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## Russo-German Military Collaboration During the Weimar Republic

*The Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union seemed predestined for close relations. Not only had Germany and Russia been traditionally friendly, World War I notwithstanding, but their fate in that war had created a "community of fate" between these two outcasts from the European family of nations. The agreement which they concluded at Rapallo in 1922 was thus suspected in the West of being an alliance, rather than merely a treaty of friendship. There were Germans who hoped that some day it might become such, and there were others who expected great economic advantages from it. But these hopes, kept alive by the Treaty of Berlin in 1926, were disappointed. The main obstacle to real friendship was communism. Only in the military sphere did the two achieve a degree of partnership. The fact that this partnership violated the terms of Versailles gave it a special significance.*

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FEW CHAPTERS in the history of the Weimar Republic have aroused as much interest among publicists and historians as the secret relations between the Reichswehr and the Red Army.<sup>1</sup> Yet until recently, very little reliable information has been available on this important subject. Only since World War II has sufficient material become available to establish, beyond mere conjecture, the main facts of these Russo-German activities. The most important of these new sources are the papers of General Hans von Seeckt<sup>2</sup> and the reminiscences of some of the German officers who participated in these dealings.<sup>3</sup> These sources are not very extensive, and the hope that they may some day be supplemented by information from German Army records will probably prove vain, since most of the documents pertaining to Russo-German military relations were "regularly and systematically" destroyed.<sup>4</sup> Nor does it seem likely that the Russians will make any revelations about their own share in these top secret operations.

This paucity of evidence, however, has been somewhat relieved by the recent opening to research of most of the documents of the German Foreign Ministry for the Weimar period.<sup>5</sup> It may seem surprising that these documents should contain any information on so secret a subject, because it has been generally accepted that the *Auswärtiges Amt*, while aware of the Reichswehr's affairs, knew very little about their details.<sup>6</sup> But the materials we shall examine here will prove otherwise. Not only do they throw new light on the role of Germany's civilian authorities in these secret relations, but they also confirm, correct, and supplement what information we already have. It is not proposed here to retrace in detail the whole course of Russo-German military collaboration, but rather to integrate these new materials into the story as it has been known thus far.

We still know very little about the beginnings of this collaboration, and the new documents do not add very much to our knowledge.<sup>7</sup> The first contacts between the German military and the Soviets apparently took place during the second half of 1919 and are closely associated with the name of Karl Radek. As Russian delegate to the founding congress of the German Communist party, Radek had been arrested in connection with the Spartacus Rebellion in February 1919.<sup>8</sup> In a letter of March 11, 1919, addressed to the journalist Alfons Paquet, Radek expressed fear for his life and asked to be put in touch with Major von Schubert, formerly German military attaché in Russia and soon to be active in Russo-German military negotiations. "A military person," Radek added, "can be more helpful in these matters than anyone else."<sup>9</sup> It may have been due to Schubert's efforts that Radek, apparently in August 1919, was transferred to less restricted quarters and was permitted to receive visitors. It was during the discussions that Radek held in his

"political salon" that the idea of Russo-German collaboration, economic and perhaps military, was first broached, but it was to be some time before these vague feelers grew into specific negotiations. General von Seeckt, despite undoubted interest in some arrangement with the Soviet Union, seems to have steered clear of any direct contact with the Russians until after the latter had been defeated by Poland in the summer of 1920.<sup>10</sup> At that time, in August 1920, the Russians used Seeckt's friend Enver Pasha to sound out the head of the Reichswehr about possible military collaboration. It may be assumed, however, that prior to that time contact had been established between the lower echelons of the two armies. This seems indicated from a letter by Baron von Maltzan (leading exponent in the *Ostabteilung* of the Foreign Ministry of a Russo-German *rapprochement*), in which he stated that Germany had established contact (*Tuchföhlung*) with the Soviet army during the Russo-Polish war.<sup>11</sup>

The first concrete negotiations concerning Russo-German military collaboration, according to present information, took place during 1921. We need not here review in detail the sketchy facts that have become known about these talks.<sup>12</sup> It is sufficient to say that by early 1921 a special section devoted to Russian affairs had been set up in the Reichswehr Ministry (the *Sondergruppe R*), and in the spring of that year conversations were begun between members of the Reichswehr (von Niedermayer, Tschunke, von Schubert, von Schleicher, Hasse, and occasionally von Seeckt) and Russian representatives (Kopp, Krassin, Karakhan, Radek, and others). The purpose of these negotiations was to reach some agreement by which Germany would provide financial and technical aid in building up Russia's armament industry (with possible concessions to German firms such as Junkers and Krupp) and obtain from Russia the necessary artillery ammunition that she was prohibited from manufacturing under the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>13</sup> The initial discussions, on the German side, were entirely under military direction, but the German chancellor, Joseph Wirth, was kept informed and gave his blessing, without, however, initiating his cabinet or President Ebert into these military secrets.<sup>14</sup> Baron von Maltzan tells of being consulted, some time before September 1921, by Wirth and two leading members of the Reichswehr, about these Russo-German negotiations. These developments, in Maltzan's opinion, were "clearly in the interest of Russo-German policy," but neither the Foreign Ministry nor the German representative in Moscow should become involved in their technical details. He did insist, however, that the Foreign Ministry be kept informed of the general trends in Russo-German military collaboration, "in order to coordinate these with possible developments (*Nuancierungen*) in our relations with Russia." When Germany's first *chargé d'affaires*, the economist Wiedenfeld, went to Moscow in September 1921, he was told by Maltzan that military negotiations were under way but that he was not to get

involved in them. According to Maltzan, all future foreign ministers and ministers of finance were briefed about the Reichswehr's Russian operations by their predecessors and by the Reichswehr Ministry.<sup>15</sup>

Germany's negotiations with Russia, however, were not restricted to the military field. There were parallel talks on economic and political matters as well. The world received a startling revelation of how far the Russo-German *rapprochement* had gone when the two powers concluded the Treaty of Rapallo on April 16, 1922. Although it was ostensibly primarily an economic agreement, there could be no doubt about the treaty's political significance. Furthermore, almost from the start there were rumors that the agreement also contained secret military clauses.<sup>16</sup> A study of the German documents, however, does not bear out this suspicion.<sup>17</sup> There actually was a secret exchange of notes, but it dealt with economic matters.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, there is evidence that the Germany military, in their simultaneous negotiations with Russia, were going far beyond what their government was ready to concede. According to Maltzan, Foreign Commissar Chicherin, on the eve of Rapallo, told Chancellor Wirth about "the promises which Herr N. [Niedermayer] had made in the name of the Chancellor to him, Chicherin." These proposals considerably exceeded the terms agreed on earlier between Wirth and the Reichswehr. "Wirth," Maltzan adds, "was extremely annoyed and in my presence corrected the statements which Herr N. had made to Chicherin."<sup>19</sup>

As this incident shows, the Reichswehr in 1922 was still pursuing a virtually independent course in its negotiations with Soviet authorities. According to Brockdorff-Rantzau, first German ambassador to Moscow after Rapallo, "the military authorities, until November 1922, proceeded on their own in Moscow and Niedermayer presented the Russians with fantastic plans which they at first took seriously, but which subsequently were recognized as impossible."<sup>20</sup> To correct this dualism in German policy and to supervise the Reichswehr's dealings with the Soviet Union became one of the foremost tasks of the new ambassador.

Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, one of the outstanding political talents of the Weimar Republic, was one of the most decisive influences in Russo-German relations during the twenties.<sup>21</sup> His attitude toward the Soviet Union had already undergone several changes since the end of the war. Prior to the Treaty of Versailles, the Count had opposed any one-sided German alignment with the West against Russia or with Russia against the West.<sup>22</sup> Under the impact of the harsh terms of Versailles, however, Rantzau had abandoned his opposition to any Russo-German *rapprochement*. While fully aware of the dangers of Bolshevism, he felt that these were less of an evil "than the consequences of the undignified helotism into which our vengeful and rapacious enemies have forced us for generations to come."<sup>23</sup> To initiate economic and

political relations with the Russians, Brockdorff-Rantzau, in 1920 and again in 1921, had proposed to head a German mission to Moscow. Yet nothing came of his plan.<sup>24</sup> Throughout this period he was in close contact with Maltzan, who was preparing the ground for what ultimately bore fruit at Rapallo.<sup>25</sup> The Treaty of Rapallo, however, much as it reflected Brockdorff-Rantzau's own desire for a *rapprochement* with Russia, by no means met with his full approval. He felt that both the time and the method of the negotiations had been unfortunate.<sup>26</sup> Yet when he was offered the ambassadorship by President Ebert in May 1922, he admitted that the treaty might be a "turning point" in Germany's foreign policy, and under certain conditions he was ready to accept the appointment.<sup>27</sup>

It was during the summer of 1922, when confirmation of his appointment was still pending, that Brockdorff-Rantzau first became fully aware of the relations that had grown up between the Reichswehr and Russia. They were brought to his attention by Chancellor Wirth, and they immediately met with his opposition.<sup>28</sup> Much as he considered himself an "apostle of revenge" against the West, Rantzau opposed a military alliance with Russia as premature and dangerous, since it would lead to the isolation of Germany and her dependence upon the Soviet Union. The controversy that developed over this issue, especially between Rantzau and Seeckt, almost prevented the former's going to Moscow.<sup>29</sup> Only after he received the necessary assurances that no military agreements would be concluded with the Russians behind his back did Brockdorff-Rantzau accept his assignment. A formal reconciliation with Seeckt took place in January 1923, at which time, according to Rantzau, "agreement of our views on all important questions was established."<sup>30</sup>

But the army did not keep its promise of fully informing the ambassador about its dealings with the Russians. At the time Rantzau took over his post, the talks that had begun in 1921 had not as yet led to any firm agreement. In December 1922, therefore, the Russians asked that a leading member of the Reichswehr be entrusted with the negotiations,<sup>31</sup> and in February 1923 General Otto Hasse, chief of the *Truppenamt* (General Staff), headed a military mission to Moscow. Brockdorff-Rantzau was informed of Hasse's appointment but did not participate in the negotiations. "As far as I can see," he complained in a letter to Foreign Minister von Rosenberg, "the military are again conducting their arbitrary policy. You know what I want! In the final analysis I have the same aim as the military. But I do not want to have the direction of things taken out of my hands and to have my policy upset. Radek told me recently: 'The fault of the Germans is that they cannot wait.' The man is right. The few among us who can wait and who know what they want should restrain their premature ambitions."<sup>32</sup> Hasse, Rantzau added, had actually spoken of the "great war of liberation" which could be

expected "in three to five years." If any of this leaks out, the Count concluded, "it may ruin the Reich." There was a good chance for such a leak, since Hasse had committed the blunder of writing an "extremely compromising" letter to the chief Russian negotiator, Rozengolts, which the Soviets might have used to blackmail Germany.<sup>33</sup>

The Hasse mission failed, partly because its leader was not the most adroit of negotiators, partly because Trotsky, who was commissar of war, became ill at the time.<sup>34</sup> To continue the negotiations, which Chicherin termed "decisive for the future relations of Russia to Germany,"<sup>35</sup> a second mission was sent in late April 1923, under Lieutenant Colonel Mentzel and Major Tschunke. "I told the leader, when he called on me," Rantzau wrote to Maltzan on April 28, 1923, "that I am the head of the house here, and that I wish to be kept regularly informed about the progress of negotiations."<sup>36</sup> Two weeks later, Rantzau wrote: "Morsbach [Mentzel] is doubtless of better caliber than the impossible Heller [Hasse] and has achieved certain results."<sup>37</sup> But soon again he complained that Mentzel had failed to tell him "about several important points" and had been much too hasty in his dealings with the Russians, offering them thirty-five million goldmarks without getting anything in return. This German eagerness, Rantzau felt, was unnecessary, since the Russians "need us more than we need them."<sup>38</sup>

This latter fact seemed borne out as the Russians kept urging that the tentative arrangement reached with Mentzel be made more definite.<sup>39</sup> In late June, the Reichswehr and the Foreign Ministry agreed among themselves "to continue and extend the existing business," that is, the military relations with Russia.<sup>40</sup> A few days later, Chancellor Cuno met with Minister of Finance Hermes, Minister of Reconstruction Albert, and Secretary of State Maltzan to discuss the financing of the Russian undertakings, about the importance of which there seemed to be general agreement.<sup>41</sup> To meet Russia's requests for some more definite understanding, Brockdorff-Rantzau now suggested that a Soviet delegate be invited to Berlin.<sup>42</sup> The Russians hesitated at first to accept the invitation, since they were not told what exactly was to be discussed at the meeting and since the Reichswehr tried to discourage their visit.<sup>43</sup> Finally, on July 22, 1923, Rozengolts (or Raschin)<sup>44</sup> arrived in Berlin, and a week later he met with Germany's top civilian officials.

Prior to this meeting, Brockdorff-Rantzau drew up a memorandum for Chancellor Cuno in which he stated his views on the military question. "The basic idea behind Chancellor Wirth's Russian policy," Rantzau wrote, "was sound. But its execution was muddled and therefore a failure." In a desire "not to burden the government with the responsibility for the negotiations," Wirth had not kept well enough informed about the Reichswehr's negotiations, thus permitting the latter to embark on schemes which were far more advantageous to Russia than to Ger-

many. In the meantime, Brockdorff-Rantzau continued, the negotiations had taken on political significance and therefore should now be conducted by political rather than military authorities. For the future the Count proposed "not only to continue but to extend the existing collaboration, but only on certain military-technical and political conditions." There was to be a virtual German monopoly in those Russian armament firms that received German aid, so that no other power could invest in these works and no foreign nationals other than Germans could be employed in them. About political conditions, Brockdorff-Rantzau said: "There can be no question of a political or military alliance. But we should try to secure ourselves against the most dangerous eventuality, an attack by Poland." Since Poland would not dare launch such an attack without the aid of France, "such an arrangement would also indirectly protect us against a French attack." These conditions, Rantzau felt, could be obtained, "since in the first place Russia needs us for the reconstruction of her armaments industry, and needs us urgently, because she can find no other power for that purpose; and in the second place, since a successful attack by Poland against Germany, strengthening Poland, would be so dangerous to Russia that she will have a vital interest in preventing such a development."<sup>45</sup>

As this memorandum shows, Brockdorff-Rantzau was no longer opposed to Germany's military policy in Russia. As he had said earlier, his aims were actually the same as those of the Reichswehr. He merely differed in his methods. By being less eager, he felt, Germany could gain greater concessions from the Russians, not only militarily but politically. It was as an aid to his political plans that Brockdorff-Rantzau valued and supported the military ties being developed by the Reichswehr. But how did he envisage Germany's relations with Russia, if he did not want a military or political alliance? An earlier memorandum, written before he went to Moscow, gives the answer.<sup>46</sup> "The immediate aim of our policy," Rantzau had written in August 1922, "must be to get a Russian pledge to come to our aid in case of an Allied attack against Germany's frontiers." Such a pledge, the Count felt, was not a military alliance but a mere defensive agreement, which could be easily explained away in case its existence became known abroad. In return for such a concession, Germany would aid in the military and economic reconstruction of Russia. Yet "the promotion of Russia's military strength," Brockdorff-Rantzau concluded, "must only go so far as is necessary to keep Poland and the Little Entente in check and to aid a development toward the East (India)."<sup>47</sup>

These, then, were the aims of Brockdorff-Rantzau and of Chancellor Cuno in their negotiations with Rozengolts. The meeting with the Russians (Rozengolts, Krestinsky, and Ustinov) took place in utmost secrecy on July 30, 1923, at the apartment of Count Ernst Rantzau, Brock-

dorff-Rantzau's brother.<sup>48</sup> It lasted for almost three hours, and its tone was "informal and amicable." Cuno began by relating how, as director of the Hamburg-America Line, he had been one of the first to advocate close economic ties with the Soviet Union. He then stated the two conditions which Brockdorff-Rantzau had outlined in his memorandum the previous day—a special position for Germany in the development of Russia's military industry and some form of protection for Germany against attack, especially from Poland. Rozengolts criticized Germany for not doing enough on her own to prepare for such an attack,<sup>49</sup> but Cuno pointed out that Germany "had to avoid giving the impression of preparing for a war of revenge. The more inconspicuous the preparations were made, the more advantageous they were." He added "that more was being done to repel an enemy attack than was known even in initiated circles." Rozengolts on the whole seems to have reacted favorably to Cuno's proposals, and he promised a written reply from his government. A tentative plan covering the expansion of Russia's armament industry and the production of war material for Germany was subsequently agreed upon between the Reichswehr and Rozengolts. The negotiations were to be concluded by Brockdorff-Rantzau in Moscow.

The Count himself was thoroughly satisfied with the results of the meeting. The fact that the Russians had come to Berlin and had promised to make written counterproposals relieved Germany of the sole onus in case the negotiations should become known outside. Furthermore, the program for Russo-German military collaboration had now been combined with political conditions which, if they were not honored by the Russians, could serve as an excuse for withdrawing Germany's military aid.<sup>50</sup> The next step was to provide the necessary funds for the undertakings. The sum of thirty-five million goldmarks which Mentzel had promised the Russians was no longer considered adequate and was now raised to seventy-five million. It took a series of meetings between government officials, Reichswehr members, and industrialists before this increased amount was appropriated. At one point Brockdorff-Rantzau threatened that he would "refuse to accept responsibility for the political relations between Germany and Russia" if the money was not granted, whereupon the president of the Reichsbank, Havenstein, agreed to the additional amount, which seriously strained the resources of the Reich.<sup>51</sup>

By the time Brockdorff-Rantzau was ready to return to Moscow, therefore, chances for a far-reaching Russo-German agreement on military and political matters seemed promising indeed. But at this point, several things went wrong. On the eve of his departure, Rantzau paid a call on President Ebert and on Stresemann, the latter having recently succeeded Cuno as chancellor. Both men, it turned out, were deeply opposed to any kind of military deal with the Soviet Union and asked that any German collaboration with Russia be restricted entirely to economic

matters.<sup>52</sup> In view of such new directives from his superiors, Brockdorff-Rantzau, upon his return to Moscow, did not seriously press the terms that had been discussed with Rozengolts. When Radek promised him an early Russian reply to Germany's proposals, the Count treated the whole matter as "academic." This sudden German coolness naturally irritated Radek. "You cannot expect," he exclaimed, "that for the measly millions you offer us, we shall undertake any one-sided political obligation. As for the monopoly you demand for German industry, we have not the slightest intention of granting it. On the contrary, we take everything military we need wherever we can find it. Thus we have bought airplanes from France and will also get some from England."<sup>53</sup> Rantzau's calculation that the Russians needed Germany more than Germany needed Russia thus seemed to be overly optimistic.

To confuse matters still further, the German military, despite instructions that future negotiations were to be carried on solely by Brockdorff-Rantzau, had resumed their direct talks with the Russians even before the Count's return. On August 22, a delegation consisting of "Direktor Eckhardt, Direktor Fritz Teichmann (Gesellschaft zur Förderung gewerblicher Unternehmungen G.m.b.H.), Direktor Freiherr von Hagen (Chemische Werke Stolzenberg, Hamburg), [and] Professor Egon Graf" arrived in Moscow.<sup>54</sup> Maltzan had warned the German *chargé d'affaires* to tell the delegation "not to enter into any binding agreements before the return of the ambassador,"<sup>55</sup> but this, apparently, did not keep the military from pursuing their usual independent tactics.

By this time, the Reichswehr had established its own headquarters in Moscow, the *Zentrale Moskau* or *Z. Mo.*<sup>56</sup> There had already been a heated debate with Brockdorff-Rantzau over the appointment of a chief Reichswehr representative in Russia. The ambassador's choice was Major Fischer of the *Sondergruppe R*, whom he had known during the Versailles negotiations and whom he valued as experienced and tactful.<sup>57</sup> Instead, the Reichswehr insisted on either Tschunke or Niedermayer, neither of whom Rantzau liked.<sup>58</sup> Yet both Tschunke and Niedermayer appeared in Russia in the fall of 1923, and while Rantzau managed to get on with Tschunke, he was deeply suspicious of Niedermayer, whom he considered a "fantastic and unscrupulous adventurer."<sup>59</sup> The Reichswehr, however, by "retiring" Niedermayer and insisting that he had become "older and quieter" since his debut in Russia in 1921, was able to keep him in Moscow.<sup>60</sup> Yet it seems to have been Tschunke who at first functioned as the Reichswehr's chief representative in Russia. The ultimate head of the *Zentrale Moskau*, Colonel von der Lieth-Thomsen, was at this time still in Berlin, although he did visit Russia in October 1923 and March 1924 "to inspect, with Rozengolts' permission, Russia's air-force and aircraft industry."<sup>61</sup>

Because of Ebert's and Stresemann's opposition to any military dealings

with Russia, and in order to stop the Reichswehr's independent negotiations, Brockdorff-Rantzau, in February 1924, suggested that Germany drastically curtail her Russian activities. "I urgently recommend," he wrote to Stresemann, who was now foreign minister, "not to spend a penny of German money for war materials in Russia, to limit all orders to a minimum and to use the credits granted by the Reich to support German industries in Russia, not for military purposes, but industries that indirectly serve rearmament and that, in case of need, can be transformed into war industries." A draft agreement, Rantzau added, which a certain "Herr Brown" was just then bringing from Berlin, seemed to fit the above requirements.<sup>62</sup> When Brown got to Moscow, he found that the military had already entered into such "careless and catastrophic" agreements and had so committed Germany, that, according to Brockdorff-Rantzau, "we cannot suddenly abandon this whole project without seriously endangering our political relations with Russia." There was some hope, Rantzau added, that the Reichswehr members might disagree among themselves over the Russian business and the "gentlemen of the *Fachministerium* might thus counteract and neutralize each other."<sup>63</sup>

The fact that there was disagreement not only between Reichswehr and Foreign Ministry but even within the Reichswehr itself came to light in a heart-to-heart talk between Brockdorff-Rantzau and Niedermayer. Like nothing else, it showed the confusion which reigned in Russo-German military relations. Niedermayer apparently had tried for some time to see the ambassador, in order to iron out some of their differences. Rantzau complained about Niedermayer's past blunders, including the "Neumann coals,"<sup>64</sup> but Niedermayer insisted that everything he had done had been on instructions from his superiors, who then had left him in the lurch. "As a soldier his hands were tied, and there were many things he could not speak about." But now he was ready to act, if need be, against his superiors, "to keep the guilty from doing any more harm." According to Niedermayer "the agreements which thus far had been concluded were so catastrophic that in his opinion Herr von S. [Seeckt] would have to contact the foreign minister personally" to save the situation. The main fault, Niedermayer said, lay with Mentzel, Tschunke, and Eckhardt, and he added: "The sad part is that some gentlemen have acted from motives of personal ambition, and in an attempt to conclude treaties at all cost, have committed themselves to the Russians in the most irresponsible way." Rantzau, who recognized Niedermayer's good intentions in thus turning against his comrades and superiors, replied that he wanted to avoid a major showdown. The best solution, he said, would be to annul the agreements with Russia. Since for political reasons that could not be done, some way had to be found to change the existing military collaboration gradually into a primarily economic one.<sup>65</sup>

There is no evidence that Brockdorff-Rantzau's aim to deemphasize the Reichswehr's dealings with Russia had any success. It seems that the commitments which the army had already made were such that they could not be abandoned without harmful political repercussions. And as the Foreign Ministry under the direction of Stresemann and Secretary of State von Schubert (who had succeeded Maltzan) now gradually embarked on its *rapprochement* with the West, the military wire between Berlin and Moscow assumed new importance, especially to those who, like Brockdorff-Rantzau, advocated an eastern orientation of German foreign policy.<sup>66</sup>

How far exactly the military contacts between Germany and Russia had developed by this time is difficult to say. By the middle of 1924, the Gesellschaft zur Förderung gewerblicher Unternehmungen G.m.b.H., or Gefu, an organization established by the Reichswehr in Berlin to direct its military-industrial relations with Russia, and the Z. Mo. in Moscow certainly were going concerns, as were the Junkers, Stolzenberg, and Krupp concessions in various parts of Russia.<sup>67</sup> Prior to 1925, Russo-German military collaboration consisted almost exclusively of industrial production for military purposes, with Germany supplying financial and technical aid and in some cases establishing German firms on Russian soil. But this form of collaboration, it seems, had not been very successful. Beginning in 1924, therefore, Germany embarked on a new round of activities in the Soviet Union, concerned not so much with the production but with the testing of war materials and with the training of German military personnel in the use of weapons and equipment forbidden under the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>68</sup> Ultimately the Reichswehr operated three such experimental and training stations in Russia; Lipetsk (airplanes), Saratov (gas), and Kazan (tanks).<sup>69</sup> This innovation, however, did not mean that the military collaboration in the industrial field was abandoned. In early 1926 the Gefu was dissolved (apparently because it had never worked too well and had misused its funds for financial speculations in Holland),<sup>70</sup> and its activities were taken over by a new body, the *Wirtschaftskontor*, or *Wiko*.<sup>71</sup>

As for the relations between the Moscow embassy and the *Zentrale Moskau*, the talk between Brockdorff-Rantzau and Niedermayer seemed to have cleared the air; with the assignment of Colonel Thomsen to duty in Moscow (probably in May 1924), relations became quite cordial.<sup>72</sup> In a letter to Brockdorff-Rantzau in 1926, Thomsen speaks of the ambassador as "Germany's most important man" and blesses his own good fortune for having won Rantzau's confidence and for having been trained in "the school of his thoughts and decisions."<sup>73</sup> The improved relations between embassy and Z. Mo. manifested themselves in several ways. While in the past the communications between Z. Mo. and Gefu had been via the *Narkomindel* and Russian couriers<sup>74</sup> (since the Reichswehr

was afraid that the Foreign Ministry would open and read its letters), the Reichswehr now used the courier and code services of the Moscow embassy, so that all routine communications between Z. Mo. and the Reichswehr Ministry became known to the embassy and the Foreign Ministry.<sup>75</sup> In addition, Rantzau now began taking a hand himself in Germany's military dealings with Russia. When there was danger, in April 1924, of Junkers abandoning its Russian subsidiary because neither the Reichswehr nor Russia was buying enough of its planes, Rantzau intervened and told Berlin that the liquidation of Junkers' Russian interests "must be avoided at all cost."<sup>76</sup> A few weeks later the ambassador brought the matter to Trotsky's personal attention, complaining that Russia appeared rather lukewarm in her military dealings with Germany.<sup>77</sup>

While the ambassador thus showed himself an able advocate of the Reichswehr's interests, direct contacts between Reichswehr and Red Army continued. In June 1924, Major Fischer, Captain Vogt, and Colonel Thomsen conferred with Rozengolts about sending ten German fliers to the Soviet Union.<sup>78</sup> In January 1925, Rozengolts visited Berlin to negotiate with General Hasse.<sup>79</sup> In July 1925, Secretary of State von Schubert informed Brockdorff-Rantzau that a delegation of German officers in mufti was planning to participate in the Red Army's maneuvers the following month and that in return several high-ranking Russian officers, camouflaged as "Bulgarians," were to visit the Reichswehr's fall maneuvers.<sup>80</sup> Rantzau was none too enthusiastic about these visits, since the news might leak out, especially since the Russians seemed less interested in secrecy than the Germans. Yet he also realized that the exchange might "help the political relations between the two countries." He added: "It would be utopian, however, to hope that this collaboration might have any effect upon the often mentioned 'common war aim'" (a reference to possible joint Russo-German action against Poland).<sup>81</sup> A subsequent report from the Reichswehr delegation itself told of the friendly reception it had found in Russia: "Greatest assistance in every respect, unhampered access to all installations and operations. Personal relations extremely polite. . . ." <sup>82</sup>

Even though relations between the embassy and the *Zentrale Moskau* had improved, they still were far from what they might have been. What was still more important, neither military nor civilian negotiators had thus far been able to derive any political benefits from Germany's military dealings with Russia. To be sure, the Russians, beginning in December, 1924, had dropped hints about a military alliance with Germany,<sup>83</sup> but Rantzau persisted in his opposition to anything so far-reaching. What he wanted was a political agreement that would serve as a counterweight to Germany's growing involvement with the West and at the same time might be used to put pressure on Poland. In January 1926, the ambassador once again criticized Germany's Russian

policy. "The collaboration in military reconstruction," he wrote, "according to leading Russian government circles, constitutes the most important link between Germany and the Soviet Union. Yet in its present form this collaboration, unfortunately, has brought no *political* advantages worth mentioning to us. The reason is that the negotiations which the German military have conducted with Russia have been carried on without sufficient contact with Germany's leading political figures." He himself, Rantzau charged, "had *never* been reliably informed about the actual status of the negotiations" and thus could not obtain the political and economic advantages he hoped to get from Russia in return for military concessions. To clear up this area of conflict between Reichswehr and civilian authorities, Rantzau demanded that the Reichswehr be prevented from maintaining direct relations with Soviet politicians, that a single representative of the Reichswehr (Colonel von der Lieth-Thomsen) be appointed in Russia, who should be responsible to the ambassador, and that the ambassador be given exclusive control over German funds to be spent for military purposes in the Soviet Union. This last point was the only guarantee, Rantzau felt, that these funds would be used not merely for the military strengthening of Russia but to procure war materials for Germany.<sup>84</sup>

Brockdorff-Rantzau, however, did not get very far with his suggestions. At that moment Germany was actually on the verge of concluding a neutrality agreement with Russia; it was signed in Berlin on April 24, 1926.<sup>85</sup> While the final negotiations were still under way, a Russian mission, headed by Vice Commissar of War Unshlikht, visited Berlin.<sup>86</sup> At a luncheon given by Soviet ambassador Krestinsky and attended by Chancellor Luther, Stresemann, Schubert, Seeckt, and General Wetzell, Unshlikht told of vast Russian plans for the production of heavy artillery, poison gas, and precision instruments. For this, he said, Russia needed Germany's financial support and guarantees that Germany would buy a certain share of her military products. In return Germany might send officers to be trained at these new industrial centers. The German civilians, it seems, were quite stunned by these sudden overtures. The chancellor replied that Germany, of course, was ready to collaborate with Russia "in all projects of peace," but he did not comment any further or show any approval of Unshlikht's proposals. "The Russians," one of the participants commented afterward, "kept talking about armaments, while we kept talking about other things." This did not seem to faze Unshlikht. He had already discussed this matter with the Reichswehr, he said, and merely wanted the government's reaction. Seeckt remained silent throughout.<sup>87</sup>

Here, then, the Reichswehr had again embarked on a venture without consulting its civilian colleagues. What was the government to do? In the draft of a letter to Brockdorff-Rantzau, Secretary of the State Schubert

discussed the pros and cons of the Unshlikht plan. Its advantages, both military and political, were obvious, since it would give Germany a hold over Russia that might be used to influence the latter's relations with France and Poland. Yet there were also important disadvantages. If such a venture became known, Schubert wrote, "we would lose all our political credit in the world." Germany's military dealings with Russia in the past "could be explained and excused on the basis of our political situation after Versailles. But an extension of our activities at this point, between Locarno and Geneva [i.e., Germany's entry into the League] would be judged a great deal more harshly." On balance, therefore, Schubert and Stresemann felt "that to pursue this project cannot be reconciled with the general lines of our policy."<sup>88</sup>

As this and earlier statements show, much of the government's attitude toward the Reichswehr's relations with Russia was determined by an ever-present fear that the rest of the world might find out about the clandestine dealings, leaving Germany isolated and entirely dependent upon the Soviet Union. The Reichswehr, on the other hand, seems to have been much less worried about such a possibility. In the summer of 1926, an exchange of political prisoners was being discussed between Germany and Russia, as a friendly gesture connected with the Treaty of Berlin.<sup>89</sup> At one point the negotiations threatened to break down over a certain Skoblevsky, a Soviet citizen, who had been convicted in Germany for plotting the assassination of several leading citizens, including General von Seeckt.<sup>90</sup> The Russians were very eager to secure the release of this top agent, but the Germans refused to free so dangerous a criminal. Brockdorff-Rantzau, in an urgent letter to Stresemann, pointed out that such refusal might have the most serious consequences. The Russians, he wrote, would probably act with "ruthless brutality," revealing to the world their military agreements with Germany. "I have emphasized more than once," he warned, "that we are in the hands of political blackmailers."<sup>91</sup> Most of the cabinet, under Rantzau's pressure, gradually came around to his views. Only Reichswehrminister Gessler, supported by Colonel von Schleicher and Major Fischer, opposed the freeing of Skoblevsky as endangering the security of the Reich. There was no reason to fear, Gessler insisted, that Russia would reveal any secrets; if there were, he would prefer to terminate Germany's military activities in Russia rather than free Skoblevsky!<sup>92</sup> The matter was finally settled as Rantzau had suggested, but Gessler remained adamant to the end, threatening even to resign.<sup>93</sup>

It was in connection with the Skoblevsky discussions that the Foreign Ministry tried to clarify how far exactly Germany's military relations with Russia were violating the terms of the Versailles Treaty. In the first place (its memorandum on the subject<sup>94</sup> stated), Germany supported, with money and personnel, "parts of Russia's armament industry

and the firm of Junkers in Moscow," in order to import their products into Germany. This violated Article 170 of the Treaty. A similar partnership existed for the poison-gas works at Ivoshenko, which produced gas for import into Germany. This was in violation of Article 171. Furthermore, Germany had sent repeated military, naval, and air missions to the Soviet Union—Hasse, Mentzel, Fischer, Wilberg, Vogt, and Spindler. These violated Article 179 of the Treaty of Versailles. In addition, "with the knowledge and support of the German government, former officers, sometimes especially deactivated for this purpose, have been active as instructors with the Red air force."<sup>95</sup> Besides these clear violations, the Foreign Ministry memorandum mentioned other German activities in Russia, "which perhaps did not constitute a direct violation of the letter of Versailles," but which, "if they became known, might compromise the German government." In this category belonged Germany's participation in Russian military industries even if their products were not sent to Germany and the training of German personnel at Lipetsk and Kazan.

Germany's concern over possible detection of these illicit relations with the Soviet Union, however, was really unnecessary. The Western Powers had known for some time that there was more to Russo-German relations than met the eye, and French and Polish intelligence were remarkably well informed about these matters.<sup>96</sup> During the second half of 1926, moreover, a series of "revelations" occurred, ironically enough not in Russia but in Germany. Despite their sensational nature, these incidents left no mark upon Germany's relations with the West. There had been signs during the summer of 1926 that the Reichswehr was getting ready to move to Germany large quantities of the grenades that had been produced in Russia over the past years.<sup>97</sup> Both Brockdorff-Rantzau and Dirksen had warned the Reichswehr against so dangerous an operation at a time when Germany was about to enter the League of Nations, but they were told that all necessary precautions would be taken.<sup>98</sup> The Reichswehr, apparently, was not careful enough, because on December 3 and 6, 1926, the *Manchester Guardian*, in two articles, not only told all about the transport of ammunition from Leningrad to Stettin but also revealed many other aspects of Russo-German military collaboration.<sup>99</sup> What these articles failed to reveal was supplied in a sensational speech delivered by Socialist deputy Scheidemann before the Reichstag on December 16.<sup>100</sup> Here was the situation which Brockdorff-Rantzau and others had dreaded for years. As might be expected, both Germany and Russia were deeply worried about the possible consequences of these revelations. Special care was taken that the official declaration that the German government had to make on these matters neither admitted nor revealed too much.<sup>101</sup> According to Major Tschunke, the incident struck "a heavy blow" at Germany's military activities in Russia, neces-

sitating a number of important changes.<sup>102</sup> From the evidence we now have, Tschunke's statement seems somewhat exaggerated; most of the changes that took place in Russo-German military dealings actually seem to have been contemplated before the revelations occurred.

On November 19, 1926, Brockdorff-Rantzau had a most enlightening discussion with Reichswehrminister Gessler about the problem of Russo-German military relations.<sup>103</sup> Gessler tried to present the whole matter as a purely political affair. Brockdorff-Rantzau pointed out that he had never really been thoroughly informed about the Reichswehr's dealings. Gessler then tried to make out as though nothing could really be proved against Germany, but Rantzau reminded him of Hasse's letter to Rozenogols. Gessler thereupon proposed simply to disavow Hasse, if anything leaked out. "In the past," he added, "we were unable to produce grenades in Germany and hence depended on production in Russia. But now we can make grenades in Germany and therefore we shall terminate things in Russia." But Brockdorff-Rantzau was still worried. "I myself," he said, "am in danger. If something leaks out, I shall either look like an ass or a scoundrel (*als Esel oder als Schweinehund*)." So what was there to do? Gessler wanted not to break with the Russians but merely to put matters on a basis "which does not compromise us." Rantzau: "But how shall the matter be continued? My idea is as follows: We will try to put matters more and more on an economic basis, i.e., we promise to support certain factories, but on condition that we supply materials which, in an emergency, can be used for war production."<sup>104</sup> Gessler agreed. "The situation," he repeated, "has changed now. On the basis of our new agreements with the entente we can now produce grenades ourselves." "But what shall I tell the Russians?" Rantzau asked. "Tell them," Gessler said, "that we do not want to break off relations. I don't want to break off things overnight but want to let them slowly peter out (*versanden*)." Rantzau: "I agree from the point of view of German-Russian policy. May I tell Chicherin that we have adopted a wholly new policy?" Gessler: "Yes. I will and can pursue the matter only if in future I remain in closest contact with you and the Foreign Ministry."

Shortly after Brockdorff-Rantzau and Gessler had thus agreed that there should be some changes in Germany's military relations with Russia, the December revelations further confirmed the need for such changes. A Foreign Ministry memorandum of December 24, 1926, stated that these revelations "had not done the harm to Germany's foreign policy in West and East which had at first been feared." But as there might be further Socialist indiscretions, this would be a good time, the memorandum added, "to reduce the mutual military relations to acceptable and useful proportions." To end these relations entirely, the memorandum said, was impossible (since it would have had political effects), unnecessary (since some military relations were permissible and



useful), and impractical (since the military might continue its contacts anyway behind the back of the Foreign Ministry). The memorandum therefore made a number of specific proposals for reducing Germany's military activities in Russia.<sup>105</sup> Most of these proposals were already being carried out. By early 1927, Germany, according to Major Fischer, had almost entirely withdrawn from the Junkers works in Russia; the poison-gas works and the import of Russian grenades had been discontinued; the flying- and tank-schools had been transformed into private enterprises; and the *Wiko* had been stricken from the commercial register and had disappeared.<sup>106</sup>

The exact extent of these changes was further clarified in a meeting between Secretary of State Schubert, Dirksen, General Wetzell, and Major Fischer on January 24, 1927. Schubert insisted on this occasion that he wanted to get a clear picture of the whole matter, since "it was no longer possible for the Foreign Ministry to follow its past practice of wanting to know as little as possible about these things, so as to be able to say that these matters were unknown to the Foreign Ministry." General Wetzell thereupon confirmed again that the Junkers, gas, and ammunition matters were all finished. The only German operations still functioning in the Soviet Union, he said, were the following: (1) the flying-school at Lipetsk, which was a private enterprise supported by German government funds, (2) the tank-school at Kazan, which was similarly organized (there were no active Reichswehr members employed in either, and the trainees were placed on inactive status), (3) some "scientific experiments with poison gas," in which Germany participated merely in an advisory capacity, and finally, (4) the yearly military missions to Russia's maneuvers. German activities under points 1 and 2, Wetzell admitted, were doubtless contrary to the peace treaty, but those under 3 and 4 he considered legal. It was absolutely necessary, Wetzell added, to gain some experience in aerial and tank warfare, since "these two weapons will play a decisive role in any future war." Schubert, on the other hand, wondered if "these military advantages were so decisive as to make up for the political risks which the continued operation of the tank- and flying-schools involved." But Wetzell assured him that the Russians were sufficiently interested in their collaboration with Germany to keep it secret. "If, on the other hand, Germany should break off her military relations, Russia might approach France or some other power," and Germany would lose all the political and military advantages she had derived from her military collaboration. These activities, Wetzell added, are "vital for our army," and he urgently requested continuing them. Secretary of State von Schubert reserved final judgment until after he had discussed the matter with Stresemann to see "whether the political risk which this involved for our policy in the West, the

liberation of the Rhineland, and the restoration of Germany's full sovereignty, could be run."<sup>107</sup>

A few days later, Stresemann, at a meeting with General Heye (who had succeeded Seeckt as *Chef der Heeresleitung* the previous October), agreed to the continued operation of Kazan and Lipetsk, yet specified that no officers on active service should be sent to these schools during 1927.<sup>108</sup> At the same time, news from Moscow indicated that the Russians as well as Brockdorff-Rantzau were in favor of continuing the existing collaboration.<sup>109</sup> On February 26, 1927, a special cabinet meeting was called to discuss the Russo-German military question and to endorse the Stresemann-Heye agreement.<sup>110</sup> In May, a further meeting of Stresemann, Gessler, Heye, and Blomberg once again confirmed the policy that henceforth was to govern the Reichswehr's relations with Russia.<sup>111</sup>

The changes that were thus introduced into the Reichswehr's Russian operations after the various revelations of December 1926 were primarily tactical. According to Gustav Hilger, who was present in Moscow during all these years, Germany's military collaboration with Russia was actually intensified after 1926. "The Foreign Ministry," he writes, "capitulated to the generals with the greatest of pleasure. All concerned, from Stresemann on down, were resolved not only to continue as before with military co-operation, but to intensify it, though with the greatest caution."<sup>112</sup> This statement is perhaps a little too strong, since the Foreign Ministry continued to express its concern over possible further revelations of the Reichswehr's Russian ventures. Yet at the same time the collaboration in these ventures, not only of the Foreign Ministry but of other government agencies as well, was now more active than ever before. The Finance Ministry took a hand in facilitating the transport of war materials to Russia.<sup>113</sup> Stresemann even agreed to Germany's continued participation in experiments with poison gas.<sup>114</sup> The *Zentrale Moskau* (renamed *Heim Deutscher Angestellter Moskau* and since early 1928 under the direction of Niedermayer) continued its activities in close collaboration with the embassy.<sup>115</sup> The Foreign Ministry was kept informed on the number of Reichswehr members assigned each year to duty in Russia,<sup>116</sup> and other officers, in addition to those stationed in the Soviet Union, continued to go on temporary missions.<sup>117</sup>

One of the most important of these missions occurred in the fall of 1928, when General von Blomberg, chief of the *Truppenamt*, together with several other officers, observed the maneuvers of the Red Army. The visit, carefully conducted so that the officers avoided meeting the military attachés of other powers, was a great success. "Commissar of War Voroshilov," Blomberg reported, "had given orders to show us everything and to fulfill all our wishes. . . . The reception of the German officers everywhere was friendly, often cordial, and very hospitable."

Blomberg visited the three German establishments, Lipetsk, Kazan, and Saratov (or "Tomka," the experimental station for poison gas "in operation since the beginning of this summer"), and found all of them in the best condition. According to Blomberg, these operations were expected to reach their "full capacity" by 1929. "The great value [of these institutions] for our military preparations (*Rüstung*) is beyond a doubt. . . . [Russian] interest in them is considerable, even though the advantages from these installations predominantly favor the German side." Blomberg had long discussions with the Red Army's top leaders. Voroshilov immediately turned to the question of Poland and asked "if in case of a Polish attack the Red Army could count on Germany's help." This, Voroshilov said, "was a decisive question for the Soviet Union," and he added "that in case of a Polish attack upon Germany, Russia was ready to give any possible aid." Blomberg evaded a definite answer, saying that this was, after all, "a matter of high policy for which the political authorities were alone responsible."<sup>118</sup>

With Reichswehr and Foreign Ministry thus collaborating more closely than ever before, Brockdorff-Rantzau felt somewhat left out of the picture, a fact about which he complained in a letter to Stresemann in April 1928. It had been himself, after all, he wrote, who had played a leading role in these matters for the past five years and who had always considered Russo-German military relations "one of the most important bonds of our common policy." "If now, without my knowledge, an agreement is being concluded between your Excellency and the Reichswehrminister, according to which the secret agreements between Germany and Soviet Russia are not only to be continued but expanded, I consider this a danger which, in my opinion, cannot be overrated."<sup>119</sup> At the time Rantzau wrote this, Russo-German relations were at a particularly low ebb, due to a number of incidents, especially the famous "Shakhty trial" of German engineers.<sup>120</sup> Stresemann admitted that "after the unheard-of attitude of the Russians he would now be much cooler toward the Reichswehr Ministry" than he had been a little earlier. He also claimed that the Reichswehr as well as his own subordinates in the Foreign Ministry had told him that Germany's new military policy in Russia amounted to a decrease rather than an increase in military relations. At the same time he felt "that an immediate cessation [of these relations] was out of the question for political reasons."<sup>121</sup>

Brockdorff-Rantzau was quite right when he called the bond between the Reichswehr and Red Army one of the most important and steadying factors in Russo-German relations. Despite the relatively few individuals initiated into its secrets, changes in personnel do not seem to have had any decisive effect upon a policy that was so advantageous to both partners. In Russia, after Trotsky's fall, Voroshilov and Unshlikht carried on, as did Litvinov when Chicherin resigned in 1930. On the German

side, Heye took over from Seeckt in 1926, Groener from Gessler in 1928, Dirksen from Brockdorff-Rantzau after the latter's death in 1928, and Curtius from Stresemann, who died in the fall of 1929. This does not mean that some individuals were not more deeply involved in these relations than others. Seeckt certainly was the most instrumental, and the fact that the role of the Foreign Ministry in these military dealings became more pronounced after 1926 was no doubt due to his dismissal. Curtius, as we shall see, was less involved than Stresemann, and Dirksen probably more so than Brockdorff-Rantzau. But the important point is that the Reichswehr's operations in Russia continued, regardless of who was in charge of German military or foreign policy.

The last chapter in Russo-German military relations on which the German Foreign Ministry documents shed any light began in the fall of 1928. It concerned the resumption of military-industrial collaboration, which had been deemphasized since 1926. The initiative in this case came from German business interests, but both Reichswehr and Foreign Ministry were sufficiently involved to give the negotiations at least a semi-official character. In October 1928, the firm of Krupp was approached by Soviet representatives with a request for aid in the production of high-grade steel and artillery. Before taking any action, Krupp asked the Reichswehr Ministry which, after consultation with the Foreign Ministry, told Krupp to go ahead. Negotiations took place in April 1929, and resulted in a preliminary agreement needing only final confirmation by Krupp to become binding. Krupp made it perfectly clear that nothing would be done without the Reichswehr's approval, especially as the agreement provided for Krupp to share a number of its production secrets with the Soviet Union.<sup>122</sup> Most of the agreement (except for the clauses providing Russia with steel) fell through when it was found to be in violation of the *Kriegsgerätegesetz* (the law regulating German arms production).<sup>123</sup> There is no record of what either the Foreign Ministry or the Reichswehr thought about the matter. Dirksen, who was now ambassador in Moscow, felt that this was "a case of useful collaboration," which he was inclined to favor, provided Germany's interests were sufficiently safeguarded.<sup>124</sup> A few months later, Dirksen reported that the Russians were trying to build up a war industry of their own, under the direction of "Herr Ulrich," that is, General Uborevich, as chief of ordnance. To achieve their purpose, they needed foreign aid, and this they hoped to get from Germany. The question of whether Germany should provide such aid, Dirksen said, was "of great political significance." It would certainly be a mistake, he warned, to consider the whole matter as merely an economic venture of concern only to German business. The Russians would always look upon it as a political matter, and it was "closely connected with our other operations here in the past. If we refuse to collaborate, our operations here will decline."<sup>125</sup>

To help in building up their war industry, the Russians had secured the services of a German consultant, "Herr Ludwig," better known as General Ludwig, former *Chef des Waffenamtes* of the Reichswehr. In January 1930, Ludwig told *Ministerialdirektor* Trautmann of the Foreign Ministry about the scope of Russia's military plans, which covered the production of everything from anti-aircraft guns to poison gas. There would be no military disadvantages for Germany from aiding the Russians, Ludwig pointed out. "The Russians," he said, "had remained practically on the level of 1914 in their military preparations" and had to start from scratch.<sup>126</sup> Ludwig's statements were supported by Major Behschnitt of the Reichswehr Ministry, who stressed that here was a welcome opportunity for Germany's armament industry to gain both money and experience. There was no danger that Germany might be compromised, since the Reichswehr was not in any way involved. If Germany did not help Russia, Behschnitt argued, some other power would.<sup>127</sup>

As these statements by Ludwig and Behschnitt show, the military were heartily in favor of aiding Russia in her contemplated armaments program. The Foreign Ministry, however, was less enthusiastic. Secretary of State Schubert was away at The Hague, and both Köpke (his deputy) and Trautmann (head of the *Ostabteilung*) reported to him. Trautmann was highly skeptical and advised against any attempt to take political advantage of Russia's request.<sup>128</sup> Köpke was somewhat more optimistic and had "no special reservations" about the matter, though he "did not feel too comfortable about it."<sup>129</sup> Schubert agreed with Trautmann and asked that a final decision be postponed until after his return from Holland.<sup>130</sup>

In the meantime, when Krupp had failed to ratify its agreement with the Russians, the latter had turned to another of the big German steel companies, Rheinmetall, as a possible sponsor of the new Soviet armaments program. The director of Rheinmetall, Eltze, in late January 1930, reported to the Foreign Ministry on the plans he had discussed with Soviet authorities. They were quite similar to those of Krupp. There was to be a "construction bureau" staffed by German engineers to plan the production of military equipment to be produced, with the aid of Rheinmetall and other German firms, mostly in neutral countries. Director Eltze was quite emphatic in his desire to do nothing that would run counter to the wishes of the Foreign Ministry and create political complications for Germany.<sup>131</sup> According to Trautmann, there might easily develop such complications; the activities proposed by Rheinmetall might become known outside Germany, and Germany might also put herself more and more in Russian hands and lose any freedom of action to follow a different course. Trautmann agreed that there were military advantages to the plan, "but the question is whether these advantages are worth the risk and whether it would not be better for us to remain

quiet for several more years in the military field, since we shall have no opportunity of using these experiences in the foreseeable future. On the other hand it cannot be denied that the military advantages are predominantly on Russia's side. We will build for the Russians, i.e., the Bolsheviks, an armament industry at a time when they are trying to bring about a revolution with us." Trautmann, therefore, advised against Eltze's project of setting up a German "construction bureau" for Russia. As for supplying Russia with war materials from German establishments in neutral countries, he foresaw no complications.<sup>132</sup>

By early February 1930, Rheinmetall and the Soviet Union had reached a tentative agreement. Under its terms, the German firm promised to place at Russia's disposal six "constructions" (mostly artillery), of which four were already in use by the Reichswehr. These were to be produced in Russian factories with the aid of a German "construction bureau" and with German material assistance. The net profit from these operations was estimated at four million marks.<sup>133</sup> The question was: What position should the Foreign Ministry take? At a meeting of Schubert and his advisers, it was decided to ask Rheinmetall not to conclude the agreement. If this could not be done without causing serious political damage, then Eltze was to make it clear that he was acting entirely at his own risk without consent of the Foreign Ministry. "The idea of combining a political deal with this matter," Schubert wired Dirksen, "has been turned down because of a standing cabinet order against any further expansion of this kind of industrial activity in Russia."<sup>134</sup>

No sooner had this decision been communicated to Moscow than the Reichswehr, which prior to this time had not shown much interest in discussing the matter,<sup>135</sup> called the Foreign Ministry and asked that no negative decision be made without consulting the Reichswehr Ministry. On February 10, General Hammerstein, Heye's successor as chief of the army command, called on Schubert and explained that initially the Reichswehr had hoped to keep the whole matter on a purely business basis. The Russians, however, had made a political issue out of it, threatening that if the agreement failed, "the friendship between the Russian and German army could not be maintained . . . that the whole German-Russian relationship depended upon the conclusion of this agreement." Schubert, on the other hand, was afraid that some day Russia's guns might go off against Germany, either as a result of a direct Soviet attack or in the course of world revolution. Hammerstein considered a revolution unlikely as long as the Russians were "satiated," and he felt that the kind of project proposed by Rheinmetall would help to satiate them. As for a Russian attack, "that after all would be primarily against Poland, which would only be agreeable to us." Besides, Hammerstein said, Russia's military preparations had a decidedly defensive character. He warned against antagonizing Ubovich, who was extremely pro-German, and he

keep a secret and who, in an emergency, could be disavowed; but they were no match for the Russians with whom they had to negotiate. In the absence of any really outstanding figure among the Reichswehr's representatives in Russia, it devolved upon the German ambassador in Moscow to keep an eye on Germany's military as well as political interests. But since the aims of Germany's civilian authorities did not always agree with those of the military, a further element of uncertainty was injected into the Reichswehr's Russian activities.

If there is one thing the German documents show, it is the fact that the whole German government and not merely its military branch was actively involved in the collaboration with Russia. The degree of involvement and the attitude toward it, as we have seen, differed from individual to individual. While some, like Wirth, Maltzan, Curtius, or even Schubert, tried to avoid becoming initiated into the details of such collaboration because they felt it was easier to deny something of which they had little knowledge, others, like Brockdorff-Rantzau or Dirksen, complained of not knowing enough of the details. There is no evidence that any of the civilian authorities were wholeheartedly in favor of the collaboration for military reasons alone. As a matter of fact, the first reaction of Brockdorff-Rantzau, Stresemann, Ebert, and Curtius was to oppose any military dealings with Russia, and we know that Hindenburg, upon becoming president, breathed a sigh of relief when he learned that Germany had no military alliance with Russia. It was only when they became aware of the possible political or economic advantages that could be derived from the Reichswehr's Russian connections that the politicians became reconciled to, and, in the case of Rantzau, Dirksen, or even Stresemann, advocates of, such relations. There was never a time at which this positive attitude toward Russo-German military collaboration was not balanced by a whole flock of fears: What would happen, both at home and abroad, if the secret leaked out? What if the guns the Germans helped Russia produce would some day go off against the Reich? What guarantee was there that the Russians would live up to their promises and give Germany her share of war materials if and when she needed them? There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of the recurrent wish of almost every responsible statesman during the Weimar period that Germany's military collaboration with Russia might be discontinued or at least decreased. But the army had made commitments which could not be broken without causing a major political crisis. Nor was there any certainty that the Reichswehr might not continue its collaboration behind the back of its civilian colleagues. And there was the definite certainty that Russia, if shown a cold shoulder by Germany, would try to find what she needed elsewhere, especially in France.

The collaboration of Germany's civilian authorities with the Reichswehr's Russian ventures was thus halfhearted, but it was nevertheless

close. In their ultimate aims, both military and civilians saw eye to eye. The hope of one day solving the "Polish problem" animated the men who directed Germany's foreign policy as it drew together the Reichswehr and the Red Army. If the diplomats preferred to solve this problem through "peaceful pressure," this was not because of any aversion on their part toward war but because of their realization that a conflict with Poland meant also war with France and thus certain defeat for Germany. To conclude a military alliance with Russia might have encouraged the latter to move against Poland, thus dragging Germany into a war for which she was not ready. The ideal solution would have been to gain assurance of Russian aid in case Poland, as a result of Germany's pressure or even without such provocation, should invade Germany. But such a one-sided arrangement, as we have seen, was not to Russia's taste. Brockdorff-Rantzau's standing complaint, that the Reichswehr did not keep him fully informed of its Russian dealings, was certainly justified, but it is doubtful whether with more information and greater latitude he would have gained the political concessions from Russia that he desired. The truth of the matter is that the German military found their Russian experiences most valuable and a reward in themselves, and this the Russians realized.

Historians, like everyone else, tend to oversimplify issues on which they feel strongly. Critics of Germany thus have presented the Reichswehr's Russian activities as evidence of a German conspiracy of revenge against the West. Defenders of Germany have tried to explain these activities as understandable military maneuvers of which Germany's political leaders were unaware. The truth lies somewhere in between. Germany's politicians were certainly well informed and often lent aid to the Reichswehr's Russian ventures. Their collaboration did not amount to a conspiracy, not because they had any fundamental aversion to it but because they knew that a conspiracy presupposes mutual trust between conspirators. Germany's political leaders realized, as their military colleagues did not, that it was impossible to have such trust in a government whose aims threatened the very existence of friend and foe alike.

#### NOTES

1. The first full treatment of the subject, Cecil F. Melville, *The Russian Face of Germany* (London, 1932), though based on unofficial sources, is still highly informative. The most recent study is Georges Castellan, "Reichswehr et Armée Rouge 1920-1939," in Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, ed., *Les Relations germano-soviétiques de 1933 à 1939* (Paris, 1954), pp. 137-260.

2. From the Heeresarchiv, Potsdam, these papers are now on microfilm available in the Widener Library, Harvard University.

3. The most important of these are the article by General Helm Speidel, "Reichswehr und Rote Armee," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 1 (January 1953), 9-45, and the memorandum by Major Fritz Tschunke of September 15, 1939,

"General v. Seeckt nimmt die Verbindung zur Sowjetunion auf," *Der Monat*, 1 November 1948), 48-50 (hereafter cited as Tschunke Memorandum).

4. Speidel, p. 9.

5. Microfilms of these documents, prepared by the German Foreign Ministry Documents Project (sponsored by the United States, British, and French governments), are deposited in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

6. The memoirs of Herbert von Dirksen, *Moskau, Tokio, London* (Stuttgart, 1949), are typical in this respect. Dirksen, who served as ambassador to Russia from 1928 to 1933, admits the existence of Russo-German military relations but disclaims any knowledge of their details (see p. 81). Yet, as we shall see, Dirksen was intimately acquainted with, and involved in, these relations.

7. Recent accounts of the first postwar years are George W. F. Hallgarten, "General Hans von Seeckt and Russia, 1920-1922," *Journal of Modern History*, XXI (March 1949), 28-34; Edward Hallett Carr, *German-Soviet Relations Between the Two World Wars 1919-1939* (Baltimore, 1951), Chaps. I-III; Theodor Schieder, *Die Probleme des Rapallo-Vertrags* (Cologne, 1956); Gerald Freund, *Unholy Alliance: Russian-German Relations from the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk to the Treaty of Berlin* (London, 1957), chaps. IV-V. The article by Alfred L. Smith, "The German General Staff and Russia 1919-1926," *Soviet Studies*, VIII (October 1956), adds little and contains serious errors.

8. Carr, pp. 17 ff.

9. Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass, Auswärtiges Amt, Germany, microfilm, container 3441, serial no. 9105, frame nos. 234084 ff., National Archives, Washington, D.C. All documents hereafter cited are from the German Auswärtiges Amt collection now on microfilm in the National Archives and will be cited in the following manner: Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass, AA, 3441/9105/234084 ff.

10. The statement in Smith, p. 126, that "some definite contacts" existed in 1919 between Seeckt and the Red Army is not convincing. The passages cited from the Tschunke Memorandum, moreover, contain serious errors of translation.

11. Maltzan to Br.-R., Aug. 6, 1920, Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass, 3445/9105/237050 ff.

12. The best account of these early negotiations is given in Freund, pp. 92 ff. See also John Wheeler-Bennett, *The Nemesis of Power: The German Army in Politics 1918-1945* (London, 1953), pp. 127-128; Castellán, pp. 151 ff.; Hallgarten, pp. 30-31. These and other accounts of the events of 1921 all show slight differences in fact and interpretation.

13. Tschunke Memorandum, p. 49.

14. Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass, 1013/1691/397479 ff.; Herbert Helbig, "Die Moskauer Mission des Grafen Brockdorff-Rantzaus," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, II (1955), 309.

15. Memorandum of March 18, 1924, Akten betr. Militärische Angelegenheiten mit Russland, Büro von Staatssekretär v. Schubert, AA (hereafter cited as Militärische Angelegenheiten), 2329/4564/162585 ff. The minister of finance had to be initiated, since his department had to supply the necessary funds for the Reichswehr's activities in Russia.

16. This rumor has already been discounted by several historians: Schieder, p. 41; Hans Rothfels in his introduction to Speidel, p. 10; Hans W. Gatzke, "Von Rapallo nach Berlin: Stresemann und die Deutsche Russlandpolitik," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, IV (January 1956), 4.

17. Most of the documents on Rapallo can be found in Akten betr. Genua vom 10. Apr. bis 26. Apr. 1922, Büro des Reichsministers, AA, 1734/3398/738276-1735/3398/739144.

18. *Ibid.*, 1735/3398/738917.

19. Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162585 ff.

20. An den Herrn Reichskanzler Eigenhändig! Ganz Geheim! July 29, 1923, *ibid.*, 162539 ff.

21. The authorized biography by Edgar Stern-Rubarth, *Graf von Brockdorff-Rantzaus, Wanderer zwischen zwei Welten* (Berlin, 1929), hardly does justice to Rantzaus's complex personality. The article by Helbig uses some of Br.-R.'s papers and gives valuable new insights. The late German historian Erich Brandenburg, in 1932, had prepared a book on Br.-R., based on the Nachlass, but the Foreign Ministry prevented its publication as contrary to the national interest. The MS of Brandenburg's book is among the Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass (container nos. 1012-13), but it is quite incomplete, since many important events in Rantzaus's career could not yet be discussed at that time. With the additional material from the complete Nachlass (container nos. 3154, 3429-36, 3438-41, 3443-46), and with the Foreign Ministry documents, a definitive biography has now been planned by Professor Helbig.

22. Br.-R. to Langwerth von Simmern, May 3, 1919, Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass, 3443/9105/235265. See also his letter to Ambassador von Romberg, May 18, 1919, *ibid.*, 235289.

23. Draft memorandum, July 1920, *ibid.*, 1013/1691/397293 ff.

24. Draft memorandum, April 24, 1921, *ibid.*, 397303 ff.; résumé of conversation with Ebert, April 25, 1921, *ibid.*, 397309 ff.

25. Letters of Maltzan to Br.-R., August 1920-January 1922, *ibid.*, 3445/9105/236822-27, 237050-54, 237141 ff.

26. Undated memorandum by Br.-R., *ibid.*, 1013/1691/397320 ff.

27. Unterredung mit Ebert am 10. Mai 1922, *ibid.*, 397333 ff.

28. Helbig, pp. 307-308.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-313. See also Freund, pp. 127 ff.

30. Memorandum of Br.-R., January 29, 1923, Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass, 3446/9105/237399 ff.

31. Maltzan to Br.-R., December 15, 1922, *ibid.*, 3431/9101/225086.

32. Br.-R. to Rosenberg, March 1, 1923, Akten betr. Russland, Büro des Reichsministers, AA, 1406/2860/552825 ff.

33. Br.-R. to Maltzan, May 16, 1923, Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass, 3431/9101/225606.

34. See footnote 32.

35. Br.-R. to Maltzan, April 18, 1923, Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass, 3431/9101/224831 ff. See also Br.-R. to Cuno, April 10, 1923, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162521.

36. Brockdorff-Rantzaus Nachlass, 3431/9101/224826.

37. Br.-R. to Maltzan, May 16, 1923, *ibid.*, 225606.

38. Br.-R. to Maltzan, June 13, 1923, *ibid.*, 225527 ff. Additional information about the Hasse and Mentzel missions may be found in Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162539 ff., 162676 ff. The references in Castellán, pp. 155-163, are based primarily on French intelligence reports and are not always clear or correct.

39. Memorandum by Br.-R., September 10, 1923, reporting complaint by Chicherin of June 15, 1923, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162676 ff.

40. Maltzan to Br.-R., June 28, 1923, *ibid.*, 162738.

41. Memorandum of July 12, 1923, *ibid.*, 162559.

42. Br.-R. to Cuno, June 16, 1923, *ibid.*, 162523; memorandum by Br.-R., September 10, 1923, *ibid.*, 162676 ff. Rantzaus felt that a Russian visit to Berlin would implicate the Soviets sufficiently so that they could not ever use the Hasse letter to Rozengolts for blackmail purposes.

43. Br.-R. to Maltzan, June 30 and July 14, 1923, *ibid.*, 162727 ff.

44. According to Gustav Hilger and Alfred G. Meyer, *The Incompatible Allies:*

*A Memoir-History of German-Soviet Relations 1918-1941* (New York, 1953), p. 194, Rozengolts was a member of the Revolutionary Military Council and chief of the central board of the Soviet air force.

45. An den Herrn Reichskanzler Eigenhändig! Ganz Geheim! July 29, 1923, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162539 ff.; memorandum by Br.-R., *ibid.*, 162557 ff.

46. Memorandum of late August 1922, Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass, 1013/1691/397476 ff.

47. Rantzau had earlier thought of using Russia against Britain in India, memorandum of July 17, 1922, *ibid.*, 397396 ff.

48. Ganz geheime Aufzeichnung, July 31, 1923, signed by Br.-R. and Cuno, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/102550 ff.

49. According to an earlier report by Mentzel, General Lebedev, Soviet chief of staff, had told him that Germany "was too weak for Russia to consider joint military action." Br.-R. to Maltzan, May 16, 1923, Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass, 3431/9101/225606.

50. Memorandum by Br.-R., September 10, 1923, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162676 ff.

51. Br.-R.'s memorandum for Stresemann, February 20, 1924, Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass, 3432/9101/226805 ff.

52. *Ibid.* Stresemann's and Ebert's stand is confirmed by Stresemann's own statement, in Nachlass des Reichsministers Dr. Gustav Stresemann, Politisches Archiv, AA (hereafter cited as Stresemann Nachlass), 3167/7337/163462. On Stresemann's attitude toward Russo-German military relations see Hans W. Gatzke, *Stresemann and the Rearmament of Germany* (Baltimore, 1954), Chap. IV. The conclusions stated there are amply supported by the Foreign Ministry documents.

53. Br.-R.'s memorandum to Stresemann, February 20, 1924, Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass, 3432/9101/226805 ff.

54. Maltzan to *chargé d'affaires* in Moscow, August 13, 1923, *ibid.*, 162731. Teichmann, i.e., Tschunke, headed the *Gefu*, an organization founded by the Reichswehr to direct its military-industrial relations with Russia. The firm of Stolzenberg was negotiating about a poison-gas factory in Russia. Hagen, on his way to or from Russia, became ill and died in a Riga hotel, leaving a briefcase full of military documents which his doctor turned over to the German embassy. *Ibid.*, 162618, 162674.

55. Maltzan to *chargé d'affaires* in Moscow, August 22, 1923, *ibid.*, 162732.

56. Speidel, p. 20.

57. See footnote 32.

58. Br.-R. to Maltzan, April 13, 1923, Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass, 3431/9101/224853.

59. Br.-R. to Maltzan, November 29, 1923, *ibid.*, 225273. Major Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer, or Neumann, apparently had made far-reaching promises to the Russians about German deliveries of coal, which never materialized and which, in Soviet circles, made the term "Neumann coals" synonymous with unkept promises. Br.-R. to Maltzan, April 13, 1923, *ibid.*, 224853. On Niedermayer's colorful career during World Wars I and II, see Dirksen, pp. 133-134, and Hilger, pp. 194 ff.

60. Maltzan to Br.-R., December 6, 1923, Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass, 3431/9101/225256 ff.; memorandum by Maltzan, March 18, 1923, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162588.

61. Hasse to Maltzan, October 4, 1923, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162735; Hasse to Staatssekretär von Schubert, March 1, 1924, *ibid.*, 162584.

62. Br.-R.'s memorandum to Stresemann, February 20, 1924, Brockdorff-Rantzau

Nachlass, 3432/9101/226805 ff. Brown, according to Br.-R., was "a most outstanding businessman and a likable person"; see also Br.-R. to *chargé d'affaires* Radowitz, February 27, 1924, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162583.

63. Br.-R. to Stresemann, April 3, 1924, *ibid.*, 2329/4564/162591 ff.

64. See footnote 59.

65. Br.-R.'s memorandum of April 4, 1924, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162594 ff.

66. On the political relations between Germany and Russia during these crucial years, see Gatzke, "Von Rapallo nach Berlin," pp. 7 ff.

67. Tschunke Memorandum, p. 49; Castellán, pp. 163 ff. The Foreign Ministry documents do not provide much new material on these various operations, except for the Junkers works at Fili. Junkers was in a special category since it was subsidized by the German government. Russia's failure to avail herself sufficiently of Junkers' services ultimately led to a crisis in which Junkers threatened to terminate its Russian ventures. For material on Junkers' operations in Russia see Entwicklung der Beziehungen zwischen Junkers und dem Reich bezüglich der Zusammenarbeit in Russland, Junkers geheim, Gesandtschaft Moskau, AA, 3663/9472/273734-843, esp. 273736 ff.; Deutsch-Russische Luftverkehrsgesellschaft "Junkerswerke," 1922-1932, *ibid.*, 3662/9444/273078-309; Akten betr. Unternehmungen der Junkerswerke in Russland, Büro von Staatssekretär v. Schubert, AA, 2331/4564/163752 ff.; Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162622 ff., 162741 ff., 162784 ff.

68. Castellán, pp. 168 ff.

69. For a detailed discussion of these stations, see *ibid.*, pp. 175 ff. Speidel, p. 18, dates Lipetsk from 1924, Saratov from 1927-1928, and Kazan from 1930. The latter, however, seems to have been in operation as early as 1926.

70. Memorandum by Dirksen, December 18, 1925, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162663; memorandum by Br.-R., January 18, 1926, *ibid.*, 162667 ff.

71. Castellán, pp. 197 ff.

72. It is difficult to determine who was head of *Z. Mo.* in 1924. Both Thomsen and Niedermayer are mentioned simultaneously as the Reichswehr's representatives in Moscow. Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162659. As late as January 1926, Br.-R. still asked that one single person be charged with the Reichswehr's affairs in Russia. *Ibid.*, 162667 ff. Hilger, pp. 196-197, places Niedermayer at the head of *Z. Mo.* until 1932 and Thomsen from then on. The documents show, however, that Thomsen was in charge until March 15, 1928, at which time Niedermayer took over. Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2330/4564/163194.

73. Oberst a.D. von der Lieth-Thomsen to Br.-R., May 29, 1926, Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass, 3429/9101/223703. See also Helbig, p. 324. Thomsen had been the senior German air force officer in World War I.

74. Br.-R.'s memorandum of April 4, 1924, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162594 ff.

75. See the series of so-called Fischertelegramme, named after Major Fischer (pseudonym Frank), who was the Reichswehr's liaison with the Foreign Ministry, in Büro von Staatssekretär v. Schubert, AA, 2329/4564/162726 ff., 2330/4564/163508 ff. Liaison for the Foreign Ministry was maintained by Dirksen.

76. Akten betr. Russland, Büro des Reichsministers, AA, 1407/2860/553774 ff., 553783 ff.

77. Br.-R.'s report on a conversation with Trotsky, June 9, 1924, Stresemann Nachlass, 3165/7414/175334 ff.

78. *Ibid.*

79. Telegram from Lieth (i.e., Thomsen) via Rantzau to Frank (i.e., Fischer) via Schubert, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162758.

80. Schubert to Br.-R., July 28, 1925, Akten betr. Rückwirkung der Garantie-

paktverhandlungen auf die Deutsch-Russischen Beziehungen (hereafter cited as Akten betr. Rückwirkung), Büro von Staatssekretär v. Schubert, AA, 2314/4562/155661.

81. Br.-R. to Schubert, July 31, 1925, *ibid.*, 155703.

82. Telegram from Frank-Lieth via Rantzau to Hoffmeister via Schubert, August 24, 1925, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162821. This conflicts with Speidel, p. 36, who states that the Germans were not given much insight into Russian military conditions. Germany may have been more liberal in initiating Soviet officers into her military planning, but she was also aware of the value of thus indoctrinating Russian officers. Russische Militärangelegenheiten, Handakten von Herrn Min. Dir. von Dirksen, AA, 3668/9481/276403.

83. Akten betr. Rückwirkung, 2313/4562/154859 ff.

84. Memorandum of January 18, 1926, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162667 ff.; memorandum of January 21, 1926, *ibid.*, 162673 ff. Italics in the original.

85. Gatzke, "Von Rapallo nach Berlin," pp. 14-24. The existence of a secret understanding in connection with the Treaty of Berlin mentioned here as a possibility (pp. 23-24) is not supported by the German documents that have become available since the article was written.

86. Hilger and Meyer, p. 202.

87. Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162694 ff.

88. Schubert to Br.-R., April 3, 1926, *ibid.*, 162703 ff., 162711.

89. For details see Akten betr. Deutsch-Russischer Gefangenaustausch, Büro von Staatssekretär v. Schubert, AA, 2330/4564/163532 ff., 163354 ff., 2331/4564/163701 ff.

90. For details of the Skoblevisky case, see *ibid.*, 2330/4564/163576 ff.

91. Br.-R. to Stresemann, July 5, 1926, *ibid.*, 163601 ff.

92. Discussion between Schubert, Gessler, Dirksen, Hencke, Schleicher, and Fischer, July 14, 1926, *ibid.*, 163632 ff.

93. *Ibid.*, 163662-743.

94. Memorandum by Legationssekretär Hencke, July 12, 1926, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2330/4564/163630.

95. About this phase of Russo-German collaboration, little has been known thus far. See Castellán, p. 159.

96. Castellán, *passim*. See also Report of Generalkonsul Kessler to Br.-R., November 17, 1924, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2329/4564/162598.

97. Memorandum by Stresemann on conversation with Br.-R., August 11, 1926, Stresemann Nachlass, 3100/7137/149293.

98. Memorandum by Dirksen on talk with Major Fischer, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2330/4564/163463.

99. *Ibid.*, 163378 ff., 163401, 163415, 163437; Russland—Sowjetgranaten 1926/27, Geheimakten 1920-36, AA, 3028/6698/106231 ff. Much of the information came from a memorandum that the firm of Junkers had distributed in the summer of 1926 to present its case in a controversy with the Reichswehr. See *Denkschrift zum Fall Reichsfiskus—Junkers*, June 25, 1926, Akten betr. Unternehmungen der Junkerswerke in Russland, Büro von Staatssekretär von Schubert, AA, 2331/4564/163792 ff.

100. Gatzke, *Stresemann and the Rearmament of Germany*, pp. 73 ff.

101. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-87; Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2330/4564/163487 ff., 163491 ff., 163499 ff., 163513 ff.

102. Tschunke Memorandum, p. 49.

103. Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2330/4564/163383 ff. This is Schubert's account of the meeting as told him by Br.-R.

104. This is almost verbatim what Br.-R. had proposed more than two years earlier.

105. Aufzeichnung über die deutsch-russischen militärischen Beziehungen, December 24, 1926, probably by Dirksen, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2330/4564/163465 ff.

106. Aufzeichnung über eine Unterhaltung mit Major Fischer, January 6, 1927, probably by Dirksen, *ibid.*, 163471 ff.

107. Aufzeichnung über den gegenwärtigen Stand der deutsch-russischen militärischen Beziehungen, probably by Dirksen, *ibid.*, 163480 ff.

108. Vermerk, February 9, 1927, probably by Dirksen, *ibid.*, 163486, 163494 ff.

109. *Ibid.*

110. *Ibid.*, 163529-530.

111. *Ibid.*, 2331/4564/163880 ff.

112. Hilger and Meyer, pp. 206-207.

113. Niederschrift über die Besprechung im Reichsfinanzministerium am 4. V. 1928, Russische Militärangelegenheiten, 3668/9481/276292.

114. Discussion between Stresemann, von Schubert, Groener, and Blomberg, February 6, 1928, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2331/4564/163921, 163924 ff.

115. Russische Militärangelegenheiten, 3668/9481/276183 ff., 276265.

116. *Ibid.*, 3668/9481/276275, 276283 ff. About forty-three Reichswehr members were sent each year to Lipetsk, and the total number sent to Russia in 1929 consisted of twenty-three active and sixty-three inactive officers. Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2331/4564/163924 ff.; 163947 ff.

117. Russische Militärangelegenheiten, 3668/9481/276305 ff.

118. Reise des Chefs des Truppenamts nach Russland (August-September, 1928), signed by Blomberg, *ibid.*, 3668/9480/276183 ff., 276249 ff.

119. Br.-R. to Stresemann, April 12, 1928, Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass, 3432/9101/226870.

120. Gatzke, "Von Rapallo nach Berlin," p. 26.

121. Hencke to Br.-R., April 28, 1928, reporting on a talk with Stresemann, Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass, 3429/9101/223630 ff.

122. Unsigned memorandum, May 1, 1929, Militärische Angelegenheiten, 2331/4564/163956 ff.

123. *Ibid.*, 164006 ff.

124. Dirksen to Trautmann, May 7, 1929, *ibid.*, 163960.

125. Dirksen to Schubert, December 19, 1929, *ibid.*, 163978 ff.

126. Memorandum by Trautmann, January 3, 1930, *ibid.*, 163984.

127. *Ibid.*, 163988-89.

128. Trautmann to Schubert, January 6, 1930, *ibid.*, 163990 ff.

129. Köpke to Schubert, January 6, 1930, *ibid.*, 163996 ff.

130. Schubert to Trautmann, January 9, 1930, *ibid.*, 163994.

131. Report by Moltke, January 29, 1930, *ibid.*, 164003 ff.

132. Votum by Trautmann, January 31, 1930, *ibid.*, 164009 ff.

133. Memorandum by Moltke on talk with Eltze, February 7, 1930, *ibid.*, 164011 ff.

134. Schubert to Dirksen, February 8, 1930, *ibid.*, 164018.

135. *Ibid.*, 164018.

136. Memorandum by Schubert, February 10, 1930, *ibid.*, 164022 ff. Uborevich had spent some time in Germany in 1927 where a conscious effort had been made "to influence him in a pro-German direction." See Russische Militärangelegenheiten, 3668/9481/276403.

137. Dirksen to Moltke, February 3, 1930, received February 10, *ibid.*, 164019 ff.

138. Dirksen to Trautmann, January 30, 1930, received February 10, *ibid.*, 164038 ff.

139. Schubert to Dirksen, February 10, 1930, *ibid.*, 164032 ff.  
 140. Curtius to Vortragender Legationsrat von Blücher, November 25, 1929, *ibid.*, 163983.  
 141. Memoranda by Schubert, February 10 and 14, 1930, *ibid.*, 164042 ff.  
 142. Dirksen to Schubert, February 10, 1930, *ibid.*, 164045.  
 143. Eltze's report to Moltke, February 12, 1930, *ibid.*, 164052 ff.  
 144. Memorandum by Schubert, February 15, 1930, *ibid.*, 164056.  
 145. *Ibid.*, 164046 ff.  
 146. *Ibid.*, 164058 ff.  
 147. Dirksen to Curtius, *ibid.*, 164062 ff.  
 148. Dirksen to Curtius, July 19, 1930, Akten betr. Russland, 1416/2860/561791.  
 149. On the period beyond, see Speidel, *passim*, and Castellán, pp. 202 ff. See also George H. Stein, "Russo-German Military Collaboration: The Last Phase, 1933," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXVII (March 1962), 54-71.

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ANNELISE THIMME

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## Stresemann and Locarno

One of the most prominent statesmen of the 1920's was Germany's Gustav Stresemann. Chancellor and Foreign Minister at the time of the Ruhr crisis and Foreign Minister thereafter, he died on the eve of the Great Depression in 1929. During his six years in office, Germany regained stability at home and respect abroad. Much of the credit for this achievement was rightly given to Stresemann. Only when Hitler began to revise the Treaty of Versailles by threat of force rather than persuasion, as had been Stresemann's method, did people begin to wonder whether Hitler's success was not made easier because Stresemann had prepared the ground, and whether the aims of the two men were not basically much alike.

As this chapter shows, the picture of Stresemann remains far from clear. The author is Professor of History at the University of Alberta. Her special field is recent German history. Among her books are Gustav Stresemann: Eine politische Biographie zur Geschichte der Weimarer Republik (Hannover/Frankfurt, 1957), and Flucht in den Mythos: Die Deutschnationale Volkspartei und die Niederlage von 1918 (Göttingen, 1969). This selection first appeared as "Die Locarnopolitik im Lichte des Stresemann-Nachlasses," in *Zeitschrift für Politik*, III (August 1956), 42-63. It is reprinted by permission of the author and publisher and has been translated by the editor.