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### Diary: Written by professor Dr Gottlob Frege in the time from 10 March to 9 April 1924

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## Diary: Written by Professor Dr Gottlob Frege in the Time from 10 March to 9 April 1924

Edited and with commentary by Gottfried Gabriel and Wolfgang Kienzler

Translated by Richard L. Mendelsohn  
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### Translator's Preface

In the Frege Archives at the *Institut für mathematische Logik und Grundlagenforschung* at Münster University, there is a typescript of a diary Gottlob Frege kept from 10 March through 9 May 1924. The typescript had been prepared by Frege's son, Alfred, in 1937/38 and sent to Heinrich Scholz in 1938; the whereabouts of the original handwritten diary from which the transcription was created are unknown. The three entries dated 23–25 March which deal with the concept of *number* have already been published in the *Nachgelassene Schriften*. The remainder of the diary, which consists primarily of reflections on the political developments of the day, was not published until last year. This first publication of the diary was prepared by Professor Gottfried Gabriel and Dr Wolfgang Kienzler. They made minor corrections to the typescript and furnished explanatory footnotes for the many allusions Frege makes to political figures and events. The annotated diary created by Gabriel and Kienzler appeared in the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 42 (1994), 6, pp. 1067–98 and is translated here with the permission of the authors and the publisher Akademie Verlag.

This is the infamous diary Michael Dummett refers to in the introduction to *Frege, Philosophy of Language*:

There is some irony for me in the fact that the man about whose philosophical views I have devoted, over years, a great deal of time to thinking, was, at least at the end of his life, a virulent racist, specifically an anti-semite. This fact is revealed by a fragment of a diary which survives among Frege's Nachlass, but which was not published with the rest by Professor Hans Hermes in *Frege's nachgelassene Schriften*. The diary shows Frege to have been a man of extreme right-wing opinions, bitterly opposed to the parliamentary system, democrats, liberals, Catholics, the French and, above all, Jews, who he thought ought to be deprived of political rights

and, preferably, expelled from Germany. When I first read that diary, many years ago, I was deeply shocked, because I had revered Frege as an absolutely rational man, if, perhaps, not a very likeable one. I regret that the editors of Frege's *Nachlass* chose to suppress that particular item.<sup>i</sup>

Professor Gabriel, in his companion essay, 'Gottlob Freges politisches Tagebuch',<sup>ii</sup> takes vigorous exception to Dummett's accusation of suppression, and provides important information about the history of the typescript. Because of the significance of Gabriel's response, I have excerpted his 'Background and Editorial Comments' from that essay as a preface to the diary. The typescript of the diary was openly accessible when I visited Münster in the summer of 1995. Gabriel says that this has always been so. I would have only wished that this were made public years ago. For, certainly, given the wide interest in the diary, it is intolerable that in the twenty-one years since Dummett's revelation about its existence and the twenty-five years since the publication of the *Nachgelassene Schriften* there have been no published comments in English about the actual content of the diary – except for the very recent (1993) work of Hans Sluga, and his brief description of the diary is quite misleading.<sup>iii</sup> The Gabriel/Kienzler scholarly effort is clearly welcome: we can at last all see for ourselves what lies there.

Frege was quite old at the time of the writing of the diary. And there is reason to suspect that these later years were not easy for him. His life-project of reducing mathematics to logic lay in ruins, he was virtually unappreciated in his day, and he was surviving on a meager pension. Does the diary only record the words of an embittered old man? I am inclined to believe that the views Frege expresses in this diary reflect a more deeply entrenched outlook. Sluga records<sup>iv</sup> Frege's connections with the right-wing, antisemitic Bruno Bauch and the *Deutsche Philosophische Gesellschaft* he established in 1916. Frege had been still vigorously creative at the time, and he published his most important later works in that society's philosophical organ, *Beiträge zur Philosophie des Deutschen Idealismus*: 'The Thought' and 'Negation' appeared in 1918 in the very first volume, and 'Compound Thoughts'

<sup>i</sup> London: Duckworth, 1973, p. xii.

<sup>ii</sup> *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 42 (1994), 6, pp. 1057–66.

<sup>iii</sup> Sluga says: 'Frege confided in his diary in 1924 that he had once thought of himself as a liberal and was an admirer of Bismarck, but his heroes now were General Ludendorff and Adolf Hitler. This was after the two had tried to topple the elected democratic government in a coup in November 1923. In his diary Frege also used all his analytic skills to devise plans for expelling the Jews from Germany and for suppressing the Social Democrats,' (Hans Sluga, *Heidegger's Crisis: Philosophy and Politics in Nazi Germany* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993], p. 99). The diary sustains Sluga's claim that Frege admired Ludendorff, but not that he admired Hitler; and certainly not as a result of the 1923 putsch, which Sluga's second sentence seems to imply, for Frege disapproved of Ludendorff's involvement; Sluga's final sentence presents a gross distortion of the content of the diary.

<sup>iv</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 98 f.

appeared in 1923. His antidemocratic sentiments were already evident in 'On Sense and Reference' (1891) where he complains of the 'demagogic abuse' to which the empty singular term 'the will of the people' is subject.

The views Frege expresses in the diary are far from original: they are the expression of an outlook that was shared by many in his day. What the diary shows more clearly than ever is how much Frege was a creature of his time, and how much more closely than we had previously been able to discern he was involved in and influenced by the philosophical activities of his time.

There is, I know, a rather sharp difference between an individual's philosophical views and his political views, and this is especially true when the philosophical views are so far removed from anything practical, as is the case with Frege.<sup>v</sup> The reprehensible social views expressed in the diary shake neither the truth nor the inventiveness of his philosophical achievements. But they do make it more difficult to read his texts with the same ease and sympathy – and admiration. I find myself deeply confused and troubled by the diary, and compelled to work to disseminate it as widely as possible.

I am grateful to Professor Justus Diller and the *Institut für mathematische Logik und Grundlagenforschung* at Münster University for their warm welcome, and to Enno Folkerts, who assisted me while there; I am especially indebted to my students, Edward Holland and Johannes Hafner, who saved me from many errors by their close, painstaking reading of the translation; to Gottfried Gabriel and Wolfgang Kienzler for their corrections and suggestions; to my colleagues, Arthur Collins and Joan Stambaugh, for their criticisms of earlier drafts; and to an editor of this journal. This work was supported in part by PSC-CUNY grant #666125.

Richard L. Mendelsohn

## Preface<sup>vi\*</sup>

The document published in what follows consists of Gottlob Frege's reflections, which he noted from 10 March through 9 May 1924 in remarks in the form of a diary. These reflections prove the later Frege – he died on 26 July, 1925, more than 76 years of age – to be in sympathy with the extreme political right. Furthermore, they also provide us with the information that the author had first been a National Liberal, and that he was on no account a

<sup>v</sup> Although Gabriel attempts to draw a connection between the two in the essay from which his comments are excerpted, *op. cit.*

<sup>vi</sup> Excerpted from 'Gottlob Frege's politisches Tagebuch', *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 42 (1994), 6, pp. 1057–9.

\*The translation is published here by kind permission of the editor and of the publisher, Akademie Verlag, Editor.

'reactionary' in his time. Frege developed his extreme position primarily in the light of the consequences which the lost First World War had had for Germany.<sup>a</sup> Frege's former colleague at Jena, the mathematician R. Haußner, characterizes the view the two held in common after the war succinctly: 'He [Frege] was as closely disposed to the monarchy as I, and flatly hated Social Democracy and any other democracy, which we had only to thank for the unfortunate end of the war and the ignominious peace of Versailles.'<sup>b</sup>

We must take many of the statements in the diary seriously only because they were made by the Founder of Modern Logic and the Father of Analytic Philosophy. The text has been often referred to in recent times because of this fact, but also because it can establish a balance in the (superfluous) argument between Continental and Analytic Philosophy at least on this point, that *none* of the traditions may lay claim to being *methodologically* immune from moral/political error: opposed to Heidegger, on the one hand, we find Frege, on the other.

With the exception of the remarks on the concept of number (entries from 23–25 March), the text was not included in the publication of the *Nachgelassene Schriften* on the grounds that the remaining reflections were of a political nature and 'could not be numbered among the scientific [wissenschaftliche] Nachlaß'.<sup>c</sup> The decision of the editors was criticized by the English Frege expert Michael Dummett. He even says that they decided 'to suppress' the text.<sup>d</sup> Dummett's formulation gives the impression that they intended to keep Frege's diary, so to speak, under lock and key. Nothing like that, however, is the case. The text is part of the Frege Archives in the possession of the *Institut für mathematische Logik und Grundlagenforschung* at Münster University, and it has been accessible there at any time. Dummett's remark has had effect. Without asking the editors of the Frege *Nachlaß* about their plans, some have said that *no* publication was considered *at all*. Yet already in 1973 there was consideration about publishing the diary together with other materials. An agreement by letter was reached with Professor Lothar Kreiser (Leipzig), who had collected documents over many years for his Frege biography, to drop the idea of a separate publication and to transfer the diary to its 'natural place', that is to say, to include it in the document appendix of the biography.<sup>e</sup> Its completion

<sup>a</sup> Compare as a supplement Frege's letters to L. Wittgenstein from this time, in *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 33/34 (1989), pp. 5–33.

<sup>b</sup> Letter to Heinrich Scholz of 24 April 1936 (located in the Frege Archives).

<sup>c</sup> *Nachgelassene Schriften*, ed. H. Hermes, F. Kambartel, and F. Kaulbach (Hamburg: Felix Meiner), p. 282, fn. 1.

<sup>d</sup> M. Dummett, *Frege, Philosophy of Language* (London: Duckworth, 1973), p. xii.

<sup>e</sup> L. Kreiser reported on the contents of the diary at the 8th conference of the section on 'History, Philosophy and Foundations of Mathematics' of the Mathematical Society of the German Democratic Republic (Magdeburg, 15–18 October 1984).

was delayed, though, because Professor Kreiser had become so drawn into the reorganization of academic institutions by the so-called 'Wende' [literally, 'Turning', a reference to the collapse of communist regimes in the East – translator] that he had no longer any time for the project. For this reason, the compilers decided in agreement with Professor Kreiser and the Frege-editors to publish the diary, and so to forestall any further misinterpretations which were to be expected.

In their decision earlier not to include the diary, the editors of the *Nachgelassene Schriften* followed the view of Alfred Frege, the adoptive son of G. Frege, and of Heinrich Scholz, the founder of the Frege Archives. As the correspondence between the two attests, the diary (with the exception of the remarks on the concept of number) did not belong with the *scientific* [*wissenschaftliche*] *Nachlaß* originally considered for publication. A. Frege made this kind of distinction in his letter of 16 January 1937:

There is something else I can turn over to you today, namely, from the sole diary of my adoptive father, a short reflection on the concept of number which was written some two years before his death. I am presently, as far as my spare time permits, occupied with creating a typewritten copy of the mentioned diary so that one can read the primarily social/political reflections laid down there some day all together. Unfortunately, this transcription is rather difficult because the handwriting is very hard to decipher in places. When I finish this transcription, I will send you this diary as well. I think I have included all of the parts with mathematical content in the enclosed extract.

They touched on the diary only after Scholz had requested the documents, which were to serve as the basis of the biographical part of a planned monograph about Frege.<sup>f</sup> In a letter dated 2 November 1938, Scholz received the announced typescript together with the remark that these writings would certainly be a contribution that 'helped complete the character sketch of my father'. It seems that Scholz did not receive the handwritten original. The title at the head of the typescript, 'Diary. Written by Professor Dr Gottlob Frege in the time from 10 March to 9 May 1924', the final remark of 'textual criticism' (cf. the last footnote in the diary), and the corresponding question marks in the text therefore originated with A. Frege. The typescript also contains numerous corrections, also in handwriting, essentially about orthography and punctuation, whose origin cannot be more clearly determined. These corrections are viewed here as belonging to the text.

The commentary in the footnotes furnishes historical background information that shall make accessible the content in order to render its evaluation

<sup>f</sup> The above-mentioned letter from R. Haußner to Scholz originated also from such an inquiry. Cf. The letter of 21 April 1936 to Haußner, in which Scholz already complains about the difficulty that is still with us today of bringing forward material for a biography of Frege.

possible from the point of view of contemporary history.<sup>8</sup> They were largely produced by W. Kienzler in the course of a research project at the University of Konstanz.<sup>9</sup> The editors are obliged to thank Professor Kambartel and the Director of the *Zentrum für Philosophie und Wissenschaftstheorie* at the University of Konstanz, Professor Jürgen Mittelstraß, for their support of the project. Further thanks for their suggestions go to the participants in my Frege colloquium held at the University of Konstanz in the summer semester of 1992 where we discussed the text.

Gottfried Gabriel

## Diary

by Gottlob Frege\*

Since I will perhaps lack the time and energy to give a more detailed exposition, I will just note down ideas which are perhaps worthy of being developed in the future.

10 March 1924

Professor Abbe<sup>1</sup> at Jena was one of the noblest men I have encountered in my journey through life. He was, first and foremost, my highly respected teacher when I was a student at Jena,<sup>2</sup> especially in the subject of mathematical physics. Thanks to his course of lectures, insight into the essence of this branch of knowledge was opened up to me. How few men have even an idea about this! How many lack the rigorous discipline in thinking which is involved in the

<sup>8</sup> Reflections on this occur first in A. Veraart, *Geschichte des wissenschaftlichen Nachlasses Gottlob Freges und seiner Edition. Mit einem Katalog des ursprünglichen Bestands der nachgelassenen Schriften in Studien zu Frege*, ed. M. Schirn, vol. I (Stuttgart/Bad Cannstatt: F. Fromann Verlag, 1976), pp. 49–106; here, pp. 76–78. In general, reference should be made to the standard work: Gebhardt – *Handbuch der deutschen Geschichte*, 9th ed., ed. H. Grundmann, vols 3 and 4, Stuttgart 1970/1973. Cf. there also on the parties mentioned by Frege: vol. 3, §§ 30, 34, and 37b; on Bismarck's politics: vol. 3, §§ 40, 47–49 and 53; on the historical circumstances around 1923/24 and the Hitler-Putsch: vol. 4, §§ 37–44; on the prehistory of reform, restoration and reaction: vol. 3, §§ 15, 17, 22 f.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Research Report of the University of Konstanz, Issue 9, 1990–1992, Konstanz 1993, p. 314.

<sup>1</sup> Ernst Karl Abbe (1840–1905) was Professor of Physics and Astronomy at Jena from 1870. After the death of Carl Zeiss (1816–1888), he took over the Carl Zeiss Factory and transformed it into the Carl Zeiss Foundation. The Foundation reformed working conditions according to a social viewpoint, giving a share of the profits of the enterprise to the workers, and also supported the University of Jena. Frege himself was benefited by the Foundation indirectly: he owed his promotion in 1896 to *Honoraryprofessor* essentially to Abbe's personal effort and the support of this position by the Foundation (cf. on this the presentation of L. Kreiser in the appendix of Frege's *Nachgelassene Schriften*, 2nd ed. [Hamburg: F. Meiner Verlag, 1983], p. 336).

<sup>2</sup> Frege studied in Jena from Easter 1869 to Easter 1871.

\*A translation of Gottlob Frege's *Tagebuch*, which was first published in *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 42 (1994), 6, pp. 1067–98. The translation is published here by kind permission of the editors and of Akademie Verlag.

pursuit of these matters. Abbe's cradle had stood in a workman's house. The nobility of his sentiment is also evident in that he never denied his origins. These origins also help to explain his social thought and action. His beginnings in Zeiss's optical workshop had the consequence that he later improved the mathematical theory of optical tools, especially microscopes, always in a way closely related to the needs and results of his work. By this means, he brought the Zeiss optical works to a higher level of prosperity and would ultimately become its top leader. Then it was possible at last for him to realize his plans to benefit his workers, plans whose seeds were formed in him in his cradle and which he had developed in the course of his work in the Zeiss factory. He converted the Zeiss factory, to the benefit of the workers employed there, into a Zeiss Foundation. He himself had worked to develop the Foundation's wealth. In reality it was a noble present to the workers, but according to Abbe's belief, the workers had also worked for it and owned it thus by right. That's at least how I understand him. It was an effort that issued from the most noble and genuinely Christian attitude to improve the economic conditions of the workers and thereby their overall situation.

11 March 1924

Before the war theologians too troubled themselves about the improvement of the economic conditions of poor employees.<sup>3</sup> To be sure, they did not have such

<sup>3</sup> Frege alludes here primarily to the theologian Adolf Stoecker (1835–1909). Stoecker was court chaplain in Berlin from 1883 to 1890, and from 1880 to 1893, at the same time member of parliament and president of the Protestant and antisemitically oriented Christian-Social Workers party (since 1881 renamed the Christian-Social party). It was established in 1878 as a counterweight to the Catholic Zentrum and against the Social Democratic party, but achieved only minor success in elections. In 1890, Stoecker was co-founder of the 'Protestant-Social Congress', which placed in its charter of 1891 the task 'to investigate in an unprejudiced manner the social circumstances of our people, to apply to them the standard of the moral and religious demands of the gospel, and to make '... latter more productive and more effective for the present economic life than hitherto' (cited in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. G. Krause and G. Müller [Berlin and New York, 1977 ff.], entry 'Evangelisch-sozialer Kongreß'). In 1896, Stoecker withdrew from the Congress, which continued until 1945 and held yearly public conventions. Stoecker in his time was one of the most influential representatives of modern antisemitism in Germany. In emancipated, liberal Judaism, whose influence he perceived mainly in the press and in finance, he saw one of his most significant enemies. For this reason, and especially through his assault on Gerson von Bleichröder (1822–1893), Bismarck's banker, with whom Bismarck also cultivated a private relationship, Stoecker came into opposition to Bismarck. In 1880, he declared once during an address: 'Why do you demand social help only of clergymen? Why never of the Jews? Herr von Bleichröder has more money than all Protestant clergymen together!' (cited in K. Kupisch, *Adolf Stoecker. Hofprediger und Volkstribun* [Berlin, 1970], p. 52). Bismarck himself mentioned in *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* (see fn. 6) a contemptuous remark by Wilhelm II about 'Jews and Jesuits' once when Bleichröder set up a meeting between Bismarck and the leading Zentrum politician Windhorst (vol. III, ch. 8, p. 82). Cf. also M. Greschat, *Protestantischer Antisemitismus in Wilhelminischer Zeit—Das Beispiel des Hofpredigers Adolf Stoecker*, in *Antisemitismus*, ed. G. Brakelmann and M. Rosowski (Göttingen, 1989), pp. 27–51. It is noteworthy that Frege's position is at bottom a 'hybridization' of the positions of Bismarck and Stoecker, which stand in explicit contrast to one another. 'Officially', Frege stands on the side of Bismarck; under the table, however, he shares the antisemitism of Stoecker.



great financial resources as Abbe had at his disposal. What a single individual could produce had only the effect of a small alms box; it had no more impact than a drop evaporating on a hot stone, with no noticeable effect on the whole. They tried to exert moral pressure on wealthy employers. With this in mind, they wanted to influence public opinion through their Protestant-Social congresses and similar events, which usually bore the name Christian-Social. Whenever employers and employees differed with regard to the fixing of wages or working hours, they believed that they must – being obliged to do so by their Christianity – in general come to the aid of the employees, as the poor, against the employers, as the rich. While Abbe sought to improve the economic conditions of the workers at his own expense, these theologians wanted to do the same at the cost of others. Because of this difference, I tend to the opinion that really they carried the words 'Protestant' and 'Christian' unjustifiably on their banners, while I do not doubt for a moment that Abbe's grand donation came forth from true Christian sentiments.

12 March 1924

Two devils have greatly harmed us by poisoning the relation between employers and employees: here the devil of pride, there the devil of envy. They are not stupid these devils, but very cunning; however, they make those possessed by them stupid, so that, misjudging their own interests, they harm themselves in a blind fury for they seem determined to struggle with one another most violently. Now, one should think this to be a suitable field of activity for theologians who could make clear to both parties the error of this opinion and could show them that this mutual struggle is the stupidest thing they could do. I hope that many theologians are silently and without much fanfare really doing this. But there are also theologians who think they have to come together to operate in public as a whole; and when they notice disagreement between employers and employees, usually let themselves, so it appears, be led astray by their Christianity and immediately take the side of the employees without investigating how things really stand, and whether the hostility of both parties is based really on the nature of the relation of employer and employee and only by completely eliminating the former could the disagreement be satisfactorily ended. Thus, these theologians, instead of appeasing and reconciling, pour oil on the flames and help both devils in their devilish work.

13 March 1924

In 1871, when the war was over, Thiers said:<sup>4</sup> 'The Republic will be

<sup>4</sup> Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877) was from 1871 until 1873 the first president of the Third French Republic. He essentially shared the responsibility with others for the suppression of the insurrection of the Paris Commune in 1871. The 'Conservative Republic' of Thiers is a constantly used catchword of the time; in the form cited by Frege, however, it could not be given a reference.

conservative, or it will not be.' France suffered from a dangerous illness. Thiers believed that the most certain way of healing it was by fire, and he cauterized it. Only a few harmless traces remained. Thus, Thiers rescued France and made possible the attainment of the strong position which it has now reached. It had infected Germany. Did Germany have no man who could perform the cauterization? It had an individual who had the will and the ability for that purpose; but his Kaiser was of a different opinion.<sup>5</sup> So, the last opportunity for the cauterization was missed. Other countries saw that Germany was weakened by the illness. From this they got the courage to attack Germany. But there had to be many of them who united to this end. A few would not have succeeded in overpowering Germany, even though it was weakened.

14 March 1924

Bismarck<sup>6</sup> recognized by his native insight that Social Democracy had no future.<sup>7</sup> Not a few, it appears, have not yet perceived this, tying their fate with Social Democracy and exposing themselves to the danger of going under with and in Social Democracy.<sup>8</sup>

15 March 1924

Germany and England stood, before the war, in competition with one another with regard to several industrial products. This ever-strengthening competition may have been one of the reasons for England's entry into the World War,<sup>9</sup> for in the long run, England's naval supremacy was placed in question. Competition with regard to manufactured goods benefits the consumers of such goods. Not a few peoples have been in this situation. The elimination of

<sup>5</sup> Frege is alluding to Wilhelm II (1859–1941), who ruled from 1888 until 1918 as German Kaiser and did not support his Reichskanzler Bismarck in his battle against the Social Democrats. So in 1890 he did not extend further the 'law against the efforts of the Social Democrats that are dangerous to the public' of 1878 (the 'Socialist Law') with which Bismarck sought to prevent the rise of Social Democracy.

<sup>6</sup> Otto Eduard Leopold Fürst von Bismarck (1815–1898) was Prussian Prime Minister from 1862, Chancellor of the North German Confederation from 1867, and from 1871, Chancellor of the newly established German Reich under Kaiser Wilhelm I (1797–1888). After he had been dismissed from his position by Wilhelm II in 1890, he wrote his work *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* whose first two volumes appeared after Bismarck's death in 1898. The third volume, which contained Bismarck's critical statements on Wilhelm II, was published in 1921. Frege refers repeatedly in his diary to Bismarck without specifying the source. It is cited in the following according to the original publication, which Frege also presumably used: Otto Fürst von Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, 3 volumes, Stuttgart/Berlin, 1919 (distributed in 1921).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. fn. 15.

<sup>8</sup> The German Social Democratic party [*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*] (SPD) was continually the political party with the highest proportion of votes in the Reichstag elections between 1890 and 1930.

<sup>9</sup> On 4 August 1914 England entered the First World War, after Germany had violated Belgium's neutrality – which had been guaranteed by England – by marching its troops in.

one of the two competitors was a disadvantage to all of them, and this could have been a reason for them to stand on the side of Germany. Their desire for conquest determined that they go over to the other side: France, Italy, Russia, Serbia. But others too, as, e.g., Norway, appeared to have sided with the English on the basis of their feelings.<sup>10</sup> The English skill in influencing world public opinion may very well have contributed to that. The Englishman understands very well how to express his opinions, especially on economic and political questions, with an appearance of infallibility, and almost all of the English speak with one voice, and since we are used to acknowledging English views as authoritative in all trade and ocean-going affairs it is very hard to counteract them. I have observed that Germans too who have looked around the world express views they have evidently learned from the English, and whose circulation is useful for England. One tends to forget that views formed about a competitor are rarely wholly uncolored.

16 March 1924

The socialist infection, which had already affected large parts of the German people long before the war, was very beneficial to the spread of Social Democracy. The theologian Stoecker, of whom the Kaiser was of the opinion that there was something of a Luther in him, may also have influenced the Kaiser in a socialist direction.<sup>11</sup>

17 March 1924

It has been said that the bourgeoisie should have sharply fought Social Democracy. But how could they do it when they themselves had no sure ground underfoot on which they could successfully fight? They were themselves already greatly infected by socialism and had already conceded

<sup>10</sup> Norway remained neutral in the First World War.

<sup>11</sup> On the character of Stoecker, cf. above fn. 3, Bismarck reported in the third volume of his *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* a conversation which took place in 1887, and in which the then Crown Prince and later Kaiser Wilhelm II said to Bismarck's son: 'Stoecker does have something of Luther.' Bismarck continued: 'My son . . . replied, Stoecker might have his merits and be a good orator; but he is passionate and could not always depend upon his memory. The prince retorted: but Stoecker has still produced many thousands of votes for the Kaiser which he snatched away from the Social Democrats; my son replied, since the elections of 1878 the Social Democratic vote had consistently been on the increase: if Stoecker has produced some effect, then a falling off would have to be evident' (vol. III, ch. 1, p. 5). In the same chapter, Bismarck presents a fundamental criticism of Stoecker, which Frege also agreed with: 'I have nothing against Stoecker; he has for my part only the one failing as a politician, that he is a priest, and as a priest, that he pursues politics' (p. 19). The parallel of Stoecker with Luther has already entered the literature through Fontane's *Stechlin* (Berlin, 1898; cited from Th. Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. E. Groß, München, 1959, vol. 8). In chapter 4, he is referred to once as 'the new Luther' (p. 42), and in chapter 3, it is said of Stoecker that he is 'paid homage, not only on the part of those for whom he cut the shoes generously, but almost more still in the camp of those from whom he took the leather for the shoes' (p. 27).

far too much to Social Democracy. One thought oneself to be very clever if one did not obstruct Social Democracy at every possible turn, perhaps remembering an earlier situation with the rise of Liberalism.<sup>12</sup> But in those days Liberalism really had a future, while Social Democracy never had one.

18 March 1924

A religious obligation is an obligation over whose fulfillment no human judge stands guard and judges. To be sure, a civil obligation can also be made into a religious one. But it is only because the obligation is at that time a legal obligation, a civil obligation, that a human judge has to judge its fulfillment. In order to separate clearly the religious from the civil and the legal, I want to exclude from consideration those cases where a civil obligation is made into a religious one.

19 March 1924

From the religious obligations which a person has, there arises no right of another against him. Rights are of a civil nature. Civil rights usually correspond to civil obligations, but civil rights cannot correspond to religious obligations, for otherwise a civil judge would also have to decide about the fulfillment of religious obligations. So, religious obligations can never ground a right. Also, the state can never impose a punishment for the nonfulfillment of religious obligations; for that would make them into civil obligations and subjugate them to the judgment of its judges, thus of men. It is not good for a religion if the state makes all of its religious obligations into civil obligations, because the danger then arises that the religious motives for acting are influenced more and more by this fear of punishment.

20 March 1924

Can one from the standpoint of religion transform the law to the advantage of poor fellow countrymen?<sup>13</sup> Religion can influence the attitude [*Gesinnung*] of the law-maker and this attitude [*Gesinnung*] can later influence the construction of the law. Never, however, can religion or someone in the name of religion set himself up as law-maker. Can one decide, on the basis of religion, what reward is appropriate for a given output in economic commerce? No, religion has nothing to do with that. It cannot

<sup>12</sup> Frege alludes to the liberal Progressive party [*Fortschrittspartei*], which was established in 1861; it immediately became the strongest power in the Prussian parliament and in 1862 nearly forced the resignation of the Prussian king (the later German Kaiser Wilhelm I). The future of liberalism rested at that time, according to Frege, in the creation of an undivided German state, as would materialize in 1871. Bismarck in his *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* (vol. III, ch. 10, p. 130) draws the same parallel as Frege.

<sup>13</sup> The expression 'fellow countrymen' [*Volksgenosse*] in the sense of 'member of a people' came into use after the beginning of the twentieth century in conservative German usage. It later became a standard term in the language of National Socialist propaganda.

judge, for example, what price is appropriate for an article of clothing or what pay for a piece of work. When both parties agree to a contract which they seal with one another, one can assume, unless proven otherwise, that output and reward, as they are determined in the contract, counterbalance one another. This holds, however, only for this contract which those very parties conclude with one another at that very time. Output and reward are almost always so dissimilar that they cannot be measured by a common standard. From the essence of output and the essence of reward, nothing can be derived about the equality of their value. Also, it is almost always arbitrary what one assumes if the equality of value is not explicitly recognized by both parties in a contract. The value of a product or service is of course not independent of the time at which it is delivered.

21 March 1924

The law presupposes a union of rational creatures, a state. Such a union appears to be less necessary for religion. Can't a single individual have a religion which no one else has? One speaks of religious obligation as well as of legal obligation; nevertheless these are of different kinds.

22 March 1924

Justice is the foundation of law. The fair judge is not permitted in any way to take into account the wealth of one of the parties in a lawsuit. The rich are not permitted, because they are rich, to have any special privilege over the poor, but also, on the other hand, the poor are not permitted, because they are poor, to have any special privilege over the rich. Religion, however, gladly places obligations on the rich which favor the poor. But these religious obligations are not legal obligations. If they are not held clearly separate from one another, religion can endanger the law, and therewith the state. The judge must always keep in sight that he is not permitted to have a prejudice either in favor of the poor or in favor of the rich. Also, judges strongly moved by religion are not permitted to allow themselves to be led astray by religious obligations to take the side of the poor against the wealthy. But also, someone not directly responsible as a judge in the service of the administration of justice must, by his judgments on what is right, behave just like a judge. He may disapprove of someone's making use of his right; but he is not permitted on this account to deny the holding of the right. Here, however, it is of course very confusing that the word 'right' is used also in a purely ethical sense.

23 March 1924<sup>14</sup>

My efforts to get clear about what we mean by number have resulted in

<sup>14</sup> The notes from 23 to 25 March have already been published in Frege's *Nachgelassene Schriften*, op. cit., pp. 282 f.

failure. We allow ourselves only too easily to be misled by language and precisely in this case the way we are misled is especially serious. The sentences 'Six is an even number', 'Four is a square number', 'Five is a prime number' appear analogous to the sentences 'Sirius is a fixed star', 'Europe is a continent' – sentences in which an object is supposed to be represented as falling under a concept. So, the words 'six', 'four', and 'five' look like proper names of objects and 'even number', 'square number', and 'prime number', just as 'number' itself, look like concept-words. So the problem appears to be to develop more clearly the nature of the concept designated by the word 'number' and then, so it appears, to demonstrate the objects that are designated by number-words and numerals.

24 March 1924

From our earliest education onwards we are so accustomed to using the word 'number' and the number-words that we do not consider our use to require justification. To the mathematicians it appears beneath their dignity to concern themselves with such childish matters. But we find the most diverse and contradictory statements about number and numbers among them. Indeed, after prolonged occupation with these questions, we come to suspect that our way of using language is misleading, that number-words are not proper names of objects at all and words like 'number', 'square number', and the rest are not concept-words; and that consequently a sentence like 'Four is a square number' simply does not express that an object is subsumed under a concept, and so just cannot be regarded like the sentence 'Sirius is a fixed star'. But how then is it to be regarded?

25 March 1924

At first, however, I labored under the misapprehension that language gives rise to. It is easy to see that a number is not a pile of things. What is a pile? A pile is a thing, a thing that is made up of things. The mathematician joins the word 'one' with the definite article: he says 'the One' or 'the number One'. If a number is now a thing, we must point to the thing that one calls the number One. Many people also want to call the numerals numbers. If this were true, we should have to be able to say which of these numerals was supposed to be the number One. What a disaster it would then be if this One were to be burned up some day. It is already an advance when a number is viewed not as a thing but as something in a thing, where the view is that different things, despite their difference, can have the same One, just as different leaves can all have the same Green. Now in which things do we find the One? Don't we have the One in each and every thing?

26 March 1924

It is understandable that it is considered essential to improve the economic condition of our poor fellow countrymen, especially of employees. Less evident is the demand that one strive to improve the economic condition of the poor employee at the expense of the employer. It cannot succeed this way, because every burden turned over to the employers, because they are employers, in time must revert back to the employees. These efforts I regard as an insanity.<sup>15</sup> Already before the World War, very many – perhaps all the well-known statesmen aside from Bismarck – suffered from this illness. One could think that since these efforts could have no success, they would be harmless. That, however, is not the case; for they spread a foul atmosphere in which Social Democracy can thrive richly until, having reached a position of power, it collapses of its own accord.

27 March 1924

In cases where employer and employee could not come to an agreement on the conditions for concluding a contract, the tendency was, even before the World War, to exert pressure on the employers through the fear that otherwise the employees could take to violence and the unrest thus originated would only give the authorities reason for dissatisfaction. Nothing could be more mistaken than this! It is the obligation of the governing authority to remain strictly impartial as long as none of the parties takes up violence; once this happens, however, it must act strongly against the violent people.

30 March 1924

*The two devils and the theologian.* The devils are mentioned first because they are intelligent. To be sure, the theologian has also learned a thing or two. But just as one is never finished with a science, so too the theologian. Even the fattest lecture notebook is not without holes and precisely in these holes . . . Who knows whether the devils haven't got the upper hand! Now, indeed, we shall see it. Don't devils seize their victims exactly where they least expect it? And where does a theologian believe he is least able to be seized? In his Christianity.

First, I should introduce the devils. Here on the right stands the devil of pride, and here on the left the devil of envy. It is part of their cunning that

<sup>15</sup> Frege considers the view that the condition of the workers is to be improved at the cost of the employers an insanity, because he perceives in it the hopeless attempt to do something that is in contradiction with itself. Cf. *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* (Forward to vol. I, p. xvi), where Frege diagnoses a 'hitherto unknown form of madness' in the case of beings 'whose laws of thought directly contradict ours'. On this issue, Frege follows the opinion of Bismarck as stated in the public minutes of a meeting of the State Ministry on 8 December 1884: '[I]n and for itself he held the growth of Social Democracy not especially threatening. Due to the obvious unfeasibility of its goals, it seemed to be less dangerous than the Progressive party . . .' (cited in *Bismarck und die preußisch-deutsche Politik 1871–1890*, ed. M. Stürmer [München, 1970], p. 207).

they represent themselves so differently, and they thereby conceal that at bottom they pursue the same goal. And what was this, as our story began? The first thing was to set the employers against the employees and then to release a colossal war in which millions of men were to perish and yet more millions were to be reduced to poverty. And did they succeed? Where does there remain any intelligible sense to world events? Doesn't it all seem like a blind awful nonsense? Yet to ask further questions at this point does not seem right for us humans; for the heavens are so much higher than the earth . . .<sup>16</sup> Even a theologian is sometimes perhaps only a blind instrument in the Highest's hand. But how could those devils manage to make employers and employees enemies even though they could see that peaceful agreement was best for them both? Precisely, they were not permitted to see that. The devils of pride and of envy then turned to stupidity for help, and a third devil, that of avarice. Despise only reason and science!<sup>17</sup> Stupidity is the night in which devilish works succeed best. But it is precisely the theologian who should have felt called upon to propose to both sides, employers and employees, in a wholly impartial manner and without betraying some greater preference for one side than for the other, that to oppose one another was the stupidest thing they could do, that it would be best for both sides to come peacefully to an understanding, but that they had to find an agreement among themselves, because he, as a theologian, had little expertise. He could speak this way and also avoid the least appearance that he wanted to push for a specific solution or to exhort one side more than the other to give in. The theologian could have also felt called upon to propose to the two sides that it was very hard, perhaps impossible, to find a settlement which incurred not the slightest disadvantage for either side, and even if an expert took so much care as to draw up a proposal for a settlement which favored no one, it could still happen that both believed that they had come off badly thereby.

31 March 1924

The theologian could then also have drawn our attention to the fact that it was not so bad after all if one of the two sides came off a little better than the other in the fixing of the workers' contract, because the former would

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 55, 8, and 9 in the [German] translation of Martin Luther: 'Then my thoughts are not your thoughts and your ways are not my ways, says the Lord, but the heavens are so much higher than the earth, so my ways are also higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'

<sup>17</sup> In J. W. Goethe's *Faust. Der Tragödie erster Teil*, Mephisto comments on Faust's 'crisis behavior' with the words: 'Despise only reason and science, the highest of all the powers of men, If you let yourself be bound by the spirit of lies in illusion and magic, I shall have you unconditionally' (J. W. Goethe, *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. E. Trunz, 11th ed. [München, 1981], vol. 3, p. 61 (Lines 1851-5)).



probably be in an unfavorable position in the fixing of the next contract, so on the whole in the course of time the small advantages and disadvantages would balance themselves out. So don't worry too much, the theologian could have said, about protecting your advantage; it is really not worth it. The theologian could have spoken like this without inviting any appearance that he favored one of the two sides. He could have added that if he had really meant to bestow on the one side a small advantage, and if he had accomplished this, then with the next fixing of a worker's contract this advantage would probably be transformed into a disadvantage. If the theologian had explained everything in this way, he would perhaps succeed in bringing about a peaceful settlement between employers and employees. That, from the standpoint of the devil, was regarded as a peril. A devil crept over to the theologian with complete Christian bearing and appearance and whispered in his ear: 'As a Christian, you must always place yourself on the side of the poor and oppressed if you see that his opinion differs from that of the rich.' The theologian did not notice that it was a devil that wanted to seize him in his Christianity. He was immediately all fired up, letting loose on the employer: 'Aren't you completely ashamed of yourself that you so exploit the poor fellow and want to live on the work done by his hands! Indeed, you deserve to be cast down into the deepest abyss in Hell.' So he spoke and thereby poured oil on the fire and helped the devils in their devilish work, and the unholiness took its course.

You young Germans celebrate now no holiday, now in the time of the deepest misfortune of our fatherland. The poor fatherland expects from you deliverance from its humiliation and its distress. Another fate devolves upon you, more serious than upon the contemporaries of Bismarck and the old Kaiser,<sup>18</sup> who with a special tender lustre stands in the starry sky of the Hohenzollerns. Your lot is a more serious one, but also a worse one? Did they know how well off they were? No, many of them have struggled like stubborn children against taking the path, the path of salvation, down which Bismarck and his revered Lord wanted to lead them.

1 April 1924

One hundred and nine years ago today Bismarck was given to the German people.<sup>19</sup> How little did they appreciate him. How much could have turned

<sup>18</sup> The 'old Kaiser' and 'venerated Lord' of Bismarck is Wilhelm I, who in Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* is in fact portrayed reverentially, in striking contrast to Wilhelm II (vol. II, ch. 32).

<sup>19</sup> Bismarck was born on 1 April 1815. What the Germans had 'learned from the French' in Frege's opinion is presumably the democratic and republican forms of state. The 'pressing in of the French on us' is an allusion to the fact that French troops in 1923 occupied the area of the Ruhr in order to force Germany to keep to the reparations payments as laid down in the Versailles Peace Treaty.

out better and happier for Germany if the Germans had wanted to learn from him. But many would sooner learn from the French than from the most German of Germans. What the French preached to us, many Germans accepted religiously; but they didn't want to learn from the deeds of the French. Now the French press in on us so that one should think that a trace of light must enter through even the thickest skull. Ah, it is so easy for foreigners to convince us of something, and it so hard for us to obtain entry to them for anything of our own truth. Ah, you young Germans do not celebrate any holidays now!

2 April 1924

Already before the war, the view that the economic condition of the poor employees could and had to be improved at the expense of the employers infected a wide circle of the German people, far beyond the boundaries of Social Democracy, like a contagious disease, and this infection of the German people continues up to the present. Until it recedes, one cannot hope for a real recovery of the German people. Only by improving the economic condition of the whole nation can the economic condition of the poor social stratum be permanently improved. How can that happen? The debts and other obligations of the Reich are, if at all possible, not to be increased. Against this, a Reich treasure is to be accumulated.<sup>20</sup> This project must be held to tenaciously.

<sup>20</sup> Frege's idea of a Reich treasure was presumably inspired by the institution of the Prussian State treasure. This consisted originally of a greater store of precious metals and coinage. In 1820 it was restored, after its dissolution in the time of the Napoleonic Wars, and had special importance in 1866 in the war of Prussia against Austria, and in 1870/71 in the war against France, especially for the initial phase of the wars. On 11 November 1871 a law was passed by the German Reichstag that broke up the Prussian State treasure and replaced it with the German Reich War treasure. This consisted of 120 million marks in reparations payments which France had had to pay after having lost the war of 1870/71. The money was stored in gold coin in the Julius tower of the Spandau Citadel in Berlin. Bismarck commented in a parliamentary address of 4 November 1871 on the advantages of a Reich treasure by referring to the beginning of the war of 1870: 'I just want to call special attention to the fact, that, if we did not have a State treasure . . . we would have definitely not been in a position to gain the few days which were sufficient to protect the entire left bank of the Rhine, the Bavarian as well as the Prussian, against the French invasion.' (*Die politischen Reden des Fürsten Bismarck*, ed. H. Kohl [Stuttgart/Berlin, 1892–1905], vol. 5, p. 153.) While Frege too emphasized the military advantage of such a treasure (but rather in the sense of a deterrent force than a concrete use), his conception goes much further than Bismarck's. The Reich treasure was not to make possible a limited application but have a positive effect on the whole of the Reich. It should also manifestly not exist in the form of a horde of gold, but in such a form that it would also produce interest and also be available for money to be borrowed. Because of this, the expression 'treasure' is not to be understood literally for Frege, but more like 'wealth of the state'.

3 April 1924

Young Germans, before you stands a task of frightful dimensions, the task of once more rebuilding the fatherland. If you successfully advance toward this goal, you may again celebrate a holiday. Let our great Commanders-in-Chief in the World War<sup>21</sup> indicate the right hour to you. Once they judge it, take the risk.

5 April 1924

The influence of stock exchange speculators must be checked; on this account the selection of securities saleable on the stock exchange must be most severely limited. The following principle must be adopted: only Germans with full civil rights may acquire landed property in Germany. Companies may only then acquire landed property if we have assurance at hand that only Germans with full civil rights are permitted to be members. Owners of German land who are not entitled to acquire landed property must pay a double land tax. This would thus pertain to all joint-stock companies. These can be replaced by companies whose joint owners are entered in the land register. The share certificates of the share holders should be treated just like landed property as regards acquisition and taxes. These share certificates do not read in amounts of money, but in fractions of the wealth of the company. Also entitled to the acquisition of landed property are the municipality, municipal agencies, the province, the state, on which the landed property lies. The owner of landed property declares at the beginning of each year to the land registry authority at what price he is prepared to deliver up the property at any time after the expiration of the removal time of four weeks. The buyer is obliged to pay an additional twenty percent (1/5) of the value. This twenty per cent of the purchase money is deposited in a special Reich treasure. The Reich, however, may only have access to the interest earned by this deposited money. Not until the buyer has paid this twenty per cent is the sale final. The new owner must declare the value of the landed property to include at least the above twenty per cent increase in the sale price and this may not be reduced in the next ten years. Expropriation is possible only in this way. But if this should come to pass, it can be

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<sup>21</sup> The two 'great Commanders-in-Chief' in the World War Frege alludes to are Paul von Hindenburg (1847–1934), who was General Chief of Staff of the German army from 1916 until 1918, and in 1925 was voted President of the Reich in the second election as a neutral candidate, and Erich Ludendorff (1865–1937), who led the German army together with Hindenburg from 1916 until 1918: he was active as a politician in the Weimar Republic, participated in 1923 in Hitler's putsch attempt and was the unsuccessful candidate of the NSDAP for the position of President of the Reich in the first election in 1925.

proclaimed that an increase in the specified price of the landed property is forbidden for a year.

6 April 1924

No new mortgages and mortgages on land may be entered. Fifty years after the new arrangement, the existing mortgages and mortgages on land should be paid off, otherwise they are converted into customary debts without mortgages or land mortgage guarantees. So long as mortgages and the like encumber landed property, they must be transferred to new owners when the property is sold. So, the mortgage banks will, in time, disappear and therewith the shares. State loans must be discharged as quickly as possible, so these papers too will disappear from the bond market. The more securities disappear from the market, the more stock market speculation is reduced. One must try to bring it about that only the landed proprietors pay taxes. This must be made possible for the proprietor through high tariffs on foreign products. Then the tax burden on trade can fall away. Those who are not landed proprietors bear their burden in the form of house rent and land leases and high prices on provisions and other goods. A large tax apparatus falls away. Yet the levying of the tariffs will require customs officials. It won't be possible to increase the amount of customs collected beyond a certain limit. It will be good to let a part of the customs collection immediately flow back to the people in the form of an honorarium for veterans, perhaps also in the form of an old age pension scheme.

7 April 1924

Expenditures covered by customs revenues must be fixed over a period of years; customs should not be decided from year to year. Since customs revenues fluctuate, outlays will only be able to be fixed as a fraction of the customs collection. Revenues from different customs can be determined for various goals. The distribution of the customs collection for different goals will be resolved some ten years in advance by a referendum in which every fully enfranchized citizen from, say, thirty years of age has the same right to vote. As long as the whole of the state debt is not paid off, at least half of the customs revenues must go toward the liquidation of debts. A quarter of the customs collection may be set aside for the collection of a treasure which will be invested in interest bearing instruments by the Reich bank. The interest recovered from this treasure shall be treated like a kind of customs collection. But standing expenses, in particular, the costs of the armed forces and the payment of the civil servants, should be defrayed alone from the taxes on land. An assembly elected by the landed proprietors will resolve the expenditures in detail. The right to vote for it is to be proportional to the land

tax paid since the last election, either by the landed proprietors or the predecessor in possession since the last election who paid the land tax.

8 April 1924

If one looks more closely, one recognizes that up to now the workers have used their political rights to their detriment. Their leading thought was the smallest possible taxes. Hence, insufficient armaments, hence war and a bad outcome of war. The smallest possible taxes, hence these war loans, Reich debts, while on the other hand the collection of a Reich treasure would have meant the economic improvement of the whole nation, including the poorest. The Reich debts serve only those who are wealthy to invest their wealth. If the well-off cannot invest their money in Reich, state, or community loans, it will be necessary for them to seek other types of investment, e.g. in industrial investments, by means of which opportunities to make money would be created for the poor. The labor leaders, however, thundered against capital, but preferably against that invested in Reich loans. Who would let himself be continually insulted as an exploiter of poor workers? In this way, one can be restrained from starting up a professional enterprise, and one can be motivated to invest his money in Reich loans, to the detriment of the poor fellow citizen. If we had had a huge Reich treasure instead of large Reich debts, how much easier and more affordably could we have carried the burden of the war. And, perhaps our enemies in the war, in view of our strength, would not have risked a fight with us at all. Millions of men who have fallen in the war would probably have still lived and a huge wealth that is now lost to the German people could serve for the further improvement of the living conditions of the German people. Now we are farther removed than ever from the building of a Reich treasure and the poor fellow countrymen are as far removed as ever from the prospect of a better economic situation.

9 April 1924

Much of our misfortune has its cause in the fact that we take so little pride in our national characteristics. We have so many people of different races under us who claim to be considered as Germans and our sense of justice leads us to recognize these claims as justified. Our ancestors thought differently in many ways. Up until the year 1866, Jews were generally not permitted to stay overnight in my native town of Wismar; only during the annual fairs were they allowed in, and they would then ring the bell for them to come in and ring the bell for them to leave. That was obviously due to bad experiences. Envy of competition? Well, the Germans were also in competition with one another. But what matters, after all, are the methods of the competition. Religion? With the Jews, religion is very closely tied to

their national characteristics, and these especially, with their way of doing business.

Liberalism has secured for the Jews equality of rights<sup>22</sup> and in return for this, Jews have earned prominent positions in the direction of Liberalism and they have used them to throw obstacles in Bismarck's way. In the frictions arising therefrom, Bismarck had to use up a large part of his power. And yet Liberalism surely had a justification. I counted myself a liberal. To a large extent, the blame for its distorted development lies with the reaction which set in after the Wars of Independence, this shameful reaction which did not even spare such men as Arndt.<sup>23</sup> Why couldn't they continue the way that Stein had shown?<sup>24</sup>

10 April 1924

I don't feel qualified to make proposals for the politics of the moment. My thoughts in politics aim at a more distant future, when we will be set free from France's pressure and we can stand on our own feet again. For the politics of the moment, we are in need of a man who sees not only the present, but who has a plan in mind how to free Germany from the French pressure. He must enjoy universal confidence. But where is such a man? I have hoped that Ludendorff could be the one. I scarcely hope so any longer. I have hoped for Hindenburg; but he is probably too old. No doubt one needs

<sup>22</sup> The equality of civil rights for Jews was declared first in 1791 in France. In Germany, the civil equality of the Jews was accomplished only in 1871 with the founding of the German Reich. The free movement law of the North German Confederation of 1867 eliminated for Mecklenburg too (and so for Wismar) the restrictions on the free choice of domicile on the grounds of religious membership. For the region of the North German Confederation, universal political and civil equality of the citizens of all religious faiths was declared in 1869, which in 1871 was then anchored in a Reich law. (Cf. I. Elbogen and E. Sterling, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* [Frankfurt a.M., 1966], pp. 240 f.)

<sup>23</sup> Frege does not distinguish here and in his entry of 22 April between the time of the restoration after the conclusion of the Wars of Independence and the Vienna Congress of 1815, which among other things to some extent made null and void the previous reform, and the reaction proper after the suppressed revolution of 1848 and 1849. On the term, cf. the article *Reaktion, Restauration* in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, ed. O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (Stuttgart, 1972). Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769–1860) was in 1812 private secretary to Karl Reichsfreiherr vom und zum Stein; he wrote *Lieder für Teutsche* (1813), *Der Rhein, Deutschlands Strom, aber nicht Deutschlands Grenze* (1813), and other things to support the Wars of Independence against Napoleon. From 1818, he was Professor of History at Bonn; however, in 1820 he was relieved of his position on political grounds by the Prussian government and only rehabilitated in 1840.

<sup>24</sup> In the years 1807/8, Karl Reichsfreiherr vom und zum Stein (1757–1838), as Prussian minister, together with Hardenberg (1750–1822), carried through the reforms of the Prussian state named after them. His liberal plans found no continuation in the following time of the restoration since 1815, especially after the restrictive Karlsbad proclamation of 1819 ushered in, among other things, a harsh political censorship in Germany.

youthful vigor to sweep away the people. Above all, our inner disunion appears to prevent such a welcome outcome. It seems our parties must first grind themselves to powder. A Social Democrat can become patriotic and German-minded, a democrat<sup>25</sup> likewise. But can a man from the Zentrum party do so?<sup>26</sup> There lies the biggest obstacle in our way. Could we, in any event, make a German of him? Yet didn't our Crown Prince in 1870 sweep everyone away with him even in Bavaria?<sup>27</sup>

11 April 1924

With all our party manoeuvring, one cannot see how we could make any headway by putting our hopes in the parliament. One moment the parties join together, the next they fight against one another. Thus the course of the ship of state appears to consist in nothing but individual parts going now in this direction, now in another. Have we no diplomats experienced in foreign policy? What we now have in foreign policy appears amateurish to me. And yet still we have a Bülow,<sup>28</sup> who even if he comes nowhere near Bismarck's greatness does at least understand something of foreign policy and has diplomatic experience. To be sure he would have to stand in the service of a man towering above him who could grasp foreign and domestic issues at the same time. Perhaps there is such a man in Germany, but how can we find him? We had a Kaiser once, who was able to find a Bismarck and a Moltke<sup>29</sup> and put them in the right places. We have need of such a Kaiser. Our unfortunate last Kaiser<sup>30</sup> departed, so it appears, with his self-confidence broken from the war. He should not have abdicated immediately. A German Kaiser must be a military leader and have self-confidence.

<sup>25</sup> By a 'democrat' Frege understands someone who belonged to the liberal German Democratic Party [*Deutsche Demokratische Partei*]. Cf. fn. 33.

<sup>26</sup> On the combination of the three powers cf. the entry of 12 April and therein fn. 31.

<sup>27</sup> The Prussian and later German Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm (1831–1888) released a storm of national enthusiasm by his visit in Munich on 27 July 1870, eight days after France declared war on Prussia. He became Kaiser in 1888 as Friedrich III, but he died in the very same year. Frege alludes to the fact that Bavaria is traditionally a Catholic land, with the strong influence of Catholic parties, like the Zentrum.

<sup>28</sup> Bernhard Fürst von Bülow (1849–1929) was Secretary of the Foreign Office from 1897, and from 1900 until 1909 Reichskanzler (and thereby one of the followers of Bismarck in this office who were criticized by Frege: cf. the entry of 27 April). From 1914 until 1916 he was the German ambassador to Rome. After 1918 von Bülow, who considered himself to be Bismarck's political heir, was no longer politically prominent.

<sup>29</sup> Helmuth Karl Graf von Moltke (1800–1891) played a decisive role in the successful Prussian conduct of the wars of 1864, 1866 and 1870/71.

<sup>30</sup> Wilhelm II resigned as German Kaiser on 9 November 1918, two days before the cease-fire which ended the First World War, and went into exile in Holland on 10 November 1918.

12 April 1924

Bismarck had described three parties as hostile to the Reich: the Zentrum, the Progressive party, and the Social Democrats.<sup>31</sup> It is these same parties which later effected the collapse of the Reich and then the revolution.<sup>32</sup> He regarded the Zentrum as the most dangerous of these parties. This party used the other two to overthrow the Empire, confident that its own position was much more firmly grounded than that of the Social Democrats and the Progressive party, which survives in our Democratic party.<sup>33</sup> The Zentrum party is the sickness from which Germany has long suffered; the other parties hostile to the Reich, which now and probably later will develop, are at bottom only dangerous because of the support which the Zentrum party furnishes them.<sup>34</sup> Bismarck was in some of his views rather liberal, for example, in his conviction of the necessity of a representation of the people or at least an influence of the people on the government, and that's why he was able to cooperate for a long time with the National Liberals. In this way, he compensated to some extent for the damage caused by the earlier period of reaction. What a misfortune that Jews had such influence in the National Liberal party, very much an after-effect of the earlier period of reaction, which Bismarck had been unable to obliterate. The political orientation of many conservatives, the 'Cross News'

<sup>31</sup> The Zentrum party originated in 1871 as the representative of the interests of the Catholic minority inside the predominantly Protestant German Reich. After the declaration of the infallibility of the Pope by the First Vatican Council of 1870, in particular, the Zentrum was regarded by many as a power directed from abroad and therewith not only as an opposition party, but as an enemy of the Reich. In the so-called '*Kulturkampf*' of the 1870s, the government under Bismarck sought to destroy the political power of the Zentrum and generally to exclude Catholics from responsible positions at the Reich level. In the following decade, the Zentrum evolved into one of the parties most important in maintaining the state, especially also during the Weimar Republic. Bismarck stuck to his mistrust of the Zentrum throughout his life: 'To be sure, the powers combined in the Zentrum fight under the papist flag; they are, however, in themselves enemies of the state, even if the flag of Catholicism stopped covering them: their connection with the Progressive party and the Socialists on the basis of their hostility to the state is unrelated to the religious controversy' (letter to Ludwig II of Bavaria on 12 August 1878, reproduced in *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. I, ch. 18, p. 417; the *Kulturkampf* is described and commented upon in vol. II, ch. 24). The Progressive party, established in 1861 (since 1884 called the Free-Thinkers party [*Freisinnige Partei*]), was the most important liberal party between 1861 and 1918. The declared goal of the party was the civil, political, and economic equality of all men – with, it went without saying, the inclusion of Jews – and the final overcoming of the corporate state as it existed in part, e.g., in Prussia (and also in Frege's homeland Mecklenburg) until 1918. The form of government striven for was parliamentary democracy as it was organized in the Weimar Republic of 1919. The National Liberal party [*Nationalliberale Partei*], established in 1867, was a split-off of the Progressive party; it strove for a liberal economic and social system under a constitutional monarchy; it collaborated for some time with Bismarck, and Frege was evidently sympathetic with it.

<sup>32</sup> By 'revolution' (or 'upheaval'), Frege does not mean the unsuccessful November revolution of 1918, but the transformation of the German Reich into a republic in 1919.

<sup>33</sup> The German Democratic party was established in 1919 as the successor to the liberal Progressive party (or the Free-Thinkers party).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. however on this, the entry of 24 April.



men,<sup>35</sup> with whom Bismarck had many fights, and whose inclination to collaborate with the Zentrum could have been dangerous, is perhaps to be regarded as a residue of the earlier period of reaction. And yet, among the conservatives, there were valuable people of power who sought to preserve the state and should not have been offended.

13 April 1924

Was it not perhaps loyalty to the throne which led many a conservative to his harsh stance against everything parliamentary? Yet hasn't experience shown, and doesn't it show ever anew, how unsuited the parliamentary process introduced from the West is to us, at bottom. It is nothing peculiarly German, grown from German soil. Bismarck himself perhaps made a mistake in introducing a bill for the right to vote for the Reichstag, which by the way has been changed in some respects from Bismarck's plan by the Constituent Reichstag.<sup>36</sup> The memory of an earlier period of reaction had in any case been a strong contributing factor. The main concern had to be, apparently, to set up a bulwark against the return of Absolutism. So one falls into the opposite error. Bismarck had confidence that Germany could ride once it sat in the saddle.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately, his confidence was too great. So long as a Bismarck and a Wilhelm I watched over Germany, things went well because they were powerful. However, when a weaker person took hold of the reins, things went downhill with Germany and we sank into a swamp.

14 April 1924

Astonishing information has come in, according to which it appears that Poincaré's policy of the destruction of Germany is entirely

<sup>35</sup> The 'New Prussian News' [*Neue Preussische Zeitung*] called 'Cross News' [*Kreuzzeitung*] after the cross in the title, co-established in 1848 by Bismarck himself, evolved however to be the mouthpiece of the conservative opposition against his policy. Bismarck describes in chapter 25 of the second volume of *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* his debates with the extreme conservative circles and their publication organ. In a retrospective on these, he remarked in a later passage: 'I have for 20 years suffered too much under the intrigues of the gentlemen of the Cross News . . . to be able to talk about them briefly' (vol. III, ch. 1, p. 22).

<sup>36</sup> In his *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, Bismarck calls the introduction of universal and equal voting rights (for the North German Confederation), which he had carried through, a 'revolutionary means' which he had resorted to in 1866 'in an uttermost case of emergency'. He remarks about this further: 'Moreover, even today I hold universal suffrage to be a legitimate principle, not merely theoretically, but also practically, if only secrecy is eliminated, which moreover has a character which is incompatible with the best qualities of Germanic blood' (vol. II, ch. 21, p. 66). Bismarck's proposed bill had provided for an open vote, but the one that passed was changed to result in a secret vote.

<sup>37</sup> 'Let's place Germany, so to speak, in the saddle! It will surely be able to ride.' This sentence of Bismarck's from a speech on 11 March 1867 (Bismarck, *Gesammelte Werke* [Berlin 1924–1935], vol. X, p. 329) has become a household word. Bismarck alludes to this in *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. II, ch. 21, p. 66. Already in 1883, Bismarck had changed his opinion: 'This nation cannot ride. Those that have do not work; only the hungry are hardworking, and they will eat us. I say this without bitterness and in complete tranquillity; I foresee a very dark future for Germany' (Bismarck, *Gesammelte Werke*, op. cit., vol. VIII, p. 492).

wrecked.<sup>38</sup> England has pulled itself together, but I don't understand the matter completely yet.

If England does not want to forfeit the fruits of the World War, then she must be concerned that Germany can never recover so far that it can be a dangerous competitor to her; on the other hand, she must not permit France's power to grow as it did in the time of Napoleon I. England appears, at the conclusion of peace, to have allowed herself to be duped by France. She appears to be very afraid that a powerful German Empire should emerge. For this reason, the outcome of the election in Germany, which appears to point the way to the coming destruction of the republican constitution,<sup>39</sup> is not in accordance with its wishes at all, and in order to prevent a further development in this direction, many English probably see it as advantageous to shore up the republican system of government.

15 April 1924

Precisely Poincaré's taking actions against Germany probably harmed the parties in Germany, whose power the English wanted to be permanent. That's why there appears to be an opposition between France and England.<sup>40</sup> It is foreseeable that these two powers will come to be in a warlike collision some day. However, whether it will happen now is doubtful; for the English appear to be very disinclined to warlike complications now. They have had enough, and more than enough, of war. So the tension between England and France probably will strengthen very slowly, until ultimately a spark ignites the gunpowder. Hopefully, the situation in Germany will be cleared up by then. On this account we must hope that the collision will yet be postponed.

16 April 1924

Young Germans still celebrate no holiday! Wait until you have, by a victory over the French, regained for Germany considerable prestige among the peoples. Then you may have a claim to celebrate a general holiday; but don't expect it before you have achieved something great. But until Germany has recovered the old respect that it once had commanded under Wilhelm I, it may remain for the sons and the grandsons of the now rising young Germans to perform heroic deeds.

<sup>38</sup> Raymond Poincaré (1860–1934) was one of the leading French politicians after 1912 and from 1922 until 1924 Prime Minister. He commanded the occupation of the Ruhr area by French troops in 1923. After the economic breakdown of this measure and because of reasons relating to home affairs, his regime was voted out in May 1924.

<sup>39</sup> In general, a strong growth of the radical parties that were hostile to the state was expected in the approaching Reichstag election of 4 May 1924, and that is what happened (cf. fn. 63), but it did not lead to the destruction of the republican constitution. This came to pass only in 1933.

<sup>40</sup> The English government criticized the arbitrary proceeding of France in occupying the Ruhr area in 1923, which also lasted through 1924. The tension between the allies would not be reduced until the new regulation of the reparation payments in the Dawes plan (cf. fn. 42).

17 April 1924

When I look at what has gone on from the establishment of the Reich up until the World War on the part of those members of the Reichstag who were elected chiefly by poor employees, I find that these activities are almost invariably opposed to those which would have bettered the situation of the workers. An example is the reluctance to concede funds, especially for military goals. Hence, too small military strength, hence the inclination of our enemies to attack us, hence the World War, hence the misfortune on the Marne<sup>41</sup> and hence the unfortunate result of the World War, hence the enormous yet inestimable burdens which the Peace of Versailles imposed on us,<sup>42</sup> our inability to compete with England in business, etc., etc. The difficulty in getting the approval of the Reichstag for new taxes led to raising the necessary resources through loans. That was only an apparent easing of the burdens which only oppressed the future even more strongly and favored stock market speculation through the increase in securities traded on the stock market, to the detriment of the people who are actually working. Instead, then, of ever multiplying the debts of the Reich, we should have striven to accumulate a treasure. In it, even the child of a wholly poor person would have had a part, while he now only inherits part of the debts. We are still further than ever removed from a sensible order to the domestic economy.

18 April 1924

Instead of having debts, the Reich should have money to lend. Thereby the Reich would have a means of preventing fluctuations in interest rates. The larger the Reich treasure was, the lower it could hold interest rates. It could however also allow interest rates to climb if threatening over-speculation could be prevented thereby. Then, by all means, credits granted by the Reich had to be short-term. But this plan and similar ones are not practicable before we can survey how large the burdens are which we have to carry as a result of the Versailles peace.

<sup>41</sup> By the 'misfortune on the Marne', Frege means the battle on the Marne from 6 through 9 September 1914 in which the German push to Paris was finally stopped. This event is better known by the phrase 'the miracle on the Marne' (meaning, the miracle of the French deliverance). Ludendorff, for example, used this phrase in his speech Frege refers to in his entry of 26 April.

<sup>42</sup> The amount of German reparation payments was worked out anew in the Dawes plan of 1924. On 16 April the Reich government agreed to collaborate on the plan, and on 29 August the plan was passed by the Reichstag with the required two-thirds majority.

19 April 1924

The disadvantages of joint-stock companies are: no guarantee is given that the shares remain in the possession of Germans. So foreigners can obtain rights in Germany. The shareholders are only very loosely associated with the enterprise and in turn also with the workers. There are no personal connections. Instead of a man of flesh and blood, the workers stand face to face with invisible, heartless Capital. To make workers shareholders seems to me an error. For then they would also have rights with regard to the running of the enterprise; but they would in many cases lack the proper understanding which is necessary for running a big enterprise. The intellectual work which is performed by the management is truly not trifling. Those who perform manual labor almost always underrate intellectual work, often to the extent that they do not regard it as work at all. Prof. Abbe in Jena, who was very friendly to labor, has never allowed his workers to exercise a decisive influence on management, although he listened to their requests and encouraged their exchange of views. The workers' opinion that everyone would be very comfortable were it not for the drawback that such strict standards be set on the precision of their work, shows that they hadn't even the smallest comprehension about what the success and growth of the enterprise depended upon.

20 April 1924

When somebody once said to a worker in the Zeiss works in Jena, 'Well, you are really well off with Abbe', he is supposed to have responded with something like: 'Well, Abbe also drinks the wine himself and leaves the cork for us to smell.' At bottom, this again seems to indicate complete lack of appreciation of the value of intellectual work. Not all workers in the Zeiss works thought like this. Certainly there would also have been some more sensible ones. And the more sensible a worker was, the less it would have occurred to him to interfere with the management of the works, the more annoying he would have regarded the attempted interference of other workers. Well, if business is especially good, the employers of an enterprise can present a special reward to the employees to encourage eagerness and to tie them more closely with the enterprise. That will certainly in many cases pay off. But not all enterprises, of course, are in such a favorable position as to allow them to provide such an unusual reward. In general, I believe, there is more to be said in favor of the workers investing their savings in secure municipal savings banks than in their acquiring stocks. The joint-stock companies are to be replaced by other companies whose share certificates read not in specific sums of money, but in fractions of the wealth of the company, and not in bearer form, but in the name of the owner. The names of the owners are to be entered in a book. The shares are saleable, but the

change of name may cost something. It has to be aimed at the least possible change in the owners. So the largest possible part of the national income is withheld from stock market speculation.

21 April 1924

Not until the law has regained the ground that was lost to arbitrariness can there be a turn for the better with us, I believe. How freely we will breathe when we again feel a firm legal ground under our feet.

22 April 1924<sup>43</sup>

When I was a child, my native town Wismar had a position in Mecklenburg similar to that which later Lübeck, Hamburg, and Bremen had in the Reich. That is to say, it enjoyed great internal independence. There was a law at that time that Jews were permitted to stay overnight in Wismar only in the time of certain annual fairs. Then, they would first be rung in by the bell and then rung out. I suppose that this decree was old. The old inhabitants of Wismar must have had experiences with the Jews that had led them to this legislation.

It must have been very much the Jewish way of doing business together with the Jewish national character that is tied closely to this way of doing business. One had also probably seen that little was achieved through laws which forbade such business practices. So it came that I could not have had experiences with Jews. This was changed only in 1866 with the establishment of the North German Confederation. There came universal suffrage, also for Jews. There came the freedom of movement, also for Jews, presents from France. We make it so easy for the French to bless us with gifts. If one had only turned to noble and patriotic Germans, and instead of persecuting them in the time of the reaction, used their help in producing decrees and institutions arising from the German spirit and heart! The French had treated us nastily enough indeed before 1813, and nevertheless we have this blind admiration for all things French. We reckoned the French so far in front of us that we believed we could hardly catch up with them with seven-league boots. Was there yet perhaps also a seed in us from which something German could have been developed? I have only in the last years really learned to comprehend antisemitism. If one wants to make laws against the Jews, one must be able to specify a distinguishing mark [*Kennzeichen*] by

<sup>43</sup> Kant's 200th birthday fell on this day. This was observed in many places in Germany with great display; but Frege mentions not a word about it.

which one can recognize a Jew for certain. I have always seen this as a problem.<sup>44</sup>

23 April 1924

I have read the essay 'Oberland' by Dr Weber<sup>45</sup> in *Deutschlands Erneuerung* (Germany's Revival).<sup>46</sup> The sentiments articulated there have my full approval. I deviate from him partly in his opinions and judgments. I agree with the last sentence of the second paragraph.<sup>47</sup> I am of the opinion that Marxism cannot be part of the powers to be gathered together for the establishment of a strong Reich. I use here this now quite

<sup>44</sup> Although Frege writes that he has only 'in the last years learned to really comprehend' antisemitism, his expression bears a likeness less to the racist antisemitism that came into fashion with the National Socialists and much more to the protestant-conservative and anti-liberal antisemitism as represented by Stoecker since 1879. On Stoecker cf. fn. 3, as well as Frege's entry of 30 April. For a general survey of the problem, see H. Grieve, *Geschichte des modernen Antisemitismus in Deutschland* (Darmstadt, 1983), as well as H. Berding, *Moderner Antisemitismus in Deutschland* (Frankfurt a.M., 1988). Frege has touched on the topic of the connection between a correct definition and the specification of a distinguishing mark [*Kennzeichen*] in his *Grundlagen der Arithmetik*, § 62: 'If we are to use the symbol *a* to signify an object, we must have a criterion for deciding in all cases whether *b* is the same as *a*, even if it is not always in our power to apply this criterion.' According to the outcome of the census of 1925, of all the territories of the German Reich, Frege's homeland, Mecklenberg, turned out to have the smallest proportion of Jewish, as well as Catholic, inhabitants.

<sup>45</sup> Dr Friedrich Weber (1892–1954) was a veterinary surgeon and leader of the extreme right-wing private militia 'Oberland', established in 1919; it was forcibly broken up after violent activities in Munich, in the Ruhr area and in Silesia in 1921, but it continued to exist as a political association. Weber participated in Hitler's attempted putsch of 8 and 9 November 1923, and stood before the court on this account in Munich. The essay *Oberland* is his speech for the defense which was published in the periodical *Deutschlands Erneuerung* (cf. the following fn.). After 1923 Weber was no longer prominent.

<sup>46</sup> The periodical *Deutschlands Erneuerung* was established in 1917 and served as a mouthpiece for strongly nationalist and politically right-wing circles. Frege obviously corresponded for some time with one of the editors, Dietrich Schäfer (1845–1929), Professor of History at the University of Berlin. (Cf. thereto A. Veraart, *Geschichte des wissenschaftlichen Nachlasses Gottlob Freges und seiner Edition in Studien zu Frege*, ed. M. Schirn, vol. I [Stuttgart, 1976], pp. 49–106; here: p. 79, fn. 85a. The dates of his lifetime stated there should be corrected.) In the April issue of 1924, the journal published the justificatory comments of Hitler, Ludendorff, and Weber, all of whom stood before the court on account of their participation in Hitler's attempted putsch in Munich. The proclamation of the judgment followed on 1 April 1924.

<sup>47</sup> The last sentence of the second paragraph in Weber's essay runs: 'Hence the demand that first of all in Germany *itself* the prerequisites for a national state be created which can gather together the power of the whole nation for the establishment of a strong, uniformly integrated Reich; that first of all a government emerge, which regains a genuine authority, which is independent of the influence of parties, of corporations and class antagonisms, and whose topmost principle is the service to the nation, a principle that is not only paid lip-service to, but can be realized, supported by power!' (*Deutschlands Erneuerung*, 1924, Issue 4, p. 221).

commonly used term in the opinion that it is generally understood in the same sense. Herewith I feel wholly in harmony with what General Ludendorff writes in the same issue.<sup>48</sup> According to that, the destruction of Marxism, or at least its expulsion from the entirety of the fully enfranchized citizens, is a necessary precondition of the possible establishment of a strong Reich, which Dr Weber strives for. – Of course, I see not only the bright side of Bismarck's Empire. Dr Weber is correct in holding that it is not possible simply to return to the former time,<sup>49</sup> and yet the empire of Wilhelm I in its best time can always be an ideal hovering before every German, just as old Redbeard's Reich once was,<sup>50</sup> and perhaps with a better justification than it. However, the old Bismarckian Reich was no longer healthy in 1914.

24 April 1924

The Reich suffered in 1914 from a cancer, namely Social Democracy.<sup>51</sup> Again and again we encounter it. Bismarck, if he had found the necessary support, would certainly have cured it, but certainly not with sugar water, which the Kaiser preferred. This remedy could not lead to a cure, however, but on the contrary only to the aggravation of the evil. The leaders of the Social Democrats, who were without any patriotic feeling, took credit for each privilege which the workers had earned. See, they say, you have us to thank for that, but of course this is nowhere near enough. The wilder you are with them, the more will be given away to you. So the workers could never

<sup>48</sup> Cf. fn. 55.

<sup>49</sup> Frege refers to the following passage of Weber's address: 'Large patriotic circles believe that Germany would be saved if we returned to 1 August 1914 and could wipe out and forget all that happened since 9 November 1918. They grew up and old in the German Empire in Bismarckian times, and they see only the bright side of those days, doubly strong and worthy of being aspired to in comparison with the misfortunate, sorrowful slave conditions in which Germany finds itself today; hopeful that a firmly established, intact army, an incorruptible, clean administrative bureaucracy, which had at the head a monarchy independent of party influence, should lead Germany back to its old greatness. And yet this displays a great error. It is not possible simply to turn back the wheel of history, to continue a ruptured tradition at any point you like. It is also wrong not to admit that the old Bismarckian Reich was no longer fresh and healthy in 1914. Had it not been sickly, had it still enjoyed the sympathy of the whole nation and been consciously and actively supported, then the frightful collapse in the autumn of 1918 could never have taken place' (*Deutschlands Erneuerung*, 1924, Issue 4, p. 222).

<sup>50</sup> 'Old Redbeard' is Kaiser Friedrich Barbarossa, who was German Kaiser from 1152 until 1190, and who has remained one of the most popular figures in all of German history. Legend has it that he is sleeping in Kyffhäuser mountain, where a monument to him was unveiled in 1896.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. however Frege's remark on the *Zentrum* of 12 April.

be satisfied. And beyond a certain limit, no government at all could satisfy the wishes of the workers if it wanted to preserve some order in the Reich. Now, after the revolution,<sup>52</sup> stronger remedies are no longer applicable. Now there is nothing else that can be done but to wait until Marxism has ruined itself.<sup>53</sup> Workers will gradually learn that they were taken for fools, and obviously they are learning it already. But we already had to pay dearly for this understanding and it will cost more yet, for the whole nation, not only for the workers. This payment could have been spared if the Kaiser had made up his mind to use stern remedies. Perhaps we would then have been spared the war, or if not that, we would have ended it successfully.

25 April 1924

Probably most people who use the word 'Capitalism' attach no sharply outlined sense to it, so that it could be the component of a thought in a tightly directed sequence of thoughts, but its content is supposedly something emotional for them; thereby it may be compared to a disharmony in music. In the usual manner of speaking, a rise in interest rates is supposedly tantamount to a rise in Capitalism. Adopting this way of speaking, I could say that for a long time Capitalism has reached no such height as it has now. How has this happened? Through the shortage of currency, the widespread mistrust, and a beginning of the revival of industry and commerce. We can hardly remedy the shortage of currency without exposing the stability of the Reichsmark to danger by doing so. We could reduce the distrust if we saw to it that the law regained the ground which it had lost to arbitrariness. Reducing the distrust could also improve industry and trade. Whether that, however, would be an advantage is doubtful given the sentiments which not only France, but also England, harbor against us.

26 April 1924

To be sure, I regarded Ultramontanism<sup>54</sup> and its embodiment in the Zentrum as very detrimental for our Reich and nation; none the less, the revelations of (His Excellency) Ludendorff in his article in the April issue of *Deutschlands Erneuerung* on the efforts and machinations of the ultramontanes gave me

<sup>52</sup> Cf. fn. 32.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. fn. 15; Frege does not distinguish between 'Social Democracy' and 'Marxism'.

<sup>54</sup> The expression 'Ultramontanism' alludes to the fact that the Pope, the head of the Catholic Church and therewith also the Catholic oriented Zentrum party, is seen, from Germany's perspective, as residing 'on the other side of the mountains' (i.e. the Alps).



insights which have most deeply disturbed me.<sup>55</sup> I implore anybody who does not yet believe in the thoroughly un-German spirit of the Zentrum to read and reflect on the stated article of His Excellency Ludendorff not only once, but repeatedly and thoroughly. This is the most evil enemy which undermined Bismarck's Reich. If I recall correctly, in the speech which Bismarck presented at the market in Jena after his discharge, he pointed to the Zentrum as the chief opponent of his work, not the Social Democrats.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, the Social Democrats can liberate themselves from the party terror and then join the German People's Freedom party [*Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartie*]<sup>57</sup> in droves and learn to feel as Germans who have a German fatherland. For the Ultramontanes, such a transformation is not to be expected. They will always look to the Pope to get their instructions.

27 April 1924

Bismarck was not able to ward off the Social Democratic danger because he lacked the necessary support in the Reichstag as well as with the Crown.

<sup>55</sup> In his address *Deutschland seit der Revolution*, Ludendorff stressed first of all his opposition to Marxism and acknowledged his antisemitism. Then he reported of efforts in the years 1919 to 1921 to create in South Germany and Austria a separate, Catholic-dominated and Zentrum-led state, which should stand in cordial relations with France and break down the predominance of Protestant Prussia in Germany. Ludendorff saw in this 'the emanation of Ultramontane politics, as they have pursued it since the foundation of the Reich in the year 1871' (*Deutschlands Erneuerung*, 1924, Issue 4, p. 216). Ludendorff rejected the objection that the Zentrum had transformed itself long ago into a state-supporting power – after all, the Zentrum politician Marx was Reichskanzler in the years 1923/24 – and calls the 'Zentrum Reichskanzler Marx . . . the executor of these efforts' (p. 217). In conclusion, Ludendorff summarized his address and once again gives very clear expression to his reverence for Bismarck: 'I have got the distinct impression that authoritative Bavarian circles, despite the fact that they were speaking ever again "in the spirit of the Bismarckian constitution", wanted to destroy Bismarck's Germany or to give it a form which had nothing in common with the Bismarckian intention' (p. 218). 'We do not want a Rhein confederacy at France's mercy, not a state under the influence of Marxist-Jewish or Ultramontane powers, but a Germany that only belongs to the Germans, where nothing else reigns but German will, German honor and German power! A stronghold of peace – as it was in Bismarck's time' (p. 219). Ludendorff's address in Munich, the capital of the preponderantly Catholic Bavaria, was received as extremely undiplomatic and out of place. Ludendorff himself was acquitted in the trial on the grounds that he apparently had not been correctly informed about the true goals and background of the Hitler putsch.

<sup>56</sup> On 31 July 1892, Bismarck gave an address at the Market in Jena, which is reproduced in his *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. XIII, pp. 137–45. After some comments there on the battles of the parties in the Reichstag, Bismarck went into detailed criticism of the Zentrum, and declared: 'We can not be governed under the influence and under the direction of a single one of the existing parliamentary parties, least under the influence of the Zentrum' (p. 142). Bismarck declared: 'I regard the Zentrum the same as ever as an opponent of the Reich' (p. 144); he closed his short speech with the words: 'I am sworn to the secular direction of a Protestant Empire.'

<sup>57</sup> The extreme right-wing German People's Freedom party, led for a time by Ludendorff, was generally considered to be a North German variety of Hitler's NSDAP and formed an election alliance with them in the Reichstag election of 4 May in the so-called People's Block [*Völkischer Blok*] after the banning of the NSDAP. Cf. also Frege's entry on this date.

Nation and Ruler failed. His successors then faced a rather difficult task. Demagogues without any German sentiment, and most also with un-German parentage, dazzled before the workers a fair improvement of their economic situation and captured many for their goals in this way. Such demagogues do not believe in the nobility of men and seek to seize them through their wretched and vulgar side. They completely lack a sense of veracity. So they had easy work, for the painting of lustrous pictures of the future does not cost much. And all workers were taken in by them? It is hard for me to believe it, for really only especially stupid ones could be taken in, or those whose avarice had almost completely suffocated their noble motives. I suspect that the terror drove many into the Social Democratic trade unions where they found themselves so wedged in that they could not move. The statesmen, so it seems, tried now to compete with the demagogues as to who could promise the workers greater prosperity. The prospects for the statesmen of being victorious in this race were from the beginning microscopically small, and the victory of the demagogues only strengthened their supremacy.

28 April 1924

It proves true again for Bismarck's successors<sup>58</sup> how destructive it is to yield to the demagogues, or to engage in a contest with them for popularity. Only one who can vigorously resist destructive tendencies in a people is a true statesman. Perhaps he will not be able to avoid demagogic methods completely, but it makes a difference whether they are intended to serve for one's own enrichment or for the well-being of the people. The more democratic a state is installed, the harder it is for a statesman to manage without methods which can be justified only by the purest patriotism.

29 April 1924

One must not mistake the desire for the well-being of the fatherland for a political program, especially if the desires are pious. How easy to propose that every German might own a piece of German land;<sup>59</sup> but how little is achieved by such wishes! Things in space clash harshly with one another.<sup>60</sup> Wishes can be a beginning of a political program; to really become one, they

<sup>58</sup> Bismarck's successors as Reichskanzler were Caprivi (1890–1900), von Bülow (1900–1909; cf. fn. 28) and Bethmann-Hollweg (1909–1917).

<sup>59</sup> Dr Weber gives voice to such a wish in his speech Frege refers to on 23 April. Weber claims that the state 'provides the possibility of settlements on a large scale in order to bind the inhabitants of large cities who have been robbed of all inner and outer bonds to a piece of their native soil again by giving even to the last and poorest of its inhabitants a piece of homeland' (*Deutschlands Erneuerung*, 1924, Issue 4, p. 220).

<sup>60</sup> 'Thoughts reside easily next to one another, but things in space clash harshly with one another.' F. Schiller, *Wallenstein's Death*, in *Werke*, ed. J. Petersen and H. Schneider, vol. 8, Weimar 1949, Act 2, Scene 2, p. 207, lines 788 f.

need to be worked out in detail. That is best done by trying to formulate laws which are dedicated to bringing about the desired state of affairs. This is the easiest way of distinguishing what is feasible from the unfeasible.

30 April 1924

One can acknowledge that there are Jews of the highest respectability, and yet regard it as a misfortune that there are so many Jews in Germany, and that they have complete equality of political rights with citizens of Aryan descent; but how little is achieved by the wish that the Jews in Germany should lose their political rights or better yet vanish from Germany. If one wanted laws passed to remedy these evils, the first question to be answered would be: How can one distinguish Jews from non-Jews for certain? That may have been relatively easy sixty years ago. Now, it appears to me to be quite difficult. Perhaps one must be satisfied with fighting the ways of thinking [*Gesinnung*] which show up in the activities of the Jews and are so harmful, and to punish exactly these activities with the loss of civil rights and to make the achievement of civil rights more difficult.<sup>61</sup>

1 May 1924

If, in economic commerce, two sides have come to an agreement without illegal compulsion exercised by one side, and if the two sides have been fully authorized to negotiate, then it must be assumed by law that output and reward, as stipulated in the agreement, have equal value. If however a third party had taken part in the process of concluding the agreement, one that had exercised coercion or pressure on one of the sides, then the agreement is no longer free and the equivalence of output and reward cannot be taken for granted. If the state is this third party, then its interference is not an act of law, but an act of arbitrariness. Once the state has made a breach in the law in this way, and through that breach arbitrariness has been introduced, it is very likely that new breaches will be made in the law, again and again, thereby introducing more and more arbitrariness. So the law is sickened, and with the law, also the state. It can only recover its health by combating arbitrariness and assisting the law to victory.

<sup>61</sup> A defining distinction between Jews and non-Jews was established in a law in 1935, during the National Socialist dictatorship. In an implementing regulation to the 'German Citizen Law' that excluded all Jews from citizenship, it was stipulated: 'He is a Jew who is descended from at least three grandparents who are purely of Jewish race' (cf. I. Elbogen and E. Sterling, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* [Frankfurt a.M., 1966], p. 307). This stipulation is not immediately applicable to a person, but as Frege also considers, appeals to the extraction. In Frege, to be sure, any reference to 'race' is missing.

2 May 1924

If one observes in otherwise intelligent people a conspicuous lack of political insight, one often later finds upon further inspection as the reason for it a complete lack of patriotism. Patriotism is to be sure also a love of the land, but even more a love of the people who dwell on the land, a pride in the vigor and nobility of this people. But it is also a condition analogous to the love children feel toward their parents. It is not really true that the child compares several mothers with one another and then by the most impartial investigation possible recognizes his mother as the best; such an impartial investigation does not happen at all, only a prejudice in favor of the real mother is in play. And even if such an impartial investigation had taken place beforehand, that would be a sign that the bond between mother and child, as it holds in a real family, does not hold at all in this case. A prejudice is clearly necessary here, and so too a prejudice is necessary for patriotism. He who finds it necessary to conduct an unbiased examination of all peoples to make up his mind as to who is best doesn't know true patriotism. Yet the word 'prejudice' can be misunderstood here. The question here is not about a judgment in the sense of logic, not about considering something as true, but about one's feelings and inner attitude. Only Feeling [*Gemüt*] participates, not Reason, and it speaks freely, without having spoken to Reason beforehand for counsel. And yet, at times, it appears that such a participation of Feeling [*Gemüt*] is needed to be able to make sound, rational judgments in political matters.

3 May 1924

Not always, to be sure, does patriotism appear to be necessary for political insight. Sometimes personal ambition can take its place. Sometimes patriotism and ambition work together. In republics, ambition, the vulgar root of political insight, has quite likely promoted the leader of the state to the highest position. This may guarantee a certain degree of political insight. In a legitimate monarchy, the well-being of the people is so closely grown together with the well-being of the ruler and the dynasty that especially favorable conditions thereby obtain. Political experience and insight can always be handed down from father to son, and so a centuries-old, ever more complete and improved treasure of political experience and insight can be accumulated. Yet there are also disadvantages in this. Especially, the marriage of daughters of foreign royal houses into the line.<sup>62</sup> In this way, the

<sup>62</sup> Frege means above all Victoria (who reigned 1840–1901), the daughter of the English Queen Victoria, wife of Friedrich III and mother of Wilhelm II, an open adversary of Bismarck. The latter informs us in his *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* that in the year 1888, when Friedrich III, who was considered to be liberal, acceded to the throne, he only remained as Reichskanzler under two conditions: 'No parliamentary government and no foreign influence in politics' (vol. II, ch. 23, p. 348).

foreign royal house and foreign politics obtain an influence which can become very dangerous. In Germany, we had within our princely houses an aristocracy which could have supplied wives to the imperial family. The coddling court-life makes more difficult the education of strong-willed successors to the throne. An antidote is military upbringing, in which the future ruler is also subjected to general military discipline and allowed to grow gradually to maturity to the final accession as leader of the military. The tradition of centuries can point us in the right direction here.

4 May 1924

Today is election day. Much depends on the outcome of this election.<sup>63</sup> Ludendorff, leader of the German People's Freedom party. As a politician, he has disappointed me, although I wholly agree with his political views, which he developed in the April issue of *Deutschlands Erneuerung*; but he cannot wait. Why did he have to engage in the Hitler putsch? Why has he now allowed himself to get entangled in the party maneuvers? He uses himself up too soon this way. Because of their reserve, I now place more hope in Hindenburg<sup>64</sup> and the Crown Prince.<sup>65</sup>

5 May 1924

Adolf Hitler writes correctly in the April issue of *Deutschlands Erneuerung*,

<sup>63</sup> The Reichstag election of 4 May 1924 resulted in the following allotment of seats in the Reichstag. The number of seats won in the preceding Reichstag which was elected in 1920 follow in parentheses: KPD/USPD 62 (88) seats; SPD 100 (102) seats; Bavarian People's party [*Bayerische Volkspartei*] 16 (21) seats; Zentrum 65 (64) seats; German Democratic party [*Deutsche Demokratische Partei*] 28 (39); German People's party [*Deutsche Volkspartei*] 45 (65); German National People's party [*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*] 95 (71) seats; People's Block (German People's Freedom party/NSDAP) [*Völkischer Block* (Deutschvölkische Freiheitspartei/NSDAP)] 32 (-) seats; remaining small parties 29 (9) seats. Of the 32 elected members of parliament of the People's Block, 23 were members of Ludendorff's German People's Freedom party and 9 were members of the NSDAP. In Frege's homeland Mecklenburg the DVFP obtained with 20.8% its highest percentage of votes (in the whole of Germany 6.5%). Together with the DNVP, which also rejected the Weimar Republic, which obtained 26.0% (Germany 19.5%), they received almost half of all votes cast (J. W. Falter and Th. Lindenberger: *Wahlen und Abstimmungen in der Weimarer Republik, Materialien zum Wahlverhalten* [München, 1986], pp. 43 and 69).

<sup>64</sup> On Hindenburg cf. fn. 21.

<sup>65</sup> Wilhelm (1882–1951), the oldest son of Kaiser Wilhelm II and Crown Prince of the German Reich, went with his father into Dutch exile in 1918, but returned to Germany in 1923. He was at first not politically prominent; later (from 1929) he supported Hitler's rise, but after 1933 achieved no significance.

that Germany no longer had a clear political goal after the departure of Bismarck.<sup>66</sup> He is of the opinion that we should have proceeded either with England against Russia or with Russia against England. Both seem to me doubtful. If, in an alliance with England, we had gained many farmlands in Russia, which would have been clearly possible only through the eviction of the previous owners of the land, then Germany, apart from its industry, would have also attained a certain land expansion and thereby gained a degree of power which would have disconcerted England. It would have become presumably stronger than France under Napoleon I, and what could England have been able to gain from that?

If we had proceeded with Russia against England, the burden of naval warfare would have almost completely fallen on us. Russia could have taken Constantinople perhaps, which would hardly have been an advantage for us, or it could have expanded into the Asian interior in the direction of India, which would not have made the combat with England's sea power any easier for us. And without the destruction of England's sea power, the general political situation would not have become favorable for us. Here, one should also consider that France would in any case have taken sides against us. We should have done something different, namely strengthen our land power as much as possible. We could have made it far superior indeed to that of the French, and France would then scarcely have engaged with us in the World War; for before England and Russia could have effectively joined in, France would have lain helpless on the ground. With a skillful foreign policy, if it had been conducted Bismarck's way, we could, I believe, have succeeded in deterring Russia from taking action against us.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) claimed in his speech *Warum mußte ein 8. November kommen?*, in which he defended his attempted putsch of 8 November 1923 in Munich: 'Since the departure of Bismarck, Germany no longer had a clear political leitmotiv.' He then explained further: 'Germany had then to choose a foreign policy: either one made up one's mind to give up maritime trade and colonies, to give up over-industrialization, etc. and gain farmlands: then the German governments would have to recognize that this was to be attained only in an alliance with *England* against Russia; or one wanted sea power and world commerce, then, however, the only thing worth considering would unquestionably have been an alliance with Russia against England, be it even at the cost of a ruthless giving up of the wholly impossible Hapsburg Reich' (*Deutschlands Erneuerung*, 1924, Issue 4, p. 199). In the main part of his speech, Hitler turns against Marxism, which he describes as the only enemy of the National Socialist movement and as the sole cause of the current German misery.

<sup>67</sup> Wilhelm II did not continue Bismarck's policy of rapprochement with Russia, and did not renew in 1890 the treaty of 1887 containing secret guarantees (cf. on this also Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. III, ch. 10, p. 137).

6 May 1924

Wilhelm II was to our misfortune not expert in matters of warfare;<sup>68</sup> hence his shying away from warlike entanglements, his efforts to reconcile with France. But all of his friendliness toward France produced no effect. He did not notice that France simply did not want to be reconciled with. A similar thing happened to him in internal politics with the Social Democrats, whose unpatriotic, mostly Jewish leaders stood opposed in extreme hostility to the monarchy. Reconciling with them was just as hopeless as reconciling with France. They simply did not want to be reconciled. To speak of the Social Democrats' having an idea is a wholly incorrect way of speaking which greatly overestimates Social Democracy. Instead of an idea, they had only wholly unclear phrases which deluded them in a never-never land and induced a hatred against all who stood in the way of the achievement of this blissful state, and to these belonged, above all, the Kaiser in spite of all his well-meaning efforts. However, I don't believe that all workers were so stupid as to believe the enticements presented to them, but the terrorism of the single-minded pushed them into trade unions, where they then were so wedged in that they could not move. The obligation of the government would then have been to break this terrorism and defend the law, the right of the workers against their violent comrades, and the right of the employers; but then harsh methods would have been necessary, methods the Kaiser did not want to use out of fear that he would then no longer have been the Kaiser of the poor and oppressed.

7 May 1924

With sorrow I notice how many parties the German people are split into, how many sources of friction thereby originate, how much hate squirts up, and how those who stand very close to one another attack their political beliefs because they compete for the same crowd. Is there then no party leader at all who has so much insight and power to take control of this mess? Precisely on the right wing, it seems to me, this evil is especially great.

8 May 1924

We urgently need a revival of religion. The Lutheran church is to some extent hardened in orthodoxy. The songs of the hymn book are, it seems to me, for the most part without strength and are deplorable doggerel. Religious instruction very often consists in hearing the students' reciting verses from the hymn book

<sup>68</sup> Bismarck comments in his *Gedanken und Erinnerungen* of his futile attempts to work toward improving the military training of Wilhelm II during his crown principedom (vol. III, ch. 1). Frege also took over Bismarck's general characterization of the policy of Wilhelm II: 'The Kaiser followed his tendency to reconciliation – which was Christian, but not always successful in the ways of the world – first with regard to the most severe enemy, Social Democracy' (vol. III, ch. 10, p. 130). On the policy with regard to France, Bismarck writes: 'The attempts to obtain the love of the French . . . have had no other outcome but that the French became more daring . . .' (ibid., pp. 132 f.).

and catechism passages. Very simple, very easy for the teacher, but also very ineffective. But indeed, even where orthodoxy does not prevail, the effectiveness of the parson is impeded by dogma. He knows who the orthodox in his parish are: he feels obliged not to offend them. So, although he continues to use the old phrases, he attaches a new sense to them for himself. The ambiguity is noticed, however. One can feel it: he does not express his opinion completely openly and freely. The old saying about new wine in old bottles still holds good. In general, the parson and the religious teacher must not arouse the suspicion that they conceal their true opinion. Nothing is more likely to cripple his effectiveness. It is hardly to be expected that the civil- or church-appointed clerics will change themselves. We must have prophets proclaim something new to come that really is something old, namely just the old religion of Jesus himself.

9 May 1924

The life of Jesus must be told according to the results of the German scholarly research. To be sure, because of the nature of this project, one cannot rule out errors completely, but the intention of the narrator must be directed to the purest truth. As far as possible, he must not bring forward anything that does not appear certain to him. If he thinks none the less that he must relate something whose truth is not wholly certain for him, he must indicate the doubts, for example, by interpolating a 'perhaps'. Yet everything scholarly has to be omitted. Criticism of the sources, determination of the chronology, etc. Whatever shall enable the formation of a personal view should be excluded in this. That should be reserved for the narrow circle of the educated. To make the life and work of Jesus intelligible, it will be necessary to portray the conditions and religious aspirations of the Jews at the time of Jesus; and to that end, the development of these conditions and aspirations under the influence of the Persian religion and the Hellenes (Maccabees) will have to be treated, with the exception of all that is not really necessary for the understanding of these things. One will always be endangered by the coherence of the events and spiritual activities to let oneself digress too far. – The way Gustav Frenssen<sup>69</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Gustav Frenssen (1863–1945) wrote about the life of Jesus in the novel *Hilligenlei* (Berlin, 1905). In the epilogue, Frenssen writes: 'The life of the savior contained in this novel has been realized after many years of study, with scrupulous use of all of the scholarly research on this topic. With the intention of someday painting a short sketch of the life of the savior, I have, in the last five years, got to know the work on the subject of the following men, most of them university teachers.' Sixteen names follow and five book titles with literature on research of the life of Jesus. In his volume *Grübeleien* (Berlin, 1920), Frenssen reports in a note of 1905: 'There are different kinds of literary pictures of the savior. The objectively true one, the purely historical one (in the scientific-historical sense) is not possible. I will, just like all the others, not capture the scientific-historical one, but I will be no further from it than those. However, I hope to capture his life better than all the hitherto existing ones, from Mark and Paul to Renan: for, I can draw on the work of a hundred years of German research, and the intention, to see him with the unspoiled, naive eyes of plain humankind' (*Grübeleien*, p. 254).



342 *Gottlob Frege*

describes the life of the savior does not really suit my purposes, because therein fiction and truth are mixed together. I want truth and nothing but the truth, at least in the intention of the narrator. A life of Jesus, as I have it in my mind, should, I think, give rise to the founding of a religion without that being obvious as the intention. . .<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> In the typescript, we find here the following remarks: '(Herewith end the diary remarks of Dr Gottlob Frege) NB. Words and expressions which have been hard to decipher because of the unreadable writing were provided with a ?'