30, 1923, p.m., p. 3; Feb. 1, 1923, a.m., p. 3; Feb. 1, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Feb. 2, 1923, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 5, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Severing, \textit{Lebensweg}, I, pp. 370-71; Allen, \textit{Rhineland Occupation}, 275-80.

for the Fatherland alone but also for its newly won republican institutions. The latter, in his opinion, constituted one of the best guarantees for peace in Europe. Poincaré's policy, he believed, was short-sighted in that its long-range effect was to encourage radical, authoritarian nationalism in Germany, with all of the evil consequences that this would bode for France as well.

In contrast to Breitscheid and to Socialists generally, the Sozialistische Monatshefte appeared relatively unperturbed about the occupation. The journal asserted that Germany was merely paying for its reliance on the Anglo-Americans, while rejecting French friendship. Ludwig Quessel conceded, rather remarkably for an advocate of Kontinentapolitik, that France harbored "a small group of extreme chauvinists," but he did not include Poincaré among these. Poincaré, Quessel declared, intends Germany no harm and he desires no German territory. All he wants are real guarantees for France's legitimate reparations claims. With the proper will on Germany's part, Quessel wrote, a "direct understanding" can be achieved between the two countries. Past problems would be solved and an era of cooperation would be ushered in.  

Also disappointing to the SPD was the ineffectiveness of the French Socialist Party in challenging Poincaré. Léon Blum opposed the Ruhr invasion from its inception and led a campaign of protests and demonstrations against the premier's "power politics." At the party congress in Lille early in February, Rudolf Hilferding was invited to explain the SPD position and was accorded "enthusiastic applause." The French also took the lead in promoting an international Socialist congress to deal with the Ruhr-reparations problem. But these actions failed to impress Poincaré, who enjoyed the strong backing of the Chamber of Deputies. The French Socialists were still recovering from the split of December 1920, when over half the party reestablished itself as the French Communist Party. Moreover, the death of Jules Guesde in 1922 deprived the Socialists of leadership. Perhaps only Blum's energetic efforts had enabled the party to survive. As it was, the French Socialists were singularly sympathetic toward Germany in 1923, an attitude that held potential political danger for them in France and which must perforce be considered courageous. What more they could or should have done remains unclear. Yet Stampfer wrote critically that "Germany seeks the other France—but doesn't find it." Equally unrealistic was the *Neue Zeit*,
which lamented that "we await the deeds of the French labor movement, the heirs of Jean Jaurès. We wait and—wait." Such comments are more revelatory of the frustration of the German Socialists than of the alleged lassitude of their French counterparts.

Waiting brought a further sharpening of the conflict. The French prohibited the export of goods (except when to their advantage) from the Ruhr to unoccupied Germany; interfered generally with rail, barge, and highway traffic; stepped up their program of Frenchification of the Saar; indulged in more confiscations, arrests, jailings, deportations, and killings; and finally, on March 14, announced that they were going to stay until Germany fulfilled each and every one of her obligations. In return, the Cuno government clandestinely financed sabotage against the French, recruited and armed short-term volunteers, and began other military preparations for a war that many Germans thought to be inevitable. Otherwise, hoodlums and toughs swarmed into the Ruhr to commit acts of violence and provocation, while ordinary citizens

---

74Vorwärts, Jan. 11, 1923, p.m., p. 2; Feb. 6, 1923, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 12, 1923, p.m., pp. 1-2; J. Steiner-Jullien, "Die Arbeiterbewegung Frankreichs," Neue Zeit, XLII (Feb. 25, 1923), 403-06; Ziebura, Blum, I, pp. 303-07; Dalby, Blum, 249-51.
contented themselves with teaching their children to recite "Frankreich ist unser Feind." 75

These developments did little to alter the SPD position of restrained opposition to the French, combined with lukewarm support of Cuno. Criticism of French actions was more ritualistic than it was vehement (except for very unusual occurrences, such as the March 31 shooting of Essen workers, wherein 13 died and 32 more were hospitalized). At no time were the French people held responsible for the occupation. Instead, Poincaré was singled out as the villain. His "deceitful" actions, perpetration of "lies," and blatant designs on German territory were said to be the cause of much Franco-German estrangement. Fortunately, so the Socialists repeatedly insisted, the workers, more so than the other classes, could be counted on to withstand Poincaré's imperialistic ambitions. Perhaps inspiring the party's wearisome repetition of this theme were French comments (as reported in Vorwärts) representing Social Democracy as "the weakest point of the resistance." 76

75 Vorwärts, Feb. 12, 1923, p.m., p. 1; March 2, 1923, p.m., pp. 1-2; March 3, 1923, p.m., p. 1; April 1, 1923, p. 1; Bergmann, Reparations, 182-83; Harold J. Gordon, Jr. The Reichshehr and the German Republic, 1919-1926 (Princeton, 1957), 348-49; Morgan, Assize, 222, 266; John W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics, 1918-1945 (London, 1953), 103.

76 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 358, pp. 9959-66 (David); Vorwärts, Feb. 7, 1923, a.m., p. 1; March 2, 1923,
From within the party, Socialist policy was also accused of weakness, but in this case it was charged with weakness toward the Cuno government. Demanding that Cuno be forced to resign was a significant SPD minority, which included the former prominent USPD members Arthur Crispian and Paul Levi. At a Berlin district convention, held on February 25 and March 4, the minority argued that the struggle of the Ruhr workers was directed against the capitalists of both France and Germany and that an effective (peaceful) foreign policy would not be possible until Cuno and his "experts" were removed. Speaking in defense of "toleration" were Wels, Bernstein, and Hilferding. Wels observed that there were enough people in the Cuno cabinet itself who wanted the SPD to assume responsibility and therefore blame. "It would really not be very difficult," he continued, "to overthrow the Cuno government." But, as Hilferding added, what would we do then? "A labor government or a Socialist-led coalition government must still face the question: how can we solve the foreign policy
crisis?" No, Hilferding concluded, we will neither overthrow the Cuno government nor enter it. He agreed with Wels and Bernstein that France was the primary enemy. Wels had rallied the delegates to oppose "the brutal attack of French imperialism," while Bernstein had cautioned that a two-front war—against both Cuno and Poincaré—would be a foolish dissipation of energy.

It was apparent, then, that the SPD had no constructive alternative to propose. Naturally, it had no desire, under the circumstances, to relieve the Cuno government of responsibility, or to assume even part of the responsibility. The best policy for the SPD, Hilferding reflected, was to retain full freedom of action. The delegates to the district convention concurred, approving the Wels-Hilferding position with only a few dissenting votes. The party's toleration of Cuno would be continued, at least for the time being.??

Toleration, however, did not preclude nervousness over Cuno's failure to dissolve or at least to discipline right-wing military organizations that began to flourish with the Ruhr invasion. Hitler and like-minded people, declared two Socialist Reichstag speakers, enjoyed marching

??Vorwärts, Feb. 26, 1923, p.m., pp. 1-2; March 5, 1923, p.m., pp. 2-3. For the struggle against German as well as French "capitalists," see also Curt Geyer, Drei Verderber Deutschlands: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Deutschlands und der Reparationsfrage von 1920-1924 (Berlin, 1924).
around and demonstrating their Heldenmut, but were all too likely to provoke the French or to inspire insane ideas about active (as opposed to passive) resistance. The SPD also tried to prod the Cuno government into negotiations with France. At first the suggestions were gently and tactfully formulated, only to become, by mid-April, quite insistent. What seems to have been the first hint from the Social Democrats that Germany initiate new discussions came from Otto Wels on February 25. Ten days later, on March 7, Eduard David declared SPD Reichstag support for Cuno, since the chancellor announced his intention to continue the SPD-initiated fulfillment policy. Such a policy, David noted, implied negotiations, which the Germans should be ready to undertake as soon as France gave signs of recognizing the folly of her actions. On March 16, Vorwärts, disillusioned about the prospects of English intervention, and desiring to break the impasse, advised that Germany make proposals that would bring about evacuation. This appeal was followed by sober editorial discussion of France's need for security. In unprecedented fashion, the party organ noted (1) the existence of 20

million more Germans than Frenchmen and (2) French awareness of a face-to-face defeat in 1870-71 and near defeat in 1914-18, prevented only by Allied support, which no longer existed. While Vorwärts added that the main question was not French security but rather Germany's defense against "French militarism and imperialism," the newspaper's effort to enlighten its readers about France's anxieties was a significant move toward mutual understanding. Soon thereafter, the party was again urging Cuno to seize the initiative. In the SPD view, passive resistance had reached its maximum effectiveness. France remained discredited. Now, while France was weakened and before German right-wingers could agitate further for active resistance, Cuno was asked "Why not make proposals?" The chancellor was also informed that since the French marched in during his term in office, it was for him to get them out. He could not expect to turn over responsibility to someone else.79

The SPD tone soon expressed greater urgency as the party found much fault with an announcement by Foreign Minister von Rosenberg that Germany was ready to discuss reparations. What is needed, Breitscheid told the Reichstag,

79Vorwärts, Feb. 26, 1923, p.m., p. 2; March 16, 1923, a.m., p. 2; March 23, 1923, p.m., pp. 1-2; March 25, 1923, pp. 1-2; April 12, 1923, a.m., pp. 1-2; April 14, 1923, p.m., pp. 1-2; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 358, pp. 9963-65.
are not vague declarations but a "positive offer." Such an offer, Müller suggested, should include

(1) reconstruction of the destroyed areas of northern France and Belgium, something "the entire world demands of us." To pay for reconstruction and to cover other claims, Müller suggested 26 billion gold marks for France and 5 billion for Belgium, an offer quite in line with previous German proposals.

(2) Genuine guarantees to creditors from whom Germany would receive loans. Without effective guarantees, there would be no loans and thus no stabilization.

(3) Examination of Germany's ability to pay. The offer of 31 billion gold marks was predicated on the assumption that payments could be made without disturbing Germany's economic and financial structure. Expert advice was needed as to the feasibility of such transfers.

Müller expressed the hope that his suggestions could be formulated into a concrete proposal. "Sooner or later," he said, "we have got to come to discussions." Rosenberg's methods, he charged, are too roundabout, and posed the danger of letting the present opportunity, with its maximization of passive resistance, slip by. Müller's conclusion was that it would be simplest to make "a direct offer to all the Allies." The only reservations were

(1) that Germany could not accept any settlement that would lessen German sovereignty in the Rhineland, Palatinate, or
other areas, and (2) no foreign gendarmerie would be permitted to take the place of French troops in the Ruhr. On this basis, Wilhelm Sollmann wrote in Vorwärts, we can do business with France; but there will be no understanding so long as the French want to detach the Rhineland.

While Müller was critical of the government's inaction, he avoided saying, or even implying, that the SPD could achieve superior results. Müller suggested the premises for an offer, but did not demand their acceptance. To have done so would have implied that the SPD possessed superior wisdom and insight, with the corollary that the party make this wisdom and insight more immediately available by participation in the government. The SPD, however, was still feeling its way. It remained distrustful both of the Cuno government, which it suspected of trying to escape responsibility, and of Poincaré, who showed no willingness to negotiate. Of course, the Socialists themselves presented the rather sorry appearance of a leftist party tolerating a rightist government, continuously criticizing the government for its inactivity but refusing either to topple it or to strengthen it, by

80 Germany, Verhandlungen, April 16, 1923, Vol. 359, pp. 10546-51 (Müller); April 18, 1923, Vol. 359, pp. 10596-10602 (Breitscheid); Vorwärts, April 26, 1923, a.m., pp. 1-2. See also Ludwig Quessel, "Die Fehler des Kabinetts Cuno," SM, XXIX (April 24, 1923), 206-16.
entering it. If they had had genuine confidence in their criticisms and proposals, the Socialists could have rendered them more effective by governmental participation.

When a German offer was presented, on May 2, the SPD enthusiastically declared "the way to negotiations is open; it will not be closed again!" In point of fact, however, nothing had been opened. The note, which offered 30 billion gold marks, by and large did no better than to reformulate earlier offers. In addition, it threatened that passive resistance would continue until the Ruhr was evacuated, and demanded that deportees be returned and that German prisoners be liberated. Only when such demands were met could negotiations proceed. According to Karl Bergmann, the leading student of reparations, the note "was everywhere [abroad] rejected as useless." "The result was fatal." Poincaré's rejection was scornful. The British and Italians were more polite but still negative. Even the Social Democrats soon realized that an exchange of notes did not necessarily constitute a forward step. In the Reichstag, Müller explained that the German note lacked deftness, that it was tactically clumsy to affirm that passive resistance would be continued until the French withdrew. Yet Müller had nothing to say about the amount of the offer, which was almost exactly what he had suggested on April 16, and which had elicited rejections all around, implying that the SPD, as well as the German government,
would have to raise the bid. Finally, Müller protested (1) rumors that the SPD had strongly influenced the writing of the note, and (2) accusations that his party advocated capitulation. The flurry of Socialist activity in demanding that the government take the initiative had helped neither Germany nor the SPD.81

Offsetting at least some of this disappointment was a very successful founding congress of the Labour and Socialist International, held at the Hamburg trade union headquarters from May 21-25. All variations of non-Communist Marxists and laborites were included among the 620 delegates from 30 countries and 41 parties, who assembled to launch a successor to the old Second International, which European Socialists had been unable to revive in the immediate post-war years. Under the circumstances, the congress served as a ready-made forum for the airing of German grievances. Careful preparation ensured that French Socialists would stage the heaviest attacks against Poincaré while the Germans would offer more general criticisms, interspersed with frequent reminders of Germany's "just" obligations. Thus Rudolf Hilferding criticized the peace settlement, the Allied

81Bergmann, Reparations, 191-93; d'Abernon, Diary, II (Garden City, 1930), 219-20; Vorwärts, May 2, 1923, p.m., p. 1; May 5, 1923, a.m., pp. 1-2; May 7, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 360, pp. 11125-30; Ludwig Quessel, "Der Notenwechsel des Kabinetts Cuno," SM, XXIX (May 23, 1923), 265-71.
application of power politics, and the Ruhr occupation. He recognized Germany's moral obligation to make reparation, but dwelt more extensively on the need for an over-all settlement to restore financial equilibrium to Europe. He clearly regarded the London Schedule of Payments as unfulfillable but did not suggest an alternative. More critical of France were the Frenchmen Alexandre Bracke and Léon Blum. They reviewed the opposition of French Socialists to the Versailles Treaty, to excessive reparations demands, to the imposition of sanctions, to the encouragement of separatism, and to the Ruhr occupation. It is all wrong, and we have stood against all of it, Blum assured his German colleagues. Receiving particularly great applause was Blum's sharp condemnation of Poincaré's power politics. Blum echoed a favorite SPD theme when he acknowledged that French military adventures and French-supported separatism merely stimulated nationalist extremism in Germany. "We French Socialists," he exclaimed, "see the strongest guarantee of peace in the establishment and maintenance of the German Republic (stormy and long-extended applause)." But Blum also felt constrained to remind his auditors of psychological tensions in France. Explaining that while most Frenchmen opposed militarism and imperialism, he added that their emotional need for security was very great and that there was much concern regarding the existence in Germany of secret military
organizations, of a monarchist-militarist reaction in Bavaria, and of the danger of right-wing elements coalescing to form a major threat to the German Republic and to France. Although Blum admitted that, to some people, the existence of France's large standing army might render laughable any doubts about that country's ability to defend herself, he tried, nevertheless, to convince the Germans of the seriousness of the French concern for security. Blum himself believed that France's militaristic policies were mistaken and he took considerable pains to make this clear. His sole intention was to apprise the Germans of the psychological barrier that would have to be surmounted before a Franco-German rapprochement could be achieved. Justified or not, the French fear of Germany was an historical fact that the Germans would have to acknowledge.

Blum's courageous speech received profuse thanks from the SPD's Arthur Crispieon. Crispieon, however, made no comment on the Frenchman's remarks on his country's security needs.

Concluding the congress was a lengthy resolution, couched in much Marxist jargon, which, inter alia, condemned excessive reparations demands and also the Ruhr occupation. The latter was said to weaken German ability to pay and, by stimulating feelings of revanche in Germany, to decrease the security of France and Belgium.
The right of men to live in freedom and peace was underlined, while passive resistance was explicitly authorized as a means of resistance. 82

The Hamburg Congress thus reinforced the cooperation of French and German Socialists that had been initiated at Frankfurt fifteen months before. Its significance was enhanced since the SPD had received very little satisfaction from Cuno and his cabinet. Perhaps, as Karl Kautsky pointedly suggested in a memorandum at this time, the key to the unlocking of the Ruhr struggle required a French door. Poincaré might continue to be unresponsive, but somehow a new atmosphere had to be created in France, an atmosphere that would permit the Ruhr conflict to be concluded before irreparable damage was done. The Hamburg Congress made it clear that at least one political force in France desired to settle matters on terms acceptable to the SPD. 83

The two-and-one-half months following the Hamburg Congress were given over to renewed attempts to push the Cuno government into ending the Ruhr war. Catastrophic inflation, threats to the Reich's territorial integrity,

82 LSI, Protokoll des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiterkongress in Hamburg vom 21. bis 25. Mai 1923 (Berlin, 1923), 13-16 (Wels), 16-17 (Bracke), 53-61 (Hilferding), 61-70 (Blum), 100-04 (resolution); Braunthal, Geschichts, II, pp. 284-91; Ziebura, Blum, I, pp. 289-90.

83 "Deutschland und Frankreich," undated manuscript, Kautsky Papers.
mounting radicalism, and the absence of effective outside assistance all impelled the Socialists to demand that Cuno act decisively or step down. Of crucial importance was the inflation, which had dislocated the entire German economic structure. Socialist spokesmen asserted that their electors bore nearly all of the burdens, what with prices outrunning wages and unemployment striking first and hardest at industrial workers. Cuno was charged with being indifferent toward hunger, suffering, and the possibility of enormous food shortages during the coming winter. Also attacked were his fiscal and tax policies, said to favor wealthy speculators at the expense of the poor. Heavy pressure was applied on the SPD leadership by the unions, who feared radicalization of their members, with a consequent defection to the Communists. The unions were influential both in opposition to Cuno's financial policies and to a continuation of passive resistance.84

Also causing concern were fears of further encroachment of German territory. Lithuania had already taken advantage of Germany's difficult situation to seize the city of Memel. France could be expected to use her

84 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 360, pp. 11205-14 (Aufhäuser); 11265-70 (Schmidt); Vol. 361, pp. 11763-71 (Müller); Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 323-27; Vorwärts, June 2, 1923, a.m., p. 1; July 11, 1923, a.m., pp. 1-2; Ludwig Zimmermann, Deutsche Außenpolitik in der Ära der Weimarer Republik (Göttingen, 1958), 178; Anderson, Hammer or Anvil, 90-92; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 284-85.
predominant position in the west to buttress establishment of an autonomous Rhenish republic. To this end, the French were supporting separatists while preventing responsible German officials from entering the occupied areas. Disquieting, too, were developments in Bavaria and Saxony, states that were under right and left-wing governments respectively, each progressively defying the central authority of Berlin. The open political challenge presented here was complemented by a growing undercurrent of active resistance in the Ruhr. At a time when the SPD was edging away from passive resistance, active resistance could hardly be condoned. Dynamiting and sabotage, Müller declared, only make the resolution of the Ruhr conflict more difficult. As the French gradually succeeded in establishing control in the Ruhr, and while domestic conditions within Germany worsened, the SPD gave increased thought to abandoning its "toleration" of Cuno. But only the Sozialistische Monatshefte explicitly advocated the immediate formation of a Great Coalition, a government that would encompass all German parties from the Socialists on the left to the People's Party on the right, forming a cabinet that would be sufficiently broadly based to enable it to make such concessions as would be necessary to achieve an understanding with France. Contrary to the wishes of the Monatshefte, the party chiefs still held back from the vote of no confidence that would oust Cuno and
force the SPD to come forward and help to solve a problem for which the party disclaimed responsibility.\textsuperscript{85}

A persistent source of discouragement was Germany's inability to benefit from France's "isolation." On July 11, at the end of a half-year of Ruhr conflict, \textit{Vorwärts} editorialized that England, whose economy was reportedly being adversely affected, would not permit the occupation to last much longer. Actually, the events of 1923, having occasioned a great decline in German coal production and consequently in German coal exports, provided a considerable stimulus to the heretofore depressed British coal industry. The revival of this industry resulted not only in increased coal exports but in expanded British production of pig iron, steel, and ship building.\textsuperscript{86} The SPD, then, was on shaky


\textsuperscript{86}British coal production in 1922 totalled 236.4 million long tons, and in 1923 rose to 264 million. Coal exports increased from 64,198 long tons in 1922 to 79,450 long tons in 1923. The greatest absolute increase was in deliveries to Germany (8,346 tons in 1922, and 14,806 tons in 1923), but deliveries to Belgium (3,489 and 6,505) and to France (13,579 and 18,826) also rose dramatically, reflecting the decreased shipments of German coal to those countries.

The price of British coal advanced as well, the 1922 average price of all classes of coal, free on board at shipping ports, being 22s8d, while the 1923 price moved
ground in inferring that Britain's economy could not stand
the strain of a prolonged Ruhr occupation. The Socialists
misjudged this and therefore misled themselves as to the
aid that could be expected from England. The only
exception was the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, which dis-
counted all possibilities of British assistance. Such
vain hopes, the *Monatshefte* argued, would only prolong
passive resistance and delay the reestablishment of peace.

Although most Socialists looked first to Great
Britain, there was also some talk of help from the League
of Nations. This was dampened, however, by the realiza-
tion that the League could not be counted on for much until
Germany became a member. Thus, by early August, the
Socialists were beginning to admit that outside aid would
not be forthcoming. The only alternative was direct and
serious negotiations with France. But for this Germany
required a government of resolution and strength, neither
of which characterized Cuno's cabinet.87

up to 25s3d. The surge in British coal exports coincided
with the decline in Ruhr production, which fell from
7,356 long tons in January, 1923 to a low of 1,423 in
August and then rose to 8,168 in March 1924. *Review of
Economic Statistics*, VI (April, 1924), 178; (July, 1924),
214-15.

87 *Vorwärts*, June 19, 1923, p.m., p. 1; July 11,
1923, p.m., pp. 1-2; July 18, 1923, p.m., p. 2; July 19,
1923, a.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 1, 1923, p.m., pp. 1-2; Germany,
XXIX (June 19, 1923), 333-38; same, "Die Opferung Deutsch-
lands," *SM*, XXIX (July 24, 1923), 397-401. That the Cuno
government also counted on England to bail it out is
On August 3, after a two-day debate, the SPD Reichstag Fraktion blamed the Cuno government for "the threatening internal and external breakdown." At the same time, the Fraktion demanded "the greatest foreign-political activity"—in order to maintain the unity of the Republic, to preserve the Rhineland within the Reich, to achieve the evacuation of the Ruhr, and to attain a satisfactory settlement of the reparations problem. The Fraktion rejected an appeal to introduce a no confidence motion against Cuno, not because the chancellor was expected to work any miracles, but because the SPD remained unwilling to dump Cuno in the absence of a suitable alternative. In fact, severe labor unrest, together with Cuno's continued inactivity, were rapidly pressuring the party into a decision. Strikes and local hunger revolts worried both trade union and party leaders, who feared that prolongation of the crisis would lead to Communist insurgency and possibly even to civil war. To head off such developments, the Socialists decided to enter a Great Coalition government. The Socialist intention was made clear on August 7 when Müller told the Reichstag that the government had spent seven months getting nowhere, that time had run out, and that the Ruhr conflict had to be confirmed in d'Abernon, Diary, II, p. 242. See also Holborn, "Diplomats and Diplomacy," The Diplomats, 1919-1939, ed. by Craig and Gilbert, 159-63.
brought to a close. On August 11, the SPD Reichstag delegation voted by a large majority to withdraw support from the government. Cuno resigned on the 12th. Soon thereafter, the Social Democrats, the German People's Party, the Democrats, and the Centrists agreed on a cabinet to be headed by Gustav Stresemann, chairman of the People's Party. Stresemann's government, presented to the Reichstag on August 14, received a 239 to 76 vote of confidence.

Entering the new cabinet were four Social Democrats: Schmidt as deputy chancellor, Sollmann as minister of interior, Radbruch as minister of justice, and Hilferding as minister of finance. The key figure, however, was Stresemann, a monarchist and one-time annexationist who was now reconciled to the Republic. He was aware of Germany's weakness and supported a conciliatory foreign policy closely paralleling that of the SPD. Vorwärts described the new government as an "emergency" arrangement, agreed to only to prevent "hopeless chaos." "It is a great mistake to believe that our party has enthusiastic respect for the Great Coalition," the newspaper confided.

88Vorwärts, Aug. 4, 1923, a.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 12, 1923, p. 1; Aug. 13, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 361, pp. 11763-71, 11871; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 286; Severing, Lebensweg, I, pp. 423-26; Noske, Aufstieg, 246-47; Landauer, European Socialism, I, pp. 973, 1172; Anderson, Hammer or Anvil, 93-94; Gustav Stresemann, Vermächtnis, ed. by Henry Bernhard, I (Berlin, 1932), 74-75, 88; Morsey, Zentrumspartei, 513-16.
Somewhat more bluntly, forty-three SPD deputies declared disapproval of the coalition and demanded a new struggle against capitalism. Undoubtedly it was embarrassing, even humiliating, for the Socialists to sit in a cabinet headed by a representative of big business. Yet SPD leaders had no desire to assume greater responsibility. Surpassing their dislike for a Stresemann-led government was their fear of a "workers' and peasants' regime," then being advocated by the Communists. Rather than seize power by themselves (and be pushed leftward) or in union with the Communists (in order to effect a proletarian revolution), the Social Democrats entered the government for a diametrically opposed reason: to resolve the Ruhr question before civil disturbances became unmanageable. Indicative of this was a Vorwärts admonition of August 14, addressed to the party's working-class readership: "Keep working and don't despair!"\textsuperscript{89}

The Great Coalition was obviously the prelude to momentous decisions. In his Reichstag acceptance speech Stresemann said as much, seconded by Müller. Stresemann was to be given the lead in foreign affairs, while Müller, Breitscheid (who had opposed the Great Coalition), and other SPD leaders called on workers to refrain from strikes,

\textsuperscript{89}Vorwärts, Aug. 13, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 14, 1923, a.m., p. 1; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 287.
not only to prevent further economic disorganization but also to help inspire a sense of confidence abroad. Once more the way to negotiations was said to be open.90

Stresemann spent the succeeding six weeks indicating to the French his readiness to come to an understanding. Poincaré, however, refused to negotiate until the Germans ended passive resistance. The chancellor, aware of the increasing demoralization in the occupied areas, recognized that passive resistance would have to be abandoned, but sought (in vain) a *quid pro quo* from the French. Time was also needed to acclimatize German public opinion to the coming changes. The SPD helped pave the way with a September 18 declaration by the Reichstag Fraktion that the government must spare no effort to enter negotiations with France. The party press conceded that both France and Germany had made many mistakes and that everything else was now secondary to liquidating the present conflict. Privately, Stresemann sent Sollmann to Cologne to explain the government's intentions to notables of the Rhine-Ruhr area.91 On September 24 the cabinet met with representatives

90 Germany, *Verhandlungen*, Vol. 361, pp. 11842-43 (Müller); 11855-57 (Breitscheid); *Vorwärts*, Aug. 13, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 15, 1923, a.m., p. 1.

91 Sollmann had the advantages of being a resident Rhinelander, an SPD moderate not given to ideological outbursts, and, most importantly, the minister of interior. His former experience as a bank employee may also have aided him in making explanations to businessmen.
of the parties from the occupied area. Stresemann received support from all delegates except the Nationalists when he told them that passive resistance would have to be called off. *Vorwärts*, now selling for two million marks a copy (the mark, on the 24th, stood at 146,632,500–$1), described the cessation of passive resistance as a "victory of French militarism" but argued that continued inaction would have culminated in a general economic breakdown, possibly followed by a territorial breakup. Breitscheid added the lament that the Cuno government had failed to use passive resistance as a bargaining weapon at a time when such resistance could still be financed. Moreover, Cuno, so Breitscheid charged, had shown no interest in negotiation. "The Cuno government placed its trust in God and England and its hands in its pockets." But now, Breitscheid observed, there is "a powerful demoralization in the Ruhr district." Germany's options had run out and she had to give in. Breitscheid was also well aware that Poincaré retained ambitions of separating the Rhineland. Socialist opinion was thus agreed, as in 1919 and again in 1921, that great concessions—perhaps even capitulation—had to be made to hold the Reich together. "Poincaré's victory will be complete," *Vorwärts* asserted, "only when German unity breaks asunder."92

The break came, not in German unity, but in the Stresemann cabinet. Now that passive resistance was over and full production could be resumed, the right-wing of the People's Party demanded the end of the eight-hour day and the ouster of Htilferding as finance minister. At the same time it was known that Stinnes and other industrialists were concluding agreements with French authorities. Within the SPD these developments provoked opposition, stemming particularly from the fear of future electoral losses to the Communists. Yet the alternative, as the party leadership saw it, was the collapse of the Great Coalition and the consequent endangering of the government's reconstituted Erfüllungspolitik. Hilferding himself eased matters by announcing his willingness to resign, so long as the SPD remained in the coalition. Once again, then, the Social Democrats placed a foreign policy imperative ahead of partisan political advantage.93

Aug. 22, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 25, 1923, a.m., p. 1; Aug. 27, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 3, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 7, 1923, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 10, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 11, 1923, a.m., p. 1 (Sollmann's views); Sept. 13, 1923, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 22, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 25, 1923, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 27, 1923, a.m., p. 3; Germany, Verhandlungen, Oct. 8, 1923, Vol. 361, pp. 11949-58; Ludwig Quessel, "Die Wahrheit über den Ruhrkrieg," SM, XXIX (Sept. 18, 1923), 523-28; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 288.

93 Vorwärts, Oct. 4, 1923, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 6, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Oct. 9, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Stresemann, Vermächtnis, I, pp. 139-46; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 289; Rosenberg, Geschichte, 144-45, which argues that the Socialists should have left the government.
That the Socialists were justifiably concerned about the unity of Germany was soon clearly demonstrated. In late September and early October, Rhenish separatists became increasingly active, with frequent parades and occasional street fights with hecklers and Prussian police. (The separatists were customarily protected by French soldiers.) On October 21 a Rhineland Republic was proclaimed in Aachen, quickly followed by separatist putsches in Trier, Koblenz, and Wiesbaden. Despite French support (or perhaps because of it), these efforts soon collapsed. At least part of the credit was due to Sollmann, Severing, Otto Braun, and other SPD leaders, who discerned French motives and who helped maintain the morale of Rhine-Ruhr workers. The Social Democrats did not escape without embarrassment, however, as a handful of Socialists, headed by a former Bavarian minister-president, Johannes Hoffmann, proclaimed a short-lived Palatinate Republic on October 23-24. The alarmed SPD chiefs in Berlin explained it as a nobly inspired "tactic," designed to save the Palatinate from the reactionary and particularistic regime in Bavaria. Only when it became clear that Hoffmann had the backing of French generals did the Berlin (and Munich) SPD authorities wash their hands of him. Still insisting that Hoffmann was reichstreu,
Vorwärts admitted that he had employed the wrong "tactic." 94

Adding to the disorder were troubles in Saxony, Thuringia, and Bavaria. In the first two states, Socialist-Communist coalition governments had been formed on October 10 and 16. Their existence generated much distrust and suspicion, which multiplied following an unsuccessful Communist putsch in Hamburg on October 22-24. In Bavaria an extreme conservative government held an umbrella over the Nazis and other rightist groups, using them as foils against Berlin. The SPD federal ministers and Reichstag leaders tried to get Erich Zeigner, the Socialist minister-president of Saxony, to step down but without success; thereupon they agreed to the forcible removal of the Saxon and Thuringian governments but only

on condition that the Reich government take similar action against the reactionary government of Bavarian State Commissioner von Kahr in Munich. This Stresemann would or could not do. Consequently the SPD left the cabinet on November 2 and voted no confidence in the reconvened Reichstag on November 23, thereby breaking-up the Great Coalition.95

The Socialists bowed out with regrets. Vorwärts took pains to point out that the SPD did not "desert" the government but would have continued to cooperate had the other parties not insisted that the Social Democrats make all the concessions. Even then, the Socialists voiced the hope that the foreign policy course charted under Stresemann could be maintained. Wels, speaking in the Reichstag, declared that the SPD departure prompted jubilation among the Rhenish separatists and their French sympathizers. People in the Rhineland, he said, expect a "turn-about" of foreign policy. It was thus hardly surprising when the Social Democrats resumed their earlier policy of toleration, this time vis-à-vis a new

bourgeois coalition headed by a Centrist, Wilhelm Marx. Stresemann remained as foreign minister, with a virtually free hand to continue his efforts at liquidating the Ruhr war. Acknowledging that a potentially explosive situation still existed, the Social Democratic Reichstag delegation approved sweeping emergency powers for the Marx government until mid-February.  

The remainder of 1923 did not bring the foreign policy "turn-about" discussed by Wels, but rather a gradual cooling-off of Franco-German relations. In late November representatives of Rhine-Ruhr industry reached an agreement with their French and Belgian counterparts organized under the supervision of the Interallied Control Commission for Manufactures and Mines, known by its French initials MICUM. Ordinarily such agreements would have been formulated in state treaties, but the still delicate nature of Paris-Berlin relations did not permit this. Yet since the Reich government obligated itself to reimburse German industry and mines for deliveries to France and Belgium, and since these deliveries were to be credited to Germany's reparations account, it was clear that the Germans had fully returned to the policy of fulfillment. Under this arrangement, to remain in force until April 15, 1924,

---

Germany was to pay coal taxes and make coal and industrial deliveries equivalent to or perhaps exceeding what had been required under the London Schedule. It is "extraordinarily harsh," wrote Vorwärts. Still, this "heavy and pressing burden" had to be accepted. The primary object was to lay the basis for getting the French out of the Ruhr. The Socialists were also acutely conscious of the need to get production rolling again, with the consequent lessening of unemployment and working-class distress. The MICUM agreements, then, were decidedly in the national interest.97

Also encouraging was the decision of the Reparation Commission to appoint two committees of experts to examine the reparations problem in the light of Germany's ability to pay. While Poincaré outwardly continued adamant, he did approve the Reparation Commission's decision, just as he must have given the go-ahead for the MICUM agreements. Whatever his motivation, Vorwärts was satisfied that a better climate for understanding existed in Paris and that serious steps were now being taken to resolve outstanding problems.98 With the central government in much firmer

97 Bergmann, Reparations, 213-15; Landauer, European Socialism, I, p. 1175; Eyck, Geschichte, I, pp. 372-73; Vorwärts, Nov. 24, 1923, p.m., p. 1; Nov. 28, 1923, p.m., pp. 1-2.

98 Bergmann, Reparations, 219-23; Vorwärts, Dec. 18, 1923, a.m., p. 1.
political and military control and with the Rentenmark, a new currency introduced on November 15, holding firm and promising to end the inflation, the "Ruhr year," closed, if not with cheers, at least with sighs of relief.

While nearly all Socialists were pleased to see the conflict terminated, there was disagreement as to its meaning or significance. The extremes were represented by Friedrich Stampfer, who characterized the nine-month struggle as "a great moral victory" for Germany, and by Ludwig Quessel, who viewed the conflict as ending in a crushing triumph for France. Stampfer believed that the French nationalists had been frustrated in their aims. This, augmented by the world-wide sympathy that had developed for Germany, implied a future relationship that would be based more on equality and respect than on force. "The Ruhr war," he wrote, "opened the way to the Dawes Plan." Quessel's conviction was that Germany had foolishly thrown away a fortune—ten times more than would have been paid in reparations—and had also morally degraded herself with lies, corruption, hatred, and bitterness. Yet Quessel asserted that England had suffered an even greater defeat, since England had been France's real (albeit hidden) rival. In forcing Germany to capitulate, France had snatched mastery of the continent from England. 99

Transcending these conflicting interpretations was the solid fact of collaboration between Stresemann and the SPD. Stresemann was one of the few political leaders of genuine talent and ability in Germany. He brought with him the assets of middle-class respectability and of commanding what in foreign affairs was a "swing" party. The Socialists had an almost instinctive trust in Stresemann (more than they publicly admitted) and were willing to make considerable domestic sacrifices, as has been shown, to preserve his leadership in the Wilhelmstrasse. Conversely, they celebrated his successes as their own—perhaps even more theirs than his. Regardless, it was the Ruhr war that ushered in the six years of Social Democrat-Stresemann cooperation that rendered fulfillment a viable policy and that inaugurated a hopeful, if too short, era of Franco-German rapprochement.
CHAPTER IV: YEARS OF CONCILIATION, 1924-1930

"The real unity of a democratic Germany can blossom forth only from the earth of a United States of Europe."

In contrast to the fevered pace of 1923, the early months of 1924 were a period of quiet in foreign affairs. In Paris, the experts prepared their reports. The Socialists remained hopeful of favorable recommendations but of course could make no substantive comment until the committees released their findings. From London came the good news of a Labour Party victory in the January elections, causing the SPD to predict a turn to the left in British foreign policy. Acknowledgment was made of the limitations that a minority government would place on Ramsay MacDonald, the new prime minister, but the Social Democrats clearly expected more activity from Whitehall. Hermann Müller, a month later, told the Reichstag that England was playing a critical role in bringing about a better understanding between Germany and France. England also reportedly desired Germany's entry into the League of Nations as well as her cooperation and assistance in stabilizing Europe. Otherwise, the SPD prepared for new

federal elections, scheduled for May 4. The party expected
to fight out the election on economic and financial issues,
focused on the adjustments to be made in the wake of the
Ruhr crisis. Demands were made for the restoration of the
eight-hour day, a Socialist tax policy, increased welfare
benefits, and like matters. Until April, when the experts'
reports were issued, little mention was made of foreign
policy.\footnote{Germany, Verhandlungen, Feb. 26, 1924, Vol. 361,
pp. 12471-72; Vorwärts, Jan. 22, 1924, p.m., p. 1;
Jan. 23, 1924, p.m., pp. 1-2; Feb. 20, 1924, p.m., p. 1;
March 3, 1924, p.m., p. 1; March 14, 1924, a.m., p. 1;
March 23, 1924, p. 1.}

With few specific incidents on which to comment and
with the feeling of having completed one phase of post-war
history, the Socialists, early in 1924, showed a penchant
for reflection. Müller, in articles and speeches, described
the League as the agency through which Germany could best
exercise a "democratic foreign policy." Commensurate with
the League broadening its membership, its authority should
be increased. The League, he hoped, would be useful in
correcting the injustices of 1919. In the application of
sanctions, as well as moral force, the League would
prevent repetitions of the power politics of the recent
past. It could also promote universal disarmament, a far
cry from the existing discriminatory disarmament of the
defeated Central Powers of World War I. The alternative,
Müller predicted, was renewed war, wherein Europe would
"sink into a new barbarism." An effective League, of course, was predicated on German membership. Müller expected the MacDonald government to force Germany's entry. This, he said, "is a grand task for the English Labour government, on which all supporters of German democracy place great hopes."

Seconding Müller's comments was Karl Kautsky, who observed that the world organization had been overly criticized for its defects and insufficiently praised for its potential uses. Like Müller, he seemed to think that the League could help lead the world to peace and Socialism, more or less filling the role that had been assigned to the Socialist International in pre-war days. Even the Sozialistische Monatshefte, with its call for a United States of Europe, could be expected to look favorably on any institutionalization of Franco-German cooperation. But unlike Müller, the journal asked no favors from England, not even from MacDonald.³

Beyond what was admittedly only a dream of the future, Müller declared for an unequivocal resumption of the fulfillment policy. Although the experts' recommendations

would not be binding, and although he anticipated that the terms would be harsh, anything within the range of the possible, he warned, would have to be accepted. At a time when trust for Germany was again building up, any other course was unthinkable. Fortunately, the SPD now had an ally in Stresemann. Breitscheid publicly expressed appreciation for the foreign minister's moderate and reasonable pronouncements. But everyone recognized that much depended on the upcoming elections.

The experts' reports were forwarded to the Reparation Commission on April 9 and made public the same day. Serving as the basis of what became known as the Dawes Plan, the reports proposed a resumption of German reparations payments at the annual rate of one billion gold marks, to rise after five years to two-and-one-half billion gold marks. To help stabilize the German currency, Germany would receive a foreign loan of 800 million gold marks. Payments would be guaranteed (Poincaré's productive pledges) by the issuance of bonds against German railways and industries. Another form of "guarantee" would be the seating of a foreign Agent General in Berlin, whose function would be to oversee all phases of the plan. Germany, in turn, would benefit by the presumable evacuation of the Ruhr. Since no terminal date was set for

---

4Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 361, pp. 12469-70 (Müller); Vol. 361, pp. 12591-92 (Breitscheid).
German payments, the reports obviously did not constitute, even in rough draft, a final settlement. The purpose of the reports was to remove, in so far as this was possible, the reparations problem from the political arena.\(^5\)

The SPD reaction was on the whole positive. The reports were considered "a great progress" because they permitted the restoration of German economic unity, renounced the policy of sanctions, promised a period of rest and quiet, and would consequently alleviate much of the distress of the people of the occupied districts. The payments were high, but Vorwärts admitted that they could have been higher. Not only would Germany benefit materially in that she could now rebuild in security and confidence, but the favorable features, taken together, constituted "a great moral victory for the German point of view."

On the minus side, the payments were described as burdensome (but bearable). It was unfortunate but understandable that Germany pledge certain guarantees and submit to a measure of external economic control. On balance, the advantages far outweighed the disadvantages. Besides, Vorwärts added, Germans suffering in the occupied district have the right to ask the rest of us to make sacrifices and to take some risks. The conclusion was that "no reasonable man can afford to withhold his support from

\(^5\)Bergmann, Reparations, 223-56.
these principles." And even more emphatically: "The rejection of the experts' reports would be a catastrophic stupidity."^6

Rather cool to the experts' proposals was the Sozialistische Monatshefte, which thought the payments were too high and which suggested that Germany could have done better via direct negotiations with France. Admitting that there was no realistic alternative to acceptance of the reports, Ludwig Queszel and Max Cohen implied that it was still not too late for close cooperation with France. Queszel expressed hopes that the May elections would bring forth men who represented this view. Cohen demonstrated his personal dissatisfaction regarding Vorwärts' advocacy of immediate acceptance. He thought it vulgar. Vorwärts, he complained, approves the Gutachten simply because it sees in it a "victory over Poincaré." The newspaper might be right in advocating acceptance, Cohen judged, but it is right for the wrong reason.7

On April 16, the Marx government gave its consent to the reports. Britain, Belgium, and Italy followed a few days later. Only France's position remained uncertain.

^6Vorwärts, April 9, 1924, p.m., p. 1; April 10, 1924, a.m., p. 1; April 11, 1924, a.m., p. 1; April 12, 1924, a.m., p. 1.

Regardless, the Gutachten immediately became a central electoral issue in Germany. The Nationalists, Nazis, Racists and Communists attacked the plan, alleging that it would sell Germany into economic servitude. The other parties, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, defended the proposals. The Socialists, greatly worried over the possible consequences of a right-wing victory, fought vigorously on this issue. Calling the Gutachten "the most important political event since the conclusion of peace," the SPD repeatedly pointed out the purely negative stance of the extremist parties while contrasting its own stand as a positive approach, designed to win evacuation of the Ruhr, to restore economic unity, and to achieve an equitable and durable peace. The opposition, conversely, could promise only political, economic, and social catastrophe. 8

Despite the evident soundness of their argument, the Social Democrats restrained any feelings of optimism. Enlargement of their Reichstag delegation, inflated from 102 to 170 by the adhesion of most of the USPD parliamentary group, could not be expected. The country had passed through a time of unparalleled stress and privation that

---

8 Bergmann, Reparations, 256-57; S. William Halperin, Germany Tried Democracy: A Political History of the Reich from 1918 to 1933 (New York, 1946), 289-91; Eyck, Geschichte, I, pp. 397-98; Vorwärts, April 9, 1924, p.m., p. 1; April 11, 1924, a.m., p. 1; April 18, 1924, a.m., p. 1; May 3, 1924, p. 1 (extra-Ausgabe).
encouraged appeals to extremism. Two days prior to the election, Vorwärts, eschewing any predictions of victory, affirmed that the party was satisfied with having fought a good fight.9

The election was a debacle. The Socialists declined to 100 seats, while the Nationalists rose from 71 to 95, the Racists-Nazis from 0 to 32, and the Communists from 17 to 62. Almost all the former USPD supporters voted Communist. The SPD post-election proclamation "We remain the strongest party" hardly told the story.10

Afraid that the election results had endangered the Gutachten, the Social Democrats at once asserted that the May 4 voting had not accurately reflected public feeling on this matter. Other issues, such as inflation, had been important, while the increased support for the Nationalists, Vorwärts asserted, was due only to successful demagogy. Beset by internal conflicts, the Nationalists had not yet clarified their position on the reparation plan. Thus their large vote, so the Social Democrats contended, could hardly be interpreted as a decisive indication of popular disapproval of the plan. In view of this, the SPD Vorstand, on May 9, proposed a national

9Vorwärts, May 2, 1924, a.m., p. 1. See also SPD, Die Arbeit der Sozialdemokratie im Reichstags von Mai bis August 1924 (n.p., n.d.), 1.

10Vorwärts, May 5, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 405-06.
plebiscite on the Gutachten. "The necessary clarity has not emerged," the party declared. "The people themselves should decide, yes or no." What the party had in mind was to propose a law to the government, demanding the acceptance of the experts' reports. The government would then present the proposed law to the Reichstag, from where, assuming its rejection, it would be presented to the voters in a referendum. The other parties, however, viewed the SPD move as premature. The Social Democrats had no lines of communication into the Nationalists' camp and were insufficiently aware of the division of opinion there regarding the Gutachten. In contrast, the moderate bourgeois politicians were unconvinced that the Nationalists would vote against the reparations plan and they consequently withheld support from the Socialist scheme. The SPD, recognizing that it could achieve little without the cooperation of the Center, Democrats, and People's Party, quietly dropped its proposal for a plebiscite.11

Disappointed over their own electoral failure, the Social Democrats were cheered by the results of the French elections of May 11, which brought victory to the left (Cartel des Gauches) and defeat to Poincaré's Bloc National. The SPD was surprised but nonetheless very

11Vorwärts, May 9, 1924, p.m., p. 1; May 10, 1924, a.m., p. 1; May 10, 1924, p.m., p. 2; May 11, 1924, pp. 1-2; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 299.
pleased. While applauding the French Socialists as the biggest winners, the German Socialists were happy to see Édouard Herriot, a Radical Socialist, installed as premier, a position barred to Léon Blum since the French Socialist Party declined to participate formally in a government that it could not dominate. Herriot was known to favor much closer cooperation with England and also more conciliatory treatment of Germany. The only Social Democratic regret was that the German elections had preceded the French. Had the French voted first, so Vorwärts speculated, the defeat of Poincaré would have had an impact in Germany favorable to the SPD and to other moderate elements. Still, the Socialists were grateful that "the other France" had awakened.\textsuperscript{12}

With Socialist or Socialist-influenced governments in power in both Britain and France, what was now the proper course for Germany? Convinced that the victory of the left was a repudiation of Poincaré's war-like Ruhr policy,\textsuperscript{13} the SPD proclaimed that now, more than ever before, a cooperative attitude was needed in Germany. The

\textsuperscript{12}Vorwärts, May 13, 1924, a.m., p. 1; May 22, 1924, a.m., p. 3 (Victor Schiff); May 22, 1924, p.m., p. 1; May 26, 1924, p.m., pp. 1-2 (Schiff).

\textsuperscript{13}Tax increases, levied largely to pay for the occupation, were also influential in the anti-Poincaré vote. In the SPD press, only Rudolf Hilferding adequately recognized the economic and financial factors underlying the Bloc's fall. Rudolf Hilferding, "Realistischer Pazifismus," Gesellschaft, I (1924, pt. 1), 97-114.
Gutachten had to be accepted without delay or reservations. No demands should be made for a downward revision of reparations or for other concessions. Germany, as Vorwärts put it, was now moving in respectable company; she could ill afford to appear nationalistic or reactionary.¹⁴

While the German elections had indicated a shift to the right, the new Marx government of June 3 was a relief to the SPD. The Nationalists had asked for too much—including ex-Admiral von Tirpitz as chancellor—with the result that Marx and Stresemann took office just as before, the SPD again "tolerating." The government's main business was to get Reichstag approval for the Gutachten. This was given on June 6 by a vote of 246 to 183, the majority consisting of the Great Coalition parties, with the opponents ranged on the extreme right and left. The vote was adequate for the moment but fell short of the two-thirds majority that, in all likelihood, would be required for the implementing legislation. In the Reichstag, Paul Löbe and Breitscheid had marshalled all the Socialist arguments supporting the Dawes Plan: the need for credit, to recharge industry and to prevent a recurrence of inflation; the removal of the French from the Ruhr, which would restore the area to German customs.

¹⁴Max Cohen, "Die aussenpolitische Forderung," SM, XXX (May 27, 1924), 286-90; Vorwärts, May 13, 1924, p.m., pp. 1-2; May 22, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 381, p. 189 (Breitscheid).
authority, discourage the separatists, and prevent further incidents there; the return of prisoners and deportees; and the discontinuance of the harsh MICUM agreements, which had been renewed to June 15. Not least was Löbe's fervid contention that acceptance would introduce "a new and better atmosphere" in which further gains could be made. Vorwärts could indeed say of this "basic decision for Germany on Europe's future: our position is unequivocal and clear."15

The party's stand on the Gutachten received resounding confirmation at the Berlin Parteitag of June 11-14. While no one considered the plan a "Socialist solution" to the reparations problem, no feasible alternative was proposed. Arthur Crispian, whose keynote speech was devoted entirely to recent foreign policy, said that acceptance was mandatory if Germany was to grasp the opportunity for cooperation opened up by the leftist victory in France. He suggested that the plan could be a sort of way-station, a preliminary to a genuine "Socialist solution." Beyond the matter of sectarian politics, Crispian also acknowledged the responsibility of Germany to help pay for France's reconstruction. Agreeing with Crispian but taking a somewhat different tack was

15 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 381, pp. 118-27 (Löbe); 183-90 (Breitscheid); 220-23 (voting); Vorwärts, June 4, 1924, a.m., p. 1; June 5, 1924, a.m., p. 1; June 7, 1924, a.m., p. 1.
Hilferding, who described the **Gutachten** as "the beginning of peace." Economic aspects aside, acceptance was the only way to end "ten years of war." A rather querulous response came from Robert Dissmann, a left-wing trade unionist, who questioned whether Germany could afford the proposed payments. Dissmann feared most of the burdens would be placed on the workers. At the very least, he contended, the matter ought to be rethought. Paul Levi also proved disputatious, stating cryptically that he approved the acceptance of the experts' recommendations, but on other grounds and for other goals. Unlike Dissmann, he apparently believed that the German upper and middle classes would bear the brunt of the reparations payments. Hilferding replied that it was out of place to accept the **Gutachten** simply to gloat over the prospect of the financial bleeding of the bourgeoisie. The workers will pay too, he said. Breitscheid joined Hilferding in criticizing such motives and asked for practical consideration of serious matters. Breitscheid was then verbally attacked and insulted by Levi, who was called to order and rebuked by Co-chairman Otto Wels. The delegates expressed their preference by the overwhelming support they gave to the official party position and by their apparently
spontaneous decision to have Hilferding's speech reprinted as a brochure.16

The Parteitag's second foreign policy theme was to applaud the success of the Cartel des Gauches in France. Crispian praised Blum and other French Socialists and forecast future victories. Hilferding described the resurgence of the French Socialists as a defeat for the Communists, as well as for the militarists, and looked forward to a great strengthening of the Labour and Socialist International. An additional prediction was that the recent French governmental change would prompt the League of Nations to be more receptive to the idea of German membership. Documenting the need for moderating influences in the League was Walter Sender of Saarbrücken, who sharply criticized past French injustices in the Saar, an area that remained, officially, under League control. He speculated that German entry would ease matters for the Saarlanders. Otherwise, Wilhelm Sollmann provided what must have been a disappointing retrospect of the

16 SPD, Protokoll . . . 1924 (Berlin, 1924), 43-50 (Crispian); 165-80, 195-99 (Hilferding); 187-88 (Dissmann); 180-82 (Levi); 193-94 (Breitscheid); Vorwärts, June 12, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 300-02. Hilferding's concern regarding Levi's attitude toward the Gutachten was also expressed privately to Karl Kautsky. Hilferding to Kautsky, July 19, 1924, Kautsky Papers.
Ruhr conflict, delivering a fumbling speech that failed to shed any light on Franco-German relations. 17

Following the Parteitag, SPD attention centered on the forthcoming London Conference, where the implementation of the Dawes Plan was to be discussed. The prognosis was good. Breitscheid had travelled to Paris for a friendly interview with Harriot. On his "unofficial" visit, the French-speaking Social Democrat reportedly sounded out the French premier on all outstanding issues, and, without relating specific details, professed satisfaction with Herriot's response. Journeying to London was Bernstein, who spoke English and who, at Stresemann's request, had a similar interview with MacDonald. In between, Herriot visited MacDonald at Chequers where the two statesmen, "in full harmony," smoothed the way for the London Conference. Vorwärts noted that Franco-British agreement, which in the past had meant only united opposition against Germany, now constituted a good omen. Other welcome signs were the peaceful return of 10,000 expellees (Sollmann's figure) to the Ruhr-Rhine area and speeches by Herriot suggesting evacuation of the Ruhr and membership in the League of Nations as rewards for German good behavior. Reciprocating, the SPD (and the Marx government) agreed to a general military inspection (prompted by long-standing

17 SPD, Protokoll, 43-50 (Crispien), 111-14 (Sender), 114-16 (Sollmann), 165-80 (Hilferding).
French suspicions of sub-rosa German rearmament) and to an additional extension of the MICUM agreements. The Socialists also sponsored Franco-German friendship meetings, waxed enthusiastic about Germany's probable entry into the League, and repeatedly toasted Herriot as one of Europe's "most honorable and open politicians."^18

These recent developments point up the depth of SPD concern for good relations with France. To the Social Democrats, France was not just one country among many but was historically bound to Germany through centuries of conflict and travail. States such as Russia and England figured prominently in Socialist policy, but Franco-German relations were recognized as crucially important. "There can be no peace and no reconstruction," Sollmann wrote at this time,^19 "without lasting German-French understanding." Such understanding, however, had to be mutual. In the same passage, Sollmann condemned France's adventuristic post-war policy. He, like most of his colleagues, attributed the failure of reconciliation

---

^18*Vorwärts*, June 16, 1924, p.m., p. 1; June 18, 1924, a.m., p. 1; June 19, 1924, a.m., p. 2; June 21, 1924, p.m., p. 1; June 23, 1924, p.m., p. 1; June 25, 1924, a.m., p. 1; June 30, 1924, p.m., p. 1; July 1, 1924, p.m., p. 1; July 2, 1924, a.m., p. 1; July 8, 1924, a.m., pp. 1-2; July 9, 1924, a.m., p. 9; July 14, 1924, p.m., p. 1; July 16, 1924, a.m., pp. 1-2; Bernstein to Kautsky, July 26, 1924, Kautsky Papers; Germany, *Verhandlungen*, Vol. 381, p. 440.

largely to France. Yet, as has been made clear, the German Social Democrats were often shortsighted, especially in their lack of awareness of French security needs. The 1924 French elections, however, suggested to the German Socialists that their analysis was correct, i.e., that stubborn leaders like Clemenceau and Poincaré were responsible for continued Franco-German estrangement, and that the advent of the Cartel des Gauches would result in France's going half-way to meet Germany.

So hopeful were the Social Democrats that they overlooked much of the hard bargaining that was Stresemann's lot at London. The SPD was so impressed by the defeat of Poincaré that it viewed Herriot as a potential wonder-worker, a man who had a free hand to grant Germany whatever she desired. For example, the SPD simply assumed that the Ruhr would be evacuated, whereas this was not taken up in the experts' reports nor even included in the London agenda. Still, the first (or Allied) segment of the conference moved smoothly ahead, with MacDonald playing on Herriot's good intentions, urging the French premier to "give Germany a chance." On August 1, 1924, having agreed amongst themselves, the Allies invited the Germans to attend. Four days later Marx, Stresemann, and Finance Minister Hans Luther arrived in London. Stresemann's problem was how to initiate meaningful discussions with Herriot. Here Breitscheid proved the "ice-breaker,"
reporting to Stresemann on a lengthy conference with his friend Herriot, wherein the latter proved receptive to the idea of evacuation so long as decent concern was given to France's security interests. Not only to protect his country but to defend himself before his electorate, Herriot had to be able to demonstrate that French security was not endangered by the prospective withdrawal. Armed with Breitscheid's information, Stresemann began discussions with Herriot that led to the French concession to evacuate the Ruhr within a year and to leave the Dortmund area as soon as the London Protocols were signed. While this was less than what Stresemann wanted, it was the maximum Herriot could give. The discussions were also important in that they launched the two statesmen on the path of collaboration that led to Locarno.20

Since the London Conference not only formalized the Dawes Gutachten but also promised evacuation of the Ruhr, the German Socialists expressed their liveliest approval. The agreements were called "a great step forward" and "the first peace treaty." Breitscheid gave most of the credit to Herriot, "a great idealist," but also observed that

Germany was fortunate in being represented by Marx and Stresemann, rather than by Tirpitz and Count Westarp, leaders of the Nationalist Party. Breitscheid regretted that the Ruhr could not be evacuated at once, but inferred that Herriot would do more for Germany when the inner-political situation in France permitted. The main thing, Social Democratic analysts stressed, was that the period of dictation and sanctions was past. Hereafter, Germany and France would negotiate on a basis of equality. 21

The positive view of the Socialists was offset by the totally negative view of the Nationalists. Whereas the SPD emphasized the betterment of Germany's situation, the DNVP (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*) had eyes only for the payments, controls, and occupation forces that remained. Since the financial controls called for in the Dawes Plan required a constitutional change and a two-thirds Reichstag majority, the Nationalist attitude was crucial. Day after day, the SPD press hammered away at the unreason of the DNVP. In the Reichstag, Hilferding and Sollmann assailed the party's stubbornness and stupidity. For the *Kreuzzeitung* to reject the London Protocols as "the grave of Germany's hopes" without proffering reasoned alternatives was characterized, not unjustly, as irresponsible and

demagogic. All of this, however, failed to have any discernible impact on the Nationalists. Further, the Social Democrats seemed content with their verbal barrages against the DNVP. No effort was made to harmonize opposing views by personal contacts. In the light of the acrimonious charges then being exchanged, this is not surprising. The Socialists regarded the Nationalists as mortal enemies, with whom fruitful collaboration was impossible. Never at any time in the history of the Weimar Republic did it seem likely that representatives of the two parties could sit in the same cabinet. They continually talked past each other. What ended the Nationalists' opposition to the Dawes Plan was not Socialist rhetoric but rather (1) Stresemann's promise to demand their admission, in the autumn, to the government on terms favorable to them, and (2) the DNVP's fear that American loans might not be forthcoming to German industry if the Dawes Plan legislation met defeat in the Reichstag. The forty-eight Nationalist votes thus gained on August 29 proved enough to ratify the crucial measure and safeguard the nascent Franco-German cooperation. Vorwärts' reaction was to claim all credit for the SPD, sneer at the DNVP, and echo the Vorstand's call for the dissolution of the Reichstag
and new elections.\textsuperscript{22}

Because Chancellor Marx, after several months' negotiations, proved unable to build a more stable government, the new elections sought by the SPD were ordered on October 20. The Socialists hoped to deal a death blow to the Nationalists by thrusting forth the question of foreign policy. The DNVP was divided, it was accused of an inordinate lust for political office, and it was thought to be in a generally weak position. A Nationalist defeat was also deemed likely to have salutary consequences abroad, particularly in France, where it might lead to further concessions for Germany. "The German Nationals are the main enemy" and "the enemy stands on the right" became the SPD electoral theme.\textsuperscript{23}

Having thus based their campaign, the Socialists were grateful for all good news of a foreign policy nature coming their way. The French pullout from the eastern Ruhr and Herriot's recall and replacement of General de Metz,

\textsuperscript{22}Vorwärts, Aug. 18, 1924, p.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 21, 1924, a.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 21, 1924, p.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 30, 1924, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 3, 1924, a.m., p. 1; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 381, pp. 807-15 (Hilferding); 1007-14 (Sollmann); 1125-34 (voting); Turner, Stresemann, 172-74; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 423-24. For DNVP concern regarding the possible withholding of American loans see Felix Hirsch, "Stresemann, Ballin und die Vereinigten Staaten," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, III (Jan., 1955), 30-31.

\textsuperscript{23}Vorwärts, Oct. 21, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Oct. 23, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Oct. 26, 1924, p. 1; Nov. 8, 1924, p.m., pp. 1-2.
one of the chief supporters of separatism, were said to be electoral boosts. And warm memories remained of MacDonald's September 4 speech at the League of Nations headquarters in Geneva, where he declared that Germany must be taken into the world organization. Herriot, Joseph Paul-Boncour, and Briand also spoke favorably (but guardedly) of German membership. Briand, the leader of the French delegation to Geneva, described German entry as a positive step but strongly implied that the Germans must counter with an equally positive contribution to France's security system. On the minus side was the crushing defeat of Labour in England's October 30 ballot. The 419 to 151 margin rolled up by the Conservatives was characterized by Vorwärts as "grotesque." The new Baldwin government was described as more insular and less willing to cooperate, particularly in the matter of the Geneva Protocol, which was designed to help the League preserve the peace by defining aggression, providing for arbitration, and outlining measures to be taken against aggressors.  

In addition to these rather predictable reactions to external events, the SPD developed ideas of its own. Most interesting was Breitscheid's attack on Stresemann.  

24 Vorwärts, Sept. 5, 1924, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 5, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 11, 1924, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 3, 1924, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 23, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Oct. 31, 1924, a.m., p. 1; Nov. 1, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Nov. 16, 1924, p. 1; Walters, League of Nations, 269-70, 277.
and his distinction between "conservative" and "democratic" foreign policies. Apparently upset by Stresemann's overtures to the Nationalists, Breitscheid, in an election speech in Breslau, attacked the foreign minister as inconsistent and therefore as unfit to lead German foreign policy. Sizing up Stresemann's reactionary political background, his conversion to fulfillment, and now his willingness to play ball with the "saboteurs of Erfüllungspolitik," Breitscheid left the impression that Stresemann was, at best, an opportunist. Since a Socialist foreign policy was presently not possible, Breitscheid narrowed the choice to "conservative" or "democratic" foreign policies. The former, employing threats, force, and appeals to outdated nationalism, was congenial to Poincaré and Tirpitz. The latter, emphasizing conciliation, peaceful understanding, and the building of bridges, was epitomized by Herriot. Where, Breitscheid asked, did Stresemann stand? In a subsequent Vorwärts editorial, Breitscheid tempered his comments somewhat, saying he wanted to believe that Stresemann, in his heart, was committed to a "democratic" policy, but that his recent actions cast doubt on this. "He extols understanding with France and simultaneously opens the door of the cabinet to those who don't want to know of such an understanding." Breitscheid wondered if anyone truly committed to democracy,
to peaceful cooperation, and to fulfillment could play such dangerous games.  

The election enemy, however, was the DNVP, not Stresemann. With occasional swipes against the Communists, the SPD continued to concentrate its fire on the Nationalists. Vorwärts warned that evacuation of the Ruhr and also of the Cologne zone, which had been occupied in accordance with the Versailles Treaty and which was due to be freed on January 10, 1925, were contingent on a

---

Vorwärts, Nov. 20, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Nov. 25, 1924, p.m., pp. 1-2. Breitscheid's personal relationship with Stresemann cannot be reconstructed. He died in an air raid over Buchenwald in 1944 after having been seized by the Gestapo in France. His family writes me that no personal papers survived. The International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam has two small packets of papers that shed light on Breitscheid’s activities as an independent but provide nothing for the later years. A tall, thin, intense intellectual, who always stood in Stresemann’s shadow on foreign policy matters, Breitscheid may have resented the more practical and much more successful foreign minister. A master of sarcasm and rhetorical insults, Breitscheid made very few friends. According to Theodor Heuss, he suffered from feelings of inferiority. Toni Sender, a former USPD and SPD colleague, writes that he was "somewhat too sensitive." A political Wandervogel, he flitted from the National Liberals to various left-wing and impotent bourgeois groups, to the SPD, to the USPD, and back to the SPD, and was therefore distrusted, even by members of his own party. See Kurt Kersten, "Das Ende Breitscheids und Hilferdings," Deutsche Rundschau, LXXXIV (Sept., 1958), 844-45; Paul Mayer, "Rudolf Breitscheid," Neue Deutsche Biographie, II (Berlin, 1955), 579-80; Heuss, Erinnerungen, 36-38; Sender, Autobiography, 241; Keil, Erlebnisse, II, p. 338; Heinrich Brüning to Sollmann, March 17, 1941, Sollmann Papers/Box 1; Tony Breitscheid to Author, Jan. 7, 1964; Gerhard Breitscheid to Author, Sept. 8, 1967. For Breitscheid's foreign policy ideas as an independent see Der Sozialist (Sozialistische Auslandspolitik), which he edited from 1918-22.
Nationalist setback. On election eve, the newspaper told its readers that they were really voting for "Herriot or Poincaré." A further turn to the right in Germany would be understood in France as a rejection of Herriot's conciliatory policy, resulting in a consequent reaction in favor of Poincaré.26

Possibly because the electorate heeded the SPD foreign policy advice or possibly because the SPD, as a party of "order," benefitted from the more settled economic and social conditions,27 the Social Democrats emerged, on December 7, the winners. The party vote increased by 1,864,000 to 7,881,000 and the Reichstag delegation by 31 to 131. The Communists declined from 62 deputies to 45, the Racists-Nazis from 32 to 14, while the moderate bourgeois parties all did well. The only anomaly was the rise of the DNVP from 95 to 103. Since the Reichstag (because of the greater turnout) was expanded from 472 to 493 seats, Vorwärts explained that the Nationalists, in contrast to the Socialists, had made no proportional gain at all. Everything considered, the result was a "confirmation of the acceptance of the Dawes laws."28

26 Vorwärts, Dec. 3, 1924, a.m., pp. 1-2; Dec. 5, 1924, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 6, 1924, a.m., p. 1.

27 That the SPD was a party of "order," a party of the status quo that benefited from prosperity, is the thesis of Richard N. Hunt, German Social Democracy, 1918-1933 (New Haven, 1964).

28 Vorwärts, Dec. 10, 1924, a.m., pp. 1-2; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 435.
Because Stresemann felt he could count on the SPD, he concentrated on winning DNVP adherence to his foreign policy and succeeded, in mid-January 1925, in engineering a right-wing cabinet that included four German Nationalists. The new chancellor was Luther, the former finance minister. His government was described by the Socialists as a "monarchist regime," as "an outspoken government of the right," and as "a government of the most brutal class egoism," formed to "carry through the class goals of the big land owners and heavy industry." Yet these condemnations were related almost exclusively to domestic affairs, to what was foreseen as the "plunder of social policy."

The SPD seemed almost to regret that it could offer no serious criticisms of Luther's foreign policy declaration, wherein the chancellor promised to follow the course set by the Marx government, to fulfill the Dawes laws, and to resolve by negotiations all problems relating to the Ruhr evacuation. "Fine words," Vorwärts jeered, adding that according to the standards of the DNVP press they constituted treason. Breitscheid jabbed again at Stresemann,

29The SPD favored the restoration of the Great Coalition, but the attitude of the People's Party, so Müller told the Reichstag Fraktion, left the Socialists with nowhere to go but the Weimar Coalition. This would, of course, have excluded Stresemann. But since the Center demanded the inclusion of the People's Party in the government, efforts to construct the Weimar Coalition founded. Turner, Stresemann, 181-83; Stresemann, Vermachtnis, I, pp. 603-09; Vorwärts, Dec. 19, 1924, a.m., p. 1; Jan. 15, 1925, a.m., p. 1; Carl Severing, "Für die Grosse Koalition," SM, XXXI (Jan. 5, 1925), 1-3; Hilferding to Kautsky, Dec. 29, 1924, Kautsky Papers.
the one-time "herald, prophet, and propagandist" of fulfillment who now applied his energies to cooperation with his erstwhile enemies, but saved his sharpest words for France, which had refused to evacuate the Cologne zone on schedule, allegedly because of disarmament discrepancies revealed in the September 1924 military inspection of Germany. The French were twice wrong, Breitscheid said, (1) in staying beyond their allotted time, and (2) in offering us such a pretext. Still, he continued, the German foreign office (Stresemann) was also partly at fault for being preoccupied "with problems of internal politics," while neglecting its assigned responsibilities. Otherwise, both Breitscheid and Müller encouraged the government to take Germany into the League of Nations as soon as possible. Breitscheid also spoke of the need to prevent German industrialists, who were intent on protecting home markets, from undermining commercial negotiations then underway with France. But beyond this desultory sniping, the SPD found itself as part of Stresemann's carefully constructed foreign policy consensus. The party's position of sharpest opposition and no confidence was based entirely on differences in internal policy.30

30Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 384, pp. 98-108 (Breitscheid); 172-81 (Müller); Vorwärts, Jan. 12, 1925, p.m., pp. 1-2; Jan. 15, 1925, a.m., p. 1; Jan. 16, 1925, p.m., pp. 1-2; Jan. 18, 1925, p. 1; Jan. 20, 1925, a.m.,
In at least one respect—the failure of the French to evacuate the Cologne zone—the Social Democrats felt that Stresemann could have done much better. As Breitscheid said in the Reichstag, the French had created the conflict, but it was the foreign minister's job to resolve it. Vorwärts observed that Stresemann took seven weeks off for the election campaign and then remained inactive because his Nationalist friends would have frowned on any initiatives. Moreover, the Socialists disputed Stresemann's opinion that the German military violations were "pitiful and petty." Still, the discrepancies were not thought to be sufficiently severe to justify a continued French occupation of the northern zone. Disarmament "to the letter" was probably impossible. What was needed was some sort of "military Dawes Plan" to remove armament and occupation questions from the realm of politics. This would benefit both Germany and France, not least the latter, since the French appeared unaware of the tremendous resentment inspired by their recent action. Vorwärts warned, however, against personal criticism of Herriot. While providing no explanation of his role in the decision not to evacuate, the paper gave assurances that Herriot was not another Poincaré. Letting off the French premier even more easily

p. 1; Jan. 20, 1925, p.m., p. 1; Jan. 21, 1925, a.m., p. 1; Ludwig Quessel, "Das Kabinett Luthers und die Aussenpolitik," SM, XXXI (Feb. 3, 1925), 69-72.
was the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, which fatuously blamed continued occupation on England and America. The Anglo-Saxons, having denied France an alliance, now forced her to find security elsewhere. By and large, however, the journal did not consider military questions to be of the essence. Fundamental to Franco-German good relations was wide-scale economic cooperation—industrial, technical, and commercial. A long step in the right direction would be the free entry of Alsatian textiles into Germany, to which the German negotiators stood opposed.\(^{31}\)

In view of the rather tense situation created by military disclosures, by the French reluctance to evacuate, and by the entry of the German Nationalists into the government, the Socialists were astonished at Luther's conciliatory tone in a January 31 speech to foreign press representatives. The chancellor's remarks regarding international understanding and especially disarmament and evacuation were so moderate and reasonable that Breitscheid now looked for a warming of relations between France and Germany, whereas only a short time before he had been questioning the government's sincerity. To be sure, the

Nationalists were still in the cabinet, but the absence of right-wing press criticism of Luther's speech was a telling sign. Breitscheid detected something in the wind.32

Stresemann had, in fact, already commenced secret negotiations with England and France on a Rhineland security pact, rumors of which were circulating by late February. Early in March the outline of an offer to France was sketched by the German ambassador to Paris, Baron Leopold von Hoesch. In a discussion with Herriot that was reported in the press, Hoesch spoke of a mutual guarantee of present boundaries in Western Europe, while ruling out any revision of Germany's eastern borders except through peaceful means. Implied, of course, was a freely-given renunciation of Alsace-Lorraine. Conversely, France would have to forswear all separatist and annexationist activities. Again the Socialists were dumbfounded.

"This proposal," Vorwärts observed, "stands in sharpest contradiction to the entire previous policy and, above all, to the entire phraseology of the German National People's Party." While recognizing that negotiations had not yet progressed very far, the SPD at once took a firm and positive stand. Emphasizing its continued

32Vorwärts, Jan. 31, 1925, a.m., p. 11; Jan. 31, 1925, p.m., p. 1; Feb. 1, 1925, pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid).
opposition to the Luther government, it declared, nevertheless, that it would do nothing to endanger the security proposals. "The question of German-French understanding and European security is of such surpassing importance that it must be considered apart from all domestic matters." Thus Stresemann was told what he already knew: that he could count on the SPD.\(^3\)

Interrupting the course of negotiations was the German presidential election, necessitated by the death of Ebert on February 28. Following an inconclusive first ballot on March 29, a runoff found the right-wing parties nominating the aged military hero, Field Marshal von Hindenburg, who opposed ex-Chancellor Wilhelm Marx, the joint candidate of the SPD, the Center, and the Democrats. Admitting the appeal of Hindenburg's name and frightened by the possibility of an adverse foreign reaction should he win the election, the Socialists campaigned shrilly against this "symbol of monarchy and war." Predicting that a victory for Hindenburg could well result in Ludendorff's being named chancellor, Vorwärts said that only the field marshal's defeat could avert "a foreign-political catastrophe." When, on April 10, Herriot was overthrown (on financial questions) in the French Chamber, Vorwärts speculated that Hindenburg's election

\(^3\)Vorwärts, Feb. 26, 1925, p.m., p. 1; March 4, 1925, p.m., p. 3; March 6, 1925, p.m., pp. 1-2.
would make more likely the return of a rightist government in Paris. Nothing, the Socialists repeated daily, could more seriously impede Germany's interests—both internal and external—than a winning vote for the one-time army commander.  

As feared, Hindenburg was elected, but without the disastrous foreign reaction anticipated by the Social Democrats. "The name did it," was the SPD explanation. The party was not displeased to discover that Paris newspapers also described the field marshal's victory as a "sentimental election." The lack of widespread consternation abroad indicated to the Socialists that perhaps Hindenburg's victory and elevation to the presidency would not, after all, endanger their foreign policy aspirations.

While Luther and Stresemann now gave assurances of no departures in foreign policy, the SPD professed new concern over the future of the mutual security negotiations. Although Hindenburg himself had been silent, his supporters,

---

34 *Vorwärts*, April 9, 1925, a.m., p. 1; April 9, 1925, p.m., p. 1; April 11, 1925, a.m., p. 1; April 11, 1925, p.m., pp. 1-2; April 17, 1925, a.m., pp. 1-2; April 18, 1925, p.m., p. 1; April 25, 1925, a.m., p. 1.
The SPD concern was shared by Stresemann. For this and for the campaign in general see Andreas Dorphalen, *Hindenburg and the Weimar Republic* (Princeton, 1964), 64-81.

35 *Vorwärts*, April 27, 1925, p.m., p. 1; April 28, 1925, a.m., p. 7.
so Breitscheid charged in the Reichstag, had violently attacked the proposed Rhineland pact, especially regarding the alleged "surrender" of Alsace-Lorraine and Eupen-Malmedy. Since Hindenburg, Breitscheid said, "is a member of the German National Party," a monarchist, and incapable of "going to Damascus," a full clarification was now required of the government. To facilitate this, Breitscheid explicitly delineated the SPD position: support for the western guarantee treaty, approval of the Geneva Protocol, and submission of all disputes relating to the eastern borders to arbitration. In addition, he brought up more long-standing demands, such as German membership in the League of Nations. His main theme, however, remained the alleged lack of clarity in German foreign policy. Breitscheid admitted that the French had been dilatory in replying to Stresemann's overtures but evidently did not think this surprising since the election of Hindenburg had changed "the political face of Germany." 36

On June 16 the long-awaited French reply was dispatched. This sought to guarantee the German-Polish, German-Czechoslovak borders similar to what had been proposed for the west. The SPD took note of France's

36 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 385, pp. 1868-82 (Stresemann); 1886-94 (Breitscheid); also 1956-62 (Landsberg); Vorwärts, April 30, 1925, a.m., p. 9; May 19, 1925, a.m., pp. 1-2; May 19, 1925, p.m., pp. 1-2; SPD, Bericht ... Januar bis August 1925 (n.p., n.d.). Hindenburg, of course, was not a member of the DNVP.
legitimate security interests in the east while remaining cool to the specific proposal. The party feared that French insistence on an eastern guarantee would destroy the prospect of a western pact. This, the Socialists believed, would be a misordering of priorities. Of crucial importance to European peace and security were Franco-German relations, which could be safeguarded best by the Rhineland treaty. Ideally, Germany should first enter the League of Nations, which would develop such security arrangements (including the Geneva Protocol) as would satisfy all men of good will. Still, the party did not rule out an eastern security pact. Negotiations, wisely, were left in the hands of Stresemann. The only SPD objection came from the Sozialistische Monatshefte, which endorsed the French view of insuring the Vistula along with the Rhine. Why not guarantee the eastern borders, asked Quessel. His answer indicted the British, who were allegedly unwilling to make reasonable and necessary commitments and whose balance-of-power doctrine worked against a strong French security system. Supposedly bracing Stresemann and Luther in their resistance to the eastern guarantee were the intrigues of the British foreign office. By early July Quessel declared that the entire project was dead.37

37Vorwärts, June 19, 1925, a.m., pp. 1-2; June 26, 1925, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); July 11, 1925, p.m., pp. 1-2; Wilhelm Sollmann, "Jahntausendjubel—Jahrtausendkampf," Die Glocke, XI (July 11, 1925),
While Quessel was soon proved too pessimistic, the developing Franco-German rapprochement had indeed been held up by events of late spring and early summer. Consuming time and maintaining a degree of tension were the Hindenburg election, a change of government in France, the delivery of a sharp disarmament note to Germany, a breakdown in commercial negotiations, and, of course, the French endeavor to underwrite the status quo in the east. Negotiations moved ahead again with Stresemann's July 20 note to Paris, which objected to possible commitments to uphold the eastern territorial settlement. Having been apprised (by the German ambassadors in London and Paris) of a French retreat regarding a guarantee for Poland, the foreign minister sought now to escape from possible obligations arising from Article 16 of the League Covenant which, in the event of a Russo-Polish war, would permit France to dispatch troops across Germany to aid the Poles. A mixture of toughness and suavity, the note won Reichstag approval from all parties from the SPD to the DNVP (although the SPD still voted no confidence). Breitscheid was by now apparently convinced of Stresemann's sincerity.

for he appraised his work as "the continuation of the policy of understanding and fulfillment." He lauded Stresemann's efforts in seeking League membership and agreed with the foreign minister's parrying of an eastern guarantee. Breitscheid's only criticism of the note was a minor one: it was overly "clad in the form of general observations." Statements of principle were fine but they should have received more specific application. Otherwise, Breitscheid launched his customary polemics at the Nationalists, accusing them of being "schizophrenic" and "Janusheaded." Observing that their attitude toward the Rhine pact had shown some improvement, Breitscheid was still unconvinced that they stood solidly behind Stresemann's negotiations.38

In Germany it was now Ferienzeit, and the Reichstag adjourned until November 20. Many of the Socialist leaders travelled to Marseilles for the Second Congress of the Labour and Socialist International. Headed the agenda was the topic "International Socialist Peace Policy." The

38Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 387, pp. 3391-99 (Breitscheid), also 3459 (Landsberg); Vorwärts, July 22, 1925, a.m., p. 9; Turner, Stresemann, 208-10; Josef KorbéI, Poland Between East and West: Soviet and German Diplomacy Toward Poland, 1919-1933 (Princeton, 1963), 168. German efforts to enter the League under the most favorable conditions are systematically discussed in Jürgen Spenz, Die diplomatische Vorgeschichte des Beitritts Deutschlands zum Völkerbund, 1924-1926; Ein Beitrag zur Ausenpolitik der Weimarer Republik (Göttingen, 1966).
delegates agreed unanimously, however, that a thorough-going Socialist solution was not yet in sight. The Germans, particularly, prided themselves on their realism, on their willingness to use such bourgeois instruments as the League of Nations in working toward a genuine Socialist solution. As at Hamburg in 1923, great cordiality between Germans and Frenchmen was on display. Hilferding, Breitscheid, and Blum all spoke of the recent Franco-German security exchanges, without, however, bringing up the difficult matter of an eastern guarantee (at least partly out of deference to the continuing negotiations). But in the context of a Socialist dialogue (which was not really as realistic as it purported to be), bi-lateral and even multi-lateral treaties would seem to border on the superfluous, for the Marseilles speeches were replete with encomia for the Geneva Protocol and for general disarmament. These were seen as the best security guarantees. Hilferding also pointed out a pressing practical need for universal and progressive disarming: to the extent that other countries did not disarm, many Germans would want to rearm. He implied, then, that general disarmament was in the long run interest of France. Blum, who privately agreed wholeheartedly with Hilferding's analysis, had other ground to cover and commented only that the problem of disarmament was "difficult." But there was full endorsement of the most
immediate goals: German inclusion in the League, enactment of the Geneva Protocol, and the evolution of the world organization into a tool of Socialist democracy. In this way, it was believed, Franco-German harmony would be permanently cemented. 39

While the Socialists were talking in Marseilles, significant progress was being made toward their desired goal. As agreed upon at the 1924 London Conference, the French had withdrawn from the Ruhr by the end of August. Word also came of the Allied decision to implement the delayed evacuation of the Cologne zone. Finally, the Germans were invited to a jurists' conference in London to discuss legal aspects of the security negotiations. Presumably this would be a prelude to a full-fledged security conference. To the SPD these developments marked not only "the triumph of reason" but also the "moral victory of the Republic." The evacuations especially, Vorwärts asserted, were achieved not by nationalists and industrialists, but by the supporters of the Dawes Plan, in whose front ranks had been the Social Democrats. The

39LSI, Zweiter Kongress der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-International in Marseille 22. bis 27. August 1925 (Berlin, n.d.), 259-67 (Hilferding), 268-75 (Blum), 320-23 (Breitscheid), 358-62 (resolution); Ziebura, Blum, I, pp. 314-15; Vorwärts, Aug. 23, 1925, p. 1; Aug. 24, 1925, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 2, 1925, a.m., pp. 1-2.
party had only one objection: Germany was not being accorded immediate entry into the League.  

Because of these recent advances, the Heidelberg Parteitag of September 13-18 reflected, even more than the Marseilles Congress, the growing optimism over the course of German foreign policy. "The greatest triumph," however, had been achieved by the SPD itself, because the governing parties had accepted Erfüllungspolitik as the only possible policy. Indeed, Stresemann, in working for Franco-German understanding, had merely taken up an idea first advanced by the SPD in pre-World War I days. As Crispien said, "our policy was right." But not all the delegates at Heidelberg agreed that the party's present policy was adequate—Toni Sender, a Reichstag deputy from Frankfurt, and Wilhelm Hoegner, of Munich, warned of "illusions" and "confusion" regarding the League of Nations. Hoegner thought the Germans might be expecting too much of the League, while Sender feared that the League, in the thinking of many Socialists, was taking the place of the International. Frau Sender was critical of the party chiefs for not sufficiently involving the masses in questions of foreign policy. She also questioned the wisdom of cooperating with Stresemann and

\[40^\text{Vorwärts, July 18, 1925, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 26, 1925, a.m., p. 7; Aug. 27, 1925, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 5, 1925, a.m., p. 1.}\]
his rightist friends, who, she alleged, did not share the SPD goals of conciliation and understanding and in reality wanted to reestablish Germany's power position and to inaugurate a new imperialistic policy. Sender was answered by Breitscheid and Müller, both of whom strongly implied that politics was the art of the possible, rather than a flight to ideals. Breitscheid said that Stresemann's motivation was not all that clear and further, that in this instance, was not very consequential. Understanding between Germany and the West, particularly France, was of such overriding importance that questions of motivation could not be allowed to stand in the way. Müller added that he did not need to be told that the International ought to pursue an active policy, but that at present the League offered greater possibilities of fulfilling Germany's legitimate demands. With Germany a member, he declared, "the spirit of Marseilles will increasingly animate the Geneva discussions." That the vast majority of the delegates sympathized with this view was indicated by the great applause accorded Breitscheid and by the passage of Müller's motion on foreign policy to the exclusion of all others.  

41 SPD, Protokoll ... 1925 in Heidelberg (Berlin, 1925), 80-86 (Wels: opening speech), 98-107 (Johannes Stelling: report of Vorstand), 231-42 (Crispien: report on the International), 243-46 (Sender), 248-51 (Breitscheid), 252-54 (Hoegner), 255-57 (Müller), 316 (resolution); Vorwärts, Sept. 13, 1925, p. 13. For other aspects of the congress see Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 309-11; Mommsen (ed.), Parteiprogramme, 461-69.
During the course of the Heidelberg Congress, the Allies had invited Germany to take part in a foreign ministers' conference to agree on a security pact. This was the Locarno Conference of October 4-16, 1925. The Socialists dared not hope for too much lest they be disappointed. "Either it will bring a great deal—or it will bring nothing!" But the pervading feeling of good will and conciliation soon removed all doubts: "The international atmosphere now favors Germany more than at any time in the last ten years." Everything is "trustful and friendly." Vorwärts was especially pleased that French Foreign Minister Briand seemed so "optimistic and satisfied." At the height of the conference, Vorwärts announced its full support of the German government's position and in effect advised Stresemann to stand fast, especially pertaining to guarantees for the eastern boundaries. The major concession, the newspaper said, was Germany's honest and final renunciation of Alsace-Lorraine. "Germany will not, as France did, think of Alsace-Lorraine for forty long years." But because of the irredentist feeling due to the loss of the Polish Corridor and the partition of Upper Silesia, a similar guarantee to Poland would be something less than honest. It would also be rejected by German public opinion. France would simply have to do without it.42

42Vorwärts, Oct. 4, 1925, p. 1; Oct. 9, 1925, p.m., p. 1 (Schiff); Oct. 10, 1925, p.m., pp. 1-2; Oct. 11, 1925, p. 1.
On October 16 the conference concluded, with France indeed "doing without." The heart of the Locarno agree-
ments was the Rhineland Pact by which England and Italy
guaranteed the German-Belgian, German-French borders.
Supplementing this were numerous treaties of arbitration
and also separate French guarantees to Poland and
Czechoslovakia. In addition, France, Britain, and the
other Locarno powers agreed to support Germany's applica-
tion for League of Nations membership, with the contro-
versial Article 16 being so interpreted that Germany need
not feel bound by it. Locarno was unquestionably a German
victory. Stresemann had given up nothing. Instead, he
had neutralized the French in the west while retaining
freedom of maneuver in the east. From Briand's point of
view, Locarno represented "the maximum realizable." It
was the best substitute for the Treaty of Guarantee that
had been rejected in 1919. Of course the Poles and the
Czechs were disappointed and they became more, rather than
less, suspicious of German intentions. But Briand could
agree with Vorwärts that East-central Europe was essentially
peripheral and that the Locarno treaties, by guaranteeing
the Franco-German frontier, had brought "the victory of
peace."43

43Gordon A. Craig, From Bismarck to Adenauer: Aspects of German Statecraft, rev. ed. (New York, 1965),
56-57; Walters, League of Nations, 286-87, 291-93; Korbel,
To the Socialists, Locarno crowned the aspirations of six years. It was "one of the greatest world-historical events, . . . an historical turning-point." It was a victory, in part, of the Socialist movement, a victory of principle." It was also said to be a victory for Erzberger and Rathenau, former champions of fulfillment who had fallen to assassins' bullets. Does it mean, Vorwärts asked, "eternal peace for Germany with all her neighbors?" The answer: "in all probability!" Certainly it marked "the bankruptcy of nationalist demagogy, thus, in any event, [it is] a great step forward." To be sure, Locarno had not solved all problems, e.g., the inequality in armaments, the occupied areas in the Rhineland, and the continued detachment of the Saar. The French guarantee to Poland and Czechoslovakia was also resented in that reciprocity was not extended to Germany in the event of attacks from the east. But these objections were virtually lost in the accompanying torrent of praise: no more war between France and Germany, no more Ruhr adventures, all disputes to be settled by arbitration, Germany to enter the League, and the Cologne zone in all likelihood to be evacuated soon. "Locarno," Breitscheid summed up, "marks the end of an epoch" and also "a beginning." Even the

Poland Between, 179-80; Wolfers, Britain and France, 178-79; Vorwärts, Oct. 17, 1925, a.m., p. 1. See also Zimmermann, Aussenpolitik, 282-96; Wandycz, Eastern Allies, 360-68.
usually disgruntled Sozialistische Monatshefte seemed satisfied. In place of the mistaken Anglo-Saxon orientation of Ebert and Scheidemann had been raised a spirit of "continental Socialism," largely the achievement of Müller, Hilferding, and Breitscheid. France could now proceed, wrote Ludwig Quessel, with her program of rallying the continental peoples against the Anglo-Saxons.44

While the SPD overwhelmingly approved the Locarno settlement, the Nationalists headed the other way. On October 23, DNVP leaders expressed their opposition to the treaties by voting to withdraw their party from the government, which they did on October 26. The Social Democrats, however, regarded this as a tactical move, designed to facilitate rejection of the treaties, which would be followed by a reentrance into the cabinet, where the DNVP would be able to resume its baleful influence over such things as grain tariffs and welfare legislation. Thus on October 28 the SPD Reichstag Fraktion announced that it would vote for Locarno only if the Nationalists did likewise. In attempting to pin down the DNVP, the SPD carefully and repeatedly explained that it favored

Locarno, but that it could not permit its class enemies to profit from SPD good will. Moreover, the Social Democrats discounted all press speculation as to Socialist entrance into a reorganized Luther government. What we want, party spokesmen declared, is the dissolution of the Reichstag and new elections. Elections, Breitscheid asserted, would produce an overwhelming majority for peace and understanding, making even more secure the relations between and among France, England, Belgium, and Germany. Breitscheid thus tried to dispel any impression on the part of the SPD's friends abroad that the Socialists themselves might be sabotaging Locarno. In trying to force the Nationalists either to approve the treaties or to forego cabinet seats, the Social Democrats implied that, in the long run, they would be putting Locarno on firmer and safer ground.  

Yet the passage of three weeks' time found the SPD reversing itself. On November 20 another Fraktion vote decided unreservedly in favor of Locarno. Among the deciding factors was the strong urging of the Executive Committee of the Labour and Socialist International, making it apparent to the Germans that a negative ballot

---

45 Turner, Stresemann, 213-15; Vorwärts, Oct. 27, 1925, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 27, 1925, p.m., pp. 1-2; Oct. 29, 1925, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 29, 1925, p.m., pp. 1-2; Oct. 31, 1925, a.m., pp. 1-2; Ludwig Quesnel, "Die Auferstehung des Rheinpakt's und seine Bedrohung," SM, XXXI (Nov. 9, 1925), 667-75.
would not be understood by their foreign friends. Also important was the November 14 statement of the Allied Council of Ambassadors, declaring satisfaction with German disarmament and officially authorizing the evacuation of the Cologne zone, to begin December 1. The SPD hoped that this would favorably influence the Nationalists; however, the Socialists seem to have felt the pressure more keenly themselves. Further easing the SPD decision was the government's declaration that it would resign after the final signing of the agreements in London. Finally, the SPD was unsure of the reaction of its own supporters. Having championed a security agreement and League membership so ardently and persistently, an adverse vote might well be misunderstood at home as well as abroad. It thus proved impossible, Vorwärts acknowledged, for the SPD to vote disapproval.

The subsequent Reichstag debate therefore proved anticlimactic. The familiar ground of pros and cons (mostly pros) was reploughed, interspersed with fervid polemicizing against the German Nationalists and the Communists. Seemingly forgetful of their earlier hesitancy,

---

the Socialists now spoke of Locarno as if no alternative had ever existed. Otto Wels described the present moment as the "crossroads" between peace and war. Landsberg told the DNVP that the treaties sacrificed nothing except future bloodshed. Breitscheid viewed Locarno as the first and necessary step to the United States of Europe. Thus on November 27 the Social Democratic Party voted unanimously for the treaties. The next day they were accepted by Hindenburg, and on December 1, in London, they were officially signed by the government representatives. Simultaneously the evacuation of the Cologne zone began. Excusably, the SPD proudly applauded itself for "the role of leadership which it has exercised in matters of foreign policy for the past seven years."47

But, as Breitscheid had said, Locarno was "a beginning." It was not an end or goal in itself. "Now commences for Germany, especially for Germany," wrote Vorwärts, "a new age that can be full of responsibility, but also of successes." Foremost among these expected successes was Germany's taking her rightful place in the League. This would facilitate universal disarmament and the protection of German minorities in other countries. Also anticipated was a speed-up of French military withdrawals from German territory. Breitscheid pointed out

47 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 388, pp. 4485-93 (Wels), 4567-74 (Landsberg), 4619-28 (Breitscheid), 4659-68 (voting); Vorwärts, Dec. 1, 1925, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 2, 1925, a.m., p. 1.
that with the security guarantees now provided France she
no longer had any valid reason to occupy German soil,
certainly not until the 1935 expiration date set by the
Versailles Treaty. Allusions were even made to Anschluss
with Austria. Finally, there was the prospect of Germany
becoming the "leading spiritual force among the democratic
nations." "That," said Vorwärts, "is the national goal of
German Social Democracy in the coming years." 48

The necessity of maintaining momentum in foreign
policy was reflected in the party's political maneuvering
that followed the government's resignation, as promised,
after the signing of the Locarno treaties. SPD hopes of
restoring the Great Coalition were thwarted as agreement
with the People's Party on domestic issues proved
impossible. Consequently a second Luther cabinet took
office in mid-January, without the Nationalists but with
the Socialists once again "tolerating." 49 In effect, the

48 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 388, pp. 4621-27;
Vorwärts, Dec. 2, 1925, a.m., p. 1; Cohen, "Locarno,"
SM, XXXI (Dec. 10, 1925), 731-36; Paul Löbe, "Paneuropa
und die Einigung Deutschlands," Junge Menschen, VII
(May, 1926), 105.

49 The SPD Reichstag delegation voted 85 to 33
against the final offer of the People's Party. Hilferding
wrote Karl Kautsky that he, Müller, Breitscheid, "and
many others" were "absolutely opposed" to working with
the Volkspartei, even for a short time. Hilferding to
Kautsky, Jan. 8, 1926, Kautsky Papers. Also SPD,
Jahrbuch 1926, 81-85; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik,
312-13; Vorwärts, Dec. 7, 1925, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 17, 1925,
p.m., p. 1; Jan. 13, 1926, a.m., p. 1; Jan. 13, 1926,
p.m., p. 1; Carl Severing, "Und wieder für die Grosse
Social Democrats waived any influence they might have exercised on domestic policies out of deference to foreign policy considerations. Too many irons were in the fire, Müller told the Reichstag, to hold things up any longer. Germany is ready to enter the League, and good men have to be chosen to represent her. A preparatory disarmament conference has been called, and Germany is among the invited. In the occupied areas there has been some troop reduction and hopefully there will be more. Vorwärts also noted that a no confidence vote, following hard on the heels of the DNVP departure and Luther's plea for help in continuing the Locarno policy, would have an unfavorable reaction abroad.50

An immediate dividend was the January 31 completion of the Cologne zone evacuation. "Cologne is free!" exclaimed Carl Severing, the party's most consistent champion of the Great Coalition. Sollmann, the leading SPD Rhenish deputy, applauded the attitude and work of Stresemann in achieving and sustaining the "spirit of Locarno." Two weeks later, another "success" was recorded for Franco-German cooperation: the signing, after eighteen months' negotiations, of a commercial

---

50 The Fraktion voted 67 to 38 to abstain during the vote of confidence. Vorwärts states the 38 were split between yes and no while Stresemann says they favored a pro-vote. Vorwärts, Jan. 29, 1926, a.m., p. 1; Stresemann, Vermächtnis, II (Berlin, 1932), 386-87; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 388, pp. 5153-61.
agreement. Applying reciprocal tariff benefits to only a few items and extending for only a three months' duration, the agreement was decidedly of a provisional nature. It hardly mirrored the comprehensive guidelines for trade and tariffs drawn up by German, French, and Belgian Socialists in Brussels on February 26-67. Yet Vorwärts conceded that the Franco-German agreement, limited as it was, showed evidence of good will; it demonstrated the possibility of a more extensive accord.51

Something of a blow, however, was a delay in Germany's admission to the League of Nations. Expecting their February 8 application to be approved in time to take their seats on the Council for the plenary session beginning March 17, the Germans were quite disappointed when their entry was held up by Polish, Spanish, and Brazilian demands for permanent Council seats.52 The

51Manuscript of Severing speech in Cologne, Severing Papers; Vorwärts, Feb. 13, 1926, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 19, 1926, a.m., p. 11; March 1, 1926, p.m., p. 3; March 2, 1926, p.m., pp. 1-2; LSI, Reports 1928, 52-54; SPD, Jahrbuch 1926, 70.

52The documentary record of German diplomacy regarding the League for the period December 1, 1925—July 31, 1926 is given in Germany, Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik, Serie B: 1925-1933, Vol. I, pt. 1: Dezember 1925 bis Juli 1926 (Göttingen, 1966). The volume also includes the most important German diplomatic documents of this period relating to France, Great Britain, and Belgium, and, inter alia, to reparations, to disarmament, and to the evacuation of occupied areas. References to Socialist policy and to Socialist politicians are very infrequent. For the League, see also Spenz, Diplomatische Vorgeschichte, 125-51; Walters, League of Nations, 316-23.
Socialists, however, proved patient. Not only did the Executive of the International issue demands for German admission, but (and considerably more important) the French and British Foreign Ministers Briand and Sir Austen Chamberlain worked energetically to resolve the conflict. "Germany must enter the League" became almost a daily Socialist watchword. Since September was now the earliest possible date for German membership, Vorwärts lamented that "a full half year of tensions and dangers lies before us." All the work of Locarno seemed to hang in the balance. At no time, however, did the SPD blame the French. Breitscheid assured the Reichstag that Briand "wants understanding and peace with Germany." And Vorwärts even called the Frenchman a "hero" for his brilliant Geneva oration on the necessity of seating the Germans in the League and with a Council seat. 53

That SPD attention was still oriented toward the west was confirmed by the discussion of the Treaty of Berlin, signed by Stresemann on April 24 with Russia. Rudolf Breitscheid emphasized that the neutrality pact was not a consequence of Germany's inability to enter the League and that it in no way meant a break in the Luther-Stresemann foreign policy. In fact, Vorwärts editorialized,

53 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 389, pp. 6502-10; Vorwärts, March 3, 1926, a.m., p. 1; March 17, 1926, p.m., pp. 1-2 (separate stories); April 18, 1926, p. 1; LSI, Reports 1926, 64.
it complemented Locarno and had the additional advantage of helping draw the sting from Communist criticism that Locarno constituted a capitalist conspiracy against the Soviet Union. What the Socialists seemed to be saying was that the Berlin Treaty was not a friendship pact; it did not signify the establishment of an entente. More critical was the Sozialistische Monatshefte, whose Ludwig Quessel described the treaty as a foolish effort "to balance" at a time when Germany needed to move closer to France. Not only do the Bolsheviks offer us nothing, Quessel argued, but the treaty compromises our relationship with Paris and therefore endangers entry into the League and all of the achievements of Locarno. An "eastern orientation," he said, "is a phantom." To act on it in this way could bring on a "new tragedy." 54

The reaction to the Berlin Treaty throws light on the Socialists' commitment to western beliefs and practices. The fact that they should take alarm over such a relatively innocuous treaty suggests a deep-seated distrust of the east, not so much of Russian military power, which was hardly formidable, but of the eastern traditions of autocracy and despotism. Similar fears or reservations were evident long before World War I, again

54 Vorwärts, April 25, 1926, pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); April 27, 1926, a.m., p. 1; Ludwig Quessel, "Eine neue Tragödie Deutschlands?" SM, XXXII (May 17, 1926), 291-99; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 390, pp. 4436-37.
at the outbreak of the war, and at the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo. Russia was also linked with support of the German Communists, who competed with the SPD for the allegiance of the German workers. Conversely, the west was the homeland of liberalism and democracy. England was historically associated with parliamentary government while France, from the time of the French Revolution, had stood for the "rights of man." Significantly, the only noteworthy conflict over foreign policy in the Social Democratic Party was over a French orientation versus an English orientation. No one argued that Germany ought to align herself with Soviet Russia. Such an alignment was apparently more congenial to reactionaries and nationalists, not because they were sympathetic to Communism, but because they, like the Communists, were opposed to parliamentarism and to democracy. Nor was the Socialist attitude a kind of Russophobia, an example of ethnic hatred. The Socialists had had high hopes for revolutionary Russia, and the Sozialistische Monatshefte had originally constructed the theory of Kontinentalpolitik on the premise that a democratic Russia (indeed all the major continental states) would cooperate with Germany and France against the Anglo-Saxon powers. The establishment of totalitarianism in Russia, however, along with Russian encouragement of German Communism, produced violent antipathy between German Social Democracy and Soviet Bolshevism. Whereas
the Leninists were devoted to the establishment of Socialism in the economic sense, the German Socialists were fundamentally committed to political democracy. The German Revolution of 1918-1919 and the subsequent history of the Weimar Republic fully attest to this. While still theoretically assenting to revolutionary Marxism, the revolution to which the Social Democrats were most committed was that of the "rights of man," i.e., freedom of speech, assembly, press, association, religion, and opportunity. Without these rights, Socialism ceased to have meaning. Thus the Locarno treaties not only seemed to promise eternal peace between ancient enemies, but were emotionally and psychologically heartening in that they brought Germany closer to those lands from which the German Socialists drew spiritual sustenance. On the other hand, the Berlin Treaty, with its overtones of possible eastern collaboration against the west, was viewed with suspicion. Of course, the Socialists were also convinced that revision of the Versailles Treaty was more dependent on Paris and London than on Moscow. But their western orientation was neither cynical nor pragmatic but derived, basically, from a community of ideals that they shared with other people of the west.

In the meantime, Luther had fallen on the "flag issue," an attempt to reintroduce the old imperial colors of black-white-red as the official flag alongside
black-gold-red. Yet most of the cabinet was brought back under the new chancellor, Wilhelm Marx, whose return prompted the SPD comment that "more republican energy" could now be expected. No change, however, was forecast for foreign affairs. In order not to disrupt foreign policy continuity, the SPD continued its tactic of toleration. 55

Continuity was also assured in that from the signing of the Berlin Treaty in April to the reconvening of the League of Nations Assembly in September the international scene remained unusually quiet. Breitscheid entrained to Clermont-Ferrand for the French Socialist Party congress where he explained the recent Russo-German treaty to the French. Upon his return, he labored to clarify the crosscurrents of French Socialism to the Germans. The latter were quite perplexed by the reluctance of the dominant French Socialist group (Blum, Bracke, Paul Faure) to bring greater Socialist influence to bear by accepting cabinet posts, as their German counterparts had been doing

55 Vorwärts, May 13, 1926, a.m., p. 1; May 16, 1926, p. 1; May 17, 1926, p.m., p. 1; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 390, pp. 7322-26 (Müller). The Socialists were now aligned with the Communists in favor of expropriation of the property of the former ruling princes, the major internal issue of 1926. This rendered doubly difficult the attempts to construct the Great Coalition, which required collaboration between the SPD and the People's Party. Substance was thereby given to Stresemann's contention that the left-wing of the party (Levi, Dittmann) had captured the de facto leadership. The onus for continued minority government was thus laid on the SPD. Turner, Stresemann, 221-23; Stresemann, Vermächtnis, II, p. 418.
for over seven years. The Germans comprehended but no longer sympathized with the elevation of ideology over the requirements of practical politics. In fact, by willfully depriving themselves of political power that they ought to be exercising and thereby refusing to face up to the more difficult decisions, the French were said to have "no clear political line at all."\textsuperscript{56}

Beyond this, only a frequent turnover in French cabinets, culminating in the accession of Poincaré to the premiership on July 23, elicited much Socialist summertime comment. Under other circumstances the return of this nemesis of former days might well have discouraged the SPD. But the party correctly understood that Poincaré's government of national unity—his Burgfriedenskabinett—resulted from the need for a "strong man" who could curb France's spiralling inflation. Indicative of this was Briand's continued occupancy of the foreign ministry while Poincaré, in addition to the premiership, assumed the ministry of finance. Admitting that the French premier's name retained certain unpleasant connotations, the SPD was certain that this time (contrary to 1922-1923) Germany could do business with Poincaré. "The continuation of the Locarno policy is unquestionably assured."\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{56}Vorwärts, May 22, 1926, a.m., pp. 1-2; May 27, 1926, a.m., p. 1; June 5, 1926, p.m., pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{57}Vorwärts, June 16, 1926, a.m., p. 9; June 24, 1926, a.m., p. 1; July 22, 1926, a.m., p. 1; July 24, 1926, a.m., p. 1.
The Socialist assessment was correct: on September 8, in Geneva, Germany was voted into the League of Nations (with a permanent Council seat) as its fifty-fifth member. Millions of Europeans tuned their radios to listen to emotional and optimistic speeches by Stresemann and Briand. So that the Social Democrats might not feel overshadowed by the German foreign minister, Vorwärts reminded readers: "Without us Germany would not be in Geneva. We know it and we are proud of it." Also remembered, as at the time of Locarno, were the dead Rathenau and Erzberger. Vorwärts lauded their past efforts as having made Geneva possible. Stresemann, however, did not rate honorable mention, a petty matter that he could overlook amid the remarkable friendliness and applause that came his way in Geneva. The euphoria, in fact, so impressed Ludwig Quessel that he detected a new "danger": "that Germany will seek in Geneva what can be found only in Paris."\(^{58}\)

What Quessel (and other Germans) had in mind was the evacuation ahead of schedule of the Rhineland. As Breitscheid had suggested earlier, the Rhineland Treaty made occupation of the remaining zones superfluous. Well aware of this and also of the admonition that Paris held

\(^{58}\)Walters, League of Nations, 326-27; Spenz, Diplomatische Vorgeschichte, 169-71; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 489-91; Vorwärts, Sept. 8, 1926, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 10, 1926, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 10, 1926, p.m., pp. 1-2; Ludwig Quessel, "Deutschland in Genf," SM, XXXII (Sept. 20, 1926), 605-09.
the key, Stresemann conferred at length with Briand at Thoiry on September 17. In this extraordinary tête-à-tête, a wide-ranging understanding was reached. Briand proved receptive to early evacuation of the Rhineland and to the early return of the Saar, while Stresemann pledged German support for the troubled franc and for general economic cooperation. The Socialists, of course, approved this effort at further cooperation, but offered a surprising number of reservations, urging the government, above all, to "keep a cool head and realistic view." Victor Schiff worried (rightfully) about the reaction of French public opinion, and speculated also about possible demands for military controls in lieu of occupation. Mainly, the SPD was doubtful about the economic aspects of the Thoiry talks. As a representative of big industry, Stresemann was alleged to have had its profits more in mind than the welfare of the people. Only the Sozialistische Monatshefte was unreservedly in favor of Thoiry. "In this pact," Quessel wrote, "one can justly see the beginning of Europe's economic solidarity and the beginning of continental striving for peace."

59

Thoiry generated a considerable afterglow in the Socialist attitude toward France. Hermann Müller's

59 Vorwärts, Sept. 18, 1926, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 18, 1926, p.m., p. 1 (Schiff); Oct. 23, 1926, p.m., pp. 1-2; Ludwig Quessel, "Livorno gegen Thoiry?" SM, XXXII (Oct. 11, 1926), 693-96.
Reichstag speech of November 24 was more approving than anything said at the time of the meeting itself. Perhaps this was because Germany now stood to gain more. With Poincaré's success in stabilizing the franc, the question of German financial assistance lost relevance. Nevertheless, the SPD still expected the French to evacuate the rest of the Rhineland ahead of schedule and to find some formula whereby the Saar could be returned to Germany in advance of the plebiscite scheduled for 1935. Thus when Müller spoke enthusiastically of Thoiry as "the basis" for the "pacification of Europe," he was thinking only of what France might do for Germany. He demanded not a "reduction" of occupation troops but a "complete evacuation of the Rhineland and the Palatinate." Regarding the Saar, he said that for France it would be a "great gesture" to return the territory to Germany at once and without a plebiscite. Nothing, Müller added, would help more to "shut the mouths" of the revanchists. The SPD spokesman also called for equality in disarming, which, he said, should include the removal of the Interallied Military Commission in Berlin, despite his (and the government's) admission that various illegal military formations still existed in Germany.60

60Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 390, pp. 8160-68. See also Ludwig Quesnel's articles: "Livorno gegen Thoiry?" SM, XXXII (Oct. 11, 1926), 693-96; and "Thoirysabotage und Thoiryarbeit," SM, XXXII (Nov. 8, 1926), 746-52; and Breitscheid's interview with Stresemann: Stresemann, Vermächtnis, III: (Berlin, 1933), 42-44.
Adding emphasis to Müller's remarks was a four-state Socialist conference held concurrently in Luxembourg. French, German, Belgian, and English Socialists endorsed German entry into the League and also the conversation at Thoiry. Further action, the Socialists agreed, should consist of speedy Rhineland evacuation; an "amicable settlement . . . in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants" regarding the Saar; steps toward universal disarmament; "economic solidarity" for "the consolidation of peace"; and a more satisfactory reparations settlement. The goal toward which all these developments were to lead was "the lasting reconciliation of Germany and France."

Only in more clearly suggesting that these actions would benefit all countries concerned did the Luxembourg declaration differ from Müller's speech.*

While the Socialists regarded the Franco-German rapprochement as basically political in nature, they also welcomed evidence of economic cooperation. A new and more extensive commercial treaty approved in August preceded an important iron and steel pact of late September. The latter was designed to create a giant cartel in which

---

* LSI, Reports 1928, 33-37; SPD, Parteikorrespondenz 1923 bis 1928, 137-40; same, Jahrbuch 1926, 70-71; Vorwärts, Nov. 17, 1926, a.m., pp. 1-2; Nov. 22, 1926, p.m., p. 1. On his way to the conference Breitscheid narrowly escaped death. Boarding a train in Berlin, he missed his step and fell onto the rails. The train, moving only slightly, was stopped in time, with Breitscheid suffering a broken right arm, a wrenched tendon in his left foot, and various bruises. Vorwärts, Nov. 21, 1926, p. 1.
Germany was granted 43.5 per cent, France 31.19, Belgium 12.26, Luxembourg 8.5, and the Saar 5.25 per cent of pooled production. The Socialists, who never voiced fear of industrial bigness per se, applauded the sharing and pooling agreement as a consequence of Locarno and Geneva and looked forward to further commercial accords. The only regret was that the workers of the participating countries had not been able to establish commensurate unity. 62

Toward the end of 1926 the energy of the SPD was absorbed in a domestic crisis that had potentially important foreign policy ramifications. This centered on recent disclosures, both at home and abroad, of illegal Russo-German military collaboration. For many months the Socialists had been urging full compliance with the disarmament strictures issued in the name of the war-time Allies. The party had voiced concern that new violations might delay the scheduled January 31 withdrawal of the Military Control Commission or might otherwise hamper increasingly cordial Franco-German relations. Also important was the long-standing Social Democratic desire to establish a

greater measure of parliamentary control over the armed
forces. Convinced that Reichswehr Minister Otto Gessler
would remain uncooperative in these matters, the Socialists
brought down the government with a December 17 no confidence
vote. The result, however, was rather dismaying in that
the ouster of Gessler led not to civilian control over the
Reichswehr, nor to the Great Coalition (as some Socialists
had hoped), but to the reentry into the government of the
Nationalists, on January 31, 1927. The French, however,
like the Social Democrats, were intent on maintaining
good relations and chose to ignore evidence of Reichswehr—
Red Army collaboration. Thus the Military Control
Commission withdrawal took place on schedule. 63

63 Thilo Vogelsang, Reichswehr, Staat und NSDAP:
Beiträge zur deutschen Geschichte 1930-1932 (Stuttgart,
1962), 48-50; Dorpalen, Hindenburg, 121-26; Stampfer,
Vierzehn Jahre, 492-96; Wilhelm Hoegner, Die verantwortene
Republik (Munich, 1958), 189-90; Turner, Stresemann,
226-29; Carsten, Reichswehr and Politics, 254-57; Gatzke,
Stresemann and Rearmament, 69-76; von Stockhausen,
Sechs Jahre, 237-38; Stresemann, Vermächtnis, III,
pp. 91-93; Severing, Lebensweg, II, p. 103; Germany,
Verhandlungen, Vol. 391, pp. 8577-86; Vorwärts, Nov. 12,
1926, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 12, 1926, p. 2; Dec. 13, 1926,
p.m., pp. 1-2; Dec. 16, 1926, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 17, 1926,
a.m., p. 1; Dec. 18, 1926, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 19, 1926,
p. 1-2. On Socialist attitudes toward military affairs
in general see Gordon, Reichswehr, 372-95, and especially
Gustav-Adolf Caspar, Die Sozialdemokratische Partei
Deutschlands und das deutsche Wehrproblem in den Jahren
der Weimarer Republik (Frankfurt am Main, 1959), which
concludes that the party failed to come to any clear
conclusions on military matters (p. 99). Vorwärts seldom
carried military news or discussed military problems, but
Die Gesellschaft, under Hilferding's editorship, printed
frequent articles in attempting to foster a dialog on
this subject.
Although Chancellor Marx, in his government declaration of February 3, promised a foreign policy of "steadiness," with no deviations from the previous course, the Socialists once again expressed skepticism about a Bürgerblockregierung. Any coalition that included the DNVP, Müller told the Reichstag, was beset with such foreign policy contradictions as to be insupportable. "Marx has a majority for a vote of confidence," Vorwärts observed. "But what then?" According to Breitscheid, Stresemann had yet to bring the DNVP fully into line with the Locarno policy. And by opening the government to the Nationalists he had emboldened French chauvinists and warmongers. The result was "to endanger Briand's position and to make extraordinarily more difficult the policy of understanding." 64

Presumably the most threatened foreign policy objective was the Rhineland evacuation. This, coupled with or followed by an early French withdrawal from the Saar, was the next goal of "the policy of understanding." As 1925 was "the year of Locarno," and 1926 "the year of Geneva," so 1927 was to be "the year of evacuation." But expectations that had run high in winter had been

64 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 391, p. 8792 (Marx); 8796-8804 (Müller); Vorwärts, Jan. 28, 1927, p.m., p. 1; Jan. 29, 1927, p.m., p. 1; Feb. 3, 1927, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); Ludwig Quessel, "Zur Außenpolitik des Kabinetts Marx-Stresemann-Hergt," SM, XXXIII (Feb. 14, 1927), 93-98.
considerably reduced by spring. The League Council meeting of March produced no results, and in mid-May it was reported that Briand had given up any idea of even cutting back the number of occupation troops. Toward the end of May, Vorwärts advised readers to abandon all hopes for a complete evacuation in the foreseeable future. Held at fault for this were not the French but rather the DNVP. Breitscheid spoke for the party in asserting that "the presence of the German Nationals in the government has proved the strongest conceivable limitation on the progress of negotiations." Briand, Vorwärts explained, deserved sympathy rather than criticism. French fear of the Nationalists, of the Stahlhelm (a reactionary veterans' organization), and of other right-wing groups had prevented the granting of concessions. The Socialists used every opportunity to ask the DNVP "Where are your successes?" But this was small compensation for the loss of momentum in Franco-German reconciliation. The only pleasant development was the French Socialist Party's wholehearted support of the demand for the Rhineland and Saar evacuations. Still, this was only one solitary harmonious note in an

---

65 French occupation forces in Germany, reaching a high of 116,000 in 1923, had dropped to 60,500 by the end of 1926. On September 15, 1927, they still totalled 60,400 but had been reduced to 55,300 by the year's end. Carl Christian Schmid, "Zehn Jahre fremder Besatzung am Rhein," *Zehn Jahre deutsche Geschichte, 1918-1928*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1928), 128.
otherwise sour orchestration. As Breitscheid said, "A cold winter frost has followed the sunny days of Thoiry." 66

With the lack of movement in foreign policy, other matters, such as coalition government and the agrarian question, dominated the May 22-27 Parteitag in Kiel. In the limited discussion of foreign affairs, interest centered on an extreme left-wing motion criticizing Stresemann for allegedly opening the door to fascism and for deliberately preparing a new imperialism. The sponsors also accused Breitscheid of having claimed an identity between Stresemann's policy and that of the SPD. Breitscheid, of course speaking against the motion, was reluctantly forced to make the very distinction to which he had objected at both the 1924 and 1925 party congresses, i.e., that Stresemann and the SPD acted from dissimilar motives but were occasionally brought together by correspondences of goals. "Stresemann," Breitscheid explained, "has never acted in the interest of the working-class but rather always in the interest of those classes that he and his party represent. We have supported him," he continued,

66 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 391, p. 8801 (Müller); Vol. 392, pp. 9816-24 (Breitscheid); Vorwärts, Jan. 1, 1927, a.m., pp. 5-6; Jan. 3, 1927, a.m., pp. 1-2; Jan. 24, 1927, p.m., p. 1; Feb. 27, 1927, pp. 1-2; March 5, 1927, p.m., pp. 1-2 (Schiff); March 7, 1927, p.m., p. 2 (Schiff); March 9, 1927, a.m., p. 1 (Schiff); April 20, 1927, a.m., p. 1; May 13, 1927, a.m., p. 7; May 21, 1927, p.m., p. 1; SPD, Jahrbuch . . . 1927 (Berlin, [1928]), 14-15.
"because we are obliged to advance every effort which effectively prevents bloody conflicts and brings forth instead a peaceful understanding. Without prejudicing our final goals, without prejudicing the conviction that only the realization of Socialism will guarantee lasting peace, we have supported this policy. (Assent). We have the task to continue in this direction, with all the mistrust and the vigilance which understandably must be posed to a bürgerliche foreign policy. But we can never permit ourselves to take the position that we must reject in advance every foreign policy that is proposed and that will be carried through by the middle classes (bürgerliche Seite)." Although Breitscheid had spoken in general terms, his comments had a direct bearing on Franco-German relations. The entire "policy of understanding" was then premised on cooperation with Stresemann. This was because SPD leaders believed that ideology ought not to stand in the way of practical and desirable achievements. It was embarrassing, however, to admit that one's policy did not accord with Marxist scriptures. The fact that Breitscheid remained at heart a radical democrat and not a doctrinaire and was therefore suspect to old-line ideologues may have made the task even more difficult. As it was, Breitscheid's explanation seemed tortured, even Jesuitical. At the Parteitag, a sort of secular synod, he felt forced to discuss foreign policy in terms of social classes and
failed to acknowledge that both he and Stresemann shared certain motives, namely patriotism and a desire for peaceful accommodation, especially with France. Despite the shock of 1914 when Socialists rushed to the colors instead of to the barricades, patriotism was an emotion with which the SPD failed to come to grips during the Weimar era. As distinguished from nationalism, it did not conflict with a desire—expressed by both the Socialists and Stresemann—for the peaceful settlement of differences. One had to read between the lines of Breitscheid's speech to perceive that there was much truth to the charge that Stresemann and the SPD pursued identical policies.67

Identity of interests notwithstanding, whatever hopes anyone had for a quick Rhineland evacuation dimmed increasingly as the year 1927 progressed. French

67 SPD, Protokoll . . . 1927 in Kiel (Berlin, 1927), 244-47 (Breitscheid), 247-49 (Petrich), 249-50 (Crispjen); Vorwärts, May 27, 1927, p.m., pp. 1-2; Osterroth and Schuster, Chronik, 321-22. On occasions when Breitscheid had, in fact, indicated an identity between Stresemann's foreign policy and that of the Social Democrats, he was referring to results, not motives. See Germany, Verhandlungen, July 22, 1925, Vol. 387, p. 3393; Nov. 27, 1925, Vol. 388, pp. 4626-27; Breitscheid, "Locarno," Gesellschaft, II (1925, pt. 2), 508; Vorwärts, April 20, 1927, a.m., p. 1 (report on French Socialist Party congress). On the other hand, Stresemann viewed the SPD as a party of good intentions but often divided and unsure of itself and therefore unreliable. He seems generally to have preferred having the Socialists outside the government but giving support in questions of foreign policy. Stresemann, Vermächtnis, I, pp. 375-76; III, pp. 94-97, but also III, pp. 99-101.
reluctance, as before, was interpreted as an unfortunate repercussion of the DNVP entrance into the Marx government. There was also some criticism of British policy. For months the Sozialistische Monatshefte had been attributing the cooling off of Berlin-Paris relations to British maneuvers. Now, Vorwärts also began to accuse the British of Machtpolitik and of desiring to keep their troops on the Rhine. The emphasis of SPD demands, however, remained on the departure of the French from the occupied Rhenish districts, although the Socialists were now willing to settle for an interim period of troop reduction, and they shelved, at least temporarily, appeals for an early return of the Saar. In a pessimistic mood, Vorwärts predicted that "the evacuation will probably come only when, with the next elections, both countries take a decisive turn to the left."68

Also without success were disarmament discussions, taking place within the framework of the Preparatory Commission, established by the League Council in December 1925. The Socialists had expected that the Locarno guarantees would encourage French readiness to disarm. Disappointment was therefore keen when no progress could

be reported after the first eighteen months of talks.
While refraining from explicit criticism of the French, the Social Democrats were amazed at the political, technical and other reservations put forth by Paris. Breitscheid could agree with Stresemann's assertion that disarmament negotiations constituted a "fiasco." But the SPD spokesman resented the foreign minister being the one to apply this epithet, since the German government itself, in Breitscheid's opinion, had displayed insufficient energy in pursuing disarmament. Yet as Breitscheid made clear later on in his Reichstag speech, there was little reason to expect much from such a cabinet, all of whose members were inspired by capitalism. They might, coincidentally, travel a common path with those persons guided by the words of Karl Marx, but, given their different motivations, their courses would surely diverge.

The only touch of brightness in an otherwise overcast political sky was the signing of a long-term commercial treaty with France on August 17. Replacing a series of short-term agreements, it provided most favored nation treatment in all important areas, although with a number of import quotas and with a tariff scale (albeit

---

most favored nation) that the SPD thought too high. Still, by putting Franco-German trade relations on a long-term basis, it ended the haggling and the incipient tariff wars that had characterized the previous two-and-one-half years. The Socialists thus acclaimed the commercial treaty as progress toward "lasting cooperation" and "final understanding," political as well as economic.  

Climaxing this year in which so much had been expected and so little attained was the September general session of the League. Vorwärts, on the eve of the departure of the German delegation, acknowledged that nothing more than a reduction of occupation troops could be hoped for. Yet when this proved the only concession granted by Briand (in the name of the Allied governments), the Socialists launched a sharply critical press campaign against Stresemann. The foreign minister was daily accused of dragging his feet, of burdening himself down with a rightist delegation, and of being satisfied with trifles.  

---


It was Stresemann's policy to include representatives of all but the most extreme parties in the delegation. Thus Breitscheid attended in the name of the SPD (and at Stresemann's specific request) as he had in 1926. Perhaps
Heightening SPD dissatisfaction was Hindenburg's speech of September 18, at the unveiling of a memorial on the Tannenberg battlefield, in which the Reichspräsident denied German guilt for the outbreak of the war. Vorwärts viewed this as symptomatic of Stresemann's lack of foresight and control in foreign policy. The newspaper opined that the only real energy expended by Stresemann in Geneva had been in trying to "dampen" the effect of the Tannenberg speech among French and Belgian delegates. Unhappily and unexpectedly, the League was not serving as an arena in which Germany could achieve justice and equality. This was because "the German Nationals don't want it to" and because Stresemann "lacked the courage" to assert himself. Stresemann, not Hindenburg or the DNVP, was held responsible for the conduct of German foreign policy. The proper course, the Socialists declared in the wake of the fruitless month at Geneva, was for the foreign minister to break up the government. Stresemann "should declare to the cabinet that he now has evidence that the rightist government is a hindrance to the early evacuation of the occupied areas. He could assure the president and the chancellor that he knows from the best sources how much Germany's domestic development has prejudiced our foreign

the 1927 delegation seemed right-wing because in 1926 the DNVP had declined representation. Stresemann, Vermächtnis, III, pp. 171-72; Zimmermann, Aussenpolitik, 327.
policy interests. Indeed, he must tell them that the swift termination of the right-wing coalition is a pressing national requirement. . . ." The big question, *Vorwärts* admitted, is "will he do it?" 72

Another important question apparently did not occur to the Socialists themselves, namely, were they not expecting too much from a man who, according to their own analysis, was motivated solely by a desire to preserve capitalism? At no time did they attempt to explain, in ideological terms, why Stresemann should be impelled to follow a foreign policy different from that of the DNVP. An honest attempt at such an explanation might have revealed that for the SPD, as well as Stresemann, ideology was not the mainspring of foreign policy.

Although the Socialists had publicly called on the foreign minister to bring down the government, there is no evidence that they were surprised by his disinclination to do so. Perhaps becoming inured to inactivity, the SPD lessened its criticism of Stresemann in the final months of 1927. By early 1928 interest centered on forthcoming elections in Germany, France, and the United States. If Stresemann was unwilling or unable to oust the Nationalists, 72

---

72 *Vorwärts*, Aug. 30, 1927, a.m., p. 2; Sept. 6, 1927, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 11, 1927, p. 1; Sept. 19, 1927, p.m., pp. 1-2; Sept. 24, 1927, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 25, 1927, pp. 1-2; Sept. 26, 1927, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 29, 1927, a.m., pp. 1-2.
soon it would not matter, for the German voters, it was contended, would do it themselves.73

Since the French would be voting in April, before the Germans, the Social Democrats understood that patience was now required. The French could not be pushed. Old issues and interests, such as the Rhineland evacuation and the return of the Saar, were kept alive, but sotto voce. To the only new development, the Kellogg-Briand exchange of notes concerning the conclusion of a worldwide peace pact, the Socialists were quite cool. "Good will," Breitscheid declared to both a New York Herald correspondent and the Reichstag, is necessary, but so is "technical organization." For such talk to amount to anything, the project ought to be turned over to the League. Even if America declined to become a member, the League could still formulate a plan to which she could adhere. Unless this was done, Breitscheid warned, not much would come of this venture.74

Expected to help the SPD in the upcoming elections was the collapse of the Bürgerblock. The Nationalists had clashed with Stresemann on the policy of Franco-German


74 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 394, pp. 12495-12504; 12571-74 (Witte); Vol. 395, p. 13615 (Sollmann); Vorwärts, Jan. 8, 1928, a.m., p. 1 (Breitscheid interview); Feb. 5, 1928, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 6, 1928, p.m., pp. 1-2.
understanding. This, together with a dispute regarding church-school questions, resulted in the government's fall and the setting of May 20 as the date for the balloting. Immediately following the Stresemann-DNVP showdown, Briand had announced France's readiness to discuss outstanding issues. Vorwärts' interpretation was that the French foreign minister's reaction proved what the SPD had been saying for over a year: that the presence of the Nationalists in the government constituted a roadblock to further Berlin-Paris agreement. 75

Although the Socialists hoped to profit from Briand's gesture, their major electoral appeal was in the area of domestic policy, where they also had been in strong opposition to the Bürgerblock. The fact that the party gave emphasis to such matters as taxation, rents, pricing, wages and working conditions, and social services was in part due to the absence of any single overriding foreign policy issue. It also brings to mind that this was the traditional area of Socialist interest and expertise and suggests further that potential Socialist voters, indeed most German voters, were primarily concerned with bread-and-butter issues. Even when foreign policy was discussed,

75Dorpalen, Hindenburg, 138-39; Turner, Stresemann, 234-35; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 395, pp. 13879-80 (Wels); Vorwärts, Jan. 31, 1928, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 2, 1928, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 3, 1928, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 3, 1928, p.m., p. 1; Feb. 4, 1928, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid).
this was done only in a rather vague and general way. Specific promises, even specific suggestions, were avoided, with one exception: the party declared that it was time to achieve a final reparations settlement, wherein payments would be considerably lightened. What the Socialists hoped to put across was that an SPD victory would end "the stagnation" of the past eighteen months. The party would get things moving again.76

That acceleration of foreign policy progress depended on the German elections was made evident by the French voting in April, where the Socialists did little better than hold their own. Vorwärts asserted that an increase of three deputies (103 to 106) constituted a victory, but, in effect, the 1928 French elections marked neither a swing to the left nor to the right. Rather, they denoted a vote of confidence in Poincaré, who was rewarded for his stabilization of the franc. For the German Socialists, this was far from being a disaster. Victor Schiff interviewed the French premier early in May and emerged convinced that Poincaré was sincere in desiring improvement in Franco-German relations. The French premier now believed Germany to be trustworthy and seemed willing to cooperate in the resolution of problems. If the French

76 Vorwärts, Feb. 19, 1928, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Severing); April 1, 1928, a.m., p. 1; April 22, 1928, a.m., p. 1; May 1, 1928, a.m., p. 2; May 15, 1928, a.m., p. 1.
Socialists could not hold office and wield power, Poincaré, so Schiff concluded, was the next best thing.??

Agreeing with Schiff's interpretation of Poincaré's intentions was the Sozialistische Monatshefte, which had never, not even in 1923, considered the French evilly disposed toward Germany. In February, the journal had been disinclined to think that elections in either country would change matters very much. But now that Poincaré's hand was strengthened, Max Cohen and Max Schippel detected new opportunities. Cohen hoped for a Reichstag and a government that would provide an impetus to economic rapprochement. This was more important than verbal ploys like the proposed Kellogg-Briand Pact. Schippel looked for colonial cooperation between the two countries. This would take the form not of a return of Germany's former colonies but of German financial underwriting of the economic development of French colonies. The crucial factor, as both writers made clear, was the requisite political will in Germany. Even Victor Schiff, whose opinions seldom coincided with those of the Sozialistische Monatshefte, said that further development of good relations between

??Vorwärts, April 14, 1928, a.m., p. 1; April 30, 1928, p.m., p. 1; May 4, 1928, p. 1 (Schiff). The evening edition of Vorwärts was now redesignated "Der Abend" and featured a sportier format. To maintain consistency, citations will continue as a.m. or p.m., except, of course, for Sunday, when only one edition was published.
the two former enemies "depends in large measure on us ourselves." 78

Final evidence that the SPD believed that foreign policy progress would be possible after the elections was a May 10 Vorwärts editorial commemorating Stresemann's fiftieth birthday. In a sequence of rather negative or back-handed compliments, the newspaper made clear that Stresemann was a man with whom one could work. This was because, in 1923, he had had the intelligence and good sense, far in advance of the rest of the People's Party, to recognize the validity of the SPD Erfüllungspolitik. To this policy, the main theme of which was said to be understanding with France, he had applied his "critical perception and energy." Despite the "stupidity" that generally characterized the party he led and despite his remaining a "political opponent," Stresemann could once again, so the editorial seemed to suggest, be a valued collaborator. 79

The election brought the hoped-for success. The Socialists gained over one million votes while the Nationalists lost nearly two million. With an increase


79 Vorwärts, May 10, 1928, a.m., p. 2.
of twenty-one Reichstag seats, the SPD held more than double the number of the second-ranking DNVP. The 1928 election seemingly confirmed both the viability of the German Republic and the effectiveness of years of hard, patient work on the part of the Social Democrats. The party also assessed the SPD "victory" and the DNVP "catastrophe" as leading toward better relations with France and the evacuation of the Rhineland. Since the voting demonstrated a clear repudiation of the Erbfeind Theorie (the idea that France and Germany were eternal enemies), it was now mandatory for the French to remove the remaining psychological block: "the military occupation of the Rhine." "The closer we come to the date of termination," Vorwärts argued, "the more the moral value [of an earlier evacuation] diminishes."80

For the electoral results to be manifested in a more vigorous German foreign policy, it was incumbent on the SPD to take the lead in forming a government. But as Vorwärts was pointing to this necessity on May 27 the newspaper's own chief editor, Stampfer, was writing privately to Kautsky that there was not the slightest possibility of building a Great Coalition. This was because of the bitter opposition between the SPD and the People's Party over economic and social policies. The

80Vorwärts, May 21, 1928, a.m., p. 1; May 21, 1928, p.m., p. 1; May 25, 1928, a.m., pp. 1-2.
danger, of course, was that the exclusion of the People's Party from the cabinet would necessitate Stresemann's surrendering the foreign ministry. Although Stampfer did not suggest that Stresemann was irreplaceable, he must have been aware that the foreign minister's talents would be needed, for the Vorwärts editor acknowledged the existence of an impending crisis in the evacuation problem, wherein evacuation, so Stampfer confided, would be made dependent on "great counter-concessions," apparently of a financial nature and quite possibly beyond Germany's reach. Stampfer implied here that the SPD might follow in the path of the Bürgerschaft in being unable to achieve the Rhineland evacuation. His fears must have been at least partly predicated on the assumption that Stresemann would be leaving the cabinet.

Despite this gloomy outlook, Müller succeeded, on June 28, in putting together a cabinet which he headed as chancellor and in which Stresemann was included. As predicted, attempts at forming a party government failed, but the cabinet, nevertheless, was made up of representatives of the Great Coalition parties, even though the

81 Vorwärts, May 27, 1928, pp. 1-2; Stampfer to Kautsky, May 25, 1928, Kautsky Papers.
parties concerned refused to commit themselves to the government's support.\textsuperscript{82}

In the negotiations that led to the forming of the government, Müller had specified that "the previous foreign policy be continued." The main objective of this policy, as agreed upon in the cabinet and as enunciated by Müller in the Reichstag, was "the freeing of the remaining occupied areas in the Rhineland, and of the Saar." Evacuation, Müller continued, ought to be immediate. He offered nothing in return. The problem, he declared, "is simple and clear. Only good will is needed to solve it."

Approximately the same formula could be applied to the other major questions: disarmament and reparations. "Germany's disarmament," the chancellor asserted, "is now complete, and no state has done so much for general security as Germany." It is time, he suggested, for other countries to make similar contributions. "On this the world must be clear: in the long run it is an impossible situation that a great state like Germany find herself unilaterally disarmed in the midst of countries armed to the teeth."

Regarding reparations, Müller spoke of the need for new agreements. The Dawes Plan was only provisional. It

\textsuperscript{82} Vorwärts, June 7, 1928, a.m., p. 1; June 23, 1928, a.m., p. 1; June 25, 1928, p.m., p. 2; Braun, \textit{Weimar zu Hitler}, 132-34; Stresemann, \textit{Vermächtnis}, III, pp. 298-301, 312-16; memoranda and telegrams, Müller Papers.
had accomplished its purpose of removing reparations from the plane of political controversy. The chancellor expressed his conviction that it was now both desirable and possible to begin work on a final settlement. To this end, as toward all foreign policy matters discussed, he pledged loyal cooperation. Both his purpose and tone were firm. Germany had legitimate grievances, for which she sought redress, but only through "peaceful understanding" and a "renunciation of revanche." As much as possible, Müller added, these tasks ought to be undertaken through the League of Nations. Thus the policy he advocated was very similar to that of the last SPD-led government, which he himself had headed and which resigned in June 1920. But by 1928 Germany had fulfilled or was fulfilling all her obligations. Müller could, with assurance, now call on his country's former foes to fulfill their "obligations" to Germany.  

Omitted by Müller was any mention of the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The SPD had grave reservations about this multi-lateral treaty whose signatories were to promise to abandon war as an instrument of policy. As "a general declaration," as "lip service" to the cause of peace, it did nothing concrete to prevent future conflict. Further,  

83 Memorandum of June 20, 1928, Müller papers; Germany, AR, Kabinett, June 29, 1928, 1697/777083; Germany, Verhandlungen, July 3, 1928, Vol. 423, pp. 38-46.
it was being hedged around with so many reservations as to be practically meaningless. On the other hand, it did have some "symptomatic significance." If it was, indeed, a true reflection of "moral disarmament," then it could lead to "material disarmament." It depended, ultimately, on the will of nations. Socialists, in particular, would have to give support in order for it to be something more than "a piece of paper," "a beautiful pretense," or "an empty gesture."84

Despite this dubious estimation, the signing of the Paris Peace Pact was the first important foreign policy action of the Müller government. While unenthusiastic, the chancellor and his cabinet agreed that the treaty had to be signed, not as an act of friendliness to France but rather to the United States. Thus in late August, Stresemann journeyed to Paris, where he was greeted with shouts of "Vive la Paix" and "Vive Stresemann," rather dissimilar, Vorwärts noted, to the epithets and garbage hurled at German emissaries some nine years before. There, in the French capital, on August 27, 1928, Germany made her official renunciation of war.85

84 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 423, pp. 462-63 (Breitscheid); Vorwärts, June 26, 1928, pp. 1-2; July 27, 1928, a.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 26, 1928, a.m., p. 1; SPD, Jahrbuch . . . 1928 (Berlin, [1929]), 19, 22.

85 Germany, AR, Kabinett, July 9, 1928, 1697/777250-52; Aug. 22, 1928, 1698/777781-82; Vorwärts, Aug. 27, 1928, p.m., pp. 1, 9.
Also expressing concern for peace were the delegates to the Third Congress of the Labour and Socialist International, held in Brussels early in August. Interest centered not on rhetorical gestures but on evacuation and disarmament, the practical steps that would begin where the Kellogg-Briand Pact left off. To the pleasure of the Germans, their case was largely argued by the French. In the name of his party, Paul Faure demanded immediate evacuation of the Rhineland and the reestablishment of German sovereignty in the Saar. No compensation was mentioned. Faure asserted that the occupation neither ensured French security nor guaranteed payment of reparations. Rather, it was disadvantageous to France in that it perpetuated hatreds and undermined efforts at conciliation. "So long as we occupy by military force a portion of German territory, there will be no real peace between Germany and us." Speaking for the SPD, Paul Löbe thanked Faure for his "courageous declaration" and added that evacuation would actually add to French security by helping to disarm the extreme German nationalists, "who in France are viewed as a special danger." On disarmament, the French also expressed "unreserved support" for the resolution advocating "total disarmament." This broke down into sections on compulsory arbitration, general as opposed to unilateral disarming, the prohibition of large standing armies, short terms of service, and drastic
technical and financial limitations on armaments. As Crispin pointed out, Germany had already complied with most of these provisions. It remained now for other countries to do so.

Socialist solidarity at Brussels was impressive. Friedrich Stampfer called it "one of the strongest factors in the preservation of world peace." Yet its impact outside of party circles was slight. The fact that German and French Socialists found themselves in agreement helped little if at all in winning elections and achieving internal power. Thus in its own way, the Socialist International, like the Paris Peace Pact, was a pious proceeding that remained devoid of fulfillment. 86

By this time, the late summer of 1928, the question of reparations had joined evacuation as a foreign policy topic of immediate interest. On September 1, Germany ended the period of preliminary payments and commenced the first "normal" (maximum) year, with annual obligations rising to at least 2500 million gold marks. This was reason enough to call for revision. Further, in both 1927 and 1928 the

86 LSI, Third Congress of the Labour and Socialist International, Brussels 5th to 11th August 1928, Reports and Proceedings (London, 1928), section VI, pp. 92-93, 111, 139, 144-45; section VII, pp. 53-54, 59, 73, 75; section IX, pp. 3-7; Vorwärts, Aug. 10, 1928, a.m., p. 1; Aug. 11, 1928, a.m., p. 2; Aug. 12, 1928, a.m., p. 2; Sisley Huddleston, "Socialists in Foreign Affairs," New Statesman, XXXI (Aug. 18, 1928), 581-82.
Agent General, Parker Gilbert, had issued reports critical of German financial policies. He believed that a definitive settlement would permit a more rational development of finances. Finally, with Briand joining in, all interested parties, in one way or another, indicated a desire for a new basis for reparations. What troubled the Socialists, as well as other Germans, was that the separate issues of evacuation and reparations might become interdependent. Evacuation of the Rhineland, it was feared, would be predicated on a financial settlement acceptable to France. Breitscheid warned against this as early as July 25. And on August 22 the cabinet agreed that Müller, who was to lead the German delegation to Geneva in place of the ill Stresemann, would, as a matter of government policy, keep the two questions apart.\(^{87}\)

Müller did not relish the prospect of undertaking delicate foreign policy negotiations. He was an able parliamentary tactician but lacked the foreign minister's finesse and was reluctant to step into his shoes. Yet Stresemann felt that the time was opportune, that the fall session of the League would provide the right setting for fruitful discussions, and he strongly urged the chancellor to make the trip. This Müller did. On arriving he told

\(^{87}\text{Vorwärts, July 25, 1928, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); Gerhard Breitscheid, "Dawes-Plan und Endlösung," Gesellschaft, V (1928, pt. 2), 344-51; Germany, AR, Kabinett, Aug. 22, 1928, 1698/77782-87.}\)
the press that "the whole German nation wants the evacuation of the Rhineland." Later, on September 5, he talked with Briand in the latter's hotel room and was assured that further meaningful discussions were possible. On September 7 Müller addressed a plenary session of the Assembly, sternly demanding universal disarmament and dwelling on Germany's disappointment over the failure of others to disarm as Germany had. He concluded with a peroration about governments practicing what they preach, otherwise "the man in the street" may come "to the conclusion that international policy is double-faced." This elicited a sharp reply from Briand who denied "that Germany's disarmament is complete," and declared that it was presumptuous for the Germans—who failed for so long to carry out "certain obligations"—to make peremptory demands of others. Obviously, indeed admittedly, Briand felt personally affronted by Müller's use of the term "double-faced." 88

To Müller's sharp words, Vorwärts had responded enthusiastically. Its correspondent in Geneva, Victor Schiff, commented that "these things had to be said once

and for all. It was the first time that a German spoke them, and this German could only be a Social Democrat."

Privately, however, Rudolf Breitscheid showed less enthusiasm. In a memorandum submitted to the Reichstag Foreign Affairs Committee, he observed that Müller's speech was "rather harsh sounding in places" but pointed out that it had been cleared by foreign office members of the delegation. "Unfortunately," he added, "the parliamentarians—through no fault of Müller—had not seen the speech beforehand."^{89}

Awaiting Briand's oration was a rather different reception. Vorwärts thought it "unfortunate" and called it a "polemic" and a "blow" to peaceful conciliation. To Breitscheid "it was and is absolutely incomprehensible."

Only the warmongers, so Vorwärts said, liked it. The newspaper suggested hopefully that Briand had indulged in "improvisation." Speaking extemporaneously, he had made a few slips of the lip. But the fact is that the French foreign minister's words were deliberate. He was angry but he had not spoken carelessly. Stresemann, who objected strongly to Briand's vehemence, tended to excuse it on the grounds of a recent illness. Georg Bernhard, editor-in-chief of the Vossische Zeitung, thought that the phrase "double-faced" reminded Briand of an old Chamber of Deputies insult.

^{89}Vorwärts, Sept. 8, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Breitscheid memorandum, Sept. 29, 1928, Müller Papers.
Regardless, Müller cannot escape criticism for having spoken indelicately. The chancellor felt uncomfortable and unsure of himself. Stampfer tells us that he had bitter recollections of his June 1919 journey to Paris, when he signed the Versailles Treaty. Müller's burden of responsibility also fell heavily on him. He apparently preferred to make a "strong" speech, one fit for public consumption at home, than to make a favorable impression on the French. Alternatively, he may have thought that a "frontal attack" offered the best prospects of success, not only for disarmament but for evacuation, for both were dependent on Briand's attitude. This suggests an almost total ignorance of Briand's mentality and of the ways and manners of Geneva, but is not implausible, considering the chancellor's inexperience. Breitscheid implies that, had he seen Müller's speech, he would have advised the chancellor to alter the tone. But, as it was, the verbal duel produced an immediate estrangement, what Breitscheid called "a brisk rupture of negotiations." The two statesmen were not able to get together again until Breitscheid, once again a go-between, had unruffled their mutual feathers.90

Despite this "rather rude confrontation," no permanent damage had been done to Franco-German relations. Briand was

90 Breitscheid memorandum, Sept. 29, 1928, Müller Papers; Vorwärts, Sept. 11, 1928, a.m., p. 1 (Schiff); Sept. 12, a.m., p. 1 (Schiff); Stern-Rubarth, Three Men Tried, 199; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 523; Stresemann, Vermächtnis, III, pp. 370–74.
piqued but contemplated no departure in policy.

Discussions recommenced, although now on a multi-national level. Following a three-and-one-half-hour meeting on September 16, representatives of Germany, France, Belgium, Britain, Italy, and Japan agreed (1) to open official negotiations regarding an early Rhineland evacuation, and (2) on the necessity of coming to a final reparations settlement, to which end a commission of financial experts would be convened.91

The Geneva session thus averted complete failure. Müller, in a visit to Stresemann in Baden-Baden and in his report to the cabinet, called it a success. For the first time reparations and Rhineland evacuation had been placed on the official agenda of negotiations. Müller also saw this as an opportunity to discuss the early return of the Saar. As he told the cabinet, all these negotiations would surely have some results. To his Reichstag Foreign Affairs Committee colleagues, however, Breitscheid confided that the session had fallen considerably short of expectations. The Germans had hoped that France would offer immediate evacuation of the second zone. Briand parried

this by saying that France could not possibly grant a total withdrawal. To this Müller made no reply. Breitscheid was also worried that the Geneva proceedings had established a partial "juncture" between evacuation and reparations, a juncture that could result in unfortunate complications and delays.92

In their public response, the Social Democrats followed the line set by Müller in his reports to Stresemann and to the cabinet. Embarrassed by Nationalist charges of "fiasco," the Socialists explained that nobody had expected resounding victories and that important negotiations take time. To DNVP demands that "something must happen," Breitscheid replied "when you had the chance to do something, we waited in vain." But now, party spokesmen affirmed, we have created the conditions wherein an early evacuation and reduced reparations can be attained.93

The only important exception to this apologetic bow-taking was the Sozialistische Monatshefte, which disputed

92Germany, AR, Kabinett, Sept. 18, 1928, 1698/777854-57; Stresemann, Vermächtnis, III, pp. 371-72; Breitscheid memorandum, Sept. 29, 1928, Müller Papers. If Geneva was even a limited success, it was due more to Breitscheid than to Müller. In his memo Breitscheid regretted that his status on the delegation—in effect that of an observer—prevented him from taking an even more active role.

93Vorzügte, Sept. 17, 1928, p.m., pp. 1-2 (Schiff); Sept. 18, 1928, a.m., pp. 1-2; Sept. 19, 1928, a.m., p. 1 (report of interview with Müller); Oct. 3, 1928, p. 1 (Breitscheid); Oct. 13, 1928, a.m., p. 1 (Hilferding); Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 423, pp. 458-64 (Breitscheid).
the contention that Geneva was any kind of a success and which sympathized with Briand rather than with Müller. In Ludwig Quesse1's view all that the chancellor had done was to throw hard stones on the path of foreign policy. Thus the Monatshefte, which initially had spoken quite approvingly of the Müller government, now wondered about its ability to attain general disarmament, evacuation, and the Anschluss, all of which, it was said, would by now be accomplished or would at least be in sight had Germany been pursuing "a purely continental European policy."94

Missing from each of these analyses was the most obvious conclusion to be drawn from the Geneva incident, namely the Socialist dependence on Stresemann. Although there is no evidence that an SPD spokesman ever made so much as a private admission that Stresemann was indispensable to the implementation of the fulfillment policy, an abundance of circumstantial evidence points directly to this. Only a short while before, the Social Democrats had held up the forming of a government for nearly six weeks, at least partly out of need to retain Stresemann as foreign minister. For the Socialists to be so dependent

on the chairman of the People's Party was a tribute not only to Stresemann's ability, but testified also to the SPD's lack of leadership—especially in the area of foreign policy. Müller, despite his earlier tenure as foreign minister, was an inexperienced diplomat and lacked broad understanding. His confusion at Geneva was symptomatic of the Socialist attitude and policy toward France: good intentions foiled by a lack of communication and by the absence of creative skill. To some extent this was due to the SPD's historic preoccupation with domestic policy, witnessed most recently in the 1928 elections. Also, the very fact that the Socialists had traditionally been internationalist and anti-nationalist left them more or less unqualified to cope with the nuances of nation-state relations. It is not surprising that Breitscheid, the Social Democrat best equipped to work for a Franco-German rapprochement, came to the party from the ranks of the middle class. Yet Breitscheid's aloof manner and caustic speech made him unpopular, and there was little chance that he could have succeeded to the foreign ministry during Stresemann's lifetime. Thus the fulfillment of Socialist foreign policy remained dependent on Stresemann. And since this dependence was so very obvious, considerations of pride dictated that it be ignored.

Following his return from Geneva, Müller was forced by Stresemann's continuing illness to remain active in
foreign affairs. Through his ambassadors and through Parker Gilbert he worked for the establishment of a reparations committee of independent experts (as opposed to a committee of government officials) to review the reparations arrangements. Müller also continued to insist that reparations be kept separate from the evacuation of the occupied Rhineland, but it became increasingly clear that the juncture had been made and that the latter was now dependent on the former. Regardless, Müller knew from his Geneva experience that evacuation could be handled best by Stresemann and Briand. Reparations, on the other hand, were more within the purview of Poincaré, who Müller hoped would remain in office because, as he wrote to Adolf Müller, German minister to Bern, "only a man of Poincaré's strength will be able to make clear to the French certain disagreeable necessities."^95

Happily for Müller, Stresemann had now recovered sufficient strength to attend the winter session of the League Council at Lugano. Vorwärts had become increasingly testy in its criticism of French inactivity but was pleased to report that Briand, Stresemann, and British Foreign Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain displayed at Lugano the same "friendly words and demonstrative optimism" that had

characterized Locarno. The accumulated "mistrust" of the recent past seemed miraculously swept away. But as Stresemann later told the cabinet, Lugano was only a very small step forward. The announcement that the new reparations committee would be composed of independent experts merely reflected broad agreement; Stresemann remained worried that the experts would be insufficiently free to decide as they wished. Nor was there any real progress toward evacuation. Briand proposed evacuation of the second zone but Stresemann and Chamberlain favored a total withdrawal. Nevertheless, the Socialists believed there had been an improvement in tone.96

On balance, 1928 had proved a slow year for foreign policy, "a year without progress." In a December 30 summation, Breitscheid confessed that he, like many others, had expected too much. Problems of security and disarmament were complex, with many nations involved and with conflicting interests at work. The only advances Breitscheid could note were (1) the Kellogg-Briand Pact, (2) verbal progress toward evacuation (the Germans having made a clearer and better case), and (3) the decision to reexamine reparations. More negative was the Sozialistische Monatshefte, which

96 Vorwärts, Nov. 25, 1928, a.m., pp. 1-2; Dec. 6, 1928, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); Dec. 9, 1928, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 12, 1928, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 16, 1928, a.m., p. 1; Germany, AR; Kabinett, Dec. 21, 1928, 1700/779133-35.
acknowledged no advances but only setbacks, with Müller's Geneva speech topping the list. From any point of view, the accomplishments of the SPD-led government were not very impressive, especially in light of the party's earlier contention that great events waited only on the departure of the Bürgerblock.  

Indicating a faster pace for 1929 was the February meeting of the experts' committee in Paris. Named as the German members were Hjalmar Horace Greeley Schacht, the Reichsbank president, and Albert Vögler, a Ruhr industrialist. Schacht was the key figure and had the approval of both Müller and Hilferding. As an "independent expert" he demanded and received a free hand, a concession which many Social Democrats soon came to regret. In mid-April Schacht and Vögler rejected Allied proposals as excessive and also introduced the extraneous matter of former German colonies, on the grounds that their return would contribute to Germany's ability to pay. None of this had been discussed with the German cabinet, which found it necessary to recall Schacht and Vögler to Berlin at once. Stresemann and apparently Müller disliked Schacht's thirty-seven year payment proposal, while Interior Minister Carl Severing was furious over the injection of political demands into

the discussions. Severing, together with Economics
Minister Julius Curtius, also advised against the
suggestion of Müller and Finance Minister Hilferding that
cabinet members confer with Schacht in Düsseldorf. The
experts, after all, were supposed to be uninstructed, and
it would be better to have them come to Berlin where no
one could be sure for what purpose or to see whom.
Hilferding, however, made the most acute observation,
noting that the Germans had already taken their stand in
Paris and that secret conversations with Schacht and
Vögler, regardless of where held, could not really alter
matters very much. 98

The SPD press response to Schacht's actions was
at first disbelief and then anger. Vorwärts dismissed
early reports of a crisis as nothing other than a French
ploy, a crude gambit to stampede the Germans into stiff
terms. Breitscheid, however, soon accused Schacht of
exceeding his competence, of acting imperiously toward
other committee members, and of endangering the entire work
of the conference. Did he not realize, Breitscheid asked,
that a failure in Paris would mean the continuation of the
Dawes Plan, and thus no alleviation whatever? A Vorwärts

98 Germany, AR, Kabinett, Jan. 9, 1929, 1701/779145;
April 19, 1929, 1701/780276-90; Hermann Müller to Adolf
Müller, Nov. 1, 1928, Müller Papers; Vorwärts, Jan. 10,
1929, a.m., p. 2; April 16, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2; April 18,
1929, a.m., p. 1. Schacht did not directly demand the
return of former colonies, but implied it by asserting
that Germany must again have her own sources of raw
materials. Curtius, Young-Plan, 39.
editorial also attacked Schacht's evident desire for colonies, arguing (1) that they were unprofitable and (2) that the introduction of the issue had severely decreased the likelihood of an understanding of any kind. Also critical of Schacht, but for a different reason, was Otto Braun, who told the Prussian Landtag that Schacht had offered too much, rather than too little. For Germans to pay 1640 million marks yearly for thirty-seven years was said to be impossible without greatly lowering the standard of living of the working-class.\(^9\)

The return of the experts to Berlin was not very helpful. Schacht's explanations to the cabinet were vague, and little was achieved except to get Schacht and Vögler to agree to refrain from discussing political matters (as opposed to economic). Still, Vorwärts expressed hope that Schacht could perform a rescue operation. Too much was at stake for the conference to collapse.\(^10\)

While the Young Committee sat in Paris, Chancellor Müller was trying to construct a more solid government in Berlin. Anticipating a bitter parliamentary fight over the final reparations settlement, he wanted the unreserved support of all the Great Coalition parties. The Paris

\(^9\)Vorwärts, April 19, 1929, a.m., p. 1; April 20, 1929, a.m., p. 1 (Breitscheid); April 20, 1929, a.m., p. 2; April 23, 1929, a.m., p. 2 (Braun); Braun, Weimar zu Hitler, 255-56.

\(^10\)Germany, AR, Kabinett, April 21, 1929, 1701/780291-780303; Vorwärts, April 21, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2.
negotiations, he said, demanded an end to the present "twilight existence." Not until April 10, however, was his appeal to place the government on "firm ground" finally heeded. By then the parties had composed their differences on domestic policy and, for the second and last time, the Great Coalition was formed. 101

While a more stable government was needed for the coming struggle over the Young Plan, there was little it could do to advance immediate foreign policy interests, such as disarmament and evacuation. At the unproductive sixth meeting of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, held in Geneva from April 15 to May 6, Count Bernstorff, the German delegate, did his best, but the "great powers," so Vorwärts complained, sabotaged any prospects for agreement. As for the evacuation question, some encouragement was provided by Poincaré, who, in an interview with Victor Schiff, declared France's readiness to evacuate, perhaps "within a few months." But nothing came of this. Nor was the SPD demand for the early return of the Saar—expressed

101 Vorwärts was technically correct in calling it a "cabinet of the Great Coalition" (italics added), since the People's Party did not fully commit itself to support future policies. Whatever its name, the cabinet had gained strength and Müller was satisfied. Germany, AR, Kabinett, April 8, 1929, 1701/780163-73; April 9, 1929, 1701/780174-79; Turner, Stresemann, 246-51; Helga Timm, Die deutsche Sozialpolitik und der Bruch der Grossen Koalition im März 1930 (Düsseldorf, 1952), 118-24; Vorwärts, April 11, 1929, a.m., p. 1.
again at the May Parteitag in Magdeburg—any closer to fulfillment.102

The Paris experts' committee, on which so much depended, completed its work in early June. Schacht continued to be relatively uncooperative and uncommunicative, and Vögler, who thought that the tentatively agreed-upon payments were too high, even resigned. But the Socialist ministers—especially Müller, Hilferding, and Labor Minister Rudolf Wissell—were interested less in the exact amount to be paid than in removing the various economic and financial controls that had been applied under the Dawes Plan. The cabinet protocols reveal that they were eager to accept anything that could be called reasonable. Vorwärts expressed a similar view, criticizing Vögler's "protest" resignation as childish and unhelpful. Fritz Naphtali, a party economic expert, wrote that not only would a new settlement assuredly be a financial improvement over the Dawes Plan, but concurrence among the Paris experts had become a de facto conditio sine qua non for the Rhineland evacuation. Being "true to the Dawes Plan," à la DNVP, would shipwreck the possibility of an

102Vorwärts, April 13, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2; April 20, 1929, a.m., p. 7; May 7, 1929, a.m., p. 7; transcript of Schiff-Poincaré interview, Feb. 16, 1929, Müller Papers; SPD, Protokoll . . . Magdeburg 1929 (Berlin, 1929), 211-12, 260.
early French withdrawal, and would also undermine any chance for further pacification.\(^{103}\)

The final plan, signed on June 7, proposed that Germany pay for fifty-nine years, with annuities for the initial thirty-seven year period averaging 2,050 million marks, and payments for the subsequent twenty-two year period averaging 1564.6 million marks. All the foreign controls that existed under the Dawes Plan would be abolished, but a Bank for International Settlements would be established to facilitate currency transfers. As expected, the experts' report was accepted by the German government as the basis for upcoming official negotiations. The Socialists viewed the plan as sound and workable but stopped short of enthusiasm. Countering the Nationalist contention that the payments were too heavy and too prolonged and that the entire proposal ought therefore to be rejected, the SPD argued that payments were lighter than under the Dawes Plan, that external economic and financial controls were being removed, and that acceptance was a necessary prelude to evacuation. While no one enjoyed the prospect of continued large reparations payments and no one claimed the plan was cause for "jubilation," still it was a big "step forward." Vorwärts confidently predicted

\(^{103}\)Germany, AR, Kabinett, May 3, 1929, 1701/780397-780405; May 6, 1929, 1701/780431-32; May 21, 1929, 1702/780571-75; Vorwärts, May 23, 1929, p.m., p. 1; June 2, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2.
that agreement on the experts’ report would usher in
"lasting cooperation between Germany and France."
Evacuation of the second zone, it was hoped, would now
come within six months with evacuation of the third
following shortly thereafter, all of which would render
untenable the occupation of the Saar. As Naphtali
maintained in Die Gesellschaft, it was France, not Germany,
that was making the major concessions. Still, France
had reason to be satisfied, because the overall settlement,
being more realistic, would bring France greater economic
and political security. Thus for both countries the
Young Plan would mark one of the final stages in the
liquidation of the war.104

On the other hand, there was an undercurrent of
concern among the Social Democrats that Germany was
accepting substantial obligations while receiving no
verification that France would, as commonly supposed,
carry out the Rhineland evacuation. There was even more
concern regarding the Saar, and for good reason.
Stresemann had talked with Briand in Madrid and in Paris,
receiving assurances of Rhineland evacuation but grave doubts about the Saar. And Müller had heard from Egon Wertheimer, an SPD correspondent in London, that the newly elected Labour government would be unwilling to support a German push for immediate return of the Saar. Müller himself recognized that the introduction of the Saar issue could complicate and delay a solution of the reparations and Rhineland questions. But Müller's view was not made public, and a considerable gap remained between what was expected and what was being achieved. This gap was large enough to prompt repeated SPD Reichstag demands for more action concerning the freeing of the Rhenish areas and the Saarland, leading one Socialist deputy (from partially occupied Hesse) to openly criticize the Müller government for its lack of energy in pursuing evacuation.105

Most critical of all was the Sozialistische Monatshefte. The journal complained that the Young Plan had been devised in London and New York to the detriment of Berlin and Paris. Almost all the payments would be made in cash and not in kind, with the result that two-thirds of all German disbursements would go "directly" to

105 Germany, AR, Kabinett, June 21, 1929, 1702/780923-26; Egon Wertheimer to Müller, June 24, 1929; Müller to Wertheimer, June 28, 1929; Müller to Breitscheid, July 10, 1929, all Müller Papers. Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 425, pp. 2777-79 (Böckler); 2784-85 (Ulrich, the Hessian); 2794-95 (Frau Schiffgens); and also Breitscheid (2815-22).
the greedy Americans in the form of French and Belgian war
debt installments. This view closely resembled that of
Léon Blum, since, like Blum, the Monatshefte believed that
German payments should not only be lowered but also should
be applied directly to reconstruction. Moreover, France's
debts to the United States and to England should be
cancelled. Yet the Monatshefte did not advocate rejection
of the Young Plan. Rather, it regarded the plan as a
fait accompli beyond which France and Germany could still
find their way to solidarity. 106

Most of the Socialist criticism could be dispelled
by moving ahead with a conference of governments, a
necessary follow-up to acceptance of the experts' report.
In the absence of Müller, who had a gall bladder operation
on July 21, Stresemann set the guidelines for the forth-
coming Hague Conference and also was named to head the
delegation. The foreign minister intended to forestall any
economic agreement unless or until there was a concomitant
settlement of the evacuation question. He was convinced
that Briand was ready to offer French withdrawal from the
two Rhineland zones but, like Müller, was much less
optimistic about the Saar. Stresemann's insistence that

106 Ludwig Quesnel, "Das angelsächsische Spiel in
Paris," SM, XXXV (May 21, 1929), 380-84; same, "Youngplan
und Reichsschuld," SM, XXXV (June 17, 1929), 482-88; Max
Cohen, "Wege nach Kontinentaleuropa," SM, XXXV (June 17,
1929), 478-82; Ziebura, Blum, I, p. 309; Breitscheid to
Müller, July 8, 1929, Müller Papers.
the conference not be interrupted but be carried through to a successful conclusion indicated a willingness to be conciliatory on the Saarland issue. 107

To fully apprise the French of the depth of German feelings regarding evacuation, Breitscheid spent over a week in Paris in late June and early July. In talks, discussions, and interviews he made it clear to Socialists, to government officials, and to the newspaper public that Reichstag acceptance of the Young Plan was contingent on the freeing of the Rhineland. On this and on the amicable settlement of the Saar question depended the future of Franco-German cooperation and understanding. Supporting Breitscheid was the Executive of the Labour and Socialist International, which announced that acceptance of the new reparations plan would necessitate foreign troop removals from the Rhineland without conditions and without delay.

And in the French Chamber, the Socialists requested that Briand cease equivocating and give a direct reply to their demand for evacuation. Yet Breitscheid was troubled about what seemed to him to be an element of ambiguity in the French Socialist attitude toward foreign affairs. The French favored evacuation but opposed the Young Plan because no commensurate downward revision of war debts had been offered France. To Breitscheid justice was justice

107 Vorwärts, July 22, 1929, p.m., p. 1; Germany, AR, Kabinett, June 28, 1929, 1702/780992-98; Aug. 2, 1929, 1702/781134-39.
and should not be predicated on the granting of a quid pro quo. Breitscheid thus felt constrained to warn his French colleagues that the "juncture" had been made and that resistance to the Young Plan could contribute to delaying the evacuation, which in Germany would have repercussions that would be detrimental to Franco-German relations.108

Thus by the time the Hague Conference opened on August 6 the Socialists had convinced themselves that it could not fail, for no reason other than that it must not fail. Externally, a satisfactory resolution of problems was necessary to advance the work of conciliation. Internally, the Rhineland evacuation had to be attained in order to silence an increasing chauvinistic agitation. The Hague Conference, Vorwärts predicted, would complete the liquidation of the war and eliminate "the unnatural predominance of foreign policy over domestic politics," thereby enabling the government to turn to matters of "financial and social reordering."109

108Vorwärts, July 2, 1929, p.m., p. 1; July 6, 1929, a.m., p. 9; July 13, 1929, a.m., p. 1; July 17, 1929, p.m., p. 1; July 30, 1929, a.m., p. 1; LSI, Reports Submitted to the Fourth Congress of the Labour and Socialist International, Vienna, July 1931, by the Secretariat of the L.S.I. (Zurich, 1931), 70; Breitscheid to Müller, July 8, 1929, Müller Papers.

109Vorwärts, Aug. 4, 1929, pp. 1-2; Aug. 6, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2.
The first three weeks of the conference produced much stormy debate but little progress. Philip Snowden, the British delegate, endangered the acceptance of the experts' calculations by demanding a larger share of German reparations for England. Meanwhile, Briand evaded Stresemann's importuning for evacuation. To Vorwärts it was "unbearable" that Germany, having accepted the plan, should now be a victim of a Franco-British dispute, especially since the quarrel had been engendered by the Labour government (Prime Minister MacDonald fully supporting Snowden), which the SPD had confidently expected to be on Germany's side. Also receiving criticism was the shifty Briand, whose tactics were charitably described as "dilatory." By August 16 the situation was diagnosed as "critical," and on August 22 Vorwärts warned that Germans must prepare themselves for a collapse of the conference. The Sozialistische Monatshefte, rather predictably, was not surprised that the English were playing the role of villain; their sole object, according to Ludwig Quessel, was to prevent agreement between Germany and France. This assertion, however, was belied by the activity of Arthur Henderson, British foreign secretary and chairman of the conference's political committee, who, at a crucial moment, threatened Briand with a fait accompli of English evacuation of the Rhineland regardless of French action. Briand then did what he had for so long been hinting he
would do anyway: he authorized French withdrawal to begin in September and to be completed by June 1930. Coupled with reparations concessions to England, this brought the conference to a surprisingly successful conclusion. The Social Democratic cabinet ministers and the Socialist press both affirmed that matters had turned out well. The Young Plan had been saved, evacuation would commence almost immediately, and the Franco-British entente of some twenty-five years standing had been finally and definitely broken. All credit was given to Henderson and the British Labourites. Briand, conversely, was criticized for so long withholding what would ultimately have to be granted anyway. Almost forgotten was the Saar, about which there had been much talk but no great expectations, at least on the part of the delegates. However, negotiations regarding the early return of this area were to be continued.\(^\text{110}\)

Pervading Socialist critiques of the Hague settlement was the inference that Germany's major foreign policy problems were now solved. Foreign troops would be leaving

\(^{110}\)\textit{Vorwärts}, Aug. 7, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Aug. 11, 1929, a.m., p. 11; Aug. 12, 1929, p. 2; Aug. 13, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Aug. 16, 1929, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 18, 1929, a.m., p. 2; Aug. 22, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Aug. 22, 1929, p.m., p. 1; Aug. 25, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2; Aug. 30, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2; Ludwig Queszel, "Frankreich und Deutschland im Haag," \textit{SM}, XXXV (Aug. 12, 1929), 682-87; Germany, AR, Kabinett, Sept. 3, 1929, 1703/781331-33; Sept. 13, 1929, 1703/781342-44; Sept. 17, 1929, 1703/781382-85.
German soil, some of them four-and-one-half years ahead of schedule, and Germany's reparations debt was to be satisfactorily adjusted. This would permit the party to concentrate on its first love: domestic policy. The winter of 1928-1929 had been unusually severe, with two-and-one-half million unemployed and with much general distress. The Nazis and Communists were both attaining greater prominence, and it seemed imperative to focus interest on questions of social welfare, the neglect of which would only encourage further radicalism. Despite the considerable reparations burden that remained, the Socialists considered the agreement on the Young Plan a great advance and a great opportunity. 111

On the negative side, a most unwelcome portent of the conference was a fainting spell of Stresemann, whose health had been in decline for many months. Hilferding, a former medical doctor, examined him and said to Curtius, "time has run out." It had, indeed. The foreign minister died on October 3, after suffering two heart attacks. Only now did the Socialists give him the credit he deserved. From Müller, Breitscheid, Severing, and many others came the recognition that it was Stresemann, who, more than any other individual, had raised Germany from the wreckage of 1923 to a responsible, respected position.

111 Vorwärts, Aug. 30, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 1, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2; Sept. 11, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2; Sept. 15, 1929, a.m., p. 15.
in the councils of the world. As the chancellor put it, Stresemann had played the "decisive" role. No Social Democrat could have done what he did. Breitscheid's personal tribute was that he had put country above party or personal interest. Out of respect, the working-class should lower its flag to him. Fortunately, so it was generally observed, at the Hague he had been able to complete his last great work of understanding. A solid foundation was now laid for further advances. Stresemann's achievement, as both Vorwärts and the Sozialistische Monatshefte noted, pointed toward the future rather than the past. But who would succeed him was another question, on the minds of both the Socialists and of the crowds that gathered in front of newspaper offices in Paris. The SPD admitted frankly that it had no replacement. "Temporary" occupancy of the foreign office was thus given to Curtius, Stresemann's People's Party colleague and a supposed follower of the policy of conciliation.112

A second portentous event of October 1929 was the New York stock market crash. It was the catastrophic economic decline, induced, at least in part, by the

112Julius Curtius, Sechs Jahre Minister der deutschen Republik (Heidelberg, 1948), 90; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 426, pp. 3251-53 (Müller); Vorwärts, Oct. 3, 1929, p.m., pp. 1-2; Oct. 4, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 4, 1929, p.m., p. 1; Oct. 6, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Julius Kaliski, "Der Außenpolitiker Stresemann," SM, XXXV (Oct. 25, 1929), 888-92.
collapse of the American securities market, that paved the way to power for the National Socialists. But in Germany there had already been a foretaste of depression and unemployment, on which the Nazis were capitalizing to make impressive gains in communal and provincial elections. They also joined forces with the Nationalists to organize an anti-Young Plan plebiscite, calling on the electorate to vote for "A Law against the Enslavement of the German People."

Luckily, the Germans had no foreign policy crisis to face at this time. Briand, who had been named premier following Poincaré's resignation in July, had made proposals for a European Union, wherein he asked for the opinions of other countries, with the understanding that he would soon circulate a detailed memorandum on his project. The Socialists, however, were still disenchanted with Briand for his recent delaying tactics regarding evacuation; thus they took a very reserved wait-and-see attitude toward his European Union scheme. Having called him "the hero of the right," Vorwärts was not unhappy to see him overthrown on October 22. His ouster also provided a splendid opportunity for the French Socialists to help construct a genuine left-wing regime, as they had been invited to do by the Radical Édouard Daladier. With the Labour Party ruling in England, and with the SPD as the strongest party in the German governmental coalition, the
circumstances were ideal for the French Socialists to pursue an "active government policy." "For the working-classes throughout Europe it would be a day of joy, hope, and pride." Yet it was not to be. The French Socialist parliamentary group favored participation in the government but Blum opposed it, as did the Socialist National Council and an extraordinary party congress. The Germans were deeply disappointed. Vorwärts itemized the reasons for rejection: an unstable majority, a tradition of non-participation, and doctrinal objections, but chided the French for thinking only negatively, as if nothing were to be gained by participation. Blum and Faure were accused of a willingness to criticize and overthrow bourgeois governments, but were said to be hesitant about making positive contributions, not only in the sense of winning greater benefits for workers but also in forestalling the advent of a rightist regime, which might well come to power should the leftist parties fail to agree. The French Socialists were characterized as so idiosyncratically concerned with their own internal problems that they had overlooked their wider responsibilities to Europe.\footnote{Vorwärts, July 12, 1929, p. 1; Sept. 7, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Sept. 10, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 23, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2; Oct. 23, 1929, p.m., p. 1; Oct. 29, 1929, p.m., p. 2; Oct. 30, 1929, p. 1; Dec. 7, 1929, a.m., p. 9; SPD, Parteikorrespondenz . . . 1930 (Berlin, n.d.), 55-58.}
The Social Democratic criticism was frank and truthful, as friendly criticism ought to be. It overlooked, however, some striking parallels between the French and German Socialist parties, which help explain the ineffectiveness of both. Each possessed leaders of probity and honor and had only the best intentions. Each had a large parliamentary delegation that was backed by an impressive party apparatus and publicity machine. Yet each was notably lacking in influence. Neither exerted much weight in national politics, at least not in proportion to party membership and voting strength. Partly responsible for this were institutional and historical factors, such as proportional representation and the multi-party system. These tended to fragment responsibility and to dilute power. Beyond this, however, the two Socialist parties displayed a general indecisiveness and fear of responsibility that militated against their achieving their stated objectives. The French appeared to be the most quixotic, wrapping themselves in a cloak of ideological purity, which was somewhat suspect, however, in that they continuously debated the whethers and ifs of entering coalition governments. The Germans had advanced to a subsequent phase, in that they were ready to participate, but they too repeatedly failed to exert maximum leverage. They could not, of course, hope to occupy the central or "swing" position of the Center Party. Nevertheless, had
the Social Democrats produced a few leaders with charisma and drive and had the party organization displayed more than a modicum of imagination and energy, then the SPD would have achieved greater success. As it was, the timidity and fecklessness attributed by the German Social Democrats to the French applied at least partially to the Germans themselves. Had both parties been able to demonstrate greater dynamism during this period, Franco-German relations could, in all likelihood, have been put on a sounder long-term basis.

Since the French Socialists rejected the formation of a leftist regime, the predicted turn to the right ensued. The new cabinet featured André Tardieu as premier and André Maginot as minister of colonies. Both men were staunch defenders of the Versailles system. Tardieu was thought of as talented but unpredictable and therefore unreliable while Maginot was considered the spokesman of the chauvinists. The retention of Briand as foreign minister provided only small comfort. Briand was expected to continue his customary foreign policy, but only in the most tepid sense was he still considered a man of the "left." 114

Disappointment over the course of French politics was alleviated by the defeat in Germany of the "Freedom

114 Vorwärts, Oct. 23, 1929, a.m., p. 1; Nov. 5, 1929, a.m., p. 2; Nov. 10, 1929, a.m., pp. 1-2.
Bill." Although the initiators received the required 10 per cent voters' signatures on the petition, the anti-
Young Plan law was crushingly defeated in the Reichstag, with even the Communists voting against it. In the
November 29-30 debate the numerous arguments against the law were reiterated by Curtius (speaking for the govern-
ment) and by Severing and Breitscheid. The Nationalists and Nazis were told that, given enactment of the "Freedom
Bill," the Dawes Plan would remain in effect, the Rhineland would not be evacuated, and the Saar negotiations would be broken off. Such reasonable arguments, however, did not faze the bill's supporters. Overwhelmed in the Reichstag, they submitted the proposal as a referendum on December 22, receiving 5,825,082 votes, or 13.83 per cent of the eligible vote, whereas over fifty per cent was required.\(^{115}\)

With this nuisance disposed of, the party and government prepared for a second Hague Conference, scheduled to open in early January 1930. Although the major political decisions had been made in August, many technical but not unimportant financial matters remained to be considered. Named to head the German delegation was Curtius. The foreign minister himself had favored Schacht, but, largely at Müller's urging, the Reichsbank president was left behind. Schacht had taken an increasingly

\(^{115}\)Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 426, pp. 3285-91 (Curtius); 3329-36 (Severing); 3336-42 (Breitscheid); 3369-74 (voting); SPD, Parteikorrespondenz 1930, 14-15.
critical view of the Young Plan, and Müller, along with other Socialists, feared that he would try to undermine the Hague negotiations. Now that Germany and her creditors were so close to final agreement, no risks should be taken. Müller may also have felt some personal animus, since Schacht's unremittent sniping at Hilferding had contributed to the latter's resignation as finance minister. The chancellor excused himself from attending the conference with the lame explanation that if it went badly, or even broke down, he would be discredited and would therefore not be in a position to pick up the pieces, i.e., to act in a conciliatory or peacemaking role. More likely, Müller's decision stemmed from a realistic appraisal of his limitations as a negotiator.116

The only controversial point that remained from the first Hague Conference was the question of sanctions. The Socialists spoke and wrote of right-wing pressure on the French government to include military or other "special" sanctions within the finalized Young Plan.117 Yet the German delegation had no difficulty in winning acceptance of what, from its point of view, was a satisfactory


117Vorwärts, Jan. 3, 1930, a.m., pp. 1-2; Jan. 5, 1930, a.m., p. 1; Germany, AR, Kabinett, Dec. 27, 1929 (1st session), 1704/782222-23.
solution: in the event of default of reparations payment, the creditor governments could appeal to the Permanent Court of International Justice, which would rule on whether German "bad faith" was involved. If "bad faith" was found to exist, then the creditors would be entitled to impose economic and/or financial sanctions. As Breitscheid explained, this was only saying that "treaties must be fulfilled." In his view the only unfortunate aspect was the mistrust implied in discussing the possibility of German bad faith. Even should Hugenberg and Hitler come to power they would shrink, so Breitscheid contended, from a deliberate violation of the treaty. Still, Vorwärts editorialized, the conference was a resounding success. Much of the credit was given to Curtius, who was described as a worthy successor of Stresemann. His skillful and energetic diplomacy had helped resolve the reparations question, thereby ensuring the evacuation of the Rhineland. Together, these achievements were said to have eliminated the major elements of insecurity from Germany's foreign relations.118

Within three weeks following the conclusion of the second Hague Conference, legislation implementing the Young Plan was presented by the Müller cabinet to the

---

Reichstag. Despite the noisy opposition of the Nationalists, Nazis, and Communists and despite disagreements over social policy that threatened the continuance of the government, the coalition held together to complete all the parliamentary readings in thirty days, by March 12. In defending the plan, the Socialists stressed that it constituted the only realistic choice. Breitscheid stated and restated the party's "very strong doubts" about Germany's ability to make even the reduced payments that were specified. Other speakers were equally explicit about their lack of enthusiasm. Yet all agreed there was no viable alternative, since rejection of the Young Plan meant continuation of the Dawes Plan, which called for the payment of 132 billion gold marks as stipulated by the 1921 London Schedule of Payments. Not only did the Young settlement reduce reparations to approximately 36.5 billion marks, but it removed the financial controls that had subjected the Reichsbank and the federal railways to a significant measure of foreign control. Equally important, the early evacuation of the Rhineland depended on approval of the Young Plan legislation. Breitscheid and Eduard David chided the opponents of the plan for their alleged unconcern over the distress of the Rhinelanders. "Let the French remain on the Rhine" was Breitscheid's sarcastic summary of the position of the Nationalists. Müller, speaking in his capacity as
chancellor, went on to say that "once the freeing of the Rhineland and the Palatinate is a fact, the freeing of the Saar district will soon follow." In this one respect, however, the official SPD spokesman did not share Müller's optimism. Breitscheid observed that very difficult negotiations lay ahead and that Germans might have to wait until 1935 for return of the Saar. Regardless, acceptance of the legislation at least raised the possibility of an early return. The Young Plan, on balance, was another "step forward" to "political equality." The only responsible course, Breitscheid told the opposition, was acceptance. True patriotism, he continued, consisted of a manly submission to necessity, a stance taken by the SPD in signing the Versailles Treaty in 1919, in accepting the London Ultimatum of 1921, and in approving the Dawes Plan in 1924. David added that the DNVP's total lack of "positive proposals" indicated the extent of that party's responsibility. Anyone sincerely interested in peace, he affirmed, conceded the merits of the pending legislation. In addition to its improvements over the existing Dawes Plan conditions, it reinforced the Franco-German reconciliation that had developed with the Locarno Pact and the Kellogg-Briand Treaty. "Lasting peace between the two great culture nations of France and Germany"—recognizably "the central problem of the present generation" could be
assured only by the continued "liquidation of the war," of which the Hague Agreements constituted an important part.\textsuperscript{119}

Although the passage of the legislation, on March 12, was hailed by the Socialist press as a "decisive" event in foreign affairs, and as a victory of the "democratic Republic" over its enemies, it constituted the last significant achievement of Weimar Germany.\textsuperscript{120} The Republic's remaining three years witnessed a slide from economic distress to economic disaster. By February 1930, unemployment had risen to over three-and-one-half million, creating desperate problems of welfare financing. Here the SPD ministers proved willing to compromise with the bourgeois parties. Müller also prepared himself to govern, with Hindenburg's support, via the emergency powers authorized under Article 48 of the constitution. On these matters, however, the chancellor was unable to carry his own party with him. On March 27, the SPD parliamentary group, at the urging of the trade unions, voted against the so-called "Brüning compromise," which would postpone for six months the decision over increased unemployment contributions. In a situation that \textit{Vorwärts}

\textsuperscript{119}Germany, \textit{Verhandlungen}, Vol. 426, pp. 3909-15 (Breitscheid); Vol. 427, pp. 4174-49 (David); 3990-94 (Heinig); 4362-67 (Müller); 4378-81 (Stampfer).

\textsuperscript{120}\textit{Vorwärts}, March 13, 1930, a.m., p. 1.
itself described as "grotesque," Müller and his cabinet were forced to resign. The new chancellor was Heinrich Brüning, a Centrist, whose government included seven holdovers from the Müller era. Yet in substituting Schiele and Treviranus, members of a breakaway element of the DNVP, for the SPD ministers, the new regime had taken an unquestioned turn to the right. Concomitantly, the Social Democratic Party was eliminated from governmental policy making.121

CHAPTER V: PRIMAT DER INNENPOLITIK

The work of German-French understanding . . . must succeed. If not, the Europe of the Twentieth Century will sink into medieval barbarism.¹

Toward the Brüning government the SPD took up a position of "decisive opposition." Lacking solid parliamentary backing (and therefore in need of increased support), and including in the cabinet a number of known opponents of the Young Plan, the chancellor was presumed to be thinking about risky and adventurous (but unspecified) foreign policy gambits. Against this, as against a domestic policy of reaction and any attempt to rule dictatorially via Article 48, the Social Democrats promised immediate and unhesitating opposition. They also declared their readiness for new elections.²

The lack of confidence in Brüning was matched by the party's discouragement over French disinclination to disarm. At the London Naval Conference of January to April 1930, the lack of agreement prompted Vorwärts to

¹Vorwärts, March 8, 1932, a.m., p. 1 (Victor Schiff).

²Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 427, pp. 4731–39 (Breitscheid); Vorwärts, March 30, 1930, a.m., pp. 1–2; April 2, 1930, a.m., p. 1; April 3, 1930, a.m., p. 1; May 1, 1930, p. 1.
characterize the work of the conference as "unsatisfactory."
Held at fault were the Italians and the French. Italy's
Fascist leadership at least made her attitude understandable,
if not excusable. But France, according to both the SPD
and the Executive Committee of the International, had
sabotaged wider agreement for no explicable reason whatever.
Already disturbed over a new French naval building program
announced in February, the German Socialists questioned
whether France needed so much protection. With Germany
disarmed and with England having committed herself, via the
Locarno treaties, to defend France in the event of a German
attack, France's best guarantee for peace, so Vorwärts
argued, was to encourage general disarmament. This would
have the advantages of winning German good will and of
stifling any cry for German rearmament. But instead the
French government exhibited "bad faith" and opened itself
to the charge that it followed a naval policy reminiscent
of that of Wilhelmian Germany.\(^3\)

A less critical but still reserved reaction was
accorded Briand's Pan-European Memorandum of May 17, 1930.
In this document the French foreign minister proposed a
European federal union, the focus of which was on collective

\(^3\)Vorwärts, Feb. 12, 1930, p.m., pp. 1-2; April 23,
1930, a.m., pp. 1-2; May 17, 1930, a.m., p. 11; LSI,
Reports Submitted to the Fourth Congress of the Labour
and Socialist International, Vienna, July 1931, by the
Secretariat of the L.S.I. (Zurich, 1931), 59.
security, but which also suggested the possibility of economic collaboration. Although momentarily viewing the memo as a dramatic new opportunity to extend economic and political cooperation, the Social Democrats soon concluded that the intent of the proposal was to institute an "eastern Locarno," to slyly contribute to France's security system at Germany's expense. Embodying this conclusion was Rudolf Breitscheid's authoritative Reichstag speech of June 25. Breitscheid had recently returned from Geneva where he had participated in sessions of the International Federation of the League of Nations Associations and of the Federation for European Cooperation. He was disappointed that economic questions had been pushed into the background and had been made dependent on the previous settlement of security questions. "We are very skeptical," he said, "when we hear the word 'security' from over there [France]. . . . what economic regulation has to do with security is not at all clear to us." Breitscheid was also doubtful of Briand's insistence on maintaining full sovereignty, which he described as an outmoded attitude, hardly consonant with the idea of European union. Additionally, Brietscheid warned against the weakening of the League by setting up a rival organization, and also declared that the proposal and the discussions had so far failed to bridge the disarmament gap, whereby Germany was still saddled with the demilitarized zone
east of the Rhine and with only token armed forces. Thus while Breitscheid did not reject Briand's proposal outright, he made it clear that, in its present form, the memorandum was unacceptable. The German government, he said, should continue the negotiations, but with two reservations, namely that "equality of rights" (general disarmament) be granted Germany and that any agreement or pact stipulate that existing treaties be subject to revision (thus avoiding the giving of guarantees to Poland and Czechoslovakia).

More sympathetic toward France was the Sozialistische Monatshefte, which bemoaned the prevalent German assessment of Briand as "the sly fox" and which blandly explained that France had only made a suggestion, that France had merely issued an invitation to other countries to commence discussions, albeit discussions of the highest importance. The Monatshefte implied that German public opinion was already writing off the memorandum as a cynical maneuver and warned that this could be disastrous, since France would not leave the door open forever. The journal asserted that only through French economic help could Germany extricate herself from her worsening domestic situation. As for "security," the Monatshefte declared that Germans,
more so than Frenchmen, seemed to suffer from this preoccupation, a result, no doubt, of the continued and unfortunate tendency in Germany to regard France as the Erbeind. The Monatshefte position was that France's security, whether founded in alliances, armies, or both, worked to the benefit of all European countries, Germany included, in that it defended the continent against the threat of Anglo-Saxon dominance.  

In the meantime, all Germans prepared for the final departure of the Allies from the Rhineland, an event that was duly celebrated on June 30 and the following days. The departure of foreign troops, five years ahead of schedule, was hailed by the SPD as "a monument to the policy of international understanding." Nearly all Socialist commentators, however, looked beyond the Rhineland evacuation to the next visible goal: the early return of the Saar. To the SPD it was a foregone conclusion that the Saarlanders would opt for Germany in the plebiscite set for 1935; the only rational course therefore was for France to return the area ahead of time to Germany. This would earn good will and would avoid the contention and strife that would, in all likelihood, accompany a plebiscite. In the spring, the party optimistically

predicted that the relevant negotiations would be concluded by September. But hopes faded with the French reaction to the wild outbursts against former separatists that followed the departure of French troops from the Rhenish territories. A wave of plundering and terrorism was conducted in the early days of July that prompted a sharp French protest and that "again gave Briand," so Vorwärts said, "the means to charge Germany with a treaty violation." At the same time, the Saar negotiations were suspended, reportedly because of "very serious differences in opinion," meaning that the French had decided to mark time to see which way the political winds in Germany were blowing.6

Plenty of evidence was soon provided by the September 14 elections, which followed the withdrawal of German National support from Brüning's government and the consequent dissolution of the Reichstag, on July 18. The SPD called this a "victory," and pitched its electoral appeal not only to workers but also to bourgeois democrats who opposed the "capitalistic anarchy" and the "dictatorial" methods of Brüning, who was now governing the country with the help of Article 48. Foreign policy received little comment other than Breitscheid's restatement of his

6Vorwärts, May 14, 1930, a.m., p. 2; June 29, 1930, a.m., p. 1; July 1, 1930, a.m., p. 1; July 3, 1930, p.m., p. 1; July 5, 1930, a.m., p. 2; July 6, 1930, a.m., p. 1; July 7, 1930, p.m., p. 1; July 9, 1930, a.m., pp. 1-2; Wilhelm Sollmann, "Reparationsen und Räumung: Genf--Paris--Haag," Rheinische Beobachter, IX (June, 1930), 181-83; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 428, p. 5638.
mistrust of Brüning's intentions and of the "new methods" supposedly being prepared by both Brüning and Foreign Minister Curtius. "No adventures!" remained the SPD admonition, a warning, however, that was directed solely against Brüning. Not taken seriously were the National Socialists (Nazis), heretofore a small extremist group that was seemingly fit only for caricature. But, as it was, the Nazis made stunning gains, increasing their Reichstag delegation from 12 to 107, while the Social Democrats declined from 153 to 143, the Communists rose from 54 to 77, and the bourgeois parties lost ground.

The Socialist reaction was extreme dismay. On the morning of September 15 the party surveyed the "heap of ruins" that now seemed to constitute German political life. While pausing briefly to inform Brüning that his policies had led to the debacle, the SPD at once sounded the alarm that the next and most immediate step was to save the Republic. It was time, Vorwärts declared, for "clear judgments and courageous decisions," the implication of which was that the party was now ready to do business with Brüning.7

So overriding had become the domestic crisis that almost forgotten in the initial reaction to the election

7Vorwärts, July 19, 1930, a.m., p. 1; July 19, 1930, p.m., p. 2; July 20, 1930, p. 1; Aug. 29, 1930, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); Sept. 15, 1930, p.m., p. 1; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 428, p. 5820.
was the future of Franco-German relations. Within a few days, however, the Socialists were asserting that the policy of "cooperation" must go on, and in a matter of a week or so were talking almost as if nothing had happened. Müller, in a lecture given in Zurich on September 28, reminded his hearers that the SPD was still the largest party in the Reichstag and that the Nazis had compiled an ostensibly impressive vote merely by weaning electors away from other right-wing parties. France should not take fright, he said, but should contribute to security by disarming. This had been the case before the election and it remained the case now. Speaking for his own party, Müller could say that nothing had changed: "German Social Democracy continues to exert all its energy for the policy of understanding." 8

More alarmed over the impact of the Nazi success on foreign policy were the advocates of Kontinentalpolitik, who were appalled by the increasing number of Germans who now seemed ready to support the use of force. The Sozialistische Monatshefte stated with frankness and foresight that irrationality and violence would find external outlets, as well as internal ones. Therefore, Germany's first task was to commence the long-delayed

policy of unreserved cooperation with France. Germany should undertake genuine economic collaboration and should cease her sniping about disarmament and other matters. Only in this way could the domestic difficulties be overcome. The proper ordering of priorities, the Monatshefte asserted, was foreign policy first and internal policy second.9

The French themselves could not help but worry about the meaning of 6,410,000 votes for Hitler. Public opinion at once evinced "bitter surprise," and Curtius notes that Briand became cooler and less cooperative and that Premier André Tardieu became positively obstructionist. On the other hand, Léon Blum apparently failed to recognize the menace of Hitlerism (until much too late) and continued to believe that the SPD and the other defenders of the German Republic would hold the fort.10 Yet there is no evidence that the German Socialists asked themselves what their reaction would have been had the positions been reversed. The party leaders continued to affirm that France had nothing to fear. The Monatshefte, in its insistence on Primat der Aussenpolitik, at least intimated that it grasped the foreign policy ramifications of the


10Vorwärts, Sept. 16, 1930, a.m., p. 1; Curtius, Sechs Jahre, 170-76; Ziebura, Blum, I, pp. 323-25; Dalby, Blum, 258-59.
election but failed to give any practical advice as to how Social Democratic influence could be brought to bear so as to implement Kontinentalpolitik. Its assumption that collaboration with France could shield Germany from the increasingly deleterious effects of a world-wide depression was naive.

For those persons responsible for Socialist policy the immediate question was the reconstitution of the government. Although apparently willing to enter a reorganized Brüning cabinet, the Socialists were unacceptable to Hindenburg. Nevertheless, they still proved willing to support Brüning, fearing that the collapse of his government would mean a sharp turn to the right and the possible inclusion of Nazis in the cabinet. As Vorwärts put it, "the decisive question" was "democracy or fascism." While Brüning himself was not thought of as democratic (only a short while ago he had been characterized as "dictatorial"), toleration of his government was deemed necessary to preserve the forms of republicanism and to forestall a right-wing dictatorship. Thus the SPD vote of confidence given Brüning on October 19 was said to have "saved Germany from a catastrophe."11

Whether the policy of toleration was "wise" need not be discussed here. What is certain, and what bears repetition, is that this time it was undertaken for domestic reasons. Müller's Reichstag explanation of October 17 and a refutation of the Nazis by Wilhelm Hoegner briefly defended the Socialist foreign policy record. The Socialist deputies also called on Brüning to work for a reduction in reparations but otherwise refrained from foreign-political comment. Only the Sozialistische Monatshefte continued to regard external developments as decisive. With the SPD in support of Brüning, Max Cohen argued that the chancellor was now in a position to make a bid for French capital, the investment of which in Germany would soak up unemployment. France, so Cohen asserted, stood ready to cooperate. If Brüning should successfully seize the initiative, then Germany's internal and external problems could be solved simultaneously. 12

While most Socialists still advocated extreme caution in foreign policy, Brüning was evidently determined to push ahead rapidly in this area. 13 The chancellor had

12 Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 44, pp. 48-56 (Müller); 131-40 (Hoegner); Max Cohen, "Das politische Gebot," SM, XXXVI (Oct. 27, 1930), 963-69.

13 For general discussions of Brüning's foreign policy see Wolfgang Helbich, "Between Stresemann and Hitler: The Foreign Policy of the Brüning Government," World Politics, XII (Oct., 1959), 24-44, which is laudatory; and Craig, Bismarck to Adenauer, 61-69, extremely critical.
already sought and received a foreign loan of $125,000,000 but was soon thinking beyond this, in terms of a moratorium on reparations payments. In his Reichstag speech of October 16 he rejected "a policy of adventures" but dwelt on Germany's deteriorating economic condition, with its rapidly increasing unemployment (2,983,000 on September 15) and falling prices, and suggested that Germany's international financial obligations might have to be revised.\(^{14}\)

In Paris, however, the feeling remained strong that no further concessions should be granted to Germany for the moment. France had just completed an early evacuation of the Rhineland; she had granted a large, downward, and supposedly "definitive" revision of reparations; and then she had witnessed the mushrooming of the Hitlerite movement. Although Briand favored continued conciliation of Germany, Premier Tardieu emphasized fulfillment of existing treaties, and it was the premier's attitude that most accurately reflected the sentiment of the Chamber of Deputies, as a November 14 vote showed.\(^{15}\)

Cognizant of French reluctance to appease Germany further, the SPD approached the possibility of Young Plan revision with great care. On this point the Sozialistische


\(^{15}\)Vorwärts, Nov. 14, 1930, p.m., p. 2.
Monatshefte was united with the party leadership. The only significant difference is that the Monatshefte continued to make undocumented assertions about French willingness, even eagerness, to treat with Germany.

But Vorwärts also believed that headway could be made only so long as the matter was undertaken in a conciliatory spirit. In an October 29 editorial, the newspaper pointed to the past successes of "the policy of understanding" and attacked the strident demands of the Nationalists and Nazis, who clamored for an end to all reparations payments, for the return of Germany's former colonies, and for the reacquisition of the Polish Corridor. Since these rantings only gave France greater cause for concern, thereby making tangible gains less likely, the conclusion was that such demands were naive and self-defeating. "Our nationalistic opponents cry that the policy of understanding is dead. In reality, they are the illusionists . . . while we are the realists." The Monatshefte joined the attack against the right-wing extremists but also developed an increasingly critical attitude toward the United States, pointing out that France could not be expected to reduce or suspend German payments to her while she was compelled to continue with her sizable payments to the Anglo-Saxon countries. And when, on December 9, Washington announced that it would not negotiate a new settlement of war debts, Vorwärts joined in the condemnation of the "have governments," in
particular America. Yet Vorwärts, which spoke officially for the party, could not resign itself to the conclusion that the Anglo-Americans were almost wholly at fault. The luxury of such pronouncements came more easily to the powerless Sozialistische Monatshefte. So despite its continued Reichstag support for Brüning—which included approval of the most repugnant deflationary fiscal measures—the party encouraged Brüning and Curtius to exert themselves at greater length regarding the hoped-for revision of reparations.  

The SPD was especially anxious that progress be made toward a moratorium or major payments reduction because the "policy of understanding" had just received what was considered a rebuff at the final session of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, held in Geneva from November 6 to December 9, 1930. Since the Draft Disarmament Convention did not affect obligations already undertaken and therefore maintained the disarmament provisions of the Versailles Treaty, the German Socialists,

together with the rest of their countrymen, felt that Germany would be starting out at a final disarmament conference with a tremendous handicap. The Socialists conceded that France and other countries could not be expected to disarm suddenly or hastily, and were willing to accept phased or step-by-step disarmament. Nor did they want Germany to rearm, in part because of their inherent anti-militarism and in part because of the great expense involved. But as long as German disarmament was compelled by treaty whereas other countries were more or less free to arm themselves as they chose, the Social Democrats felt that Germany lacked bargaining power. Thus they became increasingly exasperated at what seemed like a total lack of progress. "The bitterness over the sabotage of disarmament is understandable," Vorwärts acknowledged, leaving no doubt that France and her allies were the chief culprits. Yet the party admitted that the French were uncertain and even, at times, frightened by the unsettled conditions in Germany. Stories of Nazi violence and murder, as well as reports of extreme right-wing utterances on foreign policy, had become commonplace. Typical of the inability of constituted authority to check these activities was its failure to prevent Nazi hoodlums from continually disrupting showings of the pacifist motion picture All Quiet on the Western Front (Im Westen nichts Neues). When the movie was finally banned in
Berlin—to preserve order—foreigners could well infer that the extremists were becoming unmanageable. And unfortunately for the SPD and for Germany, the more this impression gained ground abroad, the less likely was Germany to be accorded equality in armaments, even though the Socialists might argue that the Republic needed concessions with which to thwart the rightists.  

The lack of foreign-political successes was increasingly attributed by the SPD to Curtius. Under attack by the "national opposition," the foreign minister at times talked "tough," as at the Pan-Europe Conference and League meetings in Geneva in January 1931. Both Vorwärts and the Sozialistische Monatshefte complained that Curtius gave the impression that he was afraid of the Nazis. Yet Breitscheid, Stampfer, and Vorwärts were all pleased with Curtius' moderate Reichstag address of February 10, 1931. Still, the party view was that Curtius lacked courage and decisiveness. Breitscheid evidently remained unconvinced that the foreign minister possessed sufficient insight and purposeful negotiating skill. Probably he was thinking of Curtius' predecessor, Stresemann, when he warned that, in foreign policy, it was necessary to...

concentrate on objectives one at a time and not to let oneself be stampeded into striking out in all directions at once.\textsuperscript{18}

Most likely unbeknownst to Breitscheid, Curtius was then laying the groundwork for an Austro-German customs union, news of which leaked out in mid-March.\textsuperscript{19} The purpose of the plan, revealed on March 21, was political rather than economic. Curtius, with Brüning concurring, sought to pull off a foreign policy coup that would win favor for the government and applause for the foreign minister, whose methods might now be seen as superior even to Stresemann's. The French, however, had misgivings. Briand termed the plan "unacceptable," denouncing it as a violation of the Treaty of St. Germain and of the Geneva Protocol #1 of October 4, 1922, wherein Austria pledged herself to refrain from any financial arrangements that might compromise her independence. Curtius was not only unprepared for the sharp French reaction but, when it came, he took an excessively legalistic view of the problem, and

\textsuperscript{18}\textit{Vorwärts}, Jan. 9, 1931, a.m., pp. 1-2; Jan. 20, 1931, a.m., pp. 1-2; Jan. 20, 1931, p.m., p. 1; Feb. 11, 1931, p.m., p. 2; Richard Kleineibst, "West-östliches Divertimento," SM, XXXVII (March 16, 1931), 230-37; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 444, pp. 884-88 (Stampfer); 933-37 (Breitscheid).

\textsuperscript{19}Since the subject of a customs union first arose while Müller was still chancellor, the Socialists may have inferred something of Curtius' intentions. But when and how he decided to go ahead is unknown. See Bennett, \textit{Financial Crisis, 1931}, 44.
erroneously assumed that the political and national-psychological storm that he had helped to raise would soon subside.\textsuperscript{20}

To the SPD, the customs union was an unquestioned "step forward." It was seen as reasonable and logical and, rather than having been assailed as a treaty violation, it was said that it should have been welcomed by the French as falling within the framework of Briand's Pan-Europe proposal. Yet the foreign criticism—from Prague and Rome as well as from Paris—was sufficiently intense to prompt the Socialists to withhold wholehearted approval. Reluctant to commit themselves unalterably to Curtius' foreign policy, they reserved freedom of action. Breitscheid said that "there is not a single man in Germany who does not desire the customs union with Austria." He thought that it would help both countries economically and that it accorded with the universally accepted principle of self-determination. But Breitscheid recognized that

\textsuperscript{20}Bennett, Financial Crisis, 1931, 44-62; F. G. Stambrook, "The German-Austrian Customs Union Project of 1931: A Study of German Methods and Motives," Journal of Central European Affairs, XXI (April, 1961), 15-44, esp. 15-20, 40-42; Curtius, Sechs Jahre, 188-96, 273-74 (Geneva Protocol); Vorwärts, March 29, 1931, a.m., p. 1. Also relevant are Jan Krulis-Randa, Das deutsch-österreichische Zollunionprojekt von 1931: Die Bemühungen um eine wirtschaftliche Annäherung zwischen Deutschland und Österreich (Zurich, 1955), which provides a very long introduction, going back to the Eighteenth Century; and Oswald Hauser, "Der Plan einer deutsch-österreichischen Zollunion und die europäische Föderation," Historische Zeitschrift, CLXXIX (1955), 45-92.
this was precisely the fear of other countries: that economic union might lead to political union. A matter of such sensitivity had to be handled with the greatest diplomatic finesse. Curtius, in the view of the SPD spokesman, had failed to pave the way and had thereby rendered his task doubly difficult. In fact, Breitscheid said, Curtius' careless diplomacy had not only created grave obstacles for the customs union itself but had also aroused enough enmity to endanger a new reparations settlement and Franco-German relations generally.21

Breitscheid's criticism took on added importance, since the death of Hermann Müller less than two weeks before, on March 20, had elevated Breitscheid into the parliamentary leadership of the party. Müller received recognition for having been a clever "tactician" and for having amassed great factual knowledge, but he had not been an inspired or inspiring leader. The more dynamic Breitscheid had made some enemies but did possess a sense of drama and oratorical ability, not to mention a sounder understanding of foreign affairs. His rise within the party was at least a marginal gain from the standpoint of Franco-German conciliation.22

21 Vorwärts, March 24, 1931, a.m., p. 1; March 30, 1931, p.m., p. 1; March 31, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); Richard Kleineibst, "Europäische Zollunion," SM, XXXVII (April 13, 1931), 381-85.

Joining the chorus of displeasure over Curtius' unskillful maneuvering were Victor Schiff and Wilhelm Sollmann. Both approved of a customs union per se, but Schiff described Curtius' handling of the plan as "gruesome" while Sollmann characterized the foreign minister's action as a poor substitute for diplomacy. Sollmann, in giving the official report on foreign policy at the Parteitag in Leipzig early in June, declared that Curtius' proposal served only to isolate Germany and he assured his auditors that the Social Democratic Party had had no part in it.23

If Curtius was such a blunderer, why did not the SPD demand his ouster? For one thing, the party recognized the context of difficulties in which he was working, most specifically the Nazi electoral surge, which had created a feeling of fear and militancy in France and had led recently to the election as president of Paul Doumer, a nationalist, over Briand, the "peace" candidate. A second reason was that Curtius was under greater fire from the right than from the left, and his resignation might well appear to be a right-wing triumph, which would encourage the extremists at home while simultaneously frightening the French. Thirdly, the party was not aware of a likely

23Vorwärts, May 20, 1931, a.m., p. 1 (Schiff); SPD, Protokoll . . . Leipzig 1931 (Berlin, 1931), 110. That the party was then preoccupied with internal developments was indicated by the Parteitag's lack of foreign policy discussion and the absence of a report on the activities of the Socialist International.
replacement. And fourthly, and most importantly, the firing of Curtius could bring down the entire cabinet, which was said to be too weak to withstand any important changes. This was the sort of uncertainty into which the SPD feared to venture. The party protected Brüning and carefully refrained from involving him in Curtius' failures. So long as the chancellor stood firmly against the Nazis, he would receive Socialist support. This would be extended even to retaining in office a foreign minister who was thought of and spoken of as unencouraging and inept.24

Even for such an allegedly clumsy diplomatist as Curtius, it would have been difficult to have erred regarding President Herbert Hoover's June 20 proposal for a one-year moratorium on all reparations and war debt payments. All that the Germans had to do was to say "Yes." Complicating the situation, however, was the hesitancy of France. The French stalled, made counter-proposals, and then haggled about details. To the SPD, the French reaction of petulant hostility was the tip-off that Paris was not really interested in the overall well-being of Europe. France, not yet suffering severely from the depression and supported by a huge gold reserve, had blindly hoarded her capital, instead of helping Europe to

24 Vorwärts, May 20, 1931, a.m., p. 1 (Schiff); May 21, 1931, a.m., p. 1; May 22, 1931, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); May 27, 1931, a.m., pp. 1-2.
rebuild. To be sure, Vorwärts conceded, she had recently offered a loan to Austria, but with so many political and economic strings attached that it resembled the sort of loans that the Great Powers used to offer Turkey. And now French selfishness was finding further expression in France's obvious reluctance to accept the moratorium. That the situation appeared differently from across the Rhine was admitted by the SPD; the French understandably disliked being asked to make a sacrifice. But this, according to Breitscheid, was precisely the point. Without some sort of relief, the German economy—and the economies of other countries as well—were in grave danger of collapse. Without cooperation all-around, the entire economy of Europe might crumble. More was at stake than parochial short-term financial interest, or, for that matter, prestige (suggesting the French resentment at being coerced into an undesired course of action). There is really no choice, Breitscheid protested. "We require (erheischen) a sacrifice from the French." A rejection, he warned, would leave

---

25 On August 1, 1931, unemployment in France stood at 650,000. On July 15, the figure for Germany was 3,956,000, the lowest figure since early December 1930, and also the lowest figure for the remainder of the depression. French production began to decline marginally in 1931 but did not fall rapidly until 1932. On the other hand, in Germany 1931 was a good year for cucumbers. Bennett reports that France expected foreign receipts of $79,000,000 for 1932, "about the same influx per capita" as the United States. Bennett, Financial Crisis, 1931, 169; Vorwärts, July 23, 1931, a.m., p. 2; Oct. 22, 1931, a.m., p. 5.
France isolated and would greatly aggravate existing Franco-German tensions.26

As hoped, France finally concurred, and the moratorium went into effect, retroactively to July 1, 1931. It was followed in August by "standstill" agreements, whereby foreign investors consented to leave their capital invested in Germany. Yet French acceptance of these agreements earned Paris no thanks from the Social Democrats. Quite the contrary, since the Socialists concluded that France had given in only to massive pressure and that she would surely resist any extension of the moratorium as well as any basic revision of the Young Plan. "The stiff-necked resistance," wrote Vorwärts, "with which the French government and parliament opposed the Hoover Plan suggests the sort of stiff-necked resistance with which a German proposal for [Young Plan] revision must reckon." A year's-end report on foreign policy intimated that the French were clinging to the Young Plan as a sort of symbol of their victory in the World War. The French were said to regard the plan as final and unalterable; further downward revision of reparations would supposedly symbolize to Frenchmen the crumbling of the dominant position that they had won in Europe in 1918. At the moment, however, reparations revision was no longer of pressing concern.

26Vorwärts, June 21, 1931, a.m., pp. 1-2; June 23, 1931, a.m., p. 1; June 25, 1931, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid).
And, to put the entire matter into perspective, Vorwärts predicted that even when "the Young Plan will be taken up . . . the capitalist crisis will remain." With banks closing and industrial concerns collapsing, capitalism, so the SPD Executive Committee declared on July 14, was emitting its death rattles. Presumably this was the moment for which a theoretically Marxist party had been waiting. In fact, however, the SPD preferred order and stability and feared the uncertainties presented by the economic downswing. Thus the party told its supporters to close ranks, presumably behind Brüning. The prevention of chaos was now understood to be the party's foremost task, transcending all considerations of foreign policy per se.27

Also indicative of the deemphasis on foreign policy was the SPD's relative lack of interest in what the French Socialists were doing. A few items were reported in the press, e.g., the French Socialists did not condemn the proposed customs union; they had voted for Briand, rather than for Doumer; and they had demanded of the French government that it take greater action toward disarmament. But these developments elicited virtually no SPD comment. Victor Schiff was not writing any more of his "open letters."

27Vorwärts, July 5, 1931, a.m., pp. 1-2; July 14, 1931, p.m., p. 1; SPD, Jahrbuch . . . 1931 (Berlin, [1932]), 21-23.
It was as if the Social Democrats had ceased to expect any aid and comfort from their Gallic counterparts.  

Similarly, while the published materials of the Socialist International reveal that the Executive Committee met to condemn Germany's "heavy [reparations] payments;" to demand disarmament "based on equality of rights and duties;" and to take an open-minded view toward the customs union, these actions were also more or less ignored by the SPD.  

Moreover, the 1931 Congress of the International, held in Vienna at the end of July, attracted only minimum attention from the German Social Democrats, at least judging from the party press. Although there was mention of "Franco-German understanding," and although Otto Wels and the Frenchman Alexandre Bracke were installed as co-chairmen, the feeling must have been prevalent that there was little that the International could do—in a concrete sense—to achieve this understanding. Actually, the delegates talked mainly about the domestic situation in Germany, in particular about the policy of "toleration," which was approved, and the need to prevent "the economic collapse of Germany . . . by generous international credit[s]."

But when the German Socialists sought to achieve tangible

\textsuperscript{28}Vorwärts, Nov. 14, 1930, a.m., p. 2; May 9, 1931, a.m., p. 1; May 15, 1931, p.m., p. 2.  

\textsuperscript{29}LSI, Reports 1931, 31, 64-65, 69-70.
gains, they were frustrated, as when Wels and Breitscheid, at Brüning's request, conferred with Arthur Henderson, the British foreign secretary and a Labour Party leader, apropos the German financial crisis. According to Brüning, the only advice that Henderson offered the Germans "was to comply with all the demands France might make." 

One of these demands was that the customs union plan be renounced, which it was, early in September. And shortly thereafter the Hague Court declared it to be in opposition to existing treaties. Sandwiched around this were visits of Brüning and Curtius to Paris and of Premier Pierre Laval and Foreign Minister Briand to Berlin. The SPD had long before given up on the customs union and now, with its collapse, dismissed it as an "adventure" that had gone awry. The exchange of visits, however, was encouraging, particularly the appearance of the Frenchmen in Berlin. The Socialists not only greeted Laval and Briand with warmth and cordiality, but the party also seemed pleased with the results of the visit, namely the furthering of "good will" and, concretely, the establishment of a joint economic commission, which included several German

trade unionists. But Vorwärts pointed out that speed was of the essence and that the commission would have to get to work quickly; otherwise everything might be lost. Nor were the Socialists enthusiastic about any future economic cooperation that suggested undue French interference in, or control over, the German economy and German finances. Moreover, there was disappointment over the absence of disarmament discussions. Still, on balance, the visit was counted "a plus." 31

Less than a week after the departure of Laval and Briand from Berlin, Curtius resigned. The Socialists seemed rather miffed, in that they had not been consulted, despite the fact that they lent Brüning his largest numerical Reichstag support. Vorwärts feared that the resignation might presage a rightist turn in foreign policy, but relaxed when Brüning announced that he was taking over the foreign affairs portfolio himself. "The course remains the same," the newspaper reported. According to the Sozialistische Monatshefte, the course might even be

---

31 Vorwärts, July 19, 1931, a.m., p. 1; July 20, 1931, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 3, 1931, p.m., pp. 1-2; Sept. 5, 1931, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 27, 1931, a.m., pp. 1-2; Sept. 28, 1931, p.m., p. 1; Sept. 29, 1931, a.m., pp. 1-2; Max Cohen, "Zurück nach Paris!" SM, XXXVII (Aug. 3, 1931), 725-31; Carl Mierendorff, "Grundsteinlegung in Berlin," SM, XXXVII (Oct. 12, 1931), 951-60; Walther Pahl, "Die französische Kraftwirtschaft," SM, XXXVII (Oct. 12, 1931), 968-74; Herman Kranold, "Frankreich und die koloniale Aufgabe Europas," SM, XXXVII (Oct. 12, 1931), 975-83; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 593-95; Severing, Lebensweg, II, pp. 301-03; SPD, Parteikorrespondenz . . . 1931 (Berlin, n.d.), 654.
improved, since Brüning was now free to promote Franco-German cooperation unencumbered by Curtius' maladroitness.\textsuperscript{32}

To ensure that the developing spirit of "good will" would be maintained, a number of individual Socialists also made contributions. Carl Severing and Otto Braun both talked with French statesmen and with various journalists, foreign and domestic, about improving relations between the two countries, while Paul Löbe, at the 1931 Bucharest congress of the Interparliamentary Union, proposed a Franco-German customs union.\textsuperscript{33} Unfortunately, these good intentions were smothered by continuing political and economic instability, not only in Germany but also abroad. In Germany, the Hessian state elections of November 15 saw an increase in the Nazi vote of 115 per cent over the comparable September 1930 figures. Also, the Communists gained 25 per cent, while the SPD declined by 22 per cent. At about the same time Hitler and Hugenberg organized the "Harzburg Front," which gave the Nazis access to at least some of the wealth and propaganda facilities of the more affluent Nationalists. Across the Rhine, a downward economic slide had commenced, rendering France incapable of providing much economic assistance to Germany. And early in January

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{Vorwärts}, Oct. 6, 1931, a.m., p. 1; Oct. 10, 1931, a.m., p. 1; Mierendorff, "Grundsteinlegung," \textit{SM}, XXXVII (Oct. 12, 1931), 954.

1932, Briand, worn out and ill, resigned. Soon thereafter, on March 9, he died. Thus disappeared from the scene one of the architects and sustainers of the policy of Franco-German cooperation. At this time both Briand and Stresemann received from the SPD the tribute that was their due, and Briand was accorded the rare compliment that, at heart, he had remained a Socialist, even though, decades before, he had left the French Socialist Party.  

Also unsettling was the February turnover in the French premiership, which saw Laval replaced by Tardieu. The latter, one of the main French formulators of the Versailles Treaty, continued to demand strict "fulfillment" and made speeches that were critical of internal developments in Germany, speeches that SPD spokesmen labelled as "demagogic" and "polemical" (*Vorwärts*), and as "tactless" (Breitscheid). In England, the Labour government of Ramsay MacDonald had broken up, "a truly tragic occurrence," *Vorwärts* lamented. This was followed by a landslide Conservative electoral victory in October 1931, shunting Labour to the side lines, except for MacDonald and a few others who chose to participate in the "National government" and who were thereupon read out of the Labour Party.  

---

*Vorwärts*, March 8, 1932, a.m., p. 1 (Schiff); Alfred Gold, "Der französische Europäer Aristide Briand," *SM*, XXXVIII (April 4, 1932), 323-27.

*Vorwärts*, Aug. 24, 1931, p.m., p. 1; April 2, 1932, a.m., p. 2; April 4, 1932, p.m., p. 2.
With these developments, the already slim hopes of furthering Franco-German understanding were gravely undermined. Löbe's suggestion of a trans-Rhine customs union fell on deaf ears. Briand's resignation and death destroyed any prospect for the revival of his Pan-Europe idea—for whatever the idea was worth. Also, the absence of the more conciliatory Briand now gave Tardieu a clear field for a policy of aloofness, if not hostility, toward Germany.

Thus the events of late 1931 and early 1932 constitute a sort of point of no return, for up to this time the possibility of cooperation remained alive. But soon thereafter a new feeling of chilliness and estrangement set in, reducing the chances and expectations of reconciliation virtually to nil.

In this atmosphere, the SPD channelled its energies into the internal struggle against Nazism. In the Reichstag, Breitscheid defended the cabinet "against the attacks of the fascists," and the SPD Fraktion continued to vote with the government parties. In the press, Vorwärts announced that the Socialists stood with the Centrists against the "Harzburg Front." And privately, Hilferding wrote to Kautsky that Brüning must be kept in office, for his departure would surely be followed by a sharply rightist regime. 36

Not only had Brüning to be protected but also, as it turned out, Reichspräsident von Hindenburg, whose seven-year term expired in 1932. Since Hitler had entered the presidential race and since the Socialists had no candidate of their own, they felt compelled to support the field marshal. Two elections were held, on March 13 and on April 10, the second election being necessitated because no candidate polled a majority in the first. The campaigns were vigorous but brief, and the Socialists, in helping to reelect Hindenburg, emphasized the defense of the Republic. Foreign policy was discussed in the context of replying to Nazi attacks, as when the Nazis asserted that the Young Plan was draining Germany of money and was therefore the cause of economic distress, to which Vorwärts replied that not a pfennig had been paid since the July 1931 moratorium. The party was content to defeat Hitler and to maintain foreign policy at the status quo. But Carl Mierendorff, writing in the Sozialistische Monatshefte, suggested that this was a mistake, and that Hindenburg and Brüning ought to be asked to pay a price for SPD support, namely the strengthening of relations with France. This would require, Mierendorff continued, acceptance of the French view on disarmament, i.e., security first and then disarmament, in contrast to the official Socialist view of disarmament first. Mierendorff, however, was grasping at straws. Party leaders were more
concerned with bread-and-butter issues than with disarmament, and would seek concessions, first and foremost, in the area of social policy. They would hardly endanger Hindenburg's reelection in order to push a disarmament view that was propagated by only a small minority of their party.37

Although internal issues remained paramount, both reparations and disarmament elicited much interest early in 1932. After years of preliminary discussions, the World Disarmament Conference at last convened in Geneva, holding its first session from February to July. The months of June to July also saw the Lausanne Conference, which attempted to negotiate a final reparations settlement.

Regarding disarmament, the SPD supported equal disarmament and equal security. Party spokesmen repeatedly underlined their advocacy, not of German rearmament, but of universal disarmament. They pointed to the Versailles Treaty, which designated Germany's disarming as a prelude to world disarming, and also to the Kellogg-Briand Pact (about which they had never been enthusiastic), wherein nearly all countries had renounced war and thus, presumably, the need for arms. Further, arms were characterized as

37Vorwärts, March 3, 1932, a.m., pp. 1-2; Carl Mierendorff, "Bedrohtes Deutschland," SM, XXXVIII (March 7, 1932), 217-28; Dorpalen, Hindenburg, 254-98.
costly and burdensome and as holding back economic progress. Breitscheid, in particular, worried about the warlike and unwholesome atmosphere—internal and external—created by militarism. He, and other party spokesmen, also lent support to the German government proposals made at Geneva, including Ambassador Rudolf Nadolny’s appeals for an end to general conscription, limitations on the numbers of police and military auxiliaries, the prohibition of gas, and limitations and restrictions on other weapons. All demands for equal disarmament, however, were rejected by France, which proposed instead an international police force and insisted on security preceding disarmament. To Vorwärts this sounded like a "great idea," but, under the circumstances, it was said to constitute only a "clever" move. It was a "tactic," a maneuver. The French, it was alleged, had stalled for years and continued to stall.

A markedly different view was presented by the pro-French Sozialistische Monatshefte. This journal continued

---

38 According to Kurt Kersten, Breitscheid originally joined the SPD, in 1912, because of his opposition to high military budgets and to the growing war danger. Kersten, "Das Ende Breitscheids," Deutsche Rundschau, LXXXIV (Sept., 1958), 844.

39 Vorwärts, Jan. 17, 1932, a.m., p. 7 (Breitscheid); Jan. 29, 1932, a.m., pp. 1-2 (Breitscheid); Feb. 6, 1932, a.m., p. 1; Feb. 9, 1932, p.m., p. 1; Feb. 18, 1932, p.m., p. 2; April 21, 1932, a.m., p. 2; April 28, 1932, p.m., p. 1; Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 446, p. 2481 (Breitscheid); p. 2632 (Hilferding); Breitscheid to Carl Severing, May 6, 1932, Severing Papers.
to regard disarmament as strictly a political problem, the solution to which was German recognition of French continental leadership. The *Monatshefte* opposed the German technical proposals as substantially irrelevant. It accepted the French demand for security first, disarmament second. In fact, it was not really interested in the disarmament controversy and tended to regard it as a nuisance, as an obstacle that impeded Franco-German economic cooperation. 40

Even more divisive for the party was the reparations issue. Although payments had been suspended by the moratorium, the Socialists (and other Germans) disliked living in a state of postponement and sought to end the uncertainty by advocating a final revision in the near future. Nearly all Social Democrats agreed that Germany's economic and financial condition made the resumption of payments impossible. Yet, to avoid alienating foreign opinion, especially in France, they used great care as to how they expressed this conviction. When Breitscheid said that "none of us is in doubt that everything must be done to bring these reparations payments to an end," he hastened to dissociate himself from the demands of the

---

40 Carl Mierendorff, "Der Weg zur Abrüstung," *SM*, XXXVIII (Jan. 16, 1932), 21-26; same, "Bedrohtes Deutschland," *SM*, XXXVIII (March 7, 1932), 228. The Sozialistische Monatshefte, traditionally a "revisionist" publication, had never sympathized with the pacifistic wing of the party.
Nazis that payments be cancelled unilaterally and added that it must be done by negotiations, via "understanding with other states." The SPD position was thus, "we can not pay," rather than, "we will not pay." But even this was regarded by some party members as too deferential. Wilhelm Keil recalls that a minority of the Reichstag Fraktion thought that the SPD should have protested reparations more vigorously ("Schluss mit der Reparationen"), and Rudolf Hilferding wrote to Karl Kautsky that "a nationalistic psychosis" had developed against any further payments. This "psychosis," Hilferding added, "even includes some of our own people, namely trade unionists."

Hilferding, who on financial questions was the best informed of all SPD leaders, explained that it was his hope that a settlement could be devised that continued the suspension for the duration of the crisis "after which a cheap compromise with France would be possible." But because of the nationalistic fervor against any future resumption of payments, Hilferding was pessimistic about the chances of achieving a new settlement.41

Again taking an independent course was the Sozialistische Monatshefte. Mierendorff, who had emerged as the

41Germany, Verhandlungen, Vol. 446, pp. 2080, 2276 (Breitscheid); 2632 (Hilferding); Vorwärts, Jan. 17, 1932, a.m., pp. 1"2 (Crispian); same, p. 7 (Breitscheid); Keil, Erlebnisse, II, pp. 428-32; Hilferding to Kautsky, Feb. 27, 1932, Kautsky Papers.
main advocate of Kontinentalpolitik, admitted that Germany could not pay cash but observed that she could still produce. Germany should not fight France on this matter, but rather, he said, try to act in concert with her. Mierendorff suggested that Germany negotiate with France for French credits, which, in turn, would finance German reparations exports to France. A Monatshefte colleague, Julius Kaliski, depicted France as eager to start discussions on receiving reparations in this form. Such cooperation, he opined, would even render obsolete the word Reparationen and would substitute for it Wiedergutmachung, a word, so he explained, of more profound moral content.42

The Monatshefte's assurances about French eagerness to receive German industrial items as reparations were only conjectural. Premiers Laval (January 1931-February 1932) and Tardieu (February-May 1932) never confirmed these expectations. In fact, they held firmly to the Young Plan, reiterating that it was the "final" solution. France did consent to the Lausanne Conference, but gave no indication as to what concessions might be offered. All

of this struck Vorwärts as "childish" and "negative."
The newspaper unhappily concluded that such a policy cast
dark shadows on the future of Franco-German understanding.
Such understanding, readers were told, will be "very
difficult—if not quite impossible."\(^3\)

Early in May a left-wing electoral victory in
France occasioned a moment of optimism. "Tardieu's
majority is not just broken," exulted Vorwärts. "Rather,
it is unmistakably smashed." Euphoria, however, was quickly
followed by disillusionment. The SPD regretfully discovered
that the French Socialists, who along with Herriot's
Radicals were the major winners, declined to participate
in the formation of a cabinet. And Herriot himself was
soon giving interviews wherein he sounded all too much like
Tardieu. Specifically, he insisted on strict treaty
fulfillment and promised to maintain France's security
through armaments. Thus the elections seemed to have
brought no change at all.\(^4\)

\(^3\) Vorwärts, Jan. 23, 1932, a.m., pp. 1-2; Feb. 13, 1932, p.m., p. 2.
\(^4\) Vorwärts, May 2, 1932, p.m., p. 1; May 9, 1932, p.m., pp. 1-2; May 21, 1932, p.m., p. 2; May 24, 1932, a.m., p. 1. Technically, the French Socialists did not
decline, but rather agreed to participate only if they
were given virtually free rein in the formulation of
economic and social policy. The Radicals refused to
accept these conditions, and the "onus" for non-participation fell on the Socialists. See Peter J. Larmour, The French
Radical Party in the 1930's (Stanford, 1964), 112-15;
Vorwärts, May 31, 1932, p.m., p. 2; June 1, 1932, a.m., p. 5.
In addition to this unhappy turn of events, Brüning, on May 30, was dismissed by Hindenburg. Although the Socialists knew something of the intrigues that had prompted the chancellor's dismissal, they had little time to lament his departure and no inclination whatever to criticize Hindenburg, who now stood as almost the sole safeguard between constitutional order and chaos. But for the new cabinet of Franz von Papen there were jeers aplenty. Papen himself was called a "bloody dilettante," especially in foreign affairs, while his ministerial colleagues were labelled "Nazi barons" who were intent on following a super-reactionary anti-labor domestic policy. The Sozialistische Monatshefte, however, professed to see some hope in Papen, almost, it seems, for the very reason that he was a dilettante, a "non-expert," from which the Monatshefte inferred that he was not tied to the allegedly anti-French policy of previous cabinets. Max Cohen wrote that Papen was the first postwar chancellor who was not dependent on the Anglo-Saxons and that he therefore favored a policy of "German reconstruction within the context of Continental-European cooperation."^45

Dilettante or not, Papen reaped Weimar Germany's last foreign policy success: The Lausanne Agreement of

^45Vorwärts, June 1, 1932, a.m., p. 1; June 4, 1932, p.m., p. 1; June 6, 1932, p.m., p. 3; Max Cohen, "Auf dem Europaweg?" SM, XXXVIII (July 1, 1932), 571-75. For Brüning's dismissal, see Dorpalen, Hindenburg, 301-27.
July 1932. This set aside all of Germany's remaining reparations obligations except for a final sum of three billion marks, the payment of which was not to begin before 1935.\(^{46}\) To the Monatshefte this was the result of Papen's open mind and independent course. Vorwärts also had to accord the chancellor some recognition, conceding, for example, that he had made a favorable impression on Paris newspapers by speaking in French. But Vorwärts could not help asking, in a carping and rhetorical manner, what would have been the reaction of the German "national" press if a left-wing chancellor had done this.

Both the Monatshefte and Vorwärts concluded that it was not Papen, but rather Herriot, who had contributed the most to making Lausanne a success. The French premier's understanding and courage were recognized as having been the crucial factors in achieving agreement. Except for the Monatshefte, the Social Democrats also interpreted Lausanne as a continuation of the Verständigungspolitik of Bauer, Müller, Rathenau, and Stresemann. In this sense, Papen reaped the harvest of the Social Democrats. The policy of understanding had been so thoroughly implemented that even the reactionaries could not escape from it. Like

\(^{46}\) Ratification of the Lausanne Agreement was made contingent on suitable war debts arrangements between Germany's creditors and the United States. And since America refused to cancel or reduce war debts, the Lausanne Agreement had no de jure standing. But for all practical purposes German reparations had come to an end. The Hitler government never resumed payment.
it or not, the chancellor had become "Erfüllungspolitiker Papen." 47

The primacy of domestic politics prevented Papen from capitalizing on his victory at Lausanne. Unemployment, privation, street fights, and political murder were the focus of attention, and in the elections of July 31 and November 6 the Nazis proved to be the chief beneficiaries of this generalized domestic distress. In each election they recorded a large plurality and made workable parliamentary government seem more of a chimera than ever.

While the Socialists ignored foreign policy in the two campaigns, some of them inferred that the swelling of the Nazi vote derived in part from the extreme nationalism of the NSDAP, and they decided, evidently, to trim their sails accordingly. Thus Sollmann, Keil, Julius Leber, and others questioned the SPD peace formula of universal disarmament and argued, after the July 31 elections, for an increase in German armaments. Under Breitscheid's leadership this new approach was beaten back, and the

47 Vorwärts, June 18, 1932, a.m., p. 2; June 25, 1932, p.m., p. 1; July 9, 1932, a.m., pp. 1-2; July 10, 1932, a.m., p. 1; Stampfer, Vierzehn Jahre, 597; Carl Mierendorff, "Sommer der Entscheidungen," SM, XXXVIII (July 29, 1932), 655-60; Max Cohen, "Der Weg ist frei," SM, XXXVIII (July 29, 1932), 660-66. Brühning believes that the reparations settlement was due primarily to his efforts, but Edward Bennett judges that neither Papen, nor Brühning, nor any German was as instrumental in the ending of reparations as was President Hoover. Consult Heinrich Brühning, "Ein Brief," Deutsche Rundschau, LXX (July, 1947), 10; Bennett, Financial Crisis, 1931, 293.
official SPD position on disarmament remained as before. All of this, however, proved inconsequential, as the Disarmament Conference, meeting sporadically, made no substantial progress. Vorwärts seemed more baffled than indignant over a German boycott of the proceedings and was more dejected than critical over French unwillingness to give more than lip service to Germany's demand for equality. After all, what difference did it make to a party whose most authoritative newspaper had begun, months before, to speak of the Totentanz of the Republic? Or to muse that "Ich hatte einmal eine Idee ..."? Or to ponder, as Mierendorff now did, what lessons could be drawn from the unhappy fate of Weimar, so as to better lay the groundwork for "the Republic of tomorrow"? At some point in the summer months of 1932 the malaise of ineffectuality seems to have been draped over the SPD like a shroud. The party seemed stunned, mesmerized, fatally waiting for a final, crushing blow. Foreign policy ceased to have any relevance. And domestic developments seemed

48 Caspar, Sozialdemokratische Partei und Wehrproblem, 69.

49 In mid-November, France published a proposal granting an "equal military system for all nations." The SPD viewed this formula as deliberately beset with extreme complications and as having little chance of contributing effectively to the progress toward disarmament. Similar "concessions" offered in December were also greeted with skepticism. Vorwärts, Nov. 15, 1932, a.m., p. 2; Nov. 15, 1932, p.m., p. 2; Dec. 5, 1932, p.m., p. 2; Dec. 12, 1932, p.m., p. 1.
to be more stupifying than decipherable. The resignation of Papen, on November 17, 1932, pleased the SPD although the party had not the remotest idea as to what sort of government it would be willing to support. Certainly it was not that of General von Schleicher, Papen's successor. Nor that of Adolf Hitler, appointed on January 30, 1933. Hitler's government was seen as the handiwork of Papen (who became deputy chancellor) and was denigrated as an assemblage of "'fine people' and three Nazis," and as a "cabinet of big business." That it was something more than this not only the German Social Democrats but all the world soon discovered.50

50 Vorwärts, Aug. 1, 1932, p.m., p. 1; Nov. 18, 1932, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 2, 1932, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 16, 1932, a.m., p. 1; Jan. 30, 1933, p.m., p. 1; Carl Mierendorff, "Die Republik von Morgen," SM, XXXVIII (Sept. 19, 1932), 738-44. The phrase "fine people" had been used by the Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels in his Berlin paper Der Angriff as an expression of contempt for Papen's earlier cabinet of barons.
to be more stupifying than decipherable. The resignation of Papen, on November 17, 1932, pleased the SPD although the party had not the remotest idea as to what sort of government it would be willing to support. Certainly it was not that of General von Schleicher, Papen's successor. Nor that of Adolf Hitler, appointed on January 30, 1933. Hitler's government was seen as the handiwork of Papen (who became deputy chancellor) and was denigrated as an assemblage of "fine people" and three Nazis," and as a "cabinet of big business." That it was something more than this not only the German Social Democrats but all the world soon discovered. 50

50 Vorwärts, Aug. 1, 1932, p.m., p. 1; Nov. 18, 1932, a.m., p. 1; Dec. 2, 1932, p.m., p. 1; Dec. 16, 1932, a.m., p. 1; Jan. 30, 1933, p.m., p. 1; Carl Mierendorff, "Die Republik von Morgen," SM, XXXVIII (Sept. 19, 1932), 738-44. The phrase "fine people" had been used by the Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels in his Berlin paper Der Angriff as an expression of contempt for Papen's earlier cabinet of barons.
EPILOGUE

The SPD closed out the Weimar Era with interests similar to those with which the era was inaugurated, namely interests of domestic policy. Just as in the period immediately following the end of World War I, so in the months surrounding Hitler's seizure of power the party ceased, in effect, to have a foreign policy. It should be noted, however, that the focus of the SPD was fixed on domestic issues for most of the 1918-1933 period and not just at its terminal points. This proved to be particularly true at election times, when issues of wages, prices, and welfare were inevitably shoved to the fore, the conviction being that these made a more direct appeal to the voters. The fact that the Socialist rank-and-file were relatively indifferent to the party's foreign policy proved to be one of the complicating factors of achieving Franco-German reconciliation.

A second complication was the theoretical approach to foreign policy to which the Social Democrats fell heir. Orthodox Marxists had condemned the nation-state as anachronistic and looked forward to the triumph of the proletariat in the international class struggle, which would be followed by the sweeping away of state borders.
This view not only bequeathed a legacy of ignorance regarding foreign affairs; it also set up an internal conflict when, in 1914, the inherent patriotism of the German working-class was manifested. This patriotism remained an abiding feature of Social Democratic attitudes and policy not only during the war but also during the entire Weimar Era. In fact, Socialist patriotism was even occasionally tinged with nationalism. Examples are Scheidemann's vehement obdurancy toward the Versailles Treaty, the insults directed toward Eduard Bernstein for suggesting at the 1919 Parteitag that Germany should admit a measure of war guilt, and the advocacy of a number of prominent Socialists, in 1932, that the party abandon its policy of universal disarmament and support German rearmament. Fundamentally, however, the party remained patriotic rather than nationalistic. Regardless, the SPD's theoretical formulations were never brought into line with the party's actual attitude toward foreign affairs. Consequently, Social Democratic spokesmen often offered tortured rationalizations of party policies, rationalizations that perhaps misled the Socialists as to their intentions and which therefore lessened the party's effectiveness.

On the other hand, the internationalist background of the Social Democrats contributed to their recognition that peace in Europe depended on Franco-German
reconciliation. They differed here from those large numbers of Germans who regarded World War I as only a battle lost, as a tactical setback that could and would be revenged. Also contributing to the SPD desire to achieve rapprochement with the French was the party's historic association of France with egalitarianism and the rights-of-man. Conversely, Russia was associated with autocracy, whether imposed by tsars or commissars. The domestic struggle waged between Socialists and Moscow-directed Communists for the support of the working-class contributed at least marginally to the SPD's western orientation.

The recognition of the need for Franco-German conciliation led the Social Democratic Party, on numerous occasions, to sacrifice domestic advantage to foreign policy needs. The acceptance of the Versailles Treaty (1919), of the London Schedule of Payments (1921), and the return to the fulfillment policy in the autumn of 1923 all attest to this. In the last-mentioned instance, the Socialists swallowed, inter alia, the loss of the eight-hour day and the ouster of Hilferding as finance minister as part of the price to be paid for maintaining the Great Coalition and for preserving Germany's unity. The SPD also took the lead in promoting acceptance of the Dawes Plan and the Young Plan, despite the disagreeable implication that the party "favored" reparations payments.
In each case, there were few votes to be won, but the Socialists avoided the easy road of chauvinism and demagogy and made a responsibly patriotic choice. It is probably true that some of the Socialist decisions were prompted, at least in part, by fear of French military power, but bearing reiteration was the SPD recognition that Franco-German rapprochement was essential for peace.

This is not to say, however, that the SPD ever developed a long-range strategy to ensure peace. The party generally drifted from one development to the next, responding to day-to-day events with improvisation. Partly this was because the party suffered from a dearth of brilliant or even insightful leaders. The SPD chiefs were unimaginative, bureaucratic personalities who were unable to translate their good intentions into effective action. Party leaders also lacked the charisma or even color that would have helped promote a more clearcut strategy had such been offered to the German electorate. On the positive side, the SPD enjoyed, from 1923 on, the support of the French Socialist Party and also received a very sympathetic ear from the Labour and Socialist International. Such support and sympathy, however, proved of little avail, especially since contacts with influential French political leaders were minimal. Had the SPD established close contact with French political leaders, a coherent strategy capable of implementation might have
been devised. As it was, this lack of contact, together with an absence of diplomatic skill and expertise within the party, forced the SPD into dependence on Gustav Stresemann, whose People's Party represented the interests of German big business. Only Stresemann seemed able to win concessions from the French. Thus he had to be included in various SPD-supported or led cabinets, even if this meant surrender on domestic issues to the People's Party.

The Socialists also failed to acknowledge adequately the deep-seated French concern for security. Yet, except for a segment of the Center Party, they came closer to such an acknowledgment than did any other German political party. What the Social Democrats wanted for Germany was equality of opportunity. To the French this meant German domination, since Germany, despite her losses under the Versailles Treaty, still presided over greater human and perhaps also material resources than did France. How the French could grant full equality to Germany and simultaneously ensure their security was the question that remained unanswered. Thoughtful attention to this matter might well have prompted some salutary adjustments in Socialist policy. Yet the party characteristically ignored taking any perspective but a German one. This remained true even when the Social Democrats were explicitly confronted with the French need for security,
as they were by Léon Blum at the Hamburg Socialist Congress in May 1923.

Since the end of World War II many of the problems that beset the SPD in the Weimar Era have been resolved. Germany's occupation and partition have reduced her economic and military potential to the point where France need no longer fear her. Further, a truncated Western Germany has been firmly tied to the liberal-democratic Atlantic community of states. Initially, the Bonn Socialists opposed these developments. Under the leadership of Kurt Schumacher, chairman of the postwar party until his death in 1952, the SPD tried to prevent the creation of close ties with the West, including France. This was due primarily to the fear that such ties would preclude reunification and to a lesser extent because of Schumacher's personal hostility to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who was the leading proponent of such ties. Schumacher also believed that the SPD had given the impression of being insufficiently nationalistic in the Weimar Era and he now propagated a sort of Socialist nationalism.¹

Schumacher was most likely mistaken in thinking that Germany, not to mention merely Western Germany, could play an independent role, that it could "balance" between Russia and the Western Powers. For this and for other reasons the Social Democrats declined in political appeal in the 1950's. In 1959, however, the party did an about-face. In an historic Parteitag at Bad Godesberg, the SPD completed the "revisionist" transformation that had been underway since the 1890's and that had been interrupted by the Hitler period. At Bad Godesberg the Socialists cast off the Marxist theoretical ballast. They emerged as an undoctrinaire, Twentieth Century welfare party and also committed themselves to the western community, accepting the ties that had been forged between Germany on the one hand and the United States, Britain, and France on the other.\textsuperscript{2} This new realism was the achievement of leaders such as Willy Brandt, the mayor of Berlin, whose city was exposed to the Russian threat, and Carlo Schmid, who was born in France, whose mother was French, and whose intellectual attainments and broad views recognized the necessity of cooperation with France. Since 1959, the SPD has maintained a full and frank western orientation. The party's attitude toward the Communist states of Eastern Europe is dependent on

\textsuperscript{2}SPD, Protokoll . . . 1959 in Bad Godesberg (Hanover and Bonn, n.d.).
modifications presumably taking place in these states. Despite some differences of opinion with French President de Gaulle, Foreign Minister Brandt was able to say, on October 6, 1967, that "Germany and France are finally and definitively reconciled. They have become friends and allies. Their close cooperation will be a lasting element in the insurance of peace in the Europe of the future. It was, and it remains correct to allow a high priority in the catalogue of tasks of German foreign policy to friendship with the neighboring French people."\(^3\)

\(^3\)Germany, *News from the German Embassy*, XI (Oct. 26, 1967), 4-5.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

A. Unpublished Materials

Bernstein Papers, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam.

Germany, Alte Reichskanzlei, Kabinett-Protokolle, microfilm, The Ohio State University.

Kautsky Papers, International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam.

Müller Papers, Social Democratic Party Archives, Bonn.

Severing Papers, Social Democratic Party Archives, Bonn.

Sollmann Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

B. Published Materials

1. Writings of German Social Democrats

Bathe, Rolf, Der Zusammenbruch. Berlin, n.d.


Braun, Otto, Von Weimar zu Hitler. 2nd ed. New York, 1940.


______, "Germany Since the War," *Foreign Affairs*, I (December, 1922), 99-119.


Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, Vorstand, Die Arbeit der Sozialdemokratie im Reichstag von Mai bis August 1924. N.p., n.d.


Bericht .. Mai bis August 1924. Berlin, n.d.

Bericht .. Januar bis August 1925. N.p., n.d.

Die Friedenspolitik der Fraktion. N.p., [1918?].


Jahrbuch der deutschen Sozialdemokratie für das Jahr 1926. Berlin, [1927].

Jahrbuch .. 1927. Berlin, [1928].

Jahrbuch .. 1928. Berlin, [1929].

Jahrbuch .. 1929. [Berlin?], [1930].

Jahrbuch .. 1930. Berlin, [1931].

Jahrbuch .. 1931. Berlin, [1932].


Protokoll ... Augsburg, Gera und Nürnberg, 1922. Berlin, 1923.

Protokoll ... 1924. Berlin, 1924.

Protokoll ... 1925 in Heidelberg. Berlin, 1925.

Protokoll ... 1927 in Kiel. Berlin, 1927.

Protokoll ... Magdeburg 1929. Berlin, 1929.

Protokoll ... Leipzig 1931. Berlin, 1931.

Protokoll ... 1959 in Bad Godesberg. Hanover and Bonn, n.d.


Sozialdemokratische Parteikorrespondenz für die Jahre 1923 bis 1928. [Title varies.] Berlin, 1930.

Parteikorrespondenz ... 1929. Berlin, n.d.

Parteikorrespondenz ... 1930. Berlin, n.d.

Parteikorrespondenz ... 1931. Berlin, n.d.

Die Zweite Internationale über den Wiederaufbau:
Resolution der am 30., 31. März und 1. April 1921 in
Amsterdam, mit Vertretern der parlamentarischen
Fraktionen abgehaltenen Konferenz des Exekutiv-

Die Sozialistische Monatshefte. Ed. by Joseph Bloch.
Berlin, 1914-33.

Stampfer, Friedrich, Erfahrungen und Erkennisse:

Die vierzehn Jahre der ersten deutschen

2. Government Publications

France, Journal Officiel: Débats parlementaires. Paris,
1919.

Germany, Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik. Serie B:

News from the German Embassy (Washington), XI
(October 26, 1967).

Verhandlungen des Reichstags: Stenographische
Berichte. Berlin, 1911-34.

Verhandlungen der verfassungsgebenden Deutschen

League of Nations, Official Journal. Special Supplement
No. 64: Records of the Ninth Ordinary Session of
the Assembly. Geneva, 1928.

United States, Senate, 61 Congress, Treaty of Peace with
Germany (Senate Document No. 51). Washington, 1919.

3. Memoirs and Diaries

d'Abernon, Edgar Vincent, Viscount, The Diary of an
Ambassador. 3 vols. Garden City and London,
1929-31.


The Rhineland Occupation. Indianapolis, 1927.


Payer, Friedrich, Von Bethmann Hollweg bis Ebert: Erinnerungen und Bilder. Frankfurt am Main, 1923.


4. Other

de Brinon, Ferdinand, "Un entretien avec M. Breitscheid," Journal des Débats, XXXIII (December 24, 1926), 1043-45.


II. SECONDARY MATERIALS

A. Books


Bevan, Edwyn, German Social Democracy During the War. New York, 1919.


Euler, Heinrich, *Die Aussenpolitik der Weimarer Republik 1918/1923 (Vom Waffenstillstand bis zum Ruhrkonflikt).* Aschaffenburg, 1957.


Neue Deutsche Biographie. Berlin, 1953--.


Wolters, Arnold, Britain and France Between Two Wars: Conflicting Strategies of Peace Since Versailles. New York, 1940.


B. Articles


Helbich, Wolfgang, "Between Stresemann and Hitler: The Foreign Policy of the Brüning Government," World Politics, XII (October, 1959), 24-44.


Kersten, Kurt, "Das Ende Breitscheids und Hilferdings," Deutsche Rundschau, LXXXIV (September, 1958), 843-54.


"Die Sozialdemokratie und die Macht im Staate," Der Weg in die Diktatur, 1918-1933: Zehn Beiträge (Munich, 1962), 72-93.


Viktor, Max, "Die Stellung der deutschen Sozialdemokratie zu den Fragen der auswärtigen Politik (1896-1914)," Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik, LX (1928, pt. 1), 147-79.