

Austria at the Crossroads: The Anschluss and its Opponents

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by

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Summary

The 12 March 1938 was not only the beginning of Nazi rule in Austria; it was also the end of a six-year struggle by a significant minority of Austrians to maintain Austrian independence against very considerable odds. This study has sought to refocus attention on the role of the Dollfuß Government 1932–34 in attempting to prevent a Nazi takeover, and to reassess the state of current scholarship on the reasons for its collapse.

In this regard, this thesis sets out to re-examine the behaviour and motivations of Dollfuß in particular, and the Christian Socials in general, during the period in question, as well as to document and clarify the key strategies of the Austrian leadership in dealing with the twin threats of Austrian and German National Socialism. Its overall conclusion is that there is a pressing need to modulate the historical narrative of the Dollfuß era to reflect more accurately what actually occurred.

This thesis seeks to prove that despite the extreme pressure that it was under from Nazi Germany, the Dollfuß government and its mainstay, the Christian Socials, used all realistic means at their disposal to keep the Nazis from the centres of power while maintaining Austrian independence. It investigates why Dollfuß refused to publicly co-operate with the Social Democrats, but was apparently willing to enter into a deal with the National Socialists, and what this tells us about his anti-Nazi stance. It also considers the question of whether the traditional focus on the breakdown of democracy, as a key cause of the collapse of the Austrian state in 1938, is useful in understanding of the period.

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Introduction

Anschluss, der; -es, Anschlüsse... 4. Angliederung, politische Vereinigung: der A. des Saargebiets; Die Autoren...rekonstruieren die Geschichte des Anschlusses Österreichs (die Einverleibung Österreichs durch das nationalsozialistische Deutschland im Jahr 1938; Spiegel 10, 1988, 275); den A. eines Gebietes [an ein Land] betrieben. Duden (1999), 243.¹

No one single word has influenced the course of recent Austrian history to such a degree as the term 'Anschluss'. Its negation lies at the very heart of contemporary Austrian identity, the point of departure and journey's end for Austria's historical discourse. Three perspectives dominate the historiography of the Anschluss. Hitler and his Nazi clique painted March 1938 as a triumph, the inexorable conclusion of an anti-Austrian, pan-German vision. For the rest of Europe it was the inevitable, if regrettable, conclusion of a twenty-year struggle for the right to self-determination that had been denied by the victorious Allied Powers in Paris in 1918–19. From the delirious enthusiasm with which the Austrian populace greeted Hitler, it appeared that the country had collaborated in its own demise. Yet, unlike the case of Germany, the Austrian state, as represented by the government and officialdom, cannot be implicated in the Nazi takeover. It is this fourth perspective that shall be the focus here: the Austrian state as an actor *against* its own demise.

The first chapter of this thesis is dedicated to situating the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era in the wider historiographical debate. At its heart, it seeks to understand how two opposing groups of historians can come to mutually exclusive conclusions about the same events. It will demonstrate how the issue of how to interpret the events of the First Republic, the Dollfuß government and the *Ständestaat* has fundamentally divided historians, particularly those in Austria, since 1945. Tracing the development of the narratives that underpin our understanding of the Dollfuß government and the *Ständestaat*, it will detail how the issue was neglected during the first few decades of the Second Republic on account of its politically divisive nature, trace the impact of

¹ Cited in: Thorsten Eitz and Georg Stötzel, *Wörterbuch der 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung': Die NS-Vergangenheit im öffentlichen Sprachgebrauch*, (Hildesheim, 2007).

this neglect, and explain why it was only with the 1970s that research into the interwar years really got under way. It will then examine how the historical record has been systematically coloured by the highly political nature of the debate. Finally, it will go on to demonstrate how politicization has shaped historical narratives of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era and how, despite knowledge of this politicization and some genuine attempts to overcome it, understanding of the era still labours under its weight.

Chapter two provides the backdrop to the struggle for Austrian independence from 1932 onwards and a closer examination of the complexities and ambiguities of the Anschluss idea in the early Republic as well as the role of Ignaz Seipel, presented later as the spiritual forebear of the *Ständestaat* in stabilizing the country after the calamity of 1918. This is followed in chapter three by an examination of the year 1932, the formation of the Dollfuß government in May of that year, the rise of National Socialism and the political and economic crisis that the country faced. It also considers the question of whether the traditional focus on the breakdown of democracy, as a key cause of the collapse of the Austrian state in 1938, is useful in understanding of the period.

Chapter four analyses relations between the Dollfuß government and the Social Democratic opposition and investigates why, when faced with the burgeoning Nazi threat, Dollfuß did not enter into a coalition with them, choosing instead immediately after the *Machtergreifung* of the National Socialists in Germany to abandon parliament and democratic rule. Chapter five investigates the thorny question of why Dollfuß refused to publicly co-operate with the Social Democrats, but was apparently willing to enter into a deal with the National Socialists and what this tells us about his anti-Nazi stance. Chapter six takes a longer view, seeking to situate the struggle against National Socialism of the Austrian government within a broader historical, political, and cultural context. It also clarifies some of the key strategies used by Dollfuß and his government to deal with the threat posed by the Nazi movement at home and abroad and demonstrates how and why Dollfuß and other Austrian 'patriots' looked back to the Habsburg Empire for inspiration in their struggle.

Chapter seven looks at the question of whether (Austro)-'German' identity espoused by the Dollfuß government and the *Ständestaat* undermined Austria's

capacity to defend itself against National Socialist ideology. It also details the nature of the conflict between Austria and Germany during 1933–34, and details more of the ways in which the Dollfuß government sought to discredit the Nazi movement at home and abroad in an attempt to neutralize the Nazi threat. The study concludes with a brief glance at the Anschluss itself, and the way in which the Nazi narrative as well as post-war political machinations continue to colour perceptions of the Dollfuß era.

This thesis seeks to prove that despite the extreme pressure that it was under from Nazi Germany the Dollfuß government and its mainstay, the Christian Socials used all *realistic* means at their disposal to keep the Nazis from the centres of power while maintaining Austrian independence. It will demonstrate how the Austrian government attempted to maintain Austrian independence by accentuating Austrian particularism vis-à-vis North Germany, particularly the Prussian tradition, highlighting a separate historical and cultural tradition which had the potential to resonate with an Austrian audience and how the struggle to maintain Austrian independence was understood in terms of a longer historical continuum. An article published by Hans Kohn, a Jewish émigré from Prague in 1939 lamented what he saw as Austria's missed opportunity 'to emphasize that German was not identical with National Socialist'.² Austria, he argued, 'could have developed into a conscious rallying-point of a non- and anti-National Socialist Germanism, of one more humane, more western, "catholic" and European'. Kohn, who had left Europe for Palestine in 1925, was not as well informed about the situation in Austria as one might initially be led to believe. This thesis will demonstrate that, within the parameters of what was *realistically possible*, Kohn's preferred answer to Nazism is exactly what the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg governments were attempting to do.

The issue of sources is a challenging one for all those investigating the Dollfuß era, in particular when trying to decipher Dollfuß's personal role, his motivations and his strategy. There is, quite simply, a distinct paucity of unambiguous documentary evidence. This is, in part, due to the nature of the situation that Dollfuß was facing. Surrounded by rivals, leakers and spies, and trying to keep a volatile and fractious

² Hans Kohn, 'AEIOU: Some Reflections on the Meaning and Mission of Austria', *The Journal of Modern History*, 11/4 (1939), 524.

coalition afloat, much of what was going on occurred behind the scenes and was left, quite naturally, either partially or fully unrecorded. For that reason, there are none of the copious personal records one would ordinarily expect of a democratic head of government. Similar problems beset the correspondence between the *Bundeskanzleramt* and the Austrian Minister in Germany; with the Nazi takeover in 1933 and the escalation of tension between the two countries, it was increasingly difficult to ensure the safe passage of confidential information between Vienna and Berlin. Those sources that do exist – chronicling Dollfuß's clandestine communications with the Nazis, for example – are fragmentary and widely dispersed. They are also contradictory; the brief report sent from the *Bundeskanzleramt* to the Austrian Minister in Berlin detailing Dollfuß's meeting with two members of the *Nationale Kampffront* in October 1933 differs from the record published after the war by one of the other participants in that meeting.³ It is for this reason that it is useful to amplify official sources, published or otherwise, with other written evidence such as government newspapers and the records of the British legation in Vienna. Newspapers, cross-referenced against other evidence, are particularly useful for deciphering broad anti-Nazi strategies while the records of the British Foreign Office provide a wealth of detailed information from the perspective of an outside observer. The latter have, of course, been accessed in the context of understanding British policy towards Austria, but they are equally valuable in providing a complementary perspective on the day-to-day minutiae and machinations prevailing in Vienna.⁴ While undoubtedly it would be desirable to compliment this thesis with a thorough trawl of the Foreign Office files in Prague, Budapest and Rome, obvious linguistic problems have prevented historians from outside these countries accessing the files of the respective foreign offices. A thorough investigation of the Nazi German response to the Dollfuß government would also hold up an interesting mirror on events in Austria, but this is,

³ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, (ÖstA), Archiv der Republik (AdR), Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (AA), Österreichische Vertretungsbehörden im Ausland I. Republik, (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 16, Bundeskanzleramt (BKA) to the Österreichische Gesandtschaft/Berlin (ÖG/B) (Tauschitz) 26.152–13, 14 November 1933, 'Görings Romreise'.

⁴ For a discussion on the official British response to the gathering crisis in Austria see: Siegfried Beer, *Der "unmoralische" Anschluss: Britische Österreichpolitik zwischen Containment und Appeasement 1931–1934*, (Vienna, 1988).

unfortunately, well beyond the realistic scope of this thesis, and would probably require a major collaborative project to remedy that.⁵

Although this thesis clearly covers a lot of common ground of nineteenth and twentieth century history, the focus is on Austria and Austrian perceptions of events, not Germany. On a further note: Dollfuß, not Schuschnigg is at the centre of this study for three main reasons. Firstly, although historians tend to be vaguely critical of Schuschnigg, it is Dollfuß 'the fascist' who is considered the real villain of the piece. Secondly, Schuschnigg largely followed the path laid out by Dollfuß and thirdly, Dollfuß enjoyed a degree of leverage during his Chancellorship, albeit relatively speaking, leverage that Schuschnigg simply did not have. In spite of the few months respite afforded him by Hitler's tactical *volte-face* in the aftermath of the failed putsch, Schuschnigg inherited an already impossible situation. Indeed, it is credit to his underestimated adroitness that he managed to outmanoeuvre Hitler and maintain Austrian independence for almost four more years. Nonetheless, the *Ständestaat* is judged on the basis of Dollfuß's policies, thus it is Dollfuß who must be the focus of this study.

⁵ For an indication of the promise of such an approach, but also of the considerable breadth it might need to take, see the analysis of Nazi anti-Austrian propaganda during the Berlin Olympics in: Gerwin Strobl, *The Swastika and the Stage: German Theatre and Society, 1933–1945*, (Cambridge, 2007).

Chapter I

‘Der Kampf ums “Haus der Geschichte”’:

The Historiographical Landscape

In the summer of 1997, Leon Zelman, founder of the ‘Jewish Welcome Service Vienna’ first suggested converting Vienna’s Palais Epstein into a ‘House of History and Tolerance’ intended to facilitate Austria’s encounter with its recent past.⁶ His suggestion became the catalyst for the creation of a ‘Haus der Geschichte der Republik Österreich’, a museum that would serve as a public platform for Austrian contemporary history, with special emphasis on the history of the First and Second Republics, as well as the Third Reich.⁷ A road map published in 2006 explains that its role would be to present an overview of Austrian history from 1918 to the present, as well as provide both academics and the public with an open forum for historical debate.⁸ However, achieving consensus on the parameters of the project has proven troublesome, and as of 2012, it is still far from being realized. This is, one might argue, due to the very nature of the beast; such ventures have an almost natural predisposition for controversy.⁹ In Austria, however, this is not the whole story. The situation is further complicated by what may be described as a quite peculiar relationship with the recent past.

⁶ For further details see: ‘Karl Renner’s Lieblingsschöpfung’, *Der Standard [online edition]*, 7 Nov. 2008, accessed: 23 Jun 2011.

⁷ The idea of a ‘Haus der Geschichte’ was, in itself, not a new one. The establishment of a ‘Geschichtliche Kammer’ was first proposed in 1919. Karl Renner revived the idea in 1945, albeit with vastly different motives to those of Zelman. See: Gertrude Enderle-Burcel, ‘“Haus der Geschichte” – Eine Idee wird 90 Jahre alt’ 2009, http://oesta.gv.at/site/cob___33092/currentpage___0/6648/default.aspx, accessed: 23 Jun. 2011 and ‘Karl Renner’s Lieblingsschöpfung’, *Der Standard [online edition]*, 7 Nov. 2008, accessed: 23 Jun 2011.

⁸ See: ‘“Haus der Geschichte der Republik Österreich”; Umsetzungsstrategie – Zusammenfassung’ http://www.doew.at/frames.php?thema/haus_der_geschichte/roadmap.html, accessed: 4 Sep. 2012”.

⁹ For a further example, consider the debate surrounding the creation and realization of the Deutsches Historisches Museum (DHM) in Berlin. See: Jan-Holger Kirsch and Irmgard Zündorf, ‘Zeitgeschichte-online, Thema: Geschichtsbilder des Deutschen Historischen Museums. Die Dauerausstellung in der Diskussion’ July 2007, <http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=DHM-Geschichtsbilder>, accessed: 4 Sep. 2012.

Such a venture – if it is to be taken seriously – demands an intellectually mature, politically objective and academically judicious view of the past, as well as a degree of historical and societal consensus on how that past should be represented. In the Austrian case this is inherently problematic as Austria's collective historical memory is sharply divided regarding the events of the twentieth century. Yet, it would be a mistake to assume that the major bone of contention is the issue of Austria's Nazi past. It is a curious fact that it is the First Republic (1918–38) and not the Nazi era that is considered the most controversial period in Austria's twentieth century. For Austrian society, confronting the frightful deeds of 1938–45 has proven much less problematic than dealing with the divisive legacy of 1933–38. Notwithstanding the decades spent evading responsibility for the crimes committed under the Nazi regime, Austrian historians and mainstream politicians are now relatively united in acknowledging the role that Austrians played in implementing the policies of the Third Reich.¹⁰ In stark contrast, despite the more than seventy years that have passed since the Anschluss, the academic community has been unable to reach a genuine scholarly and non-partisan consensus on the events of the interwar period.

Despite protestations to the contrary, this is not a conventional case of bickering academics at loggerheads over the nuances of historical interpretation. Rather, historical analysis of the Dollfuß era has been governed by the highly political nature of the debate. A number of factors are at work here. Part of the problem lies in the fact that the history of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era has been put to political use. For decades, Austrian elites have exploited the past either to enhance their own political legitimacy, or to undermine the legitimacy of their political opponents: the SPÖ, for example, use the 'February Uprising' to uphold a narrative of democratic, antifascist resistance, while the ÖVP, in turn, emphasize their forebears' dogged defence of Austrian independence in the face of the Nazi onslaught. For this reason, Austria's bi-partisan political establishment has played too prominent a role in the evolution of the academic discourse of the period, and academics, for their part, have

¹⁰ See: Günter Bischof, 'Victims? Perpetrators? "Punching Bags" of European Historical Memory? The Austrians and Their World War II Legacies', *German Studies Review*, 27 (2004), 1. It remains to be seen just how much of this sentiment has filtered down into the perceptions of society as a whole. For more on this theme see, for example: Wolfgang Neugebauer, 'Zur Problematik der NS-Vergangenheit Österreichs', *Rassismus und Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Südafrika und Österreich – ein Vergleich?* (Austrian Parliament, Vienna, 2000).

not always remained above the fray. Over the years this has blurred the boundaries between historical analysis and political debate, tainting, if not distorting, understanding of the period.

Unsurprisingly, such intrusion has resulted in a historiography of the First Republic that is highly politicized and heavily partisan. As Bischof and Lassner point out in the introduction to *The Dollfuss–Schuschnigg Era in Austria: A Reassessment*, evaluations of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg system of rule are often determined by political preference; while those on the right tend ‘to portray [the ‘regime’] strictly as a defensive bastion against Nazi Germany’, those on the left tend to indict ‘the Dollfuß–Schuschnigg governments as decisive contributors to the successful Anschluss through their rejection of parliamentary democracy.’¹¹ A comparison with Irish historiography is perhaps useful here. With Irish history, the ‘tradition’ – nationalist or unionist – to which a historian adheres is generally discernible from the tone and flavour of their work. In much the same way, in Austria, the Dollfuß era is often presented through a filter, in this case either ‘red’ or ‘black’, again according to the tradition to which the historian adheres. The problem is, while each filter draws the reader’s attention to different aspects, neither provides a glimpse of the picture as a whole. The result is a body of literature split between two, mutually exclusive interpretations, even in those cases where the motivation is not consciously political. Rather than genuine synthesis, this rigid dichotomy has resulted in ideological deadlock, a stalemate so immutable that it has been treated as a historiographical ‘draw’. Despite moves towards differentiation on an academic level – Ernst Hanisch’s excellent body of work is particularly notable here – there is no sign of a decisive breakthrough on the horizon.¹² Thus, with no cohesive meta-narrative, reaching an agreement on how to depict Austria’s twentieth century will prove exceptionally difficult. As it stands, Austria would need to build two ‘Houses of History’, not just one.

¹¹ Günter Bischof, et al., *The Dollfuss-Schuschnigg Era in Austria: A Reassessment*, (New Brunswick, 2003), 1.

¹² Particularly worthy of note is Hanisch’s history of Austria in the twentieth century: Ernst Hanisch, ‘Der lange Schatten des Staates: Österreichische Gesellschaftsgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert’, in ed., Herwig Wolfram *Österreichische Geschichte 1890–1990* (Vienna, 1994). For an insight into how the book was received in Austria – his reviewer notes how Hanisch felt the need to defend his work even before it was published – see: Steven Beller, Review of: ‘Ernst Hanisch. Österreichische Geschichte 1890–1990: Der lange Schatten des Staates: Österreichische Gesellschaftsgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 30, (1999), 305–07.

‘Na ja, wir haben alle geirrt und daher ist es schief gegangen’

Austria's historiographical imbroglio and dysfunctional relationship with the recent past can be traced back to the earliest days of the Second Republic. In 1945, the fledgling Austrian state was in a vulnerable position: while officially liberated by the allies it was in effect treated as an enemy combatant and occupied accordingly. Austrian elites quickly recognized the need to prove to the Allies that a post-war Republic, in contrast to its disastrous pre-war predecessor, was both politically and economically viable. Bound by this one, mutual objective, the leading representatives of the two major pre-war parties executed a remarkable change of tack; surrendering the sectarian strategies of the interwar years, they agreed to co-operate in establishing a civil administration and to present a united front in negotiations with the Allies. The pre-war parties were quickly re-established, now as the *Österreichische Volkspartei* (ÖVP) and the *Sozialistische Partei Österreichs* (SPÖ).¹³ As a unity government offered the most stable basis for dealing with the allies, they formed a provisional coalition government, which, as a nod to the Russian occupiers, also included representatives from the *Kommunistische Partei Österreichs* (KPÖ).¹⁴ The Communists, having gained only four seats in the 1945 *Nationalrat* elections, left the coalition in 1947 in a dispute over a financial measure, leaving the two major parties to co-operate closely in constructing the foundations of the Second Republic.¹⁵

Austria quickly found itself travelling down the road towards consociationalism.¹⁶ The coalition was renewed, even after the ÖVP won an absolute majority in the first

¹³ The ÖVP succeeded the *Christlichsoziale Partei* (CSP), the SPÖ the pre-war *Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei* (SDAP[D]Ö). The latter changed its name to *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs* in 1991. See: Manfred Rauchensteiner, 'The Big Two': The Grand Coalition, 1945–1966 and 1987–2000', in eds. Rolf Steininger, et al. *Austria in the Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick, 2002), 235–39.

¹⁴ Renner government I. (27 April – 20 December 1945).

¹⁵ The KPÖ left the Grand Coalition on 24 November 1947.

¹⁶ Consociationalism is a form of government found in states which are deeply divided along ethnic, linguistic, religious, or, in Austria's case, political lines, where no one group commands a majority and yet the state remains stable due to power-sharing agreements and guaranteed group representation. Many scholars consider consociationalism to have a close affinity to corporatism. For more on Austrian consociationalism and Austro-corporatism respectively see: Kurt Richard Luther and Wolfgang C. Müller, eds., *Politics in Austria: Still a Case of Consociationalism?*, (London, 1992) and Günter Bischof and Anton Pelinka, eds., *Austro-Corporatism: Past, Present, Future*, (New Brunswick, 1996).

post-war parliamentary elections of December 1945.¹⁷ It held until 1966. Although the bitter ideological enmity of the pre-war period persisted, the humiliating loss of independence in 1938 and the disgrace of Nazi rule had had a sobering effect. In the 'spirit of 1945', Austrian elites pledged to 'miteinander unter allen Umständen reden', in theory if not always in practice.¹⁸ Over time, differences of political opinion were mitigated by means of a system of *Proporz* – in short, a power-sharing agreement – whereby power and responsibility was divided according to political strength, effectively dividing the country into 'red' and 'black' spheres of influence.¹⁹ This may not have been the much-lauded antifascist '*Geist der Lagerstrasse*', but a degree of trust was gradually established through, on the one hand, the mutual control mechanisms offered by the coalition and *Proporz* and on the other, the reciprocal demonstration of political pragmatism and ideological restraint.²⁰

The price of political stability was historical truth. In the public sphere, Austria's 'rebirth' was presented as a *tabula rasa*, and 'Austrian history was purged for the purpose of stabilizing democracy'.²¹ Although there was certainly a very public debate in Austria about Nazi crimes in the immediate post-war years, as well as significant attempts at denazification, after 1948–49 there was little desire – or incentive – to look too closely at the events of the recent past; not the Nazi era – the so-called 'Great Taboo' – nor the

¹⁷ Figl government I. (20 Dec. 1945–8 Nov. 1949).

¹⁸ The 'spirit of 1945', exemplified in a speech by Viktor Matejka *Stadtrat für Kultur und Volksbildung* (KPÖ) on the opening of the antifascist exhibition, *Niemals vergessen!* in Vienna on 14 Sep. 1946: 'Das ist ja das einigende Band, das uns alle verbindet: die Schrecklichkeit des gemeinsamen Erlebens und der unabdingbare Wille, damit fertig zu werden und etwas Neues – unser demokratisches Österreich – zu schaffen, das für die Zukunft unerschütterlich steht und fest im Volk verankert ist.' In: *Wiener Rathauskorrespondenz* 1946, <http://www.wien.gv.at/ma53/45jahre/1946/0946.htm> (8 Jan. 2012). Viktor Matejka, (4 Dec. 1901–2 Apr. 1993), a '*Linkskatholik*' during the interwar period, from 1934–36 Matejka was Secretary of the Volkshochschule Volksheim Ottakring until he was removed from his post by the Mayor of Vienna, Richard Schmitz. On the same subject, see, also: Anton Pelinka, 'Karl Renner – A Man for All Seasons', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 23 (1992).

¹⁹ 'Red' refers to the SPÖ, 'black' the ÖVP, the latter an allusion to the cloth of the clergy and the party's traditional links to the Catholic Church.

²⁰ See, for instance: Manfred Rauchensteiner, '"The Big Two"', 239.

²¹ See: Anton Pelinka, 'Karl Renner – A Man for All Seasons', 116.

events that had led to it.²² Accordingly, under Allied occupation, a 'spirit of historical forgetfulness... pervaded the country', and discussion of the events of the recent past was impeded by the official policy of externalising National Socialism and promoting the convenient half-truth of Austria as 'the first free country to fall victim to Hitlerite aggression'.²³ The official line was exemplified in the *Rot-Weiß-Rot-Buch*, a series of documents published by the Austrian Foreign Ministry in 1946. Its purpose was to demonstrate to the Allies why Austria should not be held responsible for what had happened between 1938 and 1945, explaining – not unreasonably – how Austria had attempted to defend itself against Nazi aggression before being overpowered and occupied in 1938.²⁴ The domestic angle was, on the whole, neglected, not least because such discussion would inevitably lead to difficult questions about Austrian complicity – or rather, the complicity of some of its citizens – in the Nazi takeover, complicating the country's 'first victim' defence strategy at a time when academic nuance was somewhat surplus to requirements.

It was not until the signing of the State Treaty in 1955 and the restoration of Austrian sovereignty that this external barrier to discussing the 'Anschluss years' was lifted.²⁵ However, external considerations were not the only motivation for burying the past. Rather, the victim discourse dovetailed neatly with the need to preserve the fragile political consensus and avoid ideological factionalism. The Dollfuß–Schuschnigg era, in particular the collapse of parliamentary rule in March 1933 and the civil war of

²² There is a wealth of literature on the 'Great Taboo' and Austrian collaboration with the Nazis. See, for example: Thomas Angerer, 'An Incomplete Discipline: Austrian *Zeitgeschichte* and Recent History', in eds. Günter Bischof, et al. *Austria in the Nineteen Fifties* (New Brunswick, 1995), 221–225. See also: Tony Judt, 'The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe', *Daedalus*, 121 (1992), 221–225.

²³ As described in the Moscow Declaration of 30 October 1943. See: F. Parkinson, 'Epilogue', in ed., F. Parkinson *Conquering the Past: Austrian Nazism Yesterday & Today* 1989), 328. See also: Gerhard Botz, '"Eine neue Welt, warum nicht eine neue Geschichte?" Österreichische Zeitgeschichte am Ende ihres Jahrhunderts. Teil I', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*, 1 (1990), 51 and Ernst Hanisch, 'Die Dominanz des Staates. Österreichische Zeitgeschichte im Drehkreuz von Politik und Wissenschaft', in eds. Alexander Nützenadel and Wolfgang Schieder *Zeitgeschichte als Problem: Nationale Traditionen und Perspektiven der Forschung in Europa* (Göttingen, 2004), 55. Angerer calls this the 'Anschluss Syndrome'. Thomas Angerer, 'An Incomplete Discipline'.

²⁴ *Rot-Weiß-Rot-Buch. Gerechtigkeit für Österreich! Darstellungen, Dokumente und Nachweise zur Vorgeschichte und Geschichte der Okkupation Österreichs (nach amtlichen Quellen)*, (Vienna, 1946).

²⁵ Gerhard Botz, '"Eine neue Welt"', 55.

February 1934, was still too politically and socially divisive to be soberly discussed. Haunted by the trauma of 'civil war' and acutely aware that addressing the reasons for the country's loss of independence in 1938 could bring about a return to the class warfare that had crippled the First Republic, Austrian elites opted instead for a 'process of evasion'. In effect, they agreed to disagree in their interpretations of the events of the interwar period.

This 'antifascist consensus' strategy was epitomized in the exhibition *Niemals vergessen!*, an expose of Nazi war crimes, staged by the coalition partners in 1946. In it Austria was portrayed as the 'first victim of fascist aggression', yet all discussion of so-called 'Austrofascism' was buried, but for the most oblique of references. So much so that Dollfuß – assassinated by the Nazis in July 1934 – could appear in the list of the victims of fascism alongside Karl Münichreiter, Koloman Wallisch and Georg Weissel, executed for their roles in the 'February Uprising' earlier that same year.²⁶ Yet, the embargo should not be understood as an absolute one, in that it did not prevent the SPÖ from keeping the memory of February 1934 alive. Adolf Schärff and Theodor Körner, both of whom had contributed to the *Niemals vergessen!* exhibition could still publically condemn the 'fascist traitors' for the 'crime' of 12 February 1934 in the pages of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the official organ of the SPÖ.²⁷ This was thanks to a 'political culture of taboo' that allowed the coalition partners their contrary views of the interwar years – and even, to an extent, to mobilize memories of the interwar period for political purposes – yet ensured that too much attention would not be drawn to particularly sensitive details, especially when they involved the architects of the Grand Coalition – Karl Renner's 'applauding' the destruction of Czechoslovakia, for example, or Leopold Kunschak's rabid

²⁶ See: Viktor Matejka and Victor Slama, *Niemals vergessen! Ein Buch der Anklage, Mahnung und Verpflichtung*, (Vienna, 1946), 146–60.

²⁷ 'Februar 1934: Niemals vergessen!', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 12 Jan. 1947, 1 and 'Tag des Gedenkens', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 12 Feb. 1946, 1. Theodor Körner (SPÖ) was mayor of Vienna from 1945–51 and the first Federal President of the Second Republic from 1951 to his death in 1957. Adolf Schärff (SPÖ) was one of the architects of the Grand Coalition and is today considered one of the founding fathers of the Second Republic. Imprisoned under the *Ständestaat*, he was a signatory of the Austria declaration of independence on 27 April 1945, Vice-Chancellor in the Grand Coalition from 1945–57 and Federal President from 1957 until his death in 1965.

anti-Semitism.²⁸ Ensuring ‘peace by deterrence’, these taboos, once established, ‘functioned like hostages: do not dare violate my taboo, because I can violate yours’, and were soon firmly entrenched within the fabric of the Second Republic.²⁹

²⁸ Anton Pelinka, 'Karl Renner – A Man for All Seasons', 116–17. In the summer of 1938, Karl Renner published a propaganda book for the National Socialists, *Die Gründung der Republik Deutsch-Österreich, der Anschluss und die Sudetendeutschen*, in which he ‘unequivocally endorsed’ the Third Reich’s claim to the Sudetenland. See, further: Peter Loewenberg, 'Karl Renner and the Politics of Accommodation: Moderation versus Revenge', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 22 (1991), 51–52. Leopold Kunschak (11 Nov. 1871–13 Mar. 1953) was a Christian Social politician and founder of the *Christlichsozialen Arbeiterbewegung*. In 1945, he became the party chairman of the ÖVP. On Kunschak’s anti-Semitism see: Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution: A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism*, (Chapel Hill, 1992), 158–63. On the subject of the historical culture of the Second Republic see, for example: Oliver Marchart, et al., 'Holocaust revisited – Lesarten eines Medienereignisses zwischen globaler Erinnerungskultur und nationaler Vergangenheitsbewältigung', in ed., Mosche Zuckermann *Medien-Politik-Geschichte. Tel Aviver Jahrbuch 2003 für deutsche Geschichte* (Göttingen, 2003), 318.

²⁹ Pelinka provides another example: ‘Do not dare to make too much of Karl Renner’s “yes” to the Nazi plebiscite, because I still can attack the Austrian bishops for their behaviour’. Anton Pelinka, 'Karl Renner – A Man for All Seasons' 118.



Figure 1: SPÖ Nationalrat Election Poster, 1959
(ÖNB Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung)

In the academic sphere analysis of the interwar years got off to a decidedly slow start. Rigorous historical enquiry was hindered on a number of levels, not least by 'bureaucratic-political resistance' and an academic environment in which not everyone had a vested interest in coming to terms with the recent past.³⁰ Initially, a lack of access to archival material led to a reliance on eye-witness testimony, political memoirs and

³⁰ Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, 'Das große Tabu! Historiker-Kontroversen in Österreich nach 1945 über die nationale Vergangenheit', in ed., Jürgen Elvert *Historische Debatten und Kontroversen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Jubiläumstagung der Ranke-Gesellschaft in Essen, 2001* (Stuttgart, 2003), 149.

other secondary materials published either during the *Ständestaat* and World War II or the immediate post-war period that were often either accusatory or exculpatory in tone.³¹ Hence, Laura Gellott's observation that the early historiography of the *Ständestaat*, particularly in the Anglo-American sphere, was often 'highly polemical', painted in 'broad brush-strokes: fascism, clerical-fascism, dictatorship' with a focus on 'heroes or demons, martyrs or villains.'³² This was certainly true of the earliest Anglo-Saxon attempt at a scholarly assessment of the period. In 1948, Charles Gulick published his 1900-page magnum opus, 'Austria from Habsburg to Hitler' a manuscript that had been thirteen years in the making.³³ Gulick's encyclopaedic treatment of the events of the First Republic remains an indispensable source of information for the student of the interwar period. Yet, 'essentially an account of the policies and achievements of Austrian Social Democracy between the two world wars' and its 'violent suppression' at the hands of a clerical-fascist dictatorship, its tone is unquestionably partisan.³⁴ Indeed, Gulick made no attempt to hide the fact that he had taken sides, 'planting both feet', according to one contemporary

³¹ From the conservative perspective, see, for example: Johannes Messner, *Dollfuß*, (Innsbruck, 1935); John Duncan Gregory, *Dollfuss and his Times*, (London, 1935); Kurt Schuschnigg, *Dreimal Österreich*, (Vienna, 1937), published in English the following year as, Kurt Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria*, (London, 1938) and Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Ein Requiem in Rot-Weiß-Rot. Aufzeichnungen des Häftlings Dr. Auster*, (Zürich, 1946). From a Social Democratic/left-wing perspective: Otto Bauer, *Der Aufstand der österreichischen Arbeiter. Seine Ursachen und seine Wirkungen*, (Prague, 1934), which was reprinted in 1947 and again in 1974, Otto Leichter, *Österreich 1934. Die Geschichte einer Konterrevolution*, (Zürich, 1935), Otto Leichter, *Ein Staat stirbt. Österreich 1934–38*, (Paris, 1938), Julius Braunthal, *The Tragedy of Austria*, (London, 1948), Joseph Buttinger, *Am Beispiel Österreichs. Ein geschichtlicher Beitrag zur Krise der sozialistischen Bewegung*, (Cologne, 1953), also published in English the same year as, Joseph Buttinger, *In the Twilight of Socialism. A History of the Revolutionary Socialists of Austria*, (New York, 1953). The most famous non-Austrian eye-witness account of Austria's collapse is: G. E. R. Gedy, *Betrayal in Central Europe. Austria and Czechoslovakia: The Fallen Bastions*, (New York, 1939) See also: Oswald Dutch, *Thus Died Austria*, (London, 1938).

³² Laura Gellott, 'Recent Writings on the *Ständestaat*, 1934–1938', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 26 (1995), 208.

³³ Charles A. Gulick, *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler*, (Berkeley, California, 1948). The German translation followed two years later and was immediately awarded a prize by the – SPÖ dominated – city of Vienna, for 'distinguished achievement in moral sciences'. The *Preise der Stadt Wien für Geisteswissenschaften*. See: Academic Senate: University of California, 'In Memoriam: 1985: Charles Adams Gulick. 1896–1984' <http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb4d5nb20m&brand=calisphere>, accessed 10 Dec. 2012

³⁴ Walter Galenson, Review of: 'Austria from Habsburg to Hitler by Charles A. Gulick', *The American Economic Review*, 39, (1949), 761–65, 761.

reviewer, 'firmly on the side of social democracy'.³⁵ Convinced that Dollfuß and Schuschnigg, were 'determined to perpetuate their own variety of Fascism', they, along with Seipel, – 'the evil genius of the republic' – are condemned as the villains of the piece, deliberately destroying Austrian democracy and betraying the Social Democrats and the Republic in the process.³⁶

In Austria, the situation was complicated by the prevailing political atmosphere. History-writing was, to a certain extent, put at the service of the emerging Austrian nation, although, as Hanisch notes, professional historians tended to avoid the hyperbolic 'anti-German Austrian nationalism' of the immediate post-war period.³⁷ Nonetheless, during the first two decades of the Second Republic the historian's gaze tended to pass over the years 1918–45, focusing instead upon 'earlier historical epochs' of Austrian history, a development, which neatly fused with a burgeoning Austrian national identity.³⁸ Where attention did fall upon the interwar years, the tone tended to be conciliatory rather than confrontational, as in, for example, Heinrich Benedikt's *Geschichte der Republik Österreich*, a collaborative piece first published in 1954, containing contributions from Walter Goldinger and Adam Wandruszka, and the first serious Austrian attempt at a history of the First Republic.³⁹ Embracing the cohesive meta-narrative of the Second Republic, the emphasis was very much on the unfavourable circumstances of the First

³⁵ Ibid, 762. The subtitles, 'Labor's Workshop of Democracy' and 'Fascism's Subversion of Democracy' give a good indication of the tenor of the narrative. See also: Laura Gellott, 'Recent Writings on the Ständestaat, 1934–1938', 8.

³⁶ Charles A. Gulick, *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler*, 1858. Ignaz Seipel, (19 Jul. 1876–2 Aug. 1932), a prelate and Christian Social politician, he was twice Chancellor of Austria, (31 May 1922–20 Nov. 1924) and (20 Oct. 1926–4 May 1929) and twice Minister for Foreign Affairs, (20 Oct. 1926–4 May 1929) and (30 Sep. 1930–4 Dec 1929).

³⁷ Ernst Hanisch, 'Dominanz des Staates', 56. Hanisch asserts that this was in part as a consequence of the influence of the *Gesamtdeutsch* school on Austrian historiography'.

³⁸ Fritz Fellner cited in: Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, 'Das große Tabu!', 148. See also: Peter Thaler, *The Ambivalence of Identity. The Austrian Experience of Nation-Building in a Modern Society*, (West Lafayette, 2001), 59. One thinks here of the work of academics such as Alfons Lhotsky, Erich Zöllner, Helmut Rumpler, Hanns Leo Mikoletzky, Adam Wandruszka and Rudolf Neck. Nonetheless, some small inroads were made into the interwar period by the likes of Ludwig Jedlicka, hailed as the pioneer of Austrian *Zeitgeschichte*, during the fifties and sixties.

³⁹ Heinrich Benedikt and Walter Goldinger, *Geschichte der Republik Österreich*, (Vienna, 1954). It was republished in 1977.

Republic; the prevailing atmosphere of mutual mistrust, the economic catastrophe, the threat from Nazi Germany and the violent political atmosphere.⁴⁰ It is worth noting that this approach was the domain of a pre-war generation of historians whose formative years had been determined by the disorientating experience of civil war, the Anschluss and the Nazi regime, then emigration, reconstruction and the State Treaty, and who 'more or less supported the "Victim Thesis"'.⁴¹ During the early seventies, this approach was, somewhat disparagingly, denounced as *Koalitionsgeschichtsschreibung* by a younger generation of predominantly left-wing historians, who objected to this quasi-consensus interpretation of the past, where 'responsibility' for the failure of the First Republic – the 'shared guilt' thesis – was split between the two pre-war parties: or as Karl Stadler, a historian who had very close links with the SPÖ put it, 'na ja, wir haben alle geirrt und daher ist es schief gegangen'.⁴² While it is certainly true that the work of professional historians such as Jedlicka and Wandruszka tended towards a more conservative interpretation of events, it would be a mistake to dismiss in its entirety the work done during this period. After all, *Koalitionsgeschichtsschreibung* was also about reaching some kind of consensus on divisive issues, or, as Gerhard Botz, who played a decisive role in

⁴⁰ With regard to the events of March 1933, Botz identifies a tendency to emphasize the fact that Dollfuß did not have antiparliamentary ambitions when he entered office in 1932. See: Gerhard Botz, 'Die Ausschaltung des Nationalrates und die Anfänge der Diktatur Dollfuß' im Urteil der Geschichtsschreibung von 1933 bis 1973', in *Vierzig Jahre Danach. Der 4. März 1933 im Urteil von Zeitgenossen und Historikern* (Vienna, 1973), 40–45.

⁴¹ Ernst Hanisch, 'Dominanz des Staates', 63. The most prominent Austrian work of the period was Heinrich Benedikt and Walter Goldinger, *Geschichte der Republik Österreich*, edited by the conservative historian, Heinrich Benedikt and reprinted in 1977.

⁴² The idea was, it appears, first mentioned by Karl Stadler on 23 October 1972 during the first symposium of the *Wissenschaftliche Kommission*: Ludwig Jedlicka, ed., *Österreich 1927 bis 1938. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien, 23. bis 28. Oktober 1972*, (Vienna, 1973), 43. In 1972 Karl Stadler became the first head of the Dr.-Karl-Renner-Institut, the educational academy of the SPÖ. He was a lifelong friend of the SPÖ politician Christian Broda, with whom he had been politically active during the 1930s. Christian Broda, (12 Mar. 1916–1 Feb. 1987) was active in Communist circles during the interwar years and a member of the *Kommunistische Jugendverband*. He was imprisoned for a few weeks in 1934 for communist activities and joined the SPÖ in 1945. For more on Christian Broda and his relationship with Stadler see: Maria Wirth, *Christian Broda. Eine Politische Biographie*, (Göttingen, 2011), esp. 57–8. For more on *Koalitionsgeschichtsschreibung* and the issue of the 'geteilte Schuld' see: Thomas Angerer, 'An Incomplete Discipline'. See also: Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, 'Das große Tabu!', 154.

developing the concept pointed out, about searching for “historical truth” in the middle ground, between the two opposing interpretations of the period.⁴³

However, despite the dominance of *Koalitionsgeschichtsschreibung* in public and historical discourse, it did not completely supplant the adversarial, politicized narratives of the interwar years. In 1973, Gerhard Botz identified, in addition to *Koalitionsgeschichtsschreibung*, a number of alternative interpretations of the events of March 1933 in early post-war historiography.⁴⁴ Although only investigated in connection to this singular event, his schematization is useful when extrapolated onto the literature of the period as a whole.⁴⁵ There was what Botz calls the ‘väterlandische’ theory, based upon *Ständestaat* propaganda and Dollfuß’s own explanation of events and consistent with a catholic-conservative understanding of the period.⁴⁶ With regard to the proroguing of the *Nationalrat* in March 1933, this meant maintaining that the parliamentary body had ‘committed suicide’, leaving the Dollfuß government little choice but to rule by decree. This interpretation, or, in Botz’s words, ‘historical legend’ was advanced primarily by pre-war functionaries of the *Ständestaat* such as Friedrich Funder, editor of the Christian-Social *Reichspost*, *Heimwehr* leader and later Vice-Chancellor Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, Guido Zernatto, another *Heimwehr* member, as well as Gordon Brook-Shepherd, a British historian and journalist and one of Britain’s foremost authorities in the field of Austrian history during the early post-war period.⁴⁷ The second interpretation was the ‘social-democratic’ version of events. This, like the ‘vaterländische’, catholic-conservative interpretation, was also a repetition of arguments that could be

⁴³ Gerhard Botz, ‘Die Ausschaltung des Nationalrates und die Anfänge der Diktatur Dollfuß’ im Urteil der Geschichtsschreibung von 1933 bis 1973’, 40.

⁴⁴ The ‘Selbstausschaltung des Parlaments’, to use Dollfuß’s description. Ibid, 31–59.

⁴⁵ Botz identified four differing interpretations of the events of 4 March 1933, three of which are dealt with here. The fourth interpretation viewed the issue ‘according to constitutional law’.

⁴⁶ Gerhard Botz, ‘Die Ausschaltung des Nationalrates und die Anfänge der Diktatur Dollfuß’ im Urteil der Geschichtsschreibung von 1933 bis 1973’, 35–37.

⁴⁷ Friedrich Funder, *Als Österreich den Sturm bestand. Aus der Ersten in die Zweite Republik*, (Vienna, 1957); Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Memoiren*, (Vienna, 1971); Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *Engelbert Dollfuß*, (London, 1961) all cited in: Gerhard Botz, ‘Die Ausschaltung des Nationalrates und die Anfänge der Diktatur Dollfuß’ im Urteil der Geschichtsschreibung von 1933 bis 1973’, 36. Guido Zernatto, (21 Jun. 1903–8 Feb 1943), in 1934 made *Bundeskulturrat*, later State Secretary in the Federal Chancellery and General Secretary of the *Vaterländische Front*.

traced directly back to the 1930s. According to the social-democratic account, Dollfuß's intention to rule dictatorially had a precedent in the first use of the *Kriegswirtschaftliches Ermächtigungsgesetz* on 1 October 1932 and the emphasis was on increasing fascist tendencies within the government camp, the desire to smash Social Democracy and the workers' movement and, ultimately, the political survival of the Christian Socials in the face of imminent electoral defeat at the hands of the Social Democrats and National Socialists.⁴⁸

Therefore, despite its obvious drawbacks, some aspects of *Koalitionsgeschichtsschreibung* were not completely without merit: while, in 1973, Botz saw it as an improvement vis-à-vis the previously dominant clerical-conservative and German-national interpretations of history, two decades later Angerer could point to its 'ability to go beyond the purely partisan traditions of writing history'.⁴⁹ Indeed, the latter is an important point, in the face of a regression to ideological typologies, partisan point-scoring and escalating politicization that occurred during the seventies and, the traces of which remain, in one form or another, until the present day. Politically-speaking *Koalitionsgeschichtsschreibung* in the public sphere served its purpose, helping to maintain the careful balance of interests between the two political camps. However, in both the public and the academic spheres, the lack of real debate on contentious issues had serious long-term consequences. Muffled agreement and anodyne synthesis was no substitute for genuine academic consensus; the failure to confront areas of disagreement head on allowed them to metastasize within the Austrian body politic and public discourse. This stunted the growth of an objective, apolitical historical tradition and stifled serious and scholarly debate.

By far the most serious consequence of these years was the blurring of boundaries between the political and historical spheres. Before the advent of *Zeitgeschichte* as a serious academic endeavour, politicians had a significant influence on the tenor of any public debate. From the earliest days of the Second Republic, the composition of

⁴⁸ Gerhard Botz, 'Die Ausschaltung des Nationalrates und die Anfänge der Diktatur Dollfuß' im Urteil der Geschichtsschreibung von 1933 bis 1973', 46–51.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 41 and Thomas Angerer, 'An Incomplete Discipline', 221.

historical exhibitions and commissions was determined by the demands of political consensus, rather than scholarly endeavour. This started with the *Niemals vergessen!* exhibition of 1946, the mandate for which came from the *Amt für Kultur und Volksbildung* of the *Gemeinde Wien*, at that time under Viktor Matejka's jurisdiction.⁵⁰ According to Viktor Slama, the exhibition's organizer, the mandate was given with 'the consent of the three democratic parties', one of which was, interestingly enough, the KPÖ.⁵¹ The exhibition's political character is laid bare not only by the presence of a 'political advisory board' comprising of two representatives from each of the coalition parties but also by the fact that the list of contributors to the accompanying publication reads as a Who's Who of post-war Austrian politics.⁵² It is perhaps also telling that it was a politician, the ÖVP Minister for Education, Heinrich Drimmel, member of the *Heimwehr* during the First Republic and a 'pronounced conservative historian', who organized the first symposium dedicated to the issue of *Zeitgeschichte* in December 1960, the purpose of which was to 'clarify problems of Austrian contemporary history' for the classroom.⁵³ The consequence was, as Lauridsen notes, the establishment of a 'peculiarly Austrian environment for pursuing scholarly activity in the field of contemporary history' where 'institutional and personal ties to political parties and interest organizations' were a common occurrence.⁵⁴ This resulted in an environment where scholars were 'independent in theory, but in practice were enmeshed in such a network of commissions, conferences, subsidies and unwritten rules for scholarly conduct that hardly any were willing to stir up a reckoning

⁵⁰ On Viktor Matejka, see above text accompanying note 18.

⁵¹ Viktor Matejka and Victor Slama, *Niemals vergessen! Ein Buch der Anklage, Mahnung und Verpflichtung*, 188.

⁵² Contributors included, amongst others: Karl Renner (SPÖ), Leopold Figl (ÖVP), Adolf Schärf (SPÖ), Rosa Jochmann (SPÖ), Oskar Helmer (SPÖ), Karl Gruber (ÖVP), Lois Weinberger (ÖVP) and Nadine Paunovic (ÖVP), Alfred Missong and Johann Breithofer for the ÖVP, Erwin Scharf and Adolf Planek for the SPÖ and Ernst Fischer and Franz Marek for the KPÖ.

⁵³ Ernst Hanisch, 'Dominanz des Staates', 55; Anton Kolbabeck, ed., *Österreichische Zeitgeschichte im Geschichtsunterricht. Bericht über die Expertentagung von 14. bis 16. Dezember 1960 in Reichenau*, (Vienna, 1960), 5. The political dimension was again evident almost a decade later, if less conspicuously, in an exhibition put together by the Austrian *Staatsarchiv* to mark the Republic's 50th anniversary. Its narrative, as far as the catalogue is concerned, appears to be classic *Koalitionsgeschichtsschreibung*, the presentation of 'events' without any accompanying analysis, and only a cursory glance at the most controversial episodes of the interwar years. The foreword to the catalogue was provided by the Federal Chancellor, Josef Klaus (ÖVP), first Chancellor of a post-war one party government. The catalogue was put together by Walter Goldinger.

⁵⁴ John T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria, 1918–1934*, (Copenhagen, 2007), 26.

with the past for fear of the inherent consequences for the community of historical research.’⁵⁵ To the present day, it is not unusual for historians to be engaged on a party political level in Austria.⁵⁶ So much so, that some have deemed it relatively simple to determine the party-political affiliation of many Austrian historians.⁵⁷ Or, as Berger Waldenegg noted in 2003, in Austria, everyone tends to know ‘wer ein “Schwarzer” oder ein “Roter” ist.’⁵⁸

During these early years, Austria’s party-political structure infiltrated the academic sphere and contemporary history’s nascent institutional landscape.⁵⁹ From the early sixties onwards, with a growing acceptance of *Zeitgeschichte* as a legitimate object of scholarly enquiry, research institutions dedicated to the study of contemporary history sprang up across the country. According to Angerer, initially at least, ‘coalition history’ was entirely adopted by early institutionalized *Zeitgeschichte*.⁶⁰ Yet, in time, each of these institutions claimed a different remit and, ultimately, a political-historical point of view. Of these, the most important included: The Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, established in 1959, whose intellectual focus hardly demands further clarification; the Institut für kirchliche Zeitgeschichte, established in Salzburg in 1962, which busied itself with investigating the role of the Catholic Church; the Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes established in 1963 ‘by ex-resistance fighters and anti-fascist historians’ who allied the institution with the ‘antifascist consensus’ of 1945 and the Ludwig-Boltzmann-Gesellschaft, formed in 1960 on the initiative of the Social Democrats, as a counter-weight to the conservative predisposition of Austrian universities.⁶¹ During its early years, the latter received most of its finance from the city

⁵⁵ Ibid, 26.

⁵⁶ Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, ‘Das große Tabu!’, 153.

⁵⁷ Ernst Hanisch, ‘Dominanz des Staates’, 62.

⁵⁸ Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, ‘Das große Tabu!’, 151.

⁵⁹ See: Ernst Hanisch, ‘Dominanz des Staates’, 62. Angerer notes that, ‘early institutionalized *Zeitgeschichte* entirely adopted coalition historiography’: Thomas Angerer, ‘An Incomplete Discipline’, 221.

⁶⁰ Thomas Angerer, ‘An Incomplete Discipline’, 221.

⁶¹ During its formative years, the DÖW was dedicated to documenting Austrian resistance to the Nazi regime. See: Ernst Hanisch, ‘Dominanz des Staates’, 57.

of Vienna and the Arbeiterkammer and during Kreisky's long reign the state took over the lion's share of the costs.⁶² Most important is likely the Österreichische Institut für Zeitgeschichte, established by Ludwig Jedlicka in 1961, the forerunner to the University Institute of the same name, which was founded a few years later in 1966 and was, until the 1980s, 'overwhelmingly engaged with the developments and conflicts of the First Republic'.⁶³ Two projects established by Hertha Firnberg (SPÖ), Minister for the newly-formed Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research, – also a key player in the *Wissenschaftliche Kommission* – are also worthy of note: the first in 1970 dedicated to the 'History of the Labour Movement', followed in 1980 by a project entitled 'Contemporary History'. Both of these ventures were charged with the same tasks; compiling a review of the particular discipline and, most significantly, stimulating new historical research.⁶⁴ More than mere interest groups, these institutions and projects initially acted as academic counterweights, levelling the playing field and, to a certain extent, mirroring the balance of political power.⁶⁵

The collapse of the 'Grand Coalition' in 1966 signalled the weakening of consensus politics and should have opened up the field for a more objective, open and impartial debate. However, whilst the artificial unity of the post-war era did begin to slowly break down, the deep-seated fear of political conflict, initially at least, remained, as did the 'continuing inability' to discuss the events of the interwar years in a sober and objective manner.⁶⁶ Bruno Kreisky's answer was the establishment of a commission dedicated to researching the history of Austria between 1927 – selected on account of the 'July Revolt', seen as a decisive milestone on the road to civil war – and the Anschluss of 1938, an idea

⁶² Ibid, 57.

⁶³ Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, 'Das große Tabu!', 149.

⁶⁴ Ernst Hanisch, 'Dominanz des Staates', 59.

⁶⁵ Other later developments included the journal *Zeitgeschichte* first published in 1973; the Ludwig Boltzmann *Institut für die Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* established in 1977, and the Karl von Vogelsang-Institut, which followed in 1980, dedicated to 'researching Christian democracy in Austria'. For further details see: Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, 'Das große Tabu!'; Gerhard Botz, '"Eine neue Welt"'; Ernst Hanisch, 'Dominanz des Staates', 149.

⁶⁶ Robert Hoffmann, 'Neuere Literatur zur Geschichte Österreichs von 1927 bis 1938', *Zeitgeschichte*, 3 (1975/76), 379.

that he had been harbouring since the early 1950s.⁶⁷ Of course, the year 1927 was also highly convenient as a point of departure because it offered the Social Democrats a neat trajectory of right-wing violence (from Schattendorf to the Anschluss), while being agreeable to ÖVP-historians because it permitted the perspective that neither side had its radical fringes fully under control. This meant no uncomfortable focus on Dollfuß for the ÖVP and, for the SPÖ, no unpleasant reminders about the fact that the Social Democrats had been noticeably keener on Anschluss than the Christian Socials all along. The idea was taken up by Alfred Maleta (ÖVP), Second President of the *Nationalrat*, and finally realized after Kreisky assumed the Chancellorship of a single-party SPÖ government in 1970. The following year saw the launch of a joint project, the *Wissenschaftliche Kommission des Theodor-Körner-Stiftungsfonds und des Leopold-Kunschak-Preises zur Erforschung der österreichischen Geschichte der Jahre 1927 bis 1938*.⁶⁸

The aim of the *Wissenschaftliche Kommission* was to investigate the events that had led to the catastrophe of 1938 – interpreted by some as ‘determining the facts’ – and under its auspices, eyewitness testimony was collected, the material available in the *Staatsarchiv* was sifted through and a series of conferences was held. The commission’s findings were published in an attempt to bring them to the wider public.⁶⁹ Kreisky had originally envisaged a commission consisting of three politicians and three journalists who had lived through the period, three young Austrian historians who had not, as well as three foreign historians.⁷⁰ These twelve people would effectively pass judgement on the

⁶⁷ See: Rudolf Neck, "Die wissenschaftliche Kommission des Theodor Körner-Stiftungsfonds und des Leopold Kunschak-Preises zur Erforschung der österreichischen Geschichte des Jahre 1927 bis 1938", in eds. Ludwig Jedlika and Rudolf Neck *Vom Justizpalast zum Heldenplatz. Studien und Dokumentationen 1927 bis 1938. Festgabe der Wissenschaftlichen Kommission des Theodor Körner-Stiftungsfonds und des Leopold Kunschak-Preises zur Erforschung der Österreichischen Geschichte der Jahre 1927 bis 1938* (Vienna, 1975), 15. For more on the ‘July Revolt’ see Chapter 4, 136–7.

⁶⁸ Ernst Hanisch, 'Dominanz des Staates', 58. Alfred Maleta, (15 Jan. 1906–16 Jan. 1990), Christian Social politician during the interwar years, incarcerated by the Nazi regime, one of the founders of the post-war ÖVP. Bruno Kreisky, (22 Jan. 1911–29 Jul. 1990). Active with the Social Democratic Party during the interwar years, he escaped to Swedish exile in 1938. Kreisky was Chancellor of Austria from 1970–83. The focus was later extended back to the year 1918. See also: Gerhard Botz, "Eine neue Welt", 66.

⁶⁹ Rudolf Neck, "Die wissenschaftliche Kommission des Theodor Körner-Stiftungsfonds und des Leopold Kunschak-Preises zur Erforschung der österreichischen Geschichte des Jahre 1927 bis 1938", 15.

⁷⁰ Gerhard Botz, "Eine neue Welt", 66.

events of 1918–38. Although the rigid structure of the *Wissenschaftliche Kommission* was eventually relaxed, the principle was adhered to, with the two main parties equally represented, and the Communists granted a significantly lesser role, a calculation which ensured a ‘balanced treatment’ of the themes to be discussed.⁷¹ Thus, although certainly well-intentioned, there was an overwhelmingly political flavour to the project; it was hoped, as Maleta explained, that the commission would bring about better understanding between ‘the opponents of the past and the partners of the present’.⁷² In reality, this was nothing more than *Koalitionsgeschichtsschreibung*, albeit in slightly altered garb.

The work of the *Wissenschaftliche Kommission* spanned the best part of a decade, and had a significant influence on contemporary understanding of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era. To its credit, it certainly succeeded in stimulating debate, while also providing a fertile breeding ground for a younger generation of Austrian historians. However, it also confirmed that the events of the First Republic could still not be discussed ‘independent of personal political posture’.⁷³ The desire to ‘sit in judgement’ and apportion blame was never far from the discussion, even if professional historians attempted to remain above the fray.⁷⁴ The attempt to guarantee that all political interest groups were equally represented was perhaps understandable, given the divisive nature of the issues being discussed. Yet, one could also argue that this became part of the problem, in that the politicized atmosphere, contributed to by the active participation of politicians, nevertheless affected the character of the debate. That is not to say that the state, the political parties or even individual politicians were deliberately using the *Kommission* to dictate the parameters of historical enquiry. Rather, that such a highly-politicized, emotionally-laden atmosphere can hardly be expected to have provided a neutral,

⁷¹ ‘Eine ausgewogene Behandlung’. Rudolf Neck, “Die wissenschaftliche Kommission des Theodor Körner-Stiftungsfonds und des Leopold Kunschak-Preises zur Erforschung des österreichischen Geschichte des Jahre 1927 bis 1938”, 15; Gerhard Botz, “Eine neue Welt” 66.

⁷² Ernst Hanisch, ‘Dominanz des Staates’, 58.

⁷³ Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, ‘Das große Tabu!’, 149–53, 150. The first in a series of symposia was held in 1972. For further details see, Ludwig Jedlicka, ed., *Österreich 1927 bis 1938*; Ludwig Jedlicka, ed., *Das Jahr 1934: 12. Februar. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 5. Februar 1974*, (Vienna, 1975); Ludwig Jedlicka, ed., *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 8. Oktober 1974*, (Vienna, 1975).

⁷⁴ See, for example the discussion contributions of Ackermann and Mommsen. Ludwig Jedlicka, ed., *Österreich 1927 bis 1938*, 57–60.

value-free environment for academic research. There were also wider implications, in that the 'agreement' to perpetuate an earlier practice and govern the structure of the *Kommission* to ensure political parity set a standard that has plagued public commemoration of divisive events ever since.⁷⁵ For want of genuine consensus, the tradition of 'equalizing' political influence on historical projects to ensure a 'balanced' appraisal is still observed to the present day; an official event held on 12 February 2004 to mark the seventieth anniversary of the 'February Uprising' is a case in point. The memorial service, which was held in the Austrian parliament, was jointly organized by the conservative Vogelsang-Institut and the left-wing Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung. Each organization nominated three historians to address the audience and, ultimately, present their point of view.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, 'Das große Tabu!', 153–54.

⁷⁶ Helmut Konrad, 'Der Februar 1934 im historischen Gedächtnis', in eds. Brigitte Bailer-Galanda and Wolfgang Neugebauer *Themen der Zeitgeschichte und der Gegenwart. Arbeiterbewegung – NS – Herrschaft – Rechtsextremismus; ein Resümee aus Anlass des 60. Geburtstags von Wolfgang Neugebauer* (Vienna 2004), 15.

‘Lernen S' bissl Geschichte, dann werden S' sehen, Herr Reporter!’

Despite all attempts to ensure ‘even-handedness’ in appraising the years 1927–38, there was, of course, no way of guaranteeing that the conclusions reached by the *Wissenschaftliche Kommission* would amount to a ‘balanced judgement’ of the period. According to one contemporary commentator, that the outcome would be anything but ‘balanced’ was obvious to those who had ‘followed the conclusions reached by the historical profession since the mid-sixties, or who, on account of their political persuasion had always been of the opinion that the attack on democracy had come from the right, and not from the left’.⁷⁷ During the late sixties and early seventies, with ‘fewer historians – especially those on the “left”...willing to continue sharing in the orderly division of responsibility for the recent past’, and the emergence of a younger generation of scholars, the artificial unity of the post-era was beginning to break down.⁷⁸ Rather than uphold the tenets of ‘coalition history’, Austria’s ‘68er’ generation, cut their academic teeth within the confines of the *Kommission* and set about challenging it from within.⁷⁹ Taking their lead, in part, from US historian Charles Gulick, they launched into the field of labour history; Gulick’s book ‘Austria from Habsburg to Hitler’ would prove seminal for Austrian students during the 60s and 70s.⁸⁰ Implementing new social and structural methodologies, and using in part, Austromarxism as a ‘theoretical armoury’ this ‘new generation of scholars, led by Gerhard Botz’ and inspired by ‘New Left historiography’ went to work on ‘the interwar period, Austrofascism, the coming of the Anschluss and Austrian labour history’.⁸¹ With the Social Democrats now politically in the ascendancy, ‘coalition history’

⁷⁷ Robert Hoffmann, ‘Neuere Literatur zur Geschichte Österreichs von 1927 bis 1938’, 381.

⁷⁸ Harry Ritter, ‘Recent Writing on Interwar Austria’, *Central European History*, 12/3 (1979), 297–98. See also: Laura Gellott, ‘Recent Writings on the Ständestaat, 1934–1938’, 58.

⁷⁹ Günter Bischof, et al., *Neutrality in Austria*, (New Brunswick, 2001), 295.

⁸⁰ Gerhard Botz, ‘“Eine neue Welt”’ 53–54, 61. Gulick’s ‘achievement’ was such that in 1972 Austrian President and Social Democratic politician Franz Jonas awarded him with a gold medal for ‘Services to the Republic’ – like Kreisky, Jonas had also stood in fundamental opposition to the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg ‘regime’ and had been arrested and imprisoned in 1935 for involvement with the RSJ. See: Academic Senate: University of California, ‘In Memoriam: 1985: Charles Adams Gulick. 1896–1984’ <http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=hb4d5nb20m&brand=calisphere>, accessed 10 Dec. 2012. For Gulick, see above note 33.

⁸¹ See: Helmut Konrad, ‘Februar 1934’, 14; Günter Bischof, et al., *Neutrality in Austria*, 295. Ernst Hanisch, ‘Dominanz des Staates’, 63.

was openly challenged by a left-wing reading of the interwar period, a process, which had been encouraged by Christian Broda and Kreisky, during the sixties, before the SPÖ came to power.⁸² Strengthened by an ever-increasing majority at the ballot box, in 1974 the Kreisky government seized the opportunity and went 'on the offensive', with the unequivocal aim of 'addressing' [*Aufarbeitung*] the key issues of the interwar period, in particular, the February Civil War.⁸³ The 1970s then, brought with them 'greater partisanship' in the historiographical debate and culminated in a pronounced shift in the historical paradigm and, particularly where the February Civil War is concerned, socialist hegemony of the historical record⁸⁴. These were unquestionably important developments and viewing the period through this filter evidently contributed to our understanding of the era. However, as Hanisch points out, while Social Democratic interwar politics was sometimes strongly criticized, this generation 'overlooked the "*Staatswiderstand*" of the authoritarian *Ständestaat* against National Socialism'.⁸⁵ Thus, historical accounts of the Dollfuß era were understandably influenced by the political and social climate of the time, which ultimately affected research interests, the way questions were formulated and ultimately the conclusions that were reached. This is of course a phenomenon true of almost every generation of historians; the peculiar thing is, when it comes to the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era, these conclusions have hardly been rigorously contested since.

For this first post-war generation of historians the central question was not why Austrian democracy had failed, but how it had been *destroyed*. By whom was obvious. On 4 March 1933, Dollfuß and his government exploited a procedural technicality in parliament to eliminate parliamentary democracy on the basis that parliament had

⁸² Gerhard Botz, "'Eine neue Welt'", 61–65. On Broda see above text accompanying note 42.

⁸³ Helmut Konrad, 'Februar 1934', 14. In March 1970 the SPÖ gained a plurality in the national elections and Bruno Kreisky became Chancellor of a minority government. In October of the following year this plurality became an absolute majority, a success, which was repeated in 1975 and again in 1979.

⁸⁴ Laura Gellott, 'Recent Writings on the *Ständestaat*, 1934–1938', 208. See also: Helmut Konrad, 'Februar 1934', 14–16.

⁸⁵ Ernst Hanisch, 'Dominanz des Staates', 63.

effectively ceased to function.⁸⁶ In the course of a heated debate about a strike of railway workers the first president of the *Nationalrat*, Karl Renner, stepped down in order to be able to take part in the vote; the second president, the Christian Social Rudolf Ramek and the third, Sepp Straffner, member of the *Großdeutsche Volkspartei* (GDVP), followed suit, the last one without formally closing the session, a move not provided for in the parliament's Standing Orders. Dollfuß, seeing an opportunity to outflank the obstructionist tactics that had plagued his tenure, refused to reconvene it despite demands from the Social Democrats, the Greater Germans (GDVP) and Nazis to do so.⁸⁷ Instead, Dollfuß opted to rule by emergency decree against the expressed wishes of the Social Democratic, National Socialist and Greater German opposition. When, on the 15 March, the Social Democrats and Greater Germans attempted to reconvene they were prevented from entering the building by the police on Dollfuß's orders. Instead, ignoring opposition demands for the reinstatement of parliament and new elections, Dollfuß pressed ahead with his authoritarian course. Over the following weeks and months, the party system and parliamentary institutions were systematically destroyed. The constitutional court was eliminated, press censorship was introduced, the death penalty was reintroduced and political opponents were locked up in internment camps. At the end of March the military arm of the SPÖ was disbanded, and in May and June the Austrian NSDAP, Styrian Heimatschutz and the KPÖ were banned. This development, along with the formation of Dollfuß's *Einheitspartei*, the *Vaterländische Front*, for all Austrians 'loyal to the government' in May 1933, culminated in the elimination of the remaining political parties, the Christian Socials included, and the February Civil War.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ It was Robert Hecht who allegedly coined the phrase, '*Selbstausschaltung des Parlaments*'. For an excellent blow-by-blow account of the end of parliamentary rule in Austria see: R. John Rath, 'The Dollfuß Ministry: The Demise of the Nationalrat', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 32 (2001).

⁸⁷ Wandruszka's assessment, for example: 'Ich glaube darüber sind wir alle einig, daß die Regierung Dollfuß die Absicht gehabt haben, die Gelegenheit zu benützen, um die Parteidemokratie auszuschalten'. Wandruszka in response to; Verena Lang, 'Die Haltung des Bundespräsidenten Miklas gegenüber der Sozialdemokratischen Partei 1933/34', in ed., Ludwig Jedlicka *Das Jahr 1934: 12. Februar. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 5. Februar 1974* (Vienna, 1975), 78.

⁸⁸ For more on the *Vaterländische Front* see: Irmgard Bärnthaler, *Die Vaterländische Front: Geschichte und Organisation*, (Vienna, 1971) and Robert Kriechbaumer, *Österreich! und Front Heill: Aus den Akten des Generalsekretariats der Vaterländischen Front; Innenansichten eines Regimes*, (Vienna, 2005).

This interpretation stressed the fact that the road to dictatorship and the elimination of Social Democracy from the political process had been set in motion well before the 'coup d'état' of March 1933. According to Leser, 'after 15 July 1927 there was no turning back from the road leading inexorably to civil war and the tragedy of February 1934'.⁸⁹ Following this line of reasoning, the motive for shutting down parliament could not have been, as the Dollfuß government had argued at the time, to keep the Nazis away from the centres of power and thus, must have been intended to 'disempower' Austrian Social Democracy.⁹⁰ In his work on interwar Christian Socialism, Anton Staudinger identified anti-social-democratic elements within the party, which, having failed in previous attempts to limit the activities of their political rivals, willingly participated in the destruction of parliament and the establishment of dictatorial rule.⁹¹ Seipel's attempts to harness the power of the *Heimwehr* for the government camp, the demand for constitutional reform in favour of the executive branch through a broadening of the prerogatives of the President, Vaugoin's instrumentalisation of the Bundesheer as an instrument of the Christian Social Party, the move towards authoritarian politics taken by the Vaugoin minority cabinet in 1930, not to mention the ever intensifying anti-social-democratic sentiment all suggested a creeping authoritarianism within the ranks of the Christian Social Party and a neat trajectory from July 1927 to March 1933.⁹² Dollfuß's increasingly ambivalent attitude towards democracy provided further evidence for this line of argument.⁹³ Even if some Christian Socials harboured reservations about

⁸⁹ Norbert Leser, 'Austro-Marxism: A Reappraisal', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 11 (1976) 144.

⁹⁰ Everhard Holtmann, 'Politische Tendenzjustiz während des Februaraufstandes 1934', in eds. Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck *Das Jahr 1934: 12. Februar. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 5. Februar 1974* (Vienna, 1975), 55.

⁹¹ Anton Staudinger, 'Christlichsoziale Partei', in eds. Erika Weinzierl and Kurt Skalník *Österreich 1918–1938. Geschichte der Ersten Republik. Teil I* (Graz, 1983), 260.

⁹² Emmerich Tálos, 'Zum Herrschaftssystem des Austrofaschismus: Österreich 1934–1938', in ed., Erwin Oberländer *Autoritäre Regime in Ostmittel- und Südosteuropa, 1919–1944* (Paderborn, 2001), 148; Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Die Anhaltelage in Österreich', in eds. Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck *Vom Justizpalast zum Heldenplatz. Studien und Dokumentationen 1927 bis 1938* (Vienna, 1975), 65. Also: Rainer Hubert, 'Johannes Schober – eine Figur des Übergangs', in eds. Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck *Vom Justizpalast zum Heldenplatz. Studien und Dokumentationen 1927 bis 1938*, (Vienna, 1975).

⁹³ Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Dollfuß', 234. 'Dollfuß stand durchaus in der Tradition des Demokratieunbehagens'. cf James William Miller, 'Engelbert Dollfuß and Austrian Agriculture', in eds. Günter Bischof, et al. *The Dollfuß-Schuschnigg Era in Austria: A Reassessment* (New Brunswick, 2003).

Dollfuß's strategy, the party ultimately aligned itself with the authoritarian course and was, on the whole – according to Gerhard Botz – 'very pleased' with the events of 4 March 1933, as it finally gave them the opportunity they had been hankering after to alter the constitution.⁹⁴ Peter Huemer pursued the theme even further, claiming, on the basis of a single case study of the jurist Robert Hecht that the destruction of Austrian democracy was the result of a systematic and wilful policy on the part of the bourgeois camp.⁹⁵ Despite one German-American reviewer's reservations about the insistence on 'destruction' and the questionable political undertones, Huemer's 'pioneering study' continues to underpin contemporary historical understanding of the period.⁹⁶ To the present day, the verdict for some historians – Leidinger and Moritz, for example – remains unequivocal that it was Dollfuß who 'destroyed Austrian democracy'.⁹⁷

The problem with that is that while one could argue that as it was Dollfuß who took the executive decision not to reconvene parliament in March 1933 the collapse of Austrian democracy was ultimately his responsibility, such a monocausal assessment fails to consider other factors that may have contributed to its demise. These factors included the abuse of the democratic process by all sides manifested in the fact that parliamentary deadlock was making government almost impossible. By way of comparison, it is interesting that the collapse of Weimar democracy has been blamed on *many*, but the failure of Austrian democracy effectively blamed, in this instance, on *one man*.⁹⁸

The role of Social Democracy was far less controversial. Although scholars – even those close to the party – went to great lengths to acknowledge the mistakes made,

⁹⁴ Gerhard Botz, in the discussion in response to: Verena Lang, 'Bundespräsidenten Miklas', 69.

⁹⁵ Peter Huemer, *Sektionschef Robert Hecht und die Zerstörung der Demokratie in Österreich. Eine historisch-politische Studie*, (Vienna, 1975).

⁹⁶ Klemens von Klemperer, Review of: 'Sektionschef Robert Hecht und die Zerstörung der Demokratie in Österreich. Eine historisch-politische Studie', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 14, (1978), 382–83; R. John Rath, Review of: 'Sektionschef Robert Hecht und die Zerstörung der Demokratie in Österreich. Eine historisch-politische Studie', *The American Historical Review*, 82:3, (1977), 676.

⁹⁷ 'Bundeskanzler Dollfuß hat die Demokratie zerstört'. Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, (Vienna, 2008), 48.

⁹⁸ One is reminded here of Berthold Brecht's "Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters": 'Caesar beat the Gauls – Did he not have even a cook with him?'

particularly by the party leadership, they were still inclined to portray them as ultimately the victims of the anti-democratic, authoritarian 'salami tactics' employed by the Dollfuß government.⁹⁹ As Norbert Leser, an academic celebrated for his critical take on Austro-Marxism and the SPÖ argued:

There is no doubt that the bourgeoisie, by trying to exclude the social-democrats from all participation in the government, must bear the overwhelming responsibility for the developments culminating in civil war. Nevertheless Austro-Marxism also contributed to its undoing, at least to the extent of providing the Heimwehr gratuitously with the sort of wild and violent statements which right-wing extremists would successfully employ to frighten the undecided and the gullible to active partisanship.¹⁰⁰

It was not just responsibility for the civil war that was laid firmly at the door of the Christian Social right. While Leser conceded that the two sides shared responsibility for the collapse of Austrian democracy in the interwar period – a stance for which he, by his own admission, came under fire from within the party – the Social Democrats, he asserted, ultimately bore less responsibility than the government camp.¹⁰¹ Social Democratic propaganda also played a role: 'continually emphasizing the transitoriness and disparaging the institutions of the republic – which in fact it did its upmost to uphold' Leser continued, 'allowed the middle classes to distort and misinterpret much of what it had to say on the subject of democracy and dictatorship'.¹⁰² He does not, however, offer his opinion on whether disparaging the institutions of the Republic in this way actually served to undermine it and its independence. Instead, it was the 'criminal' provocation of the left by the government camp, which culminated in the February Uprising of 1934.¹⁰³ Pushed on the defensive by a government propelled by an 'unbridled lust for power', a group of

⁹⁹ See, for example, the work of Norbert Leser: Norbert Leser, '12 Thesen zum 12. Februar 1934', in ed., Ludwig Jedlicka *Das Jahr 1934: 12. Februar. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 5. Februar 1974* (Vienna, 1975); Everhard Holtmann, 'Sozialdemokratische Defensivpolitik vom dem 12. Februar 1934', in eds. Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck *Vom Justizpalast zum Heldenplatz. Studien und Dokumentationen 1927 bis 1938* (Vienna, 1975), 117. In the same publication, see also 251, 253.

¹⁰⁰ Norbert Leser, 'Austro-Marxism: A Reappraisal' 144.

¹⁰¹ Norbert Leser, "...auf halben Wegen und zu halber Tat..." *Politische Auswirkungen einer österreichischen Befindlichkeit*, (Vienna, 2000), 97.

¹⁰² Norbert Leser, 'Austro-Marxism: A Reappraisal' 144–45.

¹⁰³ Norbert Leser, '12 Thesen', 59.

Schutzbündler, failed by indecisive leadership within their own party, in an act of desperation, took matters into their own hands. In this 'glorious chapter' in the history of the Austrian labour movement, seeing democracy and freedom under serious threat, they made a heroic – and ultimately futile – last-ditch attempt to defend it, making Austria 'the one spot in Western Europe where the working classes found the courage and strength to resist fascism', the author overlooking, it seems, the Spanish Civil War.¹⁰⁴ Thus, in an act of 'crass stupidity', the Dollfuß government not only destroyed a reliable pillar of democracy but also deprived itself, it was claimed, of its most valuable ally in the fight against National Socialism while at the same time destroying the only possible foundations for a common defence strategy.¹⁰⁵ In this manner, or so the argument went, the 'Austrofascist' government paved the way for the National Socialist regime.¹⁰⁶ All of these assertions can be found, in one form or another, repeated in assessments of the period up to the present day.¹⁰⁷

Thus, in the Austria of the 1970s things were said in print – that apparently went unchallenged there – that would have raised eyebrows outside Austria. Dollfuß, who never took the easy path of abdicating responsibility for the affairs of state and refused to sign over power to the Nazis even when he had a bullet in his chest, supposedly paved the way for the National Socialist regime and was responsible for the Nazi takeover, but Renner, in endorsing the Anschluss somehow resisted Hitler. Of course, outside of Austria someone may have recalled that it was Dollfuß who had been shot by the Nazis, while Dollfuß's opponent, Karl Renner, had rather conspicuously survived the Third Reich – unlike most of the leadership of German Social Democracy, who were, in fact,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 59; 'Hier hat an einer einzigen Stelle, kann man sagen, in Westeuropa die Arbeiterschaft den Mut und Kraft gefunden, dem Faschismus Widerstand zu leisten' Rudolf Neck, 'Der Februar 1934. Die politische Entwicklung', in ed., Ludwig Jedlicka *Österreich 1927 bis 1938. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien, 23. bis 28. Oktober 1972* (Vienna, 1973), 104–5.

¹⁰⁵ Norbert Leser, '12 Thesen', 59.

¹⁰⁶ See: Ackermann, Discussion: Ludwig Jedlicka, ed., *Österreich 1927 bis 1938*, 232–3. See also: Werner Suppanz, for example, also contends that the 'Austrofascists' laid the political-cultural groundwork for the takeover by the National Socialist regime; Werner Suppanz, "'Er gab für Österreich sein Blut, ein wahrer deutscher Mann". Engelbert Dollfuß und die austrofascistische Version des Führertums', in ed., Benno Ennker *Der Führer im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg, 2010), 156.

¹⁰⁷ For example: Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, 48.

murdered by the Nazis.¹⁰⁸ This is not a question of favouring one side or another. Rather, it is a question of putting historical events into the wider context of the fight against National Socialism in Europe in the 1930s and comparing the record of Austrian Social Democracy with that of Social Democracy elsewhere. It is the question of whether the record of Austrian Social Democracy, despite having no sympathy with the Nazi cause, can be considered equal to that of German Social Democracy in resisting National Socialism before the takeover of Austria in 1938.

Just as the wider evidence remained unexamined so did the question of under which conditions Austrian Social Democracy would have been prepared to act as an ally of Dollfuß against Hitler. It also failed to examine the assumption that democracy was the only basis for a defence against National Socialism. After all, democracy made Czechoslovakia vulnerable to the Nazi onslaught and it was of course the ballot box that ensured Hitler could paralyse what was left of Weimar democracy through frequent elections. These significant silences and omissions contrast sharply with the considerable energy expended in the attempt to undermine Dollfuß's anti-Nazi credentials. Since one could not deny that he had been killed by the Nazis, it was suggested that, engaged in a 'war on two fronts', the Dollfuß government saw its main enemy in Social Democracy and not National Socialism. According to Staudinger, Dollfuß's key concern was, first and foremost, the elimination of the Social Democratic party, not the struggle against the Austrian Nazis.¹⁰⁹ In the same vein, Everhard Holtmann maintained that preferential treatment was discernible in the judicial system, which seemed to be employed in favour of the NSDAP and to the detriment of the Social Democrats.¹¹⁰ The participants of the 'February Uprising', for example, were treated more harshly by the courts than the Nazi

¹⁰⁸ On the failed Nazi putsch that ended in Dollfuß's assassination see: Gerhard Jagschitz, *Der Putsch: Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, (Graz, 1976) and, most recently, Hans Schafranek, *Sommerfest mit Preisschießen. Die unbekannte Geschichte des NS-Putsches im Juli 1934*, (Vienna, 2006).

¹⁰⁹ Staudinger's reply in discussion about; Anton Staudinger, 'Die Mitwirkung der christlich-sozialen Partei an der Errichtung des autoritären Ständestaates', in ed., Ludwig Jedlicka *Österreich 1927 bis 1938. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien, 23. bis 28. Oktober 1972* (Vienna, 1973), 94–5. On Dollfuß and the topic of Anschluss see: Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Dollfuß', 237.

¹¹⁰ See: Everhard Holtmann, 'Politische Tendenzjustiz', 45.

putschists.¹¹¹ Conversely, Dollfuß, the 'Anschlussfreund' was singled out for his apparent equivocation vis-à-vis the National Socialist movement.¹¹² As Jagschitz argued, Dollfuß did not really fight National Socialism itself.¹¹³ Neck suggested that where Dollfuß and his circle did attack the Nazis, they did so, 'time and again...on account of the socialist elements of their [the Nazis] programme'.¹¹⁴ Both Staudinger and Jagschitz maintain that, in the immediate aftermath of the elimination of parliament in March 1933, Dollfuß was, in fact, in favour of working with the National Socialists, however, his colleagues within the Christian Social Party rejected this strategy.¹¹⁵ Thus, while Dollfuß rejected the idea of a coalition with the Social Democrats outright, he appeared – in 1933 at least – willing to negotiate with the National Socialists on the issue, and was, ultimately, only prompted into rigorous action against the Austrian National Socialists by their terroristic activities.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ See: Everhard Holtmann, 'Zwischen "Blutschuld" und "Befriedigung": Autoritäre Julijustiz', in ed., Ludwig Jedlicka *Das Jahr 1934: 25. Juli. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 8. Oktober 1974. Wissenschaftliche Kommission des Theodor-Körner-Stiftungsfonds und des Leopold-Kunschak-Preises zur Erforschung der österreichischen Geschichte der Jahre 1927 bis 1938.* (Vienna, 1975), 44.

¹¹² Jagschitz's reply in discussion about; Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Bundeskanzler Dollfuß und der Juli 1934', in eds. Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck *Österreich 1927 bis 1938. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien 23. bis 28. Oktober 1972. Wissenschaftliche Kommission des Theodor-Körner-Stiftungsfonds und des Leopold-Kunschak-Preises zur Erforschung der österreichischen Geschichte der Jahre 1927 bis 1938* (Vienna, 1975), 172.

¹¹³ See Jagschitz's reply in discussion about; Ibid 172. According to Jagschitz: 'Er [Dollfuß] hat sich primär nicht gegen den Nationalsozialismus als Ideologie gestemmt, er hat das Österreichbewusstsein dagegen durchaus als politisches Mittel eingesetzt, und wir wissen aus vielen, vielen Dokumenten, daß Dollfuß gar nicht so sehr gegen den konkreten Nationalsozialismus gekämpft hat.'

¹¹⁴ Rudolf Neck, 'Der Februar 1934', 106.

¹¹⁵ See Staudinger's reply in discussion concerning: Anton Staudinger, 'Die Mitwirkung der christlich-sozialen Partei' 94–5.

¹¹⁶ See, Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Christlichsoziale Partei', esp. 76–77. 'Auch die Ablehnung des Nationalsozialismus war bei der Mehrzahl der christlich-sozialen Mandatäre stärker ausgeprägt als beim Dollfuß, den erst die terroristischen Methoden der NSDAP in Österreich zu rigorosem Vorgehen gegen die Nationalsozialisten in Österreich veranlaßten': Anton Staudinger, 'Die Mitwirkung der christlich-sozialen Partei', 74.

Austrofaschismus?

Somewhat inevitably, this renewed interest in the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era, coming as it did at a time when historical analysis across Europe and the United States was fixated with explaining the fascist phenomenon, induced – or rather, re-opened – a contentious debate about how the period should be categorized and defined; it was certainly anti-democratic, but was it authoritarian, totalitarian, fascist?¹¹⁷ For the Austrian left, which drew its political legitimacy from its ideologically anti-fascist posture, there was little room for doubt; the idea of ‘Austrofascism’ was sacrosanct, the lynchpin in a mythologized narrative of heroic antifascist resistance, which legitimized the claim that Austria – and thus the Social Democrats – had experienced two ‘fascist dictatorships’ during the twentieth century. Thus Kreisky could declare in his memoirs that Austrian Social Democracy ‘was the first and only Social Democratic party in the world that at least made an attempt at resistance’.¹¹⁸ Maintaining this narrative was – and one could argue, still is – critical because it diverted attention away from the Austrian Social Democrats’ failure to offer decisive resistance to National Socialism.¹¹⁹ Thus, to this day Social Democratic circles fiercely defend an account of Austrian workers being, in February 1934, the first in Europe to take a stand against Fascism. This account masks some difficult questions about why it was Dollfuß who was deemed to be the true enemy of the working classes, and not the National Socialists. Conversely, those on the conservative right wishing to avoid discussion of an uncomfortable anti-democratic past, preferred to stick with the term *Ständestaat*, the official designation used between 1934 and 1938.

Transposed onto the academic community, the ‘Austrofascist’ debate remains a key historiographical fault-line; despite the vast literature on the subject there is no consensus on how the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg system of rule should be judged. One reason for this lack of consensus is that, within Austria at least, the issue has largely been

¹¹⁷ See, for instance: R. John Rath, ‘The First Austrian Republic – Totalitarian, Fascist, Authoritarian, or What?’, in eds. Rudolf Neck and Adam Wandruszka *Beiträge zur Zeitgeschichte. Festschrift Ludwig Jedlicka zum 60. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 1976).

¹¹⁸ Bruno Kreisky, *Zwischen den Zeiten. Erinnerungen aus fünf Jahrzehnten*, (Berlin, 1986), 214.

¹¹⁹ See: Gudula Walterskirchen, ‘Dollfuß, die Historiker und die Parteipolitik’, *Die Presse* [online edition], 25 Jul. 2009, accessed: 13 Jun. 2012.

investigated by historians from two separate camps; while the one side look for evidence to prove that it was indeed fascist, the other look for evidence that does not fit traditional fascist typologies. This is compounded by the fact that definitions of both authoritarianism and fascism are in themselves disputed, and with shifting boundaries almost any interpretation is possible, which in part explains why, when it comes to describing the *Ständestaat*, there are just so many labels and descriptions to choose from. While for some the *Ständestaat* is best understood as a form of authoritarian conservatism, as a 'conventional' dictatorship, whether of the bourgeois, chancellorial, conservative or corporate kind, others argue that it was fascist to the core. It is branded 'clerical fascism', 'competitive fascism' (vis-à-vis National Socialism), 'imitation fascism' or 'Austrofascism' according to where one wishes to place the emphasis. For those who are mindful of the evident disparities between the three systems, yet still wish to emphasize some loose ideological similarities, all is not lost; there is still 'parafascism', 'protofascism' and 'semifascism', *fascistoid* and *fascisant*. Thus, rather than helping us to an academic consensus, the literature leaves us with more questions than answers.

The 'Austrofascist' school maintains that, even though, like traditional authoritarian dictatorships, it ruled through the Church, the civil service and the army, the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg system of rule was effectively closer to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in nature than it was to the authoritarian regimes of interwar Europe. In the early 1980s, claiming 'blind spots' in understanding of the period, in part, as a result of what was deemed to be selective academic research, Wolfgang Neugebauer, the 'doyen of Austrofascist research' and Emmerich Tálos, one of the most prominent proponents of 'Austrofascist' theory, set out to analyse the establishment and implementation of the 'Austrofascist' dictatorship.¹²⁰ Tálos rejected the label 'authoritarian regime' as a 'vague "residual category"' lacking clear demarcation from fascist regimes. He linked political changes in Austria with those of neighbouring countries and deemed that the Austrian system of rule fell somewhere between 'the fascist prototypes, Italy and Germany'. Tálos

¹²⁰ Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer, eds., *Austrofascismus: Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur, 1933–1938*, (Vienna, 2005). The first edition was published in 1984. Neugebauer was described as such by Harald Walser, a politician for *Die Grünen* in: Harald Walser, 'Austrofascismus – "sagen wir es nur ganz offen und ehrlich!"', *Die Presse [online edition]*, 03 Oct. 2011, 4 Sep. 2012.

maintained that, on account of three ideological indicators – occupational estates, anti-Marxism and the elimination of class warfare – the system of rule between 1934 and 1938 could indeed be characterized as ‘Austrofascism’.¹²¹ The anti-Socialist sentiment of all three systems lies at the heart of this analysis, Hitler was anti-Socialist, Mussolini was anti-socialist and so was Dollfuß. Arguing on the one hand, that the constant emphasis on Austria’s German character precluded a strict demarcation from Nazi Germany, and on the other, that Dollfuß had other choices than to establish a regime that Tálos claims was based on the Italian model, no-one, he maintains, forced Dollfuß down the path he took.¹²²

Despite enjoying significant academic ‘air-time’ – due to visible and vociferous adherents – and thus a strong historiographical presence, the ‘Austrofascist’ thesis has not gone unchallenged. Many scholars, within Austria and abroad, disagree with this assessment, either completely, or by degrees. In the course of a recent debate about the use of the term *Austrofaschismus* in the text of a law concerning the rehabilitation of victims of the Dollfuß ‘regime’, Kurt Bauer appealed to the political and academic communities to ditch the use of ‘Austrofascism’ to describe the period 1933–38 once and for all. Bauer’s argument was an altogether pragmatic one: pointing out that most regimes and ideologies are now known by the name that they gave themselves without issue – Communists, Italian Fascists, National Socialists, Anti-Semites – Bauer, no Dollfuß apologist by any stretch of the imagination, contended that there really was no conceivable problem with the use of the term *Ständestaat*, and that dogged insistence on ‘Austrofascism’, in spite of the facts, was ultimately damaging for the whole debate.¹²³

One of the main problems of the term ‘Austrofascism’ is that it was used as an ideological-political ‘Kampfbegriff’, first by the left during the First Republic to denote

¹²¹ See: Emmerich Tálos, ‘Herrschaftssystem’, 161–62 and Emmerich Tálos ‘Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem 1933–1938’, in ed., Wolfgang Maderthaner “Der Führer bin ich selbst”: Engelbert Dollfuß–Benito Mussolini, *Briefwechsel* (Vienna, 2004), 112.

¹²² See: Emmerich Tálos and Walter Hämmerle, “Niemand hat Dollfuß gezwungen”, *Wiener Zeitung* [online edition], 13 May 2011, accessed: 20 Sep. 2012.

¹²³ See: Kurt Bauer, ‘Vergesst endlich den “Austrofaschismus”’, *Die Presse* [online edition], 25 Jan. 2011, accessed: 14 Jul. 2011 and Kurt Bauer, “Austrofaschismus”, nein danke’, *Der Standard* [online edition], 29 Sep. 2011, accessed: 17 Jan. 2012

those currents that were not National Socialist, but that they identified as 'antidemocratic, right-wing extremist and fascist', and later by the SPÖ, as a political weapon against their ÖVP opponents.¹²⁴ As a pejorative epithet often used in political discourse for the purposes of moral condemnation, it cannot be simply separated from its political, emotional and moral baggage. Tálos's insistence that he uses the term 'Austrofascism' in an academic sense (as if the same could not be true for scholars using the term *Ständestaat*) is unconvincing and inconsistent; as Schausberger has rightly pointed out, one cannot claim 'Austrofascism' as an academic concept, while simultaneously dismissing *Ständestaat* as a political one.¹²⁵ To understand the problem here, one must consider the function of such terms in Austrian society. If a historian uses the term 'Austrofascism', he/she is effectively saying – 'I adhere to the thesis that Dollfuß, the anti-Marxist, in destroying Austrian democracy paved the way for Anschluss and the Nazi regime'. Conversely, if someone uses the term *Ständestaat*, it generally means – 'I adhere to the thesis that Dollfuß acted as a bulwark against National Socialism and sacrificed democracy in the struggle to prevent a Nazi takeover and ensure independence'. Of course, one could theoretically use either term and not strictly adhere to either thesis, yet, it appears clear that while the term *Ständestaat* could be unshackled from any inherent value judgement – it does not exclude a 'fascist' interpretation – the term 'Austrofascism' simply cannot.¹²⁶

The problem with 'Austrofascism' is not just that it has proven to be a somewhat nebulous epithet but that its liberal application has, it could be argued, contributed to the obfuscation of historical reality. Even if one concludes that there were 'fascistic' elements

¹²⁴ Kurt Bauer, 'Vergesst endlich den "Austrofaschismus"', *Die Presse [online edition]*, 25 Jan. 2011, accessed: 14 Jul. 2011. For an example of 'Austrofascism' in use, see: "'Niemand kommt auf Urlaub nach Chile'", *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 11 Feb. 1975, 3. Although likely originating from the *Heimwehr* leader Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, the Kreisky Archive maintains that the concept was coined by the left in response to Austria's increasing dependence upon Mussolini's Italy, see: 'Erinnerungsort Wien' http://www.erinnerungsort.at/thema2/u_thema2.htm accessed 8 August 2010. See also: John T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria, 1918–1934*, 57.

¹²⁵ See: Franz Schausberger, 'Gastkommentar: Was hinter dem Ständestaat stand', *Wiener Zeitung [online edition]*, 17 May 2011, accessed: 17 Nov. 2012. On Schausberger's political allegiance see: Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, 'Das große Tabu!', 9.

¹²⁶ Although, strictly speaking the term 'Ständestaat' only refers to the system of government post-May 1934.

to the *Ständestaat*, either in the form of fascist trappings – the *Vaterländische Front*, the *Kruckenkreuz*, or the internment camps – or in the form of the *Heimwehr* as a coalition partner, to label the whole system of rule ‘fascist’ seems to be to fall victim to a reductionist logic. Whilst the *Heimwehr* certainly displayed unambiguous ‘fascist’ tendencies, they remained a subordinate ally in Dollfuß’s, overwhelmingly conservative, government. Granted, they used their position to push Dollfuß on an increasingly authoritarian/fascist course, but one should also consider Dollfuß’s persistent and tireless attempts to outmanoeuvre his coalition partners and avoid implementation of their most radical demands. The Austrian dictatorship also lacked some of fascism’s core tenets: an aggressive foreign policy, ultranationalism, the celebration of violence, revolutionary zeal, totalitarian aspirations, and, as in the case of Italy in Abyssinia and in National Socialism everywhere, in its virulent and ultimately murderous racism. There is also the issue of intention; there is no evidence to suggest that before 1933 Dollfuß ever intended to seize power and establish a fascist-type regime, something that was demonstrably not the case for either Hitler or Mussolini. As regards the external trappings – the *Vaterländische Front* and the *Kruckenkreuz* – as well as Dollfuß’s attempt to mobilize the Austrian community, again, the wider context in which Dollfuß decided to institute these measures needs to be considered. The very real threat posed by Nazi Germany, pressure from their only half-dependable ally, Italy, to take Austria on a fascist course, no concrete offer of support from the West as well as the perceived need to unite Austrians behind some sort of banner (in the nation-building, rather than the ultranationalistic sense, the *Ständestaat* only ever claimed the Austrians were the better Germans vis-à-vis the Nazis, not the ‘master race’) all suggest a profound deviation from traditional fascist typologies.

Outside of Austria, one does not have to look far to find voices that challenge the blanket fascist label. Among scholars of fascism, Stanley Payne identifies Dollfuß and Schuschnigg as representatives of the conservative right and the *Heimwehr* as part of the radical right, seeing it as ‘a pre-emptive non-fascist authoritarian regime’.¹²⁷ Philip Morgan views the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg system of rule as authoritarianism that co-opted the *Heimwehr*, which in his assessment was a strand of Austrian fascism. Perhaps most

¹²⁷ Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914–1945*, (London, 1995).

recently, Roger Griffin labels the *Ständestaat* – along with Horthy's Hungary and Salazar's Portugal – as para-fascist, a form of authoritarian and ultranationalist conservatism that adopted the 'fascist style', but never aspired to a its 'ideological revolutionary vision of genuine fascism'.¹²⁸ Although, even this brings with it its own problems; intended as 'a corrective to the earlier indiscriminate branding of inter-war dictatorial regimes as "fascist"', Kallis points out that the term para-fascism, 'created as many definitional and analytical problems as those it aspired to resolve' as it remains unclear 'whether the distinction between the two categories of fascist and para-fascist regime refers to a difference of quality or simply degree'.¹²⁹ Kallis himself also opts for a more nuanced approach, and deems Dollfuß's strategy ultimately a defensive one; to co-opt the least radical component of fascism – the Starhemberg faction of the *Heimwehr* – 'under the tutelage of the conservative establishment' in defence of the existing order against the threat posed by 'the aspirations of a more extreme fascist agenda' – internally, the Austrian NSDAP, and, externally, Nazi Germany.¹³⁰ In Austria too, there are a handful of interwar specialists who, wary of the pitfalls, studiously avoid the term. Helmut Wohnout, a 'conservative' historian, eschews both terms, opting for 'chancellorial dictatorship', arguing that Dollfuß was actually attempting to chart a 'third way' between liberal democracy and totalitarian dictatorship.¹³¹ Yet, it is not just 'conservative' historians – or 'ÖVPlers', to quote Bauer – who favour a more nuanced approach to the 'fascist' debate; Bauer points to Gerhard Botz's description of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg period as 'a half-fascist authoritarian dictatorship that developed over time', Ernst Hanisch's depiction of an 'authoritarian regime with fascist trappings', and even Oliver Rathkolb's preference

¹²⁸ Aristotle A. Kallis, 'Fascism', 'Para-Fascism' and 'Fascistization': On the Similarities of Three Conceptual Categories', *European History Quarterly*, 33 (2003), 220.

¹²⁹ Cyprian Blamires and Paul Jackson, *World Fascism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, (Oxford, 2006), 504–05. Aristotle A. Kallis, 'Fascism', 'Para-Fascism' and 'Fascistization', 220.

¹³⁰ Aristotle A. Kallis, 'Fascism', 'Para-Fascism' and 'Fascistization', 236.

¹³¹ Helmut Wohnout is currently *Bezirksobmann* for the ÖVP's *Österreichische Arbeitnehmerinnen- und Arbeitnehmerbund Wien* (ÖAAB). On the nature of the *Ständestaat* see: H. Wohnout, *Regierungsdiktatur oder Ständeparlament?: Gesetzgebung im autoritären Österreich*, (Graz, 1993).

for the designation 'Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime'.¹³² Even the social democratic scholar Norbert Leser rejects the term as 'without scientific basis'.¹³³ Nonetheless, the abject lack of consensus on the issue, as well as the considerable doubt cast on 'Austrofascist' theory has not stopped otherwise reputable historians from proclaiming in general works aimed at undergraduate students, that the system was a fascist one, as though it were stated fact.¹³⁴

The question of whether we label the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg system of rule fascist or not is an important one, as the definitions that are used invariably impact the types of questions that historians ask of the evidence. When the period is viewed solely through a 'fascist' filter, certain aspects are illuminated, while others are obscured; similarities come into focus, yet differences, disparities and nuances are pushed further from view. And in the debate about whether this was a fascist regime, these nuances are important, precisely because definitions of fascism are so malleable and open to interpretation. On the one hand, as Berger Waldenegg argued, the answer to whether there were fascist movements in Austria or whether the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg system of rule itself was fascist, rather depends upon 'what one understands fascism to be'.¹³⁵ On the other, it is worth remembering that not all definitions of fascism are equally useful. Passmore argues, for a concept to be useful, it must explain more about an object of study than others; it remains to be seen whether using the blanket term 'Austrofascism', or even viewing the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era through a 'fascist' prism actually furthers our understanding in a constructive and quantifiable manner.¹³⁶

It is only by removing the 'Austrofascist' filter that a differentiated picture comes into view. In a series of articles published in the Austrian History Yearbook in the late

¹³² An 'entwickelten halbfaschistisch-autoritären Diktatur' and 'faschistisch verkleideten autoritären Regime' respectively. As cited in: Kurt Bauer, "'Austrofascismus", nein danke', *Der Standard* [online edition], 29 Sep. 2011, accessed: 17 Jan. 2012.

¹³³ Norbert Leser, "...auf halben Wegen und zu halber Tat..." *Politische Auswirkungen einer österreichischen Befindlichkeit*, 97.

¹³⁴ See, for example: Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs. Kultur – Gesellschaft – Politik*, (Munich, 2000), 293.

¹³⁵ Georg Christoph Berger Waldenegg, 'Das große Tabu!', 164.

¹³⁶ See: Kevin Passmore, *Fascism. A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford, 2002), 13.

1990s, the late R. John Rath highlighted the incongruous fact that Dollfuß, – Rath opts for ‘semifascist dictator’ – was, quite unlike Hitler or Mussolini, ‘seemingly a genuine democrat when he was appointed Chancellor in May 1932’.¹³⁷ Rath’s contentions were reinforced by James William Miller in his pioneering work on Dollfuß’s ideological outlook and political world-view, which Miller convincingly demonstrates was based on an ‘elitist, authoritarian conception of democracy’ rooted in peasant tradition and ‘his own close study of agricultural cooperatives’.¹³⁸ His revelations that Dollfuß saw co-operatives as an ideal model of democracy in action – when one joined one became responsible, not to one another as individuals, but to the co-operative as a whole – goes some way to explaining how Dollfuß could move from convinced democrat to authoritarian ruler within such a short space of time.¹³⁹ Moreover, where adherents of the term ‘Austrofascism’ may see Nazi-inspired *Führerprinzip* – again, the argument goes, paving the way for the Nazi takeover in 1938 – Miller’s more nuanced approach discerns an elitist and hierarchical conception of democracy based upon co-operative principles, which emphasized the obligations of the individual members to the experts who lead them, i.e. the co-operative’s leadership.¹⁴⁰ Miller’s conclusion, that ‘Dollfuß’s political philosophy...cannot be understood if confined to or analysed according to liberal definitions of democracy or dictatorship’ demonstrates that to understand the Dollfuß years it is simply not enough to fall back on simplistic explanations of supposed Austrian imitation of Nazi Germany.¹⁴¹

Which leads us to the thoroughly questionable and all too common practice of comparing – and conflating – the Austrian *Ständestaat* with the genocidal National Socialist regime, an assessment that was initially propagated by socialist circles in the pre-Anschluss period. While such an allegation is perhaps more understandable in the

¹³⁷ R. John Rath, ‘The Dollfuß Ministry: The Democratic Prelude’, *Austrian History Yearbook*, 29/1 (1998), 161.

¹³⁸ James William Miller, ‘Engelbert Dollfuss’, 124.

¹³⁹ See: *Ibid*, 127

¹⁴⁰ See: *Ibid* 128 and on Dollfuß, Austrofascism and the *Führerprinzip* see: Werner Suppanz, “‘Er gab für Österreich sein Blut, ein wahrer deutscher Mann’”.

¹⁴¹ Laura Gellott, ‘Recent Writings on the *Ständestaat*, 1934–1938’, 210.

ideologically-charged context of the early 1930s – although even then, the differences were obvious – its continued application by contemporary historians defies belief. This was especially true after the Waldheim debate had reminded everyone of the Third Reich's record – and of all the things the contributors to the 'Austrofascist' debate downplayed or ignored in their testimonials: Hitler's war of aggression and attempted colonial conquest, the Nazis' eliminationist anti-Semitism, the compulsory sterilizations and the euthanasia campaign. That Dollfuß was demonstrably anti-Marxist is not under dispute, but when he said in March 1933 'Die braune Welle können wir nur auffangen, wenn wir das, was die Nazis versprechen und in Deutschland getan haben, was ohnehin gemildert wird durch verschiedene Richtungen bei uns, selber machen', he was not talking about destroying Social Democracy à la Hitler, but about how to force the – weakened – Socialists into negotiations for reform of the constitution.¹⁴² He did not do what one of his *Heimwehr* cabinet colleagues suggested he do and actually try to defeat the National Socialists by 'out-Hitlering, Hitler'.¹⁴³ His behaviour was certainly anti-democratic, but to compare Dollfuß's attitude – not to mention behaviour – towards the Austrian Social Democrats to the violent – and murderous – suppression of German Social Democracy by the National Socialists is inappropriate, potentially misleading and at the very least runs the risk of relativizing Nazi crimes.

Not only does this approach, in stressing the primacy of anti-Socialist ideology, understate – or at worst, ignore – the Dollfuß government's anti-Nazi measures, it also obscures a more complex historical reality. It is worth noting that according to the assessment of the British, French and Czech observers, the consensus in October 1933 was that Dollfuß did not personally wish 'to push matters to extremes' with the Social Democrats, despite pressure from both the *Heimwehr* and Mussolini for the complete suppression of Social Democracy and for the establishment of a state along fascist lines.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Dollfuß to the Mehrheitsparteienbesprechung, 25 Mar. 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle des Klubvorstandes der Christlichsozialen Partei 1932–1934*, (Vienna, 1980), 212.

¹⁴³ Statement by Odo Neustädter-Stürmer (*Heimatschutz*) cited in: Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Christlichsoziale Partei', 73.

¹⁴⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16639, paper C9151/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Attitude of Dr. Dollfuss towards Austrian Socialists, 12 Oct. 1933.

Instead, the evidence suggested Dollfuß was endeavouring to chart a middle course, refusing to institute against the Socialists those measures that they most feared and the *Heimwehr* most desired.¹⁴⁵ Thus, it was Dollfuß who was generally credited *outside Austria* with the wish to hold 'Heimwehr exuberance' in check and the display of moderation in this regard was attributed 'very largely to the influence of Dr. Dollfuss personally'¹⁴⁶. Even if one maintains that Dollfuß was acting under pressure from the European democracies to observe moderation towards the Socialists, the very fact that he accepted this advice surely signifies a fundamental divergence from the National Socialist model.

¹⁴⁵ See: F.O. Minute by R.A. Gallop (20 Oct. 1933); Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Memorandum ostensibly by Z. Fierlinger [Czechoslovak envoy in Vienna, 1932–36] but cautiously attributed to Otto Bauer: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16639, paper C9152/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Memorandum on the position of the Socialist Party in Austria, 16 Oct. 33

As a result of the Waldheim affair in the mid-eighties the First Republic was no longer accorded that same degree of scrutiny, and the debate moved on to other topics, despite the fact that few, if any, of these controversial issues had been satisfactorily settled. Rathkolb is right when he says, historians more or less agree on Dollfuß' role as an anti-democrat, yet, there is little consensus on very much else.¹⁴⁸ In a sense, part of the problem lies in the fact that the Dollfuß era resists easy categorization. It sits uneasily between mutually irreconcilable historiographical definitions; the Dollfuß government harboured 'fascist' elements and yet was patently anti-Nazi, it resisted a Nazi takeover yet some of its members were actively collaborating in its own demise, it saw itself as culturally and historically 'German' yet not the 'German' avowed by the National Socialists, it behaved in an anti-democratic manner, yet in part to avert a legal takeover by the Nazis, sacrificing democracy but supporting independence.

Since the eighties, despite intermittent – and often valuable – contributions to overall understanding of the Dollfuß era little of the underlying tone and substance of the debate has changed.¹⁴⁹ In 1995, Gellott identified a tendency towards 'differentiation and integration', and thus the appearance of more tempered appraisals and reasoned judgement in the historiography of the period. She maintained that by the late 1980s, liberated from the constraints of long-established narratives, a younger generation of scholars had begun to challenge historical and societal orthodoxy and reappraise the legacy of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime and the *Ständestaat* era.¹⁵⁰ Yet, Hanisch, on the other hand, is right to point out that the historical record, on the whole, still tends to

¹⁴⁷ 'Haus des Proporz', *Der Standard* [online edition], 7 April 2006, accessed: 4 Sep. 2012.

¹⁴⁸ See: 'Contribution by Oliver Rathkolb on science.orf.at: 1933: ein (noch) geteilter Erinnerungsort, der im Dunkeln der Geschichte verschwindet' 2008, <http://science.orf.at/science/news/150949>, accessed 13 Mar. 2012.

¹⁴⁹ Kriechbaumer deserves particular mention here, for example: Robert Kriechbaumer, *Ein vaterländisches Bilderbuch: Propaganda, Selbstinszenierung und Ästhetik der Vaterländischen Front, 1933–1938*, (Vienna, 2002), Robert Kriechbaumer, *Österreich! und Front Heil!: Aus den Akten des Generalsekretariats der Vaterländischen Front; Innenansichten eines Regimes* and Robert Kriechbaumer, *Die grossen Erzählungen der Politik: Politische Kultur und Parteien in Österreich von der Jahrhundertwende bis 1945*, (Vienna, 2001).

¹⁵⁰ Laura Gellott describes this process in: Laura Gellott, 'Recent Writings on the Ständestaat, 1934–1938'.

overlook the *Ständestaat's* resistance to a Nazi takeover.¹⁵¹ Moreover, Botz's acknowledgment in 1990, that "'History" was and is highly political in Austria' still holds true to the present day.¹⁵² As Bischof asks from the United States: 'is there another country in EU-Europe where historians are close personal friends and intimates of the governing class?'¹⁵³ Despite protestations to the contrary, contemporary history in Austria has still not managed to completely emancipate itself from state influence, a fact that is tangible in the composition of historical commissions, official publications, exhibitions and commemorations.¹⁵⁴ The situation is best summed up the fact that, in 2005, two exhibitions were necessary to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the State Treaty. The one "*Österreich ist frei*" – 'more black' according to *Der Standard* – was shown at the Schallaburg, in Lower Austria, ÖVP country to the very core. The other, "*Das neue Österreich*" – 'more red' – was held at the Belvedere, in the heart of still-Red Vienna.¹⁵⁵

Despite the advent of a new generation of scholars, the siege mentality that permeated Austria's historical profession has failed to dissipate completely. For example, Gottfried-Karl Kindermann's thesis, first presented in *Hitlers Niederlage in Österreich* in 1984, of Austria under Dollfuß and the *Ständestaat* as the 'erste Abwehrfront' against National Socialism was highly controversial in Austria, dismissed wholesale as revisionism by some historians, Siegfried Mattl included: 'Some refuse to give up. For almost two decades, Kindermann has striven to re-write an – not unimportant – phase of Austrian history'.¹⁵⁶ Mattl went as far as to dismiss Kindermann's work *Österreich gegen Hitler* as an

¹⁵¹ See: Ernst Hanisch, 'Dominanz des Staates', 63.

¹⁵² Gerhard Botz, "'Eine neue Welt'", 54.

¹⁵³ Günter Bischof, 'The Politics of History in Austria', *Small States in a Global World. Austria in Comparative Perspective* (Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2006), 5.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example: Ernst Hanisch, 'Dominanz des Staates', 57–62.

¹⁵⁵ 'Haus des Proporz', *Der Standard [online edition]*, 7 Apr. 2006, accessed: 4 Sep. 2012.

¹⁵⁶ 'Vaterländische Gute-Nacht-Geschichten': Siegfried Mattl, undated, <http://sciencev1.orf.at/sciencev1.orf.at/science/mattl/76386.html>, accessed 11 Nov. 2012. See for example: Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Hitlers Niederlage in Österreich. Bewaffneter NS-Putsch, Kanzlermord und Österreichs Abwehrsieg von 1934*, (Hamburg, 1984); Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, 'Österreichs Widerstand gegen das dritte Reich. Die Aussenpolitik und ideologische Abwehrstrategie der Regierung des Bundeskanzlers Dollfuß 1933/34', *Der österreichische Ständestaat – Engelbert Dollfuß zwischen Sozialismus und Nationalsozialismus. Ein*

old fable, arguing that the issue was effectively resolved in the 1970s when a ‘whole generation of Austrian historians settled the question of what led to the dismantling of democracy in 1933–34 and ultimately the Anschluss of 1938’. Although there are a handful of scholars who, striving to separate history and politics, are more nuanced in their conclusions, the fact remains, and as Allinson pointed out in 2006, that ‘the “Austrofascist era” is still too sensitive to allow a wholly non-partisan, unemotional view’.¹⁵⁷ Part of the problem is that too many historians interested in the era have a demonstrable political connection, despite the fact that what the subject demands is rigorous reassessment and thorough depoliticization. The problem is not the quality of their work, but its credibility and the fact that it prevents the siege mentality from dissipating. Moreover, it ensures that in some ways, historical research continues to follow the ideological battle lines of the 1930s, and in doing so, reinforces them. At the same time, some academics have clearly become so accustomed to viewing the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era through the distorted prism of a politicized historical tradition, that they very often fail to comprehend its significance. That means a younger group of scholars who, instead of coming at the topic anew, accept the conclusions of the previous generation without question and thus reproduce narratives that have effectively not moved on since the 1970s.¹⁵⁸ Thus, the literature dealing with the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era remains a historiographical minefield, often best read for its silences, rather than its revelations; even when reading the most recent literature on the interwar period, one would do well to keep an eye open for the insidious ‘partisan subtext’.¹⁵⁹ The gravity of the situation is best illustrated by way of comparison with the material available on the

Beitrag zur Zeitgeschichte, (1984); Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, 'Zur Rolle Österreichs in der Frühphase des widerstandes europäischer Staaten gegen den Nationalsozialismus', *Christliche Demokratie.*, 5 (1987); Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, 'Der Feindcharakter Österreichs in der Perzeption des Dritten Reiches', in eds. Gerald Stourzh and B Zaar *Österreich, Deutschland und die Mächte: Internationale und österreichische Aspekte des "Anschlusses" vom März 1938* (Vienna, 1990); Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Österreich als Angriffsziel und Gegner des Nationalsozialismus 1933–1938*, (Vienna, 2002); Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Österreich gegen Hitler. Europas erste Abwehrfront 1933–1938*, (Munich, 2003).

¹⁵⁷ Mark Allinson, 'Reading the Dollfuss Years', *Austrian Studies*, 14 (2006), 337.

¹⁵⁸ For an example of the latter see: Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, 48–49.

¹⁵⁹ Günter Bischof, 'The Politics of History in Austria', *Small States in a Global World. Austria in Comparative Perspective* (Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2006), 6.

collapse of the Weimar Republic; measured against this excellent body of research, contemporary scholarship into the collapse of interwar Austria is wanting. Not only is it full of gaps and littered with omissions and half-truths, much that has been written is based upon received wisdom, rather than demonstrable historical fact. There is, for example, still no scholarly biography of Dollfuß, despite the fact that he is central to understanding a key period in interwar Austrian – and European – history.¹⁶⁰ For Otto Bauer, this gap was only filled as recently as 2011, albeit with an excellent account of the man who was central to shaping interwar Social Democracy.¹⁶¹ This lack of attention would be less problematic, if it were not for the fact that the thirties were a key period in interwar European history, Anschluss a major Nazi foreign policy objective and the events of March 1938 a crucial milestone on the road that led to the Second World War.

¹⁶⁰ The most informative to date was written in English in 1961. Gordon Brook-Shepherd, *Engelbert Dollfuss*. Gudula Walterskirchen's 2004 publication is a good introduction but falls short of being considered truly scholarly. Gudula Walterskirchen, *Engelbert Dollfuss: Arbeitermörder oder Heldenkanzler*, (Vienna, 2004). There are two useful studies on Dollfuß's early years, including his agricultural background; Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers Dr. Engelbert Dollfuss. Ein Beitrag zur geistig-politischen Situation der sogenannten "Kriegsgeneration des 1. Weltkrieges"', Unpubl. doctoral thesis (University of Vienna, 1967) and James William Miller, *Engelbert Dollfuss als Agrarfachmann: Eine Analyse bäuerlicher Führungsbegriffe und österreichische Agrarpolitik, 1918–1934*, (Vienna, 1989).

¹⁶¹ See: Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist. Otto Bauer (1881–1938)*, (Vienna, 2011).

Chapter 2

‘Der Staat, den keiner wollte’?

Anschluss and the First Republic

Understanding of the Dollfuß era has primarily hinged on a narrative that centres on the collapse of Austrian democracy as *the* key issue of the interwar period for Austria. While it is true that some, mainly conservative, historians continue to emphasize the issue of Austrian independence as a key motivating factor for Dollfuß and his government, for others it is not even worthy of note.¹⁶² Yet, the events of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era can only be fully understood against the backdrop of Christian Social attitudes to the Austrian state. By shifting the focus from a penchant for tinkering with democracy on the conservative right, to Christian Social attitudes towards Austrian independence before the advent of National Socialism in Austria, we are better placed to explain the weaknesses that undermined the Austrian state in its later struggle against the National Socialists and why the Christian Socials under Dollfuß followed the path they did in 1932–33.

In the weeks and months following the Anschluss the Nazis set out to destroy, once and for all, the very idea that Austria had ever had any right to an independent existence. It was not a difficult task. On the surface the Nazis’ claim was plausible enough; what Allied leaders had perpetrated in Versailles and St. Germain had been deeply unpopular in both Germany and Austria and the argument that the two countries had been denied the much-lauded right to self-determination in 1918 was impossible to refute. Had German-Austria not declared union with Germany in November 1918, only to have its hopes dashed in Paris? Had the German-Austrians not demanded Anschluss in a wave of unofficial referenda over the following years? Only with the Anschluss, the Nazis argued in the newly nazified *Reichspost*, once the principal newspaper of Catholic Austrian

¹⁶² It is not mentioned by Vöclka, for example, in his general survey of Austrian history. See: Karl Vöclka, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 286–96.

opinion, 'ist das letzte Glied der Kette, die die Verfasser der Friedensdiktate um das deutsche Volk schmiedeten, zerrissen worden'.¹⁶³ However, as always, they had skilfully manipulated this historical reality to suit their purposes. The humiliation and territorial dismemberment inflicted upon *Deutschösterreich* in Paris was used to argue that the burning desire of the Austrian-Germans to unite with their German brethren had been crushed by the Allies, forcing statehood upon a nation that did not want it. Interwar Austria had been, they claimed, a *Staat wider Willen*. The phrase was coined in 1940, the title of a book described by one observer as one of 'the most "impartial" of the Nazi versions' of the Anschluss.¹⁶⁴ In 1962, Hellmut Andics reinforced the Nazi notion of a *Staat wider Willen*, in his book *Der Staat, den keiner wollte* an appellation, which has become common currency when talking about the First Republic.¹⁶⁵ It was a 'fact' repeated by Kreisky in his memoirs: 'Austria 'was a state that could not live, but could not die, a state that no one actually wanted'.¹⁶⁶ The idea that Austria was a state with 'a strong tendency towards non-existence' has permeated the literature ever since'.¹⁶⁷

Der Staat, den keiner wollte is a misnomer, and a gross oversimplification of the facts. The first thing to remember is that before 1918 no German-Austrian political party would have willingly chosen the collapse of the Empire and Anschluss with Germany – a handful of diehard Pan-Germans excepted. However, in October 1918, with the war well and truly lost, the Habsburg Monarchy had begun to disintegrate.¹⁶⁸ Remarkably, in advance of any formal commitment by the other nationalities of the Empire to independence, it was the German-speaking Social Democrats and the German Nationalists who officially abandoned the idea of a unified, multinational Austrian state, calling for the

¹⁶³ 'Der Erfüllung entgegen', *Reichspost*, 13 Mar. 1938, I.

¹⁶⁴ Paul R. Sweet, 'Democracy and Counterrevolution in Austria', *The Journal of Modern History*, 22/1 (1950), 53, fn. 5.

¹⁶⁵ See, for example, Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 275.

¹⁶⁶ Bruno Kreisky, *Zwischen den Zeiten*, 40.

¹⁶⁷ Hellmut Andics, *Der Staat den keiner wollte: Österreich 1918–1938*, (Vienna, 1962).

¹⁶⁸ See: Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815–1918*, (London, 2001), 265.

abdication of the Emperor, the formation of a republic and union with Germany.¹⁶⁹ The Christian Socials were caught off guard. Loyal to the monarchy, they were especially reluctant to abandon the Emperor and were divided on the form that the future state should take.¹⁷⁰ However, believing that collapse was imminent and faced with a potential coup by the Social Democrats and German Nationalists, they reluctantly agreed to consider their demands.¹⁷¹

On 21 October 1918, in response to the declaration of the Emperor's Imperial Manifesto, the monarchy's German-speaking deputies formed a 'Provisional National Assembly', at the same time agreeing to the formation of a German-Austrian state, yet the Christian Socials continued to defend the monarchist principle, and sought to avert the republic.¹⁷² The issue of German Bohemia and Moravia complicated matters. It was for this reason that Karl Renner, himself a German Moravian, 'appellierte an die Christlichsozialen, Österreich müsse den Anschluss an Deutschland beschließen, obwohl der "überwiegende Teil des Deutschen Volkes in Österreich" bisher "zu diesem Entschluss nicht gekommen sei"'.¹⁷³ Retaining these areas only really appeared possible if Austria and Germany became a unified state. Yet, ultimately, the Christian Socials lacked the 'courage of their convictions' to make a 'decided stand either for the monarchy or against Anschluss'.¹⁷⁴ On 11 November, the Emperor announced his conditional

¹⁶⁹ See: S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss: October 1918–September 1919', *The Journal of Modern History*, 22/3 (1950), 222.

¹⁷⁰ Karl I, (1887–22). The last Emperor of Austria-Hungary, he ruled from 1916 until his renunciation of the affairs of state in 1918.

¹⁷¹ See: S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss', 222.

¹⁷² See: Francis L. Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic 1918–1938*, (Aldershot, 1986), 1 Emperor Charles pronounced his Imperial Manifesto on 16 October 1918. Addressed to his 'Austrian Peoples', the manifesto was a last-ditch attempt to federalize the Monarchy along national lines. It effectively, if somewhat inadvertently, legalized the Social Democrat proposal. See also: S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss', 222.

¹⁷³ Ernst Bruckmüller, 'Die christlichsoziale Partei 1918–1920', *19. Symposiums des NÖ Instituts für Landeskunde*. (Obersiebenbrunn, 2007), 77. Karl Renner, (14 Dec.1870 – 31 Dec.1950), SDAPÖ/SPÖ politician. First Chancellor of both the First and Second Republics.

¹⁷⁴ S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss' 231.

withdrawal from the throne, when he renounced 'all participation in the affairs of state'.¹⁷⁵ With the Emperor gone the road was now clear to implement the Socialists' proposal: the following day the National Assembly passed a unanimous resolution, which proclaimed the *Republik Deutschösterreich* [Republic of German-Austria] and, on Social Democratic insistence, declared its union with the new German Republic.¹⁷⁶

The 'German-Austria' initiative was short-lived. The Peace Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye signed on 10 September 1919 by representatives of the Allies and the Republic of Austria prohibited an economic or political union between Germany and Austria without the agreement of the Council of the League of Nations. Unnerved by the slightest suggestion of Pan-German sentiment, the treaty stipulated that the name of the state was to be 'Österreich' and not 'Deutsch-Österreich'.¹⁷⁷ The territories claimed by the *Republik Deutsch-Österreich* were dismembered in much the same manner as its name. The fact that the German-Austrians in the South Tyrol and the Sudetenland had proclaimed themselves a part of Austria was completely disregarded: the contiguous German-speaking populations of the South Tyrol were given to Italy, whilst three million German-speakers in Bohemia and Moravia were subsumed within Czechoslovakia. For the Allies this was considered a politico-strategic necessity, for many Austrians it was a humiliating and hypocritical *fait accompli*.

All of Austria's political parties, regardless of their stance on a union with Germany, were outraged by the draconian terms dictated in Paris.¹⁷⁸ Few Austrian politicians were convinced of the *Lebensfähigkeit* of an independent Austria and some had hoped that the

¹⁷⁵ Emperor Charles did not formally abdicate. It is believed that it was Seipel who phrased the relevant passage to leave the Emperor's 'renunciation' deliberately vague. See: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel: Christian Statesman in a Time of Crisis*, (Princeton, NJ, 1972), 88–91.

¹⁷⁶ The armistice between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Entente Powers was officially concluded on 3 November 1918. See: Francis L. Carsten, *First Austrian Republic*, I; Douglas Alder, 'Catholic and Marxist Paradigms: Ignaz Seipel and Otto Bauer in the First Austrian Republic', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 19–20/2 (1983–4), 111.

¹⁷⁷ The ban of *Anschluss* had been stipulated in Article 80 of the Treaty of Versailles with Germany, signed on the 28 June 1919. Article 88 of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye signed between Austria and the Allies on 10 September 1919 repeated the clause; 'the independence of Austria is unalienable except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations'. See: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 127.

¹⁷⁸ See: *Ibid*, 127.

Allies would at least insist on maintaining a free trade policy in the Danubian basin, thus ensuring Austrian economic viability. When the terms of the treaty revealed that this was not going to be the case, many argued that signing the treaty was tantamount to signing the country's death warrant.¹⁷⁹ With no monarchy, no empire and no assurance of free trade it was almost inevitable that the Anschluss idea would become more attractive as the most feasible solution.¹⁸⁰ Moreover, the Paris Peace Treaties made Anschluss agitation worse, as prohibition merely served to make it all the more desirable. Nevertheless, short of allowing the country to disintegrate, the Austrian government had little choice but to accept the terms; back in Vienna, the majority within the *Nationalrat* 'bowed to the inevitable' and ratified the treaty, although they did so under palpable protest.¹⁸¹

When faced with the reality of an independent existence, surrounded by unfriendly neighbours and with no provisions made to guarantee its economic future, it is hardly surprising that the inhabitants of the Austrian Hereditary Lands were swamped by a wave of 'panic and despair'.¹⁸² Certainly, during the immediate post-war period, the outlook for an independent Austrian state appeared hopeless and for many Anschluss with whoever seemed ready to take them was the obvious answer. There was clearly a strong desire for some type of union within Germany among certain sections of the population. However, it was not an ideal solution and by no means universally welcomed, as the vote of 12 November would otherwise appear to suggest. In reality, the issue of whether union with Germany was in Austria's best interests fundamentally divided Austria's political elites. Thus, while it is accurate to say that initially there was little enthusiasm for a small, republican state, this belies the fact that significant sections of Austrian society were equally unenthused about political union with Germany. When examining the early interwar period one must be careful to distinguish between those who rejected the

¹⁷⁹ See: Ibid, 127.

¹⁸⁰ See: S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss' 229.

¹⁸¹ Günther Bischof, 'Allied Plans and Policies for the Occupation of Austria, 1938–1955', in eds. Rolf Steininger, et al. *Austria in the Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick, NJ 2002), 91. In Klemperer's view the fact that the treaty was accepted with such dignity and decorum goes back to the fact that a governmental coalition was in place, of which Seipel was one of the main architects. See: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 129–130.

¹⁸² Barbara Ward, 'Ignaz Seipel and the Anschluss', *Dublin Review*, 102 (1938), 39.

concept of Austrian independence in its entirety and those who, lamenting the collapse of the Empire, were inclined to salvage something from it.

As one would expect, union with Germany remained at the heart of the Pan-Germans' ideological programme throughout the interwar period.¹⁸³ However, sheer force of numbers dictated that it was the Social Democrats, the state's largest homogenous party, who were the decisive force behind the crusade. For the Social Democrats, the proclamation of the democratic republic on 12 November 1918 was deemed a personal achievement, the culmination of decades of struggle against the anti-democratic monarchical system (this despite the fact that they had only really abandoned the monarchy when it was in its death throes). Yet, somewhat ironically, despite claiming the Republic as the fruits of their own labour, the Socialists rejected the concept of an independent Austria outright.¹⁸⁴ Like many during this period, they were convinced that the Alpine republic was too small to be economically viable.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, Otto Bauer, party leader and first Foreign Minister, was so convinced of this fact that he insisted that the Social Democrats' task in Paris was to convince the Allies that an independent Austria was incapable of existence. However, there was much more to it than just economics; Anschluss with 'Red' Germany was a particularly attractive proposal to the Socialists, not least because the country was heavily industrialized, boasted a large proletariat and a well-developed Social Democratic tradition: 'just by joining Germany, we shall live in a socialist commonwealth', the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* declared on 13 November 1918.¹⁸⁶ The Austrian provinces, on the other hand, were predominantly agricultural, and since the farmers and peasants traditionally voted for the Christian Socials, the SDAPDÖ feared that they would never be able to attain power within an independent

¹⁸³ The *Großdeutsche Volkspartei* and the *Landbund*.

¹⁸⁴ See: Georg Martin Mihli, 'Die österreichische Sozialdemokratie, die deutsche Nation, der Anschluß', Unpubl. MA Dissertation (University of Vienna, 2002), 291.

¹⁸⁵ See: S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss' 230.

¹⁸⁶ See: Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 276. See also: Rolf Steininger, '12 November 1918–12 March 1938: The Road to Anschluss', in ed., Günther Bischof Rolf Steininger, Michael Gehler *Austria in the Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2002), 89. 'Vom Siege zu neuen Kämpfen', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 13 Nov. 1918, 1.

Austrian state.¹⁸⁷ However, with the merger of a centralized Austrian state with the German Republic, Austria's conservative state capitals would have been assigned to provincial oblivion. Thus, for the Social Democrats the democratic Austrian Republic was only a means to an end: Anschluss with the Socialist German Republic and, ultimately, victory over the capitalist system.¹⁸⁸

For many of the same reasons and more, the Christian Socials did not share with their political adversaries, the enthusiasm for Anschluss. Although they had voted for the Anschluss in 1919, it was a move that was due more to the lack of a unified position within the party, rather than a declaration of genuine conviction.¹⁸⁹ Catholic circles were divided on the issue, with the Christian Social workers' movement the chief source of opposition.¹⁹⁰ Anschluss sentiment was also stronger in the provinces – the Salzburg faction, for example, supported union with Bavaria, although preferably outside both an Austrian or German framework – while opponents of union were 'prominent in Vienna', although such disparities were due as much to specific local concerns, as to ideological considerations.¹⁹¹ Yet, for those who considered Anschluss an option, the preference was for union with Catholic Munich, not Protestant Berlin. In their Salzburg stronghold, the *Deutschfreiheitliche* and the Christian Socials both supported merging the province with Bavaria yet the Social Democrats rejected the proposal in favour of waiting for the union of the country as a whole.¹⁹² However, the idea of independence was also taking root; as early as 1918, a group of Christian Socials opposed to the proposed Anschluss had

¹⁸⁷ See: Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 276.

¹⁸⁸ 'Vom Siege zu neuen Kämpfen', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 13 Nov. 1918, I.

¹⁸⁹ See: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 113. What is often overlooked is that the prevailing revolutionary atmosphere in Vienna was not particularly conducive to undergoing a meticulous parliamentary inspection of the proposal or indeed for making prudent judgements about Austria's future. As Gould points out, the Social Democrats were the authors of this clause, which was inserted in response to their direct demand. See: S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss' 225.

¹⁹⁰ See: Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers', 133.

¹⁹¹ Erich Bielka, 'Salzburger Volksabstimmung 1921 – auch manipuliert!', *Saint-Germain 1919. Protokoll des Symposiums am 29. und 30. Mai 1979 in Wien*, Vienna, (1989) and Alfred David Low, *The Anschluss Movement, 1918–19 and the Paris Peace Conference*, (Philadelphia, 1974), 209.

¹⁹² The *Großdeutsche Volkspartei* [GDVP], a coalition of German national groups and organisations, was officially founded on 20 November 1920. See: Richard Voithofer, *Drum schliesst Euch frisch an Deutschland an: Die Grossdeutsche Volkspartei in Salzburg 1920–1936*, (Vienna, 2000), 157.

'formed around the composer Ludwig Bittner', a group that included the 'arch-Austrian' author Hermann Bahr.¹⁹³ Bahr's involvement is hardly surprising, not least in light of his observation during August 1915, at the height of World War I, "daß wenn das Ergebnis des ganzen Krieges nur sein soll, uns zu einer deutschen Provinz, zum Vasallen Hohenzollerns zu machen, wir das hätten billiger haben können".¹⁹⁴ Moreover, Anschluss with a Socialist Germany was hardly attractive to Austria's Catholic right; 'today's Germany', Ignaz Seipel, prelate and key figure in the Christian Social Party, argued, 'with the terror of the Soldiers' Councils and socialist dictatorship' is not for us.¹⁹⁵ Thus, despite regional inconsistencies, there was, generally speaking, far less enthusiasm for a union with Germany within the catholic-conservative camp, particularly for a union with a centralized German Republic ruled by a Social Democrat-dominated government in Berlin.¹⁹⁶

Nonetheless, many of those who found the idea objectionable were prudent enough to avoid energetically opposing the Anschluss in public.¹⁹⁷ As the British Minister, Sir Walford Selby, later explained to London, any open manifestation of opinion against the Anschluss, whether economic or political was 'rendered difficult' by the presence of an 'amorphous patriotism for the "great German nation"'.¹⁹⁸ However, this did not stop them taking the opposite stance in private discussions.¹⁹⁹ The Party's true position is better revealed in the omission of the Anschluss issue from its electoral programme

¹⁹³ Alfred David Low, *The Anschluss Movement*, 209; Fredrik Lindström, *Empire and Identity: Biographies of the Austrian State Problem in the Late Habsburg Empire*, (Indiana, 2008), 241.

¹⁹⁴ Petra Rösigen, *Verfreundete Nachbarn. Deutschland – Österreich* (Bielefeld, 2005), 41.

¹⁹⁵ Seipel to Krebs, a theology professor in Freiburg. Cited in: Christian Strasser, 'Die Haltung Dr. Ignaz Seipels zu Österreich, zu Nation und Staat, in seinen Reden, Schriften und Aufzeichnungen', Unpubl. MA dissertation (University of Vienna, 1984), 67–8.

¹⁹⁶ See: S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss', 229; Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 115.

¹⁹⁷ See: Bruce F. Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis: A History of Austrian National Socialism*, (London, 1981), 8.

¹⁹⁸ Cited in: Iago Gil Aguado, 'The Creditanstalt Crisis of 1931 and the Failure of the Austro-German Customs Union Project', *The Historical Journal*, 44/1 (2001), 218.

¹⁹⁹ See, for example: Erich Bielka, 'Wie viele Österreicher waren in der Ersten Republik für den Anschluß an Deutschland?', *Geschichte und Gegenwart; Vierteljahresshefte für Zeitgeschichte, Gesellschaftsanalyse und politische Bildung*, 7 (1988), 43 and Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 276.

published on 25 December 1918, and the fact that the party did not take part in Anschluss rallies held throughout the country on 11 May of the following year.²⁰⁰ In their manifesto of 1926, the Christian Socials demanded only 'die Gleichberechtigung des deutschen Volkes in der europäischen Völkerfamilie und die Ausgestaltung des Verhältnisses zum Deutschen Reich auf Grund des Selbstbestimmungsrechtes'.²⁰¹ That the organ of the Christian Social Party, the *Reichspost* was nowhere near vehement enough in its Anschluss sentiment is evident from Seipel's assurance to a German colleague that the paper had always espoused the Anschluss, and that no, it did not need any extra coaching in this regard.²⁰² Yet, most telling is the fact that the Christian Social's official stance vis-à-vis the Anschluss was obvious to the German Embassy. In late 1920, the German Ambassador, Dr. Frédéric von Rosenberg, noted that under the prevailing conditions, no support for the Anschluss was to be expected from the Christian Social Party. Caution was advised; as long as the Christian Socials were at the helm, the German Foreign Office would have to avoid any action which could be misused by Vienna to dampen the Anschluss movement, confirming Pauley's conclusion that, the Christian Socials 'paid at best lip service to the Anschluss idea when not actively opposing it'.²⁰³ Yet, some historians continue to present this information as if Anschluss sentiment were somehow equally shared between the Christian Socials and the Social Democrats. Moritz and Leidinger, for example, maintain that, 'like the Social Democrats, the Christian Socials also invoked the right to self-determination'.²⁰⁴ This appears to suggest that both sides were equally as responsible for fostering an Anschluss sentiment that would one day be abused by Hitler, an interpretation for which the evidence is inadequate.

²⁰⁰ See Rolf Steininger, '12 November 1918–12 March 1938', 89. The rallies were held on 11 May 1919. See also: Erich Bielka, 'Wie viele Österreicher'.

²⁰¹ Punkt VIII des Parteiprogrammes; 'Anschluß und Wahlprogramme', *Der Anschluß. Mitteilungen des Österreichisch-Deutschen Volksbundes*, 15 February 1927, 1.

²⁰² See: Seipel to Krebs, a theology professor in Freiburg. Krebs had written to Seipel to ask him to support the Anschluss. Christian Strasser, 'Die Haltung Dr. Ignaz Seipels' 67–68.

²⁰³ See: Erich Bielka, 'Die Volksabstimmung in Tirol 1921 und ihre Vorgeschichte', *Saint-Germain 1919. Protokoll des Symposiums am 29. und 30. Mai 1979 in Wien*, Vienna, (1989), 310–11. Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 8.

²⁰⁴ Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, 18.

The Anschluss Plebiscites

Which raises the question, just how popular was the Anschluss clarion call amongst the wider population during the early years of the First Republic? On the surface there appears to have been widespread support for merger with Germany and it is easy to understand why the impression has endured that 'practically all Austrians favoured union' during this early period.²⁰⁵ The provincial separatist movements and the plebiscites in Tyrol and Salzburg appear to provide solid evidence of the strength of Anschluss sentiment. On 24 April 1921, 97 per cent of the votes cast in an unofficial plebiscite in North Tyrol – a vote held against the wishes of the federal government – were in favour of union with Germany.²⁰⁶ A few weeks later Salzburg also went to the polls, again yielding a large majority in favour of a union with Germany.²⁰⁷ These results are often invoked as proof of overwhelming Anschluss sentiment, yet they are not quite the reliable indicators that they appear. The plebiscite in North Tyrol is a case in point. North Tyrol's overriding concern was not Anschluss, but ending the Italian occupation of South Tyrol and restoring the unity of the province. For this reason, Tyrolean elites remained intentionally irresolute, willing to pursue any policy that would achieve this aim. Although they had provisionally 'joined' the Republic in November 1918, they vehemently asserted their autonomy vis-à-vis any decisions that could adversely affect this primary goal. Up until mid-1919, the policy of the dominant *Tiroler Volkspartei*, was not Anschluss with Germany, which would have put paid to any hope of reinstating Tyrolean unity, but the creation of an independent Tyrolean state.²⁰⁸ Thus, when Vienna declared the Anschluss of *Deutschösterreich* with Germany in 1918, Tyrol, which had only provisionally joined the

²⁰⁵ S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss', 228.

²⁰⁶ See: M. Alice Matthews, 'Chronicle of International Events', *The American Journal of International Law*, 15/3 (1921), 463.

²⁰⁷ The plebiscite was held on 24 May 1921. As Malbone states, these moves were only stopped by Allied pressure and the insistence of Chancellor Schober. See: W. Malbone, Graham, Jr., 'Foreign Governments and Politics: The Constitutional Crisis in Austria', *The American Political Science Review*, 24 (1930), 146. These plebiscites were also a response to the fact that the federal government was unable to act due to pressure from the Allied Powers: See: Rolf Steininger, '12 November 1918–12 March 1938', 93.

²⁰⁸ The *Tiroler Volkspartei* was a coalition of catholic-conservatives and Christian Socials, formed in October 1918. See: Bielka, Erika, 'Die Volksabstimmung in Tirol 1921 und ihre Vorgeschichte', Saint-Germain 1919. Protokoll des Symposiums am 29. und 30. Mai 1979 in Wien. (Vienna, 1979), 304.

Republic, responded by threatening to withdraw from the state because of the question of German South Tyrol.²⁰⁹ Tyrolean elites unequivocally rejected the Anschluss policy of the central government, contemplating every conceivable alternative, including the possibility of an independent Tyrol linked in a loose union with Switzerland or Italy, or of a fusion of the 'western provinces'.²¹⁰ Some in the conservative camp supported the idea of a union between Tyrol and Bavaria, or even the creation of a south German state.²¹¹ Ultimately, and as Seipel correctly observed, in early 1919 at least, Vorarlberg and Tyrol would rather remain small, neutral states, or better still, unite with Switzerland, than be mutilated and join Germany.²¹²

In late 1919, with the *Anschlussverbot* confirmed, Tyrolean tactics were deliberately reversed. Now Anschluss with Germany – or rather Bavaria – appeared to the majority of the Tyrolean leadership to be their only hope of ever regaining South Tyrol and at the same time, escaping the prevailing economic misery.²¹³ Yet, this still does not wholly explain the statistics. The voter returns appear conclusive, yet, as Bielka points out, the plebiscite was accompanied by severe electoral fraud and voter manipulation and an accurate percentage figure of voter eligibility is, therefore, impossible to attain. In addition to the massive propaganda campaign and not insignificant Reich German influence, 'Ja' ballot papers were pre-printed and provided at the polling stations and ballots were to be handed to an election official, undermining voter confidentiality. In addition, voter eligibility rules were liberally conceived and, therefore, open to abuse. Not only were those registered for the *Nationalrat* elections of October 1920 permitted to vote, but also those who registered themselves as living in Tyrol before April 1921, that is, less than a fortnight before going to the polls, as were all those Tyroleans who lived outside of the

²⁰⁹ See: Christian Strasser, 'Die Haltung Dr. Ignaz Seipels', 69.

²¹⁰ The 'westlichen Alpenländer'. Erich Bielka, 'Die Volksabstimmung in Tirol', 304.

²¹¹ See: Ibid, 316.

²¹² See: Christian Strasser, 'Die Haltung Dr. Ignaz Seipels', 69.

²¹³ See: Erich Bielka, 'Die Volksabstimmung in Tirol', 326.

state; a train was even chartered from Bavaria to mitigate the financial burden of travelling 'home'.²¹⁴

As Bielka concludes, the question of whether the overwhelming majority of Tyroleans wanted Anschluss cannot be definitively proven, and, considering the circumstances surrounding the plebiscite it appears 'very doubtful' that this was the case.²¹⁵ The situation was similar in Salzburg province, where democratic principles were also liberally violated.²¹⁶ Again, the majority of the ruling elite supported Anschluss, but the circumstances surrounding the ballot make it an unreliable indicator of public sentiment, let alone pan-German attitudes.²¹⁷ What is more, Salzburg can in no way be considered paradigmatic for the rest of Austria. Salzburg, which had been independent until the early nineteenth century, had spent the shortest time under Habsburg rule; when it finally fell to Austria in 1816, part of the province, the *Rupertiwinkel*, had remained with Bavaria, which had ruled Salzburg during the Napoleonic years. Therefore, for Salzburg, union with Bavaria was an entirely logical step that might actually restore the provinces historic borders. Vorarlberg went to the polls on 11 May 1919, although here 80 per cent voted for union with Switzerland, towards which the province had always gravitated, both economically and culturally.²¹⁸ The provincial movements do tell us that Germany – or rather, Bavaria – was the 'obvious' solution for some, but it was by no means the only one. They also tell us that Anschluss meant different things to different people, and that those who talked of Anschluss did not necessarily mean full political union. This ambivalence was reflected in the observation of the British Minister, Sir Walford Selby, on the subject in 1934:

²¹⁴ The driving force behind both campaigns was Gilbert in der Maur, an Austrian journalist with Pan-German sympathies who later became a prominent figure within the Austrian Nazi Party. See: Ibid, 322.

²¹⁵ See: Ibid, 326.

²¹⁶ See: Erich Bielka, 'Salzburger Volksabstimmung', 336.

²¹⁷ See: Ibid, *passim*.

²¹⁸ Before 1884 and the construction of the Arlberg railway, Vorarlberg could only be reached from Austrian territory with difficulty. See: Hubert Weitensfelder, "Römlinge" und "Preußenseuchler". *Konservativ-Christlichsoziale, Liberal-Deutschnationale und der Kulturkampf in Vorarlberg, 1860 bis 1914*, (Vienna, 2008), 229. See also: Kathryn Sellers, 'Chronicle of International Events', *The American Journal of International Law*, 13/4 (1919), 780.

He [the Austrian] likes to toy with “Anschluss” ideas in the abstract and to consider the German as his natural blood-brother. But, in point of fact, his kinship and friendship neither extend to nor include Prussia and – as was amply shown during the war – German thoroughness and brusqueness are abhorrent to the Austrian supineness and love of ease. Consequently there is no desire, except among the desperate minority, to see Prussia dominating Vienna, and what the average Austrian nebulously hopes for – if he gives himself the trouble to be precise – is a loose working partnership between Munich and Vienna in common resistance to Prussia²¹⁹

What can also be deduced is that the referenda were as much influenced by Austrian federal attitudes, as they were by a lack of confidence in the new Republic. Provincial separatism was underpinned by an age-old aversion to rule from Vienna: under the Empire each *Kronland* had had its own diet and government and operated ‘independently’ of central rule, each looking to their own ‘capital’, and not to Vienna.²²⁰ Dynastic loyalty was what bound them together; remove the Emperor, who was also their local prince, duke or archduke, and there was no reason to defer to Vienna. Joining Germany on their own terms, rather than as a centralized state in a deal negotiated from Vienna, could potentially ensure that their independent status as a ‘state’ could be maintained. However, the same was true of rule from Berlin as it was from Vienna; regional patriotism was considerably stronger than any pan-German sentiment.

Despite the initially compelling statistics, overall, it appears doubtful that a qualified majority of Austrians would have supported Anschluss with Germany.²²¹ From the sparse evidence available, it appears that the pro-Anschluss movement could only hope for a slim majority in the event of a plebiscite, and not the 75 per cent necessary, and that the number of Anschluss supporters in 1919 was not more than 50 per cent of the population.²²² Even Otto Bauer, leader of the Social Democratic party had to admit that both the bourgeoisie and the peasantry wanted ‘an independent Austria fully capable of a

²¹⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, 2, para. 9. Sir Walford Harwood Montague Selby (1881–1965), British Minister to Austria, 1933–1937.

²²⁰ See: Charles à Court Repington, *After the War. London, Paris, Rome Athens, Prague, Vienna. Bucharest, Berlin, Sofia, Coblenz, New York, Washington. A Diary*, (London, 1922), 138.

²²¹ See: Erich Bielka, 'Wie viele Österreicher', 42.

²²² See: Ibid, 43.

national life of its own'.²²³ More telling is Bauer's admission that, because of the strength of the conservative opposition to Anschluss and the real possibility that the majority would have voted against the Anschluss, the Socialists did not dare to hold a referendum in 1919.²²⁴

Nonetheless, some kind of union with Germany was an appealing solution for broad sections of the Austrian population. Why was it so alluring? On the one hand, self-determination was *the* touchstone of the period, and as such, the demand for Anschluss – as a symbol of equality – was part of a much wider trend. However, the key stimulus for most German-Austrians was economic, not nationalistic imperative. At heart, the plea for Anschluss was not an ideological one, but a 'counsel of despair', a reflection of Austria's desperate economic situation and the fundamental lack of faith in an economically independent Austrian state.²²⁵ After four years of war and a devastating peace settlement, Austria's economy was in ruins. With whole branches of industry at a complete standstill and the country deficient in natural resources, it is hardly surprising that such a dire economic situation did little to promote the idea of Austrian independence.²²⁶ Everyday existence was intolerable for the vast majority of the populace; October 1920 saw hordes of angry crowds on Austria's streets demanding a plebiscite on the Anschluss issue within six months.²²⁷ Austria had been dealt a poor hand in Paris; trade channels that had developed over centuries were blocked off overnight and the raw materials that had fed Austrian industries were suddenly unavailable. Austria's supply of natural resources was highly imbalanced and inadequate, the country had no coal deposits and its agricultural output was insufficient to meet the needs of the population.²²⁸ The arbitrary redrawing of central European borders had cut the Austrians off from their traditional markets. Her new neighbours were openly hostile, seeing the Austrian

²²³ Cited in: S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss', 228–29.

²²⁴ See: Ibid, 227.

²²⁵ Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 112.

²²⁶ See: Peter J. Katzenstein, *Disjoined Partners: Austria and Germany Since 1815*, (Berkeley, California, 1976), 144.

²²⁷ See: Rolf Steininger, '12 November 1918–12 March 1938', 93.

²²⁸ See: Peter J. Katzenstein, *Disjoined Partners*, 144.

Republic as the successor to the Habsburg Empire. This enmity spilt over into the economic arena: obstructionist trade barriers were established by the successor states that destroyed centuries of economic integration, a development that, paradoxically, practically drove the Austrians into the arms of the Weimar Republic.

The economic distress that this caused took Austria to the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe; to observers and Austrians alike it seemed that the country would collapse before it had even taken its first steps. As agricultural and industrial production had halted, and trade was non-existent, Austria became dependent upon the Allies for essential supplies. Many Austrians were living in abject poverty and suffering from malnutrition, especially in Vienna and other urban areas. Food and fuel were scarce; a British journalist described how 'after two and a half years of peace, the Austrians [were] suffering privations unknown to us in the worst days of the war'.²²⁹ Carsten notes that 'it was only with the aid of shipments of food and other commodities that the country was able to survive, however precariously, during the terrible winter of 1919–20'.²³⁰ This only confirmed the pre-existing belief that Austria could not survive as an independent state and this reliance upon international aid served to erode what little political autonomy the country may have been able to muster; few had dared to believe that an independent Austrian state would ever be viable economically, and this failing state was incapable of offering any proof to the contrary.²³¹

²²⁹ Francis L. Carsten, *First Austrian Republic*, 41.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, 30.

²³¹ Interestingly enough, Gerhard Senft maintains that doubts about the viability of the First Republic were 'chiefly of a socio-psychological nature and did not derive from any reasonable review of the economic facts'. Gerhard Senft, 'Economic Development and Economic Policies in the *Ständestaat* Era', in eds. Günter Bischof, et al. *The Dollfuss-Schuschnigg Era in Austria: A Reassessment* (New Brunswick, 2003), 33.

Das wahre Antlitz Österreichs? – The Seipel Legacy

Austria may well have had an inauspicious start, but it is seldom sufficiently emphasized that, despite the odds, Austria did weather the post-war storm. During the first two years of the state's existence the two main parties managed to put aside their stark ideological differences long enough to enter into a series of red-black coalitions, the purpose of which were to negotiate the peace treaty and to establish the Republic's constitutional and legal foundations.²³² However, the Social Democrats failed to abandon Anschluss as their ultimate objective.²³³ It is not without irony, that despite the fact that they were not republicans at heart, the Christian Socials under Seipel's stewardship were the first party to commit themselves unequivocally to a significant rescue attempt for the floundering state. When, in October 1920, it appeared that the 'class balance' had shifted 'in favour of the bourgeoisie', the Socialists left the coalition and Renner's policy of co-operation came to an abrupt end. Fearing a further extension of the coalition might compromise doctrinal purity and party unity, inducing, in Leser's words, 'the masses to transfer their allegiance to the communists', the Socialists opted to remain in opposition. They refused to shore up a 'bourgeois' system that Austro-Marxist doctrine considered to be on the verge of collapse, preferring to wait for the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' that was promised by the Marxist model.²³⁴ Following the departure of the Social Democrats from the ruling coalition in 1920, all successive governments were dominated by the Christian Social Party.²³⁵ To obtain the parliamentary majority necessary the Christian Socials entered into a series of uneasy alliances, first with the *Großdeutsche Volkspartei* and later with the *Landbund*, both representatives of the German national *Lager*; again, to maintain the coalition, moderation in anti-Anschluss statements was the order of the

²³² See: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 120.

²³³ See: Robert Kann, A., 'Karl Renner (December 14, 1870 – December 31, 1950)', *The Journal of Modern History*, 23/3 (1951), 246.

²³⁴ Norbert Leser, 'Austro-Marxism: A Reappraisal' 143. See also: Kurt Leo Shell, *The Transformation of Austrian Socialism*, (New York, 1962), 15.

²³⁵ Leser claims that the collapse of the coalition in 1920 was a 'heaven-sent opportunity' seized on by both sides to terminate the coalition. Norbert Leser, 'Austro-Marxism: A Reappraisal' 143.

day.²³⁶ Though a small minority, the pan-German camp was now needed and 'tactfulness' in language, rather than genuine political concessions was the favoured Christian Social strategy for keeping them on board.

Hyperbole aside, there is more than a grain of truth in the statement that it was Ignaz Seipel, who, ultimately, 'guided his little country out of the valley of despair'.²³⁷ A priest and theologian, Seipel had been at the centre of the imperial reform efforts and peace initiatives throughout 1917. Although a staunch monarchist who had remained loyal to the House of Habsburg until the end, he proved himself to be exceptionally pragmatic as a politician in the post-revolutionary period. In February 1919, he embarked on his parliamentary career for the Christian Socials, quickly becoming a political personality of considerable stature. He was under no illusions about the likelihood of either the restoration of the monarchy or the approval of an Anschluss with Germany noting that 'salvation lies neither in melancholy thoughts about the past nor in fantastic dreams about the future'.²³⁸ As early as May 1919 he declared Bauer's Anschluss policy 'finished'.²³⁹ An 'Austrian patriot', he was naturally inclined towards the revival of an independent Austria within a new supranational confederation that would unite the rival successor states of the old monarchy. He was certainly no fan of union with Germany, for a number of fundamental reasons, not least because the concept of the German Reich, as the artificial 'westernisation' of German nationhood – in a spiritual or philosophical, rather than a geographical sense – was anathema to him. However, it was also because, as Stefan Zweig put it, as a 'fanatical Old-Austrian' Seipel stood 'in deep rooted opposition to German, Prussian Protestant militarism' as 'incompatible with the traditional ideas of Austria and her Catholic mission'.²⁴⁰ Anschluss would invariably mean becoming 'a province among

²³⁶ This was one of the reasons why the federal government could not force Tyrol to abandon the Anschluss referendum in 1921.

²³⁷ Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 212.

²³⁸ Seipel to D.W. Bauer, (30 Jul. 1928); Paul R. Sweet, 'Seipel's Views on Anschluss in 1928: An Unpublished Exchange of Letters', *The Journal of Modern History*, 19/4 (1947).

²³⁹ Ursula Daniel, 'Ignaz Seipel im Spiegel der österreichischen Presse', (Karl-Franzens-University, 1979), 313.

²⁴⁰ Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday: An Autobiography*, (London, 1943), 199.

provinces under the leadership of Prussia'.²⁴¹ To Seipel, this 'westernized concept of a nation state' was not only unsuited for the German context, it could not be the ultimate incarnation of German nationhood, precisely because Austria had undergone 'a different historical experience'.²⁴²

Despite his 'latent anti-“Anschluss” leanings', some confusion still surrounds Seipel's attitude to union with Germany, a confusion, which has certainly been fuelled by his deliberate ambiguity on the issue.²⁴³ As his biographer points out, Seipel 'talked a great deal and compulsively about the Anschluss' without, however, 'speaking either for or against it', a fact which is surely telling in itself.²⁴⁴ His watchword, 'nothing against Germany, nothing without Germany' had a clear double meaning, a fact which did not escape the attention of both the *Wilhelmstrasse* and the *Quai d'Orsay*, who suspected his Anschluss policy 'to be a *double jeu*'.²⁴⁵ Sidestepping prickly questions, Seipel would often resort to drawing on divine providence as and when the situation demanded: 'It is still by no means clear', he declared evasively when challenged about his position, 'where the Lord intends us German-Austrians to be, and that, surely, is what ultimately matters'.²⁴⁶ Part of the problem also lies in the somewhat sophisticated nature of his argument: to Seipel, Anschluss 'did not only mean “union with Germany”' and was not considered 'antithetical to a Danubian confederation which would include non-German states'.²⁴⁷ What is more, understanding of Seipel's attitude has also been obscured by what one scholar has termed 'the big lie', the fact that the Nazis claimed him as one of their own, a *Vorkämpfer volksdeutschen Denkens*, 'a pioneer of the German racial idea' an interpretation

²⁴¹ Barbara Ward, 'Seipel and the Anschluss', 45.

²⁴² 'Westlerische Staatsbegriff'. Excerpt from a lecture held in the *Österreichischen politischen Gesellschaft* in Vienna on 11 February 1926. Published in: Ignaz Seipel, ed., *Österreich, wie es wirklich ist*, (Vienna, 1953), 9.

²⁴³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, 2, para. 6. See also: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 302.

²⁴⁴ Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 301.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 302.

²⁴⁶ 'Es ist noch keineswegs gewiß, wo der lieber Gott uns Deutschösterreicher haben will, und darauf kommt es doch in erster Linie an'. Christian Strasser, 'Die Haltung Dr. Ignaz Seipels', 69.

²⁴⁷ Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 114–15.

which is only borne out by a superficial evaluation of the facts.²⁴⁸ Yet, in many ways, Seipel's position on Anschluss was plain to see. According to Gehl, in 1927 Seipel rejected Stresemann's initiative for a customs union because Seipel, 'in contrast to Stresemann' opposed Anschluss 'for fundamental and not only tactical reasons'.²⁴⁹ Berlin thus waited for a change in Vienna, which came with Johann Schober in 1929. Seipel then dropped the plan when he became Foreign Minister in the autumn of 1930, only for Schober to take it up once more when he became Foreign Minister under Otto Ender.²⁵⁰ Ultimately, Seipel's strategy was nowhere near as complex as it first appears; Anschluss was for Seipel, quite simply, 'a last resort'.²⁵¹

Seipel's attitude towards union with Germany was based upon the belief that *Altösterreich* was by no means dead.²⁵² 'Austria' and 'Austrianism' had not disappeared with the Empire; rather these concepts had taken on a different form, and the German-Austrians, the backbone of *Altösterreich*, now formed the last true bastion of the 'Austrian Idea'. The Empire, he maintained, had been taken from them, but their 'homeland [*Heimat*], their 'Austrianism' had not. Even the name *Deutschösterreich*, Seipel argued, was indicative of a *großösterreichische* mind-set; the notion of German-Austria, he reasoned, could only be understood in connection with the concept of a 'Czech-Austria' or a 'Polish-Austria'.²⁵³ He was not, however, talking about monarchical restoration or the re-establishment of an Empire under German-Austrian leadership, but about Austria's historical and spiritual mission, a mission which 'might be placed before them once more, either as an Austrian, an eastern European, a central European or a pan-European task'.²⁵⁴ It remained undecided in which direction *Deutschösterreich* would gravitate, 'East or West, South or North' as the Austrians still did not know where they could 'best serve the

²⁴⁸ Jerry W. Pyle, 'Austrian Patriotism: Alternative to Anschluss', in ed., F. Parkinson *Conquering the Past: Austrian Nazism Yesterday & Today* (Detroit, 1989), 87.

²⁴⁹ Jürgen Gehl, *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss, 1931–1938*, (London, 1963), 4.

²⁵⁰ See: *Ibid*, 6.

²⁵¹ Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 306.

²⁵² See: Christian Strasser, 'Die Haltung Dr. Ignaz Seipels', 69.

²⁵³ Ignaz Seipel, "'Der Föderalismus in Oesterreich'", *Reichspost*, 22 Jan. 1929, 1–3.

²⁵⁴ Seipel to Dr. W. Bauer, (3 Jul. 1928) in: Paul R. Sweet, 'Seipel's Views on Anschluss', 322.

German people'.²⁵⁵ Where does the Lord want us in the future, he mused, what is our true cultural mission? Not in a centralized German state, it would seem: all of these questions, Seipel suggested, point, almost assuredly, towards the *Donauföderation*.²⁵⁶ Here was the cloudy allegiance to the German nation to which the British Minister would later refer. For Seipel the German people might well be best served if the Austrians remained *outside* Germany.

Wenn wir das Leben unserer Nation in der Schaffung des Einheitsstaates nicht erschöpft sehen, dann können wir uns irgendwie auch damit abfinden, daß wir in einem deutschen Staat leben, der dem Deutschen Reiche nicht angehört. Daß es einen Vorteil hat, einen solchen deutschen Staat zu haben, das sehen wir gerade in diesen Zeiten, in denen wir beobachten müssen, daß die Deutschen, die ebensowenig wie wir zum Reiche gehören können und dürfen, die aber anderen Staaten zugeteilt wurden, nicht dieselbe Freiheit des nationalen Lebens haben wie wir.²⁵⁷

Thus, Austria should not “abandon itself to pseudo national intoxication”, not least because, ‘if ‘the German-Austrians were to join the German Empire it would only gain a couple of million more inhabitants’, but ‘Austria would have disappeared’ for good.²⁵⁸ This was particularly important because Seipel believed that the Austrian Germans, as the ‘the true heirs of the old Empire’, would ‘continue to “guard the imperial supernational [sic] ideal”, after 1918, much as they had done after 1866 and their separation from the ‘Reich’.²⁵⁹ Seipel’s attitude reveals that the Austro-Hungarian Empire may have been physically wiped from the map in 1918, but deeply rooted historical memories and cultural consciousness were not so easily erased.

²⁵⁵ ‘Immerhin ist auch in dieser Frage noch keine Entscheidung gefallen, ... – und das ist für uns die Hauptsache – weil wir noch nicht wissen, auf welchem Platz wir dem deutschen Volk am besten dienen können’ Ignaz Seipel, ‘Das Volk und die künftige Staatsform’, *Reichspost*, 23 Nov. 1918, 1–2 and Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 114. See also: Christian Strasser, ‘Die Haltung Dr. Ignaz Seipels’, 72.

²⁵⁶ From an article written by Seipel on the ‘Die Beziehungen zu den Nachbarstaaten’, cited in: Christian Strasser, ‘Die Haltung Dr. Ignaz Seipels’, 72.

²⁵⁷ Excerpt from a lecture held in the *Österreichischen politischen Gesellschaft* in Vienna on 11 February 1926. Published in: Ignaz Seipel, ed., *Österreich, wie es wirklich ist*, 9–10.

²⁵⁸ Ignaz Seipel, *Nation and State*, 92. Quoted in: Barbara Ward, ‘Seipel and the Anschluss’, 37.

²⁵⁹ Originally cited in *Volk und Reich*, January 1926. Ibid, 50.

Although he was not an authentic spokesman for the party as a whole, Seipel was the driving force behind persuading the Christian Socials to remain within the boundaries of the impoverished Republic.²⁶⁰ When he assumed the chancellorship in May 1922, the country was on the verge of complete collapse. The unemployment rate had risen above 20 per cent, inflation was at its peak, and political discontent was widespread; the population had taken to the streets en masse with their demand for Anschluss. Seipel was to remain in office until 1929, during which time the country settled, if somewhat uncomfortably, into its independent guise.²⁶¹ Shunning Anschluss as a guiding principle, Seipel's foremost aim was to stabilize Austria economically. He was convinced, in 1922 at least, that Austria could be saved.²⁶² His first major accomplishment was the negotiation of the first Geneva Protocols in 1922. On his initiative, the international community was asked to provide a loan to save Austria from financial collapse. The money was desperately needed to help rehabilitate the country's critically failing economy. The international community agreed to a loan of 650 million crowns – after Seipel proposed annexing Austria to Italy, Czechoslovakia or Germany – although the conditions were austere and the Austrians would have to make vast sacrifices in return for this financial aid.²⁶³ The Austrians were bound to carry out strict financial and fiscal reforms, reaffirm their acceptance of Article 88 (banning union with Germany) and make a pledge to drastically reduce the number of state employees.²⁶⁴ Even the German Nationalists concurred with Seipel's plan, agreeing that this was the only option available, although making the requisite protest in accordance with their political principles.²⁶⁵ The real problems came from the Socialists who were virulently opposed to outside assistance that would shore up the state. They labelled Seipel a traitor to his own country for relinquishing financial control to foreign powers.²⁶⁶ In September 1922, the

²⁶⁰ See: Paul R. Sweet, 'Seipel's Views on Anschluss', 320 and Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 130.

²⁶¹ See: Rolf Steininger, '12 November 1918–12 March 1938', 95.

²⁶² See: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 207.

²⁶³ See: Douglas Alder, 'Paradigms', 113; Rolf Steininger, '12 November 1918–12 March 1938', 96.

²⁶⁴ See: Margaret G. Myers, 'The League Loans', *Political Science Quarterly*, 60 (1945), 499.

²⁶⁵ See: Rolf Steininger, '12 November 1918–12 March 1938', 96.

²⁶⁶ See: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 208.

Arbeiter-Zeitung, the mouthpiece of the SDAP, accused Seipel of being a “puppet of the Jews” who wanted to turn Austria over to the enslavement of Jewish international finance capital.²⁶⁷ According to Leser, Seipel’s efforts to ward off the currency crisis through the use of foreign loans was viewed in class terms, as an attempt by the bourgeoisie to regain the position it had lost in the aftermath of the war; the day of the signing of the Geneva protocols, 4 October 1922, was, Bauer said, “Seipel’s revenge for 12 November 1918” (the day the Christian Socials had been forced by the Social Democrats to agree to proclaiming a republic and declaring Anschluss as the government’s aim).²⁶⁸ Yet, the fact remains, and as Leser also points out, the Social Democrats failed to persuade the nation of their alternative strategy of overcoming the economic crisis by the imposition of capital levies and the expropriation of indigenous capitalists.²⁶⁹ To others still, Seipel was a saviour for providing the country with a way out of its terrible predicament. Whichever interpretation is accepted, the loans were eventually ratified by means of a compromise between the parties, saving the country from certain bankruptcy and helping to end post-war inflation.²⁷⁰

In retrospect, it is clear that these strict fiscal measures and Seipel’s dexterous administrative skills lent the adolescent Austrian state a degree of stability, even if Austria’s myriad problems were not miraculously solved.²⁷¹ Under his leadership, the crown was stabilized, before being replaced by a new currency, a new National Bank was organized and an economic reconstruction programme was initiated.²⁷² The reform

²⁶⁷ Cited in: Bruce F. Pauley, 'The Austrian Press and the Third Reich: Contradictory Views from a Neighbour', in ed., Robert M. Shapiro *Why Didn't the Press Shout?: American and International Journalism During the Holocaust* 2003), 272.

²⁶⁸ Norbert Leser, 'Austro-Marxism: A Reappraisal' 140.

²⁶⁹ See: Ibid 140.

²⁷⁰ See: Isabella Ackerl and Friedrich Weissensteiner, *Österreichisches Personen Lexikon*, (Vienna, 1992), 445–46.

²⁷¹ See: R. John Rath, 'The Deterioration of Democracy in Austria, 1927–1932', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 27 (1996), 213.

²⁷² On 22 October 1922 the first round of Geneva Protocols were signed, which granted a twenty-year loan to be used to help restore the Austrian economy. The Social Democrats fiercely opposed the loan in the *Nationalrat* on the grounds that the Austrians had to guarantee their independence for the duration of the loan.

measures quickly bore fruit, which was reflected in the gradual but discernible improvement in the country's economic stability. By 1923–24, the upturn in Austria's financial situation 'was marked, although it did not proceed without continuous effort'.²⁷³ That is not to say Austria experienced a remarkable economic renaissance, indeed, the pursuit of 'deflationary economic policies' demanded by the Western Powers 'hampered the growth of Austrian industry and contributed to a high unemployment rate'.²⁷⁴ Ultimately, reliance on international credit and the 'League's budgetary and credit guidelines' of 1924 and 1925 invariably had a 'restraining effect upon Austria's economic growth'.²⁷⁵ Moreover, the dependence on foreign loans meant that the Austrians had little freedom to control their own financial affairs. However, there was little other choice and at least the loans gave Austria the tools to stabilize the economy and alleviate some of the worst problems that the country was facing. Assessments of Austria's achievements during this decade are ultimately divided. The country was, after all, dependent on the international financial community for monetary assistance, budget deficits were a permanent fixture for most of the twenties and the economy was hampered by grave and perennial structural problems.²⁷⁶ Yet, some analysts point to the vast improvements that occurred, including the critical fact that Anschluss sentiment did decline as the psychological climate changed.²⁷⁷ Which raises the question, what was the Austrian attitude to Anschluss after a decade or so of independent rule? Enigmatic as ever, according to the British Legation, writing as the year 1932 drew to a close:

No review of an Austrian year would be complete without some reference to the 'Anschluss.' It is a baffling subject to understand and perhaps still more to explain. It is talked about so much and thought of so little. It is attractive when forbidden or distant. When near, as in the case of the abortive Austro-German Customs Union, it arouses all the latent antagonism of conflicting religions, mentalities and vested interests. I feel it to be a bogey for the French and a will-o'-the-wisp for the

²⁷³ Margaret G. Myers, 'League Loans', 503.

²⁷⁴ R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy', 254.

²⁷⁵ Peter Berger, 'The League of Nations and Interwar Austria: Critical Assessment of a Partnership in Economic Reconstruction', in eds. Günter Bischof, et al. *The Dollfuss-Schuschnigg Era in Austria: A Reassessment* (New Brunswick, 2003), 80.

²⁷⁶ See: Peter J. Katzenstein, *Disjoined Partners*, 144.

²⁷⁷ See: R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy', 213.

pan-Germans. For the Austrians it is often a means of gentle and transparent blackmail. Its most potent stimulant is the veto of the French; its most powerful check is tactless German striving; I may be mistaken, but I believe it to be not only difficult to explain, but still more difficult to realise. As forbidden fruit, it always presents attractions to whose view chiefly distance lends enchantment; if offered as a gift, it would, I think, be declined.²⁷⁸

Thus, the stage was set for the showdown with the National Socialists the following year.

²⁷⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, 2, para. 5.

Chapter 3

Kampfplatz ohne Spielregeln:

The Dollfuß Government – 1932

The Dollfuß government's response to the challenge of National Socialism both at home and abroad can only be understood against the background of the wider political and economic catastrophe that the country faced. Although the nature of the threat posed by the National Socialist movement was understood to be unique, the problem was considered part of a larger, multi-dimensional crisis. On the one hand, there was the worsening economic situation. The 'Great Depression' had hit the Austrian economy exceptionally hard, a situation that was compounded by the failure of the *Creditanstalt*, the country's largest bank, in 1931.²⁷⁹ Under pressure from abroad, the Austrian government agreed to compensate the bank's losses, which added a further budgetary burden to an economy already in the throes of a severe recession.²⁸⁰ Added to this was the depression's destabilizing effect on Austrian society as economic misery and rampant unemployment led to mounting public disorder. Civil unrest escalated to such an alarming degree, that to some the breakdown of law and order appeared imminent. Political polarization reached a hitherto unprecedented level as relations between the Christian Social government and the Social Democrat opposition deteriorated, bringing the *Nationalrat* to a standstill. It was in the middle of this chaos that the National Socialist movement scored its first decisive electoral victory on Austrian soil.

²⁷⁹ The *Creditanstalt* was the largest bank in Central and Eastern Europe. For further information on the bank's collapse see; Iago Gil Aguado, 'The Creditanstalt Crisis of 1931 and the Failure of the Austro-German Customs Union Project'.

²⁸⁰ See: Peter Gerlich and David F. J. Campbell, 'Austria: From Compromise to Authoritarianism', in eds. D. Berg-Schlosser and J. Mitchell *Conditions of Democracy in Europe, 1919–39: Systematic Case-studies 2000*, 55.

The parallels with the revolutionary chaos that had gripped the Weimar Republic were obvious to contemporary observers. In Germany, democracy was in a stranglehold; in July 1932 the German Nazi party had become the largest party in the German *Reichstag*, trapping the centre parties, in the eyes of conservative Austrian onlookers, between the radical parties on the left and right. At the same time, political violence had reached distressing levels. For Austria, this was an ominous development. One Viennese newspaper likened the country to ‘...a small house next to a larger, burning building’. Austria was facing a new and potentially life-threatening political crisis.²⁸¹ Indeed, Austrian journalists and foreign observers alike ransacked the store of catastrophic imagery to get their point across. With the Weimar Republic already half submerged by the ‘brown flood’, it looked to the British Foreign Office as through Austria too ‘might be carried away on a National Socialist wave’.²⁸² The fear was well founded. Although numerically speaking the threat posed by the National Socialists appeared to be nowhere near as serious in Austria as it was in Germany, in combination with the prevailing economic and political crisis, the electoral arrival of the Nazi movement was a devastating blow to the beleaguered Christian Social government. Indeed, it is the success of the movement first in Germany, then in Austria and its subsequent impact upon Austrian politics that is key to understanding the stance of the Dollfuß government, and the proroguing of parliament in March the following year.

Traditional explanations of the events of 1932, particularly those that seek to place Dollfuß within a ‘fascist context’, tend to view Dollfuß’s early premiership as part of a narrative of escalating right-wing violence and anti-democratic sentiment that spanned 1927–34. While Tálos and Manoschek, for example, present the year 1932 as the ‘latent phase’ in the establishment of an Austrofascist system, Leidinger and Moritz emphasize the lack of resistance from mid-1932 onwards to the overthrow of the existing order and Socialist fear of the *Heimwehr*. Vocolka maintains, that in Dollfuß many believed they had

²⁸¹ ‘Die Woche der Entscheidungen’, *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, 26 Jul. 1932, I.

²⁸² (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/15888 paper C1255/68/3, Sir E. Phipps, Political Situation in Austria, 8 Feb. 1932.

found ‘the strong man’ they had been looking for.²⁸³ Thus, Dollfuß, who was supposedly anti-democratic all along, seized the opportunity to bypass parliamentary government in the spring of 1933 and rule by emergency decree with the intention of establishing dictatorial rule, an event that led inexorably to the complete destruction of Austrian democracy in 1934.

The tendency to view the period through an anti-democratic prism and to read history backwards from February 1934 has led to other factors being overlooked. There were, it is true, right-wing groups waiting in the wings to destroy Austrian democracy and there was a tendency towards authoritarianism on the moderate right where loyalty to parliamentary democracy was tenuous. However, to focus solely on the issue of democracy or on the deliberate destruction of democracy ultimately obscures our view of the period. One of the most popular assertions about the Dollfuß era is that it was the move away from democratic principles to authoritarian rule that paved the way for the catastrophe of 1938 and Nazi rule, a notion originating in the interwar years and Socialist critiques of the period. The argument is a spurious one. It assumes that democracy alone provided the basis of defence against National Socialism. It rather conspicuously ignores, for example, the evidence of the Saar, which voted overwhelmingly and by democratic means to become part of Hitler’s Empire, emphatically rejecting the idea of the status quo. That the democratic system would mean the Saar falling into the lap of the German Reich like ripe fruit, providing a victory that the Hitler government did not deserve was obvious to proponents of the Dollfuß government: ‘in einer gefährlichen Situation’ the *Reichspost* pointed out in May 1934, ‘ist eben die Demokratie tatsächlich eine Schwäche’.²⁸⁴ In the free city of Danzig, despite being under League of Nations control and with a small Polish garrison, the Nazis successfully took control of the *Volkstag* and Senate via the ballot box, after which they set about violently suppressing the political opposition.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ See: Emmerich Tálos and Walter Manoschek, ‘Zum Konstituierungsprozeß des Austrofaschismus’, in eds. Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer *Austrofaschismus: Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur, 1933–1938* (Vienna, 2005), 11–17; Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, 68 and Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 289.

²⁸⁴ ‘Saar–Deutschland’, *Reichspost*, 23 May 1934, 1–2.

²⁸⁵ See: H.S. Levine, *Hitler’s Free City: A History of the Nazi Party in Danzig, 1925–1939*, (Chicago, 1973).

It also ignores the evidence of what happened in Czechoslovakia, where in the parliamentary elections of 1935 the *Sudetendeutsche Partei* (SdP), funded by Nazi Germany (the Czech Nazi party had been banned and many of its supporters now found a home among the SdP's ranks), obtained 15.2 per cent of the total vote – 66 per cent of the German vote – to become the largest parliamentary party. The election has since been interpreted as a referendum on whether Czechoslovakia should shift to an authoritarian system: due, in part, to Beneš skilful manoeuvring Czechoslovakia retained its democratic structure.²⁸⁶ Although there the existing coalition government, united, but only against the German minority, was in a position to 'squeeze out' the SdP – an option not available in Austria – the election allowed the Nazi party a platform in Czechoslovak politics, albeit surreptitiously, and, moreover, caused great difficulties to the coalition government now in a vulnerable position with a precarious majority (149 out of 300 seats) and ultimately precipitated the crisis that culminated in the Munich Agreement of September 1938 and Nazi annexation.²⁸⁷ Thus, although the tactics were different, the result remained the same.

It also bears repeating the earlier evidence of the Weimar Republic itself, where the Nazis used the weaknesses of the parliamentary system to come to power. Ultimately, historians chose not to look at this when they argue that in Austria, democracy provided the surest defence against National Socialism. Although a functioning democratic system might have helped Austria put up an effective defence against National Socialism, the evidence of the Saar, Danzig and Germany show us that it provided no guarantees. However, the elimination of parliamentary government and the refusal to call new elections bought the Austrians time by blocking the Nazis' road to power for a number of years. And ultimately the argument is academic because as the undermining of Austrian democracy by both the left and the right meant that the democratic process was not functioning at a level where it was capable of warding off the Nazi threat. The events of 1932 and the first months of Dollfuß's premiership demonstrate that the real issue was

²⁸⁶ See: David Kelly, 'A Democracy at the Crossroads: The Czech Extreme Right in the 1935 Czechoslovak Elections', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, 15/3 (2002).

²⁸⁷ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/20376, paper R971/971/12, Foreign Office Memorandum. The German Minority in Czechoslovakia 8 Apr. 1936.

not the *destruction* of Austrian democracy, but the fact that it was in *crisis* – the reality was that by the 1930s escalating political polarization had made governing the country ‘practically impossible’.²⁸⁸ Only a healthy, functioning democracy would have stood the slightest chance of combatting the Nazi threat, and, on a federal level, Austrian democracy could not function because it was deadlocked. The pitched battle for the ratification of the Lausanne protocols, at a time when the Austrian economy was on the brink of collapse, painfully exposed the limitations of the democratic decision-making process, as well as the triumph of political intransigence and ideological dogmatism. The burgeoning Nazi movement laid bare this weakness and knew just how to use it to its own advantage.

²⁸⁸ Mark Allinson, *Germany and Austria, 1814-2000*, (London, 2002), 77.

Wählet die stärkste Partei Deutschlands – The Rise of National Socialism in Austria

Although an ostensibly ‘Austrian’ phenomenon, it is a curious fact that without the meteoric success of their German confrères, Austrian National Socialism would have been consigned to historical oblivion. During the 1920s, Austria’s indigenous Nazi movement, the DNSAP, the direct descendent of the *Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (DAP), established in Bohemia in 1903 in the wake of the collapse of Georg von Schönerer’s *deutschnationale Bewegung*, was something of a political non-entity, marred by disunity and discord.²⁸⁹ So much so, that in 1926 it split into two factions: the radical *Hitlerbewegung*, which professed its allegiance to Hitler, and the more ‘conservative’ socialist-orientated Schulz group, with both groups claiming to be the true representatives of the Austrian National Socialist tradition. The split did nothing to garner support for either variant; in the parliamentary elections of April 1927, the NSDAP-*Hitlerbewegung* only managed to win a paltry 27,000 votes and not one parliamentary mandate, while the Schulz group had already dwindled into political insignificance.²⁹⁰

While the tide of National Socialism swept across the German political landscape, Austrian National Socialism initially remained little more than a nuisance that, according to Eric Phipps, British Minister in Vienna, went almost ‘unheeded’ in Austria during 1931.²⁹¹ Austria’s relatively stable political structure had approximately 80 per cent of the vote traditionally going to the two largest parties, the Christian Socials on the right and the Social Democrats on the left. The presence of an alternative ‘fascist’ movement in the *Heimwehr*, as well as a strong Catholic movement and a powerful and well-organized Socialist party all meant that during the late 1920s, National Socialism had struggled to find

²⁸⁹ The DNSAP was an indigenous ‘Austrian’ movement – in the *altösterreichisch* sense. Although enjoying close ties with the German NSDAP, which was formed in 1919, the German Nazis, as Whiteside confirms ‘were [not] the direct descendants of the Austrian National Socialists’. Andrew G. Whiteside cited in: Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 29.

²⁹⁰ See: *Ibid*, 41–47.

²⁹¹ Sir Eric Clare Edmund Phipps, (1875–1945), Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Austria, 1928–1933. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/15888 paper C4469/68/3, Sir E. Phipps, Political Situation in Austria and the growth of the National Socialist movement, 30 May 1932.

an adequate foothold.²⁹² Leaderless and plagued by internal rivalries, the NSDAP-*Hitlerbewegung* proved itself no match for the *Heimwehr*, a right-wing paramilitary movement and the National Socialists' main competitor. However, within the space of a few short months the situation had changed dramatically prompting Eric Phipps, British Minister to Austria, to inform London in May 1932 that the Nazi movement was 'acquiring an increasing hold over [Austria's] electorate'.²⁹³

On the 24 April 1932, both Austria and Germany went to the polls in what would prove to be landmark elections in both countries. With 75 per cent of the Austrian electorate balloted in the municipal and provincial elections, and roughly 33 million of 43 million German voters in the provincial *Landtag* elections, it was clear enough that 'taken together the results would yield a clear picture of the political currents and opinions in both states'.²⁹⁴ In Austria, the elections heralded a major shift in the balance of political power. The NSDAP notched up its first electoral success with 344,000 votes, taking 17 per cent in Vienna, 14 per cent in Lower Austria and 29 per cent in Salzburg, finally making the breakthrough to a mass party and entering into parliamentary government.²⁹⁵ A total of 29 Nazi representatives took up seats in the provincial diets.²⁹⁶ The Nazis' electoral success came largely at the expense of the 'conservative bourgeois parties'. Christian Social and *Heimwehr* losses were appreciable, even the Social Democratic Party suffered, but the Greater Germans, the so-called 'Schoberblock' and the *Landbund* were completely wiped out.²⁹⁷

²⁹² Unlike in Germany, there was no body of floating voters to be captured, a fact which helps shed some light on Botz's observation that by 1932 '...there [had been] a slowdown of the upward trend suggesting that the party was approaching the limits of its electoral potential'. See: Gerhard Botz, 'The Changing Patterns of Social Support for Austrian National Socialism (1918–1945)', in eds. Stein Ugelvik Larsen and Gerhard Botz *Who Were the Fascists: Social Roots of European Fascism* (Bergen 1980), 214.

²⁹³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/15888 paper C4469/68/3, Sir E. Phipps, Political Situation in Austria and the growth of the National Socialist movement, 30 May 1932.

²⁹⁴ The German *Landtagswahlen* took place in Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg, Anhalt and Hamburg (*Bürgerschaftswahl*) See: 'Der große Wahltag', *Reichspost*, 24 Apr. 1932, 1.

²⁹⁵ See: Gerhard Botz, 'Changing Patterns', 211.

²⁹⁶ See: *Ibid*, 211.

²⁹⁷ See: R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 164.

If the depression provided the Austrian NSDAP with the fertile soil it needed to flourish, it was the growing electoral successes of their German brethren across the border that gave the ailing Austrian *Hitlerbewegung* the boost that it so desperately needed.²⁹⁸ The obvious correlation between the success of the German party and growing support for its poor relations in Austria was clear to contemporary observers: as always, Austria's political fate was seen to be tied to the course of events in Germany. Here is Sir Walford Selby, who replaced Eric Phipps as British Minister to Austria in July 1933:

At the end of 1932 there were many who thought the apparent decline of national socialism in Germany likely to be followed closely by a similar trend in Austria, this belief being shared at the time by leading Austrian politicians. Yet, barely two months later, the overwhelming victory of Herr Hitler at the German polls has kindled a fire in Austria which the Dollfuss government has battled for the rest of the year to keep under control, with a growing realisation of the fact that, so long as it sweeps through Germany, the Nazi conflagration cannot be altogether extinguished in Austria, though it may be kept under by international co-operation.²⁹⁹

In the immediate run up to the Austrian local elections in April 1932, Hitler and Hindenburg had twice stood in two rounds of the presidential elections in Germany. Although Hindenburg had beaten Hitler by a significant margin Hitler had still managed to amass almost 13.5 million votes in Germany – despite running against a nationalist icon of Hindenburg's stature – and the impact upon the Austrian electorate was palpable.³⁰⁰ From the German example alone, where the upsurge in violent political radicalism was pushing the country to the brink of civil war, it was clear to those writing in the Christian-Social *Reichspost* that the Nazi breakthrough signified a 'new emergency' for Austria.³⁰¹ With the same trend, the 'seismic' radicalization of the right now discernible in both countries,

²⁹⁸ See: Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 49.

²⁹⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, 1.

³⁰⁰ The outcome of the German Presidential elections held on 13 March 1932 fell just short of an outright majority for Hindenburg. As a result, a second round of elections were held on 10 April 1932; the second time round Hindenburg managed to gain the majority stipulated by the Weimar Constitution.

³⁰¹ 'Der große Wahltag', *Reichspost*, 24 Apr. 1932, 1; see also: 'Knapp vor einem Bürgerkrieg', *Reichspost*, 18 Jul. 1932, 1; 'Kein "rotes Oesterreich!"', *Reichspost*, 25 Apr. 1932, 1.

Austria's political life had entered stormy waters.³⁰² Yet, while it was evident that Austria needed to be protected, it was not immediately clear how that could be done.³⁰³

A further, crucial factor in the Nazi movement's rapid expansion was the disintegration of its native Austrian fascist competitors, the *Heimwehr*.³⁰⁴ Established as a paramilitary group in 1918–19, the *Heimwehr* was something of an ideological mélange, influenced by a variety of beliefs ranging from Italian Fascism and German National Socialism to indigenous philosophies espousing the return to a state based upon corporatist principles.³⁰⁵ These disparities were reflected in the fact that the movement was split into two opposing wings. While the one was radical, German national and 'usually anti-government', the other tended to be pro-clerical and conservative. The latter, dominated by Ernst Rüdiger Fürst von Starhemberg, was close to the Christian Socials in Lower Austria and Burgenland and generally supported the Christian Social government.³⁰⁶ During the twenties – and, indeed, on into the thirties – the *Heimwehr* received generous financial and military support from both Italy and Hungary in an attempt by the leaders of these two countries to push a more radical, rightist agenda in Austria. Mussolini in particular was pushing for the destruction of Austrian Social Democracy.³⁰⁷ The ultimate result of this interference in Austria's domestic politics was the elevation of the *Heimwehr* to the vanguard of Austrian politics following the riots of July 1927. It was no coincidence

³⁰² 'Das politische Leben unseres Staates gerät in immer stürmischere Bahnen'. 'Kein "rotes Oesterreich!"', *Reichspost*, 25 Apr. 1932, 1.

³⁰³ 'Die Woche der Entscheidungen', *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, 26 Jul. 1932, 1.

³⁰⁴ For background information on the Heimwehr movement see: C. Earl Edmondson, *The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics 1918–1936*, (Athens, 1978); Ludwig Jedlicka, 'The Austrian Heimwehr', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1/1 (1966).

³⁰⁵ Like the Austrian Nazi party the Heimwehr stemmed from of an area plagued by ethnic tensions. The Heimwehr movement came into being in 1918–1919. A loosely unified militia, it originally acted as a defence force, protecting Austria's borders against armed incursions, primarily from Hungarian and Yugoslav troops. See: Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 73. In reality the various factions that sheltered under its umbrella agreed upon little but upon the rejection of parliamentary democracy and their ferocious aversion to Marxism. Bruce F. Pauley, 'A Case Study in Fascism: The Styrian Heimatschutz and Austrian National Socialism', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 12–13 (1976–77), 251 See also: Ludwig Jedlicka, 'Austrian Heimwehr', 134–37.

³⁰⁶ Bruce F. Pauley, 'A Case Study in Fascism', 251.

³⁰⁷ See: R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy' and Ludwig Jedlicka, 'Austrian Heimwehr', 136.

that, with the *Heimwehr* at the pinnacle of its power in 1927–28, the *NSDAP-Hitlerbewegung* was at its lowest ebb.

As long as this proto-fascist competitor remained a relatively united force, it stood in the way of the National Socialists making any substantial electoral progress. However, the *Heimwehr*'s star fell as quickly as it rose. In the 1930 elections the movement tried to make the breakthrough into parliamentary politics but was sorely disappointed; even with Mussolini's backing they only managed to win a paltry 228,000 votes (6.16 per cent of the total vote), which equated to a modest eight parliamentary seats.³⁰⁸ The ideological divisions within the movement had simply proved to be too deep to be overcome and the movement began to disintegrate into competing factions. The on-going feud between the 'pro-Austrian' wing of the *Heimwehr* around Starhemberg, Fey's clique and Pfrimer's National Socialist sympathizers escalated, culminating in Pfrimer launching a truly bumbling attempt at a coup d'état in 1931.³⁰⁹ The insurrection was a complete disaster and was easily extinguished by police and local gendarmes the following day. Pfrimer's failed march on Vienna sounded the death knell for the movement and the signal for the National Socialists to close in.

The National Socialists had made no secret of their objective to 'capture the pan German "right"' in Austria en masse and the trouble-stricken *Heimwehr* provided the perfect recruiting ground.³¹⁰ The Austrian Nazi Landesinspekteur Theo Habicht's strategy was to exploit the disillusionment within the *Heimwehr*'s ranks and persuade, if not the whole of the *Heimwehr*, then at least its largest wing – the pan-German Styrian Heimatschutz – to join forces with the Nazis.³¹¹ As Pauley notes, Habicht was aware that the key to absorbing the whole of the pan-German right in Austria was dependent upon

³⁰⁸ This realisation initiated, at least in part, the call for a unified programme for the *Heimwehr*; the movement could not rely upon a solely negative platform and would need to 'invent' an ideology of its own. The result was the proclamation of the so-called 'Korneuburg Oath' in 1930, but even this ultimately failed to unify the party. See: Ludwig Jedlicka, 'Austrian Heimwehr', 138. See also: Bruce F. Pauley, 'A Case Study in Fascism', 261.

³⁰⁹ R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy', 240–41.

³¹⁰ Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 75.

³¹¹ See: R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 173.

winning over this latter faction.³¹² If Habicht's strategy proved successful, it was likely that the rest of the pan-German right, as well as a part of the ruling Christian Social Party would follow suit. The odds were with the National Socialists; pan-German, anti-Semitic and linked to a region of *Geheimprotestantismus*, the Styrian Heimatschutz was a particularly easy target.³¹³ Within three weeks of Pfrimer's abortive putsch the Nazis had begun the process of splitting the Styrian faction from the rest of the movement; the Styrian wing of the *Heimwehr* attempted to form a fighting alliance with the National Socialists, a step that inexorably led to the complete absorption of the pan-German wing of the *Heimwehr* within the Nazi ranks.³¹⁴ The disintegration of the *Heimwehr* and the likely magnetism of the Nazis for the remaining sections of the movement played a central role in Dollfuß's decision-making over the coming weeks and months.

³¹² See: Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 76. Theo Habicht (4 Apr. 1898–31 Jan. 1944) was *Landesinspekteur* of the Austrian NSDAP from 1931.

³¹³ Discussions between Hitler and Styrian representatives had taken place as early as 1926–27. *Ibid*, 76.

³¹⁴ See: R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy', 241.

Der Kampf um Österreich! – The Formation of the Dollfuß Government

In early May 1932, just a few weeks after the Nazi's electoral breakthrough, Engelbert Dollfuß was summoned by Wilhelm Miklas, the Christian Social Federal President and asked to attempt the formation of a workable government.³¹⁵ The expectation was, according to Jagschitz, that Dollfuß's government would be a transitional one, until either the political situation had stabilized, or, as some within the Christian Social Party hoped, a 'strong man' emerged to take the helm of both the party and the state.³¹⁶ The previous government, headed by Karl Buresch, had resigned on 6 May after just three months in office; Nazi gains in the municipal elections prompted the Nazis, Greater Germans (who hoped for an electoral pact with the Nazis) and Social Democrats to, in effect, join together to demand new elections, triggering a cabinet crisis and the government's downfall.³¹⁷ Buresch had attempted to forestall the crisis through the inclusion of a member of the *Heimatblock*, but had ultimately failed to save his government.³¹⁸ A protracted cabinet crisis ensued, which was, according to the reports of the British legation, prolonged by the excessive demands made by the *Heimatblock* and the Greater Germans in return for their support. Both Germany and Italy sought to influence Austrian domestic affairs to their own advantage: while the Italian legation purportedly backed *Heimwehr* demands for Rintelen as Chancellor, the German legation 'was intriguing on behalf of Dr. Schober' of the Greater Germans, 'supporting, and possibly inspiring impossible pan-German demands'.³¹⁹

³¹⁵ Wilhelm Miklas, (15 Oct. 1872 – 20 Mar. 1956) President of Austria, from 1928–1938. Miklas refused to resign as Federal President despite Nazi pressure until 13 March 1938.

³¹⁶ Jagschitz maintains that Dollfuß was not considered that man. Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Engelbert Dollfuß 1892 bis 1934', in eds. Friedrich Weissensteiner and Erika Weinzierl *Die österreichischen Bundeskanzler. Leben und Werk* (Vienna, 1983), 197.

³¹⁷ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 67.

³¹⁸ See: *Ibid*, para. 67.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, para. 67.

With the country on the verge of bankruptcy and a financial moratorium seemingly imminent, there was some urgency to end the government crisis.³²⁰ The previous year, Austria had appealed to the League of Nations for help in the form of a second tranche of the 1930 loan, to mitigate a crisis exacerbated by the collapse of the *Creditanstalt*, the country's largest bank.³²¹ The *Creditanstalt* was, according to one scholar, in today's language considered 'too big to fail', and the Austrian government under Chancellor Ender had assembled a bailout package to rescue the bank, with the State guaranteeing the bank's liabilities vis-à-vis the Austrian National Bank.³²² However, this ultimately brought the government's own creditworthiness into question and by 1932 the Austrian National Bank found itself, despite the exchange restrictions in place, 'in a serious plight...with some among its directorate pressing the government to declare a moratorium'.³²³ International discussions about Austria's financial quandary dragged on into 1932 without significant result. On 9 May, in the very midst of the cabinet crisis, and with Austria 'perilously near a collapse of its currency' the interim Austrian government – with Buresch acting as a caretaker Chancellor until a new government was formed – appealed, once again, to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations for international assistance and advice.³²⁴ Discussions were organized to take place in Paris on 30 May, which were then transferred to Geneva on 12 June and Lausanne on 17 June.³²⁵ On top of all this, there was the on-going issue of the *Creditanstalt*, with foreign creditors expected to arrive in Vienna any day. The Austrian economy was teetering on the brink of collapse and there was no government in place to co-ordinate a settlement.

³²⁰ Ibid, para. 67.

³²¹ Ibid, para. 7. The negotiations for a long-term foreign loan for Austria had begun under Buresch. The 250,000,000-schilling loan was applied for on 7 August 1931. See: R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy', 240. The *Creditanstalt* was in fact the largest bank in Central and Eastern Europe. For further information on the bank's collapse see; Iago Gil Aguado, 'The Creditanstalt Crisis of 1931 and the Failure of the Austro-German Customs Union Project'.

³²² Aurel Schubert in, Peter Coy, 'Lessons from the Credit-Anstalt Collapse [online edition]', *Bloomberg Businessweek*, 20 Apr. 2011, accessed: 28 Nov. 2012. See also; Aurel Schubert, *The Credit-Anstalt Crisis of 1931*, (Cambridge, 1991).

³²³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 7.

³²⁴ Ibid, para. 10.

³²⁵ Ibid, para. 10–13.

Dollfuß's nomination was certainly not intended as a provocation to the left. On the contrary, he was chosen to form a government precisely because he had 'few enemies and many friends in all parties, including the Social Democrats'.³²⁶ As Dollfuß was 'largely unknown', at least on the national stage, and untainted by parliamentary squabbles – Dollfuß had never been a member of parliament and although a member of the Christian Social Party was not a 'party politician' – the hope was that he would be better placed to reach the compromises necessary to weather the storm.³²⁷ He also enjoyed relatively good relations with the Social Democrats and agricultural circles. There is certainly no evidence to suggest that he entered office intent upon attacking the left, or destroying Austrian democracy. As Rath noted, everyone, including Dollfuß's opponents, truly believed that he was a genuine democrat when he assumed the Chancellorship.³²⁸ Rath quotes Otto Leichter, a prominent Social Democrat, describing how Dollfuß 'never grew weary assuring the Social Democratic political leaders...that nothing was farther from his thoughts than waging a war against the Social Democrats'.³²⁹

Yet, within the space of less than a year, Dollfuß had gone from being 'one of the more non-partisan, moderate leaders of the Christian Social Party' to the 'gravedigger of Austrian parliamentary democracy'.³³⁰ Within two years, he had given the order to fire on the Karl-Marx-Hof with light artillery, earning the epithet *Arbeitermörder* and his position as one of the most controversial figures in Austrian contemporary history.³³¹ Before James William Miller and R. J Rath in the 1990s, few historians – besides perhaps Jagschitz – questioned closely this striking transformation from democrat to dictator and the

³²⁶ R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 162.

³²⁷ Ibid, 162; Similarly, Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Engelbert Dollfuß 1892 bis 1934', 197.

³²⁸ R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 162.

³²⁹ Ibid, 162.

³³⁰ Miller provides the best examination to date of this crucial issue. James William Miller, 'Engelbert Dollfuß', 123.

³³¹ The Karl-Marx-Hof is one of the most well-known of the Viennese *Gemeindebauten*. During the February Civil War of 1934, members of the *Republikanischer Schutzbund* barricaded themselves into the building.

contradiction that appeared to lie behind it.³³² Consequently, despite the fact that these more nuanced appraisals of Dollfuß's political development have been available for a number of years, blanket assertions about his motivations still permeate even the most contemporary literature. In the light of current knowledge of the period, it seems extremely unreasonable to assert that Dollfuß was driven by a 'unbridled lust for power', or, a rehashing of the same basic idea, 'motivated more by the preservation of power and ideological pretexts than domestic peace', an allegation first made by his political opponents on the left and repeated in the literature up to the present-day.³³³ Indeed, we seem to have forgotten that from the perspective of 1933, Dollfuß was not viewed quite as unfavourably as one might otherwise suspect. Selby's assessment of Dollfuß, written in January 1934 is so striking that it is worth quoting in full:

'Undoubtedly the ablest man in Austrian public life, he is courageous and energetic, but possesses also sufficient suppleness to control his very discordant team of supporters. Though an indifferent speaker, he has succeeded on impressing his personality on the country and abroad, (in which, of course, his diminutive stature was of considerable assistance), and is not really unpopular even with his opponents. They are inclined to assert, however, that the mainspring of his policy is his desire to remain in power. Though there may be a grain of truth in this, he is probably sincere in his belief that the complete "Gleichschaltung" of Catholic Austria would mean the lost [sic] of valuable elements to the German race"³³⁴.

One must surely ask if it is intellectually legitimate or academically judicious to assert that it was Dollfuß who – the suggestion seems to be singlehandedly – destroyed Austrian

³³² See, for example: Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Engelbert Dollfuß 1892 bis 1934'. Rath offers an excellent appraisal of Dollfuß's 'drift towards authoritarianism during 1932. R. John Rath, 'The Dollfuß Ministry: The Intensification of Animosities and the Drift toward Authoritarianism', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 30 (1999). Most recently, Hanisch observed that Dollfuß was 'neither an anti-democrat nor a Sozialistenfresser': Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist*, 278.

³³³ As in, for example, the *Geheimer Briefwechsel*, first published in 1949 by the socialist Verlag der Wiener Volksbuchhandlung: Karl Hans Sailer, ed., *Geheimer Briefwechsel Mussolini–Dollfuß*, (Vienna, 1949). Karl Hans Sailer was a prominent Social Democratic figure during the interwar period, political editor of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* he joined the *Revolutionäre Sozialisten* after the February Uprising of 1934 and was imprisoned under the *Ständestaat*. The *Geheimer Briefwechsel* was updated and republished in 2004 with contributions on 'Austrofascism' by Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Maderthaner: Wolfgang Maderthaner, ed., *"Der Führer bin ich selbst": Engelbert Dollfuß–Benito Mussolini, Briefwechsel*, (Vienna, 2004). See for example: Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, 48.

³³⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18359, paper R179, Sir W. Selby, Leading Personalities in Austria, 1 Jan. 1934.

democracy, let alone to insinuate that Dollfuß and Hitler were cut from the same despotic cloth?³³⁵ Perhaps, most importantly, we should wonder, when we focus solely on the ‘destruction’ of parliamentary democracy in Austria as the key experience of the interwar period and the single cause of the Nazi takeover in 1938, if we are even asking the right questions.

As assessments of the Dollfuß era in many ways hinge on the fateful decision to invite the *Heimwehr* into government, it is a course of action that demands further clarification. If Dollfuß’s ambitions were indeed democratic, why opt for a coalition with the ‘proto-fascist’ *Heimwehr* instead of the Social Democrats? Would it not have been more responsible – not to mention democratic – to call new elections come what may? In terms of forming a coalition, Dollfuß was faced with two basic choices in May 1932. He could attempt to form another ‘bourgeois’ coalition, as his predecessors had done, either with the participation of the Greater Germans, the *Landbund* or, as a last resort, the *Heimatblock*. From his perspective, a coalition with the Christian Social Party’s former partners would have been ideal, not least because it would have meant avoiding making concessions to the Social Democrats and would have helped improve relations with Germany. Fragmented, unpredictable and sponsored by Italy and Hungary, the *Heimatblock* was the least attractive option on the political right. Alternatively, he could invite the Social Democrats into a ‘grand coalition’, a daring if politically suicidal, move. A possible third ‘option’ – simply declining the President’s invitation to form a government – cannot be considered a genuine option at all. Since the *raison d’être* of any political party is to achieve and maintain power, that course of action, unless finding a majority proved impossible, would have been illogical; if a coalition could be formed then it goes without saying that an attempt would be made to do so.

Throughout the 1920s, the Christian Socials had ruled the country in a ‘bourgeois’ coalition with the Greater Germans and the *Landbund* as junior partners. Like any coalition, it was not all plain sailing; although they shared some programmatic overlap – primarily the rejection of Marxism – there were some serious points of contention, the

³³⁵ Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, 48.

Greater Germans and the *Landbund* being anti-clerical in outlook, pan-German and ideologically wedded to the idea of Anschluss. By the late 1920s, the fault lines had reappeared and the uneasy consensus had broken. The rising tide of radicalism, starting with the growth of the *Heimwehr* in the aftermath of the *Justizpalast* riots in 1927 and exacerbated by the economic emergency and the arrival of the National Socialist movement, triggered an ideological crisis on the right of the political spectrum. This sparked a generational conflict within the Christian Social movement while radicalizing their pan-German coalition partners.³³⁶ On the one hand, support was haemorrhaging from the conservative right in favour of the more radical anti-Marxist parties, first the *Heimwehr* and later the National Socialists: in what ended up being the last *Nationalrat* elections of the First Republic in November 1930, the Christian Socials only won 66 seats – down from 73 in 1927 – against the Social Democrats' 72, making the latter the strongest party, but not giving it an outright majority.³³⁷ On the other hand, relations between the Christian Social Party and the Greater Germans had deteriorated to such an extent that in January 1932 the decade-long coalition finally broke down for good, mainly due to pan-German opposition to the anti-Anschluss clause of the Lausanne loan as well as the radicalization of the party under its new leader, Hermann Foppa.³³⁸ In losing the support of the Greater Germans, the Christian Socials had lost the ability to form a majority government. Dollfuß's initial intention, like Buresch's before him, was to try to bring the Christian Social's erstwhile coalition partners back into the fold. The enterprise proved unsuccessful; although Dollfuß could still rely on what was left of the *Landbund* for support, the Greater Germans, with the almost certain approval of the German legation in Vienna, rejected his proposal. In February 1933, the German Minister in Vienna,

³³⁶ The Christian Socials had never been socially homogenous party, embracing a range of outlooks from committed democrats, monarchists and German nationalists to peasants and capitalists. Much of the *Heimwehr*'s sudden growth post-1927 came at the expense of the Christian Socials. The *Heimwehr* imperilled the Christian Social party's monopoly in the provincial villages, which as Rath points out, meant that the peasants were no longer under the exclusive control of the Christian Socials. See: R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy', 220–21.

³³⁷ The Greater Germans and *Landbund* came third with 19 seats.

³³⁸ Relations with the GDVP had deteriorated to such an extent that in January 1932 the decade long coalition had broken down for good, mainly due to opposition to the anti-Anschluss clause of the Lausanne loan as well as the radicalization of the party under its new leader, Hermann Foppa. See: Erika Weinzierl, *Österreich: Zeitgeschichte in Bildern 1918–1975*, (Innsbruck, 1975), 96.

Kurt Rieth, refers to the fact that the Greater Germans took up the position of non-participation in government, 'chiefly in the interests of German policy'.³³⁹

That only left Starhemberg's *Heimatblock* – the political arm of the *Heimwehr* – as a viable coalition partner on the political right.³⁴⁰ Although Dollfuß was clearly cautious about the idea, having, according to Rath, 'openly demonstrated his aversion for the *Heimwehr*', there was some precedent for the Christian Socials working together with the *Heimwehr* movement, particularly the pro-clerical wing.³⁴¹ There were, for example, ideological and material overlaps between the two groups, particularly in Lower Austria and Burgenland, where the more conservative faction of the *Heimwehr*, which 'refused to accept accretions of fascist and German-national theories', enjoyed a close relationship with the Christian Socials.³⁴² Julius Raab, for example, a prominent member of the Christian Social Party joined the *Heimwehr* in Lower Austria, although, according to one academic, he did so at Seipel's request.³⁴³ During the latter part of the 1920s, as prominent members of the Christian Socials moved 'decidedly further to the right', Seipel had attempted to forge closer ties with the *Heimwehr*, at the same time assimilating elements of their programme into his own.³⁴⁴ Exasperated by the dominance of 'dogma' in Austrian politics, Seipel became increasingly sceptical about the particular merits of Austria's parliamentary democracy, deeming it nothing but a 'sham democracy' in that it represented the interests of the 'party oligarchies' rather than the countries citizens.³⁴⁵

³³⁹ Kurt Heinrich Rieth (28 Mar. 1881 – unknown) was German Minister in Vienna. In his report, Rieth advocated providing the Greater Germans with financial assistance, on account of the fact that their current financial difficulties stemmed from their non-participation in Government, 'a position they took up, according to Rieth, 'chiefly in the interests of German policy'. Minister Rieth to State Secretary Bülow, 18 Feb. 1933, Nr. 25: *DGFP. The Third Reich: First Phase C/II (January 30–October 14 1933)*, (London, 1957), 52–55.

³⁴⁰ The only other party on the right was the NSDAP Hitler-Bewegung, which, in the 1930 Nationalrat elections had failed to gain any seats.

³⁴¹ See: R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 165.

³⁴² The Christian Socials and *Heimwehr* ran in the 1930 Nationalrat elections on the same list in Vienna and Lower Austria. Ludwig Jedlicka, 'Austrian *Heimwehr*', I.

³⁴³ See: *Ibid*, 138.

³⁴⁴ John T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria, 1918–1934*, 164.

³⁴⁵ Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel* 277.

His despondency concerning the abuse of the democratic system induced him to become progressively more convinced of the ‘possible advantages of authoritarian rule’³⁴⁶. Seipel hoped to gain control over the *Heimwehr* and thus use the movement’s strengths to the government’s advantage; in this regard, the *Heimwehr* was increasingly used as an instrument of domestic policy and as a defence force against the Social Democratic *Schutzbund* and the threat of internal disorder.³⁴⁷ Striving to support what he deemed to be the ‘constructive’ elements within the *Heimwehr* against the more radical fascist wing, Seipel tried to play a double game, supporting the *Heimwehr* with the one hand, whilst trying to keep them from getting too close to the centres of power with the other. Unfortunately, having steered the Austrian “state coach” to the Right’ Seipel was, according to his biographer, unable to retrieve it from its ‘dangerous course’.³⁴⁸ Yet, although the decision to ‘toy’ with fascism was an ‘altogether irresponsible’ one, Seipel was ultimately, ‘not ready to abandon himself to it’.³⁴⁹ Thus, Klemperer argues, ‘to portray Seipel as a fascist...as is generally done by his various Marxist critics, detracts from a right understanding of his place in history’; in the final analysis, Seipel’s ‘clerical commitment to the Christian faith’ defied ‘a commitment to and an identification with a new secular counterfaith’.³⁵⁰ Nonetheless, this tradition within the Christian Social Party was not the primary reason why Dollfuß was ultimately willing to consider bringing in the *Heimwehr*.

Faced with a catastrophic economic situation and worsening political crisis, Dollfuß – the economist – was determined to form a strong government that would have room for manoeuvre, not one that would just ‘muddle along’.³⁵¹ With the Greater Germans

³⁴⁶ R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy' 225. See also: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel* 281–283.

³⁴⁷ See: John T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria, 1918–1934*, 166 and Ludwig Jedlicka, 'Austrian Heimwehr', 134–137.

³⁴⁸ Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 436.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 439.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 439.

³⁵¹ ‘...keine Regierung des “Fortwurstelns”’. Cited in: R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude'. See: Julius Deutsch, *Ein weiter Weg*, (Vienna, 1960) 184–87

refusing to co-operate, the only way of securing a workable 'bourgeois' government that would be capable of passing the necessary economic reforms was by bringing in the *Heimatblock*. Suffice it to say, after two weeks of fierce negotiations, all that Dollfuß could achieve was a government with a flimsy one-seat parliamentary majority, the government with 83 seats, against an opposition with 82.³⁵² To make matters worse, the severely unreliable pro-Nazi wing of the Styrian *Heimwehr* provided two of the government votes, putting the coalition in a wholly precarious position right from the off.³⁵³ Its prospects were, according to the British legation, decidedly 'gloomy'; with a precarious majority of one, there was little expectation that the Dollfuß government would survive very long.³⁵⁴ Indeed, the position of the government was initially so dubious that in his ministerial declaration Dollfuß, the British Minister observed, thought it necessary 'to hold out an olive branch to the pan-Germans'.³⁵⁵ In addition, the *Heimwehr*, even those of a pro-clerical and pro-Austrian bent, could not be completely relied upon as political partners, with some striving to undermine the government from the very start. Even during the coalition negotiations with Dollfuß, some members of the *Heimwehr* were simultaneously negotiating with the National Socialists and the Italians about how the government could be overthrown.³⁵⁶ At this juncture, Starhemberg, who had been flirting on and off with the National Socialists for years, and had last met with Hitler just a few weeks before entering government, still harboured designs to 'secure assistance from the National Socialists for his conspiratorial projects'.³⁵⁷ A few months later, Starhemberg and Rintelen were making plans to provoke a cabinet crisis and remove Dollfuß in a *coup d'état* if the Chancellor returned from Geneva without the Lausanne loan, convinced that in this

³⁵² The first Dollfuß ministry consisted of 66 Christian Socials, 9 *Landbund* and 8 *Heimwehr*. See: R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 166. Even Karl Renner had to admit that 'Dollfuss is actually very adroit'. See: *Ibid*, 171.

³⁵³ See: *Ibid*, 168.

³⁵⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 68.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid*, para. 68.

³⁵⁶ See: R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 173.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 174.

scenario Dollfuß would certainly try to inaugurate a red-black government.³⁵⁸ Indeed, Rintelen enthusiastically conspired with *both* the *Heimwehr* and the Austrian Nazis and was indefatigable in his attempts to replace Dollfuß as Chancellor.³⁵⁹

The *Heimwehr* was clearly not to be trusted. Why then, did Dollfuß run the risk of inviting it into the corridors of power? Was Dollfuß's 'lust for power' or his antipathy towards the left to blame for the inclusion of the autocratic, rabidly anti-Marxist *Heimwehr* in his government? The incorporation of the *Heimwehr*, so the argument goes, not only demonstrates that Dollfuß was already set on an autocratic course, it was also the catalyst for the destruction of Austrian democracy, which inexorably led to Nazi rule. The fallacy of this line of reasoning is exposed by the fact that all the evidence suggests that at this point in time, Dollfuß was committed to the democratic system and the democratic process. What is more, Dollfuß's insistence that the participation of the *Heimwehr* in his government in no-way signified a long-term fascist course cannot be repudiated by the subsequent course of events.³⁶⁰ As far as Dollfuß was concerned, there simply was no grand plan to shut down parliament and destroy the opposition à la Hitler.

Some emphasize the fact that the Christian Socials were primarily motivated by the preservation of power for their own ends, fuelled, in part, by the realization that after the Nazi breakthrough in the regional elections, they would emerge as the losers in the event of national elections.³⁶¹ For many commentators, the refusal to hold elections was solid evidence of anti-democratic intentions. Yet, the calling of elections when tactically advantageous to the incumbent party is accepted practice within the democratic system, as long as there is a functioning government in place. And whilst their unwillingness was, of course, partially motivated by their – quite natural – reluctance to hand over the reins

³⁵⁸ See: Ibid, 175.

³⁵⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 70.

³⁶⁰ See, the conversation between Dollfuß and Deutsch where Dollfuß asks the Social Democrats to promise to tolerate his government, or he would be forced to bring in the *Heimwehr*: Julius Deutsch, *Ein weiter Weg*, 186.

³⁶¹ See, for example: Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, 48 and Emmerich Tálos and Walter Manoschek, 'Konstituierungsprozeß des Austrofaschismus', 15.

of government to their political adversaries, other factors were also at play; the Christian Socials had not simply 'come to enjoy governing the country'.³⁶² The suggestion that it was the 'fear of losing power to the Socialists' that made Dollfuß and Schuschnigg 'play into the hands of a far more dangerous enemy' is also misguided.³⁶³ Such an analysis ignores the complexity of the situation on the ground, for example the fact that losing power to the Socialists would have sounded the death knell for the Christian Social Party, which would have benefited the Nazis and destroyed the only other party willing to fight against National Socialism. It would have been, Buresch argued, utter folly to hold elections at a time when the state was struggling to tackle serious economic problems and public order issues.³⁶⁴ This might sound like the standard excuse of right-wing politicians covertly harbouring anti-democratic intentions, yet, with one eye on Germany, the concern was not completely unwarranted. It is certainly worth asking whether it would have been truly wise for the government to resign and call new elections after the German presidential elections of March 1932, or, at the latest after the federal elections in July 1932, when the National Socialists became the largest party in the *Reichstag*. Although in April 1932 the Austrian Nazis had not yet reached the success of their German counterparts, in the wake of the municipal elections, they still 'looked sufficiently formidable' to unsettle the established parties.³⁶⁵ Moreover, there was no mistaking the political trend; the Nazi party was 'gradually acquiring an increasing hold over' the Austrian electorate.³⁶⁶ National Socialism presented the Austrian state with a demanding

³⁶² As, for example, suggested by: Friederick C. Engelmann, 'The Austro-German Relationship: One Language, One and One-Half Histories, Two States', in eds. Hanspeter Neuhold and Harald von Riekhof *Unequal Partners. A Comparative Analysis of Relations Between Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany and Between Canada and the United States* (San Francisco, 1993), 52.

³⁶³ El Refaie erroneously suggests that this was the case for Schuschnigg. Elisabeth El Refaie, 'Keeping the Truce? Austrian Press Politics between the 'July Agreement' (1936) and the *Anschluß* (1938)', *German History*, 20 (2002), 65. Lassner provides a robust refutation of this line of argument. Alexander Lassner, N., 'Peace at Hitler's Price: Austria, the Great Powers and the 'Anschluß', 1932–1938', Unpubl. doctoral thesis (Ohio State, 2001).

³⁶⁴ 'Neuwahlen!', *Reichspost*, 29 Apr. 1932, 1–2 and 'Regierung gegen Neuwahlen', *Wiener Sonn- und Montags-Zeitung*, 2 May 1932, 1.

³⁶⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, 14, para. 67.

³⁶⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/15888 paper C4469/68/3, Sir E. Phipps, Political Situation in Austria and the growth of the National Socialist movement, 30 May 1932.

domestic political problem whose only solution, the *Reichspost* argued, was to be found in solidity, stability and statesmanlike decisiveness.³⁶⁷

From Schuschnigg, we know that the impact of the Nazi breakthrough in April 1932 had hit government quarters like a 'bombshell'.³⁶⁸ New elections would very likely have yielded a significantly weakened Christian Social fraction, destroying any chance of bringing a coalition together. It would also have led to the entry of National Socialists into the *Nationalrat*, a fact that was later acknowledged by Oskar Helmer, a prominent Social Democratic politician.³⁶⁹ This did not seem to concern the Social Democrats who, publically at least, positively revelled in the Christian Socials' loss to the Nazis in Vienna.³⁷⁰ From 1897, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* rejoiced that, until yesterday's election, the substance of political life in Vienna had been the struggle between the Social Democracy and the Christian Socials. Now, 'our oldest, strongest, most powerful opponent', the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* proclaimed, 'is down for the count'. The Christian Socials were disintegrating, the Greater Germans had been destroyed and the *Heimwehr* fascists were on the decline.³⁷¹ A new opponent – the Nazis – had of course arisen in their place, riding on the national socialist wave in the Reich, but the Social Democrats remained optimistic; they would know how to handle them, after all, they had beaten the Christian Socials and now they would beat the Nazis. With the German example before their eyes, the Social Democrats opted to play a dangerous game, banking on National Socialist gains to either split the Christian Socials and force what was left of the party into a centre-left coalition, or to create the conditions for the formation of an 'unholy alliance' with the Nazis under a Socialist-dominated government.³⁷² Allowing the National Socialists into the *Nationalrat* to

³⁶⁷ 'Der Versucher', *Reichspost*, 26 Apr. 1932, 1–2.

³⁶⁸ Schuschnigg cited in: Franz Schausberger, *Ins Parlament, um es zu zerstören. Das "parlamentarische" Agi(t)ieren der Nationalsozialisten in den Landtagen von Wien, Niederösterreich, Salzburg und Vorarlberg nach den Landtagswahlen 1932*, (Vienna, 1995) 93. A second edition was published in 2012. See also: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 67.

³⁶⁹ Cited in: Franz Schausberger, *Ins Parlament, um es zu zerstören*, 94.

³⁷⁰ 'Die rote Mehrheit stärker als je!', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 25 Apr. 1932, 1.

³⁷¹ 'Nach dem Kampf', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 26 Apr. 1932, 1.

³⁷² Peter Berger, 'The League of Nations and Interwar Austria', 87.

face concrete economic problems should, Bauer argued, unmask their demagoguery.³⁷³ So, while it is also true that some on the right, Seipel included, took pleasure in the results seeing it as a 'shift to the Right', the evidence suggests that misjudging the gravity of the situation was not confined to either side.³⁷⁴ Either way, the only real beneficiaries of new elections would have been the National Socialists, a fact that was confirmed in April the following year in the municipal elections in Innsbruck.³⁷⁵ There, the National Socialists emerged as the strongest party with 14,996 votes, almost as many as the combined total of the Social Democrats (9,932) and the Christian Social Tyrolean Volkspartei (9,394). By this point, things had become so serious that the Austrian government would admit in private, if not in public, that 'it could not hold elections without handing over the key of the Austrian citadel to the National Socialist party'.³⁷⁶

The German example played a crucial role, in particular the fact that in Germany the results of elections meant that Hitler could not be ignored in the 'power-brokerage game'.³⁷⁷ During 1932, the *Reichspost* persistently drew its readers' attention to the chaos that National Socialism – and Communism – had inflicted upon Germany.³⁷⁸ The newspaper admonished in the run-up to the 1932 elections, that the exceptionally difficult circumstances that National Socialism had caused in Prussia and, through Prussia, for the whole of Germany, should serve as a serious warning to Austrian voters; in Germany, the Nazi movement had become such a 'grave national-political problem' that it had taken the country to the brink of civil war.³⁷⁹ It was certainly no secret that as soon as the Nazis were in control of the state apparatus of power they would use it dictatorially.³⁸⁰ Did this

³⁷³ See: Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist*, 278.

³⁷⁴ See: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 418.

³⁷⁵ 'Die Lehre von Innsbruck', *Reichspost*, 24 Apr. 1933, 1–2.

³⁷⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 32.

³⁷⁷ Ian Kershaw, ed., *Weimar: Why did German Democracy Fail?*, (London, 1990), 25.

³⁷⁸ "'System Hindenburg-Brüning'" oder das Chaos' and 'Deutschland vor der Entscheidung', *Reichspost*, 13 Mar. 1932, 1.

³⁷⁹ 'Der große Wahltag', *Reichspost*, 24 Apr. 1932, 1 and 'Knapp vor einem Bürgerkrieg', *Reichspost*, 18 Jul. 1932, 1.

³⁸⁰ 'Wahltag im Deutschen Reich', *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, 5 Mar. 1933, 2.

fact influence the decisions made by the Dollfuß government? A leading article published in the *Reichspost* in January 1933 confirms that the issue of whether, in light of subsequent Nazi gains, Papen's decision to dissolve the Reichstag and call new elections in July 1932 had been the correct one had certainly occurred to the Christian Socials.³⁸¹ Would it not have been better, the guest author argued, if instead Germany had left a functioning Reichstag in place, say under Brüning, until the crisis was overcome, the unemployment rate had peaked and a gradual economic revival had returned? The collapse of the Schleicher government just three weeks later merely confirmed that 'the domestic conflict in Germany could not be solved by normal, constitutional means'; Schleicher only had two, somewhat theoretical 'choices', bringing the Nazis into the government or effecting a *coup d'état*.³⁸² On 9 March 1933, in the midst of the parliamentary crisis Schuschnigg judged the situation that they found themselves to be in to be basically the same as that of Brüning two years earlier.³⁸³ Escalating political violence, coupled with the electoral results of April 1932 buttressed the fear that the Christian Socials, not unlike the German Centre, were trapped between the 'twin poles' of National Socialism and Austromarxism³⁸⁴. It is in light of this, and in the hope that the radical commotion of the 'demagogues' would only be temporarily popular, that, unlike their counterparts in Germany, the Dollfuß government resolved to weather the storm.³⁸⁵ It was no coincidence that on 12 March 1933, in the immediate aftermath of the closure of the Austrian parliament against the background of events in Germany, the Christian Socials declared that they would now stand and fall as the Catholic, Austrian *Volkspartei*.³⁸⁶

³⁸¹ 'Hitlers letzte Chance', *Reichspost* 6 Jan. 1933, 1–2.

³⁸² According to the article's author, Hindenburg would not have supported a coup. 'Zwei Regierungskrisen an einem Tag', *Reichspost*, 29 Jan. 1933, 1–2.

³⁸³ Schuschnigg to the Christian Social party executive and the *Landeshauptleute*, 9 Mar. 1933, 10.30, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 145.

³⁸⁴ 'Kein "rotes Oesterreich!'", *Reichspost*, 25 Apr. 1932, 1. Allegedly, the disappearance of the German nationalist groups such as the Greater Germans came as no real surprise as even before the election it was obvious to observers that these groups had acted as a vanguard for the National Socialists in many areas. For example: 'Der Tag der Entscheidung', *Die Neue Zeitung*, 24 Apr. 1932, 1–2.

³⁸⁵ 'Hier Volkstag – dort Bluttag', *Reichspost*, 17 Oct. 1932, 1.

³⁸⁶ 'Um Oesterreich!', *Reichspost*, 12 Mar. 1933, 1.



Figure 2: Wird uns Dollfus retten? Nazi rally poster, 1932
(ÖNB Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung)

If events in Germany were not warning enough of National Socialist tactics, following the April elections the Austrians experienced the National Socialists' political repertoire first hand. The admission of 'Hitler's Apostles' into the chambers of local and municipal government provided a stark warning of the movement's ability to incapacitate the democratic process. That events in the *Wiener Landtag* – brawling between the National Socialist and the Social Democratic deputies – were a carbon copy of what was happening in the Prussian *Landtag* was not lost on those writing for the *Reichspost*.³⁸⁷ At

³⁸⁷ 'Wiener Landtag und Lainzer Tiergarten', *Reichspost*, 2 Jul. 1932, 1–2.

any rate, the Austrian Nazis had made no secret of their intention to enter the *Nationalrat* to destroy it from the inside.³⁸⁸ The Austrian Nazi *Landesinspekteur* Theo Habicht's instructions to National Socialist deputies were clear:

He [the NS deputy] is not sent [into parliament] to act as a parliamentarian amongst parliamentarians, but as a fox in a chicken coop. He is not to keep the peace but break it. He is not to engage in 'positive collaboration' – i.e. prolong the lifespan of this System! – Instead, he is to highlight its flaws and to see his whole mission in making sure that [the System] is eliminated as soon as possible. ...He is sent into parliament to stake out, from the centre of the enemy camp, the opponent's plans and to...frustrate them.³⁸⁹

The veracity of this claim soon became apparent as the *Wiener Gemeinderat* and the *Wiener Landtag*, bastions of Socialist power, were brought to a standstill as a result of the Nazis' obstructionist tactics. Interjections and insults between the opposing political factions quickly degenerated into missile-throwing and even brawling between the representatives, which frequently spread to the public galleries and out onto the street. Indeed, the hostility became so serious that several delegates were actually wounded as the result of violent skirmishes between the National Socialists and Social Democrats in the *Wiener Gemeinderat*, prompting the Christian Socials to leave the room in a demonstration of protest against such 'shameful' behaviour.³⁹⁰ Furthermore, the Nazis' election to these local bodies, according to the British Embassy, 'secured them representation in the Federal Council, where their presence later in the year [1932] enabled them on one occasion to be a nuisance to the government'.³⁹¹ That such unsavoury behaviour bolstered the opposition of the Dollfuß government to new elections was inevitable; the 'Hitlerleute' strangling Austria's already conflict-ridden parliament was, without doubt, the last thing that the country needed.

³⁸⁸ See, for example: Franz Schausberger, *Ins Parlament, um es zu zerstören*.

³⁸⁹ Theo Habicht, *Das Dienstbuch der NSDAP Österreichs (Hitlerbewegung)*, (Wels, 1932), 179. See also: 'Mitten Durch!', *Reichspost*, 25 May 1932, 1.

³⁹⁰ 'Wüste Raufereien im Wiener Gemeinderat', *Reichspost* 1 Oct. 1932, 1.

³⁹¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933 14.

Historians tend to agree that at this juncture, a 'red-black' Grand Coalition would have provided the best possible defence against the Nazi threat. Instead, Dollfuß chose to rule with a flimsy one-vote majority, a fact often presented as evidence of Dollfuß's anti-democratic tendencies; if the threat posed by National Socialism was so ominous, and if the only way Austria could overcome its grave economic problems was in collaboration with the Social Democrats, why did he not invite them to join him in coalition? Part of the reason was that the more conservative elements of the Christian Social Party would have almost certainly opposed a coalition with the Social Democrats, which would have led to defections towards the radical right.³⁹² In his memoirs, Richard Schüller maintained that if Dollfuß had colluded with the Socialists, he would have alienated his supporters, the farmers, the urban Christian Socials, the clergy and the *Heimwehr*.³⁹³ Another reason that no official offer of a coalition was made in 1932 was because, as Rath points out, 'the Social Democrats had made it more than clear that they would not accept such an invitation if proffered to them'.³⁹⁴ Several attempts had in fact already been made to bring the Socialists into the government following the onset of the depression, and all had failed. However, Otto Bauer, who dominated the Social Democratic Party, was not yet interested in 'compromise politics' and a coalition with the 'bourgeoisie'.

Dollfuß's immediate predecessors, Chancellors Ender and Buresch, had both attempted to restore some degree of co-operation between the government and the opposition, to no avail.³⁹⁵ In June 1931, faced with yet another governmental crisis, Miklas had called upon Seipel to form a coalition government in which all of the parties would be represented according to their parliamentary strength. This would comprise four portfolios for the Social Democrats, three for the Christian Socials, and one each for the Greater Germans and the *Landbund* respectively, with Otto Bauer as

³⁹² See: R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude' 165.

³⁹³ See: Richard Schüller and Jürgen P. Nautz, *Unterhändler des Vertrauens. Aus den nachgelassenen Schriften von Sektionschef Dr. Richard Schüller*, (Vienna, 1990), 169.

³⁹⁴ R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude' 164.

³⁹⁵ Initiated by chancellors Otto Ender (24 December 1875–25 June 1960) and Karl Buresch (12 October 1878 – 16 September 1936).

Vice-Chancellor.³⁹⁶ Seipel approached the Social Democrats with the proposal, but they refused for fear of being too heavily burdened by unpopular measures taken by the future government.³⁹⁷ Many historians now recognize that this was a serious mistake on the part of the Social Democrats.³⁹⁸ In the aftermath of the Pfrimer putsch in September/October 1931 Chancellor Buresch, who, after the failure to establish an all-party coalition government a few months earlier, was charged with the formation of the government on the basis of good relations with the Social Democrats at a regional level, again invited the Socialists to join in a coalition, which they again refused.³⁹⁹ Should we have accepted Seipel's offer?, asked the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* the following month.⁴⁰⁰ Despite the fact that the economy was in a parlous state, the answer was no on the grounds that they would not be entering government to serve the working classes, but to help the bourgeois government extricate themselves from the mess that they had got into over the past 11 years. In opting to remain in opposition, the Socialists had, in the eyes of the Christian Socials, persistently refused to accept political responsibility for state affairs.⁴⁰¹ It was really about time, mused Theodor Hornbostel, Political Director in the *Bundeskanzleramt* under Dollfuß, in the summer of 1931, 'dass sich die gar nicht so spärlichen Männer zusammentun, die apolitische und parteilose, aber österreichische Patrioten ohne alles blöde und unwahre nationale Gefasel sind'.⁴⁰² So whilst the

³⁹⁶ See: Gertrude Enderle-Burcel, 'Karl Buresch 1878 bis 1936', in eds. Friedrich Weissensteiner and Erika Weinzierl *Die österreichischen Bundeskanzler. Leben und Werk* (Vienna, 1983), 178.

³⁹⁷ '...da die Sozialdemokraten, deren Verhältnis zu Seipel seit Jahren schwer gelitten hatte,, fürchteten, durch unpopuläre Maßnahmen in der zukünftigen Regierung zu schwer belastet zu werden'. Ibid, 178.

³⁹⁸ Norbert Leser, 'Die Rolle der Sozialdemokratie in der ersten Republik', in ed., Joseph F. Desput *Österreich 1934-1984* (Graz, 1984) 151.

³⁹⁹ See: R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy' 242 and Gertrude Enderle-Burcel, 'Karl Buresch 1878 bis 1936', 178–80.

⁴⁰⁰ 'Der Parteitag', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 12 Nov. 1931, 2.

⁴⁰¹ The Socialists left the Grand Coalition in 1920 to go into permanent opposition for the duration of the First Republic. See: Kurt Leo Shell, *Transformation* 15.

⁴⁰² Christian Dörner and Barbara Dörner-Fazeny, *Theodor von Hornbostel 1889–1973*, (Vienna, 2006), 52. Theodor Hornbostel (9 January 1889–8 June) was an Austrian diplomat. A confidant of Dollfuß, he was appointed head of the *Politischer Abteilung* in the *Bundeskanzleramt*. Hornbostel accompanied Dollfuß on all foreign visits and was a passionate supporter of Austrian independence. He was not as close to Schuschnigg and looked upon the *Juliabkommen* with great scepticism. See: Isabella Ackerl and Friedrich Weissensteiner, *Österreichisches Personen Lexikon*, 191.

observation that a grand coalition would have provided the most effective defence for the Republic is theoretically correct, the evidence suggests that, at this juncture, the Socialists were unwilling to settle for anything less than total power.

Faced with a rebellious support base and an intransigent opposition, Dollfuß first tried to seek a middle way. In May 1932 he approached the Socialists, albeit unofficially, to find out if a government with him at the head could perhaps rely on the Socialists' benevolent neutrality, pointing out that a refusal would leave him no choice but to bring in the *Heimwehr*.⁴⁰³ Rather than support the moderate Dollfuß, thereby freeing him from the necessity of reliance on the *Heimwehr*, the Socialists refused, opting instead to deal with the *Heimwehr* in their own way: they had recently prepared a military plan of action – via the *Schutzbund* – to be implemented in the event of a *Heimwehr* putsch.⁴⁰⁴ When Dollfuß finally presented his government to the *Nationalrat*, the reply from the opposition benches was an immediate vote of no confidence, which the government barely survived.⁴⁰⁵ This was only weeks after the presidential election in Germany had yielded the biggest results for the Nazis yet. For that election the German Social Democrats had, to an astonishing degree, thrown their support behind Hindenburg in an attempt to prevent Hitler's election.⁴⁰⁶ By March the following year it was increasingly clear that such missed opportunities had been a grave mistake; with Dollfuß now trapped in a coalition with the *Heimwehr* from which he could not escape and with the National Socialists baying at the door, only then did the Socialists begin to change tack, by which point it was far too late.

At this juncture, it is worth positing the question of what the consequences would have been if Dollfuß had failed to bring a government together. Although the Social Democrats had emerged as the strongest party in the last *Nationalrat* elections in 1930, they did not achieve an outright majority and would not have been able to bring a governmental majority together either; a Socialist minority government, like a minority

⁴⁰³ Julius Deutsch, *Ein weiter Weg*, 184–87.

⁴⁰⁴ See: Otto Naderer, *Der bewaffnete Aufstand: Der Republikanische Schutzbund der österreichischen Sozialdemokratie und die militärische Vorbereitung auf den Bürgerkrieg (1923–1934)*, (Graz, 2005), 284–87.

⁴⁰⁵ See: Gudula Walterskirchen, *Engelbert Dollfuß*, 100–02.

⁴⁰⁶ See: Richard Evans, J., *The Coming of the Third Reich*, (London, 2004), 279.

Christian Social one, would also have been in trouble from the start.⁴⁰⁷ The issue was obvious at the time, with the British legation confirming that the opposition were – one can assume the Social Democrats are being referred to here – ‘handicapped by the consciousness that they could not provide an alternative government’.⁴⁰⁸ What, though, if new elections had been called? In this scenario, considering the turn of events in Germany and the local election results of the previous month, it is safe to say that the real beneficiaries would have been the Nazis, not the Social Democrats. The simple fact is that the Social Democrats would have needed at least 83 seats to wield an outright majority and thus the ability to govern alone (which would still only put it in the same weak position as the Dollfuß government), yet they had never managed more than 72 in the five *Nationalrat* elections since 1919. Whether such an electoral swing to the left was up for grabs at that point is highly unlikely. Although the Socialists had come through the regional elections relatively unscathed, there were signs that the Nazis – and to a certain extent the KPÖ – were beginning to make inroads into the Socialist electorate. Initially this occurred outside of their urban and industrial strongholds, in those areas where their electoral base and infrastructure was weaker, but by March 1933 support was beginning to crumble away from the Socialist camp, to varying degrees, throughout Austria.⁴⁰⁹ An outright majority in the *Nationalrat* was without doubt already well beyond their grasp. Finding coalition partners among the smaller, overwhelmingly anti-Marxist parties, was impossible, notwithstanding that they would have ceased to exist in the event of new elections. Of course, theoretically, a minority Socialist government could have been supported by the rump of the Christian Social Party, but such a move would have demanded the Christian Socials commit political suicide, which would also have played straight into the Nazis’ hands. Moreover, by this point, the debilitating ‘civil war psychosis’ noted by Renner in 1928, coupled with fundamental differences about the way in which

⁴⁰⁷ The last *Nationalrat* elections were held 17 months earlier on 9 November 1930. The Social Democrats took 72 seats, making it the strongest party, but not giving it an outright majority. The Christian Socials won 66 seats, and the Greater Germans and *Landbund* came third, with 19 seats.

⁴⁰⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 68.

⁴⁰⁹ See: Barry McLoughlin, ‘“Das intensive Gefühl, sich das nicht gefallen lassen zu dürfen”: Arbeiterschaft und die Gewaltpraxis der NSDAP, 1932–1933’, in eds. Rudolf G. Ardel and Karl R. Stadler *Arbeiterschaft und Nationalsozialismus in Österreich* (Vienna, 1990), 54–55.

the crisis should be tackled, not to mention the issue of Austrian independence, made parliamentary compromise nigh on impossible.⁴¹⁰ Above all, new elections would have meant the National Socialists entering the *Nationalrat*, rendering not only the fragile coalition system dominated by the Christian Socials unworkable, but likely any coalition unworkable, just as it had in Germany.

There is danger in reading history backwards. The inclusion of the *Heimwehr* in the coalition was not a premeditated step towards dictatorship, nor was the formation of the Dollfuß government a 'catalyst on the road to Austrofascism'.⁴¹¹ Rather, it is better understood as the result of a last-ditch attempt to tackle a severe political and economic crisis by persuading radical anti-system elements to lend their support to maintaining Austrian independence. As Jedlicka pointed out back in 1966, winning over a section of the *Heimwehr* was actually one of Dollfuß's tactical achievements.⁴¹² It is often overlooked that bringing the *Heimwehr* into government actually had a moderating influence, keeping a section of the movement away from the clutches of the Nazis that would have undoubtedly been absorbed by it, whilst preventing a section of the Christian Socials defecting to the radical right. Those who suggest that, if it had not been for Dollfuß the *Heimwehr* would otherwise have sunk into political obscurity seem to miss the point.⁴¹³ Their followers would have gone over to the Nazis *en masse*, lending strength and legitimacy – not to mention arms, of which the Nazis were allegedly extremely short in 1932 – to that movement; they would not have evaporated into thin air.⁴¹⁴ As a direct result of being incorporated into the decision-making process, the *Heimwehr* started re-orientating their programme away from the National Socialists towards the government, and a more pro-Austrian stance, lending its legitimacy to the government and the Austrian state instead. Thus, by winning over a section of the *Heimwehr* for the

⁴¹⁰ Karl Renner cited in: Klemens von Klemperer, *Ignaz Seipel*, 435.

⁴¹¹ Emmerich Tálos and Walter Manoschek, 'Konstituierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus', 12.

⁴¹² See: Ludwig Jedlicka, 'Austrian Heimwehr', 140.

⁴¹³ For example: Emmerich Tálos and Walter Manoschek, 'Konstituierungsprozeß des Austrofascismus'.

⁴¹⁴ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 139.

Christian Social government, Dollfuß secured an ally – intractable, but an ally none the less – that was willing at that juncture to lend him some tentative support in shoring up Austrian independence.⁴¹⁵ There is no doubt that the *Heimwehr* were, at best, fair-weather friends. The crucial issue was whether the alliance would last long enough for Austria to outride the storm. And ultimately, as Pauley notes, ‘it is difficult to see what alternative he [Dollfuß] had under the circumstances’.⁴¹⁶ In May 1932, no-one could have predicted the course of events in 1933 or 1934, let alone 1938.

⁴¹⁵ Jedlicka also makes this point. Ludwig Jedlicka, ‘Austrian Heimwehr’, 140.

⁴¹⁶ Bruce F. Pauley, *The Habsburg Legacy 1867–1939*, (New York 1972), 129.

'Ich glaube an Österreich, ich halte Österreich für Lebensfähig' – The Lausanne Loan

Dollfuß's key concern on taking office, and his government's primary task, was solving Austria's devastating economic crisis. After all, Dollfuß was an economist, and in his inaugural speech, Austria's financial problems loomed large. Dollfuß was convinced that Austria was 'viable', if only Austrians would stick together during a time of severe economic hardship – rather than provoke one another – and declared his government's central objective to encourage and promote Austria's 'will to live'.⁴¹⁷ Its main priority was to put Austria's financial house in order with the assistance of the League of Nations; the acquisition of the Lausanne loan was at the top of Dollfuß's agenda, accompanied by the settling of the *Creditanstalt* issue⁴¹⁸. Not only did Austrians at home need to be convinced that Austria could survive, those abroad who were being asked to provide Austria with credit needed to believe in it too. For that reason, Dollfuß argued that even though fulfilling one's obligations was unpopular, Austria had to meet its financial commitments and adhere to its agreements if it were to win back confidence and trust.⁴¹⁹ Seeing the root cause of Austria's problems, including the threat posed by National Socialism, in the catastrophic economic situation, the economy would remain a primary focus throughout Dollfuß's Chancellorship.⁴²⁰ 'The economic crisis', he argued at Christmas 1932, had unleashed movements that threatened 'the fundamentals of human society and culture'.⁴²¹ Resolving the economic crisis would, therefore, go some way towards bringing order to Austria, 'once and for all'.

⁴¹⁷ 'Wenn wir in dieser ungeheuer schweren Zeit, wo die Not der ganzen Welt sich auch auf uns auswirkt, nicht einander gegenseitig verhetzen, sondern uns bewusst sind, dass wir zusammenhalten müssen, dann werden wir diese schwere Zeit überdauern'. 'Ich glaube an Österreich', *Reichspost*, 24 Oct. 1932, 1 and 'Ein Programm des Lebenswillens', *Reichspost*, 28 May 1932, 1–2.

⁴¹⁸ The negotiations for a long-term foreign loan for Austria had already begun under Buresch. The 250,000,000-schilling loan was applied for on the 7th of August 1931. See: R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy' 240.

⁴¹⁹ Dollfuß, speaking before the Anglo American Press Association, 3 September 1932, Edmund Weber, ed., *Dollfuß an Österreich: Eines Mannes Wort und Ziel*, (Vienna, 1935), 135.

⁴²⁰ See: 'Was jetzt? Rundfunkrede des Bundeskanzlers', *Reichspost* 15.3.1933, 5.

⁴²¹ 'Österreichische Zuversicht', *Reichspost*, 25 Dec. 1932, 2.

When Dollfuß assumed office, the Austrian economy was in terrible shape. Dependent as it was upon export trade, the Austrian economy had proven to be particularly vulnerable to the effects of the depression: between 1929 and 1933 total production in Austria decreased by 38 per cent, exports fell by 53.3 per cent and imports by 42.5 per cent.⁴²² The number of unemployed rose to 545,000 – a rate of 27 per cent – with only 57 per cent of those unemployed receiving any welfare subsidy at all.⁴²³ The financial emergency was compounded by the collapse of the *Creditanstalt* in 1931, provoking a crisis so serious that Ender, then Chancellor, feared that if the *Creditanstalt* problem were not solved, 'law and order in Austria would collapse'.⁴²⁴ However, the severity of the crisis that it unleashed can only be explained against the background of Austria's fundamental economic weakness during the inter-war period. Dependent upon the international financial community for monetary assistance to keep it afloat, with budget deficits a permanent fixture and an economy hampered by grave and perennial structural problems, Austria was in no position to weather a storm like the Great Depression.⁴²⁵

Before we proceed, a few historiographical issues regarding the economic strategy and legacy of the Dollfuß government demand clarification. As Jens-Wilhelm Wessel noted back in 2003, the adherence to orthodox economic policies and financial principles during the First Republic and the *Ständestaat* have been harshly criticized by many modern scholars, often arguing a direct connection between government policy, economic misery and the 'apparent ease of the takeover of Austria by National Socialist Germany in March 1938'.⁴²⁶ Government policy, it is contended, remained wedded to orthodox

⁴²² See: R. John Rath, 'Deterioration of Democracy' 254.

⁴²³ See: Ibid 255.

⁴²⁴ Iago Gil Aguado, 'The Creditanstalt Crisis of 1931 and the Failure of the Austro-German Customs Union Project', 213.

⁴²⁵ See: Peter J. Katzenstein, *Disjoined Partners* 144. See also: Gerhard Senft, 'Economic Development'. The exception was 1932, when the budget was more or less balanced, probably because a balanced budget was a prerequisite of financial assistance from the League. Further: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 5.

⁴²⁶ Jens-Wilhelm Wessels, 'Economic Performance and Micro-Economic Development in Austria, 1929-1938', in eds. Günter Bischof, et al. *The Dollfuss-Schuschnigg Era in Austria: A Reassessment* (New Brunswick, 2003), 93.

financial policy, and was too strongly oriented towards balancing the budget and monetary stability. This led to a recovery that looked good on paper but meant austerity measures which alienated vast swathes of the Austrian population.⁴²⁷ Tálos, for example, contends that the strategies for solving the crisis, forced on the country by the Christian Socials, not only placed the burden on the wider population, but also led to the erosion of political support within the bourgeois milieu, manifested in the results of the 1932 elections and the Greater Germans' withdrawal from the coalition.⁴²⁸ The attempt to realize this policy against the backdrop of dwindling political support was, he argues, the point of departure for eliminating those institutions – parliament and the labour movement – that stood in the way.

This interpretation is problematic on a number of levels. Following the same logic, one would have to charge democratic Czechoslovakia with paving the way for the Nazi takeover of 1938–39 by flagrantly mismanaging the economy, in particular worsening the impact of the economy in the Sudetenland. As British officials in Prague noted in 1933, thoroughly politicized economic decisions, not least a policy of expropriation and 'Czechization' motivated by the attempt to reduce the influence of the German minority, 'minimized the capacity of the state to handle squarely and fairly the intricate economic problems which arose in 1932'.⁴²⁹ However, this is a line not usually taken in histories of the interwar Czechoslovak Republic. Moreover, as Wessel demonstrates, 'while it is certainly true that the deflationary policy impeded recovery...the policy implications of the *Ständestaat* have been overestimated; long-term structural preconditions, circumstances and transformations were the primary determinants of economic growth'.⁴³⁰ In short, it is highly probable that nothing short of a miracle would have turned Austria's fortunes around. Besides, the granting of the Lausanne loan was contingent on the

⁴²⁷ The Dollfuß government's pro-agrarian course is also criticized for protecting the interests of the farming community to the detriment of other sections of society.

⁴²⁸ See: Emmerich Tálos 'Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem 1933–1938', 106.

⁴²⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16658, paper C1753/36/12, K.T Gurney to Sir John Simon, Memorandum respecting the General Economic Situation in Czechoslovakia by H. Kershaw, commercial secretary of the British legation in Czechoslovakia, 20 Feb. 1933.

⁴³⁰ Jens-Wilhelm Wessels, 'Economic Performance', 94.

implementation of strict fiscal and monetary reforms, which seriously limited Austria's room to manoeuvre. This made Austria heavily dependent on the good will of its major European creditors, who would certainly have opposed any drastic economic experimentation. Of course, the Dollfuß government could have pursued a policy that was not based on foreign credit, but the choice at the time appeared to be a simple one between an international bailout and state bankruptcy. Indeed, those who seek to condemn the Dollfuß government for the stance it took seem to assume that there were viable alternatives to the path taken. Yet no credible evidence has emerged that there actually were any.

This interpretation also neglects the fact that the implementation of orthodox economic strategies to combat the depression was not restricted to Austria or to Austria's conservative right. Deflation was the initial response of most countries to the crisis of 1929; until at least 1934, for example, France's conservative governments applied the 'classic deflationary remedy' to the crisis.⁴³¹ In the aftermath of the First World War and the rampant hyperinflation that followed, the situation in Austria had been 'even worse than in Germany', fuelling an almost pathological fear of inflation also shared by the Social Democrats who initially supported a deflationary policy and budgetary austerity.⁴³² This helps explain why Social Democratic deputies voted in favour of a budgetary reconstruction law on 3 October 1931, even though it was clear 'that Austrian workers would pay a dear price for balancing the budget'.⁴³³ Moreover, as Klingenstein noted, the Social Democratic counterplan put forward in July 1932 was not only ill-defined, unrealistic, and failed to take enough account of the facts, it hardly departed from that of the government in its main points.⁴³⁴ Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it is crucial to

⁴³¹ Peter Alexis Gourevitch, 'Breaking with Orthodoxy: The Politics of Economic Policy Responses to the Depression of the 1930s', *International Organization*, 38 (1984), 95, 122–23.

⁴³² Juan Flores and Yann Decorzant, 'Public Borrowing in Harsh Times: The League of Nations Loans Revisited', Working Paper, (University of Geneva, 2012), 31 Oct. 2012, <http://www.unige.ch/ses/dsec/research/wps/12091.pdf>, 7; Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist*, 270.

⁴³³ Peter Berger, 'The League of Nations and Interwar Austria', 84. It was only in the summer of 1933 that Otto Bauer's thinking took a 'Keynesian turn', by which point the political situation had spiralled out of control. See: Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist*, 272.

⁴³⁴ Grete Klingenstein, *Die Anleihe von Lausanne: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Ersten Republik in den Jahren 1931–1934*, (Vienna, 1965), 78. While the Dollfuß Government may have been restrained by received

note that, ideology aside, the economic policy decisions adopted by the Dollfuß government were taken with the genuine intention of stabilizing the economy and shoring up the Republic, not destroying it.

Convinced that only a long-term international aid effort could save Austria from a financial moratorium or economic collapse, in 1931 the Christian Social-led government had appealed to the League of Nations for financial assistance.⁴³⁵ The aid, in the form of a long-term loan, was to provide the basis for the restructuring of state finances in much the same way as it had done in 1922, and was, the Austrian government argued, 'a vital prerequisite for the strengthening of the Austrian currency and the restoration of confidence'.⁴³⁶ Yet, undoubtedly, it would come at a price, 'the reestablishment of external custody of Austrian economic policy', or, as some historians have sought to label it, a League of Nations *Finanzdiktatur*.⁴³⁷ For the Christian Socials the justification for the loan was simple: 'a state can not and must not commit suicide', a statement that was characteristic of the Christian Socials' activist strategy and pro-independence stance.⁴³⁸ However, the loan was not just a monetary issue, it was also seen as a foreign vote of confidence in Austria and the only real chance to secure Austria's future; failure to obtain the loan and then ratify the protocols would undoubtedly have 'serious repercussions for Austrian independence'.⁴³⁹ It was also of political importance. Less than a year had passed since the Customs Union debacle, the covert attempt to co-ordinate trade relations

economic wisdom, there is evidence that the Social Democrats were equally constrained by a Marxist orthodoxy that interpreted the worldwide economic crisis in terms of the imminent collapse of the capitalist system. Norbert Regitnig-Tillian, 'Die Zertrümmerung von Mythen: Neue Erkenntnisse über den Bürgerkrieg 1934', *Profil [online edition]*, 7 Feb. 2009, accessed: 5 Jun. 2012

⁴³⁵ The idea of an appeal to the League for financial help was publicly aired for the first time in 1931. See: Grete Klingenstein, *Die Anleihe von Lausanne*, 44–47.

⁴³⁶ Stenographische Protokolle des Nationalrates der Republik Österreich, 94th Sitzung der Nationalrat der Republik Österreich, IV, 28 July 1932, 2421. Speaker: Dollfuß; (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 15, (BKA/AA) to the (ÖG/B), 20 Oct. 1932, 'Angeblicher Kurswechsel in der österr. Aussenpolitik'.

⁴³⁷ Hansjörg Klausinger, 'The Austrian School of Economics and the Gold Standard Mentality in Austrian Economic Policy in the 1930s', December 2002), 9. See also: Peter Berger, 'The League of Nations and Interwar Austria', 76.

⁴³⁸ Stenographische Protokolle, 95th Sitzung der Nationalrat, IV, 29 July 1932, 2445. Speaker: Kunschak.

⁴³⁹ Stenographische Protokolle, 94th Sitzung der Nationalrat, IV, 28 July 1932, 2425. Speaker: Dollfuß.

between Austria and Germany that had incurred the violent opposition of both France and its Czechoslovakian protégé.⁴⁴⁰ In that instance, both countries threatened to start a trade war, which ‘Germany and Austria, given the present circumstances, would barely survive two months’⁴⁴¹. This episode had seriously damaged Austria’s standing abroad and Austria needed to prove to the other European powers and particularly its nervous neighbours, that it was serious about maintaining its independence from Germany. So while it is factually correct to emphasize – as Moritz and Leidinger do – that the Customs Union plan and apparent call for Anschluss – or at least closer ties between Germany and Austria – came at a time when the National Socialists did not yet rule Germany, it is immaterial because the international community were not about to countenance such a move.⁴⁴² Thus, Dollfuß’s determination to bring together a coalition, and his decision to bring the *Heimwehr* into government as a last resort can only be fully understood against the backdrop of attaining the Lausanne loan for the purposes of stabilizing both the Austrian economy and the foreign policy situation: it is beyond doubt that leaving office, or calling elections during 1932 would have invariably meant ‘giving up the Lausanne loan’.⁴⁴³

The issue of the Lausanne loan immediately set Dollfuß at odds with the Social Democratic and pan-German opposition. Neither group would countenance the idea of an international bailout and on similar grounds: the Social Democrats because of ‘ideological economic’ as well as nationalist considerations, claiming a threat to democracy by ‘reactionary’ elements and fearful that it could bolster the Christian Socials’ position, the pan-Germans, in a bid to outdo their radical Nazi rivals, labelling the loan ‘national betrayal’ and a foreign dictatorship’ that would shackle Austria ‘to the chariot wheel of the

⁴⁴⁰ For a cogent analysis of the Customs Union project and the impact upon the collapse of the Credit-Anstalt see: Iago Gil Aguado, ‘The Creditanstalt Crisis of 1931 and the Failure of the Austro-German Customs Union Project’ and Margaret G. Myers, ‘League Loans’, 504.

⁴⁴¹ Beneš asked Vienna rhetorically: ‘Do we need to go that far?’ Beneš to the Austrian Minister in Prague Ferdinand Marek, cited in: Iago Gil Aguado, ‘The Creditanstalt Crisis of 1931 and the Failure of the Austro-German Customs Union Project’, 208.

⁴⁴² See: Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, 69.

⁴⁴³ Kurt Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria*, 157.

peace treaties'.⁴⁴⁴ Klingenstein notes that, although the Social Democrats attempted to frame their arguments in a way that would set them apart from the pan-Germans, the reasons were basically the same. Thus, the loan was primarily rejected on political, not economic grounds; the anti-Anschluss clause, foreign control of the Austrian economy and what was ultimately perceived as a pro-French, anti-German course.⁴⁴⁵ Certain that Austria's future was at stake, Dollfuß appealed to all, not just those who were friends of the government, 'mutually conscious of the seriousness of the times, [to] lend a helping hand' in delivering Austria from the immediate crisis.⁴⁴⁶ From the point of view of the government, Austria was a 'ship in the most severe distress' and radical action and responsible statesmanship were essential to avoid an imminent catastrophe.⁴⁴⁷ However, the attempt to revive the economy fell upon deaf ears, and the struggle against the crisis received little backing.⁴⁴⁸ The opposition, whose ultimate objective was Anschluss, rejected the idea of going cap in hand to Geneva from the very beginning.

Opposition to the loan was not limited to domestic circles. In Germany, the Austrian government's decision to appeal to the League of Nations for assistance met with a bitter press campaign spearheaded by nationalist circles and accusations of a change of course in Austrian foreign policy.⁴⁴⁹ In May 1933, the mouthpiece of Schuschnigg's *Ostmärkische Sturmscharen* reminded its readers that following the signing of the Lausanne Protocols the previous year a 'downright savage hate campaign against Dollfuß and Austria' had been instigated from Germany, and not just from National Socialist circles, but also from 'certain Zentrum circles and the Catholic Front!' ⁴⁵⁰. As a result, tensions between

⁴⁴⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 26 and Grete Klingenstein, *Die Anleihe von Lausanne*, 61, 78–9.

⁴⁴⁵ See: Grete Klingenstein, *Die Anleihe von Lausanne*, 78–9.

⁴⁴⁶ Dollfuß's speech before the *Nationalrat* cited in: R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 170. For a more detailed explanation of the opposition's objections see: Grete Klingenstein, *Die Anleihe von Lausanne*, 51.

⁴⁴⁷ Stenographische Protokolle, 95th Sitzung der Nationalrat, IV, 29 July 1932, 2445. Speaker: Kunschak.

⁴⁴⁸ See: Grete Klingenstein, *Die Anleihe von Lausanne* 51.

⁴⁴⁹ (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 15, (BKA/AA) to the (ÖG/B), 20 Oct. 1932, 'Angeblicher Kurswechsel in der österr. Aussenpolitik'. Cf. *DGFP C/I*, 52–55.

⁴⁵⁰ 'Nazibuben stänkern einen Rheinländer an', *Sturm über Österreich*, 28 May 1933, 4

the two countries became frayed, with ‘feelings towards “the brothers in the Reich”...not particularly cordial in government circles in Vienna’ during 1932.⁴⁵¹ Having ‘mixed up too much in Austrian internal politics’ the legation staff, Rieth included, were unpopular with the Austrian government, and ‘Rieth’s own position was at one time a good deal compromised as a result. His much too active, though clever first secretary, Dr. Clodius, was, at the request of the Austrian government, removed from Vienna’.⁴⁵² Indeed, one Berlin newspaper observed that ‘the unprecedented abuse from the National Socialists that the Chancellor had to endure [during 1932] awakened something in Austria that in other countries one calls national feeling’.⁴⁵³ In an incendiary speech to the Austrian *Nationalrat* that was, according to the British legation undoubtedly ‘officially inspired’, the Christian Social representative Leopold Kunschak condemned the activities of Reich German emissaries agitating against the loan on Austrian soil, comparing them to the Russian agents that prior to 1914 were ‘awakening passions in the Balkans, sowing hatred and thirst for blood’⁴⁵⁴. ‘Call off the hounds and put them on the leash’ he warned the German government, and leave the Austrians to their own affairs.⁴⁵⁵ Although, the legation continued, Dollfuß ‘subsequently endeavoured to explain that Herr Kunschak had been “misinterpreted” and had never attacked the German government’, the Federal Chancellery proceeded to issue an official communiqué drawing attention to the penalties laid down to deal with foreigners involved in acts of propaganda and provocation on Austrian soil, ‘hinting broadly that these penalties – which include expulsion – would be rigorously enforced’.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 38.

⁴⁵² (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16636, paper C418/418/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on the Head of Foreign Missions, 1 Jan. 1933.

⁴⁵³ ‘Lausanne, Nationalgefühl und Zusammenschluß’, *Reichspost*, 10 Aug. 1932, 5.

⁴⁵⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/15890, paper C6870/69/3, R.H. Hadow, Memorandum, 9 Aug. 1932 and “Gott schütze unser Oesterreich! Gott schütze unser Volk!”, *Reichspost*, 30 Jul. 1932, 2.

⁴⁵⁵ “Gott schütze unser Oesterreich! Gott schütze unser Volk!”, *Reichspost*, 30 Jul. 1932, 2.

⁴⁵⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/15890, paper C6870/69/3, R.H. Hadow, Memorandum, 9 Aug. 1932.

German support, or the appearance of support, was crucial to diffuse the objections of the Austrian pan-Germans to the anti-Anschluss clause. However, the German government refused to get involved. In an attempt to placate the German nationalists – and, of course, the National Socialists – Germany under von Papen undermined the Austrian government at home and abroad by refusing openly to support its request, despite the Austrians arguing that without the loan the collapse of the Austrian economy, and thus the state, was inevitable.⁴⁵⁷ In a private discussion between Dollfuß and Papen, Dollfuß attempted to win over the latter to participation in a League loan, but Papen refused on the grounds that he ‘took exception’ to the fact that Austria had to reaffirm the anti-Anschluss clause.⁴⁵⁸ Instead, the German delegation to the League withheld its vote, and as the Dollfuß government had hoped to use German backing to prevent extensive opposition at home, it presented the move as tacit acquiescence.⁴⁵⁹ The Greater Germans were not convinced, forcing Dollfuß to appeal on at least one occasion to von Papen to use his influence on the Greater Germans to encourage them to support ratification.⁴⁶⁰ Therefore, in short, rather than come to Austria’s aid, Germany, with an ostensibly Catholic statesman at the helm, publically undermined the Austrian government.⁴⁶¹ Here we have the man who helped Hitler into the saddle the following year and was instrumental in bringing about the Nazi take-over of Austria in 1938, conspiring in effect with Austrian Social Democrats to undermine, if not end Austrian independence in 1932. If we regard the company politicians keep as evidence of their character, as we do routinely do with Dollfuß and the *Heimwehr*, we surely cannot ignore

⁴⁵⁷ (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 15, (BKA/AA) to the (ÖG/B), 20 Oct. 1932, ‘Angeblicher Kurswechsel in der österr. Aussenpolitik’. According to Gehl, Papen did write to Rieth in Vienna in July 1932 instructing him to persuade the Pan-German leaders not to raise difficulties for Dollfuß. See: Jürgen Gehl, *Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss*, 43.

⁴⁵⁸ Theodor von Hornbostel, Witness statement in the treason trial of Guido Schmidt, Guido Schmidt, *Der Hochverratsprozess gegen Dr. Guido Schmidt vor dem Wiener Volksgericht*, (Vienna, 1947), 167.

⁴⁵⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 24.

⁴⁶⁰ See: Grete Klingenstein, *Die Anleihe von Lausanne*, 65.

⁴⁶¹ Papen claimed in his post-war memoirs to have encouraged Dollfuß in his endeavours, albeit privately. See: Franz von Papen, *Der Wahrheit eine Gasse*, (Munich, 1952).

the strange alliance of Austrian Social Democracy with the man who ended democracy in Germany.

Thus, on Dollfuß's return to Austria with the secured support of the international community, the bulk of the political opposition refused to ratify the loan, accusing Dollfuß of 'national betrayal'. The *Heimwehr* threatened to withdraw from the coalition, a move that would have caused the government to collapse; to prevent them from doing so Dollfuß acceded to Starhemberg's demands, which as Lassner points out, included the position of minister for security for the *Heimwehr*.⁴⁶² The increasingly radicalized pan-German camp was intractable in its opposition to a loan which stipulated that Austria once again officially renounce Anschluss with Germany, this time until the year 1952.⁴⁶³ However, the real stumbling block was the opposition of the Social Democrats, who played a reckless game, which really does deserve to be called deceitful, bitterly opposing the loan in Vienna, while secretly urging the French Socialist party to vote for it in Paris.⁴⁶⁴ Rather than lend their support to the government, they accused the Christian Socials of having sacrificed the Anschluss and joined, once again, with the National Socialists in calling for the dissolution of parliament and new national elections.⁴⁶⁵ There is no record of Social Democrats in Germany joining forces with the Nazis in any shape or form at any time. Austrian Social Democrats did effectively do so, however, and did so more than once. While many historians maintain that Dollfuß's reliance on the *Heimwehr* paved the way for the Nazi dictatorship, the literature is conspicuously silent on the issue of whether Social Democrat actions cannot be said to have smoothed the path for a Nazi take-over.

⁴⁶² See: Alexander Lassner, N., 'Peace at Hitler's Price', 19.

⁴⁶³ The pan-German camp consisted of the Greater Germans (*Grossdeutsche Volkspartei*), the *Landbund* and the National Socialists. The GDVP had actually supported the loan request in 1922. Rolf Steininger, '12 November 1918–12 March 1938', 96.

⁴⁶⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, pg. 1, para. 3.

⁴⁶⁵ Stenographische Protokolle, 94th Sitzung der Nationalrat, IV, 28 July 1932, 2429. Speaker: Ellenbogen. See also: R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 165.

The protocols eventually passed through the *Nationalrat*, albeit by the narrowest of margins. Interestingly enough, Klingenstein draws attention to the fact that neither the pan-Germans nor the Social Democrats deployed their key weapon – denying the government a quorum by leaving the Chamber – to scupper ratification of the protocols, suggesting that they were aware that there was no viable alternative to the loan.⁴⁶⁶ Again, this is not an issue of left or right or of attaching blame to a particular ideology. Rather, it is an issue of contrasting the record of Social Democracy in Germany, which sought to uphold the state even at the risk of losing elections, with that of Austrian Social Democracy, which did not.

Dollfuß's efforts to achieve and maintain financial stability were looked upon with approval from abroad. The British Legation deemed it a matter for congratulation that the Austrian government 'resolutely continued to face its foreign obligations' despite incessant pressure from its opponents and even in part from its supporters.⁴⁶⁷ To contemporary observers what was remarkable was that 1932 had ended *without* disaster. Not only praising Dollfuß, but contrasting him favourably with those around him, the British Minister observed how, 'with a degree of courage and pertinacity unusual amongst Austrian politicians', Dollfuß refused to be beaten by facts, 'valiantly doing all he [could] economically to keep his country's feet on the path of political independence'.⁴⁶⁸

Yet, at home Dollfuß could rely on little support. In fact, it seemed that the opposition were doing everything in their power to render the situation as difficult as possible. After months of wrangling and hand-wringing, – by the end of 1932 the Austrians had still not received any money – the Hirtenberg arms affair broke and landed Dollfuß in hot water at home and abroad.⁴⁶⁹ Tensions between the government and the opposition escalated when Social Democratic railway workers in Villach intercepted an

⁴⁶⁶ Grete Klingenstein, *Die Anleihe von Lausanne*.

⁴⁶⁷ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, 20.

⁴⁶⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16630, paper C8509/8/3, Sir W. Selby, Selby to Sargent 21 Sep. 1933; (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, 4.

⁴⁶⁹ In fact, by the end of 1933 only 244 million Schillings had reached Austria. See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934 17.

illegal arms shipment from Italy, intended for the *Heimwehr*.⁴⁷⁰ A clear violation of the Treaty of St. Germain, the transfer was exposed in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, unleashing the condemnation of the international community. Although Dollfuß had not known about the illicit consignment, the revelation incurred the wrath of the Little Entente, particularly the Czechs, who pressured the Austrian government by refusing Czech participation in the Lausanne Loan, once again jeopardizing the credit that was imperative for the country's short-term survival⁴⁷¹. The lessons of Lausanne and the Hirtenberg affair were undoubtedly bitter ones for Dollfuß and key turning points in his relationship with the Social Democrats. The Social Democrats had not used quiet channels to get the arms confiscated without imperilling the loan; rather they were willing to sacrifice Austria's economic survival in the interest of embarrassing the Dollfuß government. This is despite the fact that, as Kindermann points out, the *Schutzbund* were also smuggling illegal weapons from Czechoslovakia.⁴⁷² What is more, the battle for the Lausanne loan had made it painfully clear that the struggle for one vote could paralyze the whole parliamentary process.⁴⁷³ It is difficult to disagree that an ineffectual parliament with an intractable opposition was a 'weak reed' in the fight to ward off economic disaster and the National Socialist plague.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁰ See: R. John Rath, 'The Intensification of Animosties', 87–88.

⁴⁷¹ France did not ratify the Lausanne treaty until December 31 1932 (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 72.

⁴⁷² Gottfried-Karl Kindermann, *Österreich gegen Hitler. Europas erste Abwehrfront 1933–1938*, 153.

⁴⁷³ 'Wir haben zu Beginn dieses Jahres sogar feststellen müssen daß diese Kreise nicht einmal davor zurückschrecken, ihre Beziehungen zum Ausland gegen das Vaterland auszunutzen. ...Aber nichts ist bezeichnender für die innere Morschheit der gegenwärtigen Form des Parlamentarismus als daß der Streit um einen Stimmzettel das ganze Parlament lahmlegen konnte'. 'Der Bundeskanzler über den Umbau der Verfassung', *Reichspost*, 3 Mar. 1933, 1–2.

⁴⁷⁴ R. John Rath, 'The Demise of the Nationalrat', 132.

Endgültig und restlos Ordnung machen!

After the economy, a second key concern for the Dollfuß government was the maintenance of public order.⁴⁷⁵ Political violence was a defining feature of Austrian politics throughout the interwar period. Austria was a hotbed of militant political activism; marches, rallies and demonstrations were an almost daily occurrence and habitually turned violent. The stark polarization of Austrian society between left and right, the lack of basic societal consensus and the subsequent political and parliamentary stalemate left no effective means of settling political, economic or societal disputes. Violence and intimidation filled the void as the competing political factions searched for alternative methods to fulfil their political ambitions and prevent their opponents from gaining the upper hand. The failure of the democratic process was exacerbated by the effective militarization of Austrian society through the formation of armed paramilitary organizations over which the State had no authority. In the eyes of a contemporary American observer, the existence of these antagonistic private armies impeded peaceful political development and 'made the task of the federal government extremely difficult'.⁴⁷⁶ Government forces were outnumbered and outgunned. The two largest militias, the *Republikanischer Schutzbund*, the militarized arm of the Social Democratic Party and the right-wing *Heimwehr* boasted memberships in 1927–28 of up to 95,000 and at least 100,000 members respectively.⁴⁷⁷ They were joined in the melee on the country's streets by the National Socialist SA (from 1931), as well as a number of smaller private armies, including the Frontkämpfer Association and the Communists.⁴⁷⁸ By way of comparison, the Treaty of St. Germain limited the Austrian army to a maximum of 30,000 men.

⁴⁷⁵ See, for example: 'Endgültig und restlos Ordnung machen!', *Reichspost*, 11 Oct. 1932, 3.

⁴⁷⁶ See: W. Malbone, Graham, Jr., 'Foreign Governments', 150.

⁴⁷⁷ See: Walter Goldinger and Dieter A. Binder, *Geschichte der Republik Österreich 1918–1938*, (Vienna, 1992), 139. Cf: Dirk Hänisch, *Die österreichischen NSDAP Wähler: Eine empirische Analyse ihrer politischen Herkunft und ihres Sozialprofils*, (Vienna, 1998), 62 with Helmut Konrad, 'Das Werben der NSDAP um die Sozialdemokraten 1933–1938', in eds. Rudolf G. Ardelt and Karl R. Stadler *Arbeiterschaft und Nationalsozialismus in Österreich* (Vienna, 1990), 80

⁴⁷⁸ On the SA see: Helmut Konrad, 'Das Werben der NSDAP', 80.

The atmosphere on the streets worsened as the economic crisis took hold, echoing the waves of violence and civil unrest that were sweeping Weimar Germany. By July 1931, there were reports that demonstrators were increasingly prepared to use violence against the police.⁴⁷⁹ There was a genuine fear within the Christian Social movement that law and order could collapse, and from 1931 onwards, the State authorities began routinely banning events, Communist gatherings having been consistently prohibited since 1929.⁴⁸⁰ The increasingly ominous tone on the streets was compounded by the sheer scale of political activity that the authorities had to deal with; during the first half of 1932, Allinson records 7,990 meetings in inns, 6,300 of which were of a political nature, 181 open air meetings and 308 public processions in Vienna alone, many of which would have been needed to be policed.⁴⁸¹ Some ended in violent clashes between the armed rival factions. Botz's chronicle of political violence during the First Republic reveals how, from April 1932 onwards, hardly a week went by without a violent altercation between rival political factions, resulting in dozens of dead and seriously wounded on all sides.⁴⁸²

During his inaugural speech, Dollfuß appealed for calm on all sides, reasoning that the economy – especially the tourist economy – needed calm if it were to have a chance of recovery.⁴⁸³ Aware that a long-term, universal ban on rallies and demonstrations would raise constitutional objections, he pledged that provisions would nonetheless be made to ensure the preservation of public peace.⁴⁸⁴ However, he pointed out, the policing of rallies and demonstrations involved costs. So, while every endeavour would be made to ensure that the right to free expression was upheld, the government would, he warned, if

⁴⁷⁹ See: Allinson, Mark, 'Politics on the Streets: Popular Political Culture in the First Austrian Republic' (2007) <http://hdl.handle.net/1983/>, 21.

⁴⁸⁰ See: Mark Allinson, 'Politics on the Streets: Popular Political Culture in the First Austrian Republic', Working Paper, (University of Bristol, 2007), accessed: 19 Dec. 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/1983/974>, 16.

⁴⁸¹ See: Ibid, 3.

⁴⁸² See: Gerhard Botz, *Gewalt in der Politik: Attentate, Zusammenstöße, Putschversuche, Unruhen in Österreich 1918 bis 1938*, (Munich, 1983).

⁴⁸³ Stenographische Protokolle , 81 Sitzung der Nationalrat, IV, 27 May 1932, 2151, Speaker Dollfuß.

⁴⁸⁴ 'Die Vorstellung der neuen Regierung im Nationalrat', *Reichspost*, 28 May 1932, 2–3.

necessary, clamp down on wanton excesses injurious to the economy.⁴⁸⁵ Again, this might sound like the standard excuse of right-wing politicians preparing to replace democracy with authoritarian rule, but consider that on that very same day armed National Socialists, Social Democrats, and Communists clashed in a town not far from Innsbruck. In the 'Saalschlacht von Hötting' one SA man was killed and over 30 others seriously injured. The episode resulted in a ban on all National Socialist, Social Democratic and Communist demonstrations in the Tyrol.⁴⁸⁶

During 1932, the burgeoning Nazi movement took the political conflict on the streets to new heights.⁴⁸⁷ The evidence suggests that Nazis were involved in over 90 per cent of all violent political clashes that occurred during that year.⁴⁸⁸ The Nazis not only treated the State authorities with contempt, they also deliberately goaded the *Republikanischer Schutzbund* by holding rallies and demonstrations in Socialist strongholds.⁴⁸⁹ The Nazi stratagem culminated in frequent and violent *Zusammenstöße* and a dangerous struggle between the 'blue shirts' and the 'brown shirts' for control of the street, a conflict, which following the Nazis electoral success, moved from the streets into the halls of government⁴⁹⁰. The danger was obvious, as Schuschnigg later explained:

When two private armies stand facing one another in a country, and the State is not in a position to disarm them both, from then on it is at the mercy of any flying spark; the issue is unavoidable and is only a question of time.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ 'Schach jedwedem Terror!', *Reichspost*, 30 May 1932, 3.

⁴⁸⁷ As Allinson notes, 'attempts to prevent demonstrations and marches intensified in mid-1931 against the backdrop of a disastrous economic situation'. Mark Allinson, 'Politics on the Streets: Popular Political Culture in the First Austrian Republic', Working Paper, (University of Bristol, 2007), accessed: 19 Dec. 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/1983/974>, 21.

⁴⁸⁸ Winifred R. Garscha, 'Nationalsozialisten in Österreich 1933–1938', in eds. Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer *Austrofaschismus: Politik–Ökonomie–Kultur 1933–1938* (Vienna, 2005), 104.

⁴⁸⁹ The *Republikanischer Schutzbund* was formed in 1923 as a symbol of 'proletarian resistance' as well as to guarantee an armed alternative to the official federal Bundesheer, which was dominated by the ruling Christian Socials.

⁴⁹⁰ 'Wüste Raufereien im Wiener Gemeinderat', *Reichspost* 1 Oct. 1932, 1 and Barry McLoughlin, 'Arbeiterschaft und die Gewaltpraxis der NSDAP', 58.

⁴⁹¹ Kurt Schuschnigg, trans. John Segrue, *My Austria*, (New York, 1938), 216.

Although it was the Nazi movement that was on the offensive, this was a worry, not least because there were signs that the Socialist leadership was losing its grip on the *Schutzbund*.⁴⁹² As early as 1923, the issue of how the *Schutzbund* should respond to Nazi rallies revealed that discipline among the ranks of this armed formation could not be guaranteed by its leaders. To the suggestion that the *Schutzbund* 'should never disturb a Nazi rally' the *Schutzbund* leader, Deutsch, replied that 'The question was pointless, as the workers would never obey such a command'.⁴⁹³

In the eyes of the government, Socialist actions made matters worse on the grounds that, rather than encouraging the maintenance of law and order, they rose to the Nazi bait. Both 'Socialisms' were deemed responsible for the escalation in violence; although the Nazis' conduct was openly provocative, the Socialists responded with equal, and often violent, measure. Social Democratic weapons were not used to safeguard their homeland from domestic and foreign enemies, it was argued, only in the service of the party.⁴⁹⁴ The Socialist response to the *NSDAP-Gautage*, held in Vienna just weeks before the clash in Simmering, was a case in point.⁴⁹⁵ The government had deemed that the safest solution was to allow the convention to take place, albeit only if certain conditions and the requisite safeguards were adhered to. The Social Democrats and the *Schutzbund*, however, refused to honour the government's decision. Adamant that they were not going to allow Vienna to become a 'brown' city, the 'blue shirts' took to the streets with the intention of sabotaging the convention. In the eyes of the authorities, this just made the situation worse, triggering a dangerous struggle for 'control' of the city.⁴⁹⁶ Not only did the Socialists belligerent behaviour threaten to inflame an already precarious situation, their counter-demonstrations, it was argued, actually managed to bring more attention to

⁴⁹² There were signs in 1932 that the *Schutzbund* leaders were 'in certain cases losing their authority over some of their "reddest" units'. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 140. Interestingly, this is part of what happened in February 1934. 'Die Simmeringer Blutmahnung', *Reichspost*, 18.10.1932, 1–2.

⁴⁹³ Barry McLoughlin, 'Arbeiterschaft und die Gewaltpraxis der NSDAP', 51.

⁴⁹⁴ 'Die Simmeringer Blutmahnung', *Reichspost*, 18.10.1932, 1–2.

⁴⁹⁵ The Vienna Gautage took place between 29 September and 2 October 1932.

⁴⁹⁶ 'Abschluß der politischen Viertage-Konkurrenz', *Reichspost*, 3 Oct. 1932, 2.

the National Socialists than they would otherwise have enjoyed.⁴⁹⁷ The Christian Socials complained time and again about a lack of responsibility on the part of the Socialists for the affairs of State; they cited the 'negligent and immature behaviour' observed in the *Wiener Landtag* and *Gemeinderat*, and in the confrontational stance of the Social Democrats on the streets, which bolstered the impression that the Social Democratic Party was more concerned about petty partisan issues than the misery and suffering of the wider population.⁴⁹⁸ Whilst Dollfuß and sections of his government were fighting in Lausanne for the financial support that could shore up the country, the *Schutzbund*, the National Socialists and the *Heimwehr* were brawling in the streets, only to oppose jointly the loans in parliament upon Dollfuß's return. From the government's point of view, the Social Democrats were no better than the National Socialists it was a '*staatszerstörende Partei*' that put partisan interests above those of the state as a whole, which was never going to be a willing or reliable ally in the fight to maintain Austrian independence.⁴⁹⁹

The violent confrontation between the National Socialists on the one side, and the Socialists and Communists on the other escalated as the year progressed. In October 1932, a group of armed Nazis attempted to storm the *Arbeiterheim* in Wien-Simmering; a *Schutzbund* contingent stationed in the building returned fire and the ensuing altercation resulted in four deaths and dozens of injuries.⁵⁰⁰ In response, Emil Fey, leader of the Vienna *Heimwehr*, who was appointed State Secretary for Public Security the following day, issued an order temporarily banning all parades and meetings for those groups involved, to wit, the Nazis, the Socialists and the Communists, a move that foreshadowed the ultimate prohibition of the Austrian Nazi party, the KPÖ and the

⁴⁹⁷ See: Ibid, Emil Fey: (23 Mar. 1886–16 Mar 1938) Leader of the Wiener Heimatschutz, Vice Chancellor.

⁴⁹⁸ 'Die Simmeringer Blutmahnung', *Reichspost*, 18.10.1932, 1–2.

⁴⁹⁹ Ministerratsprotokolle (MRP) Nr. 832 (I) 3 Nov 1932. Rudolf Neck Gertrude Enderle-Burcel, Adam Wandruszka, ed., *Kabinett Dr. Engelbert Dollfuß: 26. Oktober 1932 bis 20. März 1933*, (Vienna, 1982), 22; 'Hier Volkstag – dort Bluttag', *Reichspost*, 17 Oct. 1932, 1.

⁵⁰⁰ See: 'Simmering' <http://www.dasrotewien.at/online/page.php?P=11663>, accessed 15 Aug. 2010. See also: Mark Allinson, 'Politics on the Streets: Popular Political Culture in the First Austrian Republic', Working Paper, (University of Bristol, 2007), accessed: 19 Dec. 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/1983/974>, 22.

Schutzbund the following year.⁵⁰¹ Fey's militant anti-Marxism and the fact that the *Heimwehr* was exempted from any restrictions were viewed as a severe provocation by the left and as evidence that the authorities' motivation was not in the genuine interest of public order. However, the measure did yield a moderate level of success, as the number of political clashes fell as a direct result.⁵⁰²

Yet, even with the *Heimwehr* represented in government, during 1932 it was the more moderate voices that clearly still held sway. As Allinson notes, the 17 October ban was relaxed to allow marches to take place on 12 November, Austria's republican holiday, 'with the strict proviso that no weapons of any sort could be carried', entirely fair by most modern democratic standards.⁵⁰³ Yet, the government's response is still interpreted as an attempt on the part of the Austrian authorities to repress a 'vibrant' democratic mobilized mass political culture. Indeed, Allinson argues that the response of the government to political protest can be viewed as a diplomatic weathervane for the extent of democracy in the First Republic. However, it is not just the response of the government that is telling here; one could also argue that the militarization of Austrian civil society, the use of paramilitary formations to further political goals and the constant threat of violence are equally useful as 'weathervanes'. Whether 'the flowering of democracy' or mass politics in action best describe the violent clashes and civil unrest that punctuated the period is highly debatable. The militant political atmosphere of the First Republic was certainly not an extreme expression of the rough and tumble of the democratic political process, nor of a 'vibrant form of civil society'; rather it was the manifestation of the abject *failure* of the democratic process and an unmistakable sign of a country struggling with a 'latent civil war'.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰¹ 'Vorübergehendes Aufmarsch- und Versammlungsverbot in Wien', *Reichspost*, 18 Oct. 1932, 1. Fey was appointed to the post on 17 October 1932.

⁵⁰² Barry McLoughlin, 'Arbeiterschaft und die Gewaltpraxis der NSDAP', 58–9.

⁵⁰³ Mark Allinson, 'Politics on the Streets: Popular Political Culture in the First Austrian Republic', Working Paper, (University of Bristol, 2007), accessed: 19 Dec. 2012, <http://hdl.handle.net/1983/974>, 22.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid 4 and Winifred R. Garscha, 'Nationalsozialisten in Österreich 1933–1938', 104.

The controversy surrounding Fey's nomination, and the accusations of anti-Marxist bias, while important observations, have clouded the fact that in 1932 there was good reason to curb the activities of the paramilitaries, not least because there was too much at stake to allow the situation on the street to escalate out of control as it had in Germany. The question of whether the *Schutzbund's* – and thus the Social Democratic – strategy of meeting violence with violence was a truly effective way of dealing with the Nazi challenge, or if it simply contributed to the general radicalization of the period is, incidentally, rarely, if ever, asked. It also overlooks that the ultimate aim was the disbandment of the 'illegal semi-military organisations', – along with the inculcation of 'patriotism, discipline and national spirit', the state of affairs common to every functioning democracy – through the introduction of universal service, that is, the return of authority to the state apparatus.⁵⁰⁵ This could sound like conventional nationalist posturing, if the speaker was not Alfred Jansa, from 1935 the de facto Chief of the Austrian Armed Forces, a staunch anti-Nazi who was responsible for drawing up detailed plans for the defence of Austria in 1935 in case of a German invasion. It was Jansa who said 'there must be no doubt in Germany about our firm [*unbeugsamen*] resolve [to fight]'.⁵⁰⁶ Dollfuß had sent Jansa as military attaché to Berlin in June 1933 with instructions to support the Austrian Minister Tauschitz to establish a reasonable relationship with Germany.⁵⁰⁷ On his return to Austria two years later he had become convinced that there could be no reasonable relationship between Austria and Germany while Hitler was still at the helm, and that the only options were to fight or to capitulate unconditionally.⁵⁰⁸

⁵⁰⁵ Memorandum by the military attaché of a conversation with General Jansa: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/15893, paper C9361/7665/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austrian View on the French Disarmament Plan, 4 Nov. 1932.

⁵⁰⁶ Wolfgang Greber, 'Die Abwehrschlacht an der Traun, die nie stattfand', *Die Presse* [online edition], 29 Feb. 2008, accessed: 19. Dec. 2012. For further details, see: Jansa, Alfred, *Ein österreichischer General gegen Hitler. FML Jansa – Erinnerungen*, (Vienna, 2011).

⁵⁰⁷ See: Witness *Feldmarschalleutnant* Alfred Jansa, Guido Schmidt, *Hochverratsprozess*, 217. *Feldmarschalleutnant* was the second-highest rank in the old Habsburg Army. In 1920 the Austrian *Bundesheer* adopted German army ranks and badges of rank. In 1933 the old Habsburg ranks, uniforms and insignia were reintroduced.

⁵⁰⁸ See: Witness *Feldmarschalleutnant* Alfred Jansa, *Ibid*, 217, 220. Jansa was removed from his post after Hitler posed Schuschnigg an ultimatum on Obersalzberg in February 1938. Jansa offered his resignation on 16 February although he had actually been asked to vacate his post the previous month.

Thus, while the *Heimwehr*'s anti-Marxism and Dollfuß's deteriorating relationship with the Social Democrats remain undisputed, it was not the only motivation for the disbandment of the *Schutzbund* the following March. In exempting the *Heimwehr* from both the prohibition on holding rallies and, later, the disbanding of the paramilitaries – the KPÖ was banned in May 1933, the Nazi party in June – the government's response was clearly partisan. What other course of action could Dollfuß have taken? What would have happened if he had exempted the *Schutzbund* from the ban? Not only would the *Heimwehr* not have stood for it, the *Schutzbund* could not have been automatically relied upon voluntarily to keep the peace. As for the *Heimwehr*, Dollfuß was simply not in a position to force the neutralization of his coalition partners, however desirable an aim. That would have to wait until 1936. It was only then that Schuschnigg would find himself in a strong enough position owing to, according to British sources, 'the growth in efficiency of the army and the introduction of universal service' to finally disband this last paramilitary formation by absorbing it into the *Vaterländische Front*.⁵⁰⁹ In 1932 Dollfuß desperately needed to keep the *Heimwehr* in his pro-Austrian front, though it is worth noting that ultimately Schuschnigg did carry out their promised move against the *Heimwehr*: on 10 October 1936 all paramilitary organizations were finally dissolved.⁵¹⁰

This, of course, raises the question of why Dollfuß actually entrusted Fey with the role in the first place, a move that saw a militant opponent of the Social Democrats promoted to the centre of the state apparatus.⁵¹¹ He did so, quite simply, because of intense pressure from the *Heimwehr*, which threatened to withdraw its support for the government, sabotaging the League of Nations bailout package – the *raison d'être* of the Dollfuß government – if their demands for concessions, which included entrusting a member of the *Heimwehr* with the security portfolio, were not met. Forced into a corner, Dollfuß attempted to outmanoeuvre the *Heimwehr* by approaching the Greater Germans once again with the request to support his government – this time, asking von Papen in

⁵⁰⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21118, paper R820/820/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1936, 27 Jan. 1937, 2.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid, para., 35–38.

⁵¹¹ Fey was initially only entrusted with the role of State Secretary, which meant that Dollfuß retained ultimate authority as Home Secretary. He was made Federal Minister in the reshuffle of 10 May 1933.

Germany to intervene via the German Minister to Austria, Kurt Rieth – but the Greater Germans, once again, refused.⁵¹² Without *Heimwehr* support, the government was doomed, the loan imperilled and Austria's independent existence threatened; with no room to manoeuvre, Dollfuß conceded to their demands.

As 1932 drew to a close, and with an economically hard winter approaching, it was deemed particularly important that the government prevent anything that could exacerbate the prevalent militant political atmosphere.⁵¹³ Increasingly, the thoughts of the government turned to a thoroughgoing de-politicization of the public domain to deal with the unrest. Again, this might sound like the standard excuse of right-wing politicians keen to disempower their political rivals but this ignores that this was a state in real trouble: Austria really had become a tinderbox just waiting for a spark. Parliamentary deadlock had made solving the root of the escalating crisis, the disastrous economic situation, nigh on impossible. The experience of Lausanne – where, despite the real threat of state bankruptcy and even collapse, the opposition had refused to help the Christian Social-dominated government for party-political reasons – shows us that there was some truth in the Christian Social claim that Austria was being held to ransom by a 'wild party fanaticism', which put the interests of the party above all else: Austrian politics *had* become a '*Fahnenfrage*', rather than about ruling in the best interests of the state.⁵¹⁴

The Christian Socials' response involved, in part, reclaiming the public arena for the perpetuation and celebration of the Austrian idea. This was exemplified in the debate surrounding whether or not the government should allow the Social Democrats to hold their annual rally to mark the proclamation of the Republic on 12 November, bearing in mind the tense atmosphere on the streets and the fact that the Nazis intended to hold a rally the same day.⁵¹⁵ Although under pressure from the *Heimwehr* to ban the march, as well as being visibly angry at the Social Democrats following, as it did, in the immediate

⁵¹² See: Michael E. Holzmann, *Die österreichische SA und ihre Illusion von 'Großdeutschland'*, (Berlin, 2011) 34.

⁵¹³ MRP, Nr. 832 (1) 3 Nov 1932. Rudolf Neck Gertrude Enderle-Burcel, Adam Wandruszka, ed., *Kabinett Dollfuß: 26. Oktober 1932 bis 20. März 1933*, 21.

⁵¹⁴ MRP, Nr. 832 (1) 3 Nov 1932. Ibid 21 and 'Hier Volkstag – dort Bluttag', *Reichspost*, 17 Oct. 1932, 1.

⁵¹⁵ Vaugoin to the Christian Social party executive, 8 Nov. 1932: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 30.

wake of a particularly acrimonious fallout with Otto Bauer during a debate in the *Nationalrat*, Dollfuß was of the opinion that the march should be allowed, albeit under certain conditions to ensure the maintenance of law and order.⁵¹⁶ However, the palpable desire to put an end to the march was not simply about disenfranchising the Social Democrats; there was a wider issue at stake. Such rallies, which should be something in which all parties could participate, were no longer, Schuschnigg argued, held in celebration of the Austrian state, but rather republican holidays had been usurped by political parties – meaning the Social Democrats – for their own purposes and had become purely party affairs.⁵¹⁷ He was correct in his assertion – every 12 November, the Social Democrats called their supporters out onto the streets, yet they did so to celebrate the ‘revolution’ of 1918, the fall of the monarchy and declaration of a *Republic*, not the declaration of the Austrian state, which remained a mere means to an end, the end being Socialism.⁵¹⁸

For the Christian Socials the answer to the problems that Austria faced was not to be found in caustic and divisive party politics – at which the Nazis evidently excelled – but in rallying the population to uphold an independent Austrian state that was otherwise heading towards catastrophe; the wellbeing of the state, the *Reichspost* argued, had to take precedence over egocentric party interests.⁵¹⁹ And while one could argue that the Christian Socials’ interest in maintaining Austrian independence was also ‘egocentric’, the fact remains that putting the survival of the state above individual party interests is a fundamental precept of any functioning democratic state. Ultimately, it is against this backdrop that the government’s declaration on the proroguing of parliament just a few months later, in the wake of the Nazi ‘*Machtergreifung*’ in Germany, is best understood:

Es geht ums Ganze! Bei Gott nicht um Personen oder deren kleine Interessen. Auch die Parteifrage ist keineswegs im Vordergrund. Oesterreich steht auf dem Spiel.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁶ Dollfuß to the Christian Social party executive, 8 Nov. 1932: Ibid, 30.

⁵¹⁷ MRP, Nr. 832 (1) 3 Nov 1932. Rudolf Neck Gertrude Enderle-Burcel, Adam Wandruszka, ed., *Kabinett Dollfuß: 26. Oktober 1932 bis 20. März 1933*, 19–22.

⁵¹⁸ See, for example: ‘Die Wahrheit der Woche’, *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 12 Nov. 1932, 3.

⁵¹⁹ ‘Was wir wollen!’, *Reichspost*, 17 Oct. 1932, 3.

⁵²⁰ ‘Von besonderer Seite’: ‘Um Oesterreich!’, *Reichspost*, 12 Mar. 1933, 1.

Chapter 4

‘...Auf so unsichere Kantonisten kann sich Oesterreich in seinem Daseinskampf nicht verlassen’:

Relations with the Social Democrats

The issue of whether the fight against Social Democracy undermined the struggle against National Socialism is central to assessments of the Dollfuß era. It is important because it is argued that Dollfuß's overriding antagonism was towards the left, and that the government's failure to distinguish National Socialism as the 'real' danger ultimately destroyed Austria's capacity to defend itself against the Nazi threat.⁵²¹ In launching a 'war on two fronts', against Socialists on the left and the Nazis on the right, Dollfuß, it is charged, actually weakened the Austrian state and in crushing Social Democracy he wilfully destroyed the only credible ally in the fight against National Socialism. Moreover, while Dollfuß was uncompromising in his refusal to work together with the Social Democrats, he was, it seems, willing to do a deal with the Nazis and apparently even to bring them into government.⁵²² Contrary to the claims of those who see the Dollfuß government as a 'defensive bastion' against Nazi Germany, this interpretation maintains that Dollfuß and his government initially saw the National Socialists as allies in their anti-Marxist struggle and that the attempt to come to terms with them was motivated by the ideological parallels in their respective programmes. McLaughlin, for example, suggests that the aim of the Dollfuß government was to smash the Social Democrats and come to an agreement with

⁵²¹ See, for example: Peter Berger, *Kurze Geschichte Österreichs im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Vienna, 2007), 155.

⁵²² See, for example; Kurt Bauer, 'Österreich: Gestern und Heute. "Strikt nein zu sagen, halte ich nicht für gut". Über Dollfuß' Versuche, mit den Nationalsozialisten ins Geschäft zu kommen', *Das Jüdische Echo; Europäisches Forum für Kultur und Politik*, 55 (2006).

the Nazis⁵²³. And as Maderthaner puts it, 'it is one of those ironies of history that it was Dollfuß's untiring efforts to reach an agreement that revealed almost a family closeness [*familiäre Affinität*] between the Christian Social right and the National Socialists – in marked contrast to the policies pursued against the Social Democrats'.⁵²⁴ Thus, there are two issues at stake here. The first is why Dollfuß refused to work together with the Social Democrats as that provided, by all accounts, the only hope of protecting Austria from a Nazi takeover. The second is why Dollfuß instead chose to negotiate with the Austrian NSDAP, and why – or indeed whether – he was ultimately prepared to do a deal with Hitler.

⁵²³ See: Barry McLoughlin, 'Arbeiterschaft und die Gewaltpraxis der NSDAP', 66.

⁵²⁴ 'In gewisser Hinsicht eine Ironie der Geschichte, war es doch gerade Dollfuß gewesen, dessen unermüdliches Bemühen um einen Ausgleich eine beinahe familiäre Affinität der christlichsozialen Rechten zu den Nationalsozialisten zum Ausdruck gebracht hatte – in markantem Gegensatz zu der gegenüber den Sozialdemokraten verfolgten Politik'. Wolfgang Maderthaner, 'Legitimationsmuster des Austrofaschismus', in ed., Wolfgang Maderthaner *"Der Führer bin ich selbst": Engelbert Dollfuß-Benito Mussolini, Briefwechsel* (Vienna, 2004), 134.

Eine staatsbejahende Partei?

Although Dollfuß had been on reasonable terms with the Social Democrats before assuming the Chancellorship, relations between the government and the opposition were immediately tarnished by the vote of no-confidence and only deteriorated as the year 1932 progressed. The experience of Lausanne, followed by the Hirtenberger affair as well as the provocative stance of the Christian Socials' junior coalition partners, the *Heimwehr*, certainly contributed to the escalating alienation between the two parties. While the Social Democrats became increasingly agitated by the presence of the *Heimwehr* in the government and alarmed at the use of anti-democratic measures to combat the economic crisis, Dollfuß and the Christian Socials became increasingly frustrated with the dogged intransigence demonstrated by the left toward the catastrophic problems that the state faced. Nonetheless, the lines of communication between the two groups remained open, with negotiations taking place between the Christian Socials and the Social Democrats in August 1932, including personal negotiations between Dollfuß and Bauer.⁵²⁵ However, in the autumn the conflict erupted, taking on a very personal note when, in the course of a particularly rancorous parliamentary debate, Otto Bauer accused Dollfuß of being an opportunist; Dollfuß retorted that Bauer had always been a 'Bolshevik', and had never truly professed himself to democracy.⁵²⁶ Dollfuß never forgave Bauer the insult.

This acrimonious exchange points to the deep ideological barriers impeding an agreement between the two parties. In the language of Austrian political Catholicism, the term 'Bolshevik' was frequently used to refer to Socialists and Communists alike.⁵²⁷ Of course, the problem with this interpretation is that we know that the Social Democrats were not 'Bolsheviks' in the manner that the term is today understood. Yet it must be remembered that Austrian Social Democracy was much more heavily influenced by Marxist thinking than, for example, the interwar British Labour Party. Austro-Marxist policy, while not synchronized with that of Moscow, remained

⁵²⁵ See: Peter Berger, *Im Schatten der Diktatur: Die Finanzdiplomatie des Vertreters des Völkerbundes in Österreich, Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen 1931–1936*, (Vienna, 2000), 245.

⁵²⁶ See: Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist*, 279.

⁵²⁷ See: Kurt Bauer, "'Strikt nein zu sagen'", 86.

committed to the revolutionary character of Marxism and occupied a mediating position and a 'third way' between Soviet Bolshevism and Western revisionist socialism.

This meant that Austro-Marxism appeared radical in its aims, while cautious in its methods: capitalism had to be endured for the time being, but the ultimate objective was, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* declared, its complete overthrow.⁵²⁸ Indeed, Social Democratic rhetoric was far more radical than that of the German Social Democrats, in part to take the wind out of the Communists' sails, the result of which was an Austrian Communist party that was electorally insignificant during the interwar years. Indeed, it was this 'verbal radicalism' which some argue successfully prevented a split within the Austrian Social Democratic movement.⁵²⁹ The problem was, Otto Bauer's talk of the 'collectivization of the means of production', the socialization of industry and large estates, the formation of agricultural collectives and the elimination of private agricultural trade, may have been 'as far as contemporary Marxism was concerned, a relatively moderate form of socialization' but it was still radical enough to alarm the Christian Social electorate, who, quite naturally, took the Austro-Marxists at their word.⁵³⁰ As the *Reichspost* pointed out in October 1932, the Social Democrats had themselves admitted during the election campaign that they had adopted or realized ninety per cent of the Communists' programme.⁵³¹

This election slogan cannot simply be explained as political posturing to weaken the Communists' appeal. The Social Democrats' commitment to the Marxist model, the championing of the revolutionary class struggle and the expropriation of capitalist property, as well as the allusions to a proletarian dictatorship in the 'Linz Programme' of 1926 were bound to be perceived by the bourgeoisie as a declaration of class war. Interestingly enough, Christian Social assessments of the German Social Democrats differed sharply. Unlike the Austro-Marxists, the *Reichspost* argued, German Social

⁵²⁸ 'Den Kapitalismus mußten wir dulden! Ihn stürzen wir! So löst sich der zweifache Zweifel in doppelte Aufgabe: Die Republik in Gefahr? Wir eilen zu Hilfe! Der Kapitalismus in schwerster Krise? Wir marschieren, die Welt von ihm zu befreien! See: 'Die Republik', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 12 Nov. 1931, 1–2.

⁵²⁹ Bruno Kreisky, *Zwischen den Zeiten*, 144.

⁵³⁰ Otto Bauer's blueprint for a programme of socialization, December 1918, cited in; Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist*, 182–3.

⁵³¹ See: 'Bolschewik oder Demokrat?', *Reichspost*, 24 Oct. 1932, 1.

Democrats, on the whole, fiercely rejected 'Bolshevism'.⁵³² A '*staatsbejahende Partei*', it continued, the German Socialists had willingly sacrificed their own popularity to participate in the reconstruction efforts of the post-war period.⁵³³

The 'July Revolt' of 15 July 1927 only served to confirm bourgeois suspicions. It began in response to the acquittal of three members of the right-wing *Frontkämpfer* association for the shooting of two bystanders, a war invalid and an eight-year-old boy, during an altercation with members of the *Republikanischer Schutzbund* in Schattendorf, Burgenland, earlier that year.⁵³⁴ In Vienna, a spontaneous demonstration against the verdict – accompanied by a general strike – caught political leaders on all sides, as well as the police, off guard and quickly escalated out of control. Perceiving parliament to be under threat, mounted policemen charged against the crowd. Some of the crowd then stormed the *Wiener Justizpalast*, setting it alight. A heavy-handed police response resulted in approximately 90 fatalities. In eyewitness Elias Canetti's words, it was, 'the closest thing to a revolution that I have physically experienced. Since then, I have known quite precisely that I would not have to read a single word about the storming of the Bastille'.⁵³⁵

⁵³² See: 'Der Bolschewismus in der Defensive', *Reichspost*, 2 Mar. 1933, 1–2.

⁵³³ '...jene Sozialdemokratie, die zur Aufbauarbeit der Nachkriegszeit unter opferwilliger Hingabe ihrer Popularität so manche tüchtige Kraft beigestellt hat und überhaupt in einem vielversprechenden, weit fortgeschrittenen Prozeß der Umwandlung in eine staatsbejahende Partei begriffen ist'. Ibid.

⁵³⁴ The events in Schattendorf continue to have political resonance to the present day. In 2010 the Social Democratic Chancellor, Werner Faymann, cancelled the *Dollfuß-Gedenkmesse* held annually in the chapel of the Federal Chancellery on 26 July to mark the anniversary of Dollfuß's murder by the National Socialists. He did so on the grounds that the date had led to "unintended political interpretations", much to the displeasure of their ÖVP coalition partners and despite the fact that the service had been held under previous Social Democratic Chancellors. According to *Die Presse*, *Staatssekretär* Josef Ostermayer, Faymann's right-hand man, whose great uncle was shot in Schattendorf, was pushing behind the scenes for the memorial service to be abandoned. See: 'Kanzleramt: Erstmals keine Dollfuß-Messe', *Die Presse* [online edition], 7 Jul. 2010, accessed: 21 Dec. 2012 and 'Dollfuß Gedenken: Messe auf November verschoben', *Die Presse* [online edition], 7 Jul. 2010, accessed: 21 Dec. 2012. See also: 'Porträt: Josef Ostermayer', *Der Standard* [online edition], 24 Nov. 2008, accessed: 21 Dec. 2012.

⁵³⁵ Elias Canetti cited in: Stefan Jonsson, 'Masses, Mind, Matter: Political Passions and Collective Violence in Post-Imperial Austria', in ed., Richard Meyer *Representing the passions. Histories, Bodies, Visions* (Los Angeles, 2003), 75. For a detailed analysis of events: Gerhard Botz, 'Der '15 Juli 1927,' seine Ursachen und Folgen', in ed., Ludwig Jedlicka *Österreich 1927 bis 1938. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien, 23. bis 28. Oktober 1972* (Vienna, 1973). See also: Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist*, 240–52.



Figure 3: Vienna, 15 July 1927
(ÖNB Bildarchiv)



Figure 4: 'The closest thing to a revolution that I have physically experienced'. The burning of the Justizpalast
(ÖNB Bildarchiv)

Dollfuß's accusation about Bauer's commitment to the democratic system also demands further examination. While Dollfuß's actions in March 1933 and then February 1934 provide firm evidence that he had given up on democracy, the question of what future for democracy the Social Democrats themselves envisaged also needs to be asked. For many Social Democrats, democracy was not the ultimate goal but a transitional phase and the democratic Republic, declared on 12 November 1918, a means to an end: the end being Socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁵³⁶ 'Jetzt gilt es, die Machtmittel, die uns die Demokratie gibt, zu gebrauchen für die Ueberwindung der Kapitalsherrschaft!' the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* declared on 13 November 1918, the day after two people died when red guards attempted to storm parliament during the declaration of the Republic.⁵³⁷ As Hanisch notes, for Otto Bauer, democracy was not about the 'peaceful equalization of social interests'.⁵³⁸ It was not about sharing power with the bourgeoisie, but securing a majority over them and using this majority to topple the capitalist system. In the event of the seizure of power by a proletarian majority in democratic elections, the workers, Bauer argued, might well have to defend their newly conquered position against the deposed bourgeoisie. Indeed, a democratic parliament could have to resort to dictatorial or even terrorist measures in the face of sabotage and active resistance on the part of the bourgeoisie. One could call this a 'dictatorship of the proletariat', Bauer continued, yet it would not be the same as a Bolshevik dictatorship, he maintained, on the grounds that it would not be against democracy, but a 'dictatorship of democracy'. Yet one simply cannot use a word like dictatorship and at the same time claim you are a democrat. And as Hanisch observes, when Bauer talks of a 'dictatorship of democracy', he is only thinking of the seizure of power for the proletariat by democratic means – he is not thinking about the possibility that these representatives of the proletariat would be voted out of office, an attitude that invariably contributed to the fear among the bourgeoisie that Social Democracy would not only 'burn down the churches and seize the farmers' land' if it came to power, but also rob them of

⁵³⁶ 'Die Demokratie ist kein Endziel, sie ist ein Mittel, zum Ziel zu gelangen, zum Sozialismus'. Karl Seitz to the *Nationalrat*, 20–21 October 1932, cited in; Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist*, 279.

⁵³⁷ 'Vom Siege zu neuen Kämpfen', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 13 Nov. 1918, 1.

⁵³⁸ Ernst Hanisch, *Der große Illusionist*, 180.

their political rights.⁵³⁹ In the light of such statements Social Democratic commitment to democracy seemed to their Christian Social contemporaries no more than skin deep.



Figure 5: The proclamation of the Republik Deutschösterreich on 12 November 1918
(Rudolf Konopa, Wien Museum, Karlsplatz)

This impression was exacerbated by the provocative and intimidating presence of the *Republikanischer Schutzbund*, the increasingly autonomous armed wing of the Social Democratic Party which was maintained to guarantee the Socialists' political security in Vienna, but symbolized to the inhabitants of Döbling or the Innere Stadt the constant and unrelenting threat of violent action, just as the Viennese Social Democrats looked anxiously at the 'black army' ranged against them in the Lower Austrian countryside.⁵⁴⁰ In reality, extremist ideology, revolutionary propaganda,

⁵³⁹ Bauer goes on to consider what would happen if the class struggle threatened to escalate out of control before this 'dictatorship of democracy' had been achieved; then the question would be, who would establish a dictatorship first, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie? Ibid, 180–81. See also: 'Bolschewik oder Demokrat?', *Reichspost*, 24 Oct. 1932, 1. Carl Zuckmayer, *Als wär's ein Stück von mir. Horen der Freundschaft*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1966), 25.

⁵⁴⁰ See: Anson Rabinbach, *The Crisis of Austrian Socialism. From Red Vienna to Civil War 1927–1934*, (Chicago, 1983), 47.

inflammatory Marxist rhetoric and threats of armed resistance contrasted with relative moderation in practical affairs, but led the Austrian middle-classes to fear a proletarian revolution if the Socialists ever came to power.⁵⁴¹ While scholars are certainly aware of the psychological impact of the ideological and rhetorical excesses of the left upon their bourgeois opponents, as well as the fact that there was a genuine fear of Socialist rule amongst Austria's middle classes, the impact has often been downplayed or has been discussed as though the phenomenon had no bearing on Dollfuß's actions.⁵⁴² Ultimately, the Socialists' strategy of fusing 'sober Realpolitik with revolutionary enthusiasm' was implemented to disastrous effect. While many may consider the theory of a slow revolution towards a socialist society a respectable one, it was a barrier to compromise with the bourgeoisie, precluding, for example, the formation of a coalition government with the Christian Socials. Moreover, whilst it may be clear to the historian that the revolutionary rhetoric of the Austro-Marxists concealed a more temperate beast, this was simply not so obvious to the frightened middle classes of the thirties, whose memories of the Russian revolution and, even closer to home, revolutions in the Soviet Republics of Bavaria and Hungary in 1918–19, were still very real.

⁵⁴¹ See: Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 12–14.

⁵⁴² See: Maria Sporrer and Herbert Steiner, ed., *Fritz Bock: Zeitzeuge*, (Vienna, 1984), 26.

‘So reimen sich heute Nationalsozialismus und Marxismus in Österreich zusammen’

There was a further reason for the deterioration in relations between the Christian Socials and the Social Democrats; the two ‘Socialisms’ appeared to have joined forces. Rather than coming to the aid of the beleaguered government, the Socialists and the Nazis were seen to be working together in ‘an unholy alliance’ to bring it down.⁵⁴³ The *Reichspost* noted how:

Im niederösterreichischen Landtag, wie im Bundesrat, im Stadtschulrat wie in den kommunalen Ausschüssen, zum Teil auch in den Bezirksvertretungen stimmen Marx-Sozialisten und Hitler-Sozialisten miteinander, daß es eine Freude und ein Skandal ist. Sie schreien einander zwar ins Gesicht, und fletschen grimmig die Zähne – derlei macht sich gut fürs Publikum – aber beim Abstimmen sind sie Brüderlein und Schwesterlein, sind sie beide Sozialisten und halten gegen die Antimarxisten zusammen.⁵⁴⁴

Even allowing for a degree of political posturing on the part of the Christian Social Party, this accusation is not so easily dismissed. On numerous occasions the Social Democratic leadership followed a strategy that dovetailed with that of the Nazis: the joint call for new elections in April 1932 – despite the fact this would bring the Nazis into the *Nationalrat* – their common stance on Lausanne and their unqualified public opposition to the Dollfuß government. The perception that the Nazis and ‘Sozis’ were working together against the government continued into 1933, fuelled no doubt by the fact that on 18 March 1933 (in the days following the proroguing of parliament), the Social Democrats had, together with the National Socialists the Styrian *Heimatschutz* and the Greater Germans (both of whom were now displaying increasingly pro-Nazi tendencies), passed a vote of no confidence in the ‘clerico-fascist’ government in the *Bundesrat*.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16633, paper C1627/211/3, Austrian Law for the Reduction of Army Pay, 04 Feb. 1933.

⁵⁴⁴ ‘Reinigungsprozesse’, *Reichspost*, 17 Jun. 1932, 1–2.

⁵⁴⁵ ‘Gemeinsamer Kampf der Sozi und Nazi gegen uns’; Spalowsky to the Christian Social Party executive, 20 April 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 240. The composition of the *Bundesrat* in 1933 was as follows: 21 CSP, 22 SDAPDÖ, 1 GDVP, 1 *Landbund*, 1 *Heimatblock* and 4 NSDAP. The *Bundesrat* continued to sit unhindered until 1934. On the vote see; ‘Mißtrauensvotum gegen Dollfuß!’, *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 Mar. 1933, 1.

In effect, the Socialists aligned themselves with the National Socialists; the two opposition parties shared a common goal – bringing down the Dollfuß government – and thus, a common enemy. As the *Reichspost* noted in May 1932, ‘the National Socialists political watchword “Down with the Dollfuß government!”’ was scarcely different to that of the Social Democrats.⁵⁴⁶ This does not negate the Social Democrats’ rejection of National Socialism as an ideology, yet it does suggest that they were not averse to the idea of joining forces with the Nazis, or at least using them for their own ends, if it meant scuppering Dollfuß.⁵⁴⁷ Their reckless behaviour towards the Nazis and the threat they posed certainly confirms McLoughlin’s conclusion that, during 1932, Social Democratic activists did not attach enough importance to the struggle against National Socialism.⁵⁴⁸ It also raises a number of important questions about the way in which historians judge the period. Could one not also argue, on the basis of such evidence, that the Social Democrats were also, to a degree, ambivalent towards the National Socialists, a charge that is often brought against Dollfuß? And does the proximity of aims between the two parties challenge explanations that trace the drift towards National Socialism within the Social Democratic milieu solely back to the alienation caused by the actions of the Dollfuß government? In his memoirs, for example, Kreisky maintained that the events of February 1934 were such a heavy blow to the Social Democrats and the working classes that it was considered *the* key confrontation of the era, as opposed to Hitler’s invasion in 1938.⁵⁴⁹ Thus, Kreisky argued, a certain tendency, above all amongst the militant wing of the Social Democratic party to ‘hanker after the brown shirts’ could be explained ‘as a form of revenge borne of defeat’ and the belief that Nazis would get rid of ‘the Dollfuß-regime’ once and for all.⁵⁵⁰ While there may be some truth in this explanation, the synchronicities highlighted make it unlikely that this was the only factor at play. After all, Kreisky himself admitted that the German national sentiment of the Nazis ‘did not

⁵⁴⁶ ‘Wo ist die Koalition?’, *Reichspost*, 29 May 1932, 1–2.

⁵⁴⁷ See, for example: Elisabeth Schreier, ‘Mit dem Zeichenstift gegen den Nationalsozialismus’. Antinationalsozialistische Karikaturen in der Wiener sozialdemokratischen Presse 1933’, Unpubl. MA dissertation (University of Vienna, 1996).

⁵⁴⁸ See: Barry McLoughlin, ‘Arbeiterschaft und die Gewaltpraxis der NSDAP’, 66.

⁵⁴⁹ Bruno Kreisky, *Zwischen den Zeiten*, 203.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 206.

bother us in the same way as the clericalism of the blacks'.⁵⁵¹ Whilst time and again historians raise the question of which opponent the government saw as their main adversary, the National Socialists or the Social Democrats, – and often get it wrong – they fail to ask the very same question of Austrian Social Democracy.⁵⁵² Not out of some misguided attempt to 'balance' the books, but because historians are duty bound to pose such questions, even when, – indeed especially when – the answers prove difficult.

In Austria, this perception was compounded by the fact that, in the eyes of the bourgeois right, the '*Hitler-Sozialisten*' and the '*Marx-Sozialisten*' shared considerable common ground.⁵⁵³ On the one hand there were the perceived programmatic overlaps between the two movements – the socialism in National Socialism epitomized in anti-capitalist, anti-bourgeois and revolutionary sentiment. On the other there was the fact that both were historically *deutschnational* in outlook, and, therefore, staunchly pro-Anschluss.⁵⁵⁴ Hence, Dollfuß's assertion that the Nazis were, in essence, an amalgam of socialism and German nationalism: '*Rot und Blau gemischt ergibt Braun*'.⁵⁵⁵ The latter meant that the primary concern of the government – the maintenance of Austrian independence – was fundamentally at odds with the policies espoused by both the Social Democrats and the National Socialists. Here, the *Reichspost*:

Es hat eine Zeit gegeben in der Austromarxisten wie Nationalsozialisten einander zublinzelnd versicherten, sie seien bereit, "sich mit Tod und Teufel zu verbinden", um zu verhindern, daß Oesterreich ein selbständiger Staat bleibe, und zu erzwingen, daß es ein "Bestandteil" der deutschen Republik werde.⁵⁵⁶

Only when the Republic became the Third Reich, the *Reichspost* charged, did the Austrian Social Democrats decide to – temporarily – shelve their plans for Anschluss.

⁵⁵¹ Bruno Kreisky cited in: Peter Pelinka, *Österreichs Kanzler. Von Leopold Figl bis Wolfgang Schüssel*, (Vienna, 2000), 121.

⁵⁵² For example; Peter Berger, *Kurze Geschichte Österreichs*, 155.

⁵⁵³ 'Wiener Landtag und Lainzer Tiergarten', *Reichspost*, 2 Jul. 1932, 1–2.

⁵⁵⁴ 'Am 5. August 1914 erschien in der "Arbeiter Zeitung" ein Leitartikel des Chefredakteurs Friedrich Aussterlitz mit dem Überschrift "Der Tag der deutschen Nation". Ein Beweis dafür, daß die österreichische Sozialdemokratie, soweit sie deutschsprachig war, von einer großdeutschen Grundgesinnung getragen war'. Bruno Kreisky, *Zwischen den Zeiten*, 151.

⁵⁵⁵ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 3 May 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 248.

⁵⁵⁶ 'Der Zweifrontenkampf', *Reichspost*, 10 Nov. 1933, 1–2.

Yet the Social Democrats still rejected on principle the 'Austrian idea' espoused by the Dollfuß government, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* declaring at the end of February 1933:

Wir deutschösterreichischen Sozialdemokraten sind nicht wie die Christlichsozialen, österreichische Partikularisten. Wir sind nicht wie Sie gesonnen, der großen Schicksals- und Kulturgemeinschaft des Deutschen Volkes die bodenständige Spezialität eines "österreichischen Menschen" entgegenzustellen.⁵⁵⁷

The strength of feeling within the Socialist party on this issue is demonstrated by the fact that, according to Utgaard, even post-1945 with the crimes of Nazism exposed to the world, 'many in the Socialist Party were against Hurdes' conservative vision of creating "unconditional Austrians"'; Hurdes was the ÖVP Minister for Education from 1945–52 and 'a leading proponent of "Austrianism"'.⁵⁵⁸ Many years later, the failure of Austrian Social Democracy to recognize the necessity of the defence of Austrian independence also from the point of view of the existence of an Austrian nation was deemed a critical mistake.⁵⁵⁹ In 1933, this did nothing to dispel the impression that the Socialists could not be relied upon to fight for Austrian independence: 'Auf so unsichere Kantonisten kann sich Oesterreich in seinem Daseinskampf nicht verlassen'.⁵⁶⁰ Hence, the Christian Socials' argument that the conflict was not simply between left and right, but between those who were 'aufbauwillig' and those who were set on destroying the Austrian state.⁵⁶¹

The issue of Austrian independence is central to understanding the mounting political hostility during 1932 as well as Dollfuß's reluctance to rely on the left for support, and yet, it is almost wholly overlooked in accounts of the period. Those who argue that a Social Democratic government, or Social Democratic participation in government could have saved Austria from the Anschluss do not consider one crucial

⁵⁵⁷ The language of this sentence, particularly the use of a term such as *Schicksals- und Kulturgemeinschaft*, really does sound like what the philologist Klemperer called *Lingua Tertii Imperii*. 'Hitlers Erpressung an Oesterreich', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 26 February 1933, 1.

⁵⁵⁸ Peter Utgaard, *Remembering and Forgetting Nazism: Education, National Identity, and the Victim Myth in Postwar Austria*, (New York, 2003), 34.

⁵⁵⁹ Josef Hindel, (trade unionist and deputy chairman of the *Bund Sozialistischer Freiheitskämpfer und Opfer des Faschismus*) discussion contribution, Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck, eds., *Vom Justizpalast zum Heldenplatz. Studien und Dokumentationen 1927 bis 1938*, (Vienna, 1975), 250–51.

⁵⁶⁰ 'Der Zweifrontenkampf', *Reichspost*, 10 Nov. 1933, 1–2; 'Mitten Durch!', *Reichspost*, 25 May 1932, 1.

⁵⁶¹ 'Hier Volkstag – dort Bluttag', *Reichspost*, 17 Oct. 1932, 1.

fact: unlike the SPD in Germany, the Austrian Social Democrats were not the Austrian Republic's 'last loyal prop' and unlike their rivals, the Christian Socials, they didn't even come close to accepting the idea of an independent Austrian state during the interwar period; indeed they were actively working to dismantle it.⁵⁶² That Anschluss remained a central tenet of the Austrian Socialists' programme through to the 1940s has been obscured by the ostensible 'removal' of the Anschluss clause from the Socialists' programme in 1933 in response to the growing threat of Nazi Germany: in actual fact, Anschluss with a free and peaceful Germany remained the party's objective.⁵⁶³ Or, as Otto Bauer responded to the news of Anschluss in 1938:

die Parole, die wir der Fremdherrschaft der faschistischen Satrapen aus dem Reiche über Österreich entgegensetzen, kann nicht die reaktionäre Parole der Wiederherstellung der Unabhängigkeit Österreichs sein, sondern nur die revolutionäre Parole der gesamtdeutschen Revolution.⁵⁶⁴

On 1 April 1938, the *Auslandsvertretung der österreichischen Sozialisten* (AVOES), established by Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler and Joseph Buttinger, declared in the *Brüsseler Resolution* the Anschluss an irrevocable fait accompli, which should remain in place after the fall of the Hitler regime, a stance that should shed some light on the Social Democrats actual level of commitment to Austrian independence since the apparent renunciation of Anschluss in 1933.⁵⁶⁵ And although the war years initiated a change in attitude towards Anschluss within the Social Democratic party, not all Social Democrats were equally convinced.⁵⁶⁶ Friedrich Adler, for example, son of Viktor Adler, one of the founding fathers of the Social Democratic movement, remained committed to the *Brüsseler Resolution* even after the Moscow Declaration of

⁵⁶² Büro des Bundesminister für Sicherheitswesen Bundeskanzleramt, *Das Braunbuch: Hakenkreuz gegen Österreich*, (Vienna, 1933); Ian Kershaw, ed., *Weimar: Why did German Democracy Fail?*, 17.

⁵⁶³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C4377, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German Relations, 13 May 1933 and 'Oesterreichs staatliche Zukunft und die Sozialdemokratie', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 13 May 1933, 1.

⁵⁶⁴ Cited in: Bruno Kreisky, *Zwischen den Zeiten*, 46.

⁵⁶⁵ Helene Maimann in: Helmut Konrad, 'Sozialdemokratie und 'Anschluß'. Historische Wurzeln; Anschluß 1918 und 1938; Nachwirkungen', *Eine Tagung des Dr.-Karl-Renner-Instituts; 1. March 1978*. (Vienna, 1978). Others prominent Social Democrats represented in the AVOES included Otto Leichter, Oskar Pollak, Karl Has Sailer and Manfred Ackermann. See: 'Auslandsvertretung der österreichischen Sozialisten (AVOES)' <http://www.dasrotewien.at/auslandsvertretung-der-oesterreichischen-sozialisten-avoes.html>, accessed 21 Dec. 2012.

⁵⁶⁶ See, for example: Peter Thaler, *Ambivalence of Identity*, 75.

1943 and on into the post-war period.⁵⁶⁷ Despite the official party line avoiding any discussion of the 'national question' after 1945 – Otto Bauer, its leading proponent, had died in 1938 – the *großdeutsch* tradition lived on within sections of the party until at least the 1960s.

This surely raises a wider question of whether the Socialists' relentless pro-Anschluss propaganda during the twenties, as well as their failure to endorse the state from its inception, or to take political responsibility for it thereafter, actually prepared the ground for the National Socialists, handing them a population receptive to their 'Anschluss' rallying cry. That Bauer himself was certainly aware of this outcome is evident from his assertion, 'that we [the Social Democrats] have created the desire for Anschluss in this people'.⁵⁶⁸ Although Mihli's study makes it markedly clear that it was thanks to Social Democracy that the Anschluss idea became the First Republic's *raison d'être*, when discussing the factors that contributed to the collapse of the Austrian state, contemporary historians tend to prefer to emphasize the lack of democratic government as the main contributory factor.⁵⁶⁹

The fierce anti-clericalism of both movements also played a key role. During the First Republic a ferocious *Kulturkampf* raged between the Austrian Social Democratic movement and the Church, a struggle that was primarily played out in the social arena – school reform, abortion, divorce, cremation – a position that softened considerably post-1945.⁵⁷⁰ So bitter was the conflict, that even Socialists have since admitted that the zeal with which Austrian Social Democracy pursued their anti-clerical goals in the interwar years made the Social Democrats appear to be 'half-Bolsheviks' to the middle-classes.⁵⁷¹ This was, the *Reichspost* noted, the primary reason why Catholics rejected 'Hitler-Socialism' and 'Marxian-Socialism' in equal

⁵⁶⁷ Friedrich Adler was imprisoned for assassinating Count Karl von Stürgkh, Minister-President of Cisleithania in October 1916 in protest against the war and the Austrian government.

⁵⁶⁸ Georg Martin Mihli, 'Die österreichische Sozialdemokratie' 290. See also: Bruno Kreisky, *Zwischen den Zeiten*, 43.

⁵⁶⁹ See: Georg Martin Mihli, 'Die österreichische Sozialdemokratie'; *Ibid.*, 271.

⁵⁷⁰ See, for example; Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 282.

⁵⁷¹ Franz Olah, cited in: Gudula Walterskirchen, *Engelbert Dollfuss*, 33. See also: Robert Schwarz, 'Sozialismus der Propaganda'. *Das Werben der 'Völkischen Beobachters' um die österreichische Arbeiterschaft 1938/1939*, (Vienna, 1975), 133–34.

measure.⁵⁷² In addition, both groups were virulently anti-Habsburg and had a pathological fear of restoration.⁵⁷³ Hitler's intense dislike of all things Habsburg is well documented and hatred of the Habsburgs among Social Democratic circles was so strong that they deemed Anschluss with Nazi Germany 'no worse than a position of vassalage to Fascist Italy, union with counter-revolutionary Hungary or a Habsburg Restoration'.⁵⁷⁴ Unsurprisingly, this attitude did not sit easily with the pro-Habsburg (if not necessarily pro-restoration) posture of broad sections of the Christian Social Party, as well as the strong monarchist tendencies within the *Heimwehr*. Interestingly enough, in his study of the *Völkische Beobachter's* attempt to woo Austrian workers after the Anschluss, Schwarz details how anti-clericalism in general, opposition to the Catholic Church in particular, and opposition to the restoration of the Habsburg Monarchy were all useful propaganda tools in the fight to win over Austrian workers.⁵⁷⁵

This failure on the part of the Social Democrats to adequately assess the nature of the Nazi threat continued past the Nazi takeover in Germany on 30 January 1933. In September of that year, Karl Renner was still arguing that the Austrian Socialists were 'fortunate' to be faced with two 'fascisms' that were fighting one another. 'We must tell the workers', he continued, 'that we are dealing with two types of fascism, and that they are both as bad as one another', and we 'must establish which one of them will be better for us'.⁵⁷⁶ This in September 1933. In Austria, the Nazis had responded to the political checkmate of March 1933 with a bombing campaign and a wave of terror, generously supported with ammunition and supplies from over the border. In Germany the *Reichstag* had long since burnt down, all civil liberties had

⁵⁷² See: 'Die Gretchenfrage an den Nationalsozialismus', *Reichspost*, 18 Jul. 1932, 2.

⁵⁷³ This apathy towards the Habsburg Monarchy was long-standing and had shared historical roots. Unowsky, for example, notes that in November 1898 both the Pan-Germans and the Social Democrats boycotted the special jubilee sitting of the *Reichsrat* to commemorate the anniversary of Franz Joseph's ascension to the throne. See: Daniel L. Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848–1916*, (West Lafayette, 2005), 177.

⁵⁷⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C4377, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German Relations, 13 May 1933.

⁵⁷⁵ Schwarz contends that the paper failed to capitalize upon the previous support for Anschluss of the Austro-Marxists. He concludes that it was possible that the paper's writers were likely not aware of the strong Anschluss sentiments of the Austro-Marxists. See: Robert Schwarz, 'Sozialismus der Propaganda', 133–34.

⁵⁷⁶ 'Aber wir müssen in jedem Fall schauen mit welchem wir besser abschneiden'. No translation fully captures the potentially ambiguous meaning of Renner's final sentence. It might conceivably mean 'which one we will do better out of'.

been suspended indefinitely, the 'Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service' had been passed, removing Jewish and 'politically unreliable' civil servants from state service, as had the 'sterilization law', the first stage of the Nazi eugenics programme, not to mention the fact that the SPD had been banned, all trade union property seized, and a not insignificant number of Social Democratic functionaries arrested and carted off to impromptu concentration camps.⁵⁷⁷ By this juncture the Socialists had a good idea about what exactly this entailed. If anyone was still in any doubt, just one month earlier the *Reichspost* had published a report on life in a German concentration camp. In it a camp inmate, beaten until his teeth fell out, described how the 'hell' of life in the camps, the beatings and violence and summary executions were in no way exaggerated.⁵⁷⁸

Whatever the Dollfuß 'regime' was, it was not of the same ilk as the murderous Nazi regime. There is no convincing comparison to be made between the situation in Nazi Germany and that in Austria in September 1933 and, on some level, the Socialists must have recognized this. In March 1933 Otto Bauer himself was of the opinion that the policy of the Christian Social Party and the Chancellor was 'controlled by their fear of the rise of the National Socialists'.⁵⁷⁹ For that reason, and as the British Minister pointed out, during 1933 'a certain amount of private bargaining between Dr. Dollfuss and the Socialist leaders took place' and that 'rather than sacrifice the Chancellor and themselves to the Nazis – the Socialists preferred to offer no resistance to Major Fey and his more anti-Socialist colleagues in the Cabinet'.⁵⁸⁰ Yet this did not manifest itself in concrete public support. Of course, the Social Democratic leadership were also on the horns of a dilemma, for if they abandoned their verbal extremism against the Dollfuß government they too risked losing some of their support base to the Nazis and the KPÖ. They were very much aware that Dollfuß was walking a political tightrope, trying to keep his cabinet together, so much

⁵⁷⁷ 'The worst betrayal of the spirit of Christianity, a tangible regression into heathendom', according to the *Reichspost*, euthanasia would, be next. 'Hinweg mit den Kranken und Siechen!', *Reichspost*, 21 Aug. 1933, 1–2.

⁵⁷⁸ See: 'Das Leben im Konzentrationslager', *Reichspost*, 9 Aug. 1933, 6.

⁵⁷⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16637, paper C3006/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Copy of a Memorandum on the Situation in Austria, addressed on March 19, 1933 by Dr. Otto Bauer to M. Beneš 27 Mar. 1933

⁵⁸⁰ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 15.

so that he felt 'unable to speak officially with the Social Democrats' because previous discussions with Danneberg had enraged the *Heimwehr*.⁵⁸¹ Dollfuß was 'walking on eggshells' as Renner put it; always 'evasive', Dollfuß maintained that he had to manoeuvre, but always with the assurance that 'afterwards, they would be satisfied with what he had done'.⁵⁸² The fact remains that, although parliamentary government had been suspended and basic democratic freedoms curbed, Dollfuß was actually the dam between a *Heimwehr* or a Nazi dictatorship and, in the case of the latter, the total annihilation of the left. Dollfuß's exceedingly difficult position also saw him trapped by the *Heimwehr* extremists in his cabinet and pressured by Italy to push to extremes measures against the Socialists. He had little room to manoeuvre. If he negotiated with the left, his anti-Nazi front would collapse like a pack of cards and he would be lost. Without the *Heimwehr* he was lost, and without Dollfuß, the British Minister argued, the struggle against Hitlerite Germany was lost; 'were [he] to disappear there would be no one to take his place'.⁵⁸³

Although under pressure to keep the *Heimwehr* in government during 1932 on account of the Lausanne loan, for the Dollfuß government, the Nazi *Machtergreifung* in Germany and the almost immediate assault on Austrian sovereignty was a game-changer. From this point on, keeping his government afloat became of paramount importance for Dollfuß. A representative of the British Foreign Office concluded in April 1933 that there were 'only two present alternatives to Dr Dollfuß' government':

The first would be some government in which the Austrian Socialists participated or had the upper hand. Such a government would presumably govern by parliamentary methods but they could not conceivably keep Austria on the straight and narrow financially and the ensuing economic and financial chaos would surely play into the hands of those who desire to alter the present frontiers of Europe, if necessary by force. The only other alternative that I can see would be a dictatorship following upon a *Heimwehr* or Nazi *coup d'état*. On the whole peace and

⁵⁸¹ Renner: Anton Staudinger, 'Die 'sozialdemokratische Grenzländerkonferenz' vom 15. September 1933 in Salzburg', in ed., Elisabeth Kovacs *Festschrift Franz Loidl zum 65. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 1971), 256–7.

⁵⁸² Renner: *Ibid*, 256–7.

⁵⁸³ Record of a conversation with Mr Citrine on the occasion of the International Trade Union Congress in Vienna. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C8944/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Dr. Dollfuss' policy towards Austrian Socialists, 7 Oct. 1933. Similarly: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C8217, Sir W. Selby, Telegram – Austro-German Situation, 14 Sep. 1933.

stability are less likely to be endangered by the continuance of Dr Dollfuß' present regime than by a change in either of the directions indicated above.⁵⁸⁴

The problem was, that now he was stuck on this path, the further Dollfuß proceeded down it, the narrower it became. Essentially held to ransom by his coalition partners, throughout 1933, Dollfuß tried to extricate himself from the *Heimwehr's* grip without, however, sending them into the arms of the Nazis. In the wake of a mass *Heimwehr* rally held at Schönbrunn Palace in May 1933 to commemorate the liberation of the city from the Turks – an official government event and ostensibly public demonstration of solidarity between Dollfuß and Starhemberg – Dollfuß began to support Schuschnigg's *Ostmärkische Sturmscharen* as a potential counterweight to the *Heimwehr*.⁵⁸⁵ The formation of the *Vaterländische Front* on 20 May 1933 can also be understood as an attempt to diminish the *Heimwehr's* monopoly, with rumours surfacing that Dollfuß intended 'to attempt to arm and equip the "patriotic front" in order to do without *Heimwehr* support' – this was finally realized with the formation of the *Frontmiliz* in October 1936.⁵⁸⁶ Bärnthaler reveals how the *Heimwehr* were suspicious of the *Vaterländische Front* from the beginning, Starhemberg initially instructing the *Heimatschutz* not to show support for the movement.⁵⁸⁷ And in early 1934, when, according to British sources, Dollfuß was put under pressure by the *Heimwehr* to dissolve the Christian Social Party – the British Minister reveals how the *Heimwehr* mobilized 8,000 men in Tyrol to ensure that their demands were executed –, he responded to this pressure from his recalcitrant coalition partners by appealing 'for the support of "those sections of the population which for class-war reasons have hitherto stood aloof from the government's followers,"' – to wit, 'the workers', to which, 'the Social Democratic leaders issued a not unfriendly reply'. Unfortunately, the Ambassador notes, 'the subsequent course of events [the February 'civil war'] nipped in the bud any possible further attempts at rapprochement'.⁵⁸⁸ Despite the fact that

⁵⁸⁴ Note by R.M.A. Hankey: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16627, paper C3521/8/3, Sir E. Phipps, Phipps to Sargent: Note, 18 Apr. 1933.

⁵⁸⁵ Irmgard Bärnthaler, *Die Vaterländische Front: Geschichte und Organisation* 33.

⁵⁸⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C11120, Sir W. Selby, Telegram – Political Situation in Austria, 16 Dec. 1933.

⁵⁸⁷ Irmgard Bärnthaler, *Die Vaterländische Front: Geschichte und Organisation* 33.

⁵⁸⁸ Dollfuß had been using the pan-German *Landbund* leader, Winkler, to rally 'the more pan-German elements in the population who could not stomach the Italian leanings of the *Heimwehr* leaders': (TNA):

the desire to reduce the direct influence of the *Heimwehr* can be understood as a positive development, some historians have chosen instead to portray the removal of power from the *Heimwehr* in 1936 from an anti-democratic perspective, suggesting that their elimination led not to an opening up of the 'system' but to greater concentration of power with the Chancellor.⁵⁸⁹

By the autumn of that year, Dollfuß was being pushed on an increasingly rightist course. On 11 September, Dollfuß, spurred on by Mussolini, announced in his infamous *Trabrennplatzrede* on the occasion of a mass meeting of the *Vaterländische Front*, the formation of a 'social, Christian, German state', to be formed 'on a corporate basis with a strong, authoritarian leadership'. Later that month, the *Heimwehr* succeeded in forcing the *Landbund* out of coalition, significantly weakening Dollfuß's basis of support.⁵⁹⁰ According to one *Heimwehr* source, Starhemberg told Dollfuß 'that unless he formed a non-party government and dismissed Winkler and Vaugoin the *Heimwehr* would cease to support the *Vaterländische Front*'⁵⁹¹. In the weeks that followed, an internment camp was set up in Wöllersdorf to detain Nazi agitators – this was its primary function until the *Schutzbund* revolt the following year, a fact that is not adequately echoed in Austrian public consciousness which sees it as a camp set up to detain Social Democrats.⁵⁹² Its first inmates, 11 Nazis, were received on 17 October 1933.⁵⁹³ As one author, writing in the publication of the *Dokumentationsarchiv des Österreichischen Widerstandes* notes, in Wöllersdorf detainees were not starved, tortured or murdered and mentally ill inmates received

(PRO), FO 371/19483, paper R826/826/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1934, 2 Feb. 1935, 2.

⁵⁸⁹ Emmerich Tálos and Walter Manoschek, 'Aspekte der politischen Struktur des Austrofaschismus', 159.

⁵⁹⁰ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C8364/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Political situation in Austria – Recent rumours of dissention in the Cabinet 19 Sep. 1933.

⁵⁹¹ Memorandum by the Macfarlane (Military Attaché), transmitted by: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C8788/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Political Situation in Austria 3 Oct. 1933.

⁵⁹² The idea originated in and was driven by *Heimwehr* circles, which, according to Jagschitz, saw the internment system as their own domain. Jagschitz records that on 9 November 1933 there were 32 Nazi and 3 Communist detainees in Wöllersdorf. Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Christlichsoziale Partei', 134.

⁵⁹³ Pia Schölnberger, '"Durchaus erträglich"? Alltag im Anhaltelager Wöllersdorf', *Mitteilungen des Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (DÖW)* [online edition], Mar. 2010, 195, (2010) accessed: 6 Nov. 2012.

medical attention.⁵⁹⁴ This is an important distinction that is brushed aside by those who seek to maintain arguments that the Austrian 'regime' was milder than its Nazi counterpart are factually irrelevant.⁵⁹⁵ Certain of these measures being taken 'ostensibly for the purpose of holding in check Nazi activities', were giving rise to much discontent among the Socialists, who naturally watched these developments with concern.⁵⁹⁶ Arguing that Dollfuß had fallen under the *Heimwehr's* influence, the Socialists threatened armed resistance if certain steps were taken against the Socialist administration, the trade unions or the political parties, despite 'fully realising that this might result in throwing the door open to the Nazis, and lead to the Nazi domination of Austria'.⁵⁹⁷ The British Foreign Office counselled restraint, 'in the hope that some diversion might occur to relieve the present tension, which was', Selby argued, 'in the main due to Hitler's agitation and Hitler's determination to become master of Austria'.⁵⁹⁸ Dollfuß, he pointed out, was manoeuvring in a very difficult position, there was simply no-one else capable of holding the Austrian situation, and any precipitate action on the part of the Socialists could have disastrous consequences and might easily lead to civil war. The Austrian Socialists were clearly 'on the horns of a dilemma'; they had to choose between the danger of a gradual whittling away of their rights and privileges by Dollfuss, or the prospect of a complete annihilation by Hitler'.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁴ On the DÖW see Chapter I, 25, fn.61. Schönberger notes how, 'In Wöllersdorf wurde weder gehungert noch gefoltert noch gemordet. Selbstmordversuche konnten meistens früh genug entdeckt und die Betroffenen, bis auf wenige Ausnahmen, am Leben erhalten werden. Physisch oder psychisch erkrankte Häftlinge wurden in die Marodenstation, bei schwerwiegenderen Zuständen in Krankenhäuser abgegeben': Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Vocolka maintains that, 'der oft gehörte Einwand das "System" sei milder gewesen als der Nationalsozialismus, ist ein Argument des Biertisches, nicht der ernsthaften politischen Diskussion oder der kritischen historischen Beurteilung'. Quite why Vocolka insists on using Nazi vocabulary to describe the Dollfuß government/*Ständestaat* is unclear. Karl Vocolka, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 293. On the use of 'System' in Nazi terminology see: Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich*. LTI – *Lingua Tertii Imperii*. A Philologist's Notebook, (London, 2000), 91–93.

⁵⁹⁶ Record of a conversation with Mr Citrine on the occasion of the International Trade Union Congress in Vienna. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C8944/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Dr. Dollfuss' policy towards Austrian Socialists, 7 Oct. 1933.

⁵⁹⁷ Record of a conversation with Mr Citrine on the occasion of the International Trade Union Congress in Vienna. Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Record of a conversation with Mr Citrine on the occasion of the International Trade Union Congress in Vienna. Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C 8986/420/3, Orme. G Sargent, Political Situation in Austria. Letter to (Anthony) Eden recording conversation with (Walter) Citrine, 13 Oct. 1933.

Dollfuß did not enthusiastically concede to *Heimwehr* demands. Pushed by them towards greater persecution of the left, Dollfuß was deemed by British observers to be endeavouring to steer a middle course; he had, for example, not instituted those anti-Socialist measures most feared by the Socialists and more desired by the *Heimwehr*, such as driving ‘the “reds” out of the Town Hall’.⁶⁰⁰ In addition, he had not prohibited the Trade Union congress or the Socialist meeting in Vienna.⁶⁰¹ Selby was of the same mind as his French and ‘even’ his Czech colleagues; that although Dollfuß was ‘strongly Catholic and anti-Marxist’ he did not wish to push matters with the Socialists to any extremes.⁶⁰² Indeed, he was ‘generally credited with a wish to hold in check *Heimwehr* exuberance’, trying both to curb and control their anti-Marxist excesses and to keep them away from the real centres of power; ‘the moderation displayed’ was deemed largely ‘attributable to the influence of Dr. Dollfuss personally’.⁶⁰³ In the cabinet reshuffle of September 1933, forced by the *Heimwehr*, Dollfuß took ‘the key portfolios of Public Security and Defence’ a move which Karl Renner interpreted as ‘a manoeuvre on Dr. Dollfuss’s part to withhold from the Vice-Chancellor, Major Fey, the instruments through which the latter might give rein to the *Heimwehr* fascist tendencies which he represented’.⁶⁰⁴ Not only were *Heimwehr* demands not met in the reshuffle, the army, gendarmerie and the police were no longer in their hands. Fey, who was dismissed from his role as Minister for Public Security, was made Vice-Chancellor, but was not authorized to represent Dollfuß in these two areas in his absence. According to Habicht, writing in December 1933, the

⁶⁰⁰ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C8364/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Political situation in Austria – Recent rumours of dissension in the Cabinet 19 Sep. 1933. See also: Minute by Gallop: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16639, paper C9151/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Attitude of Dr. Dollfuss towards Austrian Socialists, 12 Oct. 1933.

⁶⁰¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16639, paper C9151/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Attitude of Dr. Dollfuss towards Austrian Socialists, 12 Oct. 1933.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ Memorandum ostensibly by Z. Fierlinger [Czechoslovak envoy in Vienna, 1932–1936] but cautiously attributed to Otto Bauer: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16639, paper C9152/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Memorandum on the position of the Socialist Party in Austria, 16 Oct. 33.

⁶⁰⁴ Sir W. Selby to Sir John Simon: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C8496, Sir W. Selby, Situation in Austria and Austro-German Relations, 21 Sep. 1933.

Heimwehr leaders were 'furious at Dollfuss', for 'increasingly depriving them of influence'.⁶⁰⁵

The Socialist leadership's failure to communicate the difference between the intentions and ethos of the Dollfuß government and those of the Nazi regime to their supporters proved to be a catastrophic mistake. Indeed, it could be argued that in conflating the two they actually obscured the danger posed by National Socialism. Again, this is something that historians often fail to pick up on. Although some within the Socialist camp realized the need for a unified party line, the Socialist leadership failed to get the message across that, without a shadow of a doubt, the Nazis were their primary enemy and that the 'brown plague' presented the greatest danger.⁶⁰⁶ Fear, not of the Nazis, but of a *Heimwehr* putsch, coloured their response.⁶⁰⁷ In the public arena the party leadership played a dangerous double game. According to the British Embassy, while it was undoubtedly true that, of the two 'fascisms' with which Dr. Bauer was faced, he 'naturally' preferred 'the milder Austrian type of Dr. Dollfuss rather than the brutal brew of Hitler', this did not, however, 'prevent him from pouring public abuse on the Chancellor, whose collaboration he seeks in private to secure'.⁶⁰⁸ Again, the historiography of the period has largely failed to emphasize this point with anything like the clarity of understanding achieved by Phipps.

Although another contemporary, Karl Kraus, was in no way an archetypal proponent of an alleged 'right-wing-legitimist-clerico-fascist regime' swathed in a black-gold nostalgia for the lost Empire, this was something that he also picked up on. An acerbic critic of old Austria, Kraus was initially no fan of the 'irksome' right-wing coalition.⁶⁰⁹ Yet by June 1933 he was praising Dollfuß's policy as, 'surprisingly good and energetic', only to astound his readers in July 1934 by declaring his support for Dollfuß, declaring, 'I fully agree with Dollfuss that parliamentarianism is ineffective against the

⁶⁰⁵ Excerpt from a Letter from Landesinspekteur Habicht to Me [Hüffer], Dated December 6: Subject: Austria, December 6, 1933, No. 106 in: DGFP. *The Third Reich: First Phase C/III (October 15–June 13 1934)*, (London, 1957), 188–89.

⁶⁰⁶ Deutsch: Anton Staudinger, 'Grenzländerkonferenz', 255.

⁶⁰⁷ In Vienna and Lower Austria, for example. Deutsch: Ibid, 254.

⁶⁰⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16637, paper C3006/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Copy of a Memorandum on the Situation in Austria, addressed on March 19, 1933 by Dr. Otto Bauer to M. Beneš 27 Mar. 1933.

⁶⁰⁹ Karl Kraus, cited in: Edward Timms, *Karl Kraus, Apocalyptic Satirist: The Post-War Crisis and the Rise of the Swastika*, (New Haven, 2005), 473–77.

resurrection of Wotan, democracy fails when faced by the mystery of Blood and Soil'. He then launched a blistering attack on the Socialist leadership and their 'intellectual imbecility', now dictating instructions from their Czech fastness, having left the country in the wake of the February Revolt.⁶¹⁰ The Socialist leadership, he charged, had failed to grasp that the Dollfuß government was by far 'the lesser evil'. Here, Kraus presenting the view from Brünn[Brno]:

Die Bestialitäten des Austrofaschismus stehen denen, die der Hitler-faschismus in Deutschland begangen hat, in keiner Weise nach. Nur ein Unterschied besteht zwischen dem schwarzgelben und dem braunen Terror: der Hitlerfaschismus bekennt sich wenigstens zynisch zu Gewalt und Grausamkeit. Der Austrofaschismus begleitet alle seine tierischen Schurkereien mit pfäffischen Reden über Versöhnung, Friedfertigkeit und Christentum!⁶¹¹

And that makes Dollfuß more dangerous than Hitler, Kraus mused? 'What would have happened', he asks, "'over there" [in Germany] if machine guns had been fired from Socialist party offices, bearing in mind that a single shot fired in self-defence triggered the massacre in Köpenick'.⁶¹² The British Embassy concurred with Kraus, certain, that if Hitler landed the fish he had been angling for, 'the Socialists would find that Hitler's little finger, as in the case of Rehoboam, would be thicker than Dollfuß' loins'.⁶¹³ To Kraus, the 'two-fascisms' tactic – we will not join with the 'black' or with the 'brown' fascists; All fascism is our deadly enemy – was an incredibly short-sighted strategy on the part of the Socialist leadership.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹⁰ Karl Kraus, 'Warum die Fackel nicht erscheint', *Die Fackel*, July 1934, 315, at 193.

⁶¹¹ Quoted in: *Ibid*, 192.

⁶¹² *Ibid*, 173.

⁶¹³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C8987/420/3, Mr. O'Malley, Political Situation in Austria. O'Malley to R.M.A Hankey, 12 Oct. 1933.

⁶¹⁴ Karl Kraus, 'Warum die Fackel nicht erscheint', *Die Fackel*, July 1934, 315, 193.

A United Front?

What, then, are we to make of the Social Democrats willingness, albeit only if certain circumstances were met, to support the Chancellor in his fight against National Socialism? With the proroguing of parliament, the Social Democrats changed their stance on co-operating with Dollfuß; conscious that he had been outmanoeuvred, Otto Bauer was now ready to negotiate. In mid-March 1933, he approached the Christian Socials with a proposal that both parties work together against the National Socialists. His offer was as follows: 'peaceful democratic government shall be ensured for a period of one to one and a half years by a government in which the Social Democrats shall take part or which they shall tolerate even without representation in the Cabinet. In the course of this period national socialism will lose its powers of attraction...It will then be possible to hold elections without national socialism becoming too strong in Austria'.⁶¹⁵ Dollfuß rejected Bauer's offer on two grounds; firstly, any co-operation with the Social Democrats would accelerate the flow of Christian Social voters towards the National Socialists and secondly, the *Sturmabteilung* would go over to the National Socialists if he turned them out of government.⁶¹⁶ Both fears were warranted, the prevailing consensus being that the National Socialist movement had already infiltrated the Christian Social Party and Catholic Action; since Seipel's death, Schmitz argued, we cannot say what the party is thinking and what its intentions are.⁶¹⁷ Dollfuß knew, the British Minister observed, that compromise with Socialism, 'was the best way of uniting his enemies'.⁶¹⁸ Instead, Dollfuß declared himself willing to restore parliamentary government if the Social Democrats declared themselves willing to vote for far-reaching constitutional reforms. The nature of these reforms was not clear, but the Social Democrats suspected that

⁶¹⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16637, paper C3006/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Copy of a Memorandum on the Situation in Austria, addressed on March 19, 1933 by Dr. Otto Bauer to M. Beneš 27 Mar. 1933.

⁶¹⁶ Schuschnigg was of the same opinion, 'Zusammengehen mit links: nach meiner Meinung unmöglich, halten wir nicht aus. Das wäre Verzicht auf weiteren Bestand der Partei: Schuschnigg at a meeting of the Christian Social Party Executive and the Provincial Governors, 9 March 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 146.

⁶¹⁷ 'Die nationalsozialistische Bewegung ist mitten in der Partei und in der Katholischen Aktion. Wir können seit dem Tode Seipels nicht mehr sagen, wie die Partei denkt, was sie vorhat'. Schmitz to the Christian Social Party Executive, 7 March 1933: *Ibid.*, 133.

⁶¹⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 15.

he would demand emergency decree powers for the Federal President on the model of article 48 of the German Constitution, something to which the Social Democrats, Bauer maintained, would never agree on the grounds that it would make it possible to establish fascism in Austria by 'legal' methods. The Social Democratic position remained the same up until 1938; the workers would only participate in defending Austria against Nazi Germany if its democratic rights were restored, in stark contrast to the 'Popular Front' strategy advocated by the KPÖ.⁶¹⁹ The problem was a return to democratic rule also held the door open to the Nazis.

On the surface, Bauer's offer appears to have offered a way out of Dollfuß's predicament that could have provided a democratic solution to the National Socialist threat. Yet, was it realistic? The British Minister certainly did not think so; 'Dr. Bauer', he wrote to London, 'cannot seriously imagine that his adversary, Dr. Dollfuss, will make the moves suggested in the memorandum' for 'if he tried to pursue such a policy in present circumstances he would soon be ploughing a lonely furrow in a non political field, for nobody in the Christian-Social party would follow him as such a course before the elections would spell suicide for that party in favour of the National Socialists'.⁶²⁰ Although there is no way of proving if this would have actually been the case, we can say that this was a sentiment often repeated:

...denn ein Zusammengehen der Christlichsozialen mit den Sozialdemokraten würde von großen Teilen der nichtmarxistischen Bevölkerung einfach nicht verstanden werden und es würde zweifellos eine starke Abwanderung aus dem christlichsozialen Lager zum radikaleren Nationalsozialismus bringen, der den entschiedenen Kampf gegen den Marxismus predigt.⁶²¹

As the key thing holding Dollfuß's disparate coalition partners together was anti-Marxism – the *Landbund* was pro-German so difficult to co-opt under the 'Austrian' banner, unlike parts of the *Heimwehr* – Dollfuß could not conclude a formal alliance with the Social Democrats without bringing his government and therefore his

⁶¹⁹ Wolfgang. Neugebauer, 'Die illegale Arbeiterbewegung in Österreich 1934 bis 1936', *Das Juliabkommen von 1936. Vorgeschichte, Hintergründe und Folgen*, (1976), 143.

⁶²⁰ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16637, paper C3006/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Copy of a Memorandum on the Situation in Austria, addressed on March 19, 1933 by Dr. Otto Bauer to M. Beneš 27 Mar. 1933.

⁶²¹ 'Was will die Regierung?', *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt* 15 Mar. 1933, 2.

party down.⁶²² If this happened, the Nazis would benefit and Austrian independence was imperilled. So, in an effort to 'keep [the Christian Socials'] peasant electors faithful', and thus keep them from the clutches of the Nazis, Dollfuß played a tactical game which involved 'seeming (perhaps only outwardly) to oppose and destroy "Marxist" socialism in Austria'.⁶²³ It was for that reason, Dollfuß admitted to the British Minister, that he 'had to have, as it were, two fronts, one for the purposes of combating national socialism and the other for political purposes.'⁶²⁴ 'His connexion with the Socialists' – Dollfuß attempted to take the Social Democrats with him – was, he added 'of course, designed to serve the first-mentioned of these'.⁶²⁵

As for the Social Democrats' offer of a coalition, Bauer, Phipps argued, in making the offer and promptly informing Beneš thereof, was merely 'manoeuvring for position' as he had the previous summer, 'when he opposed the loan in Vienna and urged Socialist support of it in Paris' in the hope of inducing France and Great Britain to intervene on behalf of the Socialists, for whom he 'affects a sweet reasonableness that would soon drop if the old, Red, palmy days returned'.⁶²⁶ Even allowing for the possibility that the British Minister could have been misguided in his assessment, the fact that, the day before this memorandum was written, the Social Democrats had, together with the National Socialists, the Styrian *Heimatschutz* and the Greater Germans passed a vote of no confidence in the government in the *Bundesrat*, certainly suggests that the Socialists had not given up on the idea of bringing the government down, even if that meant working together with the Nazis to do so.⁶²⁷ Not only was Bauer asking Dollfuß to effectively destroy his own party – a not altogether

⁶²² Record of a Conversation between Sir. John Simon and Dr. Dollfuss: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C8551/2092/3, Sir John Simon, Record of a Conversation between the Secretary of State and Dr. Dollfuss at the Hotel Beau Rivage, Geneva, on September 24, 1933, 27 Sep. 1933.

⁶²³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16643, paper C 7436/2092/3, R.H. Hadow, Austro-German relations. Memorandum on Pan-German and Socialist Points of View, 17 Aug. 1933.

⁶²⁴ Record of a Conversation between Sir. John Simon and Dr. Dollfuss: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C8551/2092/3, Sir John Simon, Record of a Conversation between the Secretary of State and Dr. Dollfuss at the Hotel Beau Rivage, Geneva, on September 24, 1933, 27 Sep. 1933.

⁶²⁵ Record of a Conversation between Sir. John Simon and Dr. Dollfuss: Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Sir E. Phipps in: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16637, paper C3006/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Copy of a Memorandum on the Situation in Austria, addressed on March 19, 1933 by Dr. Otto Bauer to M. Beneš 27 Mar. 1933.

⁶²⁷ The composition of the Bundesrat in 1933 was as follows: 21 CSP, 22 SDAPDÖ, 1 GDVP, 1 *Landbund*, 1 *Heimatblock* and 4 NSDAP. The Bundesrat continued to sit unhindered until 1934. On the vote see: 'Mißtrauensvotum gegen Dollfuß!', *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 Mar. 1933, 1.

unfavourable development from the Social Democratic perspective – he was also insisting that he sacrifice the *Heimwehr* in return for the uncertain support of a party that had made it its primary objective to bring his government down. This was a gamble that Dollfuß felt he could simply not afford.

Central to Dollfuß's rejection, however, was undoubtedly the increasing show of support being afforded him and his circle by Mussolini; Rome was, Joseph Wirth informed Bülow at the beginning of April, now 'watching over the political independence of Austria with the greatest attention'.⁶²⁸ A sea-change was taking place in Austria; 'the leadership of Dr. Dollfuß is emerging strongly', he counselled, 'he and his circle of friends display a very strong attitude', and are 'being strongly supported by Italy'.⁶²⁹ Yet, Dollfuß was not sidling up to Mussolini in the hope of finding an ally against the Social Democrats, or for support in establishing a 'fascist' regime. Rather, he looked to Mussolini for support against the obvious threat posed to Austrian independence by National Socialist Germany. Mussolini, the British Minister noted, was the key to the Anschluss problem. For Anschluss to occur it would be necessary for Hitler and Mussolini to come to an understanding, 'for it was hardly to be supposed that the former would indulge in a policy of prestige which would not only provoke the latter, but would possibly ally him with France in opposing an extension of the German Reich to the Brenner'. In March 1933 Mussolini had made it patently clear to Hitler that 'Italy could never permit Anschluss', the Italian Ambassador warning the German government that it 'should not encourage too much the cause of national socialism in Austria'.⁶³⁰ As such, he had for the time being, locked the door on such a solution.

Dollfuß could hardly oust the *Heimwehr* from the government and enter into a coalition with the Social Democrats without antagonising Mussolini and, without doubt, losing the one ally deemed critical to preventing Anschluss in the process. Bringing the Socialists into government severely limited Dollfuß's foreign policy options, a fact that was obvious to the eagle-eyed Germans: 'a black-red coalition in Austria – which

⁶²⁸ Dr. Joseph Wirth to State Secretary Bülow, No. 130, 2 April 1933, *DGFP C/I*, 237. Ross surmises that the letter was possibly inspired by Dollfuß himself. Dieter Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuß. Die deutsche Österreich-Politik 1933–1934*, 1966), 30.

⁶²⁹ Dr. Joseph Wirth to State Secretary Bülow, No. 130, April 2 1933, *DGFP C/I*, 236–37.

⁶³⁰ Memorandum by the Director of Department II, Nr. 112, Berlin, 23 March 1933, *Ibid* 207.

anyway would hardly be expected to maintain itself in the long-run – would have to be aligned with France and the Little Entente; for an Italian-Hungarian or Legitimist orientation cannot very well come into consideration for a government under Social Democratic leadership'.⁶³¹ And, as we have seen, a foreign policy leaning on France and the Little Entente would hardly have been popular at home. The Socialists' suggestion was that Austria should instead 'observe the strictest neutrality', a neutrality that would be underwritten 'by treaties which shall preserve us [Austria] from being drawn into conflicts of the two groups of states and which shall guarantee the inviolability of our soil in case of such conflicts'.⁶³² This was all well and good in theory but hardly likely to work in practice. Austria could not hope to stand up to Nazi Germany alone, and this would have left her isolated and thus an easy target for Nazi aggression. Moreover, a policy of absolute non-alignment would have been useless at preventing Anschluss as its success would have depended upon Germany respecting Austria's territorial integrity and sovereignty and refraining from interference in her domestic affairs. Italy would, the British Minister assumed, continue to support Dollfuß and the *Heimwehr* in their fight on two fronts against the Socialists and the National Socialists, as, he believed, would France. Not seeing 'any other reasonable policy in present circumstances for them to follow', he hoped the same would be true of 'His Majesty's government, in a spirit of doubtless benevolent neutrality'. 'The choice', he maintained, did not lie between Dollfuß and a parliamentary regime on the British model. Rather, it was 'confined to Dr. Dollfuss...flanked by an Austrian fascism...with Austrian faults perhaps, but nevertheless adapted to this easy-going country, and national socialism, with all its Prussian harshness and brutalities...Which should we prefer to put the question is, I think, to answer it'.⁶³³

Mussolini was then, in the eyes of contemporary diplomatic observers, the lynchpin in the Anschluss issue. If the British – and the French – observers on the ground believed that the only chance Austria had of staving off the Anschluss was by keeping Italy and Germany from coming to an understanding, then it follows that

⁶³¹ Ministerialdirektor Köpke to Minister Rieth, No. 107, 22 March 1933, Ibid, 195.

⁶³² (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C4377, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German Relations, 13 May 1933.

⁶³³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16637, paper C3006/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Copy of a Memorandum on the Situation in Austria, addressed on March 19, 1933 by Dr. Otto Bauer to M. Beneš 27 Mar. 1933.

Dollfuß's decision to accept Mussolini's backing was a logical one. If Austria were going to withstand the Nazi onslaught for any length of time, she would need foreign backing. As British policy towards Austria was one of 'sympathetic inaction', and the French were equally as unwilling to act on her behalf, Dollfuß was left with little choice but to trust Mussolini's promise to protect Austria, by military means if necessary.⁶³⁴ Yet, Mussolini had a price and that price precluded an accommodation with the Social Democrats, something that the other powers appeared willing to accept. Support from Rome meant pushing Dollfuß on a more rightist course in Austria but there were simply no other credible alternatives other than keeping Mussolini on-board. It also, at this juncture at least, precluded an accommodation with Nazi Germany, Rome, having apparently stated that 'she was not in a position to protect Austria further if the latter committed herself too far...with respect to Germany'.⁶³⁵ That is not to say that Dollfuß simply threw his lot in with Mussolini. On the contrary, his over-arching aim was to remain as flexible and independent as possible, all the while striving to keep countries like Britain engaged and interested in Austria's fate.

It is all well and good claiming, as Tálos does, that no one forced Dollfuß to establish a regime on the Italian model and that Dollfuß could have instead gravitated towards the democracies, France, Great Britain and Czechoslovakia, but only when the interpretation is a realistic one.⁶³⁶ And here we have the representative of one of those democracies telling us in March 1933 that there was effectively no other choice than the course that Dollfuß was following and that France, although urging Dollfuß not to push matters with the Socialists, was basically in agreement. 'I continue to believe,' Phipps's told London, 'that Dr. Dollfuss is well-advised in pursuing his present course, for any undue weakness to the left would merely play into the hands of the National Socialists on his right'.⁶³⁷ This meant Dollfuß had to tread a narrow path, the British Foreign Office noted, in a certain dilemma, 'for if he compounds with the Socialists, he offends the Italians, and if he maintains his severity towards them he

⁶³⁴ Foreign Office comment, (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C11103/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Situation in Austria, 30 Nov. 1933.

⁶³⁵ Dr. Joseph Wirth to State Secretary Bülow, No. 130, 2 April 1933, *DGFP C/I*, 237.

⁶³⁶ Interview with Emmerich Tálos, Emmerich Tálos and Walter Hämmerle, "'Niemand hat Dollfuß gezwungen'", *Wiener Zeitung [online edition]*, 13 May 2011, accessed: 20 Sep. 2012.

⁶³⁷ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C4481/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Visit by Hans Frank, 16 May 1933.

offends the French'.⁶³⁸ It was necessary for Dollfuß to continue courting Paris because an indication had again been conveyed to him in Paris 'that he was still dependent on Socialist goodwill for the French tranche of the loan'.⁶³⁹ Yet too pro-French a course and he would not be able to take the country with him and would have opened himself up to attack from the Nazis. As for the Czechoslovaks, one can assume they would have taken their lead from France. In any event, by October that year their position was unequivocal, the Czechoslovak government declaring itself 'entirely in favour of Dr. Dollfuss' and intended 'to support him by all the means in its power'.⁶⁴⁰ Thus, it is difficult to see how one could seriously maintain that, given the internal situation and the external parameters, a coalition with the Social Democrats or the retention of parliamentary democracy offered Dollfuß a feasible solution. In the summer of 1933, Dollfuß was in an almost impossible situation, for 'if he retained [British] moral support by placating the Socialists, he would lose the far more concrete support which he is at present receiving from Mussolini, who insists upon his following an anti-Socialist policy'.⁶⁴¹ Moral support from countries such as Britain and France was all well and good, but was simply not enough tête-à-tête with Hitler.

The record of Austrian Social Democracy in the twentieth century is, in many ways, a distinguished and impressive one. Its interwar social and house-building programmes were not only visionary, they were without parallel elsewhere in Europe. Likewise, after 1945, Austrian Social Democracy carried its share of government responsibility more consistently than almost any Social Democratic party in Europe. If the Second Republic turned out to be a conspicuous success story, it was not least due to the role of the SPÖ after 1945.

It is, therefore, legitimate to say that in the period 1932–45 Austrian Social Democracy fell short in an otherwise distinguished record. Because of the almost tribal nature of Austrian politics, which has almost unavoidably infected understanding

⁶³⁸ Note by R.M.A. Hanky, (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C5958/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Situation in Austria and her relations with other European Powers, 30 Jun. 1933.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16639, paper C9152/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Memorandum on the position of the Socialist Party in Austria, 16 Oct. 1933.

⁶⁴¹ F.O. Minute; (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C 8986/420/3, Orme. G Sargent, Political Situation in Austria. Letter to (Anthony) Eden recording conversation with (Walter) Citrine, 13 Oct. 1933.

of the period, any criticism of the role of Social Democracy in the 1930s and early 1940s is generally regarded as evidence of die-hard sympathy for Dollfuß and Schuschnigg. It is therefore useful to bear in mind the international context and to compare the record of parties in Austria with those in other parts of Europe. From this it becomes clear that German Social Democracy had an impressive record in not making the slightest concessions to the emerging Nazi party, or any moves that may be mistaken even as agreement with parts of the Nazi agenda. Austrian Social Democracy, however, did not achieve anything like this clarity on the issue, although it is obvious that its leadership had no sympathy for the Nazi cause.

It is also clear that significant sections of the Social Democrats 'went over' to the National Socialists in 1938, a point freely acknowledged by Austrian historians. Indeed, there are fine studies that have even charted the potential post-war ramifications of the significant number of Nazis that found refuge within the SPÖ.⁶⁴² However, the sheer mass of evidence makes it difficult to dismiss both these ideological 'migrations' as a case of a few rotten apples. Nor should we be too ready to see in this solely a reaction to the stance and actions of the Dollfuß government and *Ständestaat*. It is difficult to imagine a German equivalent of a leading Social Democrat like Karl Renner giving Hitler advice on how to undermine Czechoslovakia in the wake of the Anschluss, an issue quite separate from the *Ständestaat* but intimately bound up with the *deutschnational* ethos of Austrian Social Democracy, an ethos that may well have fatally weakened the party's ability to muster an effective response to the National Socialists. It is also hard to imagine a German equivalent of someone like Bernaschek, the man who started the fighting in February 1934, who, having eventually made it to safety in exile, actually chose to come back to Austria after the Anschluss. It is worth considering how many leading German Social Democrats 'returned' to the Third Reich from safety in exile. Moreover, Bernaschek's grim fate – murdered by the National Socialists in the grizzly final days of the Third Reich – should not blind us to the fact that he was murdered as a result of panic and not on account of an act of 'resistance'. It should also not obscure the fact that he and his collaborators in Linz had hoarded weapons with the intention of using them, and that they did use them –

⁶⁴² See, for example: Wolfgang Neugebauer and Peter Schwarz, *Der Wille zum aufrechten Gang. Offenlegung der Rolle des BSA bei der gesellschaftlichen Reintegration ehemaliger Nationalsozialisten*, (Vienna, 2005).

against the wishes of the Social Democratic leadership – against the Dollfuß government; at a time, moreover, when the Christian Socials were still governing at a regional level in Upper Austria *in coalition with the Social Democrats*. Bernaschek and his companions very conspicuously did not hoard weapons or seek to obtain weapons to use *against the National Socialist regime* after 1938. If we are to celebrate the impressive record of Austrian Social Democracy before and after the fateful years of 1933–45 we must be ready to mention inconvenient truths about the intervening years. Moreover, we must also be willing to use these inconvenient truths to test our judgements of the actions of Dollfuß and his government.

Chapter 5

‘Hier wird auch der Nationalsozialismus sein “Halt” finden’: Negotiations with the NSDAP

Where then, did Dollfuß himself stand on the issue of National Socialism? Can his government be understood as a bulwark against the Nazis, as conservative circles would have us believe? On one level this question is easy to address as the anti-Nazi activities of the Dollfuß government are relatively well documented; not only did he block their parliamentary road to power, the Nazi party was banned, their headquarters were raided, curfews were imposed, weapons seized, the death penalty was reimposed for terroristic activities, Nazi adherents were locked up or deported to Germany and pro-Nazi elements were purged from the state apparatus. From these actions alone, one can assume solid anti-Nazi credentials. Yet, in his 2006 assessment of the negotiations that took place between the Dollfuß government and the National Socialists from February to May 1933, Kurt Bauer concludes that Dollfuß was ‘anything but a “principled opponent” of National Socialism’, and was only prevented from going further in the direction of a coalition with them by the escalation of violence on the part of the Nazis, the growing resistance of the *Heimwehr* and the outright rejection of such a course by members of his own party.⁶⁴³ In short, he appears to be suggesting that far from rejecting the movement, Dollfuß, in his willingness to enter into negotiations, initially harboured some degree of sympathy for the Nazis.

Those like Bauer, who seek to demolish ‘Christian Social-conservative myths’ of Dollfuß’s anti-Nazi stance, point to the fact that, instead of working together with the Social Democrats within a democratic framework, Dollfuß chose instead to suspend parliament, disempower the opposition and then attempted to come to terms with the Nazis.⁶⁴⁴ Bauer seeks to demonstrate how, despite clear signals from Social

⁶⁴³ Kurt Bauer, “Strikt nein zu sagen”, 92.

⁶⁴⁴ See: Ibid, 93.

Democratic leaders that they were prepared to work together with Dollfuß against the National Socialists, Dollfuß chose instead to court the Austrian NSDAP at home, while building bridges with the new Nazi regime in Berlin.⁶⁴⁵ From this he concludes, quite understandably, that the repeated attempts to ‘come to terms’ with either the Nazis or ‘allegedly moderate German Nationalists’ clearly demonstrate Dollfuß’s ‘ambivalent’ attitude vis-à-vis National Socialism. Thus, he maintains, Schuschnigg’s signing of the – in his view, fatal – July Agreement with Nazi Germany in 1936, was nothing more than a continuation of Dollfuß’s previous attempts to come to an arrangement with the Nazis.⁶⁴⁶ On the basis of this ‘dubious and ambivalent handling of the National Socialists’, Bauer draws the traditional narrative line from Seipel, through Dollfuß to Schuschnigg, that culminates, inexorably, in the events of March 1938; in short, responsibility for the Nazi takeover lies with the ‘Austrofascist’ government, which paved the way for the National Socialist regime.

⁶⁴⁵ See: *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶⁴⁶ Its ‘fatal’ nature is one of the most popular assertions about the *Juliabkommen*. See, for example; Elisabeth El Refaie, ‘Keeping the Truce’. This view is firmly rebutted by Lassner, who maintains that the *Juliabkommen* of 11 July 1936 was in fact ‘the centerpiece of Schuschnigg’s second strategy of resistance to Nazi Germany... that of feigned friendship’. Waging battle with Hitler ‘by means of the spoken and written word’, Schuschnigg attempted to buy time for the recreation of Anglo-French-Italian support and that ‘in the ensuing battle of wits, the Austrians repeatedly proved themselves superiors to the Nazis and their agents’. Moreover, he demonstrates that neither Schuschnigg nor his colleagues were taken in by Nazi blandishments: Rather, they were well aware that ‘the German statesmen and diplomats with whom they were negotiating’ were ‘political criminals...whose “ruling principle” was that “one may say anything at all in politics and hold to nothing”’ and that ‘treaties and any *modus vivendi* agreed to by the German government were only temporary and opportunistic maneuvers until such time as the Reich disavowed them’. Alexander Lassner, N., ‘Peace at Hitler’s Price’, 8, 226–27, 726–27.

‘Das, was in Nationalsozialismus...gut und gesund ist, das ist altes, christlichsoziales Programm’

Dollfuß's efforts to open lines of communication with the Nazis, which began in the immediate wake of the Nazi seizure of power in Germany in January 1933, pose an immediate problem of interpretation: was Dollfuß seeking a genuine understanding with the Nazis, was he attempting to appear to be seeking an understanding with the Nazis, or was he in fact searching to find some way of neutralizing the Nazi threat? In February 1933, Dollfuß, spurred on by Hungary and Italy, approached the new German Chancellor to propose a closer relationship between Vienna and Berlin. The first meeting between representatives of the Christian Socials and the Austrian NSDAP was held at the beginning of April 1933, a few weeks after the proroguing of parliament, and was followed by two private meetings between Habicht and Dollfuß on 27 April and 4 May. Dollfuß rejected Habicht's terms – the offer of a coalition, amongst other things – and the stalemate dragged on into the summer. Persistent rumours of a Nazi putsch and a possible incursion from German territory throughout August, coupled with increasing tensions within the government camp, provided the backdrop for renewed attempts in September to ease the tension between the government and the National Socialists at home and abroad. On 12 September, Dollfuß laid down his conditions to the German Minister in Vienna, a move that was followed by an aborted attempt to meet with the German Foreign Minister, Konstantin von Neurath, in Geneva at the end of the month.⁶⁴⁷ Then, in October, with Vice-Chancellor Fey once again independently seeking a compromise with the Nazis, Dollfuß consented to an attempt at mediation by Hermann Foppa and Franz Langoth who, as representatives of the now essentially defunct pan-Germans, were engaged in a *Kampfgemeinschaft* with the Austrian NSDAP. These talks also ended in deadlock, Dollfuß changing tack in mid-November, declaring that he was prepared to negotiate with Germany, but that he could not accept Habicht as a negotiating partner after all.

⁶⁴⁷ See: Dieter Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuß*, 95.

The autumn brought renewed attempts to circumvent Habicht and deal directly with Berlin. At the end of October, Schuschnigg travelled to Munich to meet with Heß with the aim of preparing the ground for a meeting between Dollfuß and Hitler, only to discover that Dollfuß had been misinformed, and that Hitler had not authorized any such meeting. The following month Dollfuß sent two more emissaries to Germany, Max Hohenlohe and the Political Director Theodor Hornbostel, again in the hope of coming to a direct agreement with Berlin. Dollfuß persisted with this line until mid-December, when the visit to Germany of the Italian Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Fulvio Suvich, prompted concerns that Italy might be changing course.⁶⁴⁸ Dollfuß responded by resuming negotiations with Habicht, on the condition that Hitler designated Habicht his official representative. A meeting was scheduled for 8 January 1934 but abandoned at the last minute due to *Heimwehr* opposition. A further hiatus ensued, broken only by an offer to Frauenfeld of a place in the cabinet in May 1934, and negotiations between Dollfuß and Neubacher in June, which, like all previous attempts at breaking the deadlock, ended in failure.

Why, if Dollfuß's overriding objective was to prevent a Nazi takeover of Austria, was he so ready to negotiate with both Habicht and Hitler? Knowing what had happened in Germany, why would he even consider bringing the Nazis into his government? The traditional explanation focuses on perceived ideological affinities between the Austrian right and National Socialism. Bauer, for example, underpins his argument by attempting to establish some broad ideological parallels between the National Socialists, Dollfuß and sections of his government, the implication being that it was these underlying ideological affinities that were behind Dollfuß's attempts to come to terms with the Nazis. Bauer argues that Dollfuß, strongly motivated by anti-Semitism and anti-Marxism, was anything but a principled opponent of National Socialism. Bauer finds grounds for this argument in Dollfuß's political socialization alone: not only his seminary education, membership of the *Cartellverband* (CV), the *Deutsche Studentenschaft* and the Lower Austrian *Bauernbund*, but also his early connections with the catholic-national *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, of which Seyß-Inquart and other leading Nazis were also members.⁶⁴⁹ Although some Christian Socials would

⁶⁴⁸ See: Ibid, 140.

⁶⁴⁹ See: Kurt Bauer, "Strikt nein zu sagen", 92.

have entered into a 'pact with the devil' against the National Socialists, in Bauer's view, Dollfuß was definitely not one of them. Rather, Dollfuß's primary concern was the defeat of the Social Democrats, and Dollfuß, he claims, would have gladly won over the Nazis as allies in this struggle.

Bauer makes an important point, highlighting an aspect of Dollfuß's political evolution that demands examination, yet his interpretation is not necessarily persuasive. The problem is, in part, that the paucity and limitations of the available documentary evidence make reconstructing Dollfuß's motives difficult. The historian is faced with the challenging task of piecing together a consistent narrative on the basis of evidence that is not only fragmentary, but also fraught with pitfalls. Dollfuß, for example, left few personal written records. However, some of those who did leave records – Rintelen, Starhemberg, Langoth and Winkler – were political adversaries (and pretty shady individuals every one of them) and therefore need to be approached with more than the customary degree of caution. The picture is further complicated by the fact that Dollfuß could not 'entirely rely upon his colleagues in the cabinet, their scrupulous honesty, or their loyalty to himself and the Austrian idea', which led to constant manoeuvring, saying different things to different people and changing his emphasis according to the interests of his audience.⁶⁵⁰ Speaking to the British Minister in September 1933, Dollfuß insisted that,

an over-great importance should not be attributed to the details of his policy, i.e., whether they represented a tendency somewhat more to the Right one day, or somewhat more to the Left another, but that the main fact of the situation should be borne in mind. That was, he said...Austrian independence should be maintained.⁶⁵¹

Indeed, it was only through his 'exceedingly skilful juggling' of the interests of not only the rival parties within his coalition (Christian Socials, *Heimwehr*, *Landbund*), but also of the rival factions within these parties, often vis-à-vis the parties outside of government (Social Democrats, Greater Germans and Nazis), that Dollfuß managed to keep his government afloat. The fact that Dollfuß was continually on the move, navigating a

⁶⁵⁰ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C5958/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Situation in Austria and her relations with other European Powers, 30 Jun. 1933.

⁶⁵¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C8551/2092/3, Sir John Simon, Record of a Conversation between the Secretary of State and Dr. Dollfuss at the Hotel Beau Rivage, Geneva, on September 24, 1933, 27 Sep. 1933.

path between the competing factions in Austrian – and international – politics, doing clandestine ‘deals’ with rival coalition partners and constantly trying to outplay the conspirators in his own cabinet all make it difficult for the historian to judge exactly what Dollfuß was up to. It is ultimately because of the ambiguous nature of the evidence that two contradictory interpretations of Dollfuß have emerged, the anti-Nazi ‘hero’ versus the opportunistic collaborator. The lack of conclusive evidence invariably means that there are weak points in the arguments on both sides; the historian, in the absence of new documentary evidence, is left to make a judgment on the basis of probability.

Bauer’s basic premise that some degree of ideological affinity between Dollfuß and the National Socialists underpinned Dollfuß’s efforts to come to an arrangement demands re-examination. On the surface, it is a compelling narrative. Dollfuß’s anti-Marxist stance is well-documented. He was, if Bauer is to be believed, also demonstrably anti-Semitic and the issue of his ‘political socialization’ certainly raises important questions. One assumes that what Bauer is alluding to here is that, as a student in the wake of the First World War, Dollfuß had been strongly ‘Catholic-National’ in orientation and a supporter of Anschluss with Germany.⁶⁵² As such, he had moved in circles that made principled opposition to National Socialism doubtful, in particular the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, a secret organization set up as a mediating institution between Catholics and Nationals that was anti-Marxist, anti-Liberal, anti-Masonic and anti-Semitic in orientation, together with such notorious personalities as Arthur Seyß-Inquart – the *Verräter Österreichs* – and Hermann Neubacher, first Nazi Mayor of Vienna.⁶⁵³ The *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* was an ostensible breeding ground for future Nazi sympathizers. Karl Wache, its *deutschnational* principle private secretary (and Dollfuß’s superior) dedicated his 1933 publication *Deutscher Geist in Österreich* to Hitler.⁶⁵⁴ After Wache was ousted in the early 1920s as a result of a power struggle between the Catholic and National wings, it was, according to Rosar, Dollfuß in his capacity as secretary who maintained the

⁶⁵² See: Gerhard Hartmann, ‘CV und Nationalsozialismus in Österreich 1933/34’, *Der österreichische Ständestaat: Engelbert Dollfuß zwischen Sozialismus und Nationalsozialismus. Ein Beitrag zur Zeitgeschichte; Seminar zum 85. Stiftungsfest, Berlin, 7–11. Juni 1984*. (Berlin, 1984), 91.

⁶⁵³ See: Wolfgang Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft: Seyss-Inquart und der Anschluss*, (Vienna, 1971), 9.

⁶⁵⁴ See: Karl Wache, *Deutscher Geist in Österreich. Ein Handbuch des völkischen Lebens der Ostmark*, (Dornbirn, 1933).

connection with the national *Erneuerungsbewegung* in the Reich.⁶⁵⁵ On the basis of evidence presented in the case against Seyß-Inquart at the Nuremberg Trials, the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* was portrayed as ‘conceived and founded upon principles which later became those of the Nazi Party’ and Dollfuß, on the basis of a letter written by Seyß-Inquart to Himmler dated 19 August 1939, as ‘a very active anti-Semitic’.⁶⁵⁶ Yet, on closer inspection, the argument is not entirely persuasive. One must consider what we know about Dollfuß’s formative years, the development of his ideological worldview and how that makes sense of his later behaviour as Chancellor, particularly vis-à-vis the National Socialists.

Assessments of Dollfuß’s formative years are principally based on the conclusions presented by Jagschitz in his 1967 thesis and, indirectly, by Wolfgang Rosar’s monograph on Seyß-Inquart, the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* and the Anschluss question.⁶⁵⁷ In his thesis, Jagschitz charts Dollfuß’s development from a pro-Austrian, pro-Habsburg position on the eve of the First World War, to a pro-Republican, pro-Anschluss position in the years that followed it. In the light of the prevalence of Anschluss sentiment in Austria at the time, and despite not having demonstrated ‘national’ sympathies before the war, it hardly comes as a surprise that Dollfuß would have supported some sort of Anschluss with Germany, particularly in the early post-war period. Although the Austrian Catholic circles whence Dollfuß came were, overall, less enthusiastic about union with the German Reich, they were, as we have seen, by no means united on the issue.⁶⁵⁸ While the Christian Socials initially supported the Anschluss declaration, albeit with palpable reservations, the Christian Social worker’s movement, for example, rejected it. This disagreement extended to the student milieu in which Dollfuß played an active role. The *Katholische Studentenbewegung*, for example, was initially pro-Anschluss, but against an unconditional and centralistic ‘Prussian solution’ to the question, an important qualification, while the Austrian CV corporations underwent a ‘smooth transition’

⁶⁵⁵ See: Wolfgang Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, 36.

⁶⁵⁶ Office of United States Chief of Counsel For Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *International Military Trials Nürnberg, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*, (Washington DC, 1946), chap. XVI, 959.

⁶⁵⁷ Both authors were students under Ludwig Jedlicka. See: Gerhard Jagschitz, ‘Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers’ and Wolfgang Rosar, *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*.

⁶⁵⁸ See Chapter 2.

from Habsburg loyalty to pro-Anschluss sentiment, organizing Anschluss rallies, sometimes together with the pan-German and *freiheitlich* students.⁶⁵⁹ This sentiment, however, gradually waned as the recognition of Austrian viability, and with it, Austrian self-assurance grew: Jagschitz notes how, from 1919, CV policy on the Anschluss question was no longer clearly defined, and, by 1929, only stressed solidarity with Germans outside Austrian borders.⁶⁶⁰

According to Jagschitz, Dollfuß followed this general trend and was pro-Anschluss during his time as a student. This is corroborated by one of Dollfuß's contemporaries, Erwin Domanig, who affirmed that Dollfuß was, in contrast to the majority of Catholic students who were Christian Social in orientation and decidedly 'Austrian' in outlook, an enthusiastic supporter of Anschluss with Germany during his time in the *Katholisch-Deutscher Akademikerausschuß*.⁶⁶¹ Trusted by their national opponents, he was often selected to represent Catholic students at Anschluss rallies.⁶⁶² This brings us to an important milestone in Dollfuß's ideological development that may have influenced his outlook later as Chancellor; closer to the 'national' wing of the CV, he played a keen role in furthering Catholic-National co-operation at a time when more active collaboration was being pursued for a number of different reasons by both sides.⁶⁶³ Dollfuß's interest in this field invariably led to his participation in the *Deutsche Studentenschaft*, established in 1919 as an autonomous, national and cross-party umbrella organization uniting the General Students' Committees of all German universities, including those in Danzig, Austria and Czechoslovakia – although as Jagschitz notes, a lack of evidence means that the question remains as to Dollfuß's actual role.⁶⁶⁴

This ideological playground, and particularly Dollfuß's membership in the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* has played a central role in assessments of his later response to

⁶⁵⁹ Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers', 133–4.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid, 133–35.

⁶⁶¹ See: Eva Dollfuß, *Mein Vater: Hitlers erstes Opfer*, (Vienna, 1994), 42–44.

⁶⁶² Domanig notes, for example, how Dollfuß was chosen to represent the *Katholisch-Deutscher Akademikerausschuß*. See: Ibid, 42–44. See also: Gudula Walterskirchen, *Engelbert Dollfuß* 70 and Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers', 173.

⁶⁶³ See: Gerhard Hartmann, *Der CV in Österreich*, (Graz, 1994), 99–101.

⁶⁶⁴ See: Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers' 173.

the National Socialist threat. His formative ideological landscape, encompassing a penchant for building bridges to the pan-Germans, Catholic-National proclivities, and questionable intellectual company all seem to suggest a neat thread from his student days to his willingness to negotiate with the Nazis in the spring of 1933. Yet, this is neither the whole picture nor does it decisively disprove the premise that Dollfuß was a 'principled' opponent of National Socialism. When impelled to choose between the 'Catholic' and the 'National', Dollfuß, unlike characters such as Seyß-Inquart, ultimately opted for the former; Jagschitz notes how, with the split in the CV in a Catholic and a National direction, Dollfuß was compelled towards the Catholic, pro-Austrian line.⁶⁶⁵ And while some of his associates from the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft* continued to agitate for Anschluss (together with the leading Social Democrats) under, for example, the auspices of the cross-party *Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund*, formed by Neubacher in 1925, Dollfuß's position on the issue appears to gradually moderate.⁶⁶⁶ Jagschitz notes how his support for Anschluss persisted after his studies, when Dollfuß continued to advocate some kind of union with Germany for reasons of agricultural policy. However, following a general trend away from radical Anschluss sentiment that was particularly distinctive within Catholic circles, Dollfuß drew nearer to the idea of some kind of harmonization [*Angleichung*] between the two countries as the term Anschluss became increasingly associated with the complete and unconditional absorption of Austria by the German Reich.⁶⁶⁷ By 1932, having pushed through the Lausanne loan against the fierce opposition of pro-Anschluss circles on the left and right, Dollfuß's rejection of Anschluss is clear:

Wir wollen nicht aus Mitleid von unserem großen Brudervolk aufgenommen werden, sondern wir wollen vorerst unser Haus selbst bestellen, um dereinst als freier selbständiger deutscher Staat frei und unabhängig aus eigener innerster Ueberzeugung über unser weiteres Schicksal zu entscheiden.⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid, 136.

⁶⁶⁶ Habicht also attempted to portray Dollfuß as a supporter of Anschluss to damage his standing with the Italians. Ross notes how Habicht attempted to collect 'speeches, essays and declarations' that proved that Dollfuß's 'opposition to Anschluss started the moment that his domestic position was seriously threatened by the NSDAP'. Dieter Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuß*, 136.

⁶⁶⁷ Jagschitz mentions, as an example, the discussions on legislative alignment (*Rechtsangleichung*) discussed by Dollfuß (and Schuschnigg) in Berlin during 1932. Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers', 135–6.

⁶⁶⁸ "Ich glaube an Österreich", *Reichspost*, 24 Oct. 1932, 1.

On the surface this may not appear to be a decisive renunciation of Anschluss, yet, in an environment where any open manifestation of opinion against the Anschluss was exceedingly difficult, Dollfuß's choice of the word *Brudervolk* made his position unambiguous. Dollfuß did say different things to different people: in London for example, Dollfuß emphasized the neighbourly nature of Austro-German relations, speaking of Germany as 'unserem größten Nachbarstaat, mit dem uns Sprache, Geschichte und kulturelle Entwicklung verbinden'.⁶⁶⁹ Yet at home, in front of an audience infused with an 'amorphous patriotism for the "great German nation"', he did not speak, as the Social Democrats did, of the 'großen Schicksals- und Kulturgemeinschaft des Deutschen Volkes' but of 'two states linked by the 'engsten Blutbande und die ältesten historischen Gemeinsamkeiten'.⁶⁷⁰ To Dollfuß, who saw himself first and foremost as an Austrian, Germany was a 'Bruderreich' and Austria and Germany cousins.⁶⁷¹

If the Anschluss angle does not then stand up to closer examination, the charge that there was a potential convergence of ideological interests as regards anti-Semitism is even more seriously overplayed. Bauer puts forward just two pieces of evidence to make his case. The first is an article in the *Reichspost* that welcomed, in principle, the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses of 1 April 1933, which Bauer appears to use to prove the anti-Semitic tendencies prevalent on the Catholic right. How exactly this relates to negotiations with the Austrian NSDAP and, ultimately, attempts to normalize relations with Nazi Germany, however, is unclear. Unless, of course, the suggestion is that palpable anti-Semitic sentiment from within government circles was somehow behind Dollfuß's attempts to 'come to terms' with the Nazis. If so, it is a curious argument. To take a non-Austrian example, it has never been suggested that fervent Polish anti-Semitism – not to mention Piłsudski's distain for parliamentary democracy – played a role in the decision to come to terms with Nazi Germany and the signing of the German-Polish non-aggression pact of January 1934.

⁶⁶⁹ Dollfuß in London, 10 June 1933.

⁶⁷⁰ Cited in: Iago Gil Aguado, 'The Creditanstalt Crisis of 1931 and the Failure of the Austro-German Customs Union Project', 218; Dollfuß in a speech in Vienna, 18 January 1933 and in Amstetten, 26 November 1933: Anton Tautscher, ed., *So sprach der Kanzler: Dollfuß' Vermächtnis*, (Vienna, 1935), 104.

⁶⁷¹ 'Hitler is ja schließlich erstens ein Österreicher, zweitens wir sind beide Deutsche'. Note that Dollfuß describes himself as German second. See: Christian Dörner and Barbara Dörner-Fazeny, *Theodor von Hornbostel 1889–1973*, 63.

The prevalence of anti-Semitic sentiment on the Austrian right is not under dispute. However, the *Reichspost's* stance on the German boycott must surely be considered against the backdrop of the traditional role of anti-Semitism in Austrian politics, and not just against the yardstick of Nazi policy. As Pauley has pointed out, in the First Republic 'all of the major political parties...were anti-Semitic to one degree or another' and each used anti-Semitism as a political weapon 'in order to embarrass its enemies'.⁶⁷² While Catholic circles denounced Jews 'in very traditional terms', seeing Jews as revolutionaries and extreme modernists 'determined to secularize society by undermining the Catholic faith', Social Democrats and Communists – although neither included anti-Semitism in their official programmes – 'often used anti-Semitism as a club with which to embarrass their capitalist enemies', while being careful to give the impression that they were 'opposed only to Jewish capitalists'.⁶⁷³ The rise of the Nazi party in Germany threatened to appropriate this issue from all parties, leaving the Austrian Nazis in the 'enviable position' of being able to say, from 1933 onwards, that 'their comrades in Germany were actually doing something about the "Jewish Problem"', whereas Austrian anti-Semites had 'seldom done more than talk'.⁶⁷⁴ Indeed, the appropriation of traditional Catholic anti-Semitic slogans by the Nazis – who also, as Pauley reminds us further, appropriated the anti-Semitic caricatures and rhetoric of the left – posed a particular problem for Catholics and the Christian Socials, for whom anti-Semitism remained a significant integrating factor.⁶⁷⁵ They could, Pauley observes, 'only quibble' with Nazi theory or run the risk of contradicting 'centuries of their own beliefs'.⁶⁷⁶

That the article discussing the boycott of Jewish businesses was not an attempt to sidle up to the Nazis is obvious because this 'great gesture' was actually presented as a *failure* on the part of the 'gentlemen in Munich'.⁶⁷⁷ Rather, this was an – ultimately

⁶⁷² Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 133; Bruce F. Pauley, 'The Austrian Press and the Third Reich: Contradictory Views from a Neighbour', 275.

⁶⁷³ Bruce F. Pauley, 'The Austrian Press and the Third Reich: Contradictory Views from a Neighbour', 271–2.

⁶⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 275–6.

⁶⁷⁵ See: Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 149.

⁶⁷⁶ Bruce F. Pauley, 'The Austrian Press and the Third Reich: Contradictory Views from a Neighbour', 276, 278.

⁶⁷⁷ 'Der abgestoppte Judenboykott', *Reichspost*, 1–2.

ineffectual – attempt to ‘re-appropriate’ one of the Christian Social’s traditional political tools, and more directly, an appeal to their own support base. This is further confirmed by Pauley’s important observation that anti-Semitism almost disappeared from the pages of the *Reichspost* between 1926–30, only to reappear with the onset of the economic crisis and the meteoric rise of the Nazis.⁶⁷⁸ Which brings us to Bauer’s second piece of evidence, the references to ‘Jewish Marxism’ in a speech made by Dollfuß at the general assembly of the *Katholische Männerverein* and reproduced in the *Reichspost* on 3 April 1933, which, Bauer claims, challenges interpretations that maintain that there were no areas of overlap between Dollfuß and the National Socialists.⁶⁷⁹ The logic is seductive in its simplicity: this speech proves that Dollfuß was clearly an anti-Semite, which surely attests to some degree of ideological kinship with the National Socialists.

This interpretation is problematic in a number of ways. Firstly, anti-Semitism was widespread throughout Europe in the interwar period and found across the length and breadth of the political and social spectrum. Therefore, it does not automatically follow that those who shared such beliefs, in whatever form, sympathized with National Socialist ideology. Secondly, and more specifically, the portrayal of Dollfuß as driven by anti-Semitism is wholly unpersuasive.⁶⁸⁰ Although there are suggestions of anti-Semitic attitudes from the early post-war years – in 1920, for example, Dollfuß submitted a proposal to the general assembly of the CV on behalf of the Catholic fraternity Franco-Bavaria that members only be accepted if they were of ‘German-Aryan descent’ – scholars have been generally cautious about reading too much into this. Jagschitz, noting, for example, the influence of Dollfuß’s sponsor during the period, the dean of the theological institute at the University of Vienna, Nivard Schlögel – and co-sponsor of the proposal – concludes that Dollfuß was not a ‘strong anti-Semite’ and one could not talk in any way of pronounced – and enduring – anti-Semitic beliefs.⁶⁸¹ Other evidence appears to back this claim. While Jagschitz notes how Dollfuß worked in the office of a Jewish lawyer during his studies and that

⁶⁷⁸ See: Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 156.

⁶⁷⁹ Kurt Bauer, “Strikt nein zu sagen”, 92.

⁶⁸⁰ According to Kurt Bauer, ‘anti-Semitism and anti-Marxism were important drivers for the politician Engelbert Dollfuß’: Ibid, 92.

⁶⁸¹ Gerhard Jagschitz, ‘Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers’.

during his time in the *Landeswirtschaftskammer* he provided positions for Jews, Walterskirchen points out that during his time as Chancellor, one of his most important legal advisors, Robert Hecht, was of Jewish descent.⁶⁸² Of course, this opens them up to the 'some of my best friends are Jews' counter-argument, which declares that close personal relations do not necessarily rule out racism. However, in the light of Dollfuß's later ideological development, this remains unconvincing; as Walterskirchen observes, this brief period was in no way symptomatic of Dollfuß's later attitude towards Jewry.⁶⁸³

Thus, perhaps a more interesting question is why both Dollfuß and Schuschnigg, considering the extent of anti-Semitic sentiment across Austrian society, in particular, the quite obvious lure of the Nazis' radical anti-Semitism on 'the inherently anti-Semitic and impoverished youth of Austria' and despite an ideological background which apparently predisposed them towards anti-Semitic beliefs, rather than instrumentalize the issue, chose not to play the anti-Semitism card.⁶⁸⁴ Although concerns were raised, for example, with the British Foreign Office, that the Austrian government might be tempted to 'connive at some persecution of the Jewish population in Austria with a view to disarming the hostility of the National Socialists', this never came to pass.⁶⁸⁵ In his 1992 study on Austrian anti-Semitism, Pauley remarked that, although anti-Semitism was tolerated in Austria during the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era, neither Dollfuß nor Schuschnigg personally resorted to anti-Semitic statements, consistently assuring foreign visitors and Jewish groups of their opposition to it, a stance that on occasion expressed itself as concrete support.⁶⁸⁶ This is confirmed by Königseder, who notes that the constitution of the Corporate State introduced by Dollfuß in May 1934 guaranteed unrestricted civil rights and religious

⁶⁸² The DÖW notes how Robert Hecht was particularly hated by the National Socialists, not least for his role in helping Dollfuß establish the *Ständestaat*. After the Anschluss, Hecht was taken to Dachau on the so-called Prominententransport of 1 April 1938. Having been tortured intolerably, he hanged himself on 30 May 1938. '1938/39: Transports of Austrian Jews to Concentration Camps – The First Murders' <http://www.doew.at/projekte/holocaust/shoahengl/1938/kz38.html>, accessed 19 Nov. 2012

⁶⁸³ Gudula Walterskirchen, *Engelbert Dollfuß*, 69.

⁶⁸⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, I, para. 4.

⁶⁸⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16646, paper C4267/4267/3, Sir R. Vansittart, Possible danger to Jews in Austria, 10 May 1933.

⁶⁸⁶ See: Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 260–7.

freedom for Austria's Jewish citizens, and that four Jews were appointed to high government bodies to represent them.⁶⁸⁷ Pauley was in a narrow sense wrong since Bauer has found one instance, but it is just one quotation. This must be weighed against the fact that, just a few weeks later, Dollfuß declared in public that he would not discriminate between different categories of Austrian citizens.⁶⁸⁸ The single instance therefore where Dollfuß refers to 'Jewish Marxism' is, on balance, not enough to overturn Pauley's otherwise well-grounded thesis.

There were, of course, political advantages to curbing the worst anti-Semitic excesses, especially as a tool for putting some 'ideological distance' between an Austrian state under authoritarian rule and the National Socialist regime.⁶⁸⁹ This, it could be argued, had a restraining influence, as neither Dollfuß nor Schuschnigg could afford to be seen to be propagating anti-Semitic policies in the eyes of the rest of the world. Now, the weight of international opinion invariably had some impact on policy; Pauley notes how American diplomatic protests about Nazi anti-Semitic violence at the University of Vienna – albeit against American students – led to Dollfuß taking a much harder line, culminating in the revocation of the University's academic autonomy, which had until then prevented the police from entering the building to restore order.⁶⁹⁰ However, the argument that the Dollfuß government refrained from anti-Semitism because of international opinion is ultimately unconvincing; in the light of such patent worldwide indifference to the plight of the Jews as that displayed at the Évian Conference of 1938, it seems doubtful that serious objections from abroad would actually have been forthcoming if the *Ständestaat* had genuinely attempted to play the anti-Semitism card, especially considering that Poland, Hungary and Romania all did so during the 1930s without encountering the slightest diplomatic problems.

⁶⁸⁷ Königseder, however, downplays this detail on the grounds that anti-Semitism persisted and these rights were only guaranteed on paper. Still why make the gesture in an anti-Semitic country? Angelika Königseder, 'Antisemitismus 1933–1938', in eds. Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer *Austrofascismus: Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur, 1933–1938* (Vienna, 2005), 55.

⁶⁸⁸ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16637, paper C5532/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Position of the Jews in Austria, 12 Jun. 1933.

⁶⁸⁹ See: Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 264.

⁶⁹⁰ While the intervention of the American Minister invariably played some sort of role in the decision to curb escalating Nazi violence at the University, the straw that really broke the camel's back was the 'greeting' accorded Dollfuß and Schuschnigg by baying National Socialist students as they arrived as guests of honour at a '*Heldengedenkfeier*' held by the Catholic fraternities in May 1933. See: *Ibid*, 265.

Ultimately, there is no definitive evidence as to whether Dollfuß was in fact a closet anti-Semite during his time as Chancellor. He did not, it is true, launch a bold ideological counter-crusade and anti-Semitism still thrived in Austria throughout his Chancellorship. This could all have been a clever ruse, pretending he was not an anti-Semite for the sake of international opinion. However, Pauley for one does not think so, arguing that, on the basis of a lack of any evidence to suggest otherwise, neither Dollfuß nor Schuschnigg can be dismissed as ‘cynical opportunists’.⁶⁹¹ On the contrary, he cites the American Minister as being “‘much impressed with [the Chancellor’s] sincerity” when he denounced the “gross stupidity” of Nazi students who attacked their Jewish classmates’.⁶⁹² That anti-Semitism was tolerated in Dollfuß’s Austria has to be weighed against, for example, the fact that Jewish newspapers – and the political factions they represented in the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde* – enjoyed relative freedom until 1938, while ‘overly anti-Semitic and Nazi party newspapers’, as well as all other political parties were prohibited.⁶⁹³ Rabid anti-Semites, such as Kunschak and his Christian Social *Freiheitsbund*, were tolerated, but, at the same time, vocal campaigners against anti-Semitism and National Socialism, like the *Harand-Bewegung* were also allowed to flourish, the two groups co-existing under the umbrella of the *Vaterländische Front*.⁶⁹⁴ Moreover, during the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era, despite the ‘delicacy of their position with regard to Germany’ Austria had taken in German-Jewish refugees. According to British documents, some 400–600 German Jews had taken refuge in Austria which undoubtedly had something to do with the government’s policy to ‘discourage all campaigns against the Jews’, despite the prevalence of anti-Semitic sentiment within the wider population.⁶⁹⁵ In the light of the strength of anti-Semitic feeling in Austria and the successful manipulation of this sentiment by the Nazis, that this tactical equivocation on the part of the

⁶⁹¹ Pauley maintains that it is reasonable to assume that their stance can be ascribed to the long-established tradition of the protection of the legal rights of minorities under the Empire. See: *Ibid*, 264

⁶⁹² *Ibid*, 264.

⁶⁹³ Bruce F. Pauley, ‘The Austrian Press and the Third Reich: Contradictory Views from a Neighbour’, 269.

⁶⁹⁴ See: *Ibid*, 280.

⁶⁹⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21118, paper R820/820/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1936, 27 Jan. 1937, para., 60–62.

Dollfuß-Schuschnigg governments can be ascribed to ambivalence on the issue of anti-Semitism, as Königseder suggests, seems doubtful.⁶⁹⁶

What can be said is that, as a direct result of their stance, both Dollfuß and Schuschnigg enjoyed the almost unanimous support of the Austrian Jewish community.⁶⁹⁷ This is significant, not least because, as Pauley reminds us, in Austria, as in Germany, Jewish support was considered a political liability, rather than an asset.⁶⁹⁸ The support of the Jewish community, or even the mere absence of anti-Semitic measures, was also a weapon to be used against Dollfuß (and Schuschnigg), opening them up to politically injurious accusations of 'philo-Semitism', not only from their opponents, but also from their supposed allies. For example, a Nazi propaganda leaflet – mimicking the *Vaterländische Wandzeitung* format used by the Austrian government – dropped onto Austrian territory sometime in November 1933 exhorted the inhabitants of Oberndorf bei Salzburg to: 'Stick with Dollfuß, Fey and Vaugoin! International Jewry will surely thank you for it'.⁶⁹⁹ At home, Dollfuß's public declaration that he would not discriminate against different groups of Austrian citizens was deemed by Rost van Tonningen, at that time representative of the League of Nations in Vienna and a personal friend of Dollfuß, as 'being calculated to render the Austrian government unpopular in view of the intense anti-Jewish feeling amongst large numbers of Austrians'.⁷⁰⁰ And, in July 1933, an article was published in the *Bauernbündler* attributing to Dollfuß the intention of restricting the participation of Austrian Jews in certain professions and of taking other repressive measures against them, causing Dollfuß to issue a rebuttal in the Austrian press. There was, the British Minister observed, 'little doubt that the article was...a 'stab in the back' for Dr. Dollfuss with the probable instigator his Vice-Chancellor, the pro-German *Landbund*

⁶⁹⁶ See: Angelika Königseder, 'Austrofaschismus', 56.

⁶⁹⁷ See: Bruce F. Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 261.

⁶⁹⁸ See: *Ibid.*, 149.

⁶⁹⁹ 'Der Dank der internationalen Judenschaft ist euch gewiß'. In the 'impressum' printed on the leaflet the publisher as given the 'Alliance Israelite'. (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 15, Tauschitz to the (BKA), z1.26.426–13, 23 November 1933, 'Nationalsozialistische Propaganda an der österreichischen-bayerischen Grenze'.

⁷⁰⁰ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16637, paper C5532/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Position of the Jews in Austria, 12 Jun. 1933.

leader, Franz Winkler.⁷⁰¹ Dollfuß's moderation on this issue was not without political risks for him. And if he had been, as Otto Bauer claimed, an opportunist, exploiting Austrian anti-Semitism would have been an obvious place to start.

Dollfuß's attempts to find a way out of the impasse in which Austria found itself because of the rise of National Socialism in the spring of 1933 cannot be simply ascribed to some kind of underlying ideological kinship with the Nazis. Such a conclusion ignores that, although Dollfuß may have started on a similar path to that of his *Burgbrüder* in the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, he neither endeavoured to make National Socialism compatible with Catholicism and Austrian sentiment, as did Catholic-Nationals such as Seyß-Inquart, nor did he support National Socialism as a vehicle for the realization of the *Reichsgedanke* as did other Catholic intellectuals – Jagschitz lists the likes of Hugelmann, Kralik, Eibl, Nadler, Srbik, Wolf and Glaise-Horstenau.⁷⁰² He was not seeking to build bridges to the Nazis, rather, he was investigating how the threat that they posed could best be neutralized. Fraternal bonds were not strong enough to prevent, for example, Karl Wache, Dollfuß's former superior at the *Deutsche Gemeinschaft*, from being removed from his post as *Oberstaatsbibliothekar* at the University of Vienna in May 1934 for Nazi activities by a Federal Chancellery under Dollfuß's command.⁷⁰³ And even if one traces Dollfuß's anti-Nazi stance to the movement's escalating violence in the spring of 1933, rather than earlier, this still sets him apart from those who went over to the Nazis. Ultimately, Dollfuß may have tried to put this formative 'bridge-building' experience to good use, employing his connections to these circles when he was Chancellor in an attempt to neutralize the effectiveness of Nazi penetration into Austria and to solidify his own position – he was even willing to meet with Habicht and Hitler to discuss Nazi demands –, but this can only be understood against the backdrop of Dollfuß's primary motivation: the maintenance of Austrian independence, as exemplified in his

⁷⁰¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C6811/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Austrian Affairs, 25 Jul. 1933.

⁷⁰² See: Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers' 135. On the subject of National-Catholic intellectuals see also: John Haag, 'Marginal Men and the Dream of the Reich: Eight Austrian National-Catholic Intellectuals. 1918–1938', in eds. Stein Ugelvik Larsen and Gerhard Botz *Who were the Fascists?*

Social Roots of European Fascism (Bergen, 1980).

⁷⁰³ See: Robert Stumpf, 'Wissensspeicher in Zeiten politischer Umbrüche: Bruchstücke zur Geschichte der Universitätsbibliothek Wien 1938 und 1945', *Mitteilungen der Vereinigung Österreichischer Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare*, 60 (2007), 17–18.

exceptional efforts in 1932 to push through the Lausanne Loan against the wishes of nationalist circles on the left and the right.

Dollfuß's opposition to a Nazi takeover in Austria was primarily on the grounds that this would spell the end of Austrian independence: 'Wenn es den Nazi gelingt, dann ist Österreich nur so ein Staat wie Hessen usw'.⁷⁰⁴ This, along with Dollfuß's apparent willingness to do a deal with the Nazis has led some historians to the claim that Dollfuß did not really fight National Socialism itself.⁷⁰⁵ This slightly convoluted line of thought does not seem entirely cogent since the end of Austrian independence was, after all, a core Nazi aim. Moreover, this interpretation also downplays the importance of those ideological factors that made National Socialism unpalatable to Dollfuß and his Christian Social colleagues. Besides, Dollfuß's catholic-corporatist worldview hardly fitted the revolutionary character of the Nazi movement and its violent radicalism, epitomized by Röhm's marauding brownshirts, not to mention Hitler's talk of a 'National Revolution' as his 'presidential' government transformed into a totalitarian dictatorship.⁷⁰⁶ Indeed, for many on Austria's catholic-conservative right, the parallels with Soviet Russia were palpable. Thus, the rejection of National Socialism was, in part, based on the premise that 'Bolshevism' and National Socialism were in fact two sides of the same revolutionary coin, the one 'red', the other 'brown'.⁷⁰⁷ National Socialism, the Christian Social *Reichspost* maintained, was simply the Bolshevism of the right, a hodgepodge of unemployed half-communists and Prussian generals.⁷⁰⁸ This interpretation was based on the fact that what scared the Austrian bourgeoisie about 'bolshevism' – dictatorial rule, censorship, the dominance of the party, political violence – were the same things that made National Socialism so

⁷⁰⁴ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive and Provincial Governors, 9 March 1933, 10.30 a.m.: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 156.

⁷⁰⁵ Jagschitz's reply in discussion about; Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Dollfuß und der Juli 1934' 172.

⁷⁰⁶ Bauer concedes that the 'godlessness' of the Nazis, as well as their 'anarchistic, ruthless violence and radicalism' separated Dollfuß from Nazi ideology, but seems to attach little importance to it, despite the fact that, if assessments of Dollfuß agree on anything, it is on the fact that he was, first and foremost, driven by his devout Catholicism. Kurt Bauer, "'Strikt nein zu sagen'", 92.

⁷⁰⁷ 'Wiener Landtag und Lainzer Tiergarten', *Reichspost*, 2 Jul.1932, 1–2. This point of view was not uncommon during the period – 'Hitlerism is brown communism, Stalinism is red fascism', the *New York Times* declared on 18 September 1939 in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Poland. 'The Russian Betrayal', *The New York Times* 18.09.1939, 11. Also cited in: Thomas R. Maddux, 'Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism: The American Image of Totalitarianism in the 1930s', *Historian*, 40 (1977), 100.

⁷⁰⁸ See: 'Ein Entscheidungstag für den neuen Kurs im Reich', *Reichspost*, 31 Jul.1932, 1–2.

distasteful. With the establishment of the Nazi regime in Germany the parallels multiplied as the movement was deemed to move from 'pseudo-nationalism to bolshevism'.⁷⁰⁹ National Socialist brutality and violence, the use of murder, terror and intimidation as political weapons appeared to mirror political methods common to Soviet Russia; according to the mouthpiece of Schuschnigg's *Ostmärkische Sturmsharen*, the only difference was the language spoken.⁷¹⁰ Dollfuß himself echoed this sentiment when, on 2 May 1933, he pronounced the 'German Reich can order its affairs how it sees fit', but 'we desire neither international socialism nor brown socialism', a somewhat audacious statement for an Austrian Chancellor supposedly wishing to remain on good terms with the Reich.⁷¹¹ The message was certainly not lost on the pro-Nazi *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, which declared Dollfuß the first Austrian Chancellor openly to denounce the Anschluss; 'it is clear that when he talks of "independence on all sides" he means, not independence from undue foreign influence in Austrian policy...but the "deepening of the frontier at Passau"'.⁷¹²

However, for those on Austria's catholic-conservative right, one issue stood out above all others: a fanatical, shared anti-clericalism that 'threatened the very foundations of human society and culture'.⁷¹³ With its 'hatred of Rome' and 'kulturkämpferische sonority', National Socialism trumped even the godless language of the Communist press'.⁷¹⁴

⁷⁰⁹ "'Totale Erkrankung'", *Sturm über Österreich*, 2 Jul. 1933, 2 See also: 'Der Hakenkreuzweg des deutschen Volkes', *Reichspost*, 27.06.1933, 1–2.

⁷¹⁰ See: "'Totale Erkrankung'", *Sturm über Österreich*, 2 Jul. 1933, 2.

⁷¹¹ Cited in: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16636 paper C4138/338/3, Sir E. Phipps, Meeting of the Christian Social Party in Vienna, 3 May 1933. For the original see: 'Christlichsozialer Landesparteitag für Niederösterreich', *Reichspost*, 2 May 1933, 4.

⁷¹² Cited in: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16636 paper C4138/338/3, Sir E. Phipps, Meeting of the Christian Social Party in Vienna, 3 May 1933.

⁷¹³ 'Österreichische Zuversicht', *Reichspost*, 25 Dec. 1932, 2

⁷¹⁴ 'Durchbruch der Naturlaute. Der Romhaß des Nationalsozialismus', *Reichspost*, 10 Jul. 1932, 3–4

12. März 1931

Katholiken!

In der letzten Zeit mehren sich die Angriffe, die von christlichen Kreise in Verleumdungen und in der Presse — gegen die Nationalsozialisten gerichtet werden. In es wird in diesen Streifen immer häufiger die Frage aufgeworfen:

☸ Kann ein Katholik Nationalsozialist sein? ☸

Wir sehen nun da, mit unserer Aufklärung, daß keine Partei des Christentum gepredigt hat und daß sich Priester nicht um Politik, sondern um die Seelsorge zu kümmern hätten, fernabzuweilen, sondern können und selbst auf Papst berufen wie nachfolgende Redenbeiträge beweisen:

Papst Leo XIII. Papst Pius XI.

„Es gibt keine katholische Partei und hat keine solche gegeben, da die Heiligen in der Kirche selbst ihre Aufklärung haben.“ „Ein katholischer Priester soll keiner Partei angehören, weil er das Vertrauen aller Gläubigen genießen soll.“

Wenn man nun hinter die Masken der christlichen Partei blickt, dann sieht man, daß es sich bei dem Kampfe gegen uns, nicht um den Schutz des Christentums, sondern lediglich um die Hülfe der christlichen Partei vor der nationalsozialistischen Sturmflut handelt. In einer geheimen Sitzung Sonntag, den 1. Februar bei der Führer der christlichen Partei

Heeresminister Carl Vaugoin im Bäckersaal erklärt:

„Wenn ich die Wahlen nicht im Herbst gemacht hätte, sondern erst im Frühjahr, hätte sich die nationalsozialistische Agitation noch volle Monate lang ausbreiten können. Die Nationalsozialisten hätten sich enorm weiter entwickelt. Und waren aber schon die letzten Wochen schädlich genug.“

Jeder Christ, jeder Katholik kommt deshalb in die

Massen-Versammlung

Donnerstag, 12. März 1931, bei der weißen Rose

II., Ausstellungsstraße 163

in welcher Gastredner **Dr. K. KAUFMANN** und der Gauobmann, des Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Lehrerbundes **Prof. Dr. Richard SUCHENWIRTH** über das Thema sprechen werden:

Nationalsozialismus und Christentum

Die christlichsoziale Bezirksparteileitung wurde unter Zusicherung freier Aussprache, zu dieser Versammlung eingeladen.

Beginn um 8 Uhr abends. Kostenbeitrag. Juden Eintritt verboten!

Sprechabend der Bezirksgruppe Josefstadt jeden Donnerstag im Gasthaus „Zur Stadt Brunn“, VIII., Strozgasse 36 Beginn 8 Uhr abends.

Druck: H. K. H. K. (Druck-Verlag), für den Verlag verantwortlich: Ludwig (Hof), Josef 7, Gassenstraße 41/42. — Druck: H. K. H. K., Josef 4.

Figure 6: Kann ein Katholik Nationalsozialist sein?

(ÖNB Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung)

A Catholic, the *Reichspost* maintained, could be neither a Marxist nor a National Socialist, a view repeated in Kunschak's *Neue Zeitung*, which repudiated the claim that a good Catholic could vote National Socialist.⁷¹⁵ A 'godless movement', National Socialism and Christianity were as 'incompatible as fire and water' in the same way that Marxism and Christianity were incompatible; both movements stood in opposition to

⁷¹⁵ See: 'Der Tag der Entscheidung', *Die Neue Zeitung*, 24 Apr. 1932, 1–2.

Christian moral teaching.⁷¹⁶ If in doubt, the Catholic knew where to turn for guidance: *Roma locuta est*, the *Reichspost* pronounced in February 1931.⁷¹⁷ Of course, this line of argument became problematic after the Vatican signed a concordat with Nazi Germany.

The argument that Dollfuß was motivated to come to an arrangement with the Nazis because of a convergence of ideological interests has only limited explanatory power. Just because Dollfuß was 'anti-Marxist', it does not follow that he would have welcomed or approved of Nazi rule. What is more, ideological overlap of some kind or another was almost inevitable. An eclectic ideology, National Socialism borrowed from both the left and the right, which invariably meant, as one scholar observes, that 'some of the ideas of fascism and national socialism reveal affinities and overlaps with more acceptable ideologies, such as liberalism, conservatism, syndicalism and socialism'.⁷¹⁸ By the same logic, any ideological or programmatic overlap could be understood as ideological kinship with the Nazis. However, one would never claim that the Socialists were Nazi sympathizers because they shared Anschluss as a common goal, or because of palpable ideological overlaps in their programmes – anti-capitalism, pan-Germanism, anti-clericalism and anti-bourgeois sentiment – or because the Nazis, as mentioned earlier, in linking anti-capitalism with anti-Semitism, had appropriated the anti-Semitic caricatures and rhetoric of the left.

If we apply the same standards to the Social Democrats that we apply to Dollfuß and the Christian Socials, then how are we to evaluate Karl Renner's connivance with the Nazis in the spring of 1938, and his voluntarily placing himself at the Nazis' disposal, via Hermann Neubacher for their plebiscite propaganda?⁷¹⁹ In 1931, Renner had assured Neubacher that he could be relied upon in the 'struggle for

⁷¹⁶ 'Die Gretchenfrage an den Nationalsozialismus', *Reichspost*, 18 Jul. 1932, 2 and 'Kann ein Katholik...?', *Reichspost* 25 Feb. 1931, 1–2; The description of the Nazis as a 'Gottlosenbewegung' comes from Dollfuß: Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 232.

⁷¹⁷ 'Kann ein Katholik...?', *Reichspost* 25 Feb. 1931, 1–2.

⁷¹⁸ Andrew Vincent, *Modern Political Ideologies*, (Oxford, 2010), 163. On National Socialist ideological eclecticism see: Richard Evans, J., *Coming of the Third Reich*, 76.

⁷¹⁹ See: Siegfried Nasko and Johannes Reichl, *Karl Renner. Zwischen Anschluß und Europa*, (Vienna, 2000), 57. Or indeed his liberal use of terms 'associated with a mythical German past...*Gau, Stamm, Gemeinschaft*' which were later appropriated by the Nazis? Michael P. Steinberg, *Austria as Theater and Ideology: The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival*, (Ithaca, 2000), 123.

self-determination' and, as Nasko points out, he remained true to his promise when the Nazis marched in seven years later.⁷²⁰ On 12 November 1928, the 10th anniversary of the declaration of the Republic, Renner had – along with other leading Social Democrats including Seitz, Körner, Austerlitz, Bauer and Deutsch – pledged his allegiance to 'Großdeutschland' in *Der Anschluss*, the mouthpiece of Neubacher's *Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund* (Dollfuß, incidentally, did not).⁷²¹ The point is not simply that Renner was pro-Anschluss, but the manner in which his actions are assessed: if politicians are to be judged by the company they keep – as Dollfuß frequently is – how are we to understand Renner's relationship with Neubacher, the man who was to become the first Nazi mayor of Vienna, and who, incidentally, despite dealings with leading Social Democrats like Renner, did not 'hesitate to attack socialism and stigmatize the leaders of the Social Democratic party...as theoretical and Hebraic Marxists'?⁷²² If Dollfuß's actions are deemed to be the result of an ideological convergence of interests with the Nazis, in particular vis-à-vis the Social Democrats, then the same must hold true for Renner vis-à-vis those who did not support Anschluss.

Renner is not the only example on the left. There is also the case of Richard Bernaschek, the *Schutzbund* commander who triggered the 'civil war' in February 1934. Having escaped from his Austrian prison in April 1934, Bernaschek fled, with Nazi assistance, to Munich, along with two Social Democratic comrades, Otto Huschka and Franz Schlagin. This was something of a propaganda coup for the Nazi regime and, keen to capitalise on it, Bernaschek was accorded an official welcome by the Mayor of Passau and provided with generous financial support. In Bavaria, Bernaschek visited the Austrian Legion, an armed paramilitary unit of Austrian Nazi 'refugees' amassed on the Austrian border.⁷²³ While his two associates converted to

⁷²⁰ Siegfried Nasko, 'Ein "deutschösterreichischer" Staatsmann? Karl Renners Haltung zur Anschlußidee 1918–1938', in ed., Michael Gehler *Ungleiche Partner? Österreich und Deutschland in ihrer gegenseitigen Wahrnehmung: Historische Analysen und Vergleiche aus dem 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1996), 422.

⁷²¹ 'Aufstieg des Österreichisch-Deutschen Volksbundes: Die Unterschriften', *Der Anschluß. Mitteilungen des Österreichisch-Deutschen Volksbundes*, 12 Nov. 1928, 1–2.

⁷²² (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16643, paper C 7436/2092/3, R.H. Hadow, Austro-German relations. Memorandum on Pan-German and Socialist Points of View, 17 Aug. 1933.

⁷²³ The number rose from 3,500 well-armed, well-trained members in August 1933, to over 9,000 in the aftermath of the July Putsch. A contingent of armed insurgents did cross the border on their own

National Socialism, Bernaschek met with Habicht, positing the possibility of collaboration between the Social Democrats and the National Socialists, infamously proclaiming that '*das Programm der Nationalsozialisten steht uns [the Social Democrats] näher*'⁷²⁴. Even though the Social Democratic leadership rejected Bernaschek's declaration, one could credibly argue that Renner's and Bernaschek's behaviour was as much an expression of a shared ideological heritage and the convergence of common interests with the Nazis as it was the result of political pragmatism or the desperation of defeat. And yet, Bernaschek has gone down in the eyes of one historian at least, as 'a man of moral courage, integrity and perseverance, but one who was politically naïve', not as someone whose actions were in part shaped by ideological kinship with National Socialism.⁷²⁵ The same is true of Renner: no stone is left unturned in the quest to explain his motivations, yet ideological sympathy for the Nazi programme is never one of them.⁷²⁶ The point here is, if we accept – quite rightly – that circumstances played a part in the conduct of individual Social Democrats, are we not duty bound to do the same for Dollfuß?

initiative on 27 July 1934, two days after Dollfuß's assassination during the failed Nazi uprising. On the Austrian Legion see: Hans Schafranek, *Söldner für den "Anschluss". Die Österreichische Legion 1933–1938*, (Vienna, 2011).

⁷²⁴ See: Inez Kykal and Karl R. Stadler, *Richard Bernaschek. Odysee eines Rebellen*, (Vienna, 1976).

⁷²⁵ Radomír Luža, *The Resistance in Austria, 1938–1945*, (Minneapolis, 1984), 172.

⁷²⁶ See, for example, Siegfried Nasko and Johannes Reichl, *Karl Renner. Zwischen Anschluß und Europa*.

Why negotiate?

The Nazis' 'seizure of power' in Germany was a real game-changer for the beleaguered Dollfuß government. While during 1932 Dollfuß's energies were consumed with tackling the economic crisis, on 30 January 1933, the nature of the problem that the Austrian government faced changed profoundly. It was assumed in Christian Social circles that Nazi agitation in Austria would increase as a result of the movement's victory in the Reich, yet within weeks the situation had become 'intolerable'.⁷²⁷ In the run-up to the *Reichstag* elections in Germany on 5 March, Austria was flooded with Nazi propaganda, according to Dollfuß, a 'prelude' of what was to come.⁷²⁸ To make matters worse, the Reich also started to put economic pressure on its neighbour, Phipps reporting to London that 'since Herr Hitler became Chancellor, Germany had been daily selling her Schilling credits cheap in Zürich, and thus pressing hard on Austria's currency'.⁷²⁹ Against this backdrop, Austria's parliament tumbled headlong into crisis, paralyzed on 4 March as a result of a procedural hitch. Rather than reinstate it, Dollfuß, we know, opted to temporarily rule by decree in the hope of pushing through alterations to the constitution. These would possibly include a body representing the *Länder* and the *Stände* that could be given primary legislative authority over economic issues, leaving parliament as the battleground for cultural and socio-political questions.⁷³⁰ As the country's serious economic problems were deemed to be responsible for the allure of National Socialism, particularly amongst

⁷²⁷ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 7 March 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 132. 'Wohl sei ziemlich sicher anzunehmen, daß die österreichische nationalsozialistische Partei gegenwärtig und in der nächsten Zeit noch infolge der Entwicklung im Reich einen verhältnismäßig starken Auftrieb erhalten werde. Ob dieser Auftrieb jedoch anhalten wird und welche Ausmaße er annimmt, das wird vom Erfolg oder Mißerfolg Hitlers in der Führung des deutschen Staates abhängen. Schon dieser Umstand allein legt es den österreichischen politischen Führern nahe, eine abwartende Haltung einzunehmen'. 'Keine unmittelbare Auswirkung der Wendung in Deutschland und Oesterreich', *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, 1 Feb. 1933, 2.

⁷²⁸ Dollfuß at a meeting of the Christian Social Party Executive and the Provincial Governors, 9 March 1933, 10.30 a.m.: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 139.

⁷²⁹ Phipps continues: 'This information is confirmed by inquiries which I have requested the Commercial Counsellor to make.' (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C2092/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Article in the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 26 Feb. 1933.

⁷³⁰ Dollfuß at a meeting of the Christian Social Party Executive and the Provincial Governors, 9 March 1933, 10.30 a.m.: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 140.

Austria's impoverished youth, circumventing parliament in this manner would allow the government a way of tackling the economic crisis, and thereby weakening the Nazis' appeal, although it was obviously anti-democratic.⁷³¹ On 7 March, the government promulgated its first authoritarian measures, limiting the freedom of the press and implementing a ban on marches and public rallies, a move that was overwhelmingly motivated by the spectre of the 'Nazi wave' that was threatening to engulf the country.⁷³²

In the spring of 1933, Dollfuß approached the new German Chancellor offering to steer a course in harmony with *gesamtdeutsch* interests and a few weeks later he entered into discussions with the Austrian NSDAP. The reason why ultimately lies in the fact that the Nazi movement now posed an immediate and palpable threat to Austrian independence. The Austrian NSDAP had powerful allies abroad, and if the government fell and, with German help, the Nazis were to seize the state apparatus in Austria, Anschluss would inevitably follow. Calling new elections was, therefore, out of the question; an issue on which Dollfuß refused to budge in all his discussions with both the Austrian Nazis and the German Reich.⁷³³ 'Hitler and the Nazis think they are clever', Dollfuß observed, 'they won't do anything to initiate Anschluss, but demand new elections so that it happens automatically'.⁷³⁴ However, the government could not simply sit back in the face of escalating agitation on the part of the Austrian Nazis. The problem was that a strong line against the Austrian NSDAP would potentially bring the Dollfuß government into conflict with its powerful German neighbour. Austria, which was already undergoing a severe domestic crisis of its own and had no reliable backers abroad, could simply not afford to be on bad terms with Germany, let alone provoke open conflict. This would make it difficult to keep his pro-German coalition partners, the *Landbund* on board: by mid-March 1933 there were already

⁷³¹ An arrangement in some ways not entirely unlike the *Sozialpartnerschaft* that worked so well in Austria after 1945.

⁷³² Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 9 March 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 132–3. See also *Ministerratsprotokolle* Nr. 851, cited in: Ludwig Jedlicka and Rudolf Neck, eds., *Vom Justizpalast zum Heldenplatz*, 344–48.

⁷³³ See, for example: Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 3 May 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 242. See also: meeting between Langoth, Foppa and Dollfuß, 13 Oct. 1933, Franz Langoth, *Kampf um Österreich: Erinnerungen eines Politikers*, (Wels, 1951), 128 and Dieter Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuß*, 121.

⁷³⁴ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 Apr. 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 229.

credible rumours of negotiations taking place between the *Landbund* and the NSDAP.⁷³⁵ Moreover, it would sit uneasily in a country with widespread pan-German sympathies. It was a battle that, in the long run, Dollfuß could not hope to win. This was obvious to contemporary observers; any contest between Austria and Germany would invariably be an unequal one, Phipps observed, 'if left "tête-à-tête" with Germany it [was] obvious that Austria must sooner or later succumb'.⁷³⁶ Dollfuß's objective then was to play for time; to keep the reigns of government in his hands until the Nazis had discredited themselves in Germany. It was, after all, not inconceivable that the Hitler government would fall. Thus, Austria needed to find a way of riding out the Nazi storm in the hope that it would quickly subside.

One such strategy for diffusing the threat was, counter-intuitively, to be seen to be seeking a rapprochement with Germany. Despite viewing National Socialism with 'deep mistrust', Dollfuß's initial aim appears to have been to maintain normal, cordial relations with Germany, as far as this was possible.⁷³⁷ This decision was a perfectly understandable one, if one remembers that at this early stage there was real hope, and not just in Austria, that governmental responsibility would have a restraining influence on Nazi radicalism and coerce Hitler into more statesmanlike behaviour. Thus, in February 1933, following a friendly exchange of telegrams on Hitler's ascension to the Chancellorship, Dollfuß, under severe French pressure in the wake of the Hirtenberg Affair, approached von Papen, now Vice-Chancellor – via Erwin Wasserbäck, press attaché at the Austrian Legation in Berlin – with the suggestion that Germany step in and cover the French tranche of the Lausanne loan, which France was threatening to withdraw. According to Wasserbäck, who recorded the event in a memorandum the following year, in return for German help, Austria would steer a foreign policy course that was in line with pan-German interests. Hitler's response demonstrated that the new German regime was not inclined to play by the rules: he not only rejected the Austrian proposal outright, he violated the sanctity of Austrian sovereignty by

⁷³⁵ Paulitsch to the Christian Social Party Executive, 22 Mar. 1933; *Ibid.*, 192.

⁷³⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C5958/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Situation in Austria and her relations with other European Powers, 30 Jun. 1933 Minute by R.M.A. Hankey.

⁷³⁷ Alice Rüppel cited in: Gerhard Jagschitz, 'Die Jugend des Bundeskanzlers', 136.

demanding Dollfuß's resignation and new elections.⁷³⁸ Such an ultimatum, Wasserbäck responded, was out of the question; the furthest the Austrian government could go would be including the Greater Germans in the government.⁷³⁹

This event has since been construed as the first of many attempts by the Dollfuß government to 'do a deal with the Nazis'.⁷⁴⁰ Yet, to assess Dollfuß's offer objectively, one must consider the context in which it was made and what exactly Dollfuß was promising. Firstly, it is worth remembering that at this juncture, Dollfuß, the Austrian Foreign Office, indeed the diplomatic corps of all the European powers were still thinking along traditional lines of diplomacy as regards relations with Germany; no-one yet knew what to expect of Hitler once he was in power. Across Europe the attitude was very much 'business as usual' and there was no reason for Austria to behave any differently. After all, no-one could predict how long the new regime in Berlin would last; Hitler could very well have been ousted from office before the year was even out. Indeed, many contemporary observers – George Messersmith, America's Consul-General in Berlin amongst them – doubted the Nazis ability to hold on to power once confronted with the realities of government, with opinions divided well into 1934 on the issue of how long the Nazi system would hold out.⁷⁴¹ Secondly, there is nothing eminently suspicious in Dollfuß's attempts to cultivate better relations with Germany. Dollfuß approaching the new Chancellor as he had von Papen the previous year – and, interestingly, this time through von Papen – was really nothing out of the ordinary as regards Austro-German relations; Germany should have been a natural ally in the face of French pressure over the Hirtenberg Affair. Moreover, there were some signals that Berlin might be amenable to discussing the issue.⁷⁴² Thirdly, there was nothing much new in Dollfuß's offer; rather it was a rehashing of Dollfuß's

⁷³⁸ L. Kerekes, 'Neuer Aktenfund zu den Beziehungen zwischen Hitler und Dollfuß im Jahre 1933', *Acta Historica*, 18 (1972), 153.

⁷³⁹ Dollfuß did not, Wasserbäck asserted, agree to Anschluss with Germany in the meeting as Hitler later claimed.

⁷⁴⁰ Kurt Bauer, "'Strikt nein zu sagen'". *Passim*.

⁷⁴¹ Messersmith was appointed Minister to Austria in 1934. Tauschitz, Austrian Minister in Berlin disagreed with Messersmith's assessment, shared by the Austrian consulate in Cologne (Wildner), about the regime's prognosis for survival. (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 17, Tauschitz to the t (BKA), z1.115/pol 29 May 1933, 'Die politische und wirtschaftliche Lage in Deutschland'.

⁷⁴² (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 16, Tauschitz to the (BKA), z1.62/pol 10 February 1933, 'Hirtenberger Waffenaffäre'.

original proposal to von Papen the previous year when he had sought help for Austria in the form of German participation in the League loan.

Which brings us to the issue of what Dollfuß was offering in return for German support. The conveniently vague promise to steer a foreign policy course in line with pan-German interests – it was in no way made clear what that would actually entail – was hardly sensational given the fact that no Austrian government would want to appear to pursue a foreign policy that went against pan-German interests, even if this were palpably the case. Dollfuß was not promising to sacrifice Austrian interests to German ones, nor was he suggesting tethering Austria's foreign policy to that of Germany's. We know that in the spring of 1933, Dollfuß's overriding intention was to maintain Austria's independence in all directions, Hornbostel noting at the time that Austria

...überhaupt keinen 'Kurs' im landläufigen Sinne aufweist. Sicherlich aber auch keinen französischen Kurs seit Lausanne. Österreichische Außenpolitik beschränkte sich nach wie vor darauf, Österreich durch eine anpassungsfähige und elastische 'Neutralität' nach allen Richtungen hin am Leben zu erhalten.⁷⁴³

This was publically repeated by Dollfuß in Salzburg on 6 May 1933: 'Das einzige Ziel unserer Außenpolitik kann nur sein, die Unabhängigkeit nach allen Seiten zu sichern und dazu beizutragen, daß für die weitere Gestaltung des Schicksals unserer Heimat niemand anderer als wir selbst die Entscheidung zu treffen haben'.⁷⁴⁴ Moreover, Dollfuß was certainly not suggesting a pro-Nazi line; pan-German and Nazi interests were not the same thing, especially not in February 1933, despite Nazi propaganda telling us otherwise. It is also worth remembering that he was not even proposing a pan-German course with a Nazi-dominated government, but with a government dominated by national conservatives with a leading Catholic statesman who was close to President Hindenburg holding the offices of Vice-Chancellor and Reich Commissioner of Prussia – at this juncture only three members of Hitler's cabinet, Hitler included, were affiliated with the NSDAP.⁷⁴⁵ Rather, Dollfuß was simply seeking to re-establish, or to appear willing to re-establish, better relations with Germany –

⁷⁴³ Christian Dörner and Barbara Dörner-Fazeny, *Theodor von Hornbostel 1889–1973*, 56.

⁷⁴⁴ Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 90.

⁷⁴⁵ Richard Evans, J., *Coming of the Third Reich*, 307.

with an obvious nod to those of a more moderate 'national' bent at home –, an objective that can only be understood against the backdrop of the estrangement in Austro-German relations caused by Lausanne and the perceived pro-French course of the previous year.

Wasserbäck's suggestion that the Greater Germans could perhaps be invited to join the government is significant if only because Dollfuß had been pursuing this objective since entering office the previous year. Dollfuß reminded the Christian Social Party Executive just a few weeks earlier that he had 'attempted to reach an accommodation with the Greater Germans for the past half a year', also to no avail.⁷⁴⁶ He had, it will be recalled, even approached the German government on several occasions for help in persuading that party to support his government, also to no avail. So, not only was Dollfuß offering his German opponents something that he himself wanted, but this was also completely in line with previous policy and can hardly be considered a genuine concession to the Nazis or even to the German Reich. The Greater Germans, however, played a wider role in Dollfuß's attempt to improve relations with Germany. According to the German Minister in Vienna, Kurt Rieth – a suspicious character, who, after the '*Machtergreifung*' in the Reich, not being a Nazi, felt he had to be 'more Catholic than the Pope' – by remaining aloof, the Greater Germans were exerting 'invisible pressure' on the Austrian government, and that this was behind the 'unceasing efforts' of Dollfuß and some leading Christian Socials – and even some within the *pendent* leadership – to draw closer to Germany once more.⁷⁴⁷ This development was looked upon with approval by the German legation in Vienna, which ascribed the Greater Germans a central role in furthering German policy interests in Austria, the 'trump card' in advancing the German point of view. Clearly mistrustful of the Dollfuß government and cognizant of the fact that its 'great weakness' was mainly due to the non-participation of the Greater Germans, Rieth essentially encouraged Berlin to continue assisting that party in holding the Dollfuß government to ransom. Instead of supporting Austrian efforts to maintain stability and independence, Rieth appeared to advocate the Greater Germans remaining aloof 'until

⁷⁴⁶ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 12 January 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 57.

⁷⁴⁷ Minister Rieth to State Secretary Bülow, 18 February 1933, Nr. 25. *DGFP C/I*, 52–55. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/ 16640, paper C 3278/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German Relations. Conversation with the Political Director, Theodor Hornbostel, 3 Apr. 1933.

conditions enable them to join a bourgeois government' thereby maintaining the pressure on the Dollfuß government, with the expressed intention of influencing political developments in Austria in a direction favourable to German interests; amongst other ways, by counteracting the pro-French and pro-'Italo-Hungarian' tendencies in Austria's foreign policy and ultimately pushing Austria towards a more pro-German course.⁷⁴⁸

Hitler's ill-mannered reply to Austria's initiative did not bode well for the Austrian government, and was followed by increasingly vociferous attacks against the Dollfuß government from over the border, which naturally emboldened their Austrian counterparts to greater acts of rebellion.⁷⁴⁹ It was against this backdrop that Dollfuß sanctioned the establishment of contact with the Austrian Nazis. The paucity of sources means that establishing Dollfuß's motivation for doing so is difficult. It is not clear whether he was seriously considering bringing them into a coalition, attempting to outmanoeuvre his political opponents (and even allies) at home and abroad, searching for a way out of the impasse that his government found itself in, or merely playing for time.

One of Dollfuß's likely motivations in talking to the Austrian Nazis was to investigate whether there was any way of diffusing the potential for coming into serious conflict with Berlin. This can be inferred from Dollfuß's report to the Christian Social Party Executive following his first meeting with Habicht at the end of April: the 'advantage' of accepting Habicht's offer – a 'black-brown' coalition under Christian Social leadership and elections in the autumn – was an alleviation of the government's position vis-à-vis the German Reich.⁷⁵⁰ The question was, Dollfuß continued, whether this would actually prove advantageous and whether it would actually alleviate the present situation? The answer was clearly no; a coalition was, he

⁷⁴⁸ Rieth advocated providing the Greater Germans with financial assistance, on account of the fact that their current financial difficulties stemmed from their non-participation in government, 'a position they took up, according to Rieth, 'chiefly in the interests of German policy'. Minister Rieth to State Secretary Bülow, 18 February, 1933, Nr. 25. *DGFP C/I*, 52–55.

⁷⁴⁹ The *Reichspost* reports how on 18 March 1933, the Nazi Justice Minister in Bavaria, Hans Frank, held a speech threatening the Austrian government, 'etwa uns zu veranlassen, die Sicherung der Freiheit unserer deutschen Volksgenossen in Oesterreich vorzunehmen'. 'Ein netter Nachbar in Bayern', *Reichspost*, 20 March 1933, on further attacks in the Reich German press: 'Der Vorwand für alles', *Reichspost*, 21 Mar. 1933, 1–2.

⁷⁵⁰ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 3 May 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 242.

reasoned, 'out of the question'. The failure to fight the Nazis would mean that the Christian Socials would not be able to shield their supporters from them and the result would likely be the collapse of the Dollfuß 'Front'. Yet Dollfuß did not believe the Nazis should be rejected outright: 'Strikt nein zu sagen halte ich nicht für gut, sondern sozusagen Bedingungen stellen'. If, for example, the Nazis were prepared to strengthen the anti-Marxist course, this could possibly be discussed. Does that mean Dollfuß was genuinely open to a coalition with the Nazis? Not necessarily. The reasoning could very likely have been tactical; why say no when you can say maybe, especially when it is highly unlikely that your conditions will ever be met? Moreover, a 'blunt rejection' would hardly help ease the escalating tension with Berlin.⁷⁵¹

Dollfuß's conversation with the Hungarian Foreign Minister Kálmán Kánya in late March provides some further clues. Dollfuß was hoping to pressure the Socialists into agreeing to a radical overhaul of the constitution, and the knowledge that he could combine with the Nazis was, Dollfuß told Kánya, his strongest weapon.⁷⁵² However, the fact that Dollfuß suggests to Kánya that he would no doubt eventually pursue a settlement with the Nazis, thus giving Kánya the impression that Dollfuß ultimately anticipated a 'brown-black' coalition, should not be taken at face value. Not only do we have no way of proving or disproving whether this was the case, on 6 April, Dollfuß contradicted this contention when he declared in a meeting of the Christian Social Party Executive that abandoning his coalition partners the *Heimwehr* and the *Landbund* to rule with the Nazis was out of the question.⁷⁵³ Indeed, at no point does Dollfuß appear willing to abandon the *Heimwehr* in favour of the Nazis. The only thing he would realistically consider at this juncture was the Nazis reinforcing the government 'Front', although this was somewhat academic as it was 'unlikely that the Nazis would give up their fight against the bourgeois parties'.⁷⁵⁴ One can only speculate as to why Dollfuß found it necessary to give the Hungarians this impression; the answer possibly lies in the fact that Hungary and Italy were, at this point, actively

⁷⁵¹ As described by Paulitsch in his comments to the Christian Social Party Executive, 3 May 1933: Ibid, 243.

⁷⁵² Cited in: Kurt Bauer, "Strikt nein zu sagen", 87.

⁷⁵³ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 6 April 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 217–18.

⁷⁵⁴ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 6 April 1933: Ibid, 217–18.

petitioning Hitler to rein in the Austrian Nazis and support the Dollfuß government. Dollfuß could work on the assumption that Kánya's account of their conversation would reach Mussolini in Rome. We cannot, therefore, be certain that Dollfuß was genuinely seeking an understanding with the Nazis as he may simply have been using Kánya to get a message through to Mussolini.

There was also an economic dimension to Dollfuß's decision to talk to the Austrian Nazis, at least in the spring of 1933. In their meeting at the end of April, Habicht made it clear to Dollfuß that Austro-German commercial policy would be dependent on relations between the Austrian government and the Austrian NSDAP.⁷⁵⁵ Habicht's threat can only be wholly understood against the backdrop of Austro-German trade relations during the previous year. In March 1932, Germany had offered Austria unilateral trade preferences, but as of the spring of 1933 and Hitler's ascension to the Chancellorship, the negotiations for a commercial treaty between the two countries had not been concluded. In February 1933, Dollfuß noted how the negotiations had come to a standstill, but he remained of the opinion that a good outcome was possible.⁷⁵⁶ Dollfuß continued to push for the conclusion of the treaty until at least mid-May, even though, by that point, it was obvious that the Nazis were spoiling for a fight and the attitude taken by the German government towards Austria was already deemed 'quite intolerable'.⁷⁵⁷ On 13 May, Hans Frank, the Nazi Minister for Justice for Bavaria, had arrived in Vienna against the expressed wishes of the Austrian government to take part in the Nazi *Türkenbefreiungsfeier*; Frank was eventually expelled from Austria by Dollfuß, having been informed on his arrival in Vienna that his presence in Austria was not desired by the Austrian government. On the one hand, the motivation for pursuing the treaty was economic: Germany was by far Austria's most important trading partner. The British Minister pointed out that

⁷⁵⁵ Dollfuß speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive, 3. May 1933: Ibid, 242.

⁷⁵⁶ Dollfuß speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive, 21 February 1933: Ibid, 119.*

⁷⁵⁷ Sometime around 15 May, Tauschitz, the Austrian Minister in Berlin, asked Ministerialdirektor Ritter of the German Foreign Ministry when it would be possible to take up the negotiations; clearly embarrassed, Ritter could only splutter, 'yes, it is very difficult'. (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 15, Tauschitz to the (BKA), z1.126/pol 15 May 1933, 'Besuch der deutschen Minister in Wien' (Karl Ritter, specialist for economic and commercial matters at the German Foreign Ministry). Dollfuß's reasons for telling Frank his visit was not desired are explained in: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C4481/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Visit by Hans Frank, 16 May 1933.

'Austria knew that, in the long run, it could neither do without Germany nor cut itself adrift, in trade with a country whose share in this country's imports and exports is in the neighbourhood of 20 per cent in each case.'⁷⁵⁸ Yet, there was also a strategic element to it. Signing such a treaty would be seen as the practical realization of friendship with Germany – and thus, albeit obliquely, German endorsement of the Austrian government.⁷⁵⁹ Hence, Dollfuß's announcement to his Christian Social colleagues on the 20 April that he was contemplating travelling to Berlin, the ostensible purpose of this visit being to sign the Austro-German commercial treaty.⁷⁶⁰ His suggestion met with disapproval from some of his colleagues because they thought it would be seen as 'bowing before the Swastika'.⁷⁶¹ This may well have been good political advice, yet perhaps it was not such a foolish move on Dollfuß's part after all. Ross points out that a refusal to sign the treaty, the negotiations for which were almost complete, put Hitler in a difficult position as it was impossible to conceal that the conclusion of the treaty was being refused for purely political reasons.⁷⁶² Dollfuß was likely trying to pin the blame for the breakdown in negotiations on Hitler, thereby ensuring that Hitler could not pin the blame on him. At home and abroad Dollfuß was then in a position to say that he was not the one being unreasonable.

Although avoiding conflict with Germany was Dollfuß's primary concern, there were also internal pressures at play. His *Landbund* coalition partners, for example, were not fundamental opponents of the Nazis, which may have put pressure on Dollfuß to at least appear willing to keep the lines of communication open.⁷⁶³ Dollfuß's contact to the *Landesinspekteur* of the Austrian NSDAP, Theo Habicht, ran through Anton Rintelen, his Minister for Education, who had, by his own account, maintained

⁷⁵⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 113.

⁷⁵⁹ Dollfuß speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 233. This is also mentioned in Ross: Dieter Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuß*, 31–32.

⁷⁶⁰ Memorandum by the Foreign Minister, 27 April 1933, No. 191, note 2, *DGFP C/I*, 351.

⁷⁶¹ Aigner speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 234.

⁷⁶² Dieter Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuß*, 32. Memorandum by the Director in Charge of Economic Negotiations, No. 187, 25 April 1933, *DGFP C/I*, 346.

⁷⁶³ Neck in response to discussion on: Rudolf Neck, 'Thesen zum Februar. Ursprünge, Verlauf und Folgen', in ed., Ludwig Jedlicka *Das Jahr 1934: 12. Februar. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 5. Februar 1974* (Vienna, 1975).

contact with Habicht throughout the spring of 1933 with Dollfuß's knowledge and approval.⁷⁶⁴ Although we have no reason to doubt Rintelen's claim that he did so with Dollfuß's knowledge, Rintelen's account needs to be approached with caution; he was, after all, very much following his own agenda and would have undoubtedly remained in contact with Habicht with or without Dollfuß's blessing. Rintelen was certainly not someone that Dollfuß could trust, on the contrary he was, as Neck pointed out in 1975, Dollfuß's most dangerous rival in the Christian Social Party.⁷⁶⁵ Deemed by Dollfuß's supporters as of 'doubtful loyalty', Rintelen had long had his eyes on the Chancellorship and his ambition to oust Dollfuß, whether with the help of the *Heimwehr* or the National Socialists became an open secret as the year progressed.⁷⁶⁶ This raises the question of why Dollfuß would trust him to mediate with the Nazis. We have no way of verifying what Dollfuß's motives were here, or what kind of pressure Rintelen was bringing to bear on him. However, from the British Minister, we do know that Rintelen was, along with Winkler, one of the most influential members of the cabinet, and therefore not someone Dollfuß could easily control or ignore.⁷⁶⁷ We also know he was an ardent advocate of reaching some kind of accommodation with the Nazis, claiming in his wartime memoirs that he threatened to resign from the cabinet if the conflict with the National Socialists were not reassessed.⁷⁶⁸ Even allowing for a degree of grandstanding – his memoirs were published in Germany in 1941 – we have no reason to doubt Rintelen's growing pro-Nazi sentiments and his desire to bring about an understanding between the Nazis

⁷⁶⁴ Anton Rintelen, *Erinnerungen an Österreichs Weg: Versailles, Berchtesgaden, Grossdeutschland*, (Munich, 1941), 215.

⁷⁶⁵ Rudolf Neck, 'Thesen zum Februar', 18.

⁷⁶⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16648, paper C8019/7870/3, Sir W. Selby, Changes in Austrian Diplomatic Service, 30 Aug. 1933. Eric Phipps was transferred from his post as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Vienna in 1933, to become Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Berlin (1933–37). For example, 'Bülow spoke well of Rintelen as a possible future Chancellor: he is certainly pro-German and an intriguer', Letter to Sargent from Phipps in Berlin: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C8977/2092/3, Sir E. (Berlin) Phipps, Austro-German Relations, 5 October 1933. Rath also reveals that in the coalition negotiations of May 1932, the Styrian *Heimwehr* had declared they would only support a coalition headed by Rintelen. R. John Rath, 'The Democratic Prelude', 166.

⁷⁶⁷ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 68.

⁷⁶⁸ '...daß mein weiteres Verbleiben nicht in Betracht komme, wenn der Konflikt mit dem Nationalsozialismus nicht bereinigt werde. Ich sei aber bereit, die Einleitung der notwendigen Verhandlungen zu übernehmen. Dollfuß schien erleichtert; ob wegen meiner Bereitschaft zur Verhandlungsführung oder wegen meiner Rücktrittsabsicht – lasse ich dahingestellt'. Anton Rintelen, *Erinnerungen*.

and the Austrian government. We know from Richard Schmitz that the first meeting between the Christian Socials and the National Socialists that took place in early April was 'facilitated' by Rintelen.⁷⁶⁹ Most conspicuous is the fact that Rintelen left the cabinet just a few weeks after these negotiations had taken place.⁷⁷⁰ While Rintelen maintained in his post-war memoirs that he resigned, Dollfuß suggested that he was actually ousted from the cabinet, telling the British Minister that he got rid of Rintelen because of his intrigues with the Nazis.⁷⁷¹ One of Dollfuß's strategies at this juncture may have been to keep a channel open to the Austrian NSDAP, but only on his own terms. Rintelen's departure from the cabinet also highlights a fundamental problem with judging what happened during this period; one cannot be sure why Rintelen left the cabinet, was he ousted or did he resign? We do know that a few months later Dollfuß went even further, effectively 'banishing' Rintelen – the 'jackal' as the British Minister saw fit to describe him – to Rome, possibly with the hope of 'immunising him'.⁷⁷² Rintelen's appointment to be Austrian Minister at the Quirinal was said to be on the personal wishes of the Chancellor; there he could be 'more conveniently and effectively "looked after"...the first move in an astute game of internal politics'.⁷⁷³ Put into context, Dollfuß's sanctioning of Rintelen's communication with Habicht in the spring of 1933 looks less like an explicit political objective and more like a tactical manoeuvre in a complex and murky political game.

Rintelen's personal motives notwithstanding, as a consequence of his mediation, and at the Nazis' request, sometime in late March, early April a committee of Christian Socials – Rintelen the facilitator, Schuschnigg and Buresch – met with Habicht and Proksch.⁷⁷⁴ Habicht proposed a Christian Social-National Socialist coalition, on

⁷⁶⁹ Erika Weinzierl, 'Aus den Notizen von Richard Schmitz zur österreichischen Innenpolitik im Frühjahr 1933', in eds. Gerhard Botz, et al. *Geschichte und Gesellschaft: Festschrift für Karl R. Stadler zum 60. Geburtstag* (Vienna, 1974), 129.

⁷⁷⁰ On 24 May 1933.

⁷⁷¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C4767/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Request for assistance from H.M.'s Government, 23 May 1933.

⁷⁷² ...ready to fall on Dollfuß, 'should an opportunity occur'. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16639, paper C10547/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Political Situation in Austria, 28 Nov. 1933 and (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para., 22.

⁷⁷³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16648, paper C8019/7870/3, Sir W. Selby, Changes in Austrian Diplomatic Service, 30 Aug. 1933.

⁷⁷⁴ Alfred Proksch, (8 Mar 1891–3 Ja. 1981), born in Silesia was Gauleiter of Upper Austria and administrative *Landesleiter* of the Austrian NSDAP.

condition that the *Heimwehr* be excluded from government and that new elections be called. The discussions ended in stalemate, with the Christian Socials rejecting the Nazis' proposal. Not only were new elections out of the question – this would only benefit the National Socialists and the government knew it – but also on the grounds of loyalty to their *Heimwehr* partners. This demonstrable gesture was met with open disparagement, with Habicht pointing out that 'the other party [the *Heimwehr*] was, to his knowledge, not so modest on the issue of loyalty'.⁷⁷⁵ Rather, the *Heimwehr*, who were negotiating separately with the Nazis, were talking about jumping ship.⁷⁷⁶

Thus, Habicht's comment perhaps hints at another key motivation for the meeting and a link that Bauer does not make in his article – the *Heimwehr* looked like they might be preparing to abandon the government and throw in their lot with the Nazis.⁷⁷⁷ This would hardly have come as much of a surprise as sections of the movement, including Starhemberg himself, had been openly flirting on and off with the National Socialists for years. A participant in the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich in 1923, Starhemberg had met with Hitler in the summer of 1930 and discussed the possibility of an alliance between the *Heimwehr* and the NSDAP in Austria; the Nazi leader made, by his own admission, 'a great impression' on him.⁷⁷⁸ That same year, in the wake of the Nazi electoral breakthrough in Germany, Starhemberg had also met with Himmler and again discussed the possibility of co-operation between the *Heimwehr* and the NSDAP.⁷⁷⁹ And as late as April 1932, just weeks before entering into coalition negotiations with Dollfuß and despite publically criticising the National Socialists, Starhemberg had travelled to Berlin where he conferred with Nazi leaders and met with Hitler for the last time.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁵ Schuschnigg, cited in: Kurt Bauer, "Strikt nein zu sagen", 87.

⁷⁷⁶ Erika Weinzierl, 'Notizen', 129.

⁷⁷⁷ While Bauer does reference Dollfuß describing how the threat of coalition could be used against the Social Democrats, he fails to draw the conclusion that the same threat could be used to keep the *Heimwehr* in place.

⁷⁷⁸ Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Memoiren* 74–75.

⁷⁷⁹ Negotiations collapsed because Hitler rejected Starhemberg's claim to leadership of the alliance. Anna Maria Sigmund, Anna Maria Sigmund, 'Für oder gegen die Nazis?', *Wiener Zeitung*, 9 Dec. 2011, (2011) 4 Dec. 2012

⁷⁸⁰ Ibid. Starhemberg contended that he had, at this juncture, disagreed with Hitler's stance on Austria, promising that he would 'vigorously oppose the aspirations of the Austrian National Socialists'. 'Und ich

The flirtation did not end with the *Heimwehr's* adoption of governmental responsibility.⁷⁸¹ The threat of an understanding between the Starhemberg *Heimwehr* and the Nazis was a serious one and in the spring of 1933 the air was once again rife with rumours of a *Heimwehr* putsch.⁷⁸² On 9 March, the *Heimwehr's* pro-Nazi wing, the Styrian *Heimatschutz* formalized co-operation with the Austrian NSDAP by joining them in forming the Pan-German Front.⁷⁸³ In a secret meeting held the following day, Starhemberg declared that an agreement with the Nazis was necessary if the collapse of the *Heimwehr* was to be avoided.⁷⁸⁴ Dollfuß was bound to have known something of the extent of Starhemberg's duplicity. Aigner's comments to the Christian Social Party Executive on 22 March about the machinations going on 'behind the back of the Federal Chancellor and the government', make it clear that he was well aware of the negotiations between the *Heimatschutz* and the NSDAP, as well as rumours that Starhemberg was willing to resign if he posed an obstacle to the union of those two groups.⁷⁸⁵ He also knew about a meeting that took place on 13 March in Berlin between Hermann Göring and the two *Heimwehr* leaders, Franz Hueber – Göring's brother-in-law – and Waldemar Pabst, to discuss bringing the Austrian NSDAP into government, as the meeting was reported in the pro-Nazi *Deutschösterreichische Tages-Zeitung* (Dötz). As we know that Dollfuß had no intention of abandoning the *Heimwehr* in favour of the National Socialists – that would have been jumping out of the frying pan into the fire, the aim was always to keep them in –, Dollfuß's decision that the Christian Socials enter into their own negotiations with the Austrian Nazis only to demonstrably reject their conditions, must be understood, in part, as a tactical

sage Ihnen daher ganz offen, daß ich mich mit aller Energie den Bestrebungen der österreichischen Nationalsozialisten entgegenstemmen werde'; Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Memoiren* 123.

⁷⁸¹ In January 1933, negotiations between the *Heimwehr* and the *Stahlhelm* were on-going, with Wilhelm Engerth, Consul General in Munich, forewarning Vienna that this would open up a new channel for the German government to influence Austrian domestic affairs, if the *Stahlhelm* were to lend its support to the government. (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 16, GK/M) to the (BKA), I/pol. 8 Jan. 1933, 'Politik der Heimwehren, Veröffentlichung Dr Richard Steidles'.

⁷⁸² Erika Weinzierl, 'Notizen', 127.

⁷⁸³ Other pan-German formations quickly followed suit, including the Greater Germans just two months later. Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 82–3.

⁷⁸⁴ Staudinger, cited in: Kurt Bauer, "'Strikt nein zu sagen'", 86.

⁷⁸⁵ Josef Aigner to the Christian Social Party Executive, 22 March 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 191–2.

manoeuvre on the domestic chessboard and not as an attempt at a genuine political realignment.

All Roads Lead to Rome – The Search for Allies

Hueber met Göring again on 5 April at Starhemberg's behest, which led to rumours of a plan to oust Dollfuß and instigate a government of national concentration – Nazis, Styrian *Heimatschutz* and the national fraction of the *Heimwehr* – all with Italian agreement. This information prompted, at least in part, Dollfuß's snap decision to fly to Rome to meet with Mussolini at Easter 1933.⁷⁸⁶ He had originally planned to travel after Easter with the aim of concluding the negotiations for the Austrian concordat, but this was, according to Richard Schmitz, hurriedly brought forward on account of pressure coming from Berlin and 'certain news' of 'plans to flood Austria with National Socialist propaganda, to overthrow Dollfuß and make the Anschluss by peaceful means – all of this apparently with the knowledge and approval of Mussolini and the Vatican'.⁷⁸⁷ Thus, the sole motivation for Dollfuß's trip was to find a way to stave off the escalating Nazi threat. In Rome, Dollfuß set about ensuring that Mussolini would not betray Austria to Hitler; 'it was desirable', the Secretary-General of the Federal Chancellery told Phipps, 'that the latter should not derive his impressions of things Austrian solely from the German Ministers now in Rome'.⁷⁸⁸

The Vatican's stance vis-à-vis National Socialism was critical to the Austrian government: if the Holy See proved to be too accommodating to Hitler, and if Nazi Germany was seen to publically receive the Pope's blessing, the Austrian government

⁷⁸⁶ Hornbostel also told the British Minister, Eric Phipps, about efforts by the German National Socialists to bring about an understanding with the Starhemberg Heimwehr with a view to ousting Dollfuß and instigating a National Socialist-Heimwehr coalition. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C3527/3311/3, Sir E. Phipps, Visit of Austrian Chancellor to Rome, 18 Apr. 1933. See also: Kurt Bauer, "'Strikt nein zu sagen'", 87; and Dollfuß speaking at the meeting of the Christian Social Party Executive on 20 April 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 227–8.

⁷⁸⁷ Cited in: Erika Weinzierl, *Die österreichischen Konkordate von 1855 und 1933*, (Vienna, 1960), 213. Negotiations for the Austrian concordat had been underway since 1931 and were yet to be concluded, despite significant pressure from the Vatican, even though, as Dollfuß pointedly noted, the Vatican had 'more time than anyone else in the world'. See: Dollfuß, to the Christian Social Party Executive, 12 January 1933 and 6 April 1933; Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 60, 218. Richard Schmitz, (14 Dec. 1885–27 Apr. 1954), CSP, Minister for Social Affairs (21 Sep. 1933–16 Feb 1934), Minister without portfolio, (16 Feb 1934–10 Jul 1934.), Major of Vienna, (1934–1938).

⁷⁸⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C3522/3311/3, Sir E. Phipps, Visit of Austrian Chancellor to Rome. Conversation with Peter, 17 Apr. 1933.

would lose a key justification for rejecting National Socialism. Thus, the news, on 7 April, that von Papen was on his way to Rome to initiate discussions for a concordat between the Holy See and Germany that would 'anchor the new government to Christian principles' was viewed with serious alarm by the Christian Socials, who feared that the Vatican would sacrifice Austria in the clamour to come to an arrangement with the Reich.⁷⁸⁹ They had watched with concern as the Holy See resigned itself to events in Germany, the destruction of political Catholicism and the realities of Nazi rule. The danger was that it would take the same attitude towards Austria, abandoning the Christian Socials in the same way that it had the *Partito Popolare* in Italy as part of the agreement surrounding the 1929 Lateran Treaty, or as it was about to abandon the Centre Party as a condition of the *Reichskonkordat*.⁷⁹⁰

Dollfuß set about convincing Pacelli and the Pope that the continued existence of the Christian Social Party in Austria was in Rome's best interests.⁷⁹¹ Germany may have already fallen to the Nazis, but Austria, a 'bulwark of German Catholicism', remained in demonstrably Catholic hands – not only was Dollfuß willing to sign a concordat, he was planning to integrate it into the new constitution.⁷⁹² However, Dollfuß argued, it was vital that the Vatican maintain its support for political Catholicism in that country. In Austria the National Socialists were the spiritual heirs of the *Los von Rom* movement and, for this reason, it was crucial that the Church refrain from displaying any kind of tolerance towards the Nazis, as without the internal restraint imposed by the Church, Austria's youth, he warned, would go over to the Nazis.⁷⁹³ Rather, he stressed, the Vatican should support the Christian Socials, a point that was made 'repeatedly', and 'in various ways' to ensure that the message came across.⁷⁹⁴ Moreover, he sought to impress on Pacelli that the removal of the clergy

⁷⁸⁹ Franz von Papen cited in: Erika Weinzierl, *Konkordate*, 212.

⁷⁹⁰ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 233.

⁷⁹¹ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, *Ibid*, 231–32. Eugenio Maria Giuseppe Giovanni Pacelli, (2 Mar. 1876–9 Oct. 1958), Papal Nuncio to Bavaria (1917–1925), Prussia, (1925–30) and Germany (1920–30) Cardinal Secretary of State (1930–1939), Pope Pius XII (1939–1958). For conflicting assessments of Pius XIII see, John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope. The Secret History of Pius XII*, (London, 1999) and Ronald J. Rychlak, *Hitler, the War, and the Pope*, (Huntington, 2010)

⁷⁹² Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 232.

⁷⁹³ 'innere Hemmung', Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, *Ibid*, 231.

⁷⁹⁴ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, *Ibid*, 231.

from German political life, for which, Dollfuß learned, Göring and von Papen were lobbying 'with fine words and promises', would be a disaster if it were implemented in Austria. Although, he insisted, no-one there was advocating politics being led only by the clergy, this ran the danger of fostering alienation towards the Church within the Christian Social Party.⁷⁹⁵

The Vatican's response was, at this juncture at least, reassuring. Concerns that it would abandon Austria, that it would adopt a wait-and-see attitude out of consideration for Germany, or would simply sit back and see who came out on top were, according to Dollfuß, unfounded.⁷⁹⁶ The Christian Socials need not have feared that the Vatican would try to push them into an accommodation with the Nazis. Rather, he was given to understand by the Vatican that it was his decisive action that had saved Austria from the fate of both Italy and Germany, where the Catholic parties had fallen victim to the new regimes; in short, the Vatican had not abandoned political Catholicism in Austria, as it had elsewhere, because of the satisfactory course that events in Austria had taken.⁷⁹⁷ As far as the Vatican was concerned, Bolshevism was the key political issue; everything that so much as bordered on it was considered '*das Übel*' and would find no understanding.⁷⁹⁸ Thus, it was not only pressure from Mussolini that precluded an accommodation between Dollfuß and the Socialists; to keep the Vatican onside, the Austrian government would have to have maintained its strongly anti-Socialist stance. Those who argue Dollfuß should have sought a coalition with the Social Democrats ignore the fact that an objection from Rome to such a proposal would have destroyed the Christian Social Party and that its destruction would have meant the collapse of the Dollfuß government, a development which would only have benefited the Nazis.

The Austrian concordat, like the *Reichskonkordat* had a clear legitimising function; by signing it, Dollfuß argued, 'the Holy See had further indicated its

⁷⁹⁵ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, *Ibid*, 232.

⁷⁹⁶ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, *Ibid*, 233.

⁷⁹⁷ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, *Ibid*, 233.

⁷⁹⁸ Pacelli's anti-Communist stance is well documented. As Cornwell notes, despite 'Pacelli's distaste for the explicit racism of National Socialism, his fears were overshadowed by the known aggression and goals of Communism'. John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope*, 112.

recognition of an independent and self-supporting Austria'.⁷⁹⁹ Yet, it had also signed a concordat with Nazi Germany and Dollfuß needed a clear signal to the German-speaking world that, despite this, the Vatican had not abandoned Austria or the Christian Socials, and that it would continue to provide the Austrian government with tangible moral support. Troubled by rumours that Hitler and his entourage were planning to participate in the *Katholikentag* scheduled to be held in Austria in September that year, Dollfuß requested that the Vatican send a papal legate – ideally Pacelli himself – as a 'guest of the government', the idea being to have someone with enough legitimacy to eclipse Hitler.⁸⁰⁰ However, as the *Katholikentag* was a purely ecclesiastical affair over which the government had no real jurisdiction, Dollfuß invited Pacelli to the *Staatliche Türkenbefreiungsfeier* that was being held at the same time. Yet this was more than just about a potential propaganda coup; in the escalating conflict between 'Catholic' Austria and 'Godless' Nazi Germany, it was crucial to communicate to the Catholic population of Austria that the Holy See was behind the Dollfuß government.

The problem was, it turned out that it was not altogether clear whose side that was. Despite Dollfuß promising extensive concessions that would allow the Church major influence in state affairs, the Vatican continued to push its own agenda, even when this meant weakening Dollfuß in his fight against the National Socialists. Complaints from the Vatican about the speed at which the ratification of the Austrian concordat were progressing – ratification required the consent of the *Nationalrat* but parliamentary rule had been suspended – compared unfavourably with the palpable ease with which the *Reichskonkordat* was pushed through; the Austrian concordat was signed first – on 5 June – but was not ratified until 1 May the following year. In a striking coincidence, the ratification of the *Reichskonkordat* took place on 10 September, coinciding with the *Allgemeine Deutsche Katholikentag* being held in Vienna – which the Nazis had already done their best to sabotage with their *Tausend-Mark-Sperre* – an event used by Dollfuß as a platform for the proclamation of his Christian Corporate State. This was a real embarrassment for Dollfuß, who, in a speech before the

⁷⁹⁹ Dollfuß's statement on his return from his trip to Rome to sign the concordat. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16646, paper C5337/3311/3, Sir E. Phipps, Results of Austrian Chancellor's visit to Rome, 7 Jun. 1933.

⁸⁰⁰ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 231–32. La Fontaine, Patriarch of Venice was eventually sent as legate.

Cardinal Legate that very same day, attempted to pacify the Vatican by emphasising the fact that although the Austrian Treaty had not been signed, this was nothing but a mere formality, as, in practice, the Austrian concordat was already in effect.⁸⁰¹

Worried that Reich German success in achieving a concordat with the Vatican would look like a victory for National Socialism, Dollfuß requested that the Vatican make it clear through its press that the agreement was between the Holy See and the German Reich, not with National Socialism, and at the same time emphasize the 'special relationship' between Austria and the Catholic Church.⁸⁰² The Vatican responded reluctantly, agreeing to a display of public approval vis-à-vis Austria, but refusing to speak out against National Socialism in the manner that the Austrians had requested.⁸⁰³ Instead, with the Austrian concordat still not ratified, the Vatican escalated its own demands. Pacelli, in response to wishes put forward by the Austrian bishops, started pushing for the negotiations to be re-opened on the issue of confessional schools – as provided for in the *Reichskonkordat* –, a demand that became more emphatic in the wake of the February civil war. Otherwise, Bishop Waitz – who was unhappy with the concordat – argued, the Nazis could maintain that they would go further towards meeting Catholic requirements than the Christian Social Austrian government.⁸⁰⁴ Sensing Dollfuß's weakened position, the Vatican pushed for improvements to the concordat, arguing that the changed political circumstances now meant that the path was finally clear to fulfil those of the Vatican's wishes that were originally rejected due to parliamentary considerations.⁸⁰⁵ Although the Austrian government initially refused to modify the concordat that it had already signed, it ultimately conceded to these further demands, as it was hardly in a position to refuse.

No matter how wide-reaching the concession, it was all to no avail. The Church ultimately decided to pursue the same policy towards the Christian Socials as it had in Germany towards the Centre; in December 1933, in a move 'universally

⁸⁰¹ 'Wichtige Mitteilungen und Erklärungen des Bundeskanzlers', *Reichspost*, 10 Sep. 1933, 4.

⁸⁰² Josef Kremsmair, *Der Weg zum österreichischen Konkordat von 1933/34*, (Vienna, 1980), 303.

⁸⁰³ '...lehnte es aber ab, sich in der von Österreich gewünschten Weise gegen den Nationalsozialismus zu äußern...' The Vatican did eventually release a statement asserting that the concordat did not endorse Nazi teachings, but only in response to reports in the Reich German to this effect. *Ibid*, 302–3.

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 305. Sigismund Waitz (29 May 1864–30 Oct. 1941), Archbishop of Salzburg from 1934–1941.

⁸⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 306–9.

regarded as a severe blow to the Christian Social Party, which [did] not seem to have even been consulted beforehand', the Austrian Episcopate announced a 'temporary' withdrawal of permission for the Catholic clergy to take part in public life.⁸⁰⁶ Not only did this undermine the beleaguered Austrian government and provide ammunition to its Nazi opponents, it indicated that the Vatican had effectively withdrawn its support, a conclusion that the Christian Social press attempted to head off by 'recalling the numerous pronouncements of Catholic dignitaries in favour of the present régime'.⁸⁰⁷

However, on his return from Rome in mid-April, Dollfuß's hand was, for the time being, strengthened and Dollfuß agreed to a face-to-face meeting with Habicht to investigate what it would take for the Austrian Nazis to cease their agitation against the Dollfuß government. Habicht suggested a coalition under Christian Social leadership and new elections in the autumn, with the assurance that the Austrian Nazis would commit themselves to a coalition even if they won more mandates in that election, and that they would not direct their election campaign against the Christian Socials.⁸⁰⁸ The Chancellor would be a Christian Social, as a Nazi would cause difficulties abroad. The offer was laced with a barely-concealed threat: Austria's relationship to Germany, Habicht warned, would be dependent on the government's relationship with the Austrian NSDAP, and that there were only two choices for relations between the Christian Socials and the Nazis, war or peace.⁸⁰⁹

Dollfuß returned to the Christian Social Party Executive and informed them of Habicht's terms. In his article, Bauer suggests that Dollfuß's 'carefully implied possibility' of a coalition with the Nazis, which demonstrated his 'ambivalent stance vis-à-vis the National Socialists', was vehemently rejected by the party's heavyweights, Bauer agreeing with Goldinger's conclusion that the Party Executive arrested [*deutlich bremste*] Dollfuß in his attempts to build bridges to the Nazis.⁸¹⁰ The first thing to say is that the nature of the evidence – Dollfuß's report to the Christian Social Party

⁸⁰⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16639, paper C10986/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Situation in Austria; Withdrawal of Clergy from Public Life, 9 Dec. 1933.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁸ See: Dollfuß speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive on 3 May 1933; Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 241.

⁸⁰⁹ See: Dollfuß speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive on 3 May 1933; Ibid, 241–2.

⁸¹⁰ Kurt Bauer, "'Strikt nein zu sagen'", 89–90.

Executive – allows, because of its odd syntax, in parts at least, for seriously divergent interpretations and it is impossible to say with any certainty what Dollfuß is actually saying. Yet two points are wholly unambiguous. Firstly, Dollfuß was clearly not taken in by Nazi blandishments: the advantage of Habicht's offer, Dollfuß noted, was the possibility that it might ease the tensions with Berlin, yet he does not really believe that this would actually happen.⁸¹¹ Secondly, it suggests that Dollfuß recognized the danger posed by the Nazi movement while it was growing and would not countenance a deal with the Nazis while they were in a position of strength: 'wenn die NS einmal sehen daß sie über eine Gewisse Grenze nicht hinwegkommen, werden sie es sich überlegen'.⁸¹²

Thus, Dollfuß appears to be suggesting to the Christian Social Party that it must somehow hold out until the Nazis realize that they will not be able to make further headway and are forced to reconsider their position, perhaps with the hope of then drawing some of them in after they had become more amenable due to lack of political progress. However, this does not mean that Dollfuß was ambivalent towards the Nazis; he was not seeking a coalition with them, on the contrary, he was trying to find a way of neutralizing the threat that they posed and a way of weathering the storm. He rejected the idea of co-operating with them when they were in a position of strength precisely because he knew that the Nazis' objective was to destroy the Christian Social Party, his government and the Austrian state. He was under no illusions about why the Nazis wanted a coalition. Hence his conclusion, 'daß in der gegenwärtigen Lage, so freundlich das Angebot aussehen möchte gegenüber der Christlichsozialen Partei, dieses Angebot auf Koalition nicht in Frage kommen kann.'⁸¹³ However, as parts of the government 'Front' thought that the Nazis could be co-opted and might question the wisdom of ruling out any form of contact, Dollfuß avoids a clear statement that there would be no co-operation under any circumstances – 'strikt nein zu Sagen, halte ich nicht für gut' – to retain maximum strategic flexibility in every direction.⁸¹⁴ This had the particular advantage of leaving the impression open to the

⁸¹¹ See: Dollfuß speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive on 3 May 1933; Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 242.

⁸¹² Dollfuß speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive on 3 May 1933: Ibid, 242.

⁸¹³ Dollfuß speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive on 3 May 1933: Ibid, 242.

⁸¹⁴ Dollfuß speaking to the Christian Social Party Executive on 3 May 1933: Ibid, 242.

Germans that Dollfuß might one day be ready for an understanding with the National Socialists.

The result of turning down Habicht's offer was an escalation of tension between the Dollfuß government and the Austrian Nazis on the one hand, and Nazi Germany on the other. Believing that a coalition with the left would bring down his government and destroy the Christian Social Party, Dollfuß tried to get out of the impasse without handing the reins of power to the Nazis. As a show of strength, Dollfuß came out strongly against the Austrian Nazis.⁸¹⁵

Diejenigen täuschen sich, die glauben, die Regierung durch ihre Terrorakte von innen oder außen stürzen zu können. Wir haben die Machtmittel, die uns zur Verfügung stehen noch lange nicht eingesetzt. Aber wenn es not tut, den Burgfrieden im Lande zu sichern, dann werden wir auch vor dem Äußersten nicht zurückschrecken.⁸¹⁶

However, suppression alone was not a long-term solution and did nothing about the immense pressure coming from the North. As the Austrian Nazis were absolutely dependent 'upon the incumbents of power in the Reich' a more effective strategy was to cut the party off from its source.⁸¹⁷

In a conversation with Rieth in July 1933, Dollfuß enquired, 'whether the Reich Chancellor and the Reich government would decide to leave the local [Austrian] National Socialist party to its own devices, without continuing to provide it with moral and material support'.⁸¹⁸ According to Rieth, Dollfuß felt he was 'in a position to cope with local National Socialism if the latter felt it was no longer supported by the Reich'. On the surface this may appear naïve – revealing your strategy to your opponents – but what Dollfuß actually seems to have been doing is emphasizing the solidity of his position, with particular reference to the recent strengthening of the *Vaterländische*

⁸¹⁵ The escalating terror campaign was an admission, the *Reichspost* claimed, of their weakness in Austria, 'und bist du nicht willig, so brauch' ich Gewalt'. See: 'In Oesterreich – Christenboykott!', *Reichspost*, 13 Apr. 1933, 1–2.

⁸¹⁶ Dollfuß, Hollabrunn, 25 June 1933, in: Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 118.

⁸¹⁷ Despatch from the Office of the Federal Chancellor, Department of Foreign Affairs, to Herr Tauschitz, Austrian Minister in Berlin, dated July 18, 1933. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933, No. 59, 55.

⁸¹⁸ Minister Rieth to State Secretary Bülow, July 1, 1933, No. 346; *DGFP C/I*, 619–21.

Front. Rieth also mentions how Dollfuß still cherished the 'illusion' of being able to suppress the Austrian Nazis by force through the *Heimwehr* on the one hand, and push through a constitutional reform with the help of the Social Democrats that would eliminate parliament and make elections impossible for at least a year, on the other. Illusion or not – and Rieth was forced to note that the struggle against the Austrian Nazis had been carried on 'in recent weeks here with unprecedented severity' – Dollfuß's message was clear: his position was not a weak one and he intended to hold out. It would also have been clear to the German Foreign Office at this point that Austria also had the other 'Powers' on her side: the same month the British made representations in Berlin on Austria's behalf. Thus, Dollfuß's aim was, as always, to 'bring about more friendly relations between the two governments' all the time suggesting that, if the Reich would desist in its support for the Austrian Nazis, a solution to the conflict was possible. As it was, Rieth explained, Dollfuß was 'not yet ready for an understanding with the National Socialists here to say nothing of yielding to their demands.'⁸¹⁹

The situation remained unchanged throughout the summer, the Germans refusing to take the 'hint' and refrain from pressurizing Austria. It was obvious to contemporary observers that Dollfuß could not withstand the pressure from Germany indefinitely; 'unless some diversion occurs to relieve him' Selby noted 'he must succumb.'⁸²⁰ No diversion was forthcoming. Instead, Mussolini began to change course. Having exhausted all options in Berlin, he began pushing Dollfuß for an understanding with the NSDAP, seeing this as a way of bringing them under control, rather than helping them to power.⁸²¹ Nonetheless, by September there was dissatisfaction in the Austrian Foreign Office, the Director-General telling the British Minister that he considered the Italians to be 'playing a double game'⁸²². This meant extra pressure on Dollfuß from Italy at a time when he was already in a dangerous position, 'at the mercy of every internal manoeuvre of Austrian parties and politicians

⁸¹⁹ Minister Rieth to State Secretary Bülow, July 1, 1933, No. 346, *Ibid* 619–21.

⁸²⁰ Copy of a letter from Sir W. Selby to Mr. Eden: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C8907/2092/3, R.M.A. Hankey, Austro-German Relations, 26 Sep. 1933.

⁸²¹ See: Dieter Ross, *Hitler und Dollfuss*, 92.

⁸²² (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16644, paper C8216/2092/3, Sir W. Selby, Austro-German Relations. Conversation with Dr. Dollfuss, 13 Sep. 1933.

arising out of the pressure coming from the North.’⁸²³ In September, tensions between the *Heimwehr* and the *Landbund* came to a head, forcing the latter out of the cabinet, significantly weakening Dollfuß’s position. By October, the *Heimwehr*, including the Vice-Chancellor Fey were once again engaged in discussions with Habicht about a *Heimwehr*–National Socialist government.⁸²⁴ By November, Dollfuß was ‘fearful, lest Austria should be sacrificed to a Franco-German agreement or to British and Italian efforts to reach a compromise with Germany’.⁸²⁵ In addition, increased pressure from Mussolini – and the *Heimwehr* – to take a stronger anti-Socialist stance had alarmed the Social Democrats who were threatening armed intervention if Dollfuß did not change course. It is against this backdrop that Dollfuß agreed to meet with the Greater-Germans Franz Langoth and Hermann Foppa, representatives of the *Nationale Kampffront* formed between the Greater Germans and the Nazis, in the autumn of 1933.

Foppa and Langoth’s intention was to bring about an understanding between the Dollfuß government and the NSDAP.⁸²⁶ Dollfuß’s main objective in speaking to the two men was to investigate if it were possible to attain a *détente* in relations with the German Reich. During their first conversation – the record for which stems from Langoth – Dollfuß enquired into how the *Kampffront* proposed bringing about a settlement between Austria and the German Reich. Dollfuß *appeared* amenable, in principle at least, to their suggestion of bringing representatives of the *Kampffront* into the government yet what is not clear is whether Dollfuß was *seriously* considering such a concession, or was merely manoeuvring and playing for time. Otherwise, why suggest during the course of the conversation that the Socialists had told him they would give their consent for a ‘comprehensive *Ermächtigungsgesetz* for five years’?⁸²⁷ What is clear from the questions that Dollfuß posed is that he was trying to find a way of getting what he wanted – an easing of tensions with the Reich – and neutralizing the

⁸²³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C8907/2092/3, R.M.A. Hankey, Austro-German Relations, 26 Sep. 1933.

⁸²⁴ See: Memorandum by an Official of Department II, 13 October, 1933, No. 497, *DGFP C/I*, 919–21.

⁸²⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16639, paper C10547/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Political Situation in Austria, 28 Nov. 1933.

⁸²⁶ The Greater Germans hoped to ensure a role for themselves in any future agreement. Langoth recorded these negotiations in his memoirs. See: Franz Langoth, *Kampf um Österreich*.

⁸²⁷ Meeting between Dollfuß, Langoth and Foppa, 13 October 1933: *Ibid*, 127.

Nazi threat: who did they have in mind as representative of the *Kampffront*, would it be a Nazi, if so, who did they envision?⁸²⁸ 'Müßte also die NSDAP als solche wieder in Erscheinung treten', he enquired? For this very reason, Dollfuß suggested, the idea of a settlement with the *Kampffront* as a whole was more attractive than a settlement with the NSDAP alone.⁸²⁹ New elections remained out of the question, as did abandoning the *Heimwehr*, a stock excuse used by the Christian Socials to explain why they could not accede to Nazi demands. Dollfuß was perhaps even hoping to be able to win some of the Greater Germans back for the government camp: 'Es ist mir besonders sympathisch, wenn Ihre Kreise mit in Frage kommen, die Sie die nationalen Belange Österreichs schon so lange verteidigen'.⁸³⁰ However, in rejecting Habicht as a negotiating partner, Dollfuß's ultimate objective becomes clear. 'Ich muß daher wünschen, daß Sie die Verbindung mit Heß und Hitler suchen': what he really wanted was direct negotiations with Berlin.⁸³¹

In mid-November Dollfuß once again changed tack, telling the two emissaries that although he was ready for negotiations he 'did not wish to conduct them through Munich' (and thus Habicht).⁸³² Instead, Dollfuß insisted that the conflict could only be resolved through a direct agreement with Berlin. This attempt to circumvent Habicht was entirely tactical. On the one hand, rejecting Habicht as a negotiating partner was an attempt to avoid strengthening Habicht's position or legitimizing the methods that he had used in the fight against the Dollfuß government. It could also help to isolate the Austrian party from the German one, which would make it easier to control. However, more important were the potential benefits of getting Hitler to come to the negotiating table. Not only would that confirm Austrian government claims that Nazi Germany was responsible for the parlous state of relations between the two countries, it would have meant *de facto* recognition of the Dollfuß government and Austrian independence by Nazi Germany. Moreover, Hitler, unlike Habicht, had to consider how his actions were interpreted abroad and was far more likely to sacrifice the

⁸²⁸ See: *Ibid*, 128.

⁸²⁹ See: *Ibid*, 126.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid*, 126.

⁸³¹ *Ibid*, 131.

⁸³² *Memorandum by an Official of Department II*, November 16, 1933, No. 71, *DGFP. C/II*, 130–32.

Anschluss as a foreign policy goal – even if superficially – than the Austrian Nazis who had nothing to lose. Thus, what Dollfuß wanted was a direct and official approach from the German government. This would be advantageous to the Austrians, as it would confirm their argument that the conflict was one between ‘two German states of a kind covered by formal conceptions of international law’ and therefore a foreign policy issue, as opposed to Nazi Germany’s argument that it was ‘a dispute between the Austrian government and a historical movement of the whole German people’.⁸³³

Dollfuß’s motivation for pursuing an agreement with Nazi Germany – with the knowledge of the British Foreign Office – was, in part, the hope that the cessation of hostilities would give the Austrian government some breathing space and room to manoeuvre.⁸³⁴ It can also be understood against the backdrop of events further afield. During the early years of the Nazi regime, Hitler strove ‘to keep Germany’s relations with its neighbours correct, if not cordial’, a policy that contrasted sharply with the treatment accorded Austria.⁸³⁵ Keen to convince the world of his peaceful intentions, Hitler began laying the foundations for an understanding with Poland that would normalize relations between the two countries and bring the almost decade-long German-Polish customs war to an end. On 2 May 1933, in a meeting with the Polish Minister in Berlin, Hitler attempted to allay Polish fears by claiming that he was sympathetic to Polish nationalist aspirations and that he ‘recognized Poland as a political entity with a right to exist’. Soon after a joint communiqué was issued wherein Hitler “‘laid stress on the firm intention of the German government to maintain their attitude and their actions strictly within the limits of existing treaties’”.⁸³⁶ This rapprochement culminated in the German-Polish non-aggression pact of January 1934 and ushered in ‘a certain superficial cordiality’ that ‘prevailed through

⁸³³ Telephone Message from Herr Tauschitz, Austrian Minister in Berlin, February 1, 1934, reproduced in; (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933, 64.

⁸³⁴ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C9589/2092/3, Sir W. Selby, Record of Conversation with Dr. Dollfuss: Austro-German Situation, 31 Oct. 1933.

⁸³⁵ Ronald Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem, 1933–1938: Volkstumpolitik and the Formulation of Nazi Foreign Policy*, (Folkestone, 1975), 10; Gerhard Ludwig Weinberg, *The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany: Diplomatic Revolution in Europe, 1933–36*, (1970), 87.

⁸³⁶ Cited in: Harvey Leonard Dyck, 'Hitler's Policy Towards the Soviet Union, January 1933–June 1941', Unpubl. MA Dissertation (University of British Columbia, 1957), 33–35.

1938' when the two countries 'cooperated in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia'.⁸³⁷ Hitler attempted a similar strategy vis-à-vis Czechoslovakia; Smelser notes how, 'already in February of 1933, Hitler assured Mastný, the Czechoslovak Ambassador to Berlin, that no contacts existed between the NSDAP and the Sudeten radicals, and emphasised his desire to be a good neighbour'.⁸³⁸ Later there were also rumours of a possible nonaggression pact between Germany and Czechoslovakia – as well as Yugoslavia – along the same lines of that which Germany was negotiating with Poland and this despite the fact that the Czechoslovak government was instituting similar suppressive measures against the DNSAP as the Austrian authorities.⁸³⁹

Poland did not sign a non-aggression pact with Germany because she was taken in by Nazi guarantees, but because it offered her some breathing space. It was clear to Piłsudski that the pact did not end Poland's conflict with Germany, it merely gave Poland some respite; 'after that' he maintained, 'we must be ready to defend ourselves'.⁸⁴⁰ The Poles were certainly aware that the Nazis could not be trusted to keep their promises, the Polish *chargé d'affaires* in Vienna admitting in November 1933 that 'if Austria goes the agreements they have signed with Germany will not be worth the paper on which they are written'.⁸⁴¹ The same would have been true for Dollfuß and his associates. Nazi Germany's willingness to negotiate with former enemies such as Poland proved problematic for the Dollfuß government; not only did it further legitimize the Nazi regime, it highlighted the Dollfuß government's inability to get Nazi Germany to the negotiating table and seemed to suggest that it was the Dollfuß government that was ultimately responsible for the state of relations between the two countries. This perhaps explains why the Nazi press in Germany felt it necessary to

⁸³⁷ Richard Blanke, 'When Germans and Poles Lived Together: From the History of German-Polish Relations', in eds. Keith Bullivant, et al. *Germany and Eastern Europe: Cultural Identity and Cultural Differences* (Yearbook of European Studies) (Rodopi, 1999), 49.

⁸³⁸ Ronald Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem*, 274, n 3.

⁸³⁹ See: Ibid, 71. This was also reported on by the Austrian Minister in Berlin: (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), ÖVB I Rep.), Karton 15, (ÖG/B) (Tauschitz) to the (BKA/AA) (Dollfuß), Z30 Nov. 1933, Deutsch-polnische Verhandlungen.

⁸⁴⁰ Paul N. Hehn, *A Low, Dishonest Decade: The Great Powers, Eastern Europe and the Economic Origins of World War II*, (London, 2005), 76.

⁸⁴¹ Letter from Sir W. Selby to Anthony Eden enclosed in: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C11103/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Situation in Austria, 30 Nov. 1933.

suggest that the signing of the pact with Poland was 'very uncomfortable' for government circles in Vienna and was viewed with 'displeasure on the Ballhausplatz'.⁸⁴²

A handful of further attempts to break the deadlock between Austria and Nazi Germany followed before Dollfuß's assassination in July 1934, the most significant of which were the aborted talks with Habicht that were due to take place in early January 1934. All of them failed, not least because Nazi conditions – a repeal on the ban on the National Socialist movement in Austria and the 'testing of the people's will by a general election' – ran directly counter to Austrian demands and would have opened the floodgates for the Nazi movement in Austria.⁸⁴³ Throughout Dollfuß's position remained in principle the same: 'namely, the recognition of the independence of Austria and no interference in the internal affairs of Austria'.⁸⁴⁴ Any solution to the conflict, the Federal Chancellery maintained, was dependent on the demonstration of the 'determination and unceasing endeavours of the German government and leader or, what is the same thing, the leaders of the N.S.D.A.P. to regard and treat the National Socialist movement in Austria as an Austrian movement'.⁸⁴⁵ This would have meant Nazi Germany cutting off all support for the Austrian party and a cessation of the propaganda flooding in from the Reich. Dollfuß and Schuschnigg clearly hoped that if these parameters were genuinely met the Austrian authorities would be in a strong enough position to keep the Austrian Nazi party – it was common knowledge that it was riven by internal rivalries – suppressed. The fact that all political parties had been eliminated in Austria offered the Austrian government a convenient excuse about why the Austrian Nazi party could not be allowed to operate as an independent body. Thus, Schuschnigg's comment to Heß in October 1933, that he 'could easily conceive of collaboration with the Austrian National-Socialists' should not be read as a naïve or malicious attempt to do a deal with the Nazis but an attempt to neutralize the threat

⁸⁴² (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), ÖVB I Rep.), Karton 17, (ÖG/B) (Tauschitz) to the (BKA/AA) (Dollfuß), ZI.26/pol, 1 Feb. 1934, Die reichsdeutsche Presse zu dem deutsch-polnischen Abkommen.

⁸⁴³ 'Report by Herr Tauschitz, Austrian Minister to Berlin, dated December 15, 1933': (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933, No. 60, 57.

⁸⁴⁴ Despatch from the Office of the Federal Chancellor, Department of Foreign Affairs, to Herr Tauschitz, Austrian Minister in Berlin, dated July 18, 1933: Ibid, No. 59, 56.

⁸⁴⁵ Despatch from the Office of the Federal Chancellor, Department of Foreign Affairs, to Herr Tauschitz, Austrian Minister in Berlin, dated July 18, 1933: Ibid, No. 59, 56.

that they posed. Such 'collaboration' he added, would only take place if the Austrian Nazis 'were ready to become members of the united Austrian front' where, cut off from Nazi Germany, they could perhaps be co-opted, or at very least controlled.⁸⁴⁶

Interpretations which suggest that Dollfuß's – and later Schuschnigg's – willingness to talk to the Nazis demonstrates a 'dubious, ambivalent and calamitous handling of the National Socialist threat' fail to spot that there are a multitude of explanations for adopting such a strategy none of which involve ideological ambivalence towards the Nazi movement or the genuine intention to of bringing them into government. While it is true that Dollfuß was prepared to sit down and consider Nazi demands – at a time when most of Europe was actively engaged in appeasement – the possibility that he was actually exploring ways to neutralize the Nazi threat without handing them the keys to the Austrian citadel also needs to be considered.

⁸⁴⁶ Schuschnigg (conversation with Heß, October 1933) Kurt Schuschnigg, *My Austria*, 227.

Chapter 6

‘Rückkehr nach Potsdam’: The Prussian Paradigm

The image of Hitler, statesmanlike in civilian dress, obsequiously bowing before an aged Field Marshall von Hindenburg resplendent in Prussian parade uniform and *Pickelhaube*, has proven to be the most enduring image of the ‘unholy alliance’ between National Socialism and Prussian militarism. On the 21 March 1933, sixty-two years to the day on which the first *Reichstag* of Bismarck’s newly founded German Empire had been inaugurated, Hitler and Hindenburg ascended the steps of the *Garnisonkirche* in Potsdam to celebrate the state opening of the newly elected *Reichstag*. Before the vault of Prussia’s ‘greatest’ king, Frederick II, and next to the Kaiser’s jarringly vacant throne, Hindenburg, the Prussian military and monarchical tradition personified, bade Hitler and his government to overcome the divisions of the Weimar era and lead Germany towards national renewal, in the ‘spirit of Potsdam’.⁸⁴⁷

The ‘Day of Potsdam’ was a ‘Meisterstück der Regie’, reassuring to worried traditionalists and conservatives and conferring legitimacy on the new Nazi-led government.⁸⁴⁸ Magnificently choreographed, the freshly appointed Propaganda Minister pulled out all the stops to ensure that his message, of the unassailable bond linking the Prussian tradition and the ‘new Germany’, was hammered home. As the seat of power of the Prussian kings, Potsdam, adorned in a sea of swastikas and Imperial *Schwarz-Weiß-Rot*, validated the allusion of Hitler’s much-lauded ‘Third Reich’ as the natural and legitimate heir to the ‘Second Reich’ of the Hohenzollerns. Moreover, the *Garnisonkirche*, altar of Prussia’s military monarchy and resting place of both Friedrich Wilhelm I. and Friedrich II, proved to be an ideal backdrop for the ritualistic union of old and new, past and future, radical and reactionary, a potent symbol of the fusion of

⁸⁴⁷ Klaus-Jürgen Müller, ‘Der Tag von Potsdam und das Verhältnis der preußisch-deutschen Militär-Elite zum Nationalsozialismus’, in ed., Bernhard R. Kroener *Potsdam: Staat, Armee, Residenz in der preußisch-deutschen Militärgeschichte* (Frankfurt am Main 1993), 435.

⁸⁴⁸ ‘Vor dem zweiten Akt’, *Reichspost*, 22 Mar. 1933, 1–2; Richard Evans, J., *Coming of the Third Reich*, 350.

National Socialism and Prussianism.⁸⁴⁹ The narrative was beautiful in its simplicity: Frederick the Great – Bismarck – Hitler.

In Austria, as elsewhere in Europe, Hitler's initial display of political restraint was welcomed with cautious relief. Nonetheless, judgement, the *Reichspost* counselled, should be reserved; although events were, 'in a sense reassuring', it was 'still wholly uncertain' where the German revolution was heading.⁸⁵⁰ At the same time, the symbolism of the event had much wider implications and, in Austria, as in parts of Catholic Germany, the Prussian-Protestant associations of the spectacle in Potsdam were met with palpable unease.⁸⁵¹ For those on Austria's conservative right, 'Potsdam', as the centre of Prussian power and traditional counter-pole to Catholic Vienna, held a deep – and overwhelmingly negative – cultural and historical meaning. Thus, to some observers the 'lesson' of the 'Day of Potsdam' was all too clear: 'daß Deutschland ein vergrößertes Preußen werden soll, daß dort die verhängnisvollen Ketten der Zentralisation geschmiedet werden'.⁸⁵² As the resurrection of the Protestant-Prussian paradigm of 1871, Hitler's Third Reich and his National Socialist movement were regarded as the modern manifestation of an old foe.

That the nineteenth-century Austro-Prussian relationship is key to understanding the Austro-German conflict of the interwar period is rarely observed. This is by no means surprising due to a pronounced tendency, particularly during the early years of the Second Republic, to view the First Republic as an historical aberration: *Der Staat, den keiner wollte*, hermetically sealed between the collapse of the Empire and the tardy (re)birth of the Austrian nation in 1945. As Utgaard has noted, 'the First Republic, Austro-fascist government, union with Nazi Germany, and World War II' all 'amounted to a collective massive rupture from the Habsburg past.'⁸⁵³ Moreover, Austrian politicians, keen to present the Second Republic as the natural successor to the Habsburg Empire, were not averse to both the First Republic and the Nazi era being

⁸⁴⁹ See: Klaus-Jürgen Müller, 'Tag von Potsdam', 435.

⁸⁵⁰ 'Vor dem zweiten Akt', *Reichspost*, 22 Mar. 1933, 1–2.

⁸⁵¹ See: Klaus-Jürgen Müller, 'Tag von Potsdam', 439.

⁸⁵² 'Die marxistenfreundliche Haltung der Nationalsozialisten in Oesterreich', *Sturm über Österreich*, 7 May 1933, 4.

⁸⁵³ Peter Utgaard, *Remembering and Forgetting*, 28.

depicted as some sort of accidental glitch, a stance, which has had profound implications for understanding of the period. Substantial continuities between the Empire and the First and Second Republics have been downplayed in favour of presenting the years 1918 and 1945 as marking an unmitigated break with the past. While recent years have seen – in particular – Austrian historians go to great lengths to break down the psychological barrier of 1945 and incorporate the years 1938–45 into the broader sweep of ‘Austrian’ history, there is less certainty about how to include the abortive First Republic in Austria’s ‘national’ historical continuum.

As a result, the year 1918 continues to mark a clearly defined historical caesura, severing the First Republic from its Imperial predecessor. Yet, the physical scale of the Empire’s collapse obscures the fact that the *Österreichische Länder* – that is, those areas, which went on to form the core of the modern Republic of Austria – had formed the nucleus of the Habsburg Monarchy for centuries.⁸⁵⁴ Unlike Germany, the Austrian state had a clear legal antecedent, of which the First Republic was ‘the new, sharply reduced incarnation’.⁸⁵⁵ Unfortunately, historical reality was eclipsed by a memorable, if spectacularly uninformed remark: ‘L’Autriche, c’est ce qui reste’, Clemenceau – allegedly – quipped and seven hundred years of uninterrupted Habsburg rule became meaningless overnight.⁸⁵⁶ Of course, the very idea of a ‘Stunde Null’ is misleading; ‘Austria’ did not cease to exist on 11 November 1918, and start again from scratch the following day. There was, of course, an obvious – and undoubtedly traumatic – political break. Yet, there were also clear continuities between Empire and Republic, not least because leading political personalities – Ignaz Seipel, Karl Renner and Otto Bauer to name just three – straddled the divide. Likewise, under the Empire all the *Kronländer* of Austria had their own diets and they were, therefore, fully ‘prepared for provincial rule’ in November 1918.⁸⁵⁷ Major institutional, political, religious, societal and cultural

⁸⁵⁴ From 1250 until 1918 the Habsburgs reigned continuously ‘over Lower Austria, Upper Austria and Styria, and they soon acquired Carinthia, Tyrol, and Carniola (the present Slovenia)’. See: Friederick C. Engelmann, ‘Austro-German Relationship’, 54.

⁸⁵⁵ Germany’s pre-1871 legal predecessor was ‘best represented by the Kingdom of Prussia’. Ibid, 54.

⁸⁵⁶ ‘Restösterreich’ actually appears to have been the sound bite of choice during the period. See: Manfred Zollinger, ‘“L’Autriche, c’est moi”? Georges Clemenceau, das neue Österreich und das Werden eines Mythos’, in eds. Stefan Karner and Lorenz Mikoletzky *Österreich – 90 Jahre Republik* (Innsbruck 2008).

⁸⁵⁷ Charles à Court Repington, *After the War. London, Paris, Rome Athens, Prague, Vienna. Bucharest, Berlin, Sofia, Coblenz, New York, Washington. A Diary*, 138.

continuities such as these, not to mention more intangible continuities in mentalities, identities and affiliations should not be overlooked.

Re-affirming the connections between Imperial and Republican Austria is important, not least because, during the First Republic, National Socialism was perceived through an historical frame of reference. Within conservative-catholic circles – whence the Dollfuß government ultimately sprang – National Socialism was rejected, in part, on the historical basis that it was ‘an intrinsically Prussian phenomenon’.⁸⁵⁸ While the German variant was viewed as the political and spiritual heir to the narcissistic, megalomaniac Kingdom of Prussia, the Austrian movement, for what it was worth, was deemed to be nothing more than *Schönererian* radicalism in slightly altered garb.⁸⁵⁹ *Preussenseuchler* to a man, their language was that of *Los von Rom*, their allegiance was to Berlin and their aims were those of Schönerer’s *Alldeutschen*: the destruction of the Austrian state and unification with a Prussian-dominated German Reich. As such, the Austrian government’s struggle against National Socialism needs to be situated within a broader historical context, as a somewhat belated manifestation of an unresolved historical dispute. To Austria’s catholic-conservative right, National Socialism was the contemporaneous resurgence of Austria’s natural and historical rival, which was threatening, once again, to enslave all of Germandom under its yoke.

⁸⁵⁸ Heinrich Mataja, ‘Was bekämpfen wir am Nationalsozialismus?’, *Reichspost*, 10 Jan. 1934, 3–4.

⁸⁵⁹ See: ‘Wo ist die Koalition?’, *Reichspost*, 29 May 1932, 1–2; ‘Durchbruch der Naturlaute. Der Romhaß des Nationalsozialismus’, *Reichspost*, 10 Jul. 1932, 3–4.

'It is a war of life and death, which will not be ended for a long time'

For the purposes of setting a context, a short survey of the roots of the Austro-Prussian conflict is useful here. These roots are to be found in the early eighteenth century with the rapid economic, political and military expansion of the Kingdom of Prussia, the Hohenzollerns' determination to claim their place in the sun, and the Habsburgs' determination to prevent it.⁸⁶⁰ However, it was Frederick the Great who really lit the fuse; his unscrupulous land grab in Silesia sparked a nine-year conflict with Austria (which ultimately spilt over into the Seven Years War) and a lifelong feud with Maria Theresa. The loss of Silesia to the Hohenzollern upstart was something that the Empress and the House of Habsburg would never be able to forget. Up until this point, the Habsburgs, Holy Roman Emperors since the fifteenth century, had enjoyed unquestioned political, military and cultural pre-eminence within the German lands and the Central European sphere; from now on, as Fredrick mischievously noted, Austria 'must now share its authority in Germany with us'.⁸⁶¹ The seed of German duality, sown during the Reformation, sprouted into a 'bitter struggle over almost everything states contend for in international politics'; the 'Catholic Emperor in Vienna' was now faced with 'a Protestant anti-Emperor in Berlin'.⁸⁶²

Although Napoleon's antics appeared to provide a degree of respite, the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, coupled with the portentous rise of German nationalism, only complicated matters further. Austrian and Prussian ambitions remained 'mutually incompatible'.⁸⁶³ Vying for influence, the two powers fundamentally disagreed on the form and direction that the successor to the Holy Roman Empire, the

⁸⁶⁰ Clark notes that 'from around 1705, when Emperor Joseph I came to the throne, they [the Habsburgs] pursued a policy of containment that aimed at preventing any further consolidation of the Hohenzollern dynasty in Germany'. Christopher M. Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600–1947*, (London, 2006), 191.

⁸⁶¹ Quoted in: *Ibid*, 216.

⁸⁶² Paul Schroeder, W., 'Austria and Prussia, 1813–1848: Pause in the Rivalry or Shift in the Paradigm?', in eds. Heinz Duchhardt and Andreas Kunz *Reich oder Nation? Mitteleuropa 1780–1815* (Stuttgart, 1998), 87; Christopher M. Clark, *Iron Kingdom*, 218.

⁸⁶³ There were also the interests of the so-called 'Third Germany', the small and middle-sized German states (including Baden, Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg) which sought to prevent either Prussian or Austrian dominance. See: John Breuilly, *Austria, Prussia and Germany, 1806–1871*, (London, 2002), 57.

German Confederation, should take. Both asserted their inherent right to pre-eminence within the Confederation and both claimed to be the sole, legitimate heir of the Holy Roman tradition: the Austrian Empire claimed the gold and black colours and the double-headed eagle. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the Austrian Empire managed to maintain its dominant position as senior partner within the Confederation, yet, with both states ploughing 'the same narrow furrow', tensions continued to mount.⁸⁶⁴ Prussia pressed ahead with its anti-Austrian policy in an attempt to expand its influence within the German lands. Austria, as 'the moving spirit of German opposition' responded by checking Prussian expansion at every turn, inciting Bismarck to complain that: 'every deceit would be practised, now as then, in order to prevent Prussia from reaching a higher standing in Germany and to keep her under the pressure of her geographical position and the unfavourable Federal Constitution'.⁸⁶⁵ In due course, the *Zollverein* of 1834, from which Austria was excluded, bore fruit. Austrian roadblocks were circumvented 'by unifying Germany first in the economic sphere', hastening the drive towards political and 'national' centralization, and ultimately forming the foundations for a north German state under Prussian control.⁸⁶⁶

If the revolutions of 1848–49 did not quite bring the 'national' issue to a head, the fallout certainly exposed the fundamental differences in Austrian and Prussian attitudes towards the 'German problem'. As Bischof observes, 'in an age of intensifying nationalism Austria's universal "European" foreign policy clashed with Prussia's determination to unite Germany in the *kleindeutsch* solution'.⁸⁶⁷ Recognizing the existential threat posed to the multi-national Austrian Empire, the House of Habsburg stood in strict opposition to the budding idea of a German nation.⁸⁶⁸ Proponents of

⁸⁶⁴ Doc. Nr. 47. Bismarck to Manteuffel, Frankfurt, April 1856. Ibid, 154–55.

⁸⁶⁵ Doc. Nr. 49, the Prince Regent William to Schleinitz, 26 Mar. 1860 and document Nr. 47, Bismarck to Manteuffel, Apr. 1856, Ibid, 155–57.

⁸⁶⁶ Günter Bischof, 'The Historical Roots of a Special Relationship: Austro-German Relations Between Hegemony and Equality', in eds. Harald Von Riekhoff and Hanspeter Neuhold *Unequal Partners: A Comparative Analysis of Relations Between Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany and Between Canada and the United States* (Boulder; Oxford, 1993), 63; John Breuilly, *Austria, Prussia and Germany*, 57.

⁸⁶⁷ Günter Bischof, 'Historical Roots', 65.

⁸⁶⁸ 'Onkel Reichsvermörderer' Erzherzog Johann, being a case in point. See: Brigitte Hamann, 'Die Habsburger und die deutsche Frage im 19. Jahrhundert', in ed., Heinrich Lutz *Österreich und die deutsche Frage im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*. (Vienna, 1982), 215–9.

the 'unity of the German governments', as opposed to 'German unity' the 'supranational Viennese court' were staunch advocates of the 'Habsburg solution' to the German question, based upon the Universalist '*Reichsidee*'.⁸⁶⁹ Although, as Hamann reveals, this attitude was discernible in all German dynasties, even, to a degree, within the Berlin court, the fact remains that escalating German nationalism offered an increasingly promising vehicle for the realization of Hohenzollern aims.⁸⁷⁰ In an attempt to weaken Austria's pre-eminence, Prussia threw itself behind Radowitz's *kleindeutsch* Prussian Union. Schwarzenberg countered with a 'third way', proffering '*Großösterreich*' and the prospect of an economic *Mitteleuropa* as a solution to the problem.⁸⁷¹ Nothing, ultimately, came of either proposal; the Frankfurt Parliament collapsed and the Confederation was restored to its pre-1848 form.⁸⁷²

Despite this temporary success, the tremulous equilibrium of Austro-Prussian relations had been decidedly shaken. In 1850, war between the two powers had been narrowly avoided. To Bismarck, whose star was on the rise, conflict between the two German states had become – if somewhat conveniently – inevitable: 'German dualism has for a thousand years, off and on, settled our mutual relations by internal war, and since the time of Charles V, it has done so at regular intervals once a century. In this century, too, war alone will set the timepiece of history at its right hour'.⁸⁷³ By the mid-1850s, that time was fast approaching, first with the Neuchâtel affair when Austria refused to acquiesce to Prussian demands for Confederation support and again in 1859 when 'dieser schmachliche Auswurf von Preußen', as Franz Joseph described his northern cousins, repaid the compliment and refused to come to Austria's aid against the Italians.⁸⁷⁴ The publication of the 'Army Order of Verona' leaves no room for doubt that Franz Joseph squarely – not to mention publicly – placed the blame for the

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid, 213–16.

⁸⁷⁰ Hamann provides the example of Queen Elizabeth of Prussia, and 'in some respects' her husband Friedrich Wilhelm I. See: Ibid, 213.

⁸⁷¹ See: Lawrence Sondhaus, 'Schwarzenberg, Austria, and the German Question, 1848–1851', *The International History Review*, 13 (1991), 2–3.

⁸⁷² *Olmützer Punktation*. See: John Breuilly, *Austria, Prussia and Germany*, 87; Lawrence Sondhaus, 'Schwarzenberg', 3.

⁸⁷³ Doc. Nr. 47, Bismarck to Manteuffel, Apr. 1856. John Breuilly, *Austria, Prussia and Germany*, 154.

⁸⁷⁴ Steven Beller, *Francis Joseph*, (London 1996), 68; Franz Schnürer, ed., *Briefe Kaiser Franz Josephs I. an seine Mutter: 1838–1872*, (Munich, 1930), 292.

Italian debacle at the door of the treacherous Prussians.⁸⁷⁵ However, it is perhaps the personal anecdote which best portrays the lack of sentimentality which governed Austro-Prussian relations during the period. At the beginning of the decade feelers had been put out about a potential marriage between Franz Joseph and Princess Anna of Prussia, a political alliance which would have gone some way towards mending fences between the two Houses. It is telling that Regent Wilhelm did not approve of the plan and the young Austrian Emperor received a polite rebuff in Berlin.⁸⁷⁶

With Bismarck's appointment as Minister President, Austro-Prussian tensions reached a tipping point. An advocate of confrontation with Austria, he persistently contested 'Austria's historical and factual seniority in German affairs', in an attempt to strengthen Prussia's position and establish Berlin as the ultimate arbiter within the German zone.⁸⁷⁷ 'As long as Bismarck remains', the Austrian Emperor observed, 'there will be no respite'.⁸⁷⁸ It is one of those ironies of history that Bismarck was no sympathizer of the nationalist cause; his 'primary loyalty was to Prussia, and its dynasty, the Hohenzollerns, not to the German national idea'.⁸⁷⁹ Nonetheless, unification proved to be a convenient vehicle for Prussian expansion and German nationalism a useful tool, a fact that was not lost on the Viennese court.⁸⁸⁰ In Austria, Prussian tactics were observed in a thoroughly negative light: 'Die Tollheiten und Schändlichkeiten der Preußen haben sich ganz bis ins Unglaubliche gesteigert; sie stacheln ohne Scham und Scheu die Italiener gegen uns auf – das hat aber das Gute, daß hier die letzten Illusionen endlich schwinden'.⁸⁸¹

The Austro-Prussian war, when it came, was no brotherly scuffle: the decisive battle, Königgrätz, involved 450,000 soldiers and was, as Hamann has pointed out, 'the

⁸⁷⁵ Francis Roy Bridge, *The Habsburg Monarchy among the Great Powers, 1815–1918*, (New York, 1990), 74.

⁸⁷⁶ See: Brigitte Hamann, 'Die Habsburger', 216–17.

⁸⁷⁷ Lonnie Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*, (Oxford, 1996), 162.

⁸⁷⁸ S[ine]. I[oco]. et d [ie]., c. May 1866. Nr. 243. Franz Schnürer, ed., *Briefe*, 351.

⁸⁷⁹ Lonnie Johnson, *Central Europe*, 161.

⁸⁸⁰ See: Ibid, 161; Brigitte Hamann, 'Die Habsburger', 227.

⁸⁸¹ Ludwig Freiherr von Biegeleben was a diplomat, originally in the service of the Grand Duchy of Hesse. He played a decisive role in Austrian foreign policy from 1850–1872. 2 Aug. 1865, Rüdiger Biegeleben, *Ludwig Freiherr von Biegeleben. Ein Vorkämpfer des großdeutschen Gedankens*, (Zürich, 1930), 294.

biggest military encounter of modern history to date'.⁸⁸² It proved to be an unmitigated disaster for the Austrians, who suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Prussian troops. The wider consequences were equally devastating; the German Confederation was dissolved, the southern German states were pulled more tightly into Prussia's sphere of influence and Austria was forced to surrender its historic claim to leadership of 'Germany'. Although, as Franz Joseph somewhat sardonically remarked, 'we are pulling out of Germany whether it is demanded of us or not. In view of the experience that we have had with our beloved German allies, I consider this to be a blessing for Austria'.⁸⁸³ Nonetheless, retaliation was considered, at least until the Franco-Prussian war destroyed any chance of luring the southern States from Prussia's orbit. With the Prussian *coup d'état* of 1871 Austria was left with little choice but to acquiesce to the inevitable: the establishment of a 'German Reich without Austria' under Prussian tutelage.

Ignominiously 'dethroned', the Habsburgs could only look on as the mantle of 'Germandom' was appropriated by their Hohenzollern rivals. On a political level, Protestant Prussia had 'triumphed'; Austria had surrendered its claim to supremacy within Germany and had re-orientated its focus towards the Balkans. Yet, the cultural and historical battle lines remained drawn; rather than unifying the Germans in a nation state, Bismarck had merely succeeded in splitting the German cultural zone, if somewhat unequally, in two. The two rival 'German' traditions, the one 'universal', the other 'national' lived on, despite the Prussian *fait accompli*. Austria remained the 'true' successor to the Holy Roman Empire; centuries of common history had ensured that the Holy Roman *Reichsidee* and the *österreichische Staatsidee* were inextricably entwined. This was why, in 1871, Franz Joseph did not even consider surrendering the Imperial Regalia, symbols of the Holy Roman Empire, to the Hohenzollerns and Berlin.⁸⁸⁴ To Vienna, the very idea of a 'German' nation state was a contradiction in terms. Germany had always been greater than the sum of its parts, making Bismarck's

⁸⁸² Brigitte Hamann, *The Reluctant Empress*, (Berlin, 1996), 156.

⁸⁸³ 'Aus Deutschland treten wir jedenfalls ganz aus, ob es verlangt wird oder nicht, und dieses halte ich nach den Erfahrungen, die wir mit unseren lieben deutschen Bundesgenossen gemacht haben, für ein Glück für Österreich'. Franz Joseph to Elisabeth, (23 Jul. 1866). Cited in: Brigitte Hamann, 'Die Habsburger', 225.

⁸⁸⁴ See: Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph und das Deutsche Reich von 1871–1914', Unpubl. doctoral thesis (University of Vienna 1950), 74.

kleindeutsch Empire a crafty slight of hand, *Großpreußen* by another name. 'German' – in a dynastic and cultural rather than a national sense – was so central to the Austrian idea, that discarding it was simply not an option, It was also completely unnecessary: in multinational Austria, 'German' had always been a universal concept, not a national one. As the 'true Germany', the 'better Germany' – according to its supporters –, Habsburg Austria naturally became a focal point for those who disagreed with Bismarck's 'blood and iron' politics and 'opposed Wilhelm II's strident Teutonic sentiment', for those who, although they saw themselves as German, saw the salvation of Germany in a universal, supranational Empire under German leadership, and not in a narrow, nationalistic ideal.⁸⁸⁵ This was a line of argument repeated during the *Ständestaat*.

Bismarck's new 'German Empire' was viewed with anything but friendliness in the Viennese court.⁸⁸⁶ With Austria's sizeable German-speaking population, an expansionist – and inherently treacherous – Prussian-Germany presented a constant threat to the independence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.⁸⁸⁷ Suspicion of Berlin was all-pervasive.⁸⁸⁸ The Prussians found their most strident opponent in the figure of Crown Prince Rudolf, the heir to the Austrian throne. His mistrust of Bismarck is well substantiated, as is his barely disguised contempt for Prince Wilhelm (later Wilhelm II), that 'hard-bitten Junker and Reactionary', to whom he saw himself as a political counter-pole.⁸⁸⁹ Indeed, as Hamann notes, the differences between the two allies were personified in the differences between the heirs to the throne.⁸⁹⁰ To Rudolf, who denounced the Austro-Prussian alliance, Prussia was not an ally but an adversary, asserting that 'Prussia's whole history, excepting Sedan, is nothing but either the leisurely sawing off of or the sudden seizure of a piece of Austria, which invariably falls

⁸⁸⁵ Brigitte Hamann, 'Die Habsburger', 228–89.

⁸⁸⁶ See, for example: Brigitte Hamann, *Kronprinz Rudolf. Ein Leben*, (Vienna, 2005), 307–339; Francis Roy Bridge, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 107.

⁸⁸⁷ See: Brigitte Hamann, *Kronprinz Rudolf*, 307.

⁸⁸⁸ See, for example: Ibid, 307–229; Francis Roy Bridge, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 107.

⁸⁸⁹ Brigitte Hamann, *Kronprinz Rudolf*, 311, 328, 403.

⁸⁹⁰ See: Ibid, 328.

to Prussia'.⁸⁹¹ His sentiments were clearly shared – or rather preceded – by those of Archduke Albrecht, a solid pillar of anti-Prussian sentiment in the Viennese court. A veteran of the war of 1866, Albrecht's hatred for this 'demonic power' could hardly be concealed.⁸⁹² In 1875, Archduke Johann Salvator had gone so far as to publicly advocate war with Germany.⁸⁹³ Then there was Archduke Franz Salvator, who, by his own admission, 'couldn't stand the Prussians'; 'Not all Germans are Prussians' replied the otherwise apolitical Empress Elizabeth, who clearly understood exactly what he meant.⁸⁹⁴

Franz Joseph's disinclination towards his Hohenzollern counterparts is also well attested, although with his ingrained sense of propriety and monarchical decorum, his antipathy can be difficult to spot.⁸⁹⁵ Indeed, Franz Joseph is often admonished for failing to grasp Berlin's true ambitions, yet there are numerous indicators that this was not the case.⁸⁹⁶ Concerned about the potential appeal of the new Reich upon his German subjects, the Emperor remained deeply mistrustful of Prussian motives, even after the two powers had become allies, and was constantly irritated by Prussian intrusions into Austria's domestic affairs. This was the key issue in the 'frosty' first meeting between the two monarchs in Ischl in the summer of 1871 and a constant cause of disagreement up until 1918. When pressed by Franz Joseph to refrain from inciting Austria's German subjects, Kaiser Wilhelm I dared to suggest that if the legitimate demands of the Germans in Austria were met they would not look towards Germany.⁸⁹⁷ Outraged by such blatant interference, the Austrian Emperor refused

⁸⁹¹ '...die ganze Geschichte Preußens bis auf Sedan ist ja nichts anderes als entweder ein langsames Absägen oder ein plötzliches Herunterhauen eines Stückes von Österreich, das dann an Preußen fällt'. Ibid, 309–10.

⁸⁹² 'dämonische Macht.' Lothar Höbelt, 'Kein Bismarck und kein Moltke: Regierung, Militär und Außenpolitik in Österreich-Ungarn 1860 bis 1890', in eds. Michael Epkenhans and Gerhard Groß, P. *Das Militär und der Aufbruch in die Moderne, 1860 bis 1890. Armeen, Marinen und der Wandel von Politik, Gesellschaft und Wirtschaft in Europa, den USA sowie Japan* (Munich, 2003), 82.

⁸⁹³ See: Francis Roy Bridge, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 107; Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 102.

⁸⁹⁴ Brigitte Hamann, 'Die Habsburger', 229.

⁸⁹⁵ See, for instance: Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 177; Andrea Blöchl-Köstner, 'Das 60jährige Regierungsjubiläum Kaiser Franz Josephs I. 1908', Unpubl. doctoral thesis (University of Salzburg, 2004), 32.

⁸⁹⁶ Eva Philippoff, *Die Doppelmonarchie Österreich–Ungarn. Ein politisches Lesebuch (1867–1918)*, (Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2002).

⁸⁹⁷ See: Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 83–84.

outright Germany's offer of a Customs, Post and Telegraph union and 'an extended commercial treaty'. It obviously took a fair amount of persuasion to convince the Emperor of the necessity of a second meeting with his Prussian counterpart, who begrudgingly acknowledged the necessity with an unequivocal lack of enthusiasm: 'If you consider a further meeting absolutely necessary, then I would oblige'.⁸⁹⁸ Nonetheless, he remained adamant that any possibility of a future meeting was conditional on the Germans ceasing all talk of Austria's domestic issues and of a defensive alliance.⁸⁹⁹

For a while the Emperor remained reticent about engaging with Berlin; in response to Andr ssy's exhortations to repay the compliment and visit Germany, the Emperor retorted that he would 'very happily take the waters at a bathing resort', but was really not very fond of the idea of visiting Berlin.⁹⁰⁰ However, faced with an uncertain future and continuing fears of a German-Russian d tente, the need to find a *modus vivendi* with the new Reich was obvious.⁹⁰¹ Indeed, as early as 1871, it was clear that the Empire only had two real options: it could either 'arm or wait' and live in constant conflict with 'Prussian-Germany', or it could make a 'serious attempt' to make sure Austria was on as good terms as possible with what was currently 'the most imperious power in Europe'.⁹⁰² Viewed from this angle, rapprochement was practically a foregone conclusion. Nonetheless, it was still very much conditional. The Austro-German 'friendship' would be upheld, according to Andr ssy, 'as long as Germany did not threaten Austria's existence or interests'.⁹⁰³ Nonetheless, the Emperor remained 'deeply distrustful' of both Bismarck and Wilhelm I's motives and in particular, of their Russophile tendencies. He was 'disconcerted to hear of a Prussian scheme to buy a controlling share in the Austrian Southern Railway; a line of vital

⁸⁹⁸ 'Wenn Sie ein nochmaliges Zusammentreffen mit Kaiser Wilhelm durchaus notwendig halten, so w re ich bereit'. Ibid, 84.

⁸⁹⁹ See: Francis Roy Bridge, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 101; Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 85.

⁹⁰⁰ Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 89.

⁹⁰¹ Francis Roy Bridge, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 101.

⁹⁰² Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 79.

⁹⁰³ To Hans Lothar von Schweinitz (1822–1901), Prussian/German Ambassador to Vienna, 1869–1876. Ibid, 102.

strategic importance' during the meeting of the three Emperors, and 'as late as 1874 he vetoed an exchange of information on torpedo development with Berlin'.⁹⁰⁴

Still smarting from Prussian treachery the previous decade, this could be dismissed as short-term sour grapes on Franz Joseph's part, if it were not for the fact that over the following decades this underlying friction never really disappeared. Although on the surface relations appeared cordial, they were undermined by a fundamental – and probably mutual – lack of trust. Franz Joseph could never be entirely certain of Germany's commitment to the alliance and was unconvinced that Austria could truly rely upon German support.⁹⁰⁵ As time went on it became increasingly clear that Austrian interests were not Germany's top priority. Time and again, Austria-Hungary would find it necessary to remind the Germans of the bilateral nature of their alliance and that they were not prepared to sacrifice their own interests.⁹⁰⁶ Tensions in the Balkans seemed to confirm Austrian suspicions of the mercurial attitude of the Wilhelmstrasse and the Bulgarian crisis of 1885–87 put a massive strain on Austro-German relations, exposing the widely conflicting interests of the two powers and the diaphanous nature of German commitment to Austrian interests in the Near East.⁹⁰⁷ In 1887, Germany warned Austria-Hungary directly that it would not fight on its side if it were to get into a war with Russia over Bulgaria.⁹⁰⁸ As late as 1902, the Emperor was 'extremely annoyed' by a speech in which Bülow said that the continuation of the Triple Alliance was not an absolute necessity for Germany.⁹⁰⁹ Indeed, even Bülow's infamous '*Nibelungentreue*' speech was intended to quash claims that Germany's response to the annexation crisis had been somewhat ambivalent. As Brigitte Hamann has pointed out, any talk of a close friendship between Germany and Austria-Hungary would be wholly misplaced.⁹¹⁰

⁹⁰⁴ Francis Roy Bridge, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 107; Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 91, 126.

⁹⁰⁵ See: Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 146.

⁹⁰⁶ An episode in December 1898 is a case in point. See: Berthold Sutter, 'Gołuchowski's Versuche einer Alternativpolitik zum Zweibund', in eds. Helmut Rumpler and Jan Paul Niederkorn *Der 'Zweibund' 1879. Das deutsch-österreichisch-ungarische Bündnis und die europäische Diplomatie* (Vienna, 1996), 151.

⁹⁰⁷ See: Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 145.

⁹⁰⁸ See: Hajo Holborn, *A History of Modern Germany. 1840-1945*, (1982), 247.

⁹⁰⁹ 'schwer pickiert'. Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 216.

⁹¹⁰ See: Brigitte Hamann, *Kronprinz Rudolf*, 317.

This wariness only intensified with the ascension of Wilhelm II to the German throne. Bismarck, despite his 'unscrupulous lack of consideration with regard to Austria' was someone the Emperor could at least deal with, and with him at the German helm, the preservation of the alliance could be halfway ensured.⁹¹¹ Wilhelm II on the other hand, with his 'informal manner' and 'discourteous, less than diplomatic jokes' was deeply unpalatable to the old Emperor. Franz Joseph's alleged condemnation of the Kruger Telegram as 'careless and irresponsible' could just as easily be taken as an illustration of his attitude towards the German Kaiser himself.⁹¹² According to the Austrian military attaché Count Joseph Stürgkh, the Austrian Emperor could tolerate Wilhelm II's company only with difficulty and, although he 'appreciated' and 'valued' his ally highly, 'preferred to do so in the abstract'.⁹¹³ The feeling was evidently mutual. The German Kaiser had so little respect for his Austrian ally that it bordered on contempt.⁹¹⁴ His derision was not confined to the Emperor: Austrian stupidity was, in his opinion, 'unfathomable', the Cisleithanian Germans 'hopeless bovines'; an opinion obviously shared by German diplomats who habitually described the typical Austrian as 'pessimistic', 'lethargically complacent', 'weak, idle, indecisive, lacking in both self-confidence and political flair'.⁹¹⁵

However, this enmity was as much about politics as it was about personality. As allies, the Hohenzollerns could simply not be trusted. The first foreign visit undertaken by Wilhelm II after taking office was not to Vienna, but to St. Petersburg, Austria's archenemy.⁹¹⁶ Of course, the German Kaiser attempted to sweeten the pill, affirming the 'exemplary relations' between the two countries, which made a hasty visit to Austria superfluous, although with a subtext so obvious it is unlikely that the Austrian Emperor was overly convinced.⁹¹⁷ When the German Kaiser finally did decide to grace Vienna with his presence, the visit proved to be an unmitigated

⁹¹¹ Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 130, 163.

⁹¹² 'Leichtsinnig und unverantwortlich'. Ibid, 215.

⁹¹³ 'Nicht leicht und nicht lang'. Ibid, 178.

⁹¹⁴ See: Berthold Sutter, 'Der 'Zweibund' 1879', 146–7.

⁹¹⁵ Ibid, 146–47.

⁹¹⁶ See: Francis Roy Bridge, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 184.

⁹¹⁷ See: Walter Wagner, 'Kaiser Franz Joseph', 164–5.

disaster, 'unsatisfactory in every regard'.⁹¹⁸ The Emperor, knowing his guest only too well, launched a pre-emptive strike, detailing Crown Prince Rudolf to ensure that Wilhelm was not left to travel around Vienna unaccompanied and stir up trouble.⁹¹⁹ Nonetheless, despite such precautionary measures, the German Kaiser still managed to infuriate the Austrian Emperor with his unsolicited interference into Austria's domestic affairs: conferring the Order of the Black Eagle on Kálmán Tisza, the Hungarian Prime Minister whilst demonstratively ignoring Eduard Taaffe, the 'pro-Slav' First Minister of Cisleithania.⁹²⁰ It remains unclear whether this early experience was the real reason why the Austrian Emperor, citing the wish to keep the affair as private as possible, declined Wilhelm II's participation at Rudolf's funeral the following year.⁹²¹

Wilhelm's opening visit set the tone for the rest of their relationship. The pressure from Berlin was unrelenting.⁹²² Through support for pan-German groups and student fraternities, via the *Los-von-Rom* movement, by means of the press, or simply by letting their displeasure be known through their conspicuous absence from the Ballhausplatz, the Wilhelmstrasse was merciless in its endeavour to exert influence on policy decisions taken in Vienna and to maintain a pro-German course in foreign affairs.⁹²³ They pulled out all the stops to maintain the spectre of German nationalism in Cisleithania, curb Czech ascendancy, and, ultimately, ensure that Vienna remained dependent upon Germany.⁹²⁴ Both Bismarck and Wilhelm II found any 'pro-Slav' tendencies in Vienna highly objectionable. In response to Austria's pro-Polish concessions in Galicia, Bismarck retaliated by increasing the harshness of the *Kulturkampf* in Polish districts of Prussia, an action which served to exacerbate tensions between the two countries.⁹²⁵ For Wilhelm II, it was the Czechs who really riled him; on hearing of yet another anti-German demonstration in Prague in 1898, he bitterly

⁹¹⁸ Ibid, 169.

⁹¹⁹ See: Ibid, 167.

⁹²⁰ See: Ibid, 168.

⁹²¹ See: Ibid, 170.

⁹²² See: Berthold Sutter, 'Der 'Zweibund' 1879', 50–52.

⁹²³ See: Ibid, 149. 152.

⁹²⁴ See: Ibid, 150–52.

⁹²⁵ See: Bascon Barry Hayes, 'Bismarck on Austrian Parliamentarianism, 1867–1890', *Austrian History Yearbook*, 2 (1966), 68.

regretted that he could not send the Kaiser Franz Regiment to ‘dash the Bohemians’ brains out’.⁹²⁶ Any such meddling incensed the Austrian Emperor. In December of that same year a personal letter from Wilhelm II prompted an uncharacteristic outburst in which the Emperor warned Graf Eulenburg, the German Ambassador, that ‘being constantly walked all over was simply not acceptable’, the clearest reminder that the alliance was a bilateral one.⁹²⁷

In many ways, the tensions of war exposed the fallacy of ‘*Nibelungentreue*’ once and for all. It was because of ‘personal antagonism between the Austrian and German military leadership’ that ‘the Berlin and Vienna general staffs failed to start joint-operations planning’ in the run-up to the war.⁹²⁸ The onset of hostilities hardly helped matters: Within months of the declaration of war ‘general hostility between the two high commands had risen, not declined’, leaving one historian to remark that ‘the first five months of the war had produced only conflict and hostility within the camp of the Central Powers’.⁹²⁹ There were ‘fundamental disparities between Falkenhayn and Conrad’ in the high command, so much so that just a few months into the war Conrad had ‘become a complete Germanophobe’, describing the Germans, most tellingly, as ‘our underhanded enemy’.⁹³⁰ The feeling was clearly mutual: Austrian defeat in Serbia in December 1914 was attributed by the German military to ‘Austrian “sloppiness” and “coffee-house ways”’.⁹³¹ By 1917, the Habsburg Monarchy was merely fighting for its own survival. The Sixtus-affair, and Emperor Karl’s secret – and ultimately abortive – attempt to negotiate a separate peace with France provides unequivocal evidence of the lengths that the new Emperor was willing to go to in order to break the ‘brotherly’ bonds that bound the Habsburg Empire to Imperial Germany. It is difficult to disagree with the observation that the Austro-German wartime alliance was ‘one between “secret enemies”’.⁹³² However, again, it is an anecdote which best conveys the abject

⁹²⁶ “‘Er hatte gewünscht, dem Kaiser von Österreich sein Kaiser-Franz-Regiment schicken zu können, damit es den Böhmen die harten Schädel einhaue’”. Berthold Sutter, ‘Der ‘Zweibund’ 1879’, 151.

⁹²⁷ ‘Es gehe nicht an “auf sich endlos herumtrommeln zu lassen’’. Ibid, 151.

⁹²⁸ Günter Bischof, ‘Historical Roots’, 71.

⁹²⁹ Gerard Edward Silberstein, *The Troubled Alliance. German-Austrian Relations 1914 to 1917*, 1970), 265, 274.

⁹³⁰ Ibid, 265.

⁹³¹ Ibid, 265.

⁹³² Günter Bischof, ‘Historical Roots’, 71.

lack of mistrust between the two allies, even during the war. In 1915, Franz Joseph refused to send the Imperial Insignia to Aachen to be displayed in an exhibition celebrating 100 years of Prussian rule in the Rhineland. The Germans had no choice but to commission a replica.⁹³³

The Austro-German relationship was an uneasy 'friendship'. Based upon 'mutual interests' rather than genuine sympathy, it demanded constant and careful nurturing. Yet, curiously, the traditional image of Austro-German relations between 1871 and 1918 is one of close allies bound in dynastic – and nationalistic – solidarity. The *Dreikaiserabkommen* (1873), the *Zweibund* (1879), the *Dreikaiserbund* (1881) and the *Dreibund* (1882), not to mention the annual dynastic shindigs, all appear to suggest that, with Prussian victory and the 'resolution' of the 'German Question', deep-seated Austro-Prussian animosity and mistrust – forged over many, many decades – simply ceased to exist. However, this was demonstrably not the case. Past hatreds continued to influence Austrian policy and perceptions throughout the Bismarckian and Wilhelmine periods and on into the Republican era. Reading between the lines, a different picture emerges, a picture which leaves us, as indeed it did more contemporary observers, 'strongly in doubt whether or not Austria ever act[ed] in entire harmony with Berlin'.⁹³⁴ They were 'profound' and 'natural' enemies; fratricide, rather than fraternity was the red thread that ran through Austro-Prussian (German) affairs.

For those blessed with an eye for contemporary realities, the truth behind Austro-German relations was self-evident in the run-up to the First World War. An examination of Austro-German relations written in 1917 makes this patently clear, when the author reveals that 'Austro-German history as written has been dominated by the memory of 1866, by the jealousy, suspicion and hatred of Prussia which it has been supposed was transferred in 1871 to the new Empire'.⁹³⁵ The same article also gives a clear indicator of why this insight was consigned to oblivion; 'such an

⁹³³ See: Petra Rösger, *Verfreundete Nachbarn*, 29.

⁹³⁴ Roland G. Usher, 'Austro-German Relations Since 1866', *The American Historical Review*, 23 (1918), 577–78.

⁹³⁵ *Ibid*, 578.

assumption' the author claims 'was definitely negated by the war of 1914'.⁹³⁶ In a nutshell, our perceptions have been fundamentally obscured by the cataclysm of 1914–18. The Allies, as well as Anglo-Saxon historians, felt they had been duped into believing that past hatreds 'continued to influence [Austrian] policy', only to discover that these conclusions, once 'plunged into war' were 'directly opposed to the actual relations revealed by the outbreak of war'.⁹³⁷

Pan-Germanism required for its preparation so great a length of time and demanded for its adequate execution so perfect a correlation of effort between the two countries; the part of each was so dependent upon the work of the other; each must necessarily be so thoroughly convinced of the other's dependability; and both so entirely staked upon the issue their destiny as nations, that the fundamental fact of their relations must have been for some considerable period that degree of mutual faith which the great scheme, of whose existence we are now thoroughly assured, made so decidedly essential.⁹³⁸

In 1917, the logic was reasonable. Written during the apogee of nationalism, and in the death throes of a war that had devastated the continent, wiping out a whole generation of young men, it is perhaps to be expected that Austro-German relations were read through a 'pan-German' prism. However, for the present-day observer, it is clear that Austro-'German' relations during 1871–1918 were determined, on both sides, by *Realpolitik*, not nationalist sentiment.

⁹³⁶ Ibid, 578.

⁹³⁷ Ibid, 578–79.

⁹³⁸ Ibid, 578.

Hoch Hohenzollern!

The focus on the alleged ideological overlaps between National Socialism and the catholic-conservative right has overshadowed the fact that the Christian Socials' rejection of National Socialism had a concrete historical precedent. The conflict between the Christian Socials and the Austrian NSDAP on the one hand, and the Austrian government and the Nazi government in Germany on the other, were both understood as a continuation of two separate but interlinked historical conflicts which had shaped Austrian politics during the late Imperial period. History, it seemed, was repeating itself. While the Nazi regime in Germany was interpreted as the resurgence of the kingdom of Prussia, the Austrian NSDAP was cast in the role of the National Socialism's political and spiritual predecessor, the Pan-Germans.⁹³⁹ 'Austrian loyalists', it was argued, – meaning the Christian Socials – had faced this enemy once before in the decades leading up to the First World War. The Austrian Nazis, the *Reichspost* declared, were the dispossessed 'remnants' of Schönerer's *Alldeutsche* and K. H. Wolf's splinter group the *Deutschradikale Partei*.⁹⁴⁰

Die uns heute vorwerfen, daß wir Gegner eines Zusammenschlusses mit Deutschland sind, sind meist diejenigen, die den Bismarckkopf im Knopfloch tragen, die Verehrer jenes Preußentyps, der Oesterreich aus dem deutschen Staatsverband hinausgeworfen hat.⁹⁴¹

Only the name, it was argued, and its colours, had changed: 'Pan-German' had become 'National Socialist', while cornflower blue – which, it was claimed, was handed over to the 'Marxists' and their blue-shirts – had been exchanged for the Prussian colours and the brown shirt.⁹⁴² The worst of the Schönererian ethos, however, the intolerance of

⁹³⁹ Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Die zweite Gefahr: Ein Weckruf an alle Österreicher*, (Vienna, 1933), 11.

⁹⁴⁰ 'Ueberresten der Alldeutschen'. 'Reinigungsprozesse', *Reichspost*, 17 Jun. 1932, 1–2; Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Die zweite Gefahr*, 11.

⁹⁴¹ Aigner, 'Oesterreich und die Hitler-Diktatur', *Reichspost*, 26 Feb. 1933, 4–5.

⁹⁴² Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Die zweite Gefahr*, 11.

compatriots with divergent views, and their intense loathing of Austria and all that it stood for, had been handed on.⁹⁴³ By presenting the Austrian Nazis as the heirs to the Pan-German tradition, the Christian Socials historicized and legitimized their opposition to the Nazi movement. Viewed from this angle, Christian Social rejection of National Socialism was a logical and natural stance.

For the adherents of the conservative-Catholic right, socialized under the Empire, this was no great leap of the imagination. Hitler's admiration for Schönerer, later lauded as the 'herald and pioneer of the Greater German Reich' was well documented in *Mein Kampf*.⁹⁴⁴ Yet, even without Hitler extolling Schönerer as his role model, and Wolf and Stein as the 'pioneers' of a 'Greater Germany', to the Christian Socials the connections with the pan-German movement were obvious.⁹⁴⁵ A seminal feature of late Imperial politics, the conflict with the pan-German movement was deeply embedded within the Christian Social Party's historical memory. In 1933 'the brawling *Alldeutschen* in the Viennese Parliament, and the furore of the academic youth at the time of the language decrees' had in no way been forgotten, not to mention that Schönerer had died as recently as 1921 and Wolf and Stein were still alive.⁹⁴⁶ A fanatical admirer of Bismarck and the Hohenzollerns, Schönerer had been the figurehead of the Pan-German movement in Austria during the late Imperial period. Like Hitler, Schönerer had been a 'formidable orator' who also roused enthusiasm amongst the young.⁹⁴⁷ Virulently anti-Habsburg, anti-Catholic, anti-Slav and anti-Jewish, Schönerer, again, like Hitler, rejected the 'slavicized' Austrian Empire, viewing the German Reich as the cure for all Cisleithanian ills. Placing 'Hohenzollern above Habsburg' he proposed the organization of Bohemia as a purely

⁹⁴³ 'Das schlimmste aber vom Geist Schönerers, das sich auf den Nationalsozialismus übertragen hat, ist seine Intoleranz gegen andersdenkende Volksgenossen'. See: Heinrich Mataja, 'Was bekämpfen wir am Nationalsozialismus?', *Reichspost*, 10 Jan. 1934, 3–4.

⁹⁴⁴ Brigitte Hamann, trans. Thomas Thornton, *Hitler's Vienna: A Dictator's Apprenticeship*, (Oxford, 1999), 253. The book has since been reissued under a slightly altered title: Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna: A Portrait of the Tyrant as a Young Man*, (London, 2010).

⁹⁴⁵ See Hamann for details of Hitler's reverence for Wolf, Schönerer and Stein: Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 36–73; 'Abg. Kunschak über den Bruderkampf', *Reichspost*, 21 Jun. 1933, 2.

⁹⁴⁶ 'Ein deutscher Kampf. Zum Gedenktag der Schlacht von Königgrätz', *Vaterländische Front*, August 1933, 3–4.

⁹⁴⁷ Heinrich Mataja, 'Was bekämpfen wir am Nationalsozialismus?', *Reichspost*, 10 Jan. 1934, 3–4.

German province, launched the *Los von Rom* movement, which advocated the conversion of Austrian-German Catholics to Lutheran Protestantism, and called for the German-speaking provinces of the Empire to break away and join the German Reich.⁹⁴⁸

The ideological overlap between Schönerer's dogma and Hitler's was self-evident: the entrenched loathing of the Habsburgs, the Catholic Church, and the multinational 'Austrian' idea and a united Germany dominated by Prussia and controlled from Berlin. Little wonder that the call for de-Austrianization – a process that had, ironically, occurred in the successor states of the Habsburg Empire in the early post-war period – had been taken up by the Nazis.⁹⁴⁹ Like Hitler, Schönerer had also been extolled as a demigod by his followers.⁹⁵⁰ Not only did the two movements share a number of fundamental aims with the German Reich – the most obvious the union of Austria (and Bohemia) –, there were also marked similarities in both political ethos and strong-arm tactics. As one commentator noted:

Der Nationalsozialismus hat in der einstigen Alideutschen Partei Oesterreichs eine programmatische und ideelle Verwandtschaft. Die politischen Ziele, die Rassentheorien, die Einstellung zur Katholischen Kirche, die versuchte Wiederbelebung heidnisch-germanischer Kultformen, die hoffärtige Verkündigung einer besseren Sittlichkeit, welche die "Liguorimoral" überwinden müsse – alles haben wir in Oesterreich genau so wie heute in den Reden und Schriften des Nationalsozialismus, schon einmal mit demselben Pathos und einem nur durch die Staatsmacht in Schranken gehaltenen Terror von der Alideutschen erlebt.⁹⁵¹

The two movements were deemed to be cut from the same terroristic cloth, even if the NSDAP took the unsavoury methods of the Pan-Germans to new heights. The agitation tactics and techniques used by the Austrian NSDAP were understood as a throwback to those once employed by Schönerer, Wolf and their supporters. There was a time, the

⁹⁴⁸ 'Die ewig Gestrigen', *Sturm über Österreich*, 2 Jun. 1935 5; Andrew Gladding Whiteside, *Austrian National Socialism before 1918*, (The Hague, 1962), 14–15.

⁹⁴⁹ 'Entösterreicherung – Diese abgestandene Parole hat jetzt das Hakenkreuz übernommen...' Carl Vaugoin, *Ist Österreich Wert, erhalten zu werden?*, (Vienna 1933), 4.

⁹⁵⁰ See: 'Die Entgötterung', *Reichspost*, 2 Jul. 1934, 1–2.

⁹⁵¹ Ibid. 'Liguorimoral' is a reference to the moral theological teachings of Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori (27 Sep. 1696 – 1 Aug. 1787), an Italian Catholic bishop, theologian and author of *Moral Theology*.

Reichspost recalled, when the Christian Socials could not gather in public without some violent intrusion by the Pan-Germans.⁹⁵² During both periods, Austria's universities had served as breeding grounds for radical German nationalist sentiment. The radicalization of student fraternities during the 1890s led to violent clashes between German and non-German students, hostility that was spurred on by Schönerer's erstwhile comrade K. H. Wolf.⁹⁵³ Stefan Zweig described how, 'above all else', Hitler 'took from the German Nationals the beginning of a ruthless storm troop that blindly hit out in all directions, and with it the principle of terroristic intimidation'.

What the S.A. men, who broke up meetings with rubber clubs, attacked their opponents by night and felled them to the ground, accomplished for the National Socialists was provided by the Student Corps...who, under the cover of academic immunity, instituted an unparalleled campaign of violence, and were organised as a militia to march in, at beck and call, upon every political action. ...On the occasion of every 'Bummel'...blood flowed. ...Whenever this tiny though loud-mouthed party of the German Nationals wished to obtain anything by force in Austria, they sent this student storm troop on ahead.⁹⁵⁴

The parallels were of course, no coincidence; the early National Socialist movement hailed from Bohemia and had its roots in the German nationalist milieu, which gravitated around Schönerer. The complex web of Bohemian politics was – due, at least in part, to its influence on Hitler as a young man - to provide much of the ideological content for the NSDAP. Indeed, the impact of late Imperial Pan-German politics on Hitler cannot be underestimated. As Evans reminds us, Hitler was the 'living embodiment of the ethnic and cultural concept of national identity held by the Pan-Germans'.⁹⁵⁵ Due to its proximity to Bohemia, Linz, where Hitler grew up, had been a hotbed of pan-German politics during the Imperial era, and it is almost certain that Hitler would have been

⁹⁵² 'Es war so weit, daß geraume Zeit die Christlichsozialen in Wien, in der von Dr. Lueger verwalteten Stadt, keine öffentliche Versammlung ohne gewaltsame Störung durch die Alldeutschen mehr halten konnten'. See: Ibid.

⁹⁵³ See: Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 269.

⁹⁵⁴ Stefan Zweig, *World of Yesterday*, 58–59.

⁹⁵⁵ Richard Evans, J., *Coming of the Third Reich*, 161.

influenced by the Schönererians, who were well represented in the town.⁹⁵⁶ Hitler's own assertion that, on his arrival in Vienna, his sympathies were 'fully and wholly on the side of the pan-German tendency', is confirmed by Hamann, who demonstrates that his predilection for pan-German politics was already visible during his years in Linz.⁹⁵⁷ Contemporary observers came to the same conclusion. 'In their ideas and technique', noted Stefan Zweig in his autobiography, 'Hitler, also a border Austrian, had his origin. He took over the cry "*Los von Rom*" from Georg Schönerer'.⁹⁵⁸ He may have criticized Schönerer's tactics, but in one issue he was their one true heir: in his hatred of 'old Austria'.⁹⁵⁹

The Christian Socials were lent further legitimacy by their historical opposition to the pan-German movement. Had not the 'great Austrian' Karl Lueger, the father of the Christian Social movement, fought the exact same fight when he had taken on the traitorous 'Preußenseuchler' Schönerer and Wolf?⁹⁶⁰ Had not he and most of his party 'thoroughly despised' the *Alldeutschen*?⁹⁶¹ The conflict with the Pan-Germans had dominated Christian Social politics during the final decades of the Habsburg Empire. Although under Lueger the Christian Socials had 'demonstrated 'creative flexibility' on the national question, their opposition to the *Alldeutschen* was indisputable.⁹⁶² Unowsky notes how, 'already on 4 January [1898], the Christian Social *Reichspost* labelled Pan-German nationalists "anti-Austrian-German-Radicals" who distanced themselves from the emperor and desired above all "to become a vassal state of the German empire"'⁹⁶³. There was no doubt about where Lueger stood on the 'German' issue. As a young man, Lueger almost

⁹⁵⁶ Ibid, 163. See also: Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler's Hometown: Linz, Austria, 1908–1945*, (Bloomington, 1986).

⁹⁵⁷ Adolf Hitler, trans. Ralph Manheim, *Mein Kampf. With an introduction by D. C. Watt.*, (London, 1997), 90; Brigitte Hamann in: Petra Rösger, *Verfreundete Nachbarn*, 50.

⁹⁵⁸ Stefan Zweig, *World of Yesterday*, 58.

⁹⁵⁹ See: Heinrich Mataja, 'Was bekämpfen wir am Nationalsozialismus?', *Reichspost*, 10 Jan. 1934, 3–4.

⁹⁶⁰ Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Die zweite Gefahr*, 11.

⁹⁶¹ John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna. Christian Socialism in Power, 1897–1918*, (Chicago, 1995), 212.

⁹⁶² Ibid, 212.

⁹⁶³ Daniel L. Unowsky, *Pomp and Politics*, 149.

caused a riot at a student demonstration held at the University of Vienna during the Franco-Prussian war in support of the North German Confederation, when he 'denounced the North German colours as "the product of despotic arbitrariness"'.⁹⁶⁴ In later years, as his biographer observes, Lueger remained 'a consistent Austrian nationalist...conscious of his nation's centuries-old heritage as separate and distinct from that of Germany'⁹⁶⁵. As such he was dedicated 'to a specifically Austrian form of German culture, neither bound to *Reichsdeutsch* values nor in sympathy with the extremism of the Sudeten Germans'⁹⁶⁶. Thus, the Christian Socials could rightfully refer back to Lueger and his fight against the *Schönerianer* to legitimize both their rejection of the Nazis and their defence of Austrian independence. At the same time, however, Hitler claimed Lueger's legacy as his own.⁹⁶⁷ Yet, what Hitler admired in Lueger was his political prowess, not his politics⁹⁶⁸. As Hamann notes, it was Lueger's 'outstanding personality' and 'talent as an orator', not his party, that 'thrilled and stimulated' the young Hitler⁹⁶⁹. To Hitler, Lueger was an 'astute tactician' endowed with a political shrewdness that Schönerer, the 'visionary', simply did not possess⁹⁷⁰.

The Christian Socials certainly hoped that at least one historical parallel would prevail. It is an irony of history that Schönerer enjoyed little long-term political success – Hitler's obvious approbation excluded – and that the radical Pan-Germans 'for all their dramatic extremism...enjoyed only modest popularity'.⁹⁷¹ Only in the Bohemian Crownlands, the '*Urheimat* of nationalism in Austria' as Seipel put it, fuelled by the

⁹⁶⁴ Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-De-Siècle Vienna: Politics and culture*, (New York, 1980), 136–37.

⁹⁶⁵ Richard Geehr, S., *Karl Lueger: Mayor of Fin de Siècle Vienna* (Detroit, 1990), 20.

⁹⁶⁶ See: John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, 212–3.

⁹⁶⁷ This was not only true of Hitler. The Austrian Nazis also allegedly used Lueger's picture at their rallies in 1932. See: 'Der Tag der Entscheidung', *Die Neue Zeitung*, 24 Apr. 1932, 1–2. A further example of the Nazis' attempt to claim Lueger as their own is the film *Wien 1910* which 'emphasizes the indebtedness of National Socialism to Lueger and Schönerer'. Richard Geehr, S., et al., 'Wien 1910: An Example of Nazi Anti-Semitism', *Film and History*, 15 (1985), 54.

⁹⁶⁸ See: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 51.

⁹⁶⁹ Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 274.

⁹⁷⁰ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 91–92.

⁹⁷¹ Daniel L. Unowsky, *Pomp and Politics*, 181.

simmering Czech-German nationality conflict, did his radical German nationalist agenda fall on moderately fertile soil.⁹⁷² It is no coincidence that it was here that Schönerer's, Wolf's and Stein's electoral districts were located.⁹⁷³ Nonetheless, by 1900 his star was on the wane and in 1907 the introduction of 'universal' male suffrage sealed its fate.⁹⁷⁴ The *Alldeutsche Vereinigung* – as well as the man himself – finally melted into political insignificance, gaining just three seats in a Parliament of 516.⁹⁷⁵ During the early 1930s, this fact offered a faint glimmer of hope and was used to downplay the significance of the Nazi movement. Schönerer's Pan-German movement, it was pointed out, had raised a furore, but had not had a lasting impact. The connotation was obvious: with any luck, the National Socialists would share the same fate⁹⁷⁶

⁹⁷² Excerpt from "Nation und Staat", Verlag Wilhelm Braumüller, Wien 1915, published in: Ignaz Seipel, ed., *Österreich, wie es wirklich ist*, 52.

⁹⁷³ The conflict did manage to contaminate the political atmosphere in the bordering provinces, particularly in Vienna, where the Pan-Germans attacked 'the weakest link of the chain: the Viennese Czechs'. See: Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 264, 308.

⁹⁷⁴ See: Ibid, 248.

⁹⁷⁵ Even Schönerer lost his seat. See: Ibid, 236, 251.

⁹⁷⁶ Schönerer's *Alldeutsche Bewegung* had, 'zu ihrer Zeit großes Aufsehen gemacht, aber keine nachhaltige Wirkung hervorgebracht'. See: Heinrich Mataja, 'Was bekämpfen wir am Nationalsozialismus?', *Reichspost*, 10 Jan. 1934, 3–4.

It was Hitler, the 'ex-Austrian', who provided the ideological link between Bohemia and Berlin.⁹⁷⁸ According to Heinrich Mataja, it could not be heedlessly ignored that the founder and leader of the National Socialist party was an Austrian, and that a movement which had captivated a substantial section of the Reich German populace – although, he pointed out, not nearly the ninety-two per cent claimed – hailed from an Austrian mind.⁹⁷⁹ It was all the more significant as it was not exactly characteristic of their Reich German 'compatriots' to willingly acknowledge the inherent value and talents of the Austrians, let alone subordinate themselves to 'Austrian' rule.⁹⁸⁰ In the case of Adolf Hitler then, an exceptional combination of circumstances must have prevailed for this to be the result.⁹⁸¹ The fundamental issue was an historical one and, to some extent, one of semantics. It was the difference between the German nation (all 'Germans' regardless of state citizenship), and the German state. In Bismarck's *kleindeutsch* German Reich, Mataja argued, the term 'German' was primarily used to refer to the citizens of the German state, rather than as a 'national' concept. Yet, 'German' had a far broader meaning, and as both Austrian citizens and 'ethnic' Germans, with Czechs, Poles and Slovenians as fellow citizens, and Reich German compatriots, the Austrians were only too aware of the distinction. The German-Austrian, who truly understood the Austrian Empire, was a German-minded Austrian patriot. He who did not truly understand, lost the bond, either with his state, or with his people. Thus, Mataja argued, the national concept of 'Germandom', uncoupled from the state, could only have been introduced into the German Reich by an Austrian, albeit one who had lost this 'bond'. In a country now ripe, as, due to the humiliation and consequences of defeat in the aftermath of the World War, Germany was, for the

⁹⁷⁷ 'Im Stehschritt zum Einheitsstaat', *Reichspost*, 11 Mar. 1933, 1–2.

⁹⁷⁸ 'Das Anschlussstolle Oesterreich', *Sturm über Österreich*, 12 Aug. 1934, 2.

⁹⁷⁹ See: Heinrich Mataja, 'Was bekämpfen wir am Nationalsozialismus?', *Reichspost*, 10 Jan. 1934, 3–4.

⁹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸¹ See: *Ibid.*

broadening of 'Germandom' from a concept of state to a concept of nationality, Hitler's idea ignited a flame in German hearts athirst for a redemptive word, a spark, which set the country ablaze.⁹⁸²

Nonetheless, if, as Mataja claimed, the '*gesamtdeutsch*' nucleus of National Socialism was of Austrian origin – albeit misappropriated –, in its aims, methods, ethos and inspiration, National Socialism was viewed by many Austrians as an explicitly 'Prussian-Protestant' phenomenon.⁹⁸³ In its arrogance, militarism and chauvinism the Nazi movement represented everything – to Austrian eyes at least – that was negative about the 'Prussian tradition'. Even if Hitler was born in Austria, its spiritual *Heimat* was 'Hinterpommern, Pommern und Mecklenburg, das östlichste Preußen und jene Gebiete von Sachsen, von denen übergroßes Elend die Sprichwörtliche sächsische Helle fernhält', a fact seemingly verified by the results of the Presidential election of March-April 1932, as well as the predominance of Protestants within Nazi ranks.⁹⁸⁴

This was useful to the Austrians in two ways: on the one hand, the Austrian Nazis could be portrayed as a 'foreign' phenomenon', as an import from Northern Germany rather than an indigenous Austrian movement.⁹⁸⁵ Thus, the Austrian government could wish the Germans well in their choice of government while delegitimizing the Austrian Nazis' claim to extend that rule to Austria; 'what is elemental in the Reich is imitation in Austria'⁹⁸⁶. On the other hand, Nazism could be rejected as a Prussian phenomenon, and therefore the antithesis of all that was considered 'Austrian'. The 'un-Austrian' crassness of National Socialist propaganda was a case in point; the exaggeration in mass persuasion and execution, the ultra-Americanism, the suffocation of thought in noise and colour, in fireworks, parades and propaganda was deemed to reflect, indeed surpass, the spirit of

⁹⁸² See: Ibid.

⁹⁸³ See, for example: Ibid; Aigner, 'Oesterreich und die Hitler-Diktatur', *Reichspost*, 26 Feb. 1933, 4–5, 4.

⁹⁸⁴ 'Warum nicht nationalsozialistisch?', *Reichspost* 20 Apr. 1932, 1–2; 'Gleichschaltung auch der Kirchen?', *Reichspost*, 8 Apr. 1933, 1–2.

⁹⁸⁵ 'Der Nationalsozialismus ist, wenn sein Trommler auch ein ins Deutscher Reich hinüber gewechselter gebürtiger Oesterreicher ist, auf österreichischen Boden ein Fremdgewächs, Import aus Norddeutschland'. 'Das Anschlussstolle Oesterreich', *Sturm über Österreich*, 12 Aug. 1934, 2.

⁹⁸⁶ 'Was im Reich Urkraft ist, ist in Oesterreich Imitation'. 'Unterschiede', *Reichspost*, 30 Mar. 1933, 1–2.

Berlin.⁹⁸⁷ After the Nazi takeover of power, the parallels multiplied as Germany fell prey to Prussian hubris.⁹⁸⁸ The Dollfuß government charged, via its newly-formed propaganda section, that in its aggressive ‘*Königgrätzer Politik*’ the new Nazi regime in Germany was mimicking the perfidious behaviour of Austria’s erstwhile Prussian rival.⁹⁸⁹ Indeed, even the Nazi assault on the rule of law was explained with recourse to Prussian megalomania:

Es gibt kein Wolkenkuckucksheim eines göttlichen objektiven Rechtes! ...Die Rechtsbegründung vermittelt dann einzig und allein die Macht...Die Botschaft ist nicht neu. Sie entstand aus dem Seite des friderizianischen preußischen Militärstaates und wurde vor mehr als hundert Jahren im Sinne einer pantheistischen Weltbetrachtung durch Hegel zu einem großen staatsphilosophischen System geführt, das seitdem mit tausend Adern die preußische Geschichts- und Staatsauffassung durchgezogen hat.⁹⁹⁰

This impression had little, if anything, to do with Hitler’s posturing in the *Garnisonkirche*. Rather, the *mise-en-scène* in Potsdam merely added more fuel to the fire, as did the objections of the German nationalist press in Germany to Dollfuß’s attempts to ‘interfere with the decrees of fate, an attempt to reverse the course of history and to stay “the inevitable victory of the spirit of Potsdam over the Hapsburg spirit”’⁹⁹¹. As early as 1931, the *Reichspost* had contended that the masses were streaming into Hitler’s movement through two giant gates. While the Socialist throng poured in through the one, through the other poured the Nationalist hordes, dreaming of the *Sanssouci-Ideal* of *Fredericus Rex*.⁹⁹²

⁹⁸⁷ ‘...die nationalsozialistische Propaganda, in ihren großzügigen, aber krassen Formen, das Auftrumpfen in Massenwirkung und Technik, der Ueberamerikanismus, das Ersticken des Denkens in Lärm und Farben, in Feuerwerken, Paraden und Propagandaschriften, das ist nicht unsere Art, das entspricht viel eher dem Berliner Wesen, und übersteigert auch dieses’. Heinrich Mataja, ‘Was bekämpfen wir am Nationalsozialismus?’, *Reichspost*, 10 Jan. 1934, 3–4.

⁹⁸⁸ See: ‘Preussengeist ist Deutschlands Ruin’, *Sturm über Österreich*, 29 Oct. 1933, 4.

⁹⁸⁹ Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Die zweite Gefahr*, 17.

⁹⁹⁰ ‘Wolkenkuckucksheim’, *Reichspost*, 26 May 1933, 1–2.

⁹⁹¹ Rumbold citing an article that appeared in the nationalist *Kreuz Zeitung* (*Neue Preußische Zeitung*), (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C 5848/420/3, Sir H. Rumbold, Situation in Austria, 21 Jun. 1933.

⁹⁹² ‘Hitlers großes Lager hat zwei riesige Tore: durch das eine strömen die Massen des Nationalismus, die Träume von Sanssouci-Ideal des Fredericus Rex’. ‘Der Katholik im Staate’, *Reichspost*, 8 Oct. 1931, 7. ‘Das Wort, daß Gott immer mit den stärksten Bataillonen ist, stammt ja von dem Preußen König Friedrich dem

In Austria, the 'Third Reich' was situated along a longer historical trajectory, upon which Weimar was presented as a mere interregnum. In the months following Hitler's ascension to 'Bismarck's throne', the piecemeal abolition of federal autonomy, the aggressive centralization of state power, not to mention the rabidly anti-clerical attitude of the new Nazi regime were all interpreted as the resurrection of the Protestant Prussian paradigm of 1871. It was, the *Reichspost* argued, the Prussian Kings who had first instigated the drive towards a unitary German state.⁹⁹³ Piece by piece, through appropriation, border adjustments and annexation, Prussia had resolutely pursued its goal for control across northern and central Germany.⁹⁹⁴ In the aftermath of 1866, this 'Prussianizing' crusade had continued unabated. The sovereignty of the German states had been further eroded, and Germany's historically federal structure, undermined. It was no coincidence that the Prussian colours, not the national Black-Red-Gold were raised above the 'Second Reich'.⁹⁹⁵ Now the process was complete: Bismarck's federal state had given way to a Greater Prussia, which was masquerading as the 'Third Reich'. Sixty-seven years after it was brutally expelled from the 'Reich', Austria was once again good enough to bear the costs for further Prussian expansion; that was the real reason why it was now being called, 'in allen Tonarten' Heim ins Reich.⁹⁹⁶

Nazi '*Gleichschaltung*' was understood as a continuation of this historic, Prussian crusade; the natural progeny of the Hohenzollern Empire, the new Nazi regime had taken up where the 'Second Reich' had left off.⁹⁹⁷

Sie Lügen, wenn Sie singen: „Deutschland über alles“, denn ihnen geht nur der Staat Groß-Preußen über alles. ... Denn Deutschland ist nicht Preußenland, nicht Bayerland, nicht Schwabenland allein, und

Großen, den gerade die Nationalsozialisten jetzt wieder als ihren Helden und Heros verehren.' 'Wahltag im Deutschen Reich', *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt*, 5 Mar. 1933, 2.

⁹⁹³ 'Im Stechschritt zum Einheitsstaat', *Reichspost*, 11 Mar. 1933, 1–2.

⁹⁹⁴ See: Ibid.

⁹⁹⁵ See: Heinrich Mataja, 'Was bekämpfen wir am Nationalsozialismus?', *Reichspost*, 10 Jan. 1934, 3–4.

⁹⁹⁶ Jetzt, da dieser Prozeß vollendet und die Umwandlung des Bismarckschen Bundesstaates in einen als "Dritte Reich" verkleideten Großstaat Preußen vollzogen ist, wäre das vor 67 Jahren aus dem Reich brutal hinausgeworfene Österreich wieder gut genug, die Kosten einer weiteren Vergrößerung Preußens zu tragen.' Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Die zweite Gefahr*, 15.

⁹⁹⁷ 'Im Stechschritt zum Einheitsstaat', *Reichspost*, 11 Mar. 1933, 1–2.

auch nicht Österreich allein, sondern alles Land zusammen „soweit die deutsche Zunge klingt“ und man „deutsche Lieder singt.“⁹⁹⁸

Within weeks, Germany's historic federalism had been destroyed, 'flattened by the steam roller of unification', de facto, if not de jure.⁹⁹⁹ Although the Weimar Constitution had not been officially annulled, and despite the fact that Hitler had expressly rejected the prospect of excessive centralization in his governmental declaration, the *Reichspost* noted with increasing alarm, that within a matter of days the German states had been reduced to mere provinces of Prussia, their Landtage 'gleichgeschaltet' and their sovereignty all but terminated.¹⁰⁰⁰ Yet, they warned, the centralizing drive of the regime would not stop there. The Nazis' intention was not only to abolish state sovereignty, but also to obliterate historical state boundaries; Germany would then be repartitioned along 'tribal' [*Stamm*] lines.¹⁰⁰¹ Particularly telling to the Austrian observer was the fact that the 'Prussia-Reich' dichotomy had finally been eliminated, in that, henceforth, the office of *Statthalter* for Prussia was to be performed by the Reich Chancellor.¹⁰⁰² In effect, this meant that the Prussian *Statthalter* commanded superiority over all other governors.¹⁰⁰³ The Reich government was, at the same time, the Prussian government, which meant that Prussia remained a great power, the uncontested arbiter of a highly centralized German state.¹⁰⁰⁴ The Nazis had succeeded, where Bismarck had baulked, establishing 'Prussian-Germany', governed directly from Berlin.¹⁰⁰⁵

⁹⁹⁸ Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Austro-Nazi ohne Maske: Ein Gang durch den braunen Lügenwald; 15. Juli 1927–14. Mai 1933*, (Vienna, 1933), 24. The latter reference is to 'Des Deutschen Vaterland', a song written by Ernst Moritz Arndt in 1813 shortly before the Battle of Leipzig.

⁹⁹⁹ 'Im Stechschritt zum Einheitsstaat', *Reichspost*, 11 Mar. 1933, 1–2.

¹⁰⁰⁰ See: 'Das Ende des deutschen Föderalismus', *Reichspost*, 8 Apr. 1933, 1.

¹⁰⁰¹ 'Der deutsche Einheitsstaat', *Reichspost*, 9 Apr. 1933, 1–2.

¹⁰⁰² See: Ibid.

¹⁰⁰³ See: 'Das Ende des deutschen Föderalismus', *Reichspost*, 8 Apr. 1933, 1.

¹⁰⁰⁴ '...die Reichsregierung ist zugleich preußische Regierung und ihr sind die Statthaltereien und damit auch die Landesregierungen der außerpreußischen Länder unterstellt'. See: 'Der deutsche Einheitsstaat', *Reichspost*, 9 Apr. 1933, 1–2.

¹⁰⁰⁵ See: 'Das Ende des deutschen Föderalismus', *Reichspost*, 8 Apr. 1933, 1.

The implications were clear: *Anschluss* would spell the end of Austrian sovereignty and Austria would share the same fate as Bavaria and the other southern and central German states, which had been 'gleichgeschaltet' despite all assurances to the contrary.¹⁰⁰⁶ What the Nazis really wanted, the government press claimed, was to make Austria a 'Prussian colony', a mere province within Prussian-Germany.¹⁰⁰⁷ Like these states, Vienna, the imperial capital, they predicted, would be provided with a *Statthalter* [Governor] appointed by Berlin. Austria would have to content herself with an impotent provincial *Landtag* and the federal provinces would be wiped from the map.¹⁰⁰⁸ Indeed, one commentary reads like a prophecy of what was to come:

Genau so würde Österreich im Falle des Anschlusses und der Machtübernahme durch den Nationalsozialismus zu einer bloßen Vogtei Berlins degradiert werden, mit einem von draußen geschickten „Landesinspekteur“ als Reichskommissar oder Reichsstatthalter an der Spitze, mit ebensolchen „Gauinspektoren“ für die Bundesländer und mit österreichischen Landes- und Gauleitern als österreichischen Anhängseln. Im Bälde wurde es dann weder ein Nieder- und Oberösterreich, noch ein Steiermark und Salzburg, noch ein Tirol und Vorarlberg, noch ein Kärnten und Burgenland geben. Schwamm drüber und Streusand drauf! ¹⁰⁰⁹

Yet, to Catholic Austria it was the rekindling of Bismarck's Kulturkampf, which offered the most striking parallel. Hitler's anti-Catholicism had been noted early on. He was likened to Ulrich v. Hutten, 'Martin Luther's messenger', a comparison that seemed to be confirmed by the preponderance of Protestants within the Nazis' ranks.¹⁰¹⁰ The Nazi assault on German Catholicism and its institutions, the violence against Catholic priests, the de facto revival of the *Kanzelparagraph*, the 'indiscriminate and brutal' liquidation of Catholic organizations, the persecution of the *Bayerische Volkspartei* and the *Zentrum* all

¹⁰⁰⁶ '...Österreich genau so „gleichzuschalten“ wie sie, allen gegebenen Zusicherungen zum Trotz, Bayern und die übrigen süd- und mitteldeutschen Bundesstaaten „gleichgeschaltet“ haben'. Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Die zweite Gefahr*, 20.

¹⁰⁰⁷ 'Die Vaterländische Front und ihre Gegner', *Vaterländische Front*, Feb. 1934, 6–7. See also: 'Ein kleiner Rückzug in der Anschlußfrage', *Reichspost*, 27 May 1933, 3.

¹⁰⁰⁸ See: 'Der deutsche Einheitsstaat', *Reichspost*, 9 Apr. 1933, 1–2.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Die zweite Gefahr*, 21.

¹⁰¹⁰ 'Im Zeichen des Hakenkreuzes', *Reichspost*, 4 Feb. 1931, 1–2; 'Gleichschaltung auch der Kirchen?', *Reichspost*, 8 Apr. 1933, 1–2.

harked back to an earlier era.¹⁰¹¹ However, with the attempted *Gleichschaltung* of the Churches, this renewed attack was not simply the triumph of Protestantism over Catholicism, but a heathen *Kulturkampf* against the whole of Christianity, indeed against Christ himself: 'The denial of divine law, the war against Christian denominations, the...party dogma is nothing less than the new edition of Voltaire's call to arms, "Ecrasez l'infame"'.¹⁰¹² With Germany fallen victim to the 'bragging Prussians', Austrians, *Sturm über Österreich* argued in October 1933, were faced with a clear choice: 'entweder Anerkennung des Nationalsozialismus und Preisgabe unserer christlich-deutschen Kultur oder aber Kampf gegen den Nationalsozialismus bis zum Äußersten'.¹⁰¹³

The 'Prussian paradigm' was a particularly useful propaganda tool for the Dollfuß government, primed for domestic consumption. The Austro-Prussian reference would not have been lost on an interwar Austrian audience, regardless of their political affiliation; Austrians' may not have been sure who they were or where they belonged during this period, but they certainly knew that they were not Prussians. What separated them – or what Austrians perceived separated them – was laid down by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, albeit anecdotally, in the *Vossische Zeitung* in December 1917.¹⁰¹⁴ While Prussia, he declared, was an artificial construction, competent and efficient, where the highest 'authority' was the crown, Austria had developed naturally, was more devout and its subjects 'had faith' in their monarchy. The Prussians, Hofmannsthal suggested, were arrogant, self-righteous and pedantic and, unlike the Austrians, who had been steady throughout the centuries, lacked historical awareness. Austrians, on the other hand, nonchalant and self-indulgent, avoided conflict, showed more humanity and appeared unworldly, perhaps even effeminate when set against the self-assurance and vigour of the average Prussian.

¹⁰¹¹ 'Der Kulturkampf in Deutschland entbrannt!', *Reichspost*, 23 Jun. 1933, 1.

¹⁰¹² Heinrich Mataja, 'Der Kulturkampf im Deutschen Reiche', *Reichspost*, 7 Feb. 1934, 2.

¹⁰¹³ 'Klarheit!', *Sturm über Österreich*, 1 Oct. 1933, 4; 'Preussengeist ist Deutschlands Ruin', *Sturm über Österreich*, 29 Oct. 1933, 4.

¹⁰¹⁴ See: Hugo von Hofmannsthal, 'Preuße und Österreicher. Ein Schema', in ed., Herbert Steiner *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben: Prosa III* (Frankfurt a. Main, 1952).

The cultural stereotypes outlined by Hofmannsthal outlived the Imperial era. The wartime experience in particular played a crucial role in forging and confirming Austrian – and invariably also ‘Prussian’ – prejudices, a fact substantiated by both Austrian and Nazi sources. In Kraus’s *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* – like Hofmannsthal’s musing, also the product of the uneasy wartime partnership – negative Prussian stereotypes abound; separated by language, the ‘clinical, single-minded, ill-mannered Prussian’ is juxtaposed against ‘the artistic, peaceable, genial Viennese’.¹⁰¹⁵ Yet such comparisons were not always in the form of caricature, nor necessarily explicit. A seemingly innocuous article published in the *Reichspost* in 1930 comparing the three rococo palaces, Versailles, Sanssouci, Schönbrunn has far deeper implications. In fact, the article only really makes sense against the backdrop of Austro-Prussian stereotypes. Not merely palaces, the author argued, they were architectural epitaphs: ‘drei Herrscher, drei Nationen, drei Temperaments’ set in stone.¹⁰¹⁶ In Protestant Prussia, the author declared, the gentle arches and dainty flourishes of the rococo were out of place. While Sanssouci, ‘feels infinitely weary’, Schönbrunn in its ‘lachende goldgrüne Helligkeit’ exudes all the qualities of the Austrian character. This is such a key passage that it is worth quoting it in full.

...die sich unbekümmert über Probleme hinwegsetzt, ohne sie vollends zu lösen, ...die trotz ihrer leichten Art das Leben zu nehmen, die Reife hat, das Leben zu verstehen und ihm deswegen seinen Lauf läßt. Es liegt in Schönbrunns Charakter, daß es sich mit der Zeit abfindet und nicht...wie Sanssouci, einen Schleier des Vergessenwollens um sich schlägt. Das ist Temperamentssache. Ein Stich ins Kokett Nonchalante die Gloriette, mäßigt die gelbgrüne Breite des Schlosses, das Aristokratie besitzt, jedoch eher die italienische, patrizierhafte Aristokratie, das sich ungarische Feudalität beherbergt und deutsche Lauterkeit, kurz, das – österreichisch ist.¹⁰¹⁷

¹⁰¹⁵ Karl Kraus, *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit. Tragödie in 5 Akten mit Vorspiel und Epilog*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1991); Eva Philippoff, *Die Doppelmonarchie Österreich–Ungarn. Ein politisches Lesebuch (1867–1918)*, 21.

¹⁰¹⁶ Kurt Weigl, ‘Schlösser der Weltgeschichte’, *Reichspost*, 11 Nov. 1930, 1–2.

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibid.



Figure 7: *Türkenbefreiungsfeier, Schönbrunn, 14 May 1933*
(ÖNB Bildarchiv)

These stereotypes permeated the fabric of interwar Austrian society. As the British Minister observed, although the Austrian ‘likes to toy with “Anschluss” ideas in the abstract and to consider the German as his natural blood-brother’, in point of fact, his kinship and friendship neither extended to nor included Prussia.¹⁰¹⁸ When an associate argued that Germany remained a threat to peace – in 1928 – precisely because of the ‘unfortunate character of the Reich Germans’ [read Prussian], a character, which was deemed ‘quite foreign to us Austrians’, Seipel also conceded ‘the understandable aversion to the uncongenial characteristics of the Prussian nature’.¹⁰¹⁹ Seipel’s successor as Chancellor, Schuschnigg, also remarked on the fundamental differences between the Austrians and the Prussians, *denn der Oesterreicher unterliegt ganz anderen*

¹⁰¹⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, 2, para., 9.

¹⁰¹⁹ D. W. Bauer to Seipel, (24.07.1928) Paul R. Sweet, ‘Seipel’s Views on Anschluss’, 321–23.

Milieueinflüssen als der Norddeutsche. Seine Art sich zu geben ist liebenswürdiger, weicher, scheinbar schwächer'.¹⁰²⁰

The Dollfuß and Schuschnigg governments instrumentalized this widespread antipathy and the Habsburg past, on the one hand to lend a basis to an Austrian identity vis-à-vis that espoused by National Socialism and on the other to counteract the draw of Anschluss and the attraction of Nazi Germany. *Sturm über Österreich* reminded its audience that the Austrian's wartime experience of 'Der Kamerad Piefke' had been less than positive. The paper dared Hitler to send one of his north German comrades to pay a visit to an Austrian veterans' association, just to see how he would be received: 'Der Kamerad Piefke wird, wenn er sich dort vorstellt und ,mal jroßartig auspacken will von den bravourösen Leistungen der kaiserlich deutschen Requisitionskommanden" in den mit österreichischem Blut eroberten Gebieten, so manches Interessante zu hören bekommen'.¹⁰²¹ Indeed, in *Sturm über Österreich* the 'Nazi-Prussian' character was somewhat standard subject matter during the Dollfuß-era and the *Ständestaat*. Here a rather unflattering portrait from the autumn of 1933 to demonstrate why, according to *Sturm über Österreich*, it was imperative that Austria remain free of Nazi Germany:

Der Preuße will immer recht haben, immer gescheiter sein als alle anderen, jeden belehren und kommandieren, im Privatverkehr, wie in der Politik. Das wissen alle Leute auf der Welt, nur der Preuße selber will es nicht wissen. Darum bringen die Preußen auch immerfort Unheil über das deutsche Volk. Wir wollen als Österreicher an den Folgen dieser Verstocktheit nicht mitleiden. Darum brauchen wir keinen Anschluß an ein Nazi-Preußen-Deutschland. Wir wollen keine Heloten und Sklaven der Preußen werden. Für ihre politisch-diplomatischen Sünden wollen wir nicht büßen helfen. Wir wollen frei bleiben und der Welt zeigen, es gibt auch bessere und konziliantere Deutsche als die Nazi-Preußen sind!¹⁰²²

However, the instrumentalization of the Austro-Prussian narrative cannot simply be ascribed to opportunism on the part of the Austrian government. This overlooks the fact

¹⁰²⁰ Kurt v. Schuschnigg, 'Das Gesicht des Österreichertums', *Vaterländische Front (Niederösterreich)*, 1/1936, 3.

¹⁰²¹ 'Das Anschlussstolle Oesterreich', *Sturm über Österreich*, 12 Aug. 1934, 2.

¹⁰²² 'Preussengeist ist Deutschlands Ruin', *Sturm über Österreich*, 29 Oct. 1933, 4.

that despite the prevalence of Anschluss sentiment, the German dichotomy of the previous century – North versus South, Protestant versus Catholic, *kleindeutsch* versus *großdeutsch*, Hohenzollern versus Habsburg, Pan-Germanism versus ‘Austrianism’, Sanssouci versus Schönbrunn – continued to function as a cultural touchstone on into the interwar period.



Figure 8: Dollfuß in the uniform of the Kaiserschützen, Schönbrunn, 14 May 1933
(ÖNB Bildarchiv)

Moreover, for the Christian Socials and those who saw themselves as German but Austrians first – Dollfuß included – their opposition to the Nazi party was built on a solid historical basis. Thus, viewed along a longer historical trajectory, the Austro-German conflict of the interwar period fits into a much broader pattern, as the belated manifestation of a conflict, which had, in a sense, waxed and waned for more than two centuries, until it was finally put to rest by the fall of the Third Reich.

This longer trajectory also provides an explanation for Dollfuß's and Schuschnigg's careful, seemingly submissive, method of communicating with the Third Reich. Under the

Empire, talk of German kinship and solidarity, or conversely, references to ‘un-German’ behaviour in an antagonist, were a commonly implemented propaganda tool, used to maintain the intricate balance of power within the German lands and sway dynastic – and later, public – opinion. In the private sphere, references to German solidarity were as often used to convey a barely concealed contempt: when Franz Joseph remarks upon the antagonistic conduct of ‘our beloved German allies’ during the summer of 1866, the irony is palpable.¹⁰²³ From the Austrian perspective, whether during times of conflict or consensus, there was often no alternative but to work with the Prussians, even if ‘their utter lack of principle and their uncivil pranks’ were often ‘hard to stomach’.¹⁰²⁴ Under the axiom ‘keep your friends close and your enemies closer’, Austro-Prussian animosity was expediently shrouded in a ‘cloak of consanguinity’, if not always with great success. Conciliatory language, mollifying diplomatic relations – the dialogue between Archduchess Sophie and her sister, Queen Elizabeth of Prussia, is an obvious example – and eventually military alliances all served to mask the animosity and mutual distrust that reigned between Habsburg and Hohenzollern.¹⁰²⁵

In a sense, the same was true during the interwar period, even though the circumstances – and the power ratio – had altered greatly. Both Dollfuß and Schuschnigg went to considerable lengths to hold out an olive branch to their German neighbours. Despite being under constant attack from the Nazis at home and in the Reich, Dollfuß never failed to emphasize that Austria was always willing to work to explore ways to overcome any ‘misunderstandings’ that may have arisen between the two states and towards a cordial relationship with the German Reich.¹⁰²⁶ Moreover, both Dollfuß and Schuschnigg never missed an opportunity to reiterate that they deeply ‘regretted’ the painful conflict with Germany, ‘all the more’ because it involved two states, ‘which shared

¹⁰²³ Franz Joseph to Elisabeth, (23.7.1866). Quoted in: Brigitte Hamann, ‘Die Habsburger’, 225.

¹⁰²⁴ ‘Die Allianz mit Preußen ist die einzig richtige Politik, aber sauer machen sie es einem mit ihrer Grundsatzlosigkeit und ihren burschikosen Streichen’. There is no exact English equivalent of *Burschikos* but the term connotes an unconventional directness bordering on the impolite, originally associated with carousing and fencing student fraternities. Franz Schnürer, ed., *Briefe*, 19.

¹⁰²⁵ See: Brigitte Hamann, ‘Die Habsburger’.

¹⁰²⁶ See, for example: Dollfuß in a speech held in Innsbruck, 29 June 1933. Edmund Weber, ed., *Dollfuß an Österreich*, 84.

the closest blood-ties' and a long and venerable history.¹⁰²⁷ However, such protestations of kinship should not be interpreted as sympathy for, or an attempt to sidle up to, the Nazi regime. On one level, this was emblematic of the manner in which the two countries traditionally communicated even when relations were bad, as demonstrated by this observation of the British Minister in Vienna in 1932:

Declarations of Pan-German solidarity are as frequent in Austria as ever; but feelings towards the "brothers in the Reich" were not particularly cordial in government circles in Vienna during the year, and the relations between the present Chancellor and his immediate predecessor and the German Legation were at one time extremely strained.¹⁰²⁸

On another level, Dollfuss and Schuschnigg were employing a tactic that was, in part, a legacy of the Imperial era; '...she [Austria] saw no reason not to bend every effort to live with the German Reich in the light of the old tradition and on the best of understandings.'¹⁰²⁹ The 'old tradition' of course had nothing to do with being dictated to by Berlin. Above all, what Dollfuß was doing here was opting for a strategy of 'feigned friendship', much like that identified by Alexander Lassner in his investigation of Schuschnigg's attempts to buy some time with the signing of the *Juliabkommen* in 1936.¹⁰³⁰

Their motivations for taking this stance – rather than, for example, entering into open conflict with the Reich – were manifold. On the one hand it can be seen as an attempt to avoid escalating a conflict with Germany that the Austrians could not hope to win. Another motivation was to convince the Austrian population that the Nazis were *solely* to blame for the poor relations between Austria and Germany. It was, after all the Nazis in Germany, the 'anarchist corrupters of youth' who were arming the youth of the

¹⁰²⁷ For example, Dollfuß speaking in Vienna, 18 Jan 1934, Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 104–05.

¹⁰²⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, 10, para. 38.

¹⁰²⁹ Schuschnigg (conversation with Heß, October 1933) Kurt Schuschnigg, *My Austria*, 226.

¹⁰³⁰ This concept, used by Lassner to describe Schuschnigg's attempts to buy some time with the signing of the *Juliabkommen* is equally as useful at describing one of the strategies of his predecessor. Alexander Lassner, N., 'Peace at Hitler's Price', 726.

country with bombs.¹⁰³¹ If the Austrian government could demonstrate that the Nazis were the ones being entirely unreasonable, this might help minimize the appeal of Nazism at home. Thus, it was imperative that Austria remain on the defensive – ‘Österreich müsse sich dem Deutschen Reich gegenüber auf eine Verteidigungsstellung beschränken und dürfte nicht selbst zum Angriff übergehen’ – as this would give the Austrian government the moral high ground at home and abroad.¹⁰³² Internationally this would enable Dollfuß to keep public and political opinion on Austria’s side. Insisting that Austria had not ‘started the fight’, Dollfuß could then explain to German nationalist circles at home (to whom conflict with Germany was never going to be palatable), as well as to the wider Austrian populace, that, contrary to Nazi accusations, the deterioration of relations with Germany was in no way his fault.¹⁰³³ After all, Dollfuß had been Chancellor a year before the Nazis came to power in Germany and had his government not worked together in all friendship with the previous German government?¹⁰³⁴ He had always managed to work in close co-operation with von Papen, ‘having simply communicated by telephone with him whenever a serious question arose’.¹⁰³⁵ Thus Dollfuß could challenge the message disseminated by Nazi propaganda that blamed Dollfuß for not only the conflict with Germany, but all of Austria’s ills. This could only mean that responsibility for the conflict between the two states could be placed firmly at Germany’s – or more specifically, the Nazis’ – door.

¹⁰³¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C5976/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Dollfuß speech, 30 Jun. 1933

¹⁰³² Dollfuß, MRP Nr. 898, 22 Sep. 1933, Gertrude Enderle-Burcel, ed., *Kabinett Dr. Engelbert Dollfuß, MRP Nr. 883 vom 16. Juni 1933 bis MRP Nr. 904 vom 27. Oktober 1933*, (Vienna, 1984), 407. See also: Dollfuß in a speech held in Dornbirn, 29 June 1933. See also: Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 101–105.

¹⁰³³ Dollfuß in a speech held in Dornbirn, 29 June 1933. Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 105.

¹⁰³⁴ See: Dollfuß, Amstetten, 26 November, 1933; *Ibid*, 104; Dollfuß, Innsbruck, 29 June 1933; Edmund Weber, ed., *Dollfuß an Österreich*, 84.

¹⁰³⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C5975/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Speech by Dollfuß made on 25 June, 27 Jun. 1933.

Chapter 7

‘Österreich hat das Reich schon in seinem Namen’:

Austria’s German Mission

Why German? The question posed by the newspaper of the *Vaterländische Front* in July 1935 is as apposite today as it was more than seven decades ago.¹⁰³⁶ The idea that Austria was a German land and that the Austrian was ‘the better German’ was a central tenet of *Ständestaat* ideology, and, according to many assessments, this ‘mixed message’ was a primary reason for its failure. ‘Insufficiently distinct from German identity’, so the argument goes, ‘Austria did not come across as unique and dissimilar to Nazi Germany, but rather as the poorer cousin of the Germans’, a failure which ultimately contributed to the ‘relatively smooth nature’ of the Anschluss in 1938.¹⁰³⁷ Others go even further, suggesting that the Austrian government colluded in its own demise by ‘refusing to encourage the development of an independent Austrian identity based on a broad consensus’.¹⁰³⁸ It is a compelling argument, especially when weighed against the successful nation-building strategy adopted by successive Austrian governments post-1945, which strove ‘to build an Austrian identity based on Austrian uniqueness vis-à-vis Germany’.¹⁰³⁹

¹⁰³⁶ See: ‘Warum deutsch?’, *Vaterländische Front*, July 1935, 4.

¹⁰³⁷ Peter Utgaard, *Remembering and Forgetting*, 27. This argument that Dollfuß and Schuschnigg failed to promote an Austrian identity distinct from Nazi Germany has become common currency. For example; Friedrich Grassegger, ‘Denkmäler des autoritären Ständestaates. Repräsentation staatlicher und nationaler Identität Österreichs 1934–1938’, in ed., Stefan Riesenfellner *Steinernes Bewußtsein I. Die öffentliche Repräsentation staatlicher und nationaler Identität Österreichs in seinen Denkmälern* 1998), 496.

¹⁰³⁸ Elisabeth El Refaie, ‘Keeping the Truce’, 45.

¹⁰³⁹ Peter Utgaard, *Remembering and Forgetting*, 28.

Yet, it is deeply flawed. Dollfuß's and Schuschnigg's 'plain *Deutschtümelei*', as one historian describes it, is often oversimplified and fundamentally misunderstood.¹⁰⁴⁰

That interwar Austria failed to successfully foster a broad, inclusive 'Austrian' national identity is well known.¹⁰⁴¹ Instead, as Botz has pointed out, three basic 'identities' collided: the German-national *Kulturnation*, the patriotic Austrian *Staatsnation* and alpine regionalism, with no one model dominating.¹⁰⁴² Although such categorisation is useful, it fails to fully emphasize that these identities all had one thing in common – the belief that the Austrians were part of a larger German entity. Although historians traditionally identify the Germanism of Austro-Germanism as a weakness of the *Ständestaat*, they fail to consider that in interwar Austria, there was no credible alternative to this so-called '*Deutschtümelei*'. This is hardly surprising considering that pre-1918 the only 'nationalism' that the Austrians had known was Habsburg (anti-national) universalism or German nationalism. Although there was a small group around Ernst Karl Winter that championed the idea of the Austrians as a distinct nation like the Swiss, this was a very marginal position during the First Republic.¹⁰⁴³ Quite simply, the 'amorphous patriotism for the Greater German nation' noted earlier, rendered unfeasible in 1933 the post-1945 strategy of Austria as unique vis-à-vis Germany. Again, it is an observation by the British Minister, which provides the clearest explanation. In his annual report for 1932, he details how, during the year 'Dr. Dollfuss and his predecessor, Dr. Buresch, [had] on the whole steered a French course' – that is, pursuing the Lausanne loan. However, he continued, 'it must not be imagined that this or any future Austrian government will pursue an

¹⁰⁴⁰ Gernot Heiss, 'Pan-Germans, Better Germans, Austrians: Austrian Historians on National Identity from the First to the Second Republic', *German Studies Review*, 16 (1993), 428, n 30.

¹⁰⁴¹ On the wider debate surrounding the genesis and development of an Austrian national identity see, for example: Felix Kreissler, *Der Österreicher und seine Nation*, (Vienna, 1984); Gerald Stourzh, *Vom Reich zur Republik: Studien zum Österreichbewußtsein im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Vienna, 1990); A. Pelinka, *Zur österreichischen Identität: Zwischen deutscher Vereinigung und Mitteleuropa*, (Vienna, 1990); Heidemarie Uhl, *Zwischen Versöhnung und Verstörung: eine Kontroverse um Österreichs historische Identität fünfzig Jahre nach dem "Anschluß"*, (Vienna, 1992) (with particular reference to the Anschluss); Ernst Bruckmüller, *Nation Österreich.: Kulturelles Bewußtsein und gesellschaftlich-politische Prozesse*, (Vienna, 1996); Peter Thaler, *Ambivalence of Identity*. For Karl Dietrich Erdmann's highly controversial thesis that sought to 'reclaim' Austria for 'German history' see: Karl Dietrich Erdmann, *Die Spur Österreichs in der deutschen Geschichte*, (Zurich, 1989)

¹⁰⁴² Botz in: Petra Rösger, *Verfreundete Nachbarn*, 62.

¹⁰⁴³ See: Radomír Luža, *Austro-German Relations in the Anschluss Era*, (Princeton, New Jersey, 1975), 16.

anti-German policy. If it attempted to do so, it would be quickly swept away'.¹⁰⁴⁴ Despite Austria seeking, bee-like, 'honey in every flower' during 1932, Seipel's motto, "nothing against Germany, nothing without Germany" remained the order of the day.¹⁰⁴⁵

To recap: the Social Democrats were overwhelmingly *deutschnational* in orientation, that is to say, they were advocates of Anschluss and persistent champions of the German Reich. And though they temporarily shelved the notion of immediate union in 1933, they never abandoned it. Neither, of course, did the Greater Germans, the *Landbund* or the Nazis. The Christian Socials, on the other hand, had, since the early years of the Republic, leant far more heavily towards the concept of an independent Austrian *Staatsnation* within a wider 'German' community. For this reason, throughout the 1920s and early 1930s the Christian Socials were routinely charged with being 'anti-Anschluss' by the opposition, which, in one way or another, the majority undoubtedly were. The debate surrounding the Lausanne loan provides a perfect example of the two positions. The Socialist deputy Wilhelm Ellenbogen attacked the loan because it sacrificed the Anschluss. The Dollfuß government countered the opposition's objections by maintaining that the loan was indeed a 'matter of national concern' and that it would inevitably serve 'German' interests precisely because it would secure Austria's existence and that this, in itself, was a 'national' deed.¹⁰⁴⁶ Yet, to the Socialists, who rejected the concept of an independent Austrian state outright, 'national' meant Germany and Anschluss, not Austria and independence. Thus, as Ellenbogen declared, the opposition were not at all taken in by the Chancellor's 'fiery national tone' in light of the fact that 'the *Reichspost* [and thus the Christian Socials] had always taken a stance against the Anschluss'.¹⁰⁴⁷

The historiographical contention that it was the *Ständestaat* that was unable to extricate itself from the clutches of Germandom is remarkable in the light of the fact that Dollfuß and Schuschnigg faced an opposition that was overwhelmingly *deutschnational* and

¹⁰⁴⁴ Rather than a 'German' course. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C749/749/3, Sir E. Phipps, Annual Report on Austria for 1932, 1 Jan. 1933, para. 6.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid, para. 6.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Grete Klingenstein, *Die Anleihe von Lausanne*, 89.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Stenographische Protokolle*, 94th Sitzung der Nationalrat, IV, 28 July 1932, 2428–29. Speaker: Ellenbogen.

pro-Anschluss, and actually attacked Dollfuß (and Seipel before him) as a traitor to the pan-German cause.¹⁰⁴⁸ And while the *deutschnational* tradition within the Social Democratic movement, the *Landbund* and the Greater Germans is not overlooked in historical accounts, the implication of their stance often is. No party could or would have offered an alternative that was not based in one way or another on some form of German nationalism. Moreover, any attempt to refute Austrian 'Germanness' in the interwar years would very likely have met with failure. Although speculative, it is surely worth asking on which basis – if indeed they could have ever agreed on one – a Christian Social–Social Democratic coalition would have sought to block the Nazi advance. We can be certain that it would not have been one based upon the propagation of an Austrian nation that was separate and distinct from Germandom. Botz asserted that Dollfuß was condemned to failure because 'the image of independent Austria as the better Germans was still associated with German nationalism, and from this point of departure – as actually transpired during the final years of the corporatist state – it could be undermined by the Nazis'.¹⁰⁴⁹ But Botz's assertion fails to emphasize a crucial point; the inherent weakness of one party, was the weakness of all parties in the face of the Nazi threat. This oversight is exacerbated by the failure to recognize that the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg *Ständestaat* was the only credible interwar 'identity' that actively espoused the preservation of an independent Austrian state, arguably the only sound basis for resisting a Nazi takeover.¹⁰⁵⁰ There is also a wider issue at stake: the real problem in 1933 was not that the Austrian Germans considered themselves culturally German as they had done for centuries, but that there was a wholesale appropriation of the concept of 'German' by the National Socialists, which led to the concept's inevitable corruption.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Seipel noted in a letter to Heinrich Lammasch on 15 February 1919 how, in 'in the last phase of the election campaign [he] was, as "the leader of the Monarchists" and "opponent of Anschluß" the most hated man in Vienna'. Cited in: Christian Strasser, 'Die Haltung Dr. Ignaz Seipels', 74.

¹⁰⁴⁹ G. Botz cited in: Steininger, Rolf, '12 November 1918–12 March 1938: The Road to Anschluss', in ed. Rolf Steininger, Günther Bischof, Michael Gehler, *Austria in the Twentieth Century*, (New Brunswick, NJ, 2002), 85–114, 104.

¹⁰⁵⁰ See, for example; S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss', 221 Mihli, for example, notes how the Austrian Social Democrats rejected the idea of an Austrian nation outright and vehemently fought the idea, all the more so due to the fact that it stemmed from their 'clerical' enemies. Georg Martin Mihli, 'Die österreichische Sozialdemokratie', 291.

Ein Volk Ein Reich, Ein Führer?

Although the anti-Anschluss stance of the Christian Socials had become more pronounced as the 1920s had progressed, the experience of Lausanne and the escalating Nazi propaganda assault played a key role in forcing the catholic-conservative right to be more decisive in their attitude towards Austrian independence and Anschluss. Dollfuß was, much to the chagrin of his Nazi opponents, the first Austrian Chancellor of the interwar period to openly and unequivocally declare himself in favour of an independent Austrian state. In the light of this, the charge that 'not even Hitler's seizure of power early in 1933 was able to put an end to the Germanic obsessions of the Christian Socials and their support base, which manifested itself in their readiness to regard Anschluss as a goal', is at best misleading, and at worst a serious misrepresentation of the facts.¹⁰⁵¹ While it is impossible to say with any certainty what the Christian Social support base was thinking, we do have a very clear idea of where the Christian Socials themselves – Dollfuß included – stood on this issue.

The Nazis claim to represent the whole of Germandom, inside and outside the Reich's borders was a clear refutation of Austria's right to an independent existence. To achieve its goal in Austria, the Nazi movement appropriated and exploited the most powerful tool in its arsenal: the Anschluss tradition and its language. 'Austrianism', the Nazis claimed, was the antithesis of Germandom and the Austrian government was 'ungerman' because it was anti-Anschluss and anti-Nazi.¹⁰⁵² The Austrian government's response was to assert that, contrary to Nazi claims, 'German' had a multitude of meanings: 'Enforced conformity' [*Gleichmacherei*], Dollfuß declared in November 1933, 'has never been the German way'.¹⁰⁵³ 'We must not', he asserted,

¹⁰⁵¹ 'Auch die Machtergreifung Adolf Hitlers Anfang 1933 konnte den 'im "Anschluß"-Willen manifestierten Deutschlandkomplex...im christlichsozialen Lager nicht aus der Welt' schaffen.' Not only does 'Komplex' have clear overtones of irrationality in German, the untranslatable phrase 'Anschluß-Wille' is a curious choice since 'Wille' was a favourite word in the Nazi vocabulary. Alfred Ableitinger cited in: Hannes Leidinger and Verena Moritz, *Die Republik Österreich 1918/2008. Überblick, Zwischenbilanz, Neubewertung*, 18.

¹⁰⁵² See, for instance: 'Der Vorwand für alles', *Reichspost*, 21 Mar. 1933, 1–2; Carl Vaugoin, *Ist Österreich Wert?*, 4.

¹⁰⁵³ Dollfuß, Graz, 19 November 1933 in: Edmund Weber, ed., *Dollfuß an Österreich*, 88.

'allow the N[ational] S[ocialists] a monopoly, as if they were the only Germans'.¹⁰⁵⁴ 'Es muß im Reich Klarheit darüber bestehen, Dollfuß warned, in response to the unsolicited visit of a leading Nazi functionary to Austria, daß die Regierung in Wien nicht um ein Haar weniger deutsch ist als die Regierung in Berlin. Das Reich hat also keinerlei Veranlassung, sich um das Deutschtum in Oesterreich zu sorgen'. And he added defiantly, 'welchen Kurs aber dieses Deutschtum in Oesterreich geht, ist eine durchaus innerösterreichische Angelegenheit'.¹⁰⁵⁵ The Christian Socials' thinking was a direct legacy of the Habsburg Empire. Germany, the Austrian government argued in its press and its propaganda, referred to all areas settled in their entirety by Germans, irrespective of state borders, not the German Reich.¹⁰⁵⁶ The problem, some Austrians argued, was that those in the Reich had become used to using the word 'German' with reference to the German Reich, not the whole German nation.¹⁰⁵⁷ Although the German Reich formed the main body of the German nation, it was, they maintained, in no way synonymous with it.

The Christian Socials called upon the past to justify their stance. Although they deemed the Austrians part of the larger German cultural community, they remained dedicated to a specifically Austrian form of German culture, based upon Austria's 'very own and separate historical past'.¹⁰⁵⁸ The 'Austro-Germans', they maintained, boasted a long and prestigious German heritage, and Austria a legacy irrefutably established in history.¹⁰⁵⁹ The Habsburg concept of statehood is crucial to understanding the 'Austro-German' identity of the *Ständestaat*. In the multinational Habsburg Empire, nationality and statehood were not considered contradictory concepts; rather national identity was posited as 'a constituent part of a broader identification with the imperial

¹⁰⁵⁴ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party executive, 3 May 1933; Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 249.

¹⁰⁵⁵ 'Klarstellung zum deutschen Ministerbesuch', *Reichspost*, 11 May 1933, 8.

¹⁰⁵⁶ See: Österreichischer Heimatdienst, *Austro-Nazi ohne Maske*, 25. See also: Heinrich Mataja, 'Deutschtum und Nationalsozialismus', *Der Christliche Ständestaat*, 21 Jan. 1934, 7–8.

¹⁰⁵⁷ See: Heinrich Mataja, 'Deutschtum und Nationalsozialismus', *Der Christliche Ständestaat*, 21 Jan. 1934, 7–8.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Günter Bischof and Anton Pelinka, *Austrian Historical Memory & National Identity*, (New Brunswick, N.J.; London, 1997), 5. See also: W. Suppanz, *Österreichische Geschichtsbilder: Historische Legitimationen in Ständestaat und Zweiter Republik*, (Vienna, 1998).

¹⁰⁵⁹ See: 'Warum deutsch?', *Vaterländische Front*, July 1935, 4.

house and with “Austria”.¹⁰⁶⁰ Similarly, during the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era there was no contradiction in Austria being both an Austrian and a ‘German’ state: just as pre-1918 ‘Imperial loyalty was not to supersede but to coexist with ethnic loyalties’. Post-1918 state loyalty, it was deemed, could co-exist with ethnic loyalty.¹⁰⁶¹ Thus, Heinrich Mataja, a Christian Social politician and fervent proponent of the Austrian idea could argue without contradiction: As proud as we are to be Germans, so proud are we of our Austrianism.¹⁰⁶²

Nonetheless, Austria's German self-identity also posed a problem, as National Socialism had to be repelled without rejecting Germany and Germandom as a whole. This meant leading a population that felt it had deep historical links to Germandom away from its, albeit fickle, affection for Germany without appearing to act in a manner that was contrary to ‘German’ interests. However, the drawing of ideological boundaries between Austro-Germanism, Germanism and Nazism was by no means an easy task, not least because the National Socialists intentionally muddled the waters. It meant countering Nazi claims that ‘Nazi’ and ‘German’ were synonymous concepts. ‘We Germans in Austria’, Dollfuß explained in July 1933, ‘want to demonstrate that a German and a National Socialist are not the same thing’.¹⁰⁶³ The Nazis also deliberately equated ‘national’ and ‘National Socialist’ in their propaganda and the Austrian authorities were well aware that every order directed against National Socialism would be portrayed as directed against Germandom as a whole.¹⁰⁶⁴ Therefore, the ‘consistent and unremitting’ clarification that ‘the concept of “Austria” implicitly included the notion of “Germandom”, and that the struggle against National Socialism was never ever directed against Germandom’, was deemed by the Federal Chancellery to be of ‘infinite importance’.¹⁰⁶⁵

¹⁰⁶⁰ Daniel L. Unowsky, *Pomp and Politics*, 10.

¹⁰⁶¹ See: *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁰⁶² See: Heinrich Mataja, ‘Oesterreichs Sendung’, *Reichspost*, 4 May 1933, 1–2.

¹⁰⁶³ Dollfuß, Hollabrunn, 25 July 1933 in: Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 118.

¹⁰⁶⁴ (ÖstA), (AdR), (BKA), Bundeskanzleramt-Inneres (BKA-I) Sonderlegungen (SL) Generaldirektion für öffentliche Sicherheit (GDföS) Beilagenablage (BA) NS-Bewegung 1934–1938 (NS-Bwg), Baar-Baarenfels, Eduard, 04R388/I, 4 Apr. 1936, ‘Information über den gegenwärtigen Stand der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung in Oesterreich’.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Der Kampf um den Reichsgedanken

Much like the Austrian Empire during the nineteenth century when faced with the twin threats of an emergent German nationalism and an antagonistic Prussian state, the First Republic was compelled, in the face of aggressive Nazi propaganda, to assert 'her German character'.¹⁰⁶⁶ Austria was a 'German state' and always had been; as Austrians, 'we stand, self-evidently and immovably, on German soil' came the persistent reply from the Dollfuß government.¹⁰⁶⁷ As Austrians, the *Reichspost* argued, they were not only a part of the German people; they were more deeply connected to Germandom than many other German 'Stämme'.¹⁰⁶⁸ The oblique reference was to the Prussians, the political equivalent of the nouveaux riches, who were, as the newspaper had already pointed out, not a German 'Stamm', merely a state.¹⁰⁶⁹ Austria, on the other hand, was the heir to a 'glorious past' – again, this argument was one that was repeatedly used by the Habsburg Empire in their struggle against Prussia for leadership of 'Germany'.¹⁰⁷⁰ Unlike Prussia – that is to say, the heart and soul of the Third Reich – Austria could look back on more than a thousand years of history and would not be 'besmirched and insulted' by the 'gentlemen on the Spree'.¹⁰⁷¹ Austria, the Christian Socials maintained, was a respected and flourishing state at a time when those 'Stämme' that today claim Germandom for themselves alone, did not even know what German meant'.¹⁰⁷² Long before Berlin even existed, at a time when the Wends still occupied the March, German settlers in Austria were cultivating the land, establishing a living frontier of German culture, one Christian Social politician observed.¹⁰⁷³ One ought to remember, *Sturm über Österreich* added, that in 1525 when 'Prussia was enfeoffed by the Margrave of Brandenburg from a Polish king' Austria was already the leading power

¹⁰⁶⁶ A. J. P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809–1918: A History of the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary*, (England, 1990), 40.

¹⁰⁶⁷ 'Weg und Ziel des österreichischen Heimatschutzes', *Reichspost*, 28 Feb. 1934, 2

¹⁰⁶⁸ Quoted in: Heinrich Mataja, 'Oesterreichs Sendung', *Reichspost*, 4 May 1933, 1–2

¹⁰⁶⁹ 'Um Oesterreichs Mission', *Reichspost*, 8 Jan. 1933, 1–2.

¹⁰⁷⁰ See, for example: Alan Sked, *Decline and Fall*, 181.

¹⁰⁷¹ Aigner, 'Oesterreich und die Hitler-Diktatur', *Reichspost*, 26 Feb. 1933, 4–5; Heinrich Mataja, 'Oesterreichs Sendung', *Reichspost*, 4 May 1933, 1–2.

¹⁰⁷² Carl Vaugoin, *Ist Österreich Wert?* 4.

¹⁰⁷³ Aigner, 'Oesterreich und die Hitler-Diktatur', *Reichspost*, 26 Feb. 1933, 4–5.

in Germany.¹⁰⁷⁴ This is striking for the fact that representatives of the Dollfuß government were basically accusing the Prussians of being part-Polish, an accusation which would have had overwhelmingly negative connotations to the Prussians, but not to the Austrians. It had further meaning to the Austrians who were commemorating the *Türkenjahr* of 1683, a reminder that Vienna, when under siege from the Turks was rescued not by the Elector of Brandenburg, who 'left the defence of Christendom to the Southern Germans and the Poles', but by the King of Poland Jan III Sobieski.¹⁰⁷⁵ In essence what the Dollfuß government was arguing was that, contrary to Nazi propaganda, Austria she had a right to exist precisely because she was not merely a German state; she was the original, true German state.

Thus, the battle lines between the Austrian government and the Nazi movement were also deemed to be historical. These facts of history, the Austrian government argued, had been appropriated – or rather misappropriated – and distorted to fit the Nazi worldview. To the patriotic Austrian observer, Hitler's determination to create a "great and all-embracing German...Reich" was a deliberate attempt to appropriate both the mantle of 'Greater-Germany' and the Holy Roman legacy for the Nazi movement.¹⁰⁷⁶ The Austrians insisted that the Third Reich, as the spiritual and political heir to both the Bismarckian Reich and the *kleindeutsch* solution, could call on neither the Holy Roman legacy nor the *großdeutsch* position for political legitimacy. Firstly, there was no authentic historical link between the 'Third Reich' and the 'First'. As the *Reichspost* pointed out:

¹⁰⁷⁴ 'Heim ins Reich?', *Sturm über Österreich* 2 Jul. 1933, 3.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Aigner, 'Oesterreich und die Hitler-Diktatur', *Reichspost*, 26 Feb. 1933, 4–5. Drawing parallels between the defence of Vienna in 1683 and the Nazi attack against Austria were common currency during the Dollfuß era. The parallel was even used by foreign observers after the Anschluss. 'The city [Vienna] which served as the bulwark of civilization against the Turks in 1683 has been converted into the eastern bulwark of a country dominated by a race whose culture and philosophical outlook is the negation of many of the principles for which civilization stands'. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21750, paper C3131/2310/18, Mack, Events leading up to the German Annexation of Austria, 8 Apr. 1938.

¹⁰⁷⁶ The observation was a prescient one. Hitler certainly recognized the narrative value of 'Reichsbewusstsein' and the fact that Austria, and not Germany, had been a centre of 'Reichsgeschichtspflege' during the 1920s was not lost on him. See: Richard Faber, *Das ewige Rom, oder, Die Stadt und der Erdkreis: zur Archäologie "abendländischer" Globalisierung*, (Würzburg, 2000), 32. See also: Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1936–1945 Nemesis*, (London, 2000), 267.

Es ist kein österreichischer, sondern der reichsdeutsche Schriftsteller Theodor Haecker, der die Gleichsetzung der Bismarckschöpfung mit dem alten Reiche als “den großen Schwindel” und “den großen Betrug” brandmarkt: “Preußen ist von Anfang an Minderer des Reiches der Deutschen”¹⁰⁷⁷

The spirit of Potsdam, it was noted, was always in favour of a strong nation state, which made Bismarck's ‘Second Reich’, by definition, the antithesis of the *Reichsidee*.¹⁰⁷⁸ It was interesting, one Christian Social journalist observed, that the Prussians should now be declaring themselves ‘*großdeutsch*’, as in the past Prussia had been the personification of the ‘*kleindeutsch*’ idea, so much so that the proverbially treacherous Prussians had even taken up arms against other Germans in its name.¹⁰⁷⁹ In reality, the Austrians pointed out, the *Großdeutsch* solution to the German question, which the Nazis were now laying claim to, had always been perpetuated from Vienna, not from Berlin.¹⁰⁸⁰

Nonetheless, it was clear that Hitler's intention was for the ‘Third Reich’ to transcend Bismarck's *kleindeutsch* construction.¹⁰⁸¹ It was for that very reason, that Nazi Germany needed Austria to be ‘brought home’ into the Reich’.¹⁰⁸² However, in the eyes of Austrian conservatives, ‘*Heim ins Reich*’ was a deliberate falsification of history:

Die Geschichte widerlegt auch das bekannte Schlagwort: “Heim ins Reich!” das die Nationalstaatsidee der österreichischen Staatsidee entgegenhält. Österreich hat dem zentralisierten Einheitsstaat Deutschland, der längst kein Reich in Sinne der deutschen Reichsidee ist, niemals angehört und kann daher nicht dorthin heimkehren.¹⁰⁸³

¹⁰⁷⁷ ‘Um Oesterreichs Mission’, *Reichspost*, 8 Jan. 1933, 1–2. ‘Preußen ist von Anfang an Minderer des Reiches der Deutschen’ is a reference to an adjunct to the title of the Holy Roman Emperor: *semper Augustus* ‘allzeit Mehrer des Reiches’.

¹⁰⁷⁸ See: Eduard Ludwig, ‘Der Kampf um den Reichsgedanken’, *Vaterländische Front* (Wien), Nov. 1933, 2.

¹⁰⁷⁹ ‘Die Feststellung, daß die Preußen Großdeutsch sind und bleiben wollen, ist interessant. In der Vergangenheit war gerade im Preußentum der kleindeutsche Gedanke verkörpert und für den kleindeutschen Gedanken hat Preußen gegen andere Deutsche sogar zum Schwert gegriffen’. See: ‘Hohenzollernkrone und Anschluß’, *Reichspost*, 23 Mar. 1933, 3.

¹⁰⁸⁰ See: Eduard Ludwig, ‘Der Kampf um den Reichsgedanken’, *Vaterländische Front* (Wien), Nov. 1933, 2.

¹⁰⁸¹ See: ‘Heim ins Reich?’, *Sturm über Österreich* 2 Jul. 1933, 3.

¹⁰⁸² See, also *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸³ Walter Adam, ‘Die österreichische Staatsidee’, *Vaterländische Front*, Apr. 1936, 1. Oberst. Walter Adam replaced Pankraz Kruckenhauser as head of the ‘Österreichischer Heimatdienst’, the department of propaganda in July 1934. The Heimatdienst was closely connected with the *Vaterländische Front*. Kruckenhauser was removed for his National Socialist sympathies, which alludes to

'Anschluss' and 'Reich', the Austrian government countered, were a contradiction in terms; Hohenzollern and Anschluss did not belong together in the same political concept, and 'Heim ins Reich' through 'Anschluss' was 'an unscrupulous deceit'.¹⁰⁸⁴

As heir to the Holy Roman Empire, Austria, according to the country's Catholic-conservative right, should be recognized as the 'true' defender of the *Großdeutsch* ideal. Austria was 'fighting National Socialism', the government's press chief explained, as it was 'the corrupter of the *Reichsgedanke*.'¹⁰⁸⁵ One could not wipe out the facts of history, the *Reichspost* argued, as one would the scribbles on a school blackboard.¹⁰⁸⁶ For centuries, Austria had been the *Stammland* of the Holy Roman Empire, its political and cultural cornerstone; and in Vienna, its nucleus, the *Reichsgedanke* had always been at home.¹⁰⁸⁷ For more than half a millennium, Dollfuß noted, Vienna, home of the 'German' Emperors, had been a German symbol.¹⁰⁸⁸ Journeying northwest from the capital, one passed the monastery in Klosterneuburg, built by the Babenbergs. On its dome was the crown of the German Reich, the original of which was housed in the treasury in Vienna. In Potsdam, it was argued, the traveller would find nothing of the sort.¹⁰⁸⁹ Austria's history was Habsburg history, *gesamtdeutsch* history and the history of the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁰⁹⁰ Austria's mission and hereditary duty, as the last visible fragment of the Reich and the authentic champion of German people, was to keep this memory and the *Reichsidee*, which was

a greater problem faced by the proponents of 'Austrianism' within the Dollfuß government; that not everyone could be trusted. Moreover it demonstrates that even within the government there really was no consensus on the future of the Austrian state and how this should be achieved and that some of those who did not agree ultimately went over to the Nazis.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Österreichischer Heimdienst, *Die zweite Gefahr*, 14–15; 'Hohenzollernkrone und Anschluß', *Reichspost*, 23 Mar. 1933, 3.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Eduard Ludwig, 'Der Kampf um den Reichsgedanken', *Vaterländische Front* (Wien), Nov. 1933, 2.

¹⁰⁸⁶ 'Um Oesterreichs Mission', *Reichspost*, 8 Jan. 1933, 1–2.

¹⁰⁸⁷ See: Eduard Ludwig, 'Der Kampf um den Reichsgedanken', *Vaterländische Front* (Wien), Nov. 1933, 2; Walter Adam, 'Die österreichische Staatsidee', *Vaterländische Front*, Apr. 1936, 1.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Dollfuß, Innsbruck, 22 April 1933, Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 77.

¹⁰⁸⁹ See: Walter Adam, 'Die österreichische Staatsidee', *Vaterländische Front*, Apr. 1936, 1; "'Aufbruch aus Oesterreich'", *Reichspost*, 5 Feb. 1933, 1–2; Kurt v. Schuschnigg, 'Österreich von heute und die deutsche Frage: Rundfunkvortrag des Justizministers Dr. Schuschnigg', *Vaterländische Front*, 1 Aug. 1933, 4.

¹⁰⁹⁰ See: Kurt v. Schuschnigg, 'Österreich von heute und die deutsche Frage: Rundfunkvortrag des Justizministers Dr. Schuschnigg', *Vaterländische Front*, 1 Aug. 1933, 4.

now 'transferred to the sphere of Spirit and Civilization', alive.¹⁰⁹¹ The true *Reichsgedanke*, the Austrian government maintained, was universal, European, humanist and federalist in spirit. The implication was obvious: Nazi Germany was nothing of the sort.

¹⁰⁹¹ 'Deutsch Ehr' ist mein Ehr", *Reichspost*, 24 Jun. 1934, 1–2; 'Um Oesterreichs Mission', *Reichspost*, 8 Jan. 1933, 1–2; Kurt Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria*.

National Socialism – Das wahre Gesicht

'Is Germandom more favoured and more esteemed by the world at large since the advent of the Third Reich?' the *Reichspost* asked in June 1934.¹⁰⁹² 'Is it capable of bettering the situation of the German minorities in the different states? Has it provided them with support and protection? Has it...brought the Germans closer together? Even during 1933, the answer was clear. National Socialism was leading the Reich, 'with mathematical certainty', towards catastrophe.¹⁰⁹³ Meanwhile, in Austria, the Nazi terrorist campaign – orchestrated from Berlin – proved, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the nature of the National Socialist threat: 'Now we know the reality of National Socialism' the *Reichspost* noted in June 1933: 'It is unrestrained fanaticism, and bloody terror', 'nothing more than organized crime'.¹⁰⁹⁴ If the Nazis were to seize power in Austria the consequences would be obvious: ...so würden sie uns einsperren, um die Existenz bringen und den gleichen Mißhandlungen überliefern, die sie Dr. Gerlich und tausenden seiner Gesinnungsgenossen zugefügt haben.¹⁰⁹⁵ Rather than inspiring a 'national rising', National Socialism had meant 'the debasement of the German spirit, indeed the worst betrayal of it that history has ever known'.¹⁰⁹⁶ Even before the purge of Hitler's political opponents in the Reich and the murder of Dollfuß by Nazi insurgents in an attempted *coup d'état* – again orchestrated from Berlin – the verdict had been handed down. National Socialism was ushering the German Reich towards ruin, and morally compromising it in front of the whole world.¹⁰⁹⁷

¹⁰⁹² 'Nationale Erfahrung', *Reichspost*, 9 Jun. 1934, 1–2.

¹⁰⁹³ 'Deutsch Ehr' ist mein Ehr", *Reichspost*, 24 Jun. 1934, 1–2.

¹⁰⁹⁴ 'Das schwerste Mordverbrechen seit dem Bestand der Republik', *Reichspost*, 20 Jun. 1933, 1 'Nun aber Schluß!', *Reichspost*, 20 Jun. 1933, 2.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Fritz Gerlich, (15 Feb. 1883–30 Jun. 1934) was a German journalist and fierce critic of the National Socialists. He was arrested on 9 March 1933 and kept imprisoned until the night of the so-called 'Röhm Putsch' when he was taken to Dachau and murdered. Heinrich Mataja, 'Deutschtum und Nationalsozialismus', *Der Christliche Ständestaat*, 21 Jan. 1934, 7–8.

¹⁰⁹⁶ 'Oesterreichs große deutsche Stunde', *Reichspost*, 20 Aug. 1933, 1–2.

¹⁰⁹⁷ See: 'Deutsch Ehr' ist mein Ehr", *Reichspost*, 24 Jun. 1934, 1–2.

Almost as soon as Hitler took office, Nazi Germany had laid its claim to Austria as 'German' territory. In March 1933 Hans Frank, Bavarian Minister for Justice, asserted over the airwaves that due to the 'incomprehensible foolishness' of the government there, 'Austria was now the one last bit of Germany in which one could still dare to oppress the German will'.¹⁰⁹⁸ 'He would like to warn the Austrian government', Frank continued, 'in all friendliness, and with the affection of an ally, against causing the National Socialists of the Reich to assume the protection of the liberty of their German brethren in Austria'. It was perhaps not surprising then that, when Frank declared he was going to pay Austria a visit a few weeks later in mid-May to speak at a Nazi counter-demonstration to the *Heimwehr* rally to mark the 'deliverance of Vienna from the Turks', that the Austrian government let it be known that a group of Nazi functionaries visiting on party business would not be welcome. Unperturbed by diplomatic courtesy, Frank and his entourage flew to Vienna, to be greeted 'with a message from the Chancellor that their presence "was not especially desired"'. Needless to say, Frank continued his tour and did not refrain from threatening the Dollfuß government with reprisal 'for the "insults offered him"'.¹⁰⁹⁹ Having sought and failed between February and April to avoid the outbreak of conflict with the Nazis – and thus the Reich – the Dollfuß government went on the offensive. 'Both sides [had] the gloves off', one observer noted; Dollfuß was now 'carrying the war into the enemy's camp by searching the Nazis' premises and seizing their arms'.¹¹⁰⁰

Austria was made to pay the price for asserting its sovereign rights. Days before the visit the new Reich Chancellor had already warned Tauschitz, the Austrian Minister in Berlin, that 'if things continued in such a manner, he would find himself

¹⁰⁹⁸ From Dr. Hans Frank's wireless speech from Munich on March 18, 1933. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933.

¹⁰⁹⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 24.

¹¹⁰⁰ Note by R.M.A. Hankey: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C5031/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Development of Austro-German enmity, 29 May 1933.

forced to prevent, perhaps for a year by way of experiment, the visit of any Germans to Austria, until Austria came to her senses'.¹¹⁰¹ As the British legation pointed out:

German weapons against Austria were primarily: (a) The pro-German feeling inherent in the majority of the Austrians: (b) Austrian economic dependence in certain aspects upon Germany. Both weapons were, therefore, used unsparingly to bludgeon Austria into acquiescence in a Nazi government, and to alienate public sympathy from Dr. Dollfuß.¹¹⁰²

Thus, just weeks after the *Machtergreifung*, Nazi Germany employed its most devastating weapon, the economic boycott. It came in the form of a thousand-Mark exit visa for Germans travelling to Austria, by today's standards a sum just short of €4,000.¹¹⁰³ The measure, introduced in May 1933, was a crippling blow to the Austrian economy, particularly in the western provinces, which were reliant upon German tourists.¹¹⁰⁴ As 'the entire German propaganda was based upon the economic situation in Austria', by strangling the Austrian economy, the Nazis sought to prove their own dictum: that 'union with Germany was essential for the economic salvation of Austria'.¹¹⁰⁵ It would remain in place until the July Agreement of 1936.

Combating these coercive economic measures on the part of the Reich was essential if Dollfuß was going to be successful in repelling the Nazi advance. Throughout 1933, Dollfuß endeavoured to counteract the worst effects of the Nazi campaign by securing whatever help he could muster abroad. Impressing on the other European powers Austria's urgent need for economic assistance if he was going to win his fight to prevent a Nazi takeover, during 1933 Dollfuß negotiated 'with any power willing to do so, for mutual and exclusive preferences'.¹¹⁰⁶ He rarely missed an

¹¹⁰¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933, 3.

¹¹⁰² (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 50–52.

¹¹⁰³ See: Marianne Enigl and Andrea Rexer, 'Hitlers Schuldendiktat: Wie Hitlers Kriegswirtschaft wirklich lief', *Profil*, 26 Jul. 2010,

¹¹⁰⁴ See, for instance: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 29.

¹¹⁰⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C6811/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Austrian Affairs, 25 Jul. 1933; (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C11103/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Situation in Austria, 30 Nov. 1933.

¹¹⁰⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 107.

opportunity to impress on the British Minister, for example, that 'economic help must by some means be made available to him, if he was to consolidate his position in Austria and to be enabled successfully to resist Herr Hitler'¹¹⁰⁷. Dollfuß's suggestions ranged from enquiring whether British tourists could be encouraged to come to Austria to an appeal to His Majesty's government to help him decrease unemployment in Austria by allowing Austrian goods to enter the British market, without delay, on preferential terms.¹¹⁰⁸ Although modest assistance was forthcoming, Italy, for example, 'at some sacrifice to itself, did all it could to stimulate Austrian timber exports' during 1933, Dollfuß's attempt to mitigate the impact of the Nazi boycott met with much sympathy, but little in the way of concrete support.¹¹⁰⁹ Part of the problem was that all of these countries were hoping to derive some economic gain from trading with Nazi Germany. Despite clear warnings from Selby in Vienna as to what the outcome of a Nazi takeover in Austria would mean for Britain, little Austria offered no comparable economic attraction. European powers were simply not keen on doing anything that might imperil their access to the German market.¹¹¹⁰

The most conspicuous front of the 'war' against the Austrian government was the wave of terror that swept the country during 1933, targeting Jews, members of the government, the Christian Social Party and the *Heimwehr*.¹¹¹¹ German Nazi agents initiated the violence that would soon engulf Austria with the murder of the Jewish journalist Georg Bell, a Reich German citizen, in April 1933.¹¹¹² Bomb attacks – a number directly ordered from Munich – were made possible by generous German financial support and became an almost daily occurrence, taking out power lines, train

¹¹⁰⁷ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16640, paper C11103/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Situation in Austria, 30 Nov. 1933.

¹¹⁰⁸ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C4767/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Request for assistance from H.M.'s Government, 23 May 1933; (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C6811/420/3, Sir W. Selby, Austrian Affairs, 25 Jul. 1933.

¹¹⁰⁹ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 109.

¹¹¹⁰ See, for example: Scott Newton, *Profits of Peace: The Political Economy of Anglo-German Appeasement*, (Oxford, 1996).

¹¹¹¹ See, for example: "'Starb für Österreich" [online edition]', *Die Presse*, 20 Jun. 2008, accessed: 23 Sep. 2010. On the Nazi terror see also: Helmut Wohnout, 'Dreieck der Gewalt. Etappen des nationalsozialistischen Terrors in Österreich 1932–34', in ed., Günther Scheffbeck *Österreich 1934. Vorgeschichte, Ereignisse, Wirkungen* (Vienna, 2004).

¹¹¹² See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934 para., 21.

lines, tram lines and bridges, disquieting the public and threatening to keep away much-needed tourists. Something of the scale of the terror is revealed by the fact that 140 terrorist attacks with 'paper bombs and explosive machines' were recorded between the night of 31 December 1933 and the morning of 8 January 1934 alone.¹¹¹³ Assassination attempts were made against Dollfuß, Richard Steidle, the leader of the Tyrolean *Heimwehr* and Anton Rintelen the Styrian *Landeshauptmann* amongst others. And there were constant rumours of an impending Nazi putsch.¹¹¹⁴ The 'terror strategy' was finally abandoned with Dollfuß's murder in July 1934. In the face of international condemnation, Hitler was finally forced to change tack.

On 5 May 1933 the wearing of the Nazi uniform and emblems was prohibited nationwide.¹¹¹⁵ Just over a month later, on the 19 June, the Austrian Nazi party was banned in its entirety following a hand grenade attack on a *Hilfspolizei* detachment in Krems, which left one dead, and 30 injured, 17 seriously. In the wake of the attack the *Reichspost* was vehement in its condemnation of both the Austrian and the German Nazis. The assault was so strongly-worded it is worth quoting in full:

Das ist der neue Geist, die Erneuerung der Deutschen Nation, der Um- und Aufbruch der deutschen Seele, die restlose Säuberung der deutschen Volkes von allem Fremdartigen, die der Nationalsozialismus in täglichen Prahlereien zu bringen verspricht! Das ist das neue, das bessere Deutschtum, das er uns beschenken will! Nun kennen wir die Nationalsozialistische Wirklichkeit: Sie ist hemmungslosester Fanatismus und blutiges Grauen. ...Das ist nicht mehr Politik, weder nationale noch soziale, sondern systemisiertes Verbrechen.¹¹¹⁶

The British legation reported that membership of the party was punishable with 'a fine, imprisonment or loss of property, or, in the case of foreigners, immediate expulsion

¹¹¹³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933, 30.

¹¹¹⁴ The first attempt to assassinate Dollfuß occurred on 3 October 1933 when he was shot by the National Socialist Robert Dertl but only slightly wounded. Starhemberg also narrowly avoided a bomb attack. For further information see: Gudula Walterskirchen, *Engelbert Dollfuß*, 141, 167. See also: "'Starb für Österreich" [online edition]', *Die Presse*, 20 Jun. 2008, accessed: 23 Sep. 2010

¹¹¹⁵ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 23.

¹¹¹⁶ 'Nun aber Schluß!', *Reichspost*, 20 Jun. 1933, 2.

from Austrian soil'.¹¹¹⁷ Nazi deputies were deprived of their parliamentary immunity, and Nazi headquarters dissolved. In an attempt to quell the continuing wave of terror from the now illegal Nazis, on the 10 November that same year, capital punishment was reintroduced, and on 8 June 1934 it was extended to include crimes involving explosives. As the British Foreign Office reports make clear, the Austrian government managed to keep control of the situation, but only by patrolling the entire border between Austria and Germany and equipping and maintaining a 'considerable number of *Heimwehr* and auxiliary police, army reserves and police reserves' at significant cost to a country already suffering the worst effects of the depression.¹¹¹⁸ German Nazi ringleaders, including Theo Habicht the Reich German *Landesinspekteur*, were arrested and deported back to Germany, where they received a hero's welcome.

Having been expelled from Austria, Habicht took up residence in Munich, from where he initiated an aggressive radio campaign against the Austrian government, the Munich Radio Broadcast Service having been put at his disposal to disseminate his views over the Austrian airwaves.¹¹¹⁹ Habicht carried on his agitation against the Dollfuß government across the ether, aided by other Austrian Nazi 'refuges', 'ridiculing the Austrian government and [calling] on Austrians to carry out new acts of terror'. Berlin countered Austrian protests by asserting the broadcasts were for domestic consumption.¹¹²⁰ In retaliation for Habicht's expulsion, Wasserback, the long-serving press attaché at the Austrian legation in Berlin, was expelled from Germany – the German legation had attempted to circumvent Habicht's deportation by nominating him press attaché in a highly irregular attempt to see him accorded diplomatic immunity.¹¹²¹

Every trick in the Nazi arsenal, from the innocuous to the perfidious, was used in the propaganda war against Austria. Subversive leaflets were dropped over Austria

¹¹¹⁷ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para., 28.

¹¹¹⁸ Ibid, para., 31.

¹¹¹⁹ Habicht was a Reich German. See, for instance: Ibid, para., 29.

¹¹²⁰ Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 114.

¹¹²¹ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933.

by aeroplane – promptly denied by Berlin, of course, even when the plane in question bore a tell-tale swastika on its rudder – which, due to a lack of fighting aircraft, the Austrian government was unable to counter-act.¹¹²² In an appeal published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* in September 1933, Reich German citizens were encouraged to write to their ‘German brothers in Austria’ to enlighten them as to what ‘Adolf Hitler has done for the German Nation’.¹¹²³ Proximity alone ensured that the border regions were the worst affected. Along with the pictures, pamphlets and leaflets smuggled into or dropped onto Austrian territory, – one with the somewhat mendacious title of ‘Not Hate, but Love’ – loudspeakers were set up on Bavarian territory, swastika fireworks were set off and even air balloons filled with leaflets were launched from border areas. Within Austria the illegal Nazis were ingenious in their attempts to keep the swastika visible and, as Pauley points out, to prove that despite the prohibition the Nazi movement in Austria ‘was still very much alive’.¹¹²⁴

At home, the Austrian government fought hard to counter the Nazi attack ‘blow-by-blow’.¹¹²⁵ Their attempts to discredit the Austrian Nazis were aided in part by the Nazi terror campaign, which did little to endear them to the wider population. The attraction of Nazi Germany, on the other hand, was a different matter, especially considering Austria’s own dire economic situation. Thus, much energy was put into revealing the ‘reality’ of life in the Third Reich. For example, exposing the failures of Nazi economic policy was a staple of Austrian reporting during 1933–34. In contrast to Nazi claims and promises, the German economy was portrayed as being in a parlous state as a result of Nazi rule, ‘its concerns greater and more pressing than they ever were under the “Systemparteien”’, deliberately choosing a word that the Nazis consistently used to disparage the Weimar era.¹¹²⁶ The picture painted during the

¹¹²² See, for instance: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para., 29. See also: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933, 20.

¹¹²³ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933, 29.

¹¹²⁴ Bruce F. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 115.

¹¹²⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 52.

¹¹²⁶ ‘Ein ungeschminktes Bild der deutschen Wirtschaft’, *Reichspost*, 28 Jul. 1933, 1–2. See also: ‘Die gefährdete deutsche Wirtschaft’, *Reichspost*, 8 Jul. 1933, 1; ‘Die Arbeitsbeschaffung in Deutschland’,

summer of 1933 was a gloomy one, of falling wages, shrinking credit and dwindling foreign trade. Inflation was on the rise and the financial situation was deemed to be 'terrible', with the German export industry and merchant trading irreparably destroyed.¹¹²⁷ Even the drop in the unemployment rate, it was claimed, was a falsification; despite Hitler's promise to tackle joblessness, Germany had just as many unemployed as in 1932, if not more. This 'calamitous' economic situation remained a constant theme into 1934, as, in the view of the *Reichspost*, general dissatisfaction grew, economic misery persisted and Hitler's promises remained unfulfilled.

This dissatisfaction, it was suggested, was not limited to the Germans themselves. Those 'misguided' Austrians who had fled to Nazi Germany were also discovering that the Nazis were offering nothing but empty promises. In July 1933, the *Reichspost* reported how SA fugitives from Vienna, initially well-received in Germany, were reduced to begging in Munich and now wished to be able to come home.¹¹²⁸ The seductive promises made by the National Socialists to encourage Austrians to flee to Germany ended in disappointment; on arrival it quickly became clear from the unfriendliness with which they were received that the émigrés were nothing more than pawns in a political game.¹¹²⁹ Those who managed to avoid a stay in a 'Zwangslager', found no support in their mostly futile search for work and even if an Austrian émigré were lucky enough to find employment, the monthly salary was barely enough for him to live on, let alone his family. According to the *Reichspost*, the disillusionment within the ranks of the Austrian Legion was even worse. A series of reports printed attested to the fact that many who had fled to Germany to join the Austrian Legion were now bitterly disappointed.¹¹³⁰ Those expelled from the Austrian army for Nazi activities and

Reichspost, 26 Oct. 1933, 1–2; 'Katastrophale Rückgang des Reiseverkehrs im Dritten Reich', *Reichspost*, 20 Jan. 1934, 5; 'Handelspolitische Belagerung Deutschlands', *Reichspost*, 22 Jan. 1934, 3; 'Die deutsche Wirtschaft an einem kritischen Punkte', *Reichspost*, 14 May 1934, 1–2; 'Warum die österreichische Braunen wieder aufgezoogen sind', *Reichspost*, 23 May 1934, 4; 'Die Rede des Bundeskanzlers', *Reichspost*, 4 Jun. 1934, 2–3.

¹¹²⁷ 'Zunehmende Teuerung in Deutschland', *Reichspost*, 30 Oct. 1933, 1; 'Die deutsche Reichsbank "außer Gefecht gesetzt"', *Reichspost*, 30 May 1933, 1; 'Bilanz an Hitlers Geburtstag', *Reichspost*, 25 Apr. 1934, 2.

¹¹²⁸ See: 'Beobachtungen und Erlebnisse im "Dritten Reich"', *Reichspost*, 21 Jul. 1933, 7.

¹¹²⁹ See: 'Verzweifelte Stimmung der österreichischen Legionäre', *Reichspost*, 13. Jun. 1934, 3.

¹¹³⁰ See, for example: Ibid; 'Die Zustände in der "österreichischen Legion" in Deutschland', *Reichspost*, 10 Jul. 1934, 3; 'Zwischen österreichischen Legionären in den bayerischen Gebirgen', *Reichspost*, 15 Jul. 1934, 3.

seduced by Nazi promises found themselves treated as second-class soldiers, mocked by the Germans as '*Kamerad Schnürschuh*'. While the leaders had an easy time of it – living off the backs of the others – most of the legionnaires were treated as foreigners, and, the paper suggested, living a miserable existence; the atmosphere in the camps fluctuated between the deepest depression and utter despair. Indeed the situation was so bad that the camps, the paper alleged, were being moved away from the Austro-German border to make escape impossible, while in the SS barracks in Dachau, the guards had been ordered to shoot any legionnaires trying to flee.

In an attempt to sully the National Socialists' image in the eyes of the Austrian electorate, the situation in Germany was painted the blackest of black. Nazi 'successes' were downplayed, the parliamentary elections of November 1933 and the referendum on Hitler's decision to pull Germany out of the League of Nations, for example, were condemned as being obviously neither free nor fair.¹¹³¹ The Germans were 'systematically misled' about conditions in Austria and, it was claimed, the agitation against Austria was 'not popular' in Germany.¹¹³² German cultural policy was deemed 'a scene of devastation' much like its foreign and economic policy.¹¹³³ Hitler is a fanatic, a great agitator, maybe even the prophet of the "Myth of the Twentieth Century", but as one Reich German writing for the *Reichspost* pronounced, 'certainly not a statesman'. Amongst National Socialism's other 'successes', the *Reichspost* counted: the devastating schism within the 'German nation'; an economic boycott against Austria that had 'astonished the rest of the world'; and the catastrophic deterioration of the situation of the ethnic German minorities throughout Europe.¹¹³⁴ Thus, its 'disastrous activities' were 'not limited to the Reich': unfortunately, it was those Germans most imperilled who were paying the price of the Nazi tragedy.¹¹³⁵ National Socialism represented a 'mortal threat' not just to the German Reich, but also to the German people as a whole.

¹¹³¹ 'Eine Demonstration des 'Dritten Reiches'', *Reichspost*, 11 Nov. 1933, 1–2; 'Vor der Abstimmung in Deutschland', *Reichspost*, 12 Nov. 1933, 8; 'Ein Abstimmungssieg, der zu groß ist', *Reichspost*, 13 Nov. 1933, 1.

¹¹³² 'Beobachtungen und Erlebnisse im "Dritten Reich"', *Reichspost*, 21 Jul. 1933, 7.

¹¹³³ 'Bilanz an Hitlers Geburtstag', *Reichspost*, 25 Apr. 1934, 2.

¹¹³⁴ Indeed, as far afield as Argentina. See, for instance: 'Das Dritte Reich und die Deutschen im Ausland', *Die Reichspost*, 25 Mar. 1934, 4; 'Pflichten der Stunde', *Reichspost*, 26 Jun. 1933, 1.

¹¹³⁵ 'Saar-Deutschland', *Reichspost*, 23 May 1934, 1–2.

Increasing support for National Socialism amongst ethnic German minorities in other countries was viewed in Austria with palpable unease. Again, the Austrian government attempted to increase the international pressure on Germany by highlighting the parallels between Nazi interference in Austrian affairs and Nazi agitation in countries such as Czechoslovakia and Poland, which was not looked on favourably abroad. While not denying the injustices perpetrated by the Paris Peace Treaties, the Austrians condemned the radicalization of politics that had occurred in these areas because of the Nazi advance. Nowhere, they argued, was the destructive impact [*Zerstörungsarbeit*] of National Socialism on Germanism more evident than it was upon ethnic German minorities 'abroad' who, ultimately, bore the brunt of anti-German hostility.¹¹³⁶ Here the *Reichspost* thought, Nazi propaganda had been 'geradezu verhängnisvoll'. Traditionally, *Auslandsdeutschtum* had been a united force:

Sie waren und blieben also in erster Linie deutsch...zugleich aber loyal gegenüber den Völkern und Regierungen, deren Gastrecht sie genossen. ...Das ist seit der Machtergreifung durch die NSDAP im Reich anders geworden. Kaum war dieser Akt vollzogen als allenthalben sich braune Sendlinge breitmachten, die NSDAP-Zellen aufzogen und eine rege Agententätigkeit entfalteten. ...Die Deutschen – bisher gern gesehen – wurden durch die hetzerische, das Nationale allzusehr übertreibende Agitation dieser landfremden Politiker, die samt und sonders nichts zu verlieren hatten, in schwere[n] Konflikt mit dem Gastvolke und mit den betreffenden Regierungen gebracht.¹¹³⁷

Thus, rather than aiding 'beleaguered' minorities 'already struggling for their existence', National Socialism had done 'terrible damage' to their cause.¹¹³⁸ Minorities that were once relatively cohesive had splintered into traditionalist and radical factions, further weakening their positions.¹¹³⁹ Nazi party politics in these areas was discrediting the Germans. Hitler's 'totalitarian psychosis' [*Totalitätswahn*] and imperialist *Volkstumspolitik* coupled with the equalization of German and Nazi made neighbouring states with German minorities nervous.¹¹⁴⁰ Indeed, the mere fact of the Nazi regime in Germany,

¹¹³⁶ See, for instance: 'Das Dritte Reich und die Deutschen im Ausland', *Die Reichspost*, 25 Mar. 1934, 4.

¹¹³⁷ 'Abkehr des Auslandsdeutschtum vom Nationalsozialismus', *Reichspost*, 13 Mar. 1934, 3.

¹¹³⁸ 'Bedrohtes Auslandsdeutschtum', *Reichspost*, 13 Oct. 1933, 1–2.

¹¹³⁹ See: 'Abkehr des Auslandsdeutschtum vom Nationalsozialismus', *Reichspost*, 13 Mar. 1934, 3. For further details see: Tammo Luther, *Volkstumspolitik des Deutschen Reiches 1933–1938. Die Auslandsdeutschen im Spannungsfeld zwischen Traditionalisten und Nationalsozialisten*, (Stuttgart, 2004).

¹¹⁴⁰ 'Preussengeist ist Deutschlands Ruin', *Sturm über Österreich*, 29 Oct. 1933, 4.

or the slightest 'suspicion of irredentism' was often enough to unleash distrust in those states.¹¹⁴¹ The result was the increased repression of the German minorities. In interwar Poland, for example, where:

Die Gleichsetzung von 'deutsch' und 'nationalsozialistisch' bot der polnischen Presse ein wirksames Mittel, stärker als bisher Ängste in der polnischen Bevölkerung zu schüren und antideutsche Ressentiments zu erzeugen. Zudem lieferte sie den polnischen Behörden eine zusätzliche Begründung für ihre gegen das gesamte Deutschtum gerichtete 'Entdeutschungspolitik'.¹¹⁴²

Similarly, *Sturm über Österreich*, accurately predicted what was going to happen to the Sudeten Germans – that Nazi agitation would give the Czechs a 'welcome opportunity to not only reduce Sudeten Germans rights, but to eliminate them completely'.¹¹⁴³

Germany's pariah status amongst the states of Europe, caused by Nazi misrule – in the propagation of which Austria played a central role – was also a common theme in conservative newspapers during 1933 and 1934. As far as foreign policy was concerned – or so the argument went – victory for the National Socialists had obliterated everything that had been achieved under Weimar since 1918: 'Mit einem Tritt des Preußenstiefels wurden die feinen internationalen Fäden zerrissen, die im Laufe des letzten Jahrzehntes von Stresemann und seinen Nachfolgern gesponnen worden waren'.¹¹⁴⁴ In four weeks, Dollfuß contended, Germany had destroyed more than it had built in 12 years.¹¹⁴⁵ England was alienated, relations with Italy were chilly and the French were engaged in military manoeuvres.¹¹⁴⁶ Once again, Germany was isolated and encircled.¹¹⁴⁷ Even the worst fears about Nazi rule had been exceeded. The Hitler government had realized what no one had thought possible: 'es ist ihr gelungen, binnen wenigen Wochen das Ergebnis einer jahrelangen Aufbauarbeit zu vernichten. Wie ein Elefant im Porzellanladen haben die deutschen "Diplomaten" des

¹¹⁴¹ 'Bedrohtes Auslandsdeutschtum', *Reichspost*, 13 Oct. 1933, 1–2.

¹¹⁴² Tammo Luther, *Volkstumspolitik des Deutschen Reiches 1933–1938. Die Auslandsdeutschen im Spannungsfeld zwischen Traditionalisten und Nationalsozialisten*, 80.

¹¹⁴³ 'Preussengeist ist Deutschlands Ruin', *Sturm über Österreich*, 29 Oct. 1933, 4.

¹¹⁴⁴ 'Das Fiasko der deutschen Außenpolitik', *Sturm über Österreich*, 21 May 1933, 2.

¹¹⁴⁵ See: Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 3 May 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*.

¹¹⁴⁶ 'Nicht Isolierung, sondern Verständigung!', *Reichspost*, 21 Apr. 1933, 1–2.

¹¹⁴⁷ See: Ibid; Heinrich Mataja, 'Oesterreichs deutsche Aufgaben', *Reichspost*, 6 May 1933, 1–2.

Hitlerregimes gehaust'.¹¹⁴⁸ The impact of Nazi rule, the Austrian government contended, was devastating. Never, it was posited by the *Reichspost*, had the German people been so badly ruled: the politics of these 'charlatans' in the Third Reich was the worst ever pursued by the German Reich.¹¹⁴⁹



Figure 9: National Socialism (*Die zweite Gefahr*)

As a result, the German people – and not just those in the Reich – were once again experiencing the immense mistrust of the majority of the outside world and not only that, the *Reichspost* pointed out, what the Nazis were actually doing was falsifying the historical record.¹¹⁵⁰ Stresemann, Rathenau and Brüning also fought against the Treaty

¹¹⁴⁸ 'Das Fiasko der deutschen Außenpolitik', *Sturm über Österreich*, 21 May 1933, 2.

¹¹⁴⁹ 'Saar-Deutschland', *Reichspost*, 23 May 1934, 1–2; 'Bilanz an Hitlers Geburtstag', *Reichspost*, 25 Apr. 1934, 2; 'Deutsch Ehr' ist mein Ehr", *Reichspost*, 24 Jun. 1934, 1–2.

¹¹⁵⁰ See: 'Nicht Isolierung, sondern Verständigung!', *Reichspost*, 21 Apr. 1933, 1–2; Heinrich Mataja, 'Oesterreichs deutsche Aufgaben', *Reichspost*, 6 May 1933, 1–2.

of Versailles, and in the process helped the Germans win back much of the sympathy that was lost during the war, 'Erfolge, die heute nur allzu leicht vergessen werden.'¹¹⁵¹ Both the *Reichspost* and *Sturm über Österreich* sought to remind people that there were honest Germans during Weimar: Germans who were now being maligned by the Nazis; Germans who had achieved notable successes for Germany. It was not a Nazi, readers were reminded, but a *Zentrum* politician, Brüning, who first declared, 'wir zahlen keine Reparationen mehr'.¹¹⁵² These politicians had worked steadily and successfully towards diminishing mistrust of Germany abroad, so much so that successes on the issue of disarmament were within reach and even in France more and more could be heard advocating reconciliation and the peaceful revision of the Treaty of Versailles.¹¹⁵³ These same Nazis were now destroying everything that Stresemann and Brüning had achieved through their misrule: 'Heute ist ein guter Teil davon abermals vertan, aber an den Verträgen hat sich nichts geändert und die Isolierung Deutschlands ist so groß, daß sogar der Pakt mit Polen schon als Erfolg empfunden wird'.¹¹⁵⁴ Thus, the Dollfuß government was not simply claiming that the Austrians were the better Germans, but that there were good Reich Germans who had fought sincerely for the rights of the German people and that the Austrians were the only version left after the Nazis destroyed what had actually worked during the Weimar Republic.

The situation Germany found herself in was constantly juxtaposed against Austria's more favourable international position. Austria, under attack from her alleged brothers in the Reich, had 'many friends abroad, important friends' supporting her in her struggle for economic and political independence; Britain, it was declared, was wholly on Austria's side.¹¹⁵⁵ Germany, on the other hand, had none. Certain that

¹¹⁵¹ 'Ein Jahr', *Reichspost*, 30 Jan. 1934, 1–2.

¹¹⁵² 'Preussengeist ist Deutschlands Ruin', *Sturm über Österreich*, 29 Oct. 1933, 4.

¹¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁴ 'Ein Jahr', *Reichspost*, 30 Jan. 1934, 1–2.

¹¹⁵⁵ Dollfuß on his return from the Economic Conference in London, Aspern, 17 Jun. 1933: 'Ich habe die Überzeugung, daß wir Österreicher im Kampf um unsere politische und wirtschaftliche Selbständigkeit nicht allein stehen, sondern in der Welt viele und große Freunde haben.' Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 91–92. The German Foreign Minister noted that 'the demonstrative applause yesterday for the speech of Federal Chancellor Dollfuss at the Economic Conference was meant, as has been confirmed to me from various sides, to give expression to the sympathy for Austria existing in wide circles of the delegations'. *The Foreign Minister to the Foreign Ministry*, June 15, 1933, No. 313, *DGFP C/I*, 567–68. Also referring to the statement by the Foreign

foreign opinion was key to keeping Austria out of Nazi clutches, the Dollfuß government went to great lengths to ensure that the 'world's loathing' remained firmly focused on Germany.¹¹⁵⁶ No opportunity was missed to tell the world about how the Hitler government was behaving towards Austria and the danger that this posed to European peace, seriously undermining the regime's attempts to communicate a 'peaceful image' abroad.¹¹⁵⁷ In threatening her much smaller neighbour, Germany, Dollfuß argued, was playing 'a dangerous game', particularly as Austria's importance was recognized and understood on all sides.¹¹⁵⁸ Germany's behaviour during 1933 had not only alarmed France, the *Reichspost* asserted, it had also led to Belgium, Denmark and even Switzerland calling for increased border protection.¹¹⁵⁹ With this strategy the Austrians enjoyed some relative success abroad, at least in the eyes of the German Foreign Office: 'the struggle with Austria, which has already lasted so much longer than we had expected, is extremely costly to us', Bülow wrote in August 1933, 'we are losing the sympathies of all the smaller countries...We are antagonizing the larger powers.'¹¹⁶⁰

Cognizant of the fact that the problem posed by National Socialism could only be solved from abroad, both Dollfuß and Schuschnigg were unceasing in their efforts to keep the eyes of western governments on the situation in Austria, and where possible, use them to keep Germany in check. The initial hope was that Hitler could be 'encouraged' by the likes of Mussolini to refrain from reckless dilettantism in foreign policy and instead act according to the traditional rules of international diplomacy; it was, Dollfuß told the Christian Social Party Executive, Mussolini's intention to bring

Minister Simon before the House of Commons: "'Die ganze Sympathie Großbritanniens gehört Oesterreich'", *Reichspost*, 7 Jul. 1933, 3; Also, 'Unser Bundeskanzler hat also in seinem Kampf gegen den Ansturm des reichsdeutschen Nationalsozialismus die gesamten Westmächte für sich.'; 'Innerpolitischer Situationsbericht', *Vaterländische Front*, Feb. 1934, 10.

¹¹⁵⁶ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 3 May 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 249.

¹¹⁵⁷ There were signals that Berlin was, at this early juncture at least, conscious of the opinions of the outside world and keen to at least appear not to be the aggressor, Wilhelm Engerth, Consul General in Munich reporting that the wording of an inflammatory radio address by Hans Frank was modified by Berlin, and it was the censored version that appeared in the foreign press. (ÖstA), (AdR), (AA), (ÖVB I Rep.), Berlin Gesandtschaft, Karton 16, Generalkonsul München (GK/M) to the Bundeskanzleramt (BKA), 22 March 1933, 'Die Entwicklung der Dinge in Bayern'; Ronald Smelser, *The Sudeten Problem*, 10.

¹¹⁵⁸ Dollfuß in Vienna on 18 Jan 1934, Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 101.

¹¹⁵⁹ See: 'Ein weltpolitisches Krisenjahr', *Reichspost*, 30 Dec. 1933, 1–2.

¹¹⁶⁰ State Secretary Bülow to Foreign Minister Neurath, August 1, 1933. No. 385; *DGFP C/I*, 708–12

the German Nazis to their senses as far as foreign policy was concerned.¹¹⁶¹ Mussolini was, according to Dollfuß, willing to apply pressure on Austria's behalf in Berlin.¹¹⁶² However, the Austrians were adamant that Italy not go it alone, regarding it as essential, 'if the Germans were to be brought to reason', that simultaneous action should be taken by the 'Three Powers' – Britain, France and Italy – in Berlin. The fear was that Italy might be tempted to sacrifice Austria if left to her own devices – Dollfuß had no such qualms about Britain approaching Berlin alone, enquiring on at least one occasion whether the British government 'could not urge German government to be more reasonable in their attitude and policy towards Austria'.¹¹⁶³ However, the government were not asking for a discreet warning to Berlin. Rather, they hoped to rouse German public opinion against the Nazis through:

an explicit communication which would become known throughout Germany to the effect that in the view of His Majesty's government the present attitude of Nazi Germany towards Austria involved the risk of the most serious complications and that in the interest of the preservation of peace in Central Europe Germany must change her attitude.¹¹⁶⁴

However, although the British 'unchained the press' in the hope that their denunciations...choke Herr Hitler off somewhat', they were reluctant to countenance a direct intervention on the grounds that Italy was the only power with sufficient influence to take the initiative.¹¹⁶⁵

Austria had to tread very carefully when asking for help against Nazi Germany from abroad. While British support could be construed as an asset to the Austrian government, open French or Czech approval of Dollfuß's course played into Nazi

¹¹⁶¹ Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 20 April 1933, Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 230; also Foreign Office Minute, (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C5257/2092/3, Sir W. Selby, Austro-German relations. Record of a conversation with Dr. Schuller, 12 Jun. 1933.

¹¹⁶² (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C5257/2092/3, Sir W. Selby, Austro-German relations. Record of a conversation with Dr. Schuller, 12 Jun. 1933.

¹¹⁶³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C4767/2092/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Request for assistance from H.M's Government, 23 May 1933.

¹¹⁶⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C5257/2092/3, Sir W. Selby, Austro-German relations. Record of a conversation with Dr. Schuller, 12 Jun. 1933.

¹¹⁶⁵ Foreign Office note; (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C5368/2092/3, Sir H Rumbold, Austro-German relations. Message for Sir R. Vansittart, 14 Jun. 1933.

hands.¹¹⁶⁶ The prevalence of anti-Czech sentiment in interwar Austria for example, the legacy of the secession of the three million Austrian-Germans that lived in Bohemia and Moravia to Czechoslovakia in 1918, ruled out the possibility of Austria appearing as an ally of Czechoslovakia, as this would have been a propaganda coup for the Nazis. In July 1933, Austrian complaints to Berlin about abusive radio propaganda broadcasts having been consistently ignored, the Austrian government requested that Britain, France and Italy make representations in Berlin on her behalf: although the propaganda did not cease, it did, allegedly, have a moderating effect.¹¹⁶⁷ Yet the government had to exercise caution, as any appeal for foreign intervention would provide grist to the Nazi propaganda mill. Robert Hadow at the British legation in Austria noted the 'anxious attempts of the government to make clear to the electorate its contention that the steps recently taken in Berlin by the three Great Powers were not taken at their request'.¹¹⁶⁸ In short, what Austria needed was its friends abroad to intervene in Berlin without any apparent request from Austria to do so.

The hope in the summer of 1933 was that Germany would take the allied hint and could 'be made to realize by world opinion and, if necessary, by League action in defence of article 80 of the Treaty of Versailles – taken spontaneously and not at the request of Austria – that the council of the League [was] firmly determined to hold her to the letter and spirit of that article', thereby easing the pressure on the Austrian government.¹¹⁶⁹ Yet Dollfuß could not easily turn to the League for assistance 'if he did so it would be represented that he had called in a foreigner against his fellow Germans'.¹¹⁷⁰ Indeed, in simply applying to the French and British for help, Dollfuß was,

¹¹⁶⁶ See: Rumbold (Berlin) recorded one German newspaper's observation that 'It notes that the whole policy of Dr. Dollfuss meets with suspicious applause in Prague and Paris. This alone should be warning to Vienna'. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C 5848/420/3, Sir H. Rumbold, Situation in Austria, 21 Jun. 1933.

¹¹⁶⁷ See: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 41.

¹¹⁶⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16643, paper C 7436/2092/3, R.H. Hadow, Austro-German relations. Memorandum on Pan-German and Socialist Points of View, 17 Aug. 1933. On Robert Hadow see: Lindsay Michie Eades, *Portrait of an Appeaser: Robert Hadow, First Secretary in the British Foreign Office, 1931–1939*, (London, 1996).

¹¹⁶⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C5958/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Situation in Austria and her relations with other European Powers, 30 Jun. 1933.

¹¹⁷⁰ Foreign Office Memorandum, (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16644, paper C7940/2092/3, J.V. Perowne, Rumoured Nazi Putsch in the Tyrol, 1 Sep. 1933.

one Nazi German newspaper accused, 'indirectly recognising the peace treaties of 1919' and committing 'treachery to the united Germanic cause'.¹¹⁷¹ Thus, it was deemed critical that 'the Austrian Chancellor should not be obliged himself to appeal to the Powers to maintain against Germany a provision of a treaty that stinks no less in Austrian than in German nostrils'.¹¹⁷² The Socialists, pressing 'once more for neutralisation of Austria under the aegis of the League of Nations' laboured under the same problem, and were, therefore, 'careful not to specify at whose request this step [was] to be taken, for it [was] generally agreed in Austria that any party which appealed to the League against Germany would reawaken the pan-German feeling of Austrians as a whole'.¹¹⁷³ The British Minister in Vienna agreed: 'My personal opinion is that the Austrian government should refrain as long as possible from invoking foreign aid against Germany. Such action on their part would provide a formidable weapon to Austrian National Socialists whose power is still said to be growing'¹¹⁷⁴.

The reality was, 'any Austrian government turning to the League of Nations for help against Germany would do so only as a last, desperate resort'.¹¹⁷⁵ Dollfuß had been encouraged by foreign observers to appeal to the League or to the Great Powers about German pressure on Austria throughout 1933, but had been, according to Selby, extremely reluctant to take this step in the knowledge that 'unless active or early action ensued his own position would be merely weakened by such an appeal'.¹¹⁷⁶ As Selby noted, 'Pan-German elements in Austria would make good use of the Chancellor's "dependence upon the butchers of Versailles for armed help against his own people"'.¹¹⁷⁷ Instead the Dollfuß government attempted to put a positive spin on

¹¹⁷¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16642, paper C6910/2992/3, Sir E. Phipps, Austro-German relations. Leading article in "Angriff" by Dr. Goebbels attacking Austrian Chancellor, 3 Aug. 1933.

¹¹⁷² (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16638, paper C5958/420/3, Sir E. Phipps, Situation in Austria and her relations with other European Powers, 30 Jun. 1933.

¹¹⁷³ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16643, paper C 7436/2092/3, R.H. Hadow, Austro-German relations. Memorandum on Pan-German and Socialist Points of View, 17 Aug. 1933.

¹¹⁷⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16641, paper C5467, Sir E. Phipps, Telegram: Austro-German Relations: Expulsion of Austrian Press Attaché from Germany,

¹¹⁷⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16643, paper C 7436/2092/3, R.H. Hadow, Austro-German relations. Memorandum on Pan-German and Socialist Points of View, 17 Aug. 1933.

¹¹⁷⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, para. 42.

¹¹⁷⁷ Ibid para. 42.

the fact that they had not taken steps internationally against Germany in defence of 'Austrian honour and independence', claiming that it was their 'German sentiment that had prevented them from doing so'.¹¹⁷⁸ However, by January 1934 the Dollfuß government was clearly desperate enough to take the risk and they put together a dossier proving Reich German involvement in acts of terrorism on Austrian soil.¹¹⁷⁹ The Austrian government officially informed the Reich government that it was in possession of direct proof that the escalation of Nazi agitation in Austria was directly due to orders received from Berlin and threatened to take it to the League if they did not receive a satisfactory answer. The German reply being considered unsatisfactory, the dossier was put to the British, French and Italian governments who were given the opportunity to voice their opinions before the issue was brought before the League of Nations.¹¹⁸⁰ Italian disinclination to take the matter to the League meant it never got that far.

Thus the fundamental problem of all Austrian politicians becomes clear. The Austrians were similarly resentful toward the Treaty of Saint Germain as the Germans were towards the Treaty of Versailles and this affected, both directly and indirectly, the choices available to the Dollfuß government. A foreign policy course bound too closely to France and Czechoslovakia would leave the government open to the Nazi accusation that it was collaborating with the very powers which had inflicted on Austria the humiliating *fait accompli* of 1919. Equally, the military terms of the Treaty made defending Austria against Nazi Germany difficult. For example, in order to raise an auxiliary force of 8,000 men in the summer of 1933 for the purpose of combatting the Nazis' terrorist activities, the Austrian government needed to gain permission from the signatory powers of the Treaty. The problem was, allowing Austria this concession set a 'bad precedent for similar German [or Hungarian] violations of the Treaty'.¹¹⁸¹ Austria stopped playing by the book and openly abrogated the Treaty in

¹¹⁷⁸ Dollfuß, Vienna, 11 September 1933, in: Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 105.

¹¹⁷⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18346, paper R839/37/3, Dossier prepared by the Austrian Government with view to an Appeal to the League of Nations regarding Alleged German Interference in the Internal Affairs of Austria, 8 Feb. 1933.

¹¹⁸⁰ See, for instance: (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/19483, paper R826/826/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1934, 2 Feb. 1935.

¹¹⁸¹ F. O. note. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16634, paper C5029/211/3, Sir E. Phipps, Auxiliary police in Austria, 27 May 1933. See also paper C6621/211/3, 27 Jul. 1933.

April 1936, introducing general national service a few weeks after Hitler grossly violated the Treaty of Versailles by invading the Rhineland.¹¹⁸² It is not just a convenient excuse to say that the Treaty of Saint Germain was at the root of all these problems and that, in part, the limited ability of Austria to resist the Nazis originated in the weakened economic state and in the considerable psychological repercussions that Saint Germain had caused.

¹¹⁸² Dieter A. Binder, 'The Christian Corporatist State: Austria from 1934 to 1938', in ed., Günther Bischof Rolf Steininger, Michael Gehler *Austria in the Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2002), 82.

Österreichs deutsche Sendung

With the main body of the German people 'gagged and enslaved' by the National Socialists, Austria's role, as the only other homogenous German state, appeared clear to proponents of the Dollfuß government. There was 'no doubt as to the necessity of a counterweight of German reason against Nazi madness', or, as Dollfuß put it, 'Es soll noch ein Gebiet geben, wo die Welt glaubt, daß die Deutschen noch nicht verrückt geworden sind'.¹¹⁸³ Germans and Germandom were being discredited in the eyes of the world because of the behaviour of the Nazi regime. Nowhere was this more apparent than with the murderous purge that took place in Germany between 30 June and 2 July 1934. Of course, the Austrian public, the *Reichspost* noted, was already more than adequately informed about the 'numerous heinous atrocities and murders' committed by the SA against its opponents – often 'defenceless prisoners' – as well as the 'abuses' that stood behind such euphemisms as 'shot while trying to escape' and 'committed suicide in the cell'.¹¹⁸⁴ Nonetheless, with the summary execution of SA leaders and political opponents, the Nazis' mask had slipped once and for all; this was decisive proof that the National Socialist system of government opposed the moral norms adhered to by the rest of the world.¹¹⁸⁵ Natural law, it was pointed out, originates from God, not Adolf Hitler. Where else in the civilized world, the *Reichspost* asked, would the head of government personally pull a minister from his bed in the middle of the night and, on his refusal to commit suicide, without hesitation, order that he be gunned down?¹¹⁸⁶ According to *Time* magazine, Dollfuß was the only head of state to comment on the purge.¹¹⁸⁷ He was certainly remarkably outspoken:

Erfreulich klingt all das nicht, was jetzt aus dem Dritten Reich herüberklingt. Aber eigentlich wundert es uns nicht. Wir haben es erlebt. ...Geht nun nicht endlich auch draußen ein Licht auf, daß man mit Gewaltmethoden ein Volk nicht glücklich machen kann? Geht nicht ein Licht auf,

¹¹⁸³ 'Saar-Deutschland', *Reichspost*, 23 May 1934, 1–2; Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 3 May 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*, 249.

¹¹⁸⁴ 'Ein Angriff gegen den Rechtsstaat', *Reichspost*, 3 Jul. 1934, 1–2.

¹¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸⁷ See: W. Ormsby-Gore, 'The Forteenth Assembly of the League of Nations', *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931–1939)*, 13 (1934).

daß, wenn man den Weg der Gerechtigkeit verläßt, man auf einen Irrweg kommt, von dem aus es keinen Rückweg gibt!¹¹⁸⁸



Figure 10: 'Das wahre Gesicht', Vaterländische Wandzeitung Nr. 11
(ÖNB Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung)

The periodical *Der Christliche Ständestaat*, undoubtedly one of the Austrian publications most virulently opposed to National Socialism – indeed, anti-Nazism was its *raison d'être* – was at pains to emphasize that 'the horrifying spiritual core of National Socialism was not only represented by Röhm and his hapless and perverse cronies', but by the actual Nazi leadership.¹¹⁸⁹ The 'Antichrist had raised its head': 'what Germany and Europe need', the author argued 'is not a reform of National Socialism, but its complete elimination'.¹¹⁹⁰ Indeed, the periodical itself is interesting.

¹¹⁸⁸ 'Der Kanzler spricht über die Ereignisse im Reiche', *Wiener Zeitung*, 2 Jul. 1934, 2.

¹¹⁸⁹ The author was Dietrich von Hildebrand himself. 'Die Letzte Maske Fällt!', *Christliche Ständestaat*, 8 Jul. 1934, 3.

¹¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Its founder and driving force was Dietrich von Hildebrand who had fled Germany in the wake of the Nazi takeover of power. Seeing Dollfuß as the best hope for combating National Socialism, Hildebrand went to Vienna where he won Dollfuß over to the idea of establishing an intellectual anti-Nazi periodical to aid in the formation of a 'German Front against Hitler'.¹¹⁹¹ Dollfuß also facilitated a professorship at the University of Vienna for Hildebrand against the opposition of 'National Catholic' intellectuals and financed the founding of the periodical.¹¹⁹² Therefore, we can safely assume that Dollfuß was in agreement with the editorial line that the journal took, in much the same way that we can assume that Schuschnigg, as leader of the *Ostmärkische Sturmscharen*, was in agreement with the aggressively anti-Nazi line taken by *Sturm über Österreich*, the weekly journal of that movement.¹¹⁹³

With the Nazi takeover of power in Germany, Austrian independence gained new significance. Austria, it was argued had a dual role to play both within Germandom and within Europe as a whole, again a line of argument that was a legacy of the Habsburg era. Not only was Austria crucial to preserving the balance of power in Europe, a fact that the Dollfuß government sought to emphasize whenever possible, she was – unlike Nazi Germany – a force for peace. Not only was peace in Europe served by Austrian independence, Austria represented no threat to her neighbours, rather she repeatedly declared herself committed to friendship and peaceful co-operation with other peoples and states.¹¹⁹⁴ Centuries of living together with other nations had made Austria, it was argued, 'more mellow, more patient and more understanding of foreign cultures', a claim that would both play well at home – again emphasizing the difference between the Austrians and the North Germans – as well as being an oblique reminder of the racial and expansionist threat posed by the Nazis,

¹¹⁹¹ Edmund Glaise von Horstenau and Peter Broucek, *Ein General im Zwielicht: die Erinnerungen Edmund Glaises von Horstenau*, (Vienna, 1980), 56 fn 10.

¹¹⁹² The most famous of the 'National Catholics' who tried to 'reconcile Catholicism and an autonomous Austrian identity with Nazism' was Arthur Seyß-Inquart. See: Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945*, 251–52. See also: Gerhard Drekonja-Kornat, 'Martin von Hildebrand', in *Gabriel García Márquez in Wien und andere Kulturgeschichten aus Lateinamerika* (Vienna, 2010), 161.

¹¹⁹³ The *Ostmärkische Sturmscharen* was a political paramilitary group formed in 1930 in opposition to the *Heimwehr*. They recruited from the ranks of the *Katholische Jugend*.

¹¹⁹⁴ 'Wir glauben, mit Aufrechterhaltung der Unabhängigkeit und mit unserem Streben nach wirtschaftlicher Erstarbung weit über unsere Grenzen dem Zusammenleben und dem Frieden in Europa dienen zu können'. Dollfuß in a speech held in Vienna, 7 Dec. 1933, Anton Tautscher, ed., *So Sprach der Kanzler*, 90–91, 97–98.

aimed at foreign audiences fearful of a resurgent Germany and the spectre of yet another war.¹¹⁹⁵

If Austria's immediate and most important task was to remain independent of Nazi Germany, its wider 'mission', in the view of the Dollfuß government, was to provide Germandom with a spiritual counter-pole to National Socialism – in the same way that the Habsburg Empire had provided a counter-pole to the German Reich. Austria, Dollfuß maintained, was conscious of this responsibility, towards the millions of Germans that lived as national minorities in other states and to Germandom as a whole.¹¹⁹⁶ Austria, the 'second' German state since 1871 – or even the 'true' German state since time immemorial – with a 'thousand-year long tradition' of acting and fighting 'unceasingly for the protection of the whole of Germandom' was faced with a 'conspicuously German task'.¹¹⁹⁷

Wir müssen denken an das Wort Kaiser Franz Josephs "Ich bin ein Deutscher Fürst", wir müssen blicken auf das Denkmal des Erzherzogs Karl am Heldenplatz, auf dem die herrlichen Worte stehen "dem beharrlichen Kämpfer für Deutschlands Ehre". Solche beharrliche Kämpfer für Deutschlands Ehre müssen auch wir sein.¹¹⁹⁸

The Nazis would distort these same words just a few years later. The 'struggle against *Gleichschaltung*' was conceived as a struggle for, and on behalf of, the whole of Germandom for a spiritual and historical tradition, which the National Socialists were attempting to destroy.¹¹⁹⁹ It was not just Austria that was at stake. Indeed, this was why Austria's sovereignty, it was argued, was so important, and why Austria would 'defend itself against every attempt at *Gleichschaltung* with all [its] might'.¹²⁰⁰ It was a blessing for Austria and the whole of Germandom, Heinrich Mataja argued, that Austria had remained a sovereign and independent state. 'If the Anschluss had been carried out earlier, Austria would now be in the same position as Bavaria', that is

¹¹⁹⁵ Dollfuß in a radio broadcast in New York, 21 May 1933, Edmund Weber, ed., *Dollfuß an Österreich*, 65–66.

¹¹⁹⁶ See: Engelbert Dollfuß, 'Unser Weg in die neue Zeit', *Reichspost*, 24 Dec. 1933, 1.

¹¹⁹⁷ Carl Vaugoin, *Ist Österreich Wert?* 4.

¹¹⁹⁸ 'Deutsch Ehr' ist mein Ehr", *Reichspost*, 24 Jun. 1934, 1–2.

¹¹⁹⁹ See: Heinrich Mataja, 'Oesterreichs deutsche Aufgaben', *Reichspost*, 6 May 1933, 1–2.

¹²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

powerless to take a stand.¹²⁰¹ Here is Starhemberg, leader of the Austrian *Heimatschutz*:

Die Erhaltung eines unabhängigen Oesterreich ist nicht nur eine österreichische Eigenwilligkeit, sondern ist eine Notwendigkeit für das Gesamtdeutschtum. Es ist eine Pflicht im großdeutschem Sinne, wenigstens irgendwo ein Stück deutschen Volkstums von der Niederknüppelung durch das Neupreußentum zu bewahren.¹²⁰²

Instead, 'Felix Austria' remained free, 'ein Gegengewicht deutscher Vernunft gegen nationalsozialistische Verblendung' and living proof to both the wider world and Germandom at large that, contrary to Nazi propaganda, Nazi and German were by no means the same thing.¹²⁰³ According to Hildebrand, writing in the first issue of *Der Christliche Ständestaat*, with the descent of the German Reich into barbarism Austria had become, the refuge of true Germandom, of German culture and traditions, of the German spirit.¹²⁰⁴ Having been spared the trials of their brethren in the north, Austria's task, in the eyes of the Christian Socials, was to prove to the world now and in the future that the whole German people could not be made responsible for the misdeeds committed by National Socialism in their name. Austria, it was argued, was not only protecting its own citizens from Nazi barbarism, it was defending the reputation of Germandom as a *Kulturnation* in front of the rest of the world.

The ideological aim of Austria's government, or at least its Christian Social core, was to provide a conscious rallying point of a non- and anti-National Socialist Germanism, and of an humane, 'Catholic' Europeanism. Therefore, Austria's struggle against Hitler's Reich was not understood as a mere political struggle, but a *Kulturkampf* in a national, Christian and 'Austrian' sense.¹²⁰⁵ It was construed as a spiritual battle – albeit extremely unequal – for German hearts and minds:

Zwei Weltanschauungen prallen heute mit aller Wucht aufeinander: die nationalsozialistisch-heidnische Berliner und die christlich-deutschföderalistische Wiener Prägung. Erstere schöpft ihre intellektuellen Kräfte aus den Ereignisse nach 1866, überspringt die deutsche

¹²⁰¹ 'Deutsch Ehr' ist mein Ehr', *Reichspost*, 24 Jun. 1934, 1–2.

¹²⁰² 'Weg und Ziel des österreichischen Heimatschutzes', *Reichspost*, 28 Feb. 1934, 2.

¹²⁰³ 'Saar–Deutschland', *Reichspost*, 23 May 1934, 1–2.

¹²⁰⁴ See: Dietrich von Hildebrand, 'Oesterreichs Sendung', *Der Christliche Ständestaat*, 3 Dec. 1933, 3–5.

¹²⁰⁵ See: 'Klarheit!', *Sturm über Österreich*, 1 Oct. 1933, 4.

Geschichte bis zur Völkerwanderung und knüpft dann an eine irrationale germanische Mystik an, die sie so interpretiert, wie es den heutigen Machthabern im Dritten Reich in den Kram paßt. Letztere steht auf dem Standpunkt, daß das deutsche Volk älter ist als das Zweite und Dritte Reich, das in Wahrheit mehr ein Großpreußen als Reich ist.¹²⁰⁶

Austria's Catholic heritage was a central tenet of this counter-weight. The dividing line between 'Austria' and 'National Socialism' was not understood as the border between the two states; rather it was a religious and cultural frontier that ran through the middle of the German nation, an observation 'confirmed' by the fact that; 'mittlerweile hat sich die Bestialität des Dritten Reiches gegen alles was irgendwie katholisch ist, gar herrlich offenbart.'¹²⁰⁷ Thus, in a sense, the conflict with National Socialism was understood as an internal conflict. As Mataja observed, it was 'a conflict between German and German, a conflict within the German nation' which had its roots in the Reformation.¹²⁰⁸ Such an argument was, however, not suitable for foreign consumption, not least because there it would be likely misunderstood. With the Nazis trying to convince the international community that the Austro-German conflict was a domestic German affair that should be settled between them, it was important for Austria to internationalize the conflict, pitching it abroad as a quarrel between two sovereign states. However, there was no real contradiction in their argument: if one remembers that for patriotic Austrians, 'state' and 'nation' were not considered to be mutually exclusive concepts, one can see how difficult it was for them to pitch an argument based on political frontiers.

In Austria, Dollfuß argued that being German meant being Christian.¹²⁰⁹ The allusion was obvious: the heathen Nazis were nothing of the sort. Thus, this was clearly anti-Nazi but it was also, inevitably, anti-Social Democratic because the Social Democrats had chosen to present themselves as an anti-Catholic, pro-Anschluss party, thereby excluding themselves on both counts. With the burgeoning *Kulturkampf* in the Reich, the *Gleichschaltung* of the churches, the onslaught against Catholic organizations,

¹²⁰⁶ Cited from the 'Deutsche Presse', Prague in: 'Sudetendeutschtum – österreichisches Deutschtum', *Reichspost*, 11 Apr. 1934, 1.

¹²⁰⁷ 'Die entfesselte Kulturkampfbestie', *Sturm über Österreich*, 2 Jul. 1933, 2; Heinrich Mataja, 'Der Kulturkampf im Deutschen Reiche', *Reichspost*, 7 Feb. 1934, 2.

¹²⁰⁸ 'Deutsch Ehr' ist mein Ehr", *Reichspost*, 24 Jun. 1934, 1–2.

¹²⁰⁹ See: Dollfuß, Feldkirch, 29 June 1934: Edmund Weber, ed., *Dollfuß an Österreich*, 92.

the arrest of priests and ministers – all this despite the concordat with the Vatican – the true anti-Christian face of National Socialism had been revealed: ‘Der nackte Bolschewismus ist es, der aus solchen Brutalitäten schreit, um kein Haar besser als jener der Kirchenstürmer von Moskau und Mexiko!’¹²¹⁰ As a Christian state, Austria, it was argued, had a duty to speak on behalf of her spiritual brothers in the Reich who had been robbed of their voice as a result of National Socialist oppression. If they gag our brothers in one place, the *Reichspost* warned, we, as German Catholics, will be their voice.¹²¹¹ Indeed, wherever our fellow Germans may live, ‘Wir wollen ihnen die Gewißheit geben, daß hier in Oesterreich das Gefühl echter Deutscher Volksgemeinschaft’ – the type that Germany had also experienced under Stresemann and Brüning – ‘nicht erloschen ist und nie erlöschen wird’.¹²¹² The ultimate hope, was the spiritual unity of all German Catholics, ‘may they live in the German Reich, in Austria or within other borders, since the Germans in Poland and in the Balkans, the Banat Swabians and the south Tyroleans all belong to this spiritual entity’ in the face of Nazi *Gleichschaltung* and terror.¹²¹³

Reasoning that Austria needed a positive national purpose to counteract the draw of the Nazis, in the very earliest days of the conflict with Germany, Dollfuß argued that Austria should seek to become the centre of the *Auslandsdeutschtum* movement.¹²¹⁴ Although the Austrians could never hope to compete with the propaganda effort of the Third Reich, financially or otherwise, some attempts were made to provide what backing they could to German-Catholic minorities outside of the Reich’s borders, particularly in those areas that were once within the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy. In her study of the Catholic weekly, *Der Deutsche in Polen* and its founder Eduard Pant, Nordblom reveals how one of the aims of the Austrian *Heimatsdienst* was to provide spiritual backing for German

¹²¹⁰ ‘Herunter die Maske!’, *Sturm über Österreich*, 14 May 1934, 2.

¹²¹¹ Heinrich Mataja, ‘Oesterreich und die deutschen Katholiken’, *Reichspost*, 11 May 1933, 1–2.

¹²¹² Heinrich Mataja, ‘Was bekämpfen wir am Nationalsozialismus?’, *Reichspost*, 10 Jan. 1934, 3–4.

¹²¹³ ‘mögen sie im Deutschen Reich, in Oesterreich oder innerhalb anderer Grenzpfähle ihren Sitz haben. Denn in dieser geistige Einheit gehören auch die katholischen Sudetendeutschen, die Deutschen in Polen, und am Balkan, die Banater Schwaben und die Südtiroler’. Heinrich Mataja, ‘Oesterreich und die deutschen Katholiken’, *Reichspost*, 11 May 1933, 1–2.

¹²¹⁴ See: Dollfuß to the Christian Social Party Executive, 3 May 1933: Walter Goldinger, ed., *Protokolle*.

Catholics across the border.¹²¹⁵ As non-Reich Germans, free from the yoke of National Socialism, Austrians, it was argued, had an even greater responsibility to ensure that the *Gleichschaltung* of every mind and thought does not spread to other countries and destroy our Christian institutions, as is the case in Germany'.¹²¹⁶ This support involved aiding German-Catholic newspapers abroad to help keep them independent from Nazi Germany, and it was in this capacity that the Dollfuß government pledged to provide financial support for Pant's newspaper.¹²¹⁷

'What would happen', Mataja asked, 'if the Czechs or the Poles applied National Socialist totalitarian principles against their German subjects?'¹²¹⁸ To love one's own people, he countered, you do not have to hate and despise others. On the contrary, a nation with as many minorities living under foreign rule as the Germans, should be tolerant regarding nationality. That was why, he argued, 'Austrian' principles would better serve German minorities.¹²¹⁹ These 'Austrian' principles were rooted in the multinational experience of the Habsburg era, in the belief that national or ethnic identity could coexist with state loyalty. It was in this capacity that the historian Hugo Hantsch, a Benedictine monk, anti-Nazi and supporter of the *Ständestaat*, was assigned by the government to work for the Germans abroad by countering the 'phrases of the Nazis'.¹²²⁰ His objective was 'to influence Germans abroad...in an Austrian sense...to win them over for the Austrian position of absolute affirmation of the state in which the German minorities lived'.¹²²¹ However, to interpret this as evidence of cultural imperialism, as a reflection of a post-Imperial 'inferiority complex' or indeed as evidence of some sort of missionary zeal would be to miss the point. The emphasis on the supposedly culturally superior Austrian Germans with their 'copious experience of tolerance towards the Monarchy's non-German subjects' was not simply

¹²¹⁵ See Pia Nordblom, *Für Glaube und Volkstum: Die katholische Wochenzeitung "Der Deutsche in Polen" (1934–1939) in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Nationalsozialismus*, (Paderborn, 2000), 205.

¹²¹⁶ Von einem unparteiischen deutschen Beobachter: 'Die Lage der Katholiken im neuen Deutschland', *Reichspost*, 8 Feb. 1934, 2–3.

¹²¹⁷ See: Pia Nordblom, *Für Glaube und Volkstum*, 204–8.

¹²¹⁸ Heinrich Mataja, 'Deutschtum und Nationalsozialismus', *Der Christliche Ständestaat*, 21 Jan. 1934, 7–8.

¹²¹⁹ See: Ibid.

¹²²⁰ Gernot Heiss, 'Pan-Germans, Better Germans, Austrians: Austrian Historians on National Identity from the First to the Second Republic'.

¹²²¹ Ibid 431, fn. 66.

about moral superiority over the Prussian-Nazis, it was also about holding a mirror up to the realities of Nazi rule in an attempt to sway opinions about which horse to back at home and abroad.¹²²² When understood against the backdrop of the Nazi – and the perceived ‘Bolshevik’ – threat to Europe, this was about protecting long fought for freedoms of religious expression, ensuring the rights of minorities, and attempting to maintain cultural and intellectual diversity within Germandom as a whole. Nordblom is right to suspect that, in contrast to Nazi Germany, Austria did not exploit the German minorities for its own foreign policy aims.¹²²³ This was because for Austria it had nothing to do with imposing conformity or extending Austrian power or influence; it was merely the attempt at the establishment of a German counter-movement against National Socialism and, as such, one strategy in the fight to maintain an independent existence and evade Nazi rule.

¹²²² Description cited from a statement by Anton Staudinger at the symposium ‘50 Jahre Zweite Republik’ held by the Alfred Klahr Gesellschaft on 8 May 1995; http://www.klahrgesellschaft.at/Referate/Staudinger_1995.html, accessed: 15 December 2012.

¹²²³ See: Pia Nordblom, *Für Glaube und Volkstum*, 548.



Figure 11: 'Zur Rettung Österreichs'
(Die zweite Gefahr)

This attempt ultimately failed. However, it did not fail simply because Dollfuß had destroyed democracy, nor because of so-called *Deutschtümelei*, but because of the overriding fact that the Austrian state, weakened as it was, was not strong enough to withstand the extreme pressure from Nazi Germany indefinitely without real support from abroad. This was obvious to contemporaries: as early as 1934 it was clear to Selby that 'so long as it [National Socialism] sweeps through Germany, the Nazi conflagration cannot be altogether extinguished in Austria, although it may be kept under by international co-operation'.¹²²⁴ Or, as he had noted earlier: 'taking the gloomy view, he [Dollfuß] must ultimately go overboard...it stands to reason that Austria cannot alone stand up to Germany'.¹²²⁵ Neither did the Austrian state fail

¹²²⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/18366, paper R1526/1526/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1933, 1 Feb. 1934, I, para. 2.

¹²²⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16644, paper C8153/2092/3, Sir W. Selby, Austro-German Situation. Copy of memorandum by Hadow, 10 Sep. 1933.

because the Dollfuß government and the *Ständestaat*, in leaning heavily on Catholicism and the Habsburg past, did not offer an inclusive identity that would also appeal to the Social Democrats. In reality the problem was not the nature of the identity on offer but the fact that the strength of German nationalism and Anschluss sentiment within Social democratic circles as well as the abject rejection of Austrian particularism made any attempt to win them over to genuine support of Austrian independence futile. The strategy of the Dollfuß government was also more than apparent: 'to group together all Austrians who favoured the continued independence of their country' and 'to hold on' until the disaster in Germany 'is apparent, and to wait until the Nazi wave recedes'.¹²²⁶

¹²²⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16628, paper C4462/8/3, Sir E. Phipps, Situation in Austria 16 May 1933; (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16628, paper C4040/8/3, Sir E. Phipps, Situation in Austria (Telegram), 2 May 1933.

Chapter 8

The Fog of Nazism

History has largely adopted the Nazis' version of the Anschluss: the years of waiting, the cheering crowds, the 'homecoming'.¹²²⁷ In the battle for the 'German' narrative that had raged between the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg governments and the Nazis since 1932, the Nazis had finally triumphed. The yearning for national unity was supposedly inevitable for two states that shared the same language, culture and history, the Nazis claimed as German troops invaded Austria in March 1938. Anschluss, according to the Nazi narrative, was the natural culmination of years of pro-Anschluss sentiment, simmering under the surface of the First Republic, 'the state that no one wanted'.¹²²⁸ It was a historical deception that had begun years earlier, initiated on the very first page of *Mein Kampf*, where Hitler had declared his intentions for Austria: 'German-Austria must return to the great German mother country'.¹²²⁹ By March 1938, a similar slogan, 'Gleiches Blut gehört in ein gemeinsames Reich' – repeated ad nauseum – had already worked its magic abroad; no one – Mexico and the Soviet Union excepted – was willing to contest the 'inevitable'.¹²³⁰ Austrian statehood, the Nazis claimed, was an historical aberration and union between the two German states a thoroughly natural development. This was unification, they maintained, not annexation.

To this end, 'German' and 'Austrian' history were appropriated and misinterpreted to fit a specifically Nazi narrative linking a united Germanic past with a common future. According to this Nazi narrative, the roots of 'German' unity were to be found in the 'unity' of the Holy Roman Empire. To get this message across, and aware of their potent symbolism, Hitler ordered that the Imperial Regalia of the Holy

¹²²⁷ For an analysis of publications dealing with the 'Anschluss Question' since 1945 see: P. Schneeberger, *Der schwierige Umgang mit dem "Anschluss": Die Rezeption in Geschichtsdarstellungen 1946–1995*, (Innsbruck, 2000).

¹²²⁸ As discussed in Chapter 2, 54.

¹²²⁹ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 3.

¹²³⁰ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, (Munich, 1939); I. Karl Vocelka, *Geschichte Österreichs*, 297.

Roman Empire be removed from the Treasury in Vienna and ‘returned’ to Nuremberg, the city of the party rallies. The now nazified *Reichspost* described how:

Nach einer jahrhundertelangen Zerklüftung, die auf die Religionskriege des 17. und die dynastischen Machtkämpfe des 18. Jahrhunderts zurückgeht, und die durch die tückischen Friedensverträge von 1919 für alle Zeiten besiegelt werden sollte, ist dank dem Genie und der Willenskraft Adolf Hitlers die Stunde der volksdeutschen Einheit angebrochen.¹²³¹

According to the Nazi narrative, the German nation’s path to unity had been tragically derailed, first in 1848, then in 1866, and again in 1918.¹²³² When on 15 March 1938 Seyß-Inquart proclaimed that ‘Das Reich ist wieder entstanden’, he was deliberately linking the annexation with the Holy Roman tradition. Like ‘links in a chain stretching back in the misty past’, ‘Germany’s’ path was represented as a series of failed attempts to form a unified German nation state.¹²³³ The first of these alleged failures occurred with the collapse of the Frankfurt National Assembly in 1848–49. Austria’s refusal to countenance an agreement that would only incorporate her German-speaking territories had left negotiations dead in the water, and the *kleindeutsche Lösung*, under Prussian leadership and excluding imperial Austria, the only viable alternative. On 11 January 1849, an Austrian representative, Camillo Wagner, addressed the chamber:

...Lassen Sie eine Lücke für uns, daß wir immer hineinkönnen – wir werden kommen, leider vielleicht nicht mehr alle; wir Deutsche Österreichs kommen; wie und wann, wer kann es sagen? Wer kann im Buche der Zukunft lesen? Wir kommen aber!¹²³⁴

Almost a century later, in an entirely different context, Wagner’s words would prove powerful bait. In 1941, the speech was recalled in *Die Ostmark: Eingliederung und Neugestaltung*, conclusive ‘proof’ of Austria’s enduring wish – if not its historical ‘destiny’ – to unite with their German brethren in the North. In Nuremberg in 1946

¹²³¹ ‘Der Erfüllung entgegen’, *Reichspost*, 13 Mar. 1938, 1.

¹²³² See: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 3.

¹²³³ Victor Klemperer, *LTI*, 245.

¹²³⁴ From a speech by Camillo Wagner (Steyr) Austrian representative at the Frankfurt parliament, given on 11 January 1849. Cited in: Helfried Pfeifer, ed., *Die Ostmark. Eingliederung und Neugestaltung. Historisch-systematische Gesetzessammlung nach dem Stande vom 16. April 1941*, (Vienna, 1941), 1.

the passage was invoked again, this time by Dr. Gustav Steinbauer, defence lawyer to Seyß-Inquart, in a last ditch attempt to save his client's neck.¹²³⁵

The term 'Anschluss', now synonymous with the annexation of Austria, had become another part of the Nazi propaganda package. Used in the sense of 'political union' since the nineteenth century, the Anschluss tradition and its language were appropriated by the Nazis as historical justification for the annexation.¹²³⁶ Just like other expressions used by the Nazis to describe the annexation – *Wiedervereinigung* a brazen lie, *Heimkehr* and *heimfinden*, perfidious plays on people's emotions – the word Anschluss was used because of its strong associative power.¹²³⁷ In his guise as 'Austria's greatest son', Hitler was central to the '*Heimkehr*' charade:

Ist es nicht eine wunderbare Symbolik, daß die triumphale Heimkehr Adolf Hitlers hier in seiner Geburtsstadt ihren Anfang nimmt? Die Brücke über den Inn- bisher war sie gewaltsame, sinnlose Trennung zwischen zwei deutschen Ländern, jetzt wird sie für alle Zeiten unvergeßliches Zeichen deutscher Einheit.¹²³⁸

Wondrous symbolism indeed. Hitler's birthplace, Braunau am Inn, nestling on the Austro-German border, provided the perfect backdrop to herald the homecoming of Austria's prodigal son. This was not invasion but reconciliation. Another brazen lie, as presumably some in Braunau had not been pleased by the propaganda that had rained down on the border town since Hitler took power in Germany in 1933, otherwise they would not have helped the Austrian authorities to shore up the border during the hot phase of the conflict in 1933–34. Hitler, the Austrian, after years held in exile, had finally returned home. There was of course no mention of this propaganda war, just as there was no mention of what had prompted Hitler into exile. To reinforce the image, Hitler first proceeded to visit the scenes of his youth; his school, his family home and – the propaganda shot par excellence – the cemetery in Leonding where his parents were buried; Heinrich Hoffmann, Hitler's official

¹²³⁵ See: One Hundred and Eighty-Second Day, Friday, 19 July, 1946, Afternoon Session; *Trial of the German Major War Criminals Before the International Military Tribunal, 14 November 1945 – 1 October 1946* ["The Blue Series"], (Nuremberg, 1948), 56.

¹²³⁶ See: Thorsten Eitz and Georg Stötzel, *Wörterbuch der 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung': Die NS-Vergangenheit im öffentlichen Sprachgebrauch* p. 10.

¹²³⁷ Bürckel's title was, for example, '*Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem Deutschen Reich*'. See: Victor Klemperer, *LTI*.

¹²³⁸ Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hitler in seiner Heimat*, (Berlin, 1938), I.

photographer was on hand to record the scene.¹²³⁹ Then it was on to Linz, where Hitler continued the charade. On arrival in Linz the Nazis destroyed the surviving records relating to his childhood. Not only did they falsify Hitler's personal record, they also set about changing the historical record of Hitler's 'adopted city': the monument to Empress Elizabeth near the *Landhaus* was blown up and the bust of Franz Joseph removed. This was a city that felt strongly German in the Habsburg Empire, but, as Hamann emphasizes, it was also clearly *pro-Habsburg*.¹²⁴⁰ Thus, just as Hitler's personal history was rewritten, so in a sense was the history of the region to fit the Anschluss narrative.¹²⁴¹ Fate had taken him from this city and given him his task – to return his beloved homeland to the German Reich.¹²⁴²

¹²³⁹ See: Thomas Weyr, *The Setting of the Pearl. Vienna under Hitler*, (New York, 2005), 34.

¹²⁴⁰ Brigitte Hamann, *Hitler's Vienna*, 3–59.

¹²⁴¹ See: Harry Slapnicka, *Hitler und Oberösterreich: Mythos, Propaganda und Wirklichkeit um den "Heimatgau des Führers"*, (Grünbach, 1998).

¹²⁴² "Wenn die Vorsehung mich einst aus dieser Stadt heraus zur Führung des Reiches berief, dann muß sie mir damit einen Auftrag erteilt haben, und es kann nur ein Auftrag gewesen sein, meine teure Heimat dem deutschen Reich wiederzugeben". Speech by Hitler on 13 March 1938 in Linz. 'Der Führer auf österreichischem Boden', *Reichspost*, 13 Mar. 1938, 1–2.



Figure 12. 'Der erste Weg des Führers in seiner Heimat führte ihn zum Grabe seiner Eltern in Leonding'
(Wiener Bilder, 20 March 1938)

Repeatedly over the coming weeks and months, Hitler's Austrian heritage would be writ large, an irony, which seems to have gone wholly unnoticed.¹²⁴³ Sidestepping the thorny issue of Hitler having avoided Austrian military service before 1914 and then voluntarily surrendered his Austrian citizenship in 1925 – not to mention his unconcealed hatred of *Altösterreich* – Hoffmann's photographs became a vehicle for the Nazi regime's key message – Hitler had a 'historical' and 'biological' mandate to rule in Austria.¹²⁴⁴ In *Hitler in seiner Heimat* and *Wie die Ostmark ihre Befreiung erlebte*, published in 1938 and 1940 respectively, Hoffmann's images were carefully combined with captions to further this narrative. Just a few years earlier Berchtesgaden, Obersalzberg and the Bavarian Alps had been offered as Hitler's *Wahlheimat* – his Austrian heritage not being particularly advantageous in furthering Hitler's popularity

¹²⁴³ Hitler's treatment of Vienna, where the administrative and military apparatus and the city's leading cultural institutions were put wholesale into the hands of non-Austrians, suggests that it was hardly a homecoming.

¹²⁴⁴ See: Per Hinrichs, 'Hitlers Einbürgerung. Des Führers Pass', *Der Spiegel* [online edition], 10 Mar. 2007, (2007) accessed: 10 Dec. 2007. On Hitler's service in the Bavarian army see: Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889–1936: Hubris*, (London, 1998), 89–90.

inside Germany.¹²⁴⁵ Now that it was useful to say so, Hitler was an 'Austrian' once more. The lower Austrian *Waldviertel* was swiftly re-instated as the *Ahnengau des Führers* – Hitler's father had been born in Strones, in the municipality of Döllersheim – until this particular line too had served its purpose. Then Döllersheim and the surrounding villages were quite literally razed to the ground.¹²⁴⁶

¹²⁴⁵ See: Wolfgang Zdral, *Die Hitlers: Die unbekannte Familie des Führers*, (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), 67. See also: Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hitler in seinen Bergen*, (Berlin, 1935).

¹²⁴⁶ The area was forcibly evacuated to make way for a military training area for the *Wehrmacht*.

“Dieser Zug fährt in die Hölle”¹²⁴⁷

The annexation of Austria was carefully choreographed by the National Socialist regime. Their signature was everywhere, from the farcical fake ‘telegram’ – ‘so we have legitimation’ – through to the sham plebiscite, via Hitler’s vainglorious return to the country he so despised.¹²⁴⁸ There was no chance that Hitler would leave his first major foreign policy test case to merely run its course.¹²⁴⁹ Hitler had tried to create this crisis for years and there was, quite simply, too much at stake to allow anything that could be controlled to be left to chance.

The familiar photographs and film footage of the Anschluss – and the referendum – have proven to be a valuable source of information for historians of the period. However, the clampdown on the press – both local and international – from 12 March 1938 onwards means that most of what was widely available, until recently at least, stemmed from *Nazi* sources.¹²⁵⁰ These images are not objective artefacts taken by objective observers. The Nazis were, indisputably, shrewd manipulators who were well aware of the power of visual propaganda and the associative role that images could play. In her 2004 study *Photographing the Holocaust*, Janina Struk cites an 1926 article in the pro-Nazi *Illustrierter Beobachter*, which argued that the ‘vivid suggestiveness of photographs’ could be ‘more convincing than any text. ...The majority of readers would regard them as an authentic depiction of reality’.¹²⁵¹ The article went further, commenting that ‘the truth of a photograph could be improved on by ‘shrewdly manipulating’ the relationship between the image and the text’.¹²⁵² Since photography ‘played an integral role’ in the Nazis’

¹²⁴⁷ Franz Jägerstätter, et al., *Franz Jägerstätter: Der gesamte Briefwechsel mit Franziska. Aufzeichnungen 1941–1943*, (Vienna, 2007), 232.

¹²⁴⁸ Joseph Goebbels, “Kanonen sprechen eine gute Sprache”. Tagebuchschreiber Goebbels (III): Der “Anschluß” Österreichs 1938’, *Der Spiegel*, 102–10.

¹²⁴⁹ See: G. E. R. Gedy, *Fallen Bastions*, 259.

¹²⁵⁰ See, for example: Hans Petschar, *Anschluss : “Ich hole Euch heim”. Der “Anschluss” Österreichs an das Deutsche Reich. Fotografie und Wochenschau im Dienst der NS-Propaganda: Eine Bildchronologie*, (Vienna, 2008).

¹²⁵¹ Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the evidence*, (London, 2004), 16–19.

¹²⁵² *Ibid*, 19.

propaganda machine, and considering the fact that the party had exercised control over all media in Germany, including photographic production, since 1933, the historian can safely assume that, wherever possible, the visual image of the 'Anschluss' was subject to a strict selection process.¹²⁵³ In essence, this body of material was the visual record propagated by the Nazis to *corroborate their version of events*.

Thus, these images provide an insight into the narrative discourse that the Nazis sought to disseminate. They were, after all, tools in a propaganda war intended to legitimize the annexation of foreign territory. As these pictures were intended to validate the Anschluss, nowhere was the takeover depicted in a negative light. The now infamous photographs of Jewish 'Reibparteien' were conspicuously absent – these were not published until after the war. Also missing is any indication of the mass arrests, the first transports to Dachau, the beatings, the murders, the desperate scenes on the Czech border as people tried to escape before it was too late or the suicide epidemic that followed in the wake of the Nazi invasion.¹²⁵⁴ Petschar verifies the fact that very few photographs exist of the 'victims' of 1938, or their family members.¹²⁵⁵ Those images that we do have are conspicuous in their abject lack of militarism or resistance. Instead, the camera is firmly focused on the 'delirious enthusiasm' with which the Führer was greeted.¹²⁵⁶ The narrative is one of unequivocal triumph, and deliberately so. That is not to say that the opposite is true, that the enthusiasm of many Austrians was a product of Nazi propaganda. Nonetheless, as documentary evidence, such images are inherently problematic and should be used with extreme caution. We can assume that the enthusiasm was on the whole, 'genuine'; we can also assume that this is the impression that Nazi propagandists were striving for. What we cannot know from these images, however, is what this enthusiasm actually *meant*.

¹²⁵³ 'Seit 1933 war die Fotografie in Deutschland ein wichtiger Teil der Propagandamaschinerie'. Hans Petschar, *"Ich hole Euch heim"*, 17.

¹²⁵⁴ See: Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hitler in seiner Heimat*. Cf: Hans Petschar, *"Ich hole Euch heim"*, 16.

¹²⁵⁵ See: Hans Petschar, *"Ich hole Euch heim"*, 16.

¹²⁵⁶ Cf: Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hitler in seiner Heimat*; Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hitler befreit Sudetenland*, (Berlin, 1938) and Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hitler in Böhmen, Mähren, Memel*, (Berlin, 1939)

Nazi choreography poses a problem for historians. In emphasizing the fact that Nazi propaganda manipulated the portrayal of the Anschluss, they run the risk of echoing those who dismiss Hitler's jubilant reception as stage-managed Nazi propaganda thereby resurrecting the *Opferthese*. As Brigitte Hamann points out, 'this kind of argument is used by the Austrians who claim that they are innocent and the Nazis were the invaders'.¹²⁵⁷ At the same time, downplaying Nazi manipulation runs the risk of neglecting another historical reality: the fact that for some Austrians – the Schuschnigg government included – the Nazis really were invaders. Ultimately, to say that the Nazis choreographed the image of the Anschluss does not automatically imply that the enthusiasm of the population was faked, nor should it in any way detract from the responsibility of those Austrians, who, whether individually or in groups, participated in the crimes of the Third Reich. Rather, it suggests that there were competing realities as well as propaganda distortions: what was for some Austrians an invasion, was for others a moment of liberation, and yet for others perhaps simply party time: a surreal carnival mood when there was free food in the streets, military music on every corner and the most impressive *Faschingsumzug* Austria had ever witnessed; that of the mechanized Prussian 'liberators' sweeping into the country.

The Nazis' 'educational' campaign commenced immediately, building on what were by now well-established axioms. At home, in what was now called the *Altreich*, where the regime was already preaching to the – at least partially – converted, there was unlikely to be much in the way of opposition. On the contrary, the Anschluss increased 'Herr Hitler's personal prestige and popularity, which' according to the British Foreign Office, 'were already approaching perilously near to a worship, religious in its fervour'.¹²⁵⁸ Even so, the regime preferred to err on the side of caution; on no account was the word 'war' to be mentioned.¹²⁵⁹ Instead, 'from the very day that action against Austria was

¹²⁵⁷ Tony Paterson, 'Anschluss and Austria's Guilty Conscience', *The Independent* [online edition], 13 Mar. 2008, accessed: 21 Nov. 2012

¹²⁵⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/ 21750, paper C2817/2310/18, Donald St. Clair Gainer, Report from the British Consul General in Munich. Transmitted by Sir N. Henderson, 5 Apr. 1938.

¹²⁵⁹ See: Ian Kershaw, *The "Hitler myth": Image and Reality in the Third Reich*, (Oxford, 1987).

inaugurated a campaign was started in the press and wireless in order to educate the people to approve also of its methods'.¹²⁶⁰

Austria, however, was the key battlefield. Here, in a well-ordered attack, the new rulers 'employed the three-fold' and time-honoured 'method of exciting the faithful, throwing the dust in the eyes of the doubtful and intimidating or locking up the potentially inimical'.¹²⁶¹ Exciting the faithful was the easy part, and some of the 'inimical' saw the writing on the wall and disappeared – or attempted to disappear – of their own accord. In some less governable regions of Austria – in parts of Styria, for example – the Nazis had in effect been in control for weeks before the Anschluss. After Schuschnigg's resignation, all hell had broken loose as the pent-up Nazi mob took to the streets – with the blessing of Berlin, naturally. The Austrian Nazis had free reign – if only for a few heady hours – and spent it initiating an orgy of retribution and revenge, the principal targets being Jews and representatives of the old regime.¹²⁶² Especially during the early hours of 12 March, with authority completely broken down, *Ständestaat* functionaries and Jews morphed into a common enemy in the eyes of the Nazi mob. G.E.R. Gedeye, a journalist later celebrated as 'the greatest British foreign correspondent of the interwar years' was in Vienna during the Anschluss.¹²⁶³ He described the situation on the Graben, one of the most famous streets in Vienna's First District, as a 'pandemonium of sound which intermingled screams of "Down with the Jews!" Heil Hitler! ...Perish the Jews, Hang Schuschnigg.'¹²⁶⁴ It was no coincidence that the infamous Jewish '*Reibparteien*' were initially forced to scrub the political slogans of the *Vaterländische Front* and the remnants of Schuschnigg's referendum propaganda from the street. Indeed, Petschar reveals that in the first few days it was not

¹²⁶⁰ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/ 21750, paper C2817/2310/18, Donald St. Clair Gainer, Report from the British Consul General in Munich. Transmitted by Sir N. Henderson, 5 Apr. 1938.

¹²⁶¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21750, paper C3139/2310/18, Mack, Point of view of Austria on the plebiscite, 11 Apr. 1938.

¹²⁶² See: Hans Petschar, "*Ich hole Euch heim*", 16. On 11 March 11 1938 Göring instructed Seyß-Inquart to '...put the party on the street, "in all its formations, SA, SS, everybody"'. See also: Thomas Weyr, *Setting of the Pearl*, 23.

¹²⁶³ The quote is attributed to Hugh Green.

¹²⁶⁴ G. E. R. Gedye, *Fallen Bastions*, 284.

just Jews who were forced to do this but also a number of representatives of the “old” regime.¹²⁶⁵



Figure 13: Vienna, March 1938
(ÖNB Bildarchiv)

This was the Nazis' iniquitous revenge for the 'Putzscharen' of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era where 'anyone caught flyposting or chalking up slogans [would] be forced to clean up the signs of their handiwork under police supervision and to pay for the damage done'.¹²⁶⁶ Vienna's Jewish community was brutally 'punished', not least for its support for the Schuschnigg government and its abortive referendum.¹²⁶⁷

¹²⁶⁵ Hans Petschar, "Ich hole Euch heim", 16.

¹²⁶⁶ Kurt Schuschnigg, *Farewell Austria*, 176–77.

¹²⁶⁷ The SS-newspaper *Das Schwarze Korps* is littered with references to 'Jewish influence' on the Schuschnigg 'System' in articles published in the immediate aftermath of the *Anschluss*. See, for instance:

Such photos, as Petschar observes, would not have been published in 1938, largely to avoid any negative repercussions abroad.¹²⁶⁸ Yet these photos, like the one produced here, were problematic for the Nazis, not just because they were still worried about images of raw anti-Semitism, but also because there was too much else going on in the photo. Not only does it depict someone erasing the word 'frei' at a time when Austrian freedoms were beginning to be seriously curbed, it also provides evidence of recent pro-Austrian sentiment for which there must have been at least a degree of popular support, otherwise Schuschnigg would never have been rash enough to call a referendum. The slogans of the *Ständestaat* – as well as images of these slogans – risked blowing the Nazis' cover and reminding viewers of the fact that a section of Austrian society had, in fact, prevented Anschluss for five long years to the intense frustration of German and Austrian Nazis alike.

Which is why the gloves came off from the moment the first Reich German Nazis landed. At 4.30 a.m. on the 12 March, before the *Wehrmacht* had even begun to march, Heydrich, Himmler, Daluge, along with other NS-functionaries landed in Vienna.¹²⁶⁹ As Neugebauer notes, although the Nazis were taken by surprise by Schuschnigg's plans for a referendum, the procedure for extending the Nazi terror apparatus to Austria were long in place.¹²⁷⁰ Hitler had entrusted Heydrich with forming the *Einsatzkommando Österreich*, a 'kidnapping and assassination team' and precursor to the notorious *Einsatzgruppen*, the mobile killing units which followed the German army into the Soviet Union whose task it was to eliminate political and racial enemies.¹²⁷¹ In Austria, its role was to secure government buildings and documents and remove political and ideological opponents.

'Schuschniggs Verrat – bar bezahlt!', *Das Schwarze Korps*, 30 Mar. 1938, 10 and 'Unser "innigstgeliebter"...', *Das Schwarze Korps*, 30 Mar. 1938, 8.

¹²⁶⁸ See: Hans Petschar, "Ich hole Euch heim", 16.

¹²⁶⁹ See: Malcolm Spencer, "Christus mit Radio': Eye-Witness Accounts of the Anschluß in Austria', *The Contours of Legitimacy in Central Europe: New Approaches in Graduate Studies*. (European Studies Centre, St. Anthony's College, Oxford, 2002), 5.

¹²⁷⁰ See: Wolfgang Neugebauer and Peter Schwarz, *Stacheldraht, mit Tod geladen... Der erste Österreichertransport in das KZ Dachau 1938*, (Vienna, 2008), 6.

¹²⁷¹ This was led by Franz Alfred Six: Carl Tighe, 'Six, Franz Alfred: A Career in the Shadows', *Journal of European Studies*, 37/1 (2007), 10.

One estimate suggests that approximately 20,000 were 'seized or arrested'.¹²⁷² Neugebauer and Schwarz believe the number to be somewhere between 50–76,000 people within the first six weeks after the German invasion, which represented fully one per cent of the country's population.¹²⁷³ Compare this with the figure of 30,000 victims arrested across the length and breadth of the Reich during the *Kristallnacht* pogrom. The *Einsatzkommando* was followed by 40,000 security police, whose task it was to carry out the arrests.¹²⁷⁴ For some, such as the *Heimwehr* leader Emil Fey, suicide appeared to offer the only escape, although the circumstances of his death remain unclear. Similarly General Wilhelm Zehner, *Staatssekretär* for National Defence under Dollfuß and Schuschnigg and someone who was prepared to defend Austria in the event of a German invasion, died on 11 April. Unwavering in his opposition to Nazi Germany, he was likely murdered by the Gestapo, although the circumstances surrounding his death also remain unexplained.¹²⁷⁵ There are no photographs of the substantial number of corpses of people who had taken their own life.

There are no photos either of the trains destined for Dachau, from where many failed to return.¹²⁷⁶ Staunch opponents of Nazism made obvious targets. In their analysis of the so-called *Prominententransport* of 1 April 1938, Neugebauer and Schwarz note how during March and April 1938 the central thrust of Nazi terror was directed against Jews and representatives of the *Ständestaat* against whom, Austrian Nazis in particular, were intent on settling scores.¹²⁷⁷ Thus, not all sides of the political spectrum were hit equally. According to their estimations, 63 of the 150 prisoners were of Jewish heritage, a third were supporters of the *Ständestaat* and approximately 10 per cent were Socialists and

¹²⁷² See: Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitlers Österreich*, (Hamburg, 2001), 63.

¹²⁷³ See: Wolfgang Neugebauer and Peter Schwarz, *Stacheldraht, mit Tod geladen...*, 8.

¹²⁷⁴ Malcolm Spencer, 'Christus mit Radio': Eye-Witness Accounts of the Anschluß in Austria', *The Contours of Legitimacy in Central Europe: New Approaches in Graduate Studies*. (European Studies Centre, St. Anthony's College, Oxford, 2002), 5.

¹²⁷⁵ See, for example: Daniela Claudia Angetter, *Gott schütze Österreich. Wilhelm Zehner (1883–1938): Porträt eines österreichischen Soldaten*, (Vienna, 2006).

¹²⁷⁶ For a contemporary view of the purge see: 'Austria: 'Spring Cleaning'', *Time Magazine [online edition]*, 28 Mar. 1938, accessed: 20 Sep. 2010.

¹²⁷⁷ See: Wolfgang Neugebauer and Peter Schwarz, *Stacheldraht, mit Tod geladen...*, 43.

Communists.¹²⁷⁸ Representatives of the *Vaterländische Front*, General Secretary Walter Adam and Fritz Bock, responsible for anti-Nazi propaganda, were joined on the list by Theodor Hornbostel, Political Director in the *Bundeskanzleramt* and Dollfuß's confidant, and Robert Hecht, Dollfuß's legal adviser. There were also a number of prominent Social Democrats on the list, Alexander Eifler, chief of staff of *Schutzbund*, for example, as well as Robert Danneberg and Franz Olah, although it appears that the Social Democrats were not the Nazis' primary targets. As a Jew, Danneberg, for example, was imperilled on 'racial' grounds. He had reached the Czech border on the evening of 11 March, only to be refused entry by the Czech authorities, who sent all those with an Austrian passport back.¹²⁷⁹ Both Eifler and Olah also had specific grounds for being singled out for persecution as they had belonged to those Social Democrats who had displayed a public willingness in the eleventh hour to reach out even to Schuschnigg to stop Hitler.

Unsurprisingly, members of the House of Habsburg were the first Austrian prisoners in Dachau. Maximilian and Ernst von Hohenberg, the sons of Franz Ferdinand, the murdered heir to the Habsburg throne, as well as Archduke Josef Ferdinand had already been arrested and deported to Dachau by the end of March.¹²⁸⁰ As staunch anti-Nazis – in stark comparison to the likes of Prince August Wilhelm of Prussia – and outspoken supporters of Austrian independence, they had certainly made enemies of the Nazi regime. This reputation was not in the least improved by an incident a few weeks before the Anschluss when Ernst von Hohenberg had smashed a swastika sign at the German 'Tourist Office' in Vienna, the so-called '*Deutsche Eck*'.¹²⁸¹ They were joined in Dachau by other 'System' enemies, including Baron von Stillfried, commandant of

¹²⁷⁸ See: Ibid, 24.

¹²⁷⁹ Danneberg was sent from Dachau to Auschwitz where he was murdered in 1942.

¹²⁸⁰ See: Wolfgang Neugebauer and Peter Schwarz, *Stacheldraht, mit Tod geladen...*, 30.

¹²⁸¹ According to Bruno Heilig, an Austrian journalist who was also on the '*Prominententransport*' to Dachau, Ernst von Hohenberg had smashed a window in response to an incident involving a Jewish man named Lebenschuss who had smashed a portrait of Hitler in the window of the German tourist office. Heilig maintained that Ernst was made to apologise to the German Ambassador under pressure from Schuschnigg who was himself under immense pressure due to the 'meeting' – if one can call it that – with Hitler at Berchtesgaden. See: Bruno Heilig, *Men Crucified*, (London, 1942), 71–72. Cf. Conversation between Edmund Glaise von Horstenau and Wilhelm Frick in: Edmund Glaise von Horstenau and Peter Broucek, *Ein General im Zwielicht: die Erinnerungen Edmund Glaises von Horstenau*, 304–05.

Wöllersdorf and Johann Lang, the executioner who put to death the Nazis found guilty of murdering Dollfuß in 1934.¹²⁸² Lang was assaulted and died a few days after being sent to the camp.¹²⁸³

Having excited the faithful and locked up the potentially inimical, the doubtful elements of the Austrian populace would need a little gentle persuasion, although, to be sure, an 'all-pervasive' fear certainly helped in this regard.¹²⁸⁴ To this end, all of the linguistic, semantic and propagandistic tricks in the National Socialist arsenal were called upon. It should come as no surprise that Goebbels' propaganda machine was rolling before German troops had received their marching orders. Late on 10 March, with an invasion inevitable, Hitler and Goebbels discussed the propaganda arrangements – 'leaflets, placards, radio'.¹²⁸⁵ There was to be a 'huge air campaign' and Hitler himself would go to Austria.¹²⁸⁶ The parole was simple; not as 'tyrants' had they come, 'but as liberators'.¹²⁸⁷ For this reason, the martial nature of the invasion was deliberately downplayed. Military vehicles were festooned with swastikas and foliage, and 'the infantry proceeded not in battle formation, but with flags and martial music', 'a strategy which proved highly successful'. As one officer noted, 'the populace saw that we came as friends'.¹²⁸⁸

The propaganda campaign ran, by Goebbels' own estimations, 'like clockwork'.¹²⁸⁹ Over the coming days, 300 million leaflets were scattered over Austria by Luftwaffe planes.¹²⁹⁰ On the ground, government offices and key media channels – the press and

¹²⁸² See: Wolfgang Neugebauer and Peter Schwarz, *Stacheldraht, mit Tod geladen...*, 30.

¹²⁸³ See: *Ibid.*, 52. See also: Bruno Heilig, *Men Crucified*, 111.

¹²⁸⁴ George Clare, *Last Waltz in Vienna. The Destruction of a Family 1842–1942*, (London, 1982), 187.

¹²⁸⁵ Joseph Goebbels, "'Kanonen sprechen eine gute Sprache'. Tagebuchschreiber Goebbels (III): Der 'Anschluß' Österreichs 1938', *Der Spiegel*, 102–10.

¹²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸⁷ 'Across Nazi Austria', *The Times*, 16 Mar. 1938, 15.

¹²⁸⁸ Bukey fails to spot that *Militärmusik* sounds far from martial to German and Austrian ears. Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler's Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938–1945*, (Chapel Hill 2000), 28.

¹²⁸⁹ Joseph Goebbels, "'Kanonen sprechen eine gute Sprache'. Tagebuchschreiber Goebbels (III): Der 'Anschluß' Österreichs 1938', *Der Spiegel*, 102–10.

¹²⁹⁰ See: Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 29.

radio broadcasting stations – were singled out by the Austrian Nazis and quickly overrun. On the evening of 11 March, with the internal takeover well underway, Odilo Globocnik, a prominent Austrian Nazi, and subsequently a central figure in the holocaust, was instructed by Berlin to remove ‘all the press people, they all have to go and our people get in there’.¹²⁹¹ To ensure that the Nazi message was the only one that got across, over the coming days and weeks ‘the lid of Nazi censorship was harshly clamped on Vienna’s journalists’.¹²⁹² Perceptions were important and in a blatant attempt to clamp down on the flow of undesirable information abroad, ‘telephone calls for foreign correspondents were tapped, mail was watched, teletype communications halted. Nearly half of Vienna’s 25-member Anglo-American Press Association found it wise to get out of Vienna—or were bluntly ordered to leave’.¹²⁹³ For the historian, however, this can be useful: it means that every word that was written at the time, every speech that was delivered, and every photograph or film reel selected for publication was deemed suitable by the new Nazi authorities.

¹²⁹¹ Thomas Weyr, *Setting of the Pearl*, 22.

¹²⁹² ‘The Press: Bottleneck Broken’, *Time Magazine [online edition]*, 28 Mar. 1938, accessed: 20 Aug. 2010.

¹²⁹³ *Ibid.*



Figure 14: Heldenplatz, from Hitler's perspective
(ÖNB Bildarchiv)

In propaganda terms – if not logistically – the German invasion of Austria went without a hitch. Hitler had banked on the *Wehrmacht* not encountering any military resistance from the Austrian army. What he had not anticipated was the outpouring of Austrian enthusiasm. German units were greeted by jubilant crowds; this was “*frisch-fröhlicher Krieg*” with a vengeance – ‘a war with no enemy but with excellent roads, petrol and other supplies provided by the country invaded’, as one British Foreign Office observer dryly noted.¹²⁹⁴ Numerous eyewitness accounts corroborate the “delirious enthusiasm” and “boundless popular jubilation” encountered by the Eighth Army as it meandered towards Vienna.¹²⁹⁵ A few hours later Hitler’s cavalcade entered Austria to a

¹²⁹⁴ Erwin Helmuth Kampelmacher, *In die Emigration*, (Vienna, 1988), 17; (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21749, paper C 2405/2310/18, Sir N. Henderson (Berlin), Recent move of German troops into Austria, 28 March 1938.

¹²⁹⁵ Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 29.

hero's welcome. By the time it reached Vienna the whole country had, it seemed, succumbed to the contagion of Nazi hysteria; tens of thousands had amassed on Heldenplatz to celebrate the arrival of their new *Führer*, and to witness him declare, 'before the face of history' the 'return' of '*die alte Ostmark*' to the Greater German Reich.

The enthusiasm demonstrated by large swathes of the Austrian population for the Anschluss proved to be a godsend. In a sense, they played right into the Nazis' hands. A huge victory for the Nazi propaganda machine, it was heartily exploited by the party. The 'extraordinary complete emotional surrender of the Austrians' served to corroborate Hitler's claim that in invading Austria he was merely fulfilling the will of the Austrian people, a claim, which was as easy to substantiate, as it was difficult to refute.¹²⁹⁶ The grainy black and white photographs taken that fateful day have haunted the nation ever since, demonstrating that many Austrians – although crucially, not the Dollfuß and Schuschnigg governments – were complicit in, or at least apathetic about Austria's demise. It is an incontrovertible fact that many Austrians welcomed regime change and approved of the 'Anschluss' with Nazi Germany. It is also correct to say that the Nazi takeover was partly initiated from the inside; yet, it was years of German pressure and not internal revolt – however grave the situation had become during the final weeks of independence – that ultimately brought the *Ständestaat* to its knees. Certainly, in the days and weeks that followed, most turned a blind eye to the violence meted out against their Jewish neighbours by the Austrian Nazis; while some willingly participated in the violence, plundering Jewish businesses and expropriating Jewish property, only a courageous few engaged in active resistance against the regime.

The new regime had little option but to hold a plebiscite, having prevented Schuschnigg from holding his. Yet, they were apprehensive about it, and with good reason. Most reliable estimates concur that, held under free and democratic circumstances, it would have yielded at most thirty-five to forty per cent in favour of union with Nazi Germany; as it was the result was over 99 per cent.¹²⁹⁷ A member of the British

¹²⁹⁶ 'Across Nazi Austria', *The Times*, 16 Mar. 1938, 15.

¹²⁹⁷ See: Erich Bielka, 'Wie viele Österreicher', 50. At any rate, only about a third of the population could be considered dyed-in-the-wool Nazis. See: Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitlers Österreich*, 58.

diplomatic corps noted how; 'behind this exterior of genial confidence which the [Nazi] authorities showed to the world could be felt a carefully suppressed but nevertheless insistent undercurrent of anxiety and nervousness'.¹²⁹⁸ This appears to be confirmed in Josef Bürckel's warning to Seyß-Inquart and the Austrian government just four days after the Anschluss that 'die augenblickliche Massenbegeisterung darf nicht überschätzt werden: infolgedessen hat sich die Wahlarbeit auf die Erfassung jedes einzelnen Deutscher-Österreichers zu erstrecken'.¹²⁹⁹ The result of the plebiscite had to be decisive. Spontaneous enthusiasm, although welcomed by the new regime, meant little and the Nazi authorities knew it. Once the euphoria had worn off it would be difficult to maintain such momentum. Indeed, the 'revolutionary élan' of the Austrians was eyed with suspicion by the Nazi authorities, especially when expressed in the clamour for posts in the weeks and months following the Anschluss.¹³⁰⁰ Within the space of a few short weeks it was being reported that, weary of celebration, 'the applause, the songs of victory and shouts of triumph have now for some time had rather a hollow ring, when compared with the frenzied demonstrations of the first few days'.¹³⁰¹ The thousands who gathered on the Heldenplatz were certainly not all dyed-in-the-wool Nazis; rather, they were potential 'recruits'.

Thus the propaganda drive became 'feverish' following Hitler's announcement of a plebiscite to be held the following month.¹³⁰² 'Vienna became one giant election theatre',

¹²⁹⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21750, paper C3139/2310/18, Mack, Point of view of Austria on the plebiscite, 11 Apr. 1938.

¹²⁹⁹ Heinz Arnberger and Rudolf Ardelt, "Anschluß" 1938. *Eine Dokumentation*, (Vienna, 1988). In March 1938, Josef Bürckel was made acting head of the Nazi Party in Austria and charged with carrying out the Anschluss referendum. From April 1938 to 1940 he held the title *Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem Reich*, responsible for the political, cultural and economic integration of the 'Ostmark' with the German Reich.

¹³⁰⁰ 'Wir haben gelernt', *Das Schwarze Korps*, 30 Mar. 1938, 2.

¹³⁰¹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21750, paper C3139/2310/18, Mack, Point of view of Austria on the plebiscite, 11 Apr. 1938.

¹³⁰² Ibid. Mack continues: '...the word "feverish" is not an exaggerated epithet to apply to the general atmosphere of unnatural enthusiasm and tension which has prevailed here'.

as one historian has described it; with the opposition quickly silenced, 'all anyone heard or read was the drum beat of Nazi propaganda'.¹³⁰³ The British Foreign Office reported how:

All the way from the Frontier to Vienna the villages and towns were elaborately decorated. In addition to the usual flags nearly all villages had triumphal arches, gigantic swastikas on pedestals, and large portraits of the Fuhrer [sic] on view. Almost without exception every house was bedecked with flags and festoons of evergreen. In nearly every locality the local S.A. *Hitler Jugend* and *BdM* were marching about – generally with a band.¹³⁰⁴

According to one British Embassy official, the chief tenor of the propaganda campaign was, quite simply, 'to impress on Austrians the fact that Herr Hitler has delivered their country from oppression and starvation and has made it part of a Reich flowing with milk and honey'.¹³⁰⁵ This may provide a partial answer to the question of enthusiasm for the Anschluss. The Dollfuß and Schuschnigg governments had gone to great lengths to regenerate the Austrian economy – in the face of constant sabotage from Nazi Germany – and with some success. The British Embassy regarded the year 1936 'within limits, very satisfactory' in this regard, noting a 'gradual economic improvement'.¹³⁰⁶ Nonetheless, the Ambassador continued, 'the poverty of the country and the smallness of the internal market [made] any improvement slow' and 'unemployment in the towns remained serious'.¹³⁰⁷ Against this backdrop of severe economic hardship, particularly in the towns, the German authorities, it was duly noted, 'lost no time in evincing the greatest interest in the welfare of the workers', a fact 'carefully strengthened by well-advertised soup-kitchens, trips to Germany organized by the "Strength through Joy" Movement and generous gifts from the Hermann Goering Fund'.¹³⁰⁸ By the 18 March an impressive

¹³⁰³ Thomas Weyr, *Setting of the Pearl*, 71–75.

¹³⁰⁴ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21749, paper C3241/2310/18, German Military Attache, Transmitted by Sir N. Henderson in Berlin to Sir A. Cadogan, 13 Apr. 1938.

¹³⁰⁵ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21750, paper C3139/2310/18, Mack, Point of view of Austria on the plebiscite, 11 Apr. 1938.

¹³⁰⁶ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21118, paper R820/820/3, Sir W. Selby, Annual Report on Austria for 1936, 27 Jan. 1937.

¹³⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁰⁸ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21750, paper C3131/2310/18, Mack, Events leading up to the German Annexation of Austria, 8 Apr. 1938. 'One of the main objects of all this propaganda was to make certain of

contingent of the *Hilfszug Bayern* – a sizeable field kitchen, which at wide distances allegedly covered several miles of road space – had reached Vienna where it set about distributing free hot meals, targeting the working class districts.¹³⁰⁹ The *Hilfszug* also went to Marienthal in August 1938, focus of the ground-breaking study on the psychological effects of unemployment by Marie Jahoda, Paul Felix Lazarsfeld and Hans Zeisel undertaken during the depression.¹³¹⁰ Over the next few days the first ‘Strength Through Joy’ trains departed for Germany, replete with Viennese workers, providing yet another ready-made photo opportunity, and a wealth of propaganda material for years to come.¹³¹¹ The distribution of free food and the granting of holidays was more than a thinly-veiled attempt to guarantee the acquiescence of the working classes, according to Kirk an ‘important, latently oppositional group’.¹³¹² Rather, this was another facet of what Gedye has described as ‘a great campaign of flattery of the Reds’, the attempt to win over the Left, the main opposition group of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg governments by the new Nazi regime.¹³¹³

As well as delivering Austria’s workers to the land of milk and honey, the Nazis also attempted, as they had done throughout the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era, to capitalize on points of common interest with the left, namely anti-clericalism and the ‘shared

securing the Socialist vote’. (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/21750, paper C3139/2310/18, Mack, Point of view of Austria on the plebiscite, 11 Apr. 1938.

¹³⁰⁹ A little known detail, the same propaganda strategy was employed in Prague and Warsaw the following year. See: Dorothee Hochstetter, *Motorisierung und "Volksgemeinschaft". Das Nationalsozialistische Kraftfahrkorps (NSKK) 1931–1945*, (Munich, 2005), 143.

¹³¹⁰ Marie Jahoda, et al., *Die Arbeitslosen von Marienthal. Ein soziographischer Versuch über die Wirkungen langdauernder Arbeitslosigkeit, mit einem Anhang zur Geschichte der Soziographie*, (Leipzig, 1933). See: ‘Der “Hilfszug Bayern” in Marienthal, August 1938’ http://agso.uni-graz.at/marienthal/chronik/06_1938_hilfszug.htm, accessed: 15 Dec. 2012.

¹³¹¹ See: Hans Petschar, *“Ich hole Euch heim”*, 94.

¹³¹² Tim Kirk, *Nazism and the Working Class in Austria: Industrial Unrest and Political Dissent in the ‘National Community’*, (Cambridge, 1996), 49. This is precisely the problem where a historian’s own perspective will guide their perception. We see the working classes as an important opposition class in Germany and we assume this will also be case in Austria. However, it is not altogether clear if this was actually warranted, or whether the Nazi strategy was based on a shrewd calculation that the Austrian working classes might be a target for co-option.

¹³¹³ G. E. R. Gedye, *Fallen Bastions*, 324.

persecution' at the hands of their 'common enemy', the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg 'regime'.¹³¹⁴ The Dollfuß-Schuschnigg 'System' became the scapegoat for all of Austria's woes. The Germans-Austrians, it was maintained, had been let down by their government, a despotic regime which did not enjoy the support of the Austrian people and had failed to protect them in their hour of need. Instead, a 'minority of ten per cent had suppressed the 90 per cent majority'.¹³¹⁵ Austria's grave economic and political problems stemmed not from the injustices of St. Germain, nor from years of Nazi harassment and economic pressure, but from the actions of these 'criminals' and their brutish regime, *Das Schwarze Korps* argued, with breath-taking hypocrisy.¹³¹⁶ With their prisons, concentration camps and gaols, the SS-newspaper continued, Dollfuß and Schuschnigg had attempted to rule the legal majority through terror, violence and suppression with all of the instruments of power available to the state. The new Nazi regime went about the task of delegitimizing the erstwhile regime with gusto, detailing the '2000 hanged or shot', the tens of thousands driven from house and home, and the many others beaten and tortured in the concentration camp established by the oh-so 'Christian' Dollfuß.¹³¹⁷ Both Dollfuß and Schuschnigg were lampooned; Schuschnigg was so 'treasured' by his people, he lived not in the Belvedere as was widely assumed, but in the 'Stöckel', a 'prison' with bars on the windows and doors and a machine gun posted on the main gate. There, as well as in his heavily armoured car, he was safe from the 'love' of his people.¹³¹⁸ Hitler had of course had attempted to warn the Austrian regime of the folly of their actions. After all, 'nur ein Wahnwitziger konnte glauben, durch Unterdrückung und Terror dem Menschen die Liebe zu ihrem angestammten Volkstum auf die Dauer rauben zu können.'¹³¹⁹ Thus,

¹³¹⁴ Tim Kirk, *Working Class*, 49.

¹³¹⁵ Extract of a message from Hitler to Ward Price on 14 March 1938. Reinhold Lorenz, *Der Staat wider Willen. Österreich 1918-1938*, (Berlin, 1940), 282.

¹³¹⁶ See: 'Wir waren in Wöllersdorf', *Das Schwarze Korps*, 24 Mar. 1938, 1-2; Heinz Ehring, *Oesterreichs Heimkehr ins Reich*, (Berlin, 1938); Robert Oberhauser, 'Wöllersdorf in Flammen', *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten* 3 Apr. 1938, 1-2; 'Ein viehisches System', *Das Schwarze Korps*, 28 Apr. 1938, 8.

¹³¹⁷ *Völkischer Beobachter*, Vienna Edition, 25 Mar. 1938. Cited in: Heinz Arnberger and Rudolf Ardelt, "Anschluß" 1938. *Eine Dokumentation*, 445.

¹³¹⁸ 'Schuschniggs Verrat – bar bezahlt!', *Das Schwarze Korps*, 30 Mar. 1938, 10; 'Zuviel Liebe um Schuschnigg', *Das Schwarze Korps*, 5 May 1938, 12.

¹³¹⁹ 'Der Erfüllung entgegen', *Reichspost*, 13 Mar. 1938, 1.

responsibility for the demise of the Austrian state was placed firmly at the door of the ousted 'regime'.

It is in this light that we should consider Bukey's observation that although the Nazis 'arrested and imprisoned a number of Social Democratic activists immediately following the Anschluss, and dispatched several prominent leaders to Dachau...the sum total of those taken into custody appears to have been relatively small'.¹³²⁰ As he points out elsewhere, 'in contrast to the Altreich, the Nazis did not regard the labor movement in Austria as their principal adversary'.¹³²¹ Again this fact has gone down as little more than a footnote in history. There were two phases of the same civil war in 1934, the Nazis argued, and Dollfuß, the power-hungry crusader for political Catholicism and Habsburg restoration, was ultimately responsible for both.¹³²² Thus, the spectacle of Wöllersdorf – *die Lager der Schande* – in flames was not merely an act of posthumous 'retribution', but can also be understood as part of a Byzantine courtship ritual of the Austrian left. Similarly, the description of 'the badly-injured Münichreiter', the potent symbol of the *Republikanischer Schutzbund's* unsuccessful armed uprising in February 1934, 'unconscious, bleeding, carried from the stretcher to the hangman's noose' an act unprecedented in the civilized world.¹³²³ Against the backdrop of Nazi treatment of the SPD, the hypocrisy was staggering.

Yet, as this Social Democratic election poster from 1956 demonstrates, this courtship ritual and shared victimhood did not end with the collapse of the Third Reich. Three *Schutzbund* members executed for their part in the February uprising are listed alongside the Nazis executed for murdering Dollfuß in the attempted coup of July 1934.

¹³²⁰ Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler's Austria*, 251 fn. 4.

¹³²¹ Evan Burr Bukey, 'Popular Opinion in Vienna after the Anschluss', in ed., Fred Parkinson *Conquering the Past. Austrian Nazism: Yesterday & Today* (Detroit, 1989), 155.

¹³²² See: Heinrich Hoffmann, *Wie die Ostmark ihre Befreiung erlebte. Adolf Hitler und sein Weg zu Großdeutschland*, (Vienna, 1940), 43.

¹³²³ *Ibid*, 54.



Figure 15: SPÖ election poster, 1956
(ÖNB Bildarchiv und Grafiksammlung)

The point here is not to tar an entire political party with a Nazi brush, or to suggest that there was anything undemocratic about post-war Austrian Social Democracy, but this extraordinary election poster points to the fact that the year 1934, and by extension the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era, really did represent something of a blind spot for parts of Austrian Social Democracy. It is impossible to look at this poster and not be reminded, uncomfortably, of Bernaschek's point about the Nazis being closer to the Socialists than the Christian Socials. While it is difficult to quantify the extent of such thinking inside Austrian Social Democracy, it was clearly large enough for the party to run with this kind of election poster even decades after. And one is probably justified in seeing some connection here between this extraordinary poster, where Nazis are used by a democratic party as though they had been victims rather than 'Täter', with the vehement claims in the Second Republic that Austrian Social Democracy had been the first to resist fascism in Europe. In other words, some unacknowledged, but obviously recognized sense of failure has distorted Social Democratic perceptions of the year 1934. But it also proves, of course, that there was something for the Nazis to exploit in March 1938.

The outburst of enthusiasm for the new regime in March 1938 is interesting, in the light of the fact that, had Schuschnigg's plebiscite taken place as planned, he would almost certainly have received a share of the vote adequate enough to pull – however temporarily – the rug on German designs on Austria. In his recollections of the Anschluss, George Clare recounts how:

On 10 March Vienna woke up in a fever of patriotic fervour. The painting columns of the Fatherland Front had been at work all night stencilling Schuschnigg's portrait, huge 'Yesses' crutched crosses and slogans on walls and streets. ...Aeroplanes showered leaflets over the city. ...Demonstrators were marching through every district shouting their loyalty to Schuschnigg and to Austria. The whole city was a seething, teeming hotbed of patriotic emotion and activity.¹³²⁴

Nonetheless, Clare was at pains to point out that '...all these outward similarities between the clerico-fascist Austrian and the Nazi German production ended the moment Schuschnigg began to speak'. There was, he adds, 'no ranting, no shouting, there were no threats, no accusations, but in a clear, steady voice he delivered the greatest speech of his career, a passionate plea for Austria'.¹³²⁵ Yet, literally hours after Schuschnigg finally buckled under the intense Nazi pressure and resigned, Heldenplatz was full to bursting with elated Austrians hoping to get a glimpse of their Führer and within a few weeks Austria has voted overwhelmingly for incorporation into the German Reich. Either Hofmannsthal was right when he suggested that the Austrians took 'play-acting' seriously or there is more to the Anschluss than meets the eye.

Can these two facts ever be reconciled? One answer that could be posited is the presence of latent pro-Nazi sentiment within Austrian institutions as well as the wider populace. While there is some evidence to suggest that the Nazis had been fairly successful in infiltrating, for example, the apparatus of state, supporting this statistically is problematic. In the pre-Anschluss period, the Nazi party was banned and few National Socialists would take the risk of openly unmasking their allegiance. Conversely, in the post-Anschluss period many were clamouring to prove their Nazi credentials and thereby ingratiate themselves with the new regime; even the new Nazi authorities looked on these Austrian *Postenjäger* with considerable suspicion.¹³²⁶ Assessing the opinions of the wider populace is even more difficult. The result of the referendum, which was neither free nor fair, obviously cannot be used as evidence of the rapid ideological conversion of the Austrian populace. If the SS-newspaper *Das Schwarze Korps* felt the need to comment on

¹³²⁴ George Clare, *Last Waltz in Vienna*, 174.

¹³²⁵ *Ibid*, 170.

¹³²⁶ See: 'Wir haben gelernt', *Das Schwarze Korps*, 30 Mar. 1938, 2.

the haste with which many Austrians flocked to the Nazi banner, we can safely assume the transformation must have been conspicuous:

Wenn unsere wohlmeinenden Freunde im Ausland immer wieder fassungslos vor solchen Wundern stehen, wenn sie jetzt wiederum nicht begreifen können, wieso die doch einst immerhin vorhanden gewesenen Anhänger eines “selbständigen, unabhängigen” Österreichs über Nacht zu Nationalsozialisten geworden sind, so ist es gar nicht erstaunlich, daß sie “Erklärungen” suchen, die im Bereich ihres politischen Horizonts liegen.¹³²⁷

In a sense, the Anschluss defies rational explanation. It was, in essence, an explosion of pent-up sentiment, a collective hysteria. For more than a decade Austrians had lived internally in a state of latent civil war, and for five years they had lived in the shadow of Nazi violence. After years of economic hardship, political violence and uncertainty the tension had finally broken and, theoretically – although certainly not in practice – without a drop of blood split. Thus, the outpouring of emotion can only be understood in connection with the two decades that preceded it. It cannot be simply explained as an outpouring of latent Nazi sentiment or ‘brotherly love’. How the does one explain the fact that German troops were even greeted in the streets of *Slovenian* villages in Carinthia?¹³²⁸ Such transitory exuberance cannot be used as evidence of genuine support for the Nazi regime, not least because what we do know is that within months this enthusiasm had collapsed. The most prescient assessment comes from a contemporary observer: ‘The obvious fact, however, that a small country like Austria is not in a position to resist indefinitely the pressure of such a country as Germany over a long period must lead to the surmise that the same crowds who have acclaimed Dr. Dollfuss might be ready to cry “Heil Hitler” with equal enthusiasm were Germany to be generally believed to be the winning horse.’¹³²⁹

Yet, fear of falling into the trap of resurrecting the *Opferthese* coupled with the fact that in some ways the *Ständestaat* remains an ideological taboo means that, on some level,

¹³²⁷ ‘Was nun?’, *Das Schwarze Korps*, 14 Apr. 1938, 1–2.

¹³²⁸ See: Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitlers Österreich*, 52.

¹³²⁹ (TNA): (PRO), FO 371/16645, paper C8217, Sir W. Selby, Telegram – Austro-German Situation, 14 Sep. 1933.

we all continue to accept the Nazis falsified record when it comes to the Anschluss. We are all familiar with the pictures of the crowds on Heldenplatz in March 1938: how many Austrians know this picture of the memorial service held for Dollfuß after he was murdered in the failed Nazi coup?



Figure 16: Memorial Service for Dollfuß on Heldenplatz, 8 August 1934
(ÖNB Bildarchiv)

Four years earlier, the crowds turned up on Heldenplatz just as freely to protest against what was, in effect, an attempted Nazi takeover. Not only does this challenge powerfully the Nazi version of events, it reminds us that a significant number of Austrians, not an absolute majority but a sizable minority, supported the *Ständestaat* and Dollfuß's attempt to keep Austria independent of Nazi Germany. There is surely something deficient about public consciousness about Austria in the Anschluss era if this picture is unfamiliar to us. And if it is unfamiliar, it is not just the work of the Nazis, it is also, in part, the result of post-war politics that systematically sought to delegitimize the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg governments in their attempt to resist the Nazis, culminating in that extraordinary election poster where a democratic party actually equated Social Democrats and Nazis in

an effort to describe, not Hitler but Dollfuß, as the supreme villain of the 1930s. One does not have to be a die-hard supporter of the *Ständestaat* to see that there is something wrong here. No political party in Austria can claim the monopoly on virtue in the first half of the twentieth century. The Social Democrats have significant virtues but their record between 1933 and 1945 and some of their post-war utterances about the period do not do them much credit. Conversely, for all the obvious faults of the Christian Socials, and of Dollfuß in particular, it should not be forgotten that he was the only head of government in Europe who gave his life – and the phrase seems appropriate – in opposing the Nazis. This does not make everything he did acceptable but it constitutes substantial merit, and rather than feeling ashamed about it, Austria and the Austrians might have reason to feel a degree of pride in the fact that the country can legitimately claim to have had a government that opposed the Nazis at a time when more powerful nations in Europe were falling over themselves to appease the Third Reich.

Conclusion

The 12 March 1938 was not only the beginning of Nazi rule in Austria; it was also the end of a six-year struggle by a significant minority of Austrians to maintain Austrian independence against very considerable odds. This study has sought to refocus attention on the role of the Dollfuß government 1932–34 in attempting to prevent a Nazi takeover, and to reassess the state of current scholarship on the reasons for its collapse. In this regard, this thesis has set out to re-examine the behaviour and motivations of Dollfuß in particular, and the Christian Socials in general, during the period in question, as well as to document and clarify the key strategies of the Austrian leadership in dealing with the twin threats of Austrian and German National Socialism. Its overall conclusion is that there is a pressing need to modulate the historical narrative of the Dollfuß era to reflect more accurately what actually occurred.

This study has shown that there is an imbalance in the available literature on the Dollfuß era, and not simply in the Anglo-Saxon world. It has demonstrated that the source of the problem is Austria's politicized historical tradition, which has been conspicuously partisan in its handling of the interwar years. Indeed, the evidence indicates that, although duty bound to extend the benefit of the doubt to all sources of evidence, even otherwise reputable historians are still making assumptions about the era based upon pre-formed judgements. This is not simply a case of judging Dollfuß guilty even where the evidence is lacking (as in the case of his supposed anti-Semitism), it is a case of notable harshness against one protagonist being combined with a 'soft-focus' approach on his opponents who are frequently spared closer scrutiny: the lack of focus on the Pan-German traditions of Austrian Social Democracy and its role on weakening interwar Austria, both politically and psychologically, is remarkable and so persistent that is hard to explain as an innocent oversight. While the record of Austrian Social Democracy in the twentieth century is in many ways a distinguished and impressive one, Austrian Social Democracy, did not achieve anything like the clarity of their German counterparts on the issue of National Socialism, although it is obvious that its leadership had no sympathy for the Nazi cause. To say so is a simple act of fairness to Social Democrats *outside* Austria

and to that minority of Social Democrats *inside* Austria who were later ready even to talk to Schuschnigg to prevent Anschluss and often paid a very high price under Nazi rule for their courage. It is emphatically not an issue of left versus right, but of those who put Austria first, versus those who valued the Anschluss above all else.

Dollfuß's willingness to speak to the Nazis is, therefore, a crucial issue. This study seeks to demonstrate that explanations which focus on supposed ideological overlaps between the Nazis, Dollfuß and the Christian Socials are unsound and that Dollfuß's efforts to prevent a Nazi takeover were actually far more nuanced than some interpretations allow for. Dollfuß's strategy here fluctuated according to domestic and international pressures – fear for example, that Austria would be sacrificed in British, Italian, French or Papal efforts to reach a compromise with Nazi Germany, or due to machinations within his coalition. However, the fact that any communication with the Nazis or their more moderate allies was based on the strength or weakness of his political position, in itself demonstrates that it was not ambivalence towards the Nazis that was driving him to do so. It was thus not ideological ambivalence but short-term tactical considerations that drove him to seek to 'string the Nazis along' to buy him time to deal with the other crises. Thus, while the observation is true that Dollfuß followed a 'zig-zag' course, he did so with the intention of keeping the Nazis away from the centres of power, not in the hope of winning an ally against the Socialists. And while German conservatives of various stripes, including Catholics like von Papen, helped the National Socialists to power, this cannot surely be said of Dollfuß.

This thesis also questions the traditional focus on the breakdown of democracy as an explanation for the collapse of the Austrian state in 1938. Not only do international comparisons – the Saar, Danzig, Czechoslovakia and, of course, Weimar Germany – mean that this line of argument does not stand up to closer scrutiny, contemporary observers confirm that the key factor in whether Dollfuß and Austria could hold out against Hitler and Nazi Germany was the willingness of international players to prevent it, not the presence of democratic institutions. Thus, the oft-cited assertion that Dollfuß, in destroying Austrian democracy paved the way for Hitler is misleading, as it was clear to foreign observers and Dollfuß alike that if Germany could not be made to abandon its

crusade to bring Austria to her knees, Austria would eventually succumb. And while Dollfuß has been much maligned, first by the Nazis and then by a reluctance in the decades following 1945 to delve too deeply into the events of the Dollfuß-Schuschnigg era, in the light of this, it is surely inappropriate to continue with the massive delegitimization of someone who, despite giving up on democracy, did oppose the Nazis. In short, the fact that Dollfuß ruled without parliament cannot be used to diminish the fact that he resisted Hitler.

Which leads to the major thrust of this thesis, that, contrary to accepted wisdom, far from undermining the ability of the Austrian Republic to defend itself against the Nazi threat, Dollfuß – and later Schuschnigg – used all *realistic* means at their disposal to keep the Nazis from the centres of power while maintaining Austrian independence. It re-emphasizes the fact that there is danger in overplaying the desire for Anschluss on the Christian Social right, and with Dollfuß in particular, and challenges the assertion that Dollfuß's defence of Austrian independence cannot be understood as a rejection of National Socialism in itself. It details how the Christian Socials, whence Dollfuß came, rejected National Socialism on both ideological and historical grounds, with the reminder that Anschluss was after all a core Nazi aim.

The fact that Dollfuß chose not to enter into a coalition with the Social Democrats cannot simply be explained with recourse to Dollfuß's rejection of Socialism. It also suggests that a shared anti-Socialism should not blind us to the fact that Christian Social sentiments in this regard were fundamentally different from the virulent and radical Nazi strain. Rather, the decision not to lean on the Social Democrats must be considered within the context of the domestic and international constraints of the time: Dollfuß could not enter into a coalition with the Social Democrats because if he had done so he would have lost the support of both Mussolini and the Vatican, who would, sooner or later, have sacrificed Austria to Nazi Germany. At home, any serious flirtation with the 'hated Socialists' would have brought his government down and destroyed the Christian Social Party in the process. Thus, Dollfuß opted for a middle way, a shrewd political calculation based on a tacit understanding with the Social Democrats that it was not his intention to push measures against them to extremes, in the hope that something could be done

internationally to keep Hitler in check and that with any luck, Austria could, in this manner, weather a potentially short Nazi storm. This, in turn points to another danger, that of viewing Dollfuß's actions during 1932–33 through the prism of February 1934 and March 1938. The evidence of the British Minister in Vienna suggests that, although the Social Democratic leadership were naturally unhappy about the course of events, from the perspective of 1933, Dollfuß was not viewed quite as unfavourably as one might suspect.

This thesis also specifically addresses the issue of whether the *Ständestaat*'s 'German' identity undermined Austria's capacity to defend itself against National Socialist ideology, concluding that this common assertion ignores a number of underlying cultural, political and historical realities. It also maintains that the Social Democrats' outright rejection of an independent Austrian identity was arguably far more problematic in the face of the Nazi threat than an identity which emphasized Austrian difference vis-à-vis (Nazi) Berlin. Moreover, it suggests that the identity proffered by the Dollfuß government and then the *Ständestaat* – Catholic, anti-Prussian and leaning heavily on the Habsburg past – had solid cultural and historical precedents and were, in fact, not radically different from that successfully propagated post-1945. Austria's fundamental problem during the period was surely not ideological ambiguity but underlying economic weakness exacerbated by the Nazis, and the fact that no-one at the time believed that Austria was in a position to defend herself indefinitely against the Nazi threat without decisive outside help. The 'Germanism' of the *Ständestaat* was not what really made Austria vulnerable to the Nazis, while its 'Austrianism' offered a credible banner under which to rally against the Nazis.

This leads to a third observation: the pervasiveness of a specific Austrian consciousness throughout the interwar years and beyond into the Nazi era. Taken together, these findings concur with those who suggest that the *Ständestaat*, far from being an interregnum was both a clear precursor to stable Austrian nationhood in 1945. Ultimately, if the Second Austrian Republic proved conspicuously successful against the backdrop of the abject failure of the First, it was not just due to its economic success but also the fact that the Second Republic managed to build on these concepts of 'Austrianness' and reclaim the Austrian past in the way that the First had not been fully able to do so. The key difference being that as the Second Republic wore on, Austrian

Social Democracy gradually abandoned its earlier attachment to Anschluss and was now prepared to join their coalition partners in celebrating Austrian identity.

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