The Vicissitudes of West German Social Democracy in the Crisis of the 1980s

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A visitor to the Social Democratic Party (SPD) headquarters — the famed “Barracke” in Bonn — on the evening of 6 March 1983, could not help but feel a deep sense of destitution and gloom amongst the Federal Republic’s Social Democrats.1 Pipe-smoking intellectuals and hardened unionists alike conveyed the unmistakable feeling that the conservative victory on that Sunday in March heralded
the end of an era. For nearly seventeen years, social democracy in West Germany had shared state power — perhaps the most coveted goal in the “staatsfixiert” tradition of German social democracy. The Social Democrats’ post-election despair was further heightened by a new challenge emanating largely, though not exclusively, from their left: the Greens, the spirited ecology party, had just garnered enough votes to gain entry into the Federal Parliament for the first time. The Greens — in Willy Brandt’s phrase, social democracy’s “lost children” — had clearly hurt the SPD at the polls, and were going to continue their relentless criticism of some of social democracy’s most fundamental tenets.2

West German social democracy, as constituted by the SPD and the organized labour movement, clearly needed to assess the serious challenges it faced in the wake of the 6 March 1983 Bundestag elections. However, the elections were neither a disastrous end, nor an insurmountable crisis for the West German left. Rather, the election results accentuated a process of political development which had been long in the making. The future direction of this shift remains unclear, yet one thing is quite definite: the old constellations will never be reconstituted. A moment of critical realignment had been reached.3

The Current Extent of the “Wende” in West Germany The origins of this political realignment date back to late 1974 and early 1975. The 6 March 1983 election results can thus be seen as merely the culmination of a relatively linear and predictable process. This perspective underlines the SPD’s active contribution to its loss of state power, for the electoral outcome was as much a consequence of social democracy’s tactical and strategic mis-steps during a period of crisis, as it was the result of Christian Democracy’s skill in selling a superior alternative to West German voters. The legitimacy of social democracy’s mainstays — Keynesianism and reform politics — was severely undermined during the crisis period. Analyzed in the context of a much longer process dating back to the mid 1970s, the Wende (“turning point”) becomes more than merely a Regierungswechsel (“change of government”). Instead, it assumes the form of a Machtwechsel (“change of power constellations”) whose outcome was the solid institutionalization of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) state. This was the result, at least
in part, of social democracy's internal contradictions, and the SPD's errors in choice and judgement.

By mid-1984, social democracy's future looked grim. Christian Democratic politicians occupied the most powerful government offices, including the Bundestag presidency, the Federal Chancellorship, and the leadership of the constitutional court. The CDU boasted parliamentary majorities, or coalition majorities, in six-out-of-eight Federal Republic territorial states ("Flächenstaaten"). It held municipal leadership in the crucial cities of West Berlin, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, and Bonn, as well as in numerous large towns that had traditionally been bastions of SPD support. Moreover, the party enjoyed an absolute majority in the Federal Republic's upper house, the Bundesrat, which plays a key role in the passage of legislation. The CDU also had a comfortable working majority in the Bundestag, thanks to a coalition with the Free Democratic Party (FDP) which had become Chancellor Kohl's "party for hire" ("Leihpartei").

The CDU also appeared to have an abundance of talented (albeit quarrelling) party leaders, including such capable politicians as Lothar Spaeth, Gerhard Stoltenberg, Ernst Albrecht and Heiner Geissler — all of whom seemed competent to succeed Helmut Kohl as party leader when the time came. Christian Democracy's near-hegemonic position in the West German state extended from the loftiest reaches of national and international politics, down to the state and local levels. There was no indication that the near future would witness a change in the status quo.

Subsequent events significantly improved the outlook for the SPD, although the contradictions that brought on the party's crisis in the first place had not been resolved. The Flick scandal seriously clouded the political fortunes of the CDU and cast doubt on the integrity of numerous prominent CDU politicians, among them Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The SPD's 1985 victories in state elections in the Saar and North Rhine-Westphalia demonstrated that the party was very much alive. With the emergence of a new generation of charismatic young leaders, including Oskar Lafontaine and Johannes Rau, the possibility of an SPD-led government in 1987 or beyond could not be discounted. Much of the political ground regained by the SPD came as the party "moved left" and thus diminished
the political space occupied by the Greens. Still, it would be inaccurate to contend that social democracy has adequately confronted the "economy-ecology" duality, or that it has solved any of the inherent problems of social democracy. A return to state power could well bring these tensions to the fore once again.

**The Retreat of Social Democracy and Reform Politics in Advanced Capitalist Countries**

Paralleling the famous dictum that 'whoever controls Germany determines the fate of Europe', no less an authority on social democracy than Bruno Kreisky said, at the SPD's convention in 1975, that the "strength of social democracy in Europe and the world depends to a great extent on how strong social democracy is in Germany." With West German social democracy in crisis since the mid-1970s, it should come as no surprise to someone giving credence to the Kreiskian paradigm that the rollback of social democracy assumed a Europe-wide dimension in the form of gradual conservative encroachments upon reformist gains. Thus, it is important to place Christian Democracy's consolidation of state power in a comparative and historical context.

Significantly, it was the Swedish Social Democrats (arguably the ideal typical representatives of Keynesian interventionism and social democratic welfare reforms) who first lost their parliamentary hegemony in 1976 after nearly 34 years of uninterrupted rule. Although the SAP engineered a successful return six years later, there can be no doubt that the interregnum of the "bourgeois" coalition weakened both wings of Swedish social democracy — i.e. the "political" (the party) and the "economic" (the unions). Adverse objective conditions, produced by a serious economic crisis, have forced the Swedish Social Democrats to proceed very gingerly with their reforms. This is best exemplified by the Social Democratic wage-earner fund legislation which, although considerably weaker than the unions' original proposals as articulated in the "Meidner Plan", barely made it through parliament. Since their return to power, the Swedish Social Democrats have been mainly concerned with implementing austerity measures, including wage restraint, that navigate the treacherous waters between losing the support of their rank and file, their voters, and their "base", and alienating the bourgeois bloc even further.
Social democracy has lost governmental power in Denmark and Norway as well. In Denmark especially, the defeat of social democracy confirms a lengthy process of internal decay and decomposition which beset the party during the crisis of the 1970s and had its roots in much earlier periods. Social democracy also retreated into opposition in Belgium and the Netherlands, where it has been subjected to a two-pronged attack: a counter-cultural one from “below” and a conservative one from “above”, not dissimilar to the developments in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Even in Austria, that other bastion of social democratic hegemony, Kreisky and the SPOe suffered a setback at the polls in 1983 which forced the venerable chancellor into retirement, and pushed the party into a very compromising coalition with a small neo-liberal party whose unrepentant attitude towards Austria's Nazi past has repeatedly embarrassed the Social Democrats. In a manner similar to the situation in West Germany during the tumultuous last days of the social-liberal coalition, the Social Democrats in Austria are compelled to make serious concessions to their junior partners in the governmental coalition, especially in the realm of economic policy and social reforms. The fact that the austerity packages in Austria have not assumed the dire forms of those in many other advanced capitalist countries is mainly a consequence of the extremely elaborate and finely-tuned “corporatist” network of conflict management in Austria and the predominance of public ownership in the Austrian economy, which the Social Democrats have deftly used to “cushion” workers who would otherwise face unemployment.

In Britain, social democracy and reform politics reached a nadir marked by the Thatcher victory in 1979, and the split between the Labour Party and the SDP in the spring of 1981. Nowhere else in Europe has such a clear attempt been made by conservative forces to use the state in reordering societal priorities to the detriment of the working class and organized labour. Serious conflicts involving the unions, such as the SDP-Labour split and the disunity between striking and non-striking miners, demonstrate both the success of the Thatcherite measures, and the inability of British social democracy and the labour movement to counter this offensive.
Social democracy's hold on governmental power has been relegated to Europe's southern periphery; i.e., Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy and France. In the first three, social democracy has been preoccupied mainly with the restoration of bourgeois rights, and the defence of still relatively feeble democratic institutions against the authoritarian elements which formed the dictatorships that dominated these countries not so long ago. In short, social democracy in these three countries (especially in Spain, where it is constantly challenged by centrifugal forces, such as Basque and Catalan separatism, and a still fundamentally undemocratic army; and in Portugal, where it is subjected to severe constraints by its conservative coalition partners) can give little attention to issues of distributive justice and the promotion of economic equality. Moreover, in all three countries, social democracy also has to abide by strict exogenously imposed rules, such as IMF-imposed austerity packages, which hamper its reformist mission.

As for Italy, despite the PSI-led Craxi government, the political and economic fortunes of the Italian working class have suffered since the late 1970s. In spite of the "historic compromise" and the Eurocommunist line of the Italian Communist Party, which, in 1976, led to the PCI's best electoral showing in Italian history, the Communists could not translate these gains into tangible power benefitting the Italian working class. Indeed, in the mid-1970s, with the end of the "cycle of struggle" which had originated in the Hot Autumn of 1969, the PCI gave its tacit approval to the austerity measures that followed. This did not change at all under the Craxi administration, a government which in no way presented a challenge to the political hegemony of Christian Democracy in Italy. If anything, the nominal existence of a Social Democratic-led government legitimated the Christian Democratic rollback of reforms. It tells a great deal about the state of social democracy that, during the crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s, it has been relegated to political power in Europe's southern states where its options remain extremely limited. The "weakest link" phenomenon may have occasionally benefitted the cause of Leninism; one could hardly imagine any parallel situation in the case of social democracy.

There remains the case of Mitterand's France which, while starting out as an open challenge to the growth of economic conservatism in advanced industrial societies, soon found itself
forced to compromise with a vengeance. Following the implementation of Keynesian programs during the first year of its incumbency, the Mitterand government reverted to monetaristic austerity packages. This departure from reform politics has, in the meantime, given Mitterand the lowest popularity rating of any president in the history of the Fifth Republic, discredited the Parti Socialiste as a viable agent of political reform, and fostered such division among the left that the three labor unions marched in separate parades on May Day, 1984.

This domestic realignment has occurred under the peculiar circumstances of a socialist government and a socialist president enjoying state power, unencumbered by coalitions with "bourgeois" parties. It has been accompanied by a foreign policy and a military posture that closely corresponds to the conservative Zeitgeist of the capitalist West. The French Socialists' highly nationalist and traditionalist foreign policy, in and of itself hardly represents a Wende, but rather a continuation of French strategies inherited from President de Gaulle. The only difference, compared to the late general's foreign policy, seems to be the Mitterand government's vitriolic anti-communism and anti-Sovietism. This has not only distanced the French socialists from their northern European, and especially their West German, colleagues, but has also stymied the development of any serious peace movement in France. Above all, the Wende in France seems to have de-legitimated what was perhaps Europe's most vibrant left-wing intellectual culture, both on the "elite" and "mass" levels — a sharp contrast to developments in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Social Democracy's Successes before the Mid-1970s The foundation to the SPD's successes in West German politics was, in large measure, the party's famous Bad Godesberg program. Recognizing the political futility of being an anti-nomian force during an era blessed with superb economic growth and cultural conformity, the SPD shed its critical, exclusionary, and class-oriented Marxism for a "constructive", inclusionary, and mass-oriented Keynesianism. The SPD transformed itself from a Klassenpartei to a Massenpartei. Godesberg propelled organized social democracy into the mainstream of West German political life. Gone were the days of cradle-to-grave "red" subculture, neutralism, anti-NATO posture, and anti-
militarism. Instead, the SPD developed into an alternative to the CDU, as a “responsible” party which could one day assume the burdens of state power in the Federal Republic.

By the mid 1960s, (and especially after West Germany’s first mini-crisis of 1966/67) the SPD had graduated from its position of passive, social acceptability to assume state power during the Federal Republic’s hour of need. The SPD had become the modern German party, the party which could provide sustained economic growth and social redistribution. As Adam Przeworski put it: “Keynesianism was not only a theory that justified socialist participation in government but even more . . . [it was] a theory that suddenly granted universalistic status to the interest of workers.”

Cushioned by a superb economic climate in global capitalism, the SPD provided a social compact which made it the ideal party to guide Modell Deutschland towards its astounding successes of the late 1960s and early 1970s. First, the growth-oriented Keynesianism of the Social Democrats provided the best possible macro-economic “instruments” for promoting accumulation. Second, social democracy’s long-standing infatuation with technological progress helped German capital in its process of accumulation via strategies designed to aid the modernization of production. Third, social democracy promised to create an atmosphere of political détente and cultural liberalization, both in the international arena and in domestic politics. Fourth, social democracy guaranteed the working class a sizeable slice of the growing pie. Fifth, social democracy, true to its traditional welfare orientation and support for the Sozialstaat, undertook appropriate steps to protect and aid all the “losers” in this ideal model by extending the already generous West German welfare package — under the assumption, of course, that the “losers” would be few and far between. It is no wonder that the SPD left the 30% electoral “ghetto” of its pre-Godesberg era and became the Federal Republic’s strongest party, winning 45.8% of the vote in the elections of 1972. The SPD had become a true, mass-oriented, “catch-all” party.

It is quite clear that social democracy’s ascent to state power could only have occurred with a concomitant desire for liberalization on the part of capital’s “enlightened” wing, for whom the old ways of Adenauer’s CDU state had become antiquated and burdensome as the 1960s drew to a close. The politics of
reconstruction, led by the Christian Democrats and sustained by Adenauer's personal charisma, were important in reintegrating the Federal Republic into the international family of nations via West Germany's position in the Western alliance. The Adenauer government could also count among its achievements: the forging of the special Franco-German relationship (which provided the main axis of a new Europe); West Germany's reparations and restitutions to Israel and the Jewish victims of the Holocaust; and the country's stellar economic performance in a global context. Yet West Germany needed to outgrow its "economic giant/political dwarf" position. This could only be achieved by a coalition of the new, modernization-oriented, Keynesian SPD on the one hand, and the growth-directed, technocratic, politically liberal bourgeoisie on the other. Untainted by the Nazi past, this coalition had the legitimacy to assert the Federal Republic's political presence in world affairs.

This coalition shared the common goal of the modernization of the West German economy only as long as the conditions of growth provided a positive-sum situation, which would benefit otherwise antagonistic social groups. The SPD's aim was to use state power to provide ideal conditions for capital accumulation, while simultaneously augmenting the reform programs of the welfare state. The liberal bourgeoisie, in turn, was willing to tolerate the latter part of the deal as long as social democracy offered the best terms for the former. As such, it was always a coalition predicated on continued growth. Thus, in 1969, the social-liberal coalition developed, with the SPD as the senior partner and the FDP (Liberal Party) as its junior governmental companion. It started with great enthusiasm, only to disintegrate in bitterness and recriminations thirteen years later, in the fall of 1982.

The period between 1969 and 1975 witnessed the ascendancy of social democratic "compassion". The two major figures of this era, Willy Brandt and Karl Schiller, embodied the two main pillars of Social Democratic policy under conditions of economic growth. Willy Brandt stood for social democracy's reformism and liberalization, both abroad and at home. In foreign policy, the strategies of Ostpolitik (denoting the normalization of relations between the Federal Republic and Eastern Europe) and Deutschlandpolitik (the institutionalization of a mo-
Studies in Political Economy
dus vivendi between the two German states) were the most tangible achievements of Social Democratic reformism and détente. In the domestic arena, the SPD-led governments instituted sweeping economic reforms, affecting virtually all facets of public life. Among the SPD’s major reforms during this period of “reform euphoria” were: the introduction of a comprehensive program of active labor power policy in the Works Promotion Act of 1969; substantial improvement of labor’s position in the industrial relations system (especially labor’s shopfloor presence and company representation) with the revised Works Constitution Act of 1972; substantial increases in unemployment compensation and child support allocations; reform of the penal code; introduction of progressive rent control laws; an increase in the availability of low-income housing; and the legalization of abortion. The SPD also democratized the educational system, introducing a complete reform of the antiquated and pyramid-like structure of higher education. Previously, it had been dominated by a handful of full professors with virtually unlimited power in determining academic research, teaching and promotion. SPD reforms either ended, or substantially weakened, the famous and notorious Ordnungenuniversitaet in West Germany. Moreover, the Social Democratic reforms to post-secondary education reduced the rigid tracking policies of the old German educational system, which had permitted only graduates of the elite Gymnasia to attend universities. The SPD intended its changes to improve access to higher education for “unconventional” students, who might decide to return to school to earn a university degree after having worked. The reform certainly diminished the former, virtually unbreakable hold of Gymnasium graduates on institutions of higher learning in West Germany.

Above all, the SPD-led government instituted a thorough liberalization of public life in the Federal Republic. While this is hard to measure, there can be no doubt that social democracy’s “compassion” introduced, perhaps for the first time in German history, a political culture which began to emphasize the primacy of civil society over that of the state. An element of democratic criticism was introduced into West German private and public life, which finally began the process of putting an end to the unquestioned power of authority (Autoritaets-eshoerigkeit) in the daily interaction of German citizens with
each other and the state. This represented nothing less than a challenge to the pre-eminence of the *Obrigkeitsstaat* ("authoritarian state") which had dominated German history for so long.

In the meantime, Karl Schiller (one of Federal Republic's leading Keynesian economists, and a masterful conflict manager) pursued a policy of economic growth which yielded considerable gains for labour, and, in turn, forced labour to cooperate with the SPD-run state in something called "concerted action".19 While differing from the openly corporatist arrangements of formalized incomes policy and political wage control, "concerted action" represented enough of an *Einbindung* ("incorporation") of the organized West German labour movement into the SPD's economic policy, to warrant speaking of a *de facto* incomes policy governing West German industrial relations at the time.

As is often the case with reforms, some observers see them as going too far; others, as not going far enough. This dialectic of reform politics came to haunt the SPD. While constantly having to be mindful of the delicate coalition with the FDP (the compact with liberal capitalism that allowed social democracy to have access to state power in the first place), it had to keep its own supporters in line. This balancing act proved problematic as early as 1969, and was ultimately one of the fundamental contradictions which sealed the fate of the SPD government.

In September 1969, steelworkers and miners led a series of wildcat strikes demanding higher wages.20 The significance of these wildcats lay not only in the fact that they shattered the myth of the supposedly complacent and compliant German worker. The strikes also aimed to undermine the SPD-imposed wage moderation that resulted from "concerted action". Similarly-motivated rank-and-file restiveness led, in 1971 and 1973, to the most massive strike waves in post-World War II German history. The 1973 period featured women and foreign workers in the vanguard of the strikers.21 Although the SPD, social democracy, and its specific reforms were never the explicit targets of the workers' complaints, there can be little doubt that strikers considered the government's reforms insufficient and saw the SPD as too concerned with fulfilling its role as a "responsible" governing party, rather than acting as the
representative of the working class. The SPD's reforms unintentionally played the objective role of rekindling a class-based collectivism on the part of West German workers, which had, by and large, lain dormant since the mid-1950s.

Social Democratic reforms gave rise to yet another challenge from "below" to the SPD's governmental power; the student protests of the late 1960s, the "'68 generation", as it is still referred to with reverence by its veterans and political successors. For, perhaps even more important than the SPD's reforms themselves was the atmosphere which dominated political discourse in the Federal Republic at this time; an atmosphere captured in the evocative term Aufbruchsstimmung ("mood of opening"). Much of this "reform euphoria" occurred outside the framework of social democracy, indeed in clear opposition to it; yet in constant dialogue with it. Rejecting all existing institutions of political participation, the so-called APO or Ausserparlamentarische Opposition ("extra-parliamentary opposition") formed the nucleus of an increasingly politicized youth culture, which attempted to radically alter virtually every aspect of West German society. Centered in major university cities — notably Berlin and Frankfurt — this movement combined the antinomian traits of American counter-culture with the theoretical underpinnings of Marxism, and revived a politicization of public life traditional in the German left but abandoned during the reconstruction period of the early 1950s and the lingering anti-communist atmosphere dominating West German politics until the late 1960s. Fundamentally anti-capitalist in its orientation, the student movement embraced ideals of participatory democracy which clashed with the technocratic modernism and the welfare state of the Social Democrats. Yet, there seems little doubt that it was the latter's reformism, as well as the success of continued economic growth, that allowed the politicization of a large anti-systemic youth movement. The SPD's reformism had opened a Pandora's box which the party was never able to close again. Paradoxically, it was a combination of the generous reforms instituted by the social-liberal coalition, and the strength of the West German economy, that stimulated the genesis of the Greens a decade ago. It is precisely the opposite development: an economy in crisis; social democracy turned sour; and a state busily trying to renege on its earlier promises by curtailing re-
forms in all corners of society; that created the recent political emergence of the Greens as a legislative force in the Federal Republic.\textsuperscript{24}

Social Democracy during the Post-1975 Economic Crisis In his 1977 New Year's address, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt said it loudly and clearly: “Nothing will ever be the way it was before 1974.” These words not only proved to be an apt characterization of the uniqueness of the previous two decades in West German (indeed West European) history; they also accurately predicted the difficulties awaiting both West German Social Democrats and those in most other capitalist countries, throughout the remainder of the 1970s and well into the 1980s. The post-1975 period ushered in a slowdown in West Germany’s economic growth, bringing rising unemployment and structural dislocations in “smoke-stack” industries such as steel, textiles, and ship-building. Suddenly, the social-liberal coalition turned to increasingly repressive austerity measures. The coalition’s former largesse gave way to cutbacks and retrenchments affecting everything from education and social services, to industrial relations and civil liberties. Social democracy was once again confronted with its old, and seemingly irreconcilable, dilemma: to pursue policies favouring its major constituencies (the industrial working class, and the “post-materialist” professionals, academics, and white-collar people who had joined its ranks during the post-Godesberg era) or to use state power primarily to introduce measures favoured by capital.\textsuperscript{25} As it had done so often in its history, the SPD tried to pursue both aims at the same time, and ended up satisfying neither side. The disastrous outcome of the March 6 elections stemmed, in many ways, from the Social Democrats’ years of vacillation between the limits imposed on the SPD by a crisis-ridden capitalist world, and the demands for further reforms placed on the party by its major supporters during a period of particular need — even desperation — for an increasing number of them.

In fairness to the SPD, the party never governed by itself. Indeed, one of the main symptoms of the crisis in the Federal Republic was the gradual distancing of the two coalition partners, leading to their inevitable breakup in the early fall of 1982. Once the crisis had set in, the consensus that had
brought these two parties together in a period of prosperity started to crack, exposing the fundamental differences which had always divided the SPD and the FDP. The two parties' respective remedies for curing the Federal Republic became increasingly incompatible. While the FDP opted unequivocally for a market-oriented, anti-statist, monetarist approach to overcome the crisis, the SPD was torn between action and words. Until the early 1980s, the party as a whole (including much of its powerful union wing) favoured a strategy that relied on increased state intervention, more public spending, and other demand-stimulating measures. However, the leadership in the cabinet (notably key party members around Chancellor Schmidt) pursued an austerity course, which, in some ways, seemed closer to the FDP's vision.

The longer the crisis persisted, and the more harshly its adversities began to affect people, the more adamant each party became in advocating its remedy as the only viable solution. Thus, by the early 1980s, the FDP grew more intransigent in its monetarism while the SPD's internal divisions became increasingly acerbic and embarrassing. The party's right wing, centered around Chancellor Schmidt and the Kanalarbeiter, opted for a policy that could be labeled "economic Noskeism". While not fully adopting the FDP's market-oriented approach to recovery, this wing of the party advocated considerable wage restraint on the part of the unions. It supported limited public spending and concurred with the Bundesbank's tight control of the money supply, urging the West German public to accept a general belt-tightening.

Structurally, the SPD's tradition of "state fixation" once again carried the day, superseding its less powerful tradition of mobilization. Just as Gustav Noske's SPD opted for a defence of the newly-established, bourgeois, Weimar Republic against the revolutionary ambitions of portions of social democracy's rank and file, so too could one interpret Schmidt's solution to the economic crisis as a manifestation of the SPD's Staatshoerigkeit ("subservience to the state").

The Schmidt program of measured austerity also split the usually-unified trade union movement into two opposite, and increasingly hostile, camps. The traditionally more conservative unions, such as those of the textile workers, the construction workers, the chemical workers, and the food and restaur-
rant workers — characteristically labelled *Kanzlergewerkschaften* ("chancellor's unions") in recognition of their uncritical support of Chancellor Schmidt — pursued an accommodationist strategy vis-à-vis the employers on virtually all counts. They argued for "reasonable" pay increases (which, of course, led to even more "reasonable" final wage settlements); opposed the 35-hour work week by opting for less-drastic work reduction schemes; and avoided the entire area of "qualitative" issues (such as restructuring of work, and employee input into rationalization and the introduction of new technologies). In addition, they went out of their way to defend the Schmidt position on economic policy as the "lesser of two evils" when compared to the unmitigated monetarism and market orientation of the FDP. These "chancellor's unions" never tired of reminding their followers and other Social Democrats that, if too many obstacles were placed in the chancellor's path, the results would lead to an inevitable demise of the Schmidt government — only to be followed by a Christian Democratic era, which would be worse for the Federal Republic's workers. In line with their accommodationism, these *Kanzlergewerkschaften* developed an interest-group-oriented strategy in opposition to the class-collective propensity of the SPD's left wing and the more radical unions. This interest-group approach implied a sort of micro-level corporatism, in which each union tried to maximize its short-term gains by collaborating with the employers — often to the detriment of its colleagues in less-profitable industries. This division in the trade union movement undermined collective solidarity, and legitimated an individualist approach on the part of segments of the working class. An astute observer of the West German labour movement called this, "the Americanization of the German labour movement".

The SPD's left (supported by "leftist" unions such as IG Metall, IG Druck und Papier, and Gewerkschaft Handel, Banken und Versicherungen) in turn, demanded immediate and substantial intervention to help the desperate situation of the country's unemployed. They also tried to revive certain micro-interventionist schemes of conflict management, including "investment guidance" and "structural policy", which were much-discussed in left-wing intellectual circles during the boom period of the early 1970s. In one form or another, all the hopes of social democracy's radical wing centered on a
"Keynes-plus" program, emphasizing the state's obligation to solve the crisis and aid its hardest-hit constituency: the so-called *Randgruppen* ("marginalized workers"), consisting of women, elderly workers, young workers, foreign workers, unskilled workers, and those combining two-or-more of these disadvantaging characteristics. This group was so perturbed by the Schmidt government's austerity measures that it organized major demonstrations (led by some unions, notably IG Metall) to protest the social-liberal policies. These events were imbued with great significance, since it takes a good deal of frustration on the part of West German unions to organize massive public protests in the first place; let alone against their "own" government. In their wake, the SPD's state power was weakened even further. The FDP's economics minister submitted a provocative position paper in the late summer of 1982, asking for deep cuts which even Helmut Schmidt could not accept, and the social-liberal era came to a sudden end in September, 1982.30

Social democracy's first experience of holding state power in the Federal Republic was over. In 1969, when the party assumed the senior position in the governmental coalition, it was strong, confident, and, on the whole, quite united. Thirteen years later, it left the center stage of West German politics internally torn, externally beleaguered, and fundamentally shaken. In a sense, social democracy and the SPD had become the victims of both their own achievements, and their missed opportunities. The SPD's reforms — certainly valuable contributions to the overall reshaping of West German politics and society — conveyed, if nothing else, a valiant effort in political leadership. Yet, by remaining largely confined to the realm of circulation, and only minimally attempting to influence the sphere of production, social democracy's reforms were simply no match for capital's counteroffensive once the growth-oriented economy began to stagnate.

On the other hand, the failures of the SPD created a mass movement to the left of the party, with some elements reaching well into the heart of social democracy itself. In addition to Ronald Reagan's hawkish rhetoric and various other public musings about the "winnability" of a limited nuclear war in central Europe, it was largely the SPD's "sins of omission" that revived the languishing Green Party in the early 1980s, making it the political spearhead of a large, amorphous "alternative
movement". Accusing the SPD of abandoning its mission and mandate, the Greens mobilized beyond the narrow issue of ecology to include the economy and international politics as well. Suddenly, the Social Democrats saw themselves attacked not only from the right, but also by a diverse group of feminists, peaceniks, health-food advocates, ecologists and radical Marxists, who, though without a coherent program, nonetheless challenged the SPD and social democracy from the left.

Social Democracy and the Unions: An Update The contemporary character of West German social democracy has also been shaped by the interplay of conflicting forces within the organized labour movement. These forces were brought into direct confrontation over the controversial issue of work-time reduction, during the highly-publicized metalworkers' and printers' strikes of 1984.

Led by IG Metall, the most "activist" member of the German Trade Union Federation (DGB), the leftist unions have traditionally advocated a class-based and collectivist approach for the labour movement; a stance which has, in recent years, become increasingly identified with work-time reduction through implementation of the 35-hour work week.

To IG Metall and its allies — particularly IG Druck und Papier — the importance accorded the struggle for the 35-hour work week seemed justified for the following reasons.

First, this measure would permit the creation of new jobs, thereby reducing unemployment, the major bane of the unions' existence in the 1980s. Thus, IG Metall felt that the 35-hour work week would increase solidarity between employed and unemployed workers, making it an essential ingredient of the union's collectivist, counter-crisis strategy. The activists viewed this demand as essentially qualitative.

Second, by demanding the 35-hour work week without any loss in remuneration, the activists hoped to substantiate one of their traditional beliefs: that the macroeconomic benefits of higher wages would stimulate consumption.

Third, the reduction of the work week would increase leisure time, which had become important in an economy dominated by stressful and monotonous methods of production. The "quality of work life" or "humanization" aspect of the 35-hour work week played a key role in the activists' advocacy.
of this strategy over that of early retirement — a remedy favoured by the more moderate accommodationist unions. What was the point, the activists argued, of having workers retire at 58, or 59, when many of them never reached that age? This argument played a central role in IG Druck und Papier’s strong support for a shorter work week, since only 2.5% of those employed in this union’s organizational domain were 59 years of age or older.

Fourth, the implementation of the 35-hour work week on a large scale would counter the proliferation of particularistic segmentations, and plant-specific arrangements, which reduced work time on a micro level. Activist unions developed a growing antipathy to such measures of localized decision-making, which they regarded as a scheme by the employers to undermine the collectivism of the unions by taking advantage of labour’s weakened position.31

In contrast to the activists, the accommodationists (centered around the “gang of five”: the chemical workers; the construction workers; the miners; the hotel and restaurant workers; and the textile workers) advocated early retirement as the best form of work-time reduction under existing circumstances. They based their argument as much on feasibility and expediency, as on strategic preferences. The accommodationists maintained that constellations of power in the Federal Republic made it impossible to have the 35-hour work week implemented in one or two large steps. This, in turn, virtually negated its desired effect of creating additional employment. The incremental reduction of the work week by one hour each year would only worsen an already intense production process, and benefit neither the employed workers nor the unemployed.

As to the accommodationists’ conceptual preferences, they viewed early retirement as the most just settlement for workers who had laboured hard for many years.32 This strategy protected a threatened and deserving group. If properly instituted, the accommodationists argued, it would also create jobs. In contrast to the 35-hour work week, which could only hurt the competitiveness of West German industry, early retirement (combined with other forms of work reduction, such as lengthening the period of compulsory education) provided an ideal solution which did not harm the economy, benefitted deserv-
ing workers, offered the possibility of additional employment, and, above all, seemed eminently feasible under existing conditions in West Germany.

In opposition to the activists, the accommodationists were less than impressed with the job-creating possibilities of the 35-hour week, even when instituted under optimal conditions. In support of their position, the accommodationists also argued that their strategy of work-time reduction enjoyed considerably greater popularity among the workers and the general public than did the 35-hour week. The latter solution suffered from a degree of uncertainty as to its job-creating potential, which made it even less likely to be adopted. Many workers also considered early retirement a far more tangible benefit, because they could not make much use of the one-hour-less per day they would work if the 35-hour work week were implemented.

Negotiations between IG Metall and representatives of the metal industry began at the end of 1983, and quickly stalled over the issue of the 35-hour week. The impasse worsened to such an extent that, by April 1984, some industrial action seemed inevitable. While the union continued to insist on a substantial reduction in weekly work-time, the employers adamantly maintained their counteroffer, featuring early retirement for older workers (the same plan advocated by the conservative unions) and increased flexibility in work-time regulations at the plant level. In early May, IG Metall finally initiated strike action, relying on its trusted bargaining area of North Württemberg/North Baden in its Stuttgart district. To the great surprise of the employers and the public, both of whom had assumed that less than the required 75% of the eligible union members would approve their leadership's decision to begin a strike, well over 80% voted in support of industrial action. When the same results occurred a few days later in IG Metall's Hesse district, where the union had not conducted a strike since the early 1950s, the employers were forced to admit that they had underestimated IG Metall's organizational resolve and institutional capabilities.

In the middle of June 1984, at the height of the conflict, well over 400,000 metalworkers were directly or indirectly involved in what had developed into the largest, costliest and most widely-publicized industrial conflict in the Federal Re-
public's history. Nevertheless, the spirit of compromise between the two contestants had not yet been irreparably damaged. Georg Leber, the flamboyant former leader of IG Bau-Steine-Erden, and the very embodiment of compromise and accommodationism, was chosen by both IG Metall and the employers as special arbitrator in what had become an embarrassing and expensive impasse for both parties.

Leber's compromise, which was announced in late June 1984, explicitly articulated the credo governing labour-capital relations throughout much of the Federal Republic's history: the agreement had to give full consideration to the workers' social needs and recognize their plight as legitimate. At the same time, however, it had to be cognizant of the demands placed on West German industry by an increasingly competitive world market, and avoid measures which could impair capital's international flexibility.

Leber's solution featured a number of major terms. The 40-hour work week would continue until 1 April 1985. Wages and salaries in the metal industry would increase by 3.3% for the period between 1 July 1984 and 1 April 1985. As of 1 April 1985, weekly work time would be allowed to fluctuate between 37 and 40 hours, but set at an average per worker of 38.5 hours, computed over a two-month period. The implementation of this three-hour flexibility would depend on negotiations between the management of each company and its works council. The compromise agreement empowered the latter body to monitor the arrangement on a monthly basis, to ascertain whether the 38.5 hour weekly average was appropriately implemented. Any deviations would constitute a violation of the contract. The compromise also called for an early retirement plan for elderly workers. Accordingly, 58-year-old workers, who had been with the same company for five years or more, were allowed to retire at 65% of their gross wages. Workers with twenty years of company loyalty were entitled to retire with 70% of their most recent level of remuneration.

With the ratification votes of both IG Metall bargaining areas largely — though far from convincingly — tallied on the positive side, the most bitter conflict of this union's history ended. IG Metall's leader, Hans Mayr, described the settlement as a victory for millions of workers, both in West Germany and Europe. His counterpart from the employers' association,
Wolfram Thiele, praised the final outcome as "historic". It is interesting to note that shortly after Leber's mediation yielded a satisfactory compromise, IG Metall's sister union IG Druck und Papier, which had also struck for a reduction in the 40-hour week, reached a similar settlement with the printing industry.

In many ways, the resolution of the conflict represented a victory for social democracy and organized labour. First and foremost, the employers' rule of "not one minute under 40 hours" — which they defended with the explicit endorsement of the CDU-led government — had been defeated. IG Metall and IG Druck broke a barrier which few believed was penetrable before the strikes began. In doing so, they took a major step on the slow and arduous road toward the 35-hour work week — seven years after this demand began to appear prominently in their programmatic statements. Given the fact that it took from the 1890s until 1919 to reach the 8-hour work day, and another 46 years to attain the 40-hour work week, this contract represents a significant achievement.

Second, IG Metall and IG Druck had never before confronted such an explicitly hostile alliance of industry and government, supported by a widely-held suspicion on the part of the public (including large numbers of workers) as to the legitimacy and feasibility of the union's demands. Despite this formidable opposition, the unions stood firm and were not afraid to conduct what they knew would be lengthy, costly, and perhaps highly divisive strikes. Contrary to the expectations of the employers and the government, the union effort was not timid or poorly organized, and never showed any signs of collapsing.

Third, whereas the employers viewed the contracts' silence on any further reduction in weekly work-time as *prima facie* evidence of their success in preventing the implementation of the 35-hour week, IG Metall and IG Druck saw it as an open invitation to continue their struggle in future years.

Lastly, the strike exhibited an unexpectedly high solidarity among the DGB unions. During the active phases of the industrial conflict, all DGB unions, including the accommodationists, rallied behind their activist rivals with frequent statements of support and a number of large-scale demonstrations. Especially at the local level — both in Hesse and in the Stuttgart area — all unions participated (under the DGB's leadership) in
various strike-support activities. With two of their sister organizations engaged in a major struggle against an alliance of employers and the CDU-led government, the DGB unions demonstrated convincingly that they could set aside their major differences, at least for a short time, and fulfill their mandate as the collective representatives of West Germany's working class. Nevertheless, the settlement did not relieve the underlying tensions between organized labour's two factions. This divisiveness promises to hamper labour in its efforts to draw up an agenda for future mobilization.

The struggle for the 35-hour week did not address the crucial issue of control over the production process. In fact, the settlement in the metalworkers' strike actually increased the shopfloor power of the more compliant and accommodationist works councils, to the detriment of the unions. In opposition to IG Metall's ongoing fight to augment the factory-level strength of union representatives through policies such as plant-level collective bargaining, the new 38.5 hour contract delegated the implementation of plant-specific provisions to the works councils which, by law, are not union bodies.35

Social Democracy's Future Prospects and Options The SPD in West Germany, like social democracy in virtually all advanced capitalist countries, finds itself at perhaps its most decisive crossroads since 1945. Indeed, the current depth of the West German Social Democrats' crisis of identity seems to exceed similar dilemmas which plagued the SPD's pre-Godesberg existence during the latter part of the 1950s. In marked contrast to its present predicament, the SPD in the late 1950s not only had clear policy options, but, more importantly, it could gauge with a relatively high degree of certainty what the various implications of each option were. Moreover, the pre-Godesberg SPD benefited from the existence of sustained economic growth, which is decidedly absent for the SPD today.

Only one thing seems quite certain. Social democracy's prosperous and, in many ways, quite glorious Bad Godesberg era has come to its irrevocable end. It was an era in which social democracy built a successful political coalition of organized labour and certain key segments of capital, by harnessing the power of growth for the purposes of facilitating both private accumulation and the expansion of public welfare. This
positive-sum constellation simply no longer pertains in the Federal Republic, and it is not likely to revive in the foreseeable future.

While growth has occurred on occasion — though never displaying the vigour it did in the 1950s, the 1960s, and the first half of the 1970s — it has done so without providing employment. In short, one of the most important characteristics of the current economic crisis has been a “decoupling” of growth from employment, thanks to increasing productivity due to technological rationalization. In short, the old recipes, which helped social democracy find political solutions to the contradictions caused by the “second industrial revolution”, are ineffectual as the “third industrial revolution” transforms production in the West German economy. Certain traditional categories, which were absolutely crucial to social democracy — such as “left” and “right” — have lost some of their clarity of meaning since they pertained to an ethic of equality and distributive justice, based on macro-economic growth and employment. The SPD is baffled by the new developments and currently unable to propose appropriate remedies.

Under conditions of economic growth, the SPD was able to distinguish itself as the Federal Republic’s “party of modernization”; implementing policies that allowed rationalization and guaranteed the continued export-prowess of West German capital in the world economy, while providing a comprehensive program of social welfare for labour. The whole concept of the welfare state was based on the availability, and the fundamental desirability, of work and employment. Without the possibility of employment for an increasingly large number of people, the welfare state became bloated, and contributed to the overall situation known as the “fiscal crisis of the state”. It was this fiscal crisis which the SPD “managed” by cutting back its reforms after 1975, thereby causing a relative worsening in the living standards of some of its main constituencies. The unions first decried this development as an unjust redistribution of wealth from the bottom to the top. Since the Christian Democrats’ rise to state power, and their acceleration of these reform-curtiling policies, sections of the organized labour movement have resorted to more radical language by denouncing these measures as representing a “class struggle from above”.

*SPE* 105
How can the apparent incompatibility of full employment and the existence of an extensive public welfare system, with conditions of minimal and sporadic economic growth be addressed? More importantly, what can social democracy contribute to the amelioration of this problem, in the specific case of the Federal Republic? As to the options, one could, of course, have full employment without a welfare state. This would be a labour-repressive and dictatorial solution akin to the path taken by fascist or right-wing authoritarian regimes. As such, it most certainly falls outside the scope of all West German political parties’ responses to the current crisis. Another option would be to have welfare with no employment. This utopian solution represents an interesting eschatological approach but is devoid of practicality, and thus hardly relevant. A third option would be to concentrate on employment, with a concomitant gradual curtailment of the welfare state, by pursuing a selective labour inclusion model — a sort of micro-level or sectoral corporatism in which the market is granted the primacy of allocation. This option seems to be the current CDU-led government’s preferred course of action. While far from an industrial policy advocating the repression of labour and economic triage for the “losers”, it definitely aims at finding selective mechanisms which will reduce the costs of welfare while increasing employment via greater productivity attained through a market-guided process of rationalization. There can be no doubt that this formula has — at least implicitly — accepted the legitimacy of the so-called “two-thirds society”, in which one-third of society is simply written off as the inevitable victims of an accelerated modernization process, made necessary by the ever-increasing competition in the system of global capitalism.

The SPD’s position is unenviable. Unlike the Christian Democrats — whose policies are also largely based on a method of trial-and-error, but who at least have the requisite political power to implement their experiments — the Social Democrats are stuck with the worst of both worlds: the SPD still represents the most important opposition to the CDU state and thus bears the major responsibility for fighting Christian Democracy’s conservative policies, which have their most adverse effects on some of the SPD’s main constituencies. Yet the SPD also has to look constantly to its left where there now exists a political
alternative in the form of the Greens.

The ecology party has assumed an ambivalent position vis-à-vis the Social Democrats: it is simultaneously their close ally and their keenest competitor, in terms of policies, strategies, and, above all, political support. Ultimately, the SPD may not be spared the bitter choice that it was offered nearly two years ago by one of its senior figures and ideologues, Richard Loewenthal, in a much-debated paper appropriately entitled "Identity and Future of the SPD". Implicitly acknowledging that the inclusionary model of the post-Godesberg era was over, Loewenthal stated that the SPD had to stop trying to be everything to everybody. He argued that the party could simply not reconcile the fundamental differences between the values and wishes of the "post-materialist" intelligentsia on the one hand, and those of the increasingly "materialist" and insecure working class on the other. The author concluded, in no uncertain terms, that for the sake of social democracy's survival as a major force in the Federal Republic, the SPD had better forget about currying favors with the "greening" counterculture, and concentrate on regaining the full confidence of its traditional supporters in the industrial working class. Concerning the unresolved dilemma between "economy" and "ecology", Loewenthal exhorted the party to opt unequivocally for the former, even at the risk of losing some voters on the left. The elections of 6 March 1983 seemed not only to corroborate Loewenthal's dire dilemma, but also to give a clear indication of the serious electoral predicament faced by the party, caught between the Scylla of "economy" and the Charybdis of "ecology". To the former, the SPD lost the vote of nearly two million workers who decided to cast their ballots for the CDU, which they perceived as "better" on the economy. Many of these renegades voted for the Christian Democrats for the first time in their lives. Moreover, this substantial loss to the right occurred in some of social democracy's traditional bastions — such as the highly industrial Rhine-Ruhr area. To worsen matters, the SPD also lost about 750,000 voters to the "ecological" side of the dilemma. It is estimated that about three-quarters of a million — mostly young — voters turned their backs on social democracy and cast their lot with the Greens.

The party regained many of these voters, however, in the North Rhine-Westphalia and Saar elections of 1985. As similar
successes in the Hesse and Bremen elections of September 1983 demonstrated, loyalty to the SPD, among large segments of the working class, is rekindled during times of crisis. \(^3\) Nevertheless, the SPD will have to devise strategies to keep these returning voters in the fold, on a more permanent basis.

While the party has still not come up with a definitive package which would successfully merge "ecology" and "economy", it has certainly recognized the importance of doing so. It has devoted a great deal of intellectual and organizational energy to the creation of a new program. The first steps were taken when the SPD set up a commission, with a clear and wide-ranging mandate, to devise a new program to replace the Godesberg paradigm by the late 1980s. At the beginning of 1985, the ghost of the Loewenthal dilemma hovered menacingly over what promised to be a lengthy and arduous process. "Eco-socialists", led by such eminent figures as Erhard Eppler and Johano Strasser, advocated a course which renounced social democracy's hitherto dominant technocratic growth logic — particularly its Godesberg variant. This wing has been strengthened by the recent victory of "green" Social Democrat, Oskar Lafontaine, in state elections in the Saar. Opposing this view was an equally influential group of "technocrats" led by Wolfgang Roth and the chemical workers' union's Hermann Rappe. Although ready to incorporate ecological considerations into social democracy's new guiding principles, they maintained the primacy of material expansion as the most fundamental aspect of a successful Social Democratic policy. \(^4\) Regardless of the ultimate outcome of this debate, the SPD will have to accept — indeed nurture — the growth of Green politics within its own ranks, or it will continue to be outmanoeuvered on key issues by the small ecology party.

Clearly, during the election period of 1983, the party also had to deal with crucial and very urgent matters regarding foreign and military policy, which had challenged the very core of social democracy's identity. With the benefit of hindsight, one could argue quite convincingly that the party withstood the traumas caused by these issues — particularly the debate concerning Pershing II and cruise missiles — and emerged surprisingly unscathed. This may not be the case regarding the much more complicated matters discussed in this paper,
namely economic and social policy. While some analysts recently detected a drift away from utopian solutions, and an emergence of pragmatism on the part of the SPD — which, in- deed, puts the party closer to the CDU than to the Greens in economic and social policy — such a conclusion is premature. Some key members of the party may once again speak loudly about “decisive modernization” and “socially determined and guided innovation”, but this in no way conveys a clear victory for the “pragmatists” over the “ideologues”; much less the institutionalization of party policy in that direction. While the party is still very far from providing any answers regarding these pressing matters, it at least has recognized the urgency of beginning the search. Only a vigorous effort in this direction will guarantee social democracy’s survival as a major political force in West German society.

Notes

The author would like to express his deep appreciation to Stephen Hubbell, whose editorial assistance and critical insights proved indispensable for the revisions of an earlier draft of this article.


3. The concept “left” is meant in the widest possible sense in this paper. Thus, it includes the right-wing *Kanalarbeiter* (“sewage workers or party appa- ratchiks”) of the SPD’s “Barracke” and the officials of the chemical workers, miners, construction workers, textile workers and food processing workers unions; as well as the various counter-cultural and radical groups constituting the bulk of the new social movements and the Green Party’s supporters. This “left” represents a large number, (circa 44 percent of the West German electorate to be precise; the sum of SPD and Green voters on 6 March 1983). Contrary to Willy Brandt, however, I will not argue that a majority of the Germans are to the left of the CDU/CSU, as he did following the SPD’s and the Greens’ good showing in the Hesse elections of September 1982 and 1983 respectively.

4. The giant Flick conglomerate has been implicated in a scandal involving large payments to West German politicians in exchange for tax advantages. No major West German party (except the Greens) has emerged untainted from the Flick affair, although the governing CDU-FDP coalition has suffered the most. Among the figures who admitted accepting money from Flick are Chancellor Helmut Kohl and former Bundestag President Rainer Barzel.


8. On the Austrian elections and their consequences, see: Franz Birk, Ernst Gehmacher, Kurt Taar, "Eine Veränderte Politische Landschaft: Ergebnisse der Umfrageforschung zu den Nationalratswahlen 1983," Journal für Sozialforschung, 23, no. 3. That the Austrian Freedom Party (FPO), which has been the Social Democrats' governing partner since 1983, still maintains a certain positive tie to its Nazi legacy was amply demonstrated in the winter of 1985. A former high-ranking SS officer, who had just been released (following a lengthy sentence for atrocities committed against Italian civilians during the war) from an Italian jail, was exuberantly welcomed by Austria's defense minister, a member of the FPO. Rather telling for the stability and harmonious atmosphere cultivated by every post-World War II Austrian government, was the Social Democrats' insistence on a token apology from their junior partners, without disassociating themselves from a party in which some members continue to extol aspects of Austria's past as part of National Socialist Germany.

9. For the best account of Austria's corporatist network and system of conflict management see Bernd Marin, Die Paritätische Kommission: Aufgeklärter Technokorporatismus in Österreich (Vienna, 1982).


15. On a discussion of Modell Deutschland, in the context of the West German political economy and the SPD, see Andrei S. Markovits (ed.) The Political Economy of West Germany: Modell Deutschland (New York, 1982).

16. On Willy Brandt and "Ostpolitik" see David Binder, The Other German — Willy Brandt's Life and Times (Washington, 1975).

17. For a detailed discussion of these reforms see Andrei S. Markovits and Christopher S. Allen, "The Trade Unions and the Economic Crisis: The West German Case," Peter Gourevitch et al., Unions and Economic Crises: Britain, West Germany and Sweden (London, 1984).

18. On the SPD's educational reforms, see Arthur Hearnden, Education in the Two Germanies (Boulder, 1976).

19. For a good discussion of the concerted action see Rolf Seitenzahl, Einkommenspolitik durch Konzertierte Aktion und Orientierungsdaten (Cologne, 1974).


22. The dialogue with social democracy is perhaps the single most important reason for the staying power of the sixties generation in West Germany; indeed, for its eventual emergence as a major political force in the 1980s. Because of the presence of social democracy (even as a negative example) and,
of course, related to this, the deep tradition of Marxism, the German student movement remained politicized; unlike its American counterpart, which became marginalized, leaving its lasting legacies mainly in the realm of culture.


26. I am coining this phrase after the figure of Gustav Noske, who, as a conservative SPD member and Minister of the Interior in the Weimar Republic's first government, opted to enforce law and order and uphold state power, even at the cost of having a Social Democratic government murder workers.


30. For the background of the Schmidt government's fall, see Klaus Bölling, *Die letzten 30 Tage des Kanzlers Helmut Schmidt — Ein Tagebuch* (Hamburg, 1982).

31. For a comprehensive summary of all arguments in favour of work-time reduction, and especially the 35-hour work week, see Hans Mayr and Hans Janssen, eds., *Perspektiven der Arbeitszeitverkürzung: Wissenschaftler und Gewerkschafter zur 35-Stunden-Woche* (Cologne, 1984); and most articles in issues of *Die Mitbestimmung* 30, no. 1 (January 1984), and 30: 9 (September 1984).

32. For the best summaries favouring early retirement, as opposed to the 35-hour work week, see most of *Die Mitbestimmung* 30: 6 (June 1984).

33. For a good summary of the agreement between IG Metall and the employers see Dieter Benthien, "Durchbruch geschaffen — Tor zur 35-Stunden-Woche aufgestossen," *Die Quelle* 35, no 7/8 (July/August 1984): 390-392; Ingrid Kurz-Scherf, "Tarifliche Arbeitszeit in Bewegung," *WSI Mitteilungen* 37: 9 (September 1984), 513-526; *Arbeitszeit im Umbruch: Analyse und Dokumentation der neuen tariflichen Arbeitszeitbestimmungen* (Düsseldorf, 1984). This document represents far and away the most thorough compilation of all forms of work-time reduction either still being demanded by the unions or already in effect. Lastly, the already mentioned entire issue of *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte* 35: 7 (July 1984) contains not only a detailed chronology of the strike, its antecedents and its aftermath, but also all the offers and counteroffers proposed along the way, eventually leading to the accepted "Leber model".

34. For the two respective characterizations by these two important men of the strike and its results, and a generally informed evaluation of the "Leber model", see "PflockimNeuland," *Der Spiegel* 38: 27 (July 2, 1984). See also the excellent account by Hans Mayr, "Der Kampf um die 35-Stunden-Woche: Erfahrungen und Schlussfolgerungen aus der Tarifbewegung 1984," *Gewerkschaftliche Monatshefte* 35: 11 (November 1984), 661-671.
35. The unions' worries about the proper implementation of these terms can be gauged in "Prediger in der Wüste," Der Spiegel 38, 47 (November 19, 1984). Some of the Federal Republic's largest automobile plants, such as Daimler, BMW and Opel, arrived at schemes based on the 38.5-hour work week which, in fact, promised to create additional jobs by forcing the employers to hire more workers to fill the void resulting from a compounded arrangement of the newly-gained free time. See "Beim Daimler flexible Arbeitszeiten," Frankfurter Rundschau, 15 February 1985; and "Umsetzung der 38.5-Stunden-Woche: Beispiele, Modelle, Argumente," in Express 23: 2 (11 February 1985), 1-6.

36. Yet another "decoupling", closely related to the one separating growth from employment, has occurred in the present economic crisis. I am referring to the "decoupling" of "monetary" from "real" accumulation.


38. Richard Loewenthal, "Identität und Zukunft der SPD," Gewerkschaftliche Umschau (January/February 1982); some of these ideas have also appeared in Richard Loewenthal, "The Future of the 'Social Democratic' Consensus," Dissent 29: 1 (Winter 1982).


43. For one such astute observer's view of the SPD's current situation, see Rolf Zundel, "Kein Umweg über Utopia," Die Zeit, 27 April 1984.