Conservative Concepts of Dictatorship in the Final Phase of the Weimar Republic: The Government of Franz von Papen

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In historical evaluations of the last cabinets of the Weimar Republic before the takeover of Hitlerian Fascism, there are two fundamentally different interpretations.¹ The first is a type of interpretation that tends to include most conservative positions and sees the politics of conservative politicians before 1933 as striving to tame the fascist movement and party. The second interpretation, derived mostly from the liberal or socialist camp, regards the function of the last cabinets of the Weimar years as fascism's "stirrup-holder" or as paving the way for fascism.

The latter view is particularly prevalent with respect to the second-to-the-last cabinet of the Republic, the government of Franz von Papen. For the most part, Papen's political contacts, the political strategy of his cabinet, and its relationship to the conservative party spectrum and the conservative dictatorship models of the Weimar Republic have so far been largely ignored.²

After Germany's military defeat in the First World War and after constituting the Republic, two problem areas dominated political discussion and political struggle in the Weimar years. On the one hand, the Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to surrender considerable territory, make reparation payments, and limit weapons. On the other hand, the Republic as a form of government guaranteed citizens the fundamental rights of a bourgeois democracy, recognized the rights of unions to form coalitions, to strike, and to bargain collectively, and introduced the parliamentary system as the foundation for shaping the processes of building political opinion and will. After 1918, in numerous discussions, leading representatives of the political, economic, and military spheres debated how the entire Treaty of Versailles, or at least certain of its stipulations, could be undermined or modified; they also
discussed how the parliamentary system could be adapted to their own interests.

Political discussion of these two questions intensified with the outbreak of the world economic crisis. Just before the Brüning government (1930-32) took office, a political program was introduced that implied a massive withdrawal of democratic rights and a reduction in parliamentary powers. The majority of big industrial leaders and bankers initially welcomed the Brüning government. The fall of the Hermann-Müller government of 1930 had deprived the Social Democrats of governmental control and freed the way for a presidential cabinet\(^3\) which could govern, on the basis of Article 48, with far less dependence on parliament.\(^4\) Early on, however, the Brüning government was criticized for its dependency on the Social Democrats' toleration.\(^5\)

After the spectacular electoral success of the NSDAP in the Reichstag election of September 1930, demands that the so-called "national opposition" be represented in the government grew increasingly vocal. (The national opposition included the rightist radicals and fascist forces from the German National People's Party (DNVP) of Hugenberg, on up to the NSDAP.) The national opposition culminated in the Harzburg Front of 1931. The circle of industrialists that had established contact with the NSDAP and supported Hitler financially and politically grew significantly broader.\(^6\)

Including the rightist forces in the Brüning government was impossible. But only with the support of rightist forces could the goals and interests be implemented that were common to broad circles of big industry, bank capital, and big agriculture, namely, a big business-oriented economic policy,\(^7\) the revision of the Treaty of Versailles, and the replacement of parliamentary rule by an authoritarian state,\(^8\) which alone could offer guarantees for economic and international expansion and for the planned rearmament.

Papen's cabinet seemed to offer the best possibility for implementing these goals. Its members, most of noble origin, came from the conservative rightist camp. Papen, who had been a member of the Catholic Center party and its delegate to the Prussian parliament from 1921-1924 and 1928-1932, was politically closer to the German National People's party (DNVP).\(^9\) Minister of the interior, Baron von Gayl, a member of the DNVP and a representative of East Prussia in the state council, held to the reactionary Hugenberg line.\(^10\) Reichswehr (Army) Minister Schleicher, generally considered the inspiration for the Papen cabinet, personified the rearmament plans of the Reichswehr leadership.\(^11\) Nearly all the ministers belonged to the German Gentlemen's Club (Deutscher Herrenklub), a fact which earned the cabinet the nickname, "Herrenklub-Kabinett" (The Gentlemen's Club Cabinet).\(^12\)
The Gentlemen's Club has unjustifiably been portrayed in writings as a harmless debating circle similar to an English club. The purpose for founding the Herrenklub in 1924, however, was to gather together a "conservative elite," which drew from the leadership of politics, the military, big industry, and big agriculture. This elite sought to unify conservative political positions in order to increase its ability to realize right-wing, conservative policies. The mentality of the Herrenklub was characteristically chauvinistic and anti-republican. The draft of its charter reads:

In its name the Herrenklub refers to our people's historical mission towards the East which is symbolic of the idea of an enlarged Germany. The German Herrenklub intends to lay a foundation, as a club, for convening persons with a Christian and nationalistic orientation who have leading or decisive political influence.

The German Herrenklub was closely related to a political movement and deserved special attention as another aspect of the development of the conservatives' models of dictatorship: namely, the young conservative movement.

The young conservatives arose as a reaction to the First World War and the November Revolution. After the collapse of the Kaiser's empire in 1918, conservatives of the old stamp remained true to the political views of the pre-World War II days. But the new conservatives criticized conditions during Wilhelm's empire and held it responsible for Germany's defeat in the war. During the Weimar Republic the young conservatives published an almost inexhaustible wealth of materials. Although these publications differed from one another in numerous ways, all shared three ideological core elements; the desire to create a unified and internally strong German Reich; the demand for a new European order in which Germany would play a leading role, and the claim that an internally and externally strong German Reich would embody the true and specifically German form of socialism.

Franz von Papen never doubted that he should be regarded as being in the tradition of the young conservatives. Leading ideologues of young conservatives such as Heinrich von Gleichen, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, and Max Hildebert Boehm were numbered among the founding members of the German Herrenklub, which was led by Heinrich von Gleichen and Hans Bode von Alvensleben.

In contrast to the NSDAP and to the Hugenberg wing of the DNVP (which had generally pulled back from the German Herrenklub after 1924), the Young Conservatives' and the Herrenklub members' internal policy steered toward a gradual reduction of
democratic and parliamentary rights through legal means. By continually making alterations in the constitution, they hoped to reach their long-term goal, a definitive revision of the Weimar Reich constitution. As way stations to this goal, they aimed at strengthening the position of the Reich president and Reich government against the parliament. After 1930, these means were put into practice by applying Article 48. The Federation for Renewing the Reich (Bund zur Erneuerung des Reiches, BER) had been presided over by the former Reich chancellor and later Reich bank president, Hans Luther, from its founding in 1923 until 1930. The BER's drafts for a constitution most nearly matched the Herrenklub's political thinking concerning the constitution.

Among the numerous political models for a constitution that emanated from this circle around the Herrenklub and BER, the proposals of one man particularly stand out: Edgar Julius Jung. He had a close relationship with Papen and his work in certain ways epitomized the Young Conservatives' models of dictatorship.

Jung, a lawyer by profession who was active in various rightist radical groups and organizations since the First World War, was made Papen's private secretary and the ghostwriter of his speeches in 1932. In 1927 he had published a book entitled The Domination of the Inferior, in which he maintained that the Weimar Republic had brought the inferior to power, while letting the potential of Germany's intellectual and moral elite go unused. According to him, it was time to put an end to liberalism and individualism and to create a new Reich in which an educated and cultivated leadership elite, drawn from the bourgeoisie, would hold all power. Specifically, Jung voted for a change in electoral rights to increase the minimum voting age for unmarried persons, to revoke electoral rights for women, and to give additional votes to fathers with several children. He also supported the creation of a two-chamber system: the first chamber was to consist of a leadership elite from the economic, military, and political spheres, with the Reich president selecting 75 percent of membership; the second chamber was to be composed of the elected representatives of the Reichstag, who could not influence legislation or cabinet formation, since the Reich president would appoint the cabinet and maintain his own office for life. Jung also proposed privileging the ministerial bureaucracy.

Although they had certain unrealistic features (especially concerning elections), Jung's constitutional proposals became the foundation for the constitutional program of the Reich government during the Papen chancellorship—a point to be developed later. Already before 1932 these proposals had gained recognition and support in certain corporate circles because of their antiparliamentary and antidemocratic character. In
particular, Paul Reusch, an industrialist in the Ruhr and general director of the Gutehoffnungshütte in Oberhausen, a subsidiary of the Haniel Corporation, was interested in Jung and helped finance the publication of his book. Indeed, Karl Haniel; Albert Wögler, the chairman of the board of United Steel Works, Europe's largest mining and steel manufacturing concern; and Fritz Springerum of the Hoesch Company of Dortmund were numbered among the circle of Jung's supporters.

To this policy of a strong state—in which the broad mass of the citizenry (the inferiors) were to be excluded from the development of a political will and in which an institutionally protected elite would govern—was closely linked to the plan for a new European order under German leadership. Jung emphasized the necessity of creating large economic spaces because "the German of the second quarter of the twentieth century (needed) economic spaces, export territories, and secure nutritional bases." The plan to create a middle-European economic domain was no intellectual plaything for the Young Conservatives; rather it grew out of the interests of German corporations and reflected a development that had taken hold since the mid-twenties. Cartel agreements in Europe, particularly with France, created the economic foundation for business ties and cooperation among various large European corporations. By establishing the "Middle European Business Day" in 1931, leading representatives of chemical, electrical, and heavy industries created an institution that was designed—by reducing tariff barriers, developing trade relationships to southeast Europe, and cooperating economically with France—to create a European economic empire. Carl Duisberg, chairman of the board of the IG-Farben conglomerate, the largest chemical concern in Europe, and also chairman of the Reich Association of German Industry, the top industrial association, introduced this strategy for economic expansion to German companies: "Only a closed economic bloc from Bordeaux to Odessa can give Europe the economic backbone it needs to maintain its importance in the world." It was less openly mentioned that not only peaceful means, but also military actions might conceivably have to be employed in order to reach this goal; but this point of view is both evident in the definition of the goal itself and became clear in the increasingly overt demands for rearmament.

Papen offered leading capitalist representatives a guarantee that he would support their economic and political plans. Since 1928 he had been a member of the German-French study committee, a coalition for encouraging economic and cultural cooperation between Germany and France. The committee had been called to life by Emile Mayrisch, an industrial magnate from Luxembourg who was general director of the Arbed Corporation, the second largest mining and steel manufacturing concern in Europe, and simultaneously president of the International Crude Steel
Towards the Holocaust

Association (Steel Cartel). From the German side, the committee received influential representatives from big industry and banking.³²

The naming of Papen's cabinet on May 31, 1932, was heralded by big industry and banking representatives. During the Reichstag election of July 1932—as with that of November 1932—the parties supporting Papen, DNVP, and DVP (Deutsche Volkspartei) received massive financial support from heavy industry circles in Rhine-Westphalia. Industrial magnates such as Vögl er of the United Steelworks and Springorum of Hoesch, who in preceding years had helped to support Hitler and the NSDAP and to make them acceptable, were among the initiators of election funds for Papen.³³

This fact has often been used to support the conclusion that the industrialists named—and with them most of heavy industry in the Ruhr—had no interest in establishing a fascist system of domination; rather, they were more concerned with saving conservatism from National Socialism, or at least with "taming" the NSDAP.

But the following points should be observed: First, the NSDAP was politically and financially supported by these powers long before 1932.³⁴ Hitler had several opportunities to speak before leading representatives of industry. After his famous speech to the Düsseldorf Industry Club on January 27, 1932, he received increased support from industrialists in the Ruhr district—and also from Vögl er.³⁵

Second, in the summer of 1932, the goal of the industrial group around Vögl er was aimed neither at neutralizing the NSDAP politically nor opposing its antidemocratic, anti-union, and chauvinistic demands; on the contrary, they wanted to include the NSDAP in the government.³⁶

Essentially there were no differences among the various industrial groups on the views that the parliamentary system should be removed and an expansive foreign policy should be introduced. There was, however, disagreement on the methods and persons to be employed and when the transition to a dictatorship should be accomplished. Fritz Thyssen, the steel industrialist, and the former Reich bank president, Hjalmar Schacht, wielded all their influence in order to affect transfer of the chancellorship to Hitler.³⁷

In contrast, the Ruhr representatives of heavy industry around Vögl er were not yet prepared to transfer full power to Hitler. They quite openly considered the time premature for various reasons: For one, a too precipitous and direct course toward an open dictatorship would invite resistance from the workers' movement. Despite the deep split in the workers' movement
between its social democratic and Communist wings, the possibility of a collective action in the case of a transfer of power to Hitler during the summer of 1932 was not to be dismissed. In addition, Prussia—the largest and economically most significant state (Land) within the German Reich, and the one that commanded a strong, social-democratically oriented police force—was still ruled by a coalition government comprised of SPD and center representatives. To appoint Hitler as Reich chancellor would have resulted in the protests of the Prussian government. Furthermore, Hitler would have never been able to risk deposing the Prussian government, as Papen in fact did.

Internationally, there were important decisions to be made at the Conference of Lausanne. Since this group would ultimately decide the fate of German reparations payments, it was unwise for them to make uncautious moves domestically. In the face of skepticism from without, particularly from France, the Lausanne negotiations would never have been completed successfully had Hitler been chancellor.

In addition, the economic program of the NSDAP was unclear. Although the NS-leadership had left no doubt that they intended to comply with the wishes and interests of big industrialists, on questions of important details they lacked clear plans for enacting economic measures. Precisely for this reason, the so-called "Keppler-Circle" was formed in the spring of 1932 in which representatives of industry and the NSDAP worked out an economic policy together. These were the all-important reasons for supporting the Papen cabinet in the summer of 1932 rather than the NSDAP.

Papen's period of government can be divided into several stages, each of which has a relatively clear major political content and demonstrates specific characteristics pointing to the successive development toward an authoritarian, elitist system of domination.

The first phase, from Papen's inauguration up to the Reichstag election on July 31, was characterized by the unwavering, drastic reduction in social and democratic rights. On June 4, the very day the government was declared, the Reichstag was dissolved to permit Papen to govern "undisturbed" by parliamentary opposition. The first emergency decrees of the government, issued that same June, contained a massive reduction in state expenditures for social welfare (cuts in pensions, in benefits to the unemployed and war veterans, and so on). Because of the "ordinance against political excesses" (extremism) of June 14, the SA and SS, the paramilitary forces of the NSDAP, were readmitted. While the Nazi paramilitary organizations could freely engage in political agitation, administrative, judicial, and police measures for taking action against republican and socialist forces were intentionally strengthened. On July 20, 1932, the Papen government delivered the greatest blow
to the democratic process when, on threadbare pretexts, it deposed the SPD and center government in Prussia. With this coup-like move against a democratically legitimated government, one of the last and most important republican bastions was eliminated. A Reich commissioner installed by the Reich government took over governmental business, and the Prussian police force was placed under the command of the Reich. Hereafter hardly any resistance was to be expected in Prussia against the planned refashioning of the Reich into an authoritarian, fascist state. For fascist forces, Prussia was a test case in which the resistance of the workers' movement to the destruction of the Weimar Republic could be measured.

The Reichstag election on July 31, 1932, closes the first stage and introduces a second stage in which the attempt to include the NSDAP in the government was the primary goal. With 37.4 percent of the votes and 230 Reichstag seats, the NSDAP became the strongest party, while the parties that had supported Papen, the DVP and DNVP combined could claim only 44 seats. Even before the election the newspaper Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (DAZ) which was aligned with heavy industry, called for a coalition of the DNVP and NSDAP under the Papen chancellorship.

Immediately after the election, discussions among cabinet members began on how the NSDAP could be made a participant in the government. But the negotiations, which Reich president Hindenberg conducted with Hitler on August 13, were a failure. Hitler—pressured by Thyssen and Schacht—refused to accept a secondary role; rather he insisted on the office of chancellor. This demand had to this point been rejected by the most important forces in heavy industry.

After the failure of negotiations with the NSDAP, the third phase of Papen's government commenced. In this stage the focus was on developing and actualizing an independent governmental policy. The main components of this policy were its economic and constitutional reform programs.

The economic program, hammered out in lengthy and intensive discussions from the end of July until the beginning of September 1932, was shaped with the participation of big business. Its most important elements were tax bonuses and hiring benefits for entrepreneurs and the virtual elimination of the tariff system. By introducing the voluntary labor service and direct (but ineffective) measures for providing work, unemployment was to be lowered.

This economic program paid not the slightest attention to the distressed economic situation of large groups of the population. Rather, it was oriented exclusively toward the demands of big business. Such a program could have been insured only when the democratic rights guaranteed by the Weimar constitution were restricted even further and the government in power was made largely independent of parliament and institutionally guaranteed
The Government of Franz von Papen

such independence.

The plans to change the constitution, which Minister of the Interior Gayl developed in agreement with the cabinet, aimed at liquidating "parliamentarism" and establishing a dictatorship.49 The plans depended heavily on the concept of the state developed by Jung and other Young Conservative authors. Gayl proposed a change in the electoral law. "Independent family providers" (men and women), as well as war veterans, would receive an additional vote, while the age limit for the right to vote and to be elected would be raised to twenty-five years of age. The proportional election system, in which the electorate could vote for a party and for individuals, was to be changed to a system in which the electorate could only vote for individuals. This suggestion, carried to its logical conclusion, would result in doing away with the party system.

Article 54 of the Weimar constitution, which gave parliament the right to depose the government by a vote of no confidence, was to be limited at once and eventually eliminated altogether.

The government was to be freed from the influence of elected officials by introducing the kind of two-chamber system Jung had proposed. Finally, new laws changing the relationship of Reich to the states ("Reich reform") would strengthen the power of the central government against the states.

If the constitutional plans of the Papen cabinet had been put into effect, they would have replaced the parliamentary system with a form of state and government in which every effective democratic control was removed and an elite leadership group exercised all authority (Herrschaft). Actualizing these plans would have meant transforming the Weimar state into an elite, authoritarian state with fascistic features, in which all opposition could be shut out.

In contrast to the NSDAP, the Papen government put little value on mobilizing the masses in favor of its politics. As a result of its policy, directed against the basic needs of broad segments of the population, and of its inability to agitate the masses, Papen suffered a catastrophic election defeat during the Reichstag election on November 6.

But the NSDAP, too—and this was actually the decisive fact of the election—lost more than two million votes. It thereby became clear that the NSDAP had passed the peak of its influence on the masses. It was also evident that the low point of the worldwide economic depression had been overcome. A new upswing in the business cycle was about to begin in which opportunities for demanding sacrifices from the working population, in the name of economic crisis, would be substantially reduced. No one wanted to return to a parliamentary system. On the contrary,
the crisis was an opportunity that could be used to get rid of that system. At this juncture, Hitler's being placed into power signified the last opportunity for the right-wing forces from big business, banking, and the military to decisively destroy parliamentary democracy. With help from the fascist dictatorship, they intended to accomplish their long-held, chief interests: destruction of the labor movement and removal of the rights of wage and salary earners, economic expansion, reconquest of the lands lost during the First World War, creation of an integrated European market under German leadership, and rearmament. In this situation, the important heads of big business and banking were unanimous in demanding that Hitler be installed as Reich chancellor.

True, after the Papen government there was a brief intermezzo--namely, the Schleicher government—but the rail switches for the fascist dictatorship had already been set.
This paper is based on my dissertation expected to be published in 1982: Ulrike Hörster-Philipp, Konservative Politik in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik: Die Regierung Franz von Papen (Marburg: University of Marburg, Dissertation, 1980).


For examples, see also the heavy industry's newspaper Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (DAZ) and F. Klein, "Zur Vorbereitung der faschistischen Diktatur durch die deutsche Grossbourgeoisie: 1929-1932," in Von Weimar zu Hitler, ed. G. Jasper (Köln: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1968), pp. 136-37. Furthermore, consider publications of the Reichsverband der deutschen Industrie (RDI), 1930, Nr. 35, p. 27; citations by Carl Duisberg (of the IG-Farben-Concern and president of RDI) in the Zentralen Staatsarchiv Potsdam, (ZSTA Potsdam), IG-Farben, A 1053, p. 272 (November 1, 1933) and p. 225 (June 24, 1931).

According to Article 48 of the Weimar constitution, the president to the Reich was, under special conditions, empowered to dissolve parliament and to govern on the basis of emergency decrees.

For example, in the private correspondence of big industrialists: "Veltenbriefe" of December 2 and 3, 1930; see also W. Müller
Towards the Holocaust


For example, see the private correspondence of big industrialists, "Deutsche Führerbriefe" Nr. 39 (May 24, 1932).

Already in 1924, Papen was opposed to the "Grand Coalition" (SPD, Center, DDP, DVP) in Prussia and demanded the inclusion of the DNVP (J. A. Bach, Franz von Papen in der Weimarer Republik p. 57). In October 1931, a few days before the Harzburg meeting, he demanded—in his much noted speech in Dülmern—the inclusion of the right-wing parties (Ibid., pp. 183-84).


See Axel Schildt, Militär mit Massenbasis? Die Querfronzonzeption der Reichswehrführung um General Schleicher am Ende der Weimarer Republik (Frankfurt: Campus, 1931). Most of the other ministers were normally not party members. However, in orientation, they were right-wing conservatives or right-wing radicals: Baron Konstantin von Neurath (foreign minister), Hermann Warmbold (minister of economic affairs), Count Lutz von Schwerin-Krosigk (minister of finance), Hans Schäffer (minister of labor affairs), Franz Gürthner (minister of justice, DNVP), von Zitz-Rühberach (minister of transport and postal services), Magnus von Braun (minister of nutrition and agriculture, DNVP).

Papen was a member of the board of directors of the German Herrenklub (DHK) since its founding. The list containing the names of the board members is in the Bundesarchiv Militärarchiv Freiburg (BA WA Freiburg), Nachlass Schleicher, No. 7, p. 6f.

The German Herrenklub emerged from the Juniklub (Club of June) founded in 1919. Its seat was in Berlin. In numerous large cities, Herrengesellschaften (gentlemen societies) were formed according to the model of the German Herrenklub.

The November 11, 1924, charter and statutes of the Herrenklub can be found in the Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BA Koblenz), R 118, Nr. 35, p. 62. This version of the charter and statutes was not published, however. The final version (BA MA Freiburg, Nachlass Schleicher, Nr. 7, p. 3) lacked any such political content.


See, for example, the works of C. Schmitt, the well-known theoretician of the state. C. Schmitt, Die Diktatur: Von den Anfängen des modernen Souveränitätsgedankens bis zum proletarischen Klassenkampf (München: Duncker & Humblot, 1921); C. Schmitt, Legalität und Legitimität (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1933); O. Spengler, Politische Schriften (München: Beck, 1933); and A. Moeller van den Bruck, Das dritte Reich (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1923).

A. Moeller van den Bruck, Das Recht der jungen Völker (Berlin: Verlag der Nahe Osten, 1932; and V. Stapel, Der christliche Staatsmann: Eine Theologie des Nationalismus (Hamburg: Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, 1932).


Membership and guest lists are to be found in the BA MA in Freiburg, Nachlass Schleicher, No. 7, p. 6ff. (Direktorium); BA in Koblenz, R 118, No. 35, p. 41ff. and BA Koblenz, Nachlass Rechberg, No. 4.


Also the self-image of the German Herrenklub, according to the BA MA Freiburg.

128 Towards the Holocaust

25 Ibid., pp. 141-44.

26 See Jung's letter to Pechel, dated February 21, 1928, BA Koblenz, Nachlass Pechel I, No. 76. Reusch sympathized with the circle's constitutional plans: He promoted the collaboration between Jung and Luther (Ibid.). He was a close friend of Oswald Spengler. See also B. Herzog, "Die Freundschaft zwischen Oswald Spengler and Paul Reusch," in Spengler-Studien, ed. A. M. Koktanek (München: Beck, 1965) pp. 77-97.

27 Jung's letter to Pechel, dated November 12, 1927, BA Koblenz, Pechel collection I, No. 76. See also the letter of January 14, 1929, Ibid., No. 77.


29 For a more elaborate treatment, see Hürster-Philipp, Konservative Politik, p. 129-40.


32 Hürster-Philipp, Konservative Politik, p. 179ff.

33 Dingeldey's letter to Schleicher, dated July 12, 1932, BA NAF Freiburg, Nachlass Schleicher, No. 22, p. 80, and his letter dated July 18, 1932, Ibid., p. 81. Springorum's letter to Schleicher, dated July 23, 1932, Ibid., p. 84.

34 Among others, it was supported by the Bergbaulicher Verein (mining association), the Employer's Association North-West, the Gruppe Eisen North-West, Stinnes, Kirdorf, and Thyssen. For more details see Hürster-Philipp, "Grosskapital, Weimarer Republik und Faschismus," Konservative Politik, pp. 77-83.


36 Relevant documents: "Führerbriefe" No. 59, dated August 2, 1932; DAZ of June 25 and August 9, 1932. Possible alternatives: A DNVP-NSDAP government coalition with Strasser or Göring as minister of the interior.

37 Thyssen's letter to Schlenker, dated November 11, 1932, ZStA Potsdam, Nachlass Bracht, 2, No. 51, p. 130. Schacht's
The Government of Franz von Papen

letter to Hitler, dated November 12, 1932, Document EC-456, in: Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher vor dem Internationen Militärgerichtshof (IMT), Vol. XXXVI, Nuremberg 1949, p. 535. The controversy between Thyssen and Schacht on the one hand and the remaining industrialists on the other also had an industrial dimension: Thyssen and Schacht were closely allied with American Morgan capital, while the remaining conglomerates had tried to maintain independent of American capital. For details, see K. Gossweiler, Grossbanken, Industriemonopole, Staat, Wirtschaft und Politik des staatsmonopolistischen Kapitalismus in Deutschland 1914-1932 (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1971, p. 266ff.


Reichsgesetzblatt (RGBl.) I, 1932, pp. 273-84.

Ibid., p. 302.

For more details see Hörster-Philipps, Konservative Politik, pp. 259-60.


DAZ, June 25, 1932.


"Führerbriefe" No. 66 dated August 26, 1932.

For all the business taxes paid from October 1, 1932 to September 30, 1933, the various businesses were to receive coupons to be used in lieu of future 1934-1939 tax payments. See also cabinet minutes in the BA Koblenz, R 43 I, Vol. 1437.
Wages could be cut by as much as 50 percent by firms which were in financial difficulty or which had a certain amount of new employment. For an overview, see also H. Marcon, Arbeitsbeschaffungspolitik der Regierungen Papen und Schleicher: Grundsteinlegung für die Beschäftigungspolitik im Dritten Reich (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1974).


There was a petition of big industrialists, bankers and large landholders requesting the Reichspräsident on November 19, 1932 to appoint Hitler as chancellor. See also minutes of the big industrialist’s "Langmannverein’s" meeting of November 26, 1932, Ibid., pp. 154-56.