

Alfred Hugenberg, Franz von Stephani and Franz Seldte at a Rally against the Adoption of the Young Plan (September 24, 1929)

Abstract

The right-wing parties vehemently rejected the Young Plan because they considered the reparations payments too high and the duration too long. Since the Weimar Constitution provided the electorate with the opportunity to directly influence legislation by means of a plebiscite, the political right decided to initiate a referendum in order to effect the rejection of the Young Plan. In July 1929, they formed the "Reich Committee on the Referendum against the Young Plan." In order to repeal it, they drafted the so-called "Freedom Law," which declared all provisions of the Versailles Treaty invalid and charged the German signatories of the Young Plan with treason. They hoped the German electorate would vote for this law in the referendum and thus override the Young Plan.

This photo from September 1929 was taken during a propaganda rally for the referendum at the Berlin *Sportpalast*. The photo shows the executive committee organizing the referendum (from left to right): Alfred Hugenberg (1865-1951), DNVP chairman and owner of an influential media business, Franz von Stephani (1876-1939), a *Freikorps* leader and head of Berlin's Stahlhelm chapter, and Franz Seldte (1882-1947), co-founder of Stahlhelm and one of its main leaders. A further member of the "Reich Commission," Adolf Hitler, is missing from this picture. The referendum was eventually held on December 22, 1929. Less than 14% of those eligible to vote in it supported a repeal of the Young Plan; the political right's attempt to change the course of the Republic's foreign policy had failed. Nevertheless, initiating the referendum meant a political success for the NSDAP since its cooperation with the more established DNVP and other nationalist organizations had raised the party's profile and popularity, which resulted in a significant gain in votes during the next elections in 1930.

Source



Source: Alfred Hugenberg, Franz von Stephani and Franz Seldte at a rally against the adoption of the Young Plan, September 24, 1929. Photographer: Unknown. BA, Aktuelle-Bilder-Centrale, Georg Pahl, Bild 102-01258, available online on Wikimedia Commons:

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Recommended Citation: Alfred Hugenberg, Franz von Stephani and Franz Seldte at a Rally against the Adoption of the Young Plan (September 24, 1929), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/weimar-germany-1918-1933/ghdi:image-4041>> [March 16, 2026].