

An Intra-National Borderland: Regional Conflicts & Affinities Across the Austro- Bavarian Border, 1918–1955

Eric Benjamin Grube

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AN INTRA-NATIONAL BORDERLAND: REGIONAL CONFLICTS & AFFINITIES ACROSS THE AUSTRO-BAVARIAN BORDER, 1918-1955

Eric Benjamin Grube

Committee: Devin O. Pendas, Ph.D.

Nicole M. Eaton, Ph.D.

Erin R. Hochman, Ph.D.

This dissertation studies the cooperation and competition amongst various right-wing paramilitaries in the southeastern portions of German-speaking Europe. My work overturns stereotypical, teleological narratives that presume any far-right German extremism inherently meant “the rise of Nazism.” Instead, I reveal a complex mosaic of far-right paramilitary men, whose allegiances to and rivalries with each other oscillated with shifting situational contexts across one of the most contested and chaotic borders in interwar Europe. Consequently, my research results open new possibilities for conceptualizing volatile twentieth-century borderlands as stemming not just from international conflicts but also from intra-national infighting.

Paramilitary men on both sides of the Austro-Bavarian border considered themselves German, but they conceived of their “Germanness” in very specific terms: southeastern, Catholic, and Alpine in contrast to the northern, Protestant, and Prussian variant of Germandom. How did right-wing groups blend greater German nationalism with their southeastern German regionalism? The hybridization of these two loyalties created an intoxicating affective brew that brought together right-wing agents on both sides of this border in fraternal solidarity but also instigated fratricidal violence, all as these German groups sought to settle the question of what it meant to be German. National identities founded on southeastern regional impulses thus formed a constitutive contradiction of greater German nationalism. The intersectionality of regionalism and nationalism generated internecine right-wing violence, as these groups disagreed over how to implement disparate versions of unification.

The result was twenty years of street brawls, assassinations, terror, Putsch attempts, mobilizations, and transborder smuggling of munitions, troops, and funds. This region was thus a paragon of borderlands conflict. The crux was that it was an intra-national borderland: to these activists, national union should have been so simple, making it all the more frustrating when it eluded them. The assumed common nationality meant any perceived dissident was not simply a political opponent but something far worse: a traitor. Paradoxically, the supposedly “agreed-upon” national identity exacerbated borderland chaos and violence. Historians of Eastern and Central Europe have falsely conflated borderlands with spaces between nations in which multi-national populations struggle among each other for hegemony. My work overturns such assumptions by offering the first analysis of European borderlands violence stemming from a perceived communal nationality. This project thus serves as a needed corrective to the scholarship, offering a richly informed regional analysis with significant interventions in the broader fields of borderlands and right-wing extremism.

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As an undergraduate, I was told that research in graduate school was a solitary, even isolating endeavor, but I have found that nothing could be further from the truth. This dissertation is the result of collaborative, collective efforts, and the very fact that the title page bears my name is misleading. Left to my own devices, this project would have gone nowhere. Indeed, I would never even be in graduate school. As an attempted corrective to the title page, I would like to say thank you to the many members on my team who made this dissertation possible.

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Since Donald J. Trump's successful presidential campaign in 2016, fascism has re-emerged in US political parlance. As condemnatory insult and emotionally-charged belief, fascism has endured well beyond its official military defeat in 1945.¹ Government agents in the former Soviet Union and in its satellite states had been claiming as much throughout the Cold War, but US-Americans would soon see it for themselves firsthand.

At Trump's inauguration in January 2017, a Trump spokeswoman asked US-Americans not to believe their own eyes about the paucity of supporters in attendance, but instead suggested we believe a set of "alternative facts" (i.e. lies) that conjured up a larger crowd of enthusiasts out of thin air.² Just seven months after, right-wing militias and organizations—the radical, revolutionary alternative right, or alt-right for short—held a torchlight parade in the fashion of the National Socialist paramilitary groups and stormtroopers just eighty years ago.³

¹ Discussing the sinews between interwar right-wing extremism in the US and today's far right, Charles R. Gallagher wrote: "But they [those values] did not go away. They lay dormant, mutated, found new expression, and reappeared. It is not in the nature of ideas simply to die." Charles R. Gallagher, *Nazis of Copley Square: The Forgotten Story of the Christian Front* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021), 246.

² Eric Bradner, "Conway: Trump White House offered 'alternative facts' on crowd size," *CNN Politics*, 23 January 2017, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/22/politics/kellyanne-conway-alternative-facts/index.html>, Accessed 27 December 2021.

³ Joe Heim, "Recounting a day of rage, hate, violence and death: How a rally of white nationalists and supremacists at the University of Virginia turned into a 'tragic, tragic weekend.'" *The Washington Post*, 14 August 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/local/charlottesville-e-timeline/>, Accessed 27 December 2021. Meghan Keneally, "What to know about the violent Charlottesville protests and anniversary rallies," *ABC News*, 8 August 2018, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/happen-charlottesville-protest-anniversary-weekend/story?id=57107500>, Accessed 27 December 2021.

These alt-right groups protested the leading members of the city government in Charlottesville, Virginia, who had discussed removing confederate iconography from a public space in the city. White supremacists bearing lit torches marched to the University of Virginia to parade around Thomas Jefferson's statue and the neoclassical Rotunda, all in a symbolic defense of some supposedly-superior white civilization built on the oppression of black lives. Among their racist, anti-Semitic rallying cries was none other than the Nazi maxim of "Blood and Soil." The very next day, they rallied to keep the statue of Robert E. Lee in Charlottesville's Emancipation Park, and during the demonstration, they murdered a counter-protestor in a motorized terrorist attack. While the conversation about the statue served as the rally's impetus, the groups had as their explicitly stated goal: "Unite the Right." The objective seemed to band together America's nefarious rightwing paramilitaries, neo-Nazis, and Ku Klux Klan members into some stronger front for white Americans.⁴ The myriad contradictions of making Thomas Jefferson into a Neo-Nazi icon and keeping Robert E. Lee's statue in Emancipation Park did not seem to bother the white supremacists. Rather, their power stemmed from this ability to ignore and even to capitalize on contradictions.

As if this torchlight display were not enough for us to take this fascist renaissance seriously, on 6 January 2021, a mob of armed right-wing paramilitarists and vigilantes stormed

⁴ Cited in Joe Heim, "Recounting a day of rage," 14 August 2017. Also cited in Matt Pearce, "Chanting 'blood and soil!' white nationalists with torches march on University of Virginia," *Los Angeles Times*, 11 August, 2017, <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-white-virginia-rally-20170811-story.html>, Accessed 27 December 2021. Gallagher shows that in the 1940s, the Supreme Court "upheld the right to engage in public anti-Semitic speech" in a case including a far-right activist of the former Christian Front. This "decision protected anti-Semitic chanting during political rallies held by Donald Trump. The Supreme Court decision equally protected anti-Semitic speech at the deadly 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia." Gallagher, *Nazis of Copley Square*, 245, 246 (for direct quotation).

the democratically-elected legislature of the United States. Congress, led by Trump's own Vice President and President of the Senate, Mike Pence, carried out its constitutional duty of certifying the electoral college votes, clearly in favor of Democratic Presidential Candidate Joe Biden and Vice-Presidential Candidate Kamala Harris. The right-wing revolutionaries breached the Capitol chambers and offices, murdering police officers in their wake and threatened the legislators, their staff, and security personnel with more violence, all by people who so pride themselves as the true advocates of "law and order."⁵

Their excuse? The alternative fact (i.e. lie) that nefarious left-wing forces had conspired to smother the real will of the people (which they believed surely wanted Trump) and undemocratically gave the election to Trump's opponent, despite no actual evidence of such conspiracy. The potency of a conspiracy stems from the fact that it remains "resistant to falsification." On the one hand, believers take evidence against the conspiracy as further proof for how deep the conspiracy goes. On the other, lack of evidence in support of the conspiracy also proves to believers just how thorough, insidious, and nefarious the alleged conspirators are. In this epistemology of conspiracy, evidence does not matter. To believers, what matters is that they seem correct on an affective level.⁶

Just before the violent *Putsch*-attempt, Trump held a pre-planned rally to deliver his incendiary invectives and lies about the "stolen" election. Trump's rally included cheering on

⁵ "Capitol riots timeline: The evidence presented against Trump," *BBC News*, "US & Canada," 13 February 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-56004916>, Accessed 27 December 2021.

⁶ Karen M. Douglas, Robbie M. Sutton, and Aleksandra Cichocka, "The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 26 (Association for Psychological Science, Sage Publishing Journals, 2017): 538 (for direct quotation), 539-542, DOI: 10.1177/0963721417718261, www.psychologicalscience.org/CDPS, Accessed 27 December 2021.

the crowd: “And we fight. We fight like hell. And if you don’t fight like hell, you’re not going to have a country anymore.”⁷ His violent, fascist dog whistles were clear enough to incite violence, yet vague and unclear enough for him to cower behind craven excuses of speaking figuratively. The sitting president had sparked a violent Staatsstreich (overthrow of the state) against a democratically elected Congress, which, on paper (meaning the US Constitution), was to be the most powerful branch of government. All this revolutionary, right-wing violence in the name of overthrowing a democratically elected candidate and reinstating the non-democratically elected opponent.

The affective, rhetorical, and behavioral essence of fascism has clearly lingered, now euphemized as the alt-right operating in their alt-world of alt-facts, what former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich recently called “neo-fascism.”⁸ Yet, Trumpism has had no shortage of infighting. With loyalty to Trump placed über alles, his method of governance meant his administrative cadre had to contend with exhausting amounts of hiring and firing.⁹ Though his penchant for turning on his own was perhaps most explicit when he set this mob against his very own Vice President during the botched coup d’état.¹⁰ With such internecine patterns,

⁷ Cited in Brian Naylor, “Read Trump’s Jan. 6 Speech, A Key Part Of Impeachment Trial,” *NPR*, 10 February 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/02/10/966396848/read-trumps-jan-6-speech-a-key-part-of-impeachment-trial>, Accessed 27 December 2021.

⁸ Robert Reich, “The true meaning of 6 January: we must answer Trump’s neofascism with hope,” *The Guardian*, 28 December 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/dec/28/6-january-capitol-attack-trump-neofascism-coup-republicans>, Accessed 30 December 2021.

⁹ Denise Lu and Karen Yourish, “The Turnover at the Top of the Trump Administration,” *The New York Times*, 10 April 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/03/16/us/politics/all-the-major-firings-and-resignations-in-trump-administration.html>, Accessed 27 December 2021.

¹⁰ Darragh Roche, “Capitol Riot Classified as ‘Attempted Dissident Coup’ by Experts,” *Newsweek*, “Politics,” 28 January 2021, <https://www.newsweek.com/capitol-riot-classified-attempted-dissident-coup-experts-1565045>, Accessed 27 December 2021.

there seems a litany of through lines to old fascism, or *alter Faschismus* in German. Indeed, Germany and Austria have seen the rise of their own alt-right parties, the Alternative für Deutschland and the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, which seek democratic election to enact xenophobic and ethno-nationalist policies.

Yet it would be misleading—teleological, presentist, and ahistorical—to draw too stark of a line from alter Faschismus to “neo-fascism,” Trumpism, Alternative für Deutschland, and the alt-right more broadly.¹¹ Rather, the connective threads remain fine and thin. While such continuities are important for their very existence, they ought not determine the bearing of our voyage throughout the past. Trumpism has created fast cycles of hiring and firings, yes, but the internecine qualities of alter Faschismus were of such a stronger degree as to constitute a difference of kind. In the first half of the twentieth century, fascist organizations were violently competitive, nationalistic, and militaristic among themselves. Terror, assassinations, and imprisonment marked the intra-fascist relationships during the interwar years—any slight disagreement over goals or means could spiral into a deadly conflict. My dissertation presents a history of such fascist “frenemies” operating across the Austro-German border from 1918 until about 1950. This fascist infighting intersected with southern German regionalism of German-speaking Austria and the federal German state of Bavaria, making the Austro-Bavarian border subject to wild spatial imagination. Only by examining these fighting fascists within the wider context of south German particularity can we understand the simultaneous affinity and conflict within this nebulous space at the center of the European continent.

¹¹ Reich, “we must answer Trump’s neofascism with hope,” *The Guardian*, 28 December 2021.

Fascist infighting among Nazi bureaucrats is nothing new, historiographically speaking. The competition for Hitler's approval created a Nazi state system whose agents worked ever faster towards completing the Nazi's evil program.¹² Even as early as 1933, Hitler's purge of the SA leadership showed fascists would not shy away from using violence against their own. My interest is not so much about internal conflicts and rivalries, though they are important pieces of the overall mosaic. Rather, my interest is in rivalries among different strains of fascisms, meaning broader conflicts among different fascist groups that did not identify as subordinates in the Nazi Party. I seek to further disrupt the notion that there was any unified fascist bloc that sought to challenge both western liberalism and Soviet Bolshevism. Instead, there existed a fractured network of far-right paramilitaries, parties, organizations, and governments that fought violently to assert their own doctrines and obsessed over slight differences, in addition to rallying around broad similarities. Paradoxically, such infighting and unpredictable backstabbing became habitual and indicative of right-wingers, marking them as a holistically understandable subject of study.

The relative unity of today's alt-right to Trump is not meant as a warning that liberalism will face a greater threat today than it did in the first half of the twentieth century. History offers no such predictions, but rather, allows us to reconstruct the ways in which past peoples understood their lives. Besides, violent competition can prove to be just as (if not more) effective than unification when it comes to achieving an objective, especially when that

¹² See Ian Kershaw, "'Working Towards the Führer.' Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship," *Contemporary European History* 2, no. 2 (July 1993): 103-118, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20081474>, Accessed 21 November 2017.

objective becomes instability to cast the democratic *status quo* as invalid. What follows is a narrative of such chaos surrounding what was meant to impose order: a geopolitical border.

List of Abbreviations

AdR	Archiv der Republik (in ÖSaW)
ALEX	Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, by Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.
ANNO	AustriaN Newspapers Online: Historische österreichische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften online, by Österreichische Nationalbibliothek
BHaM	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv München
BaBL	Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde
BaK	Bundesarchiv Koblenz
BkA	Bundeskanzleramt (Österreich)
BSOA	Bund der Selbstschutz Organisationen der westlichen Alpenländer
CSP	Christlichsoziale Partei (Österreich)
DDB	Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek
DZa	Deutsches Zentralarchiv (in BaBL)
GPA	German Propaganda Archive, Calvin University online, by Randall Bytwerk
LaBWSL	Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg (Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek: Kultur und Wissen online)
LaS	Landesarchiv Salzburg
NSDAP/Nazi	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
Orgesch	Organisation Escherich
Orka/Orgka	Organisation Kanzler
OSB	Ostmärkischer Studentenbund
OSS	Ostmärkische Sturmscharen

ÖL	Österreichische Legion (in Bayern)
ÖSaW	Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Wien
PRÄ	Präsidialakten (in LaS)
RS	Republikanischer Schutzbund
SA	Sturmabteilung (von den Nationalsozialisten)
SAG	Soziale Arbeitsgemeinschaft (von der Vaterländischen Front)
SDP	Sozialdemokratische Partei (Österreich)
SS	Schutzstaffel (von den Nationalsozialisten)
SSV	Selbstschutzverband
TLal	Tiroler Landesarchiv Innsbruck (Österreich)
VF	Vaterländische Front
VR	Volkspolitisches Referat (von der Vaterländischen Front)
VS	Vaterländischer Schutzbund (von den österreichischen Nationalsozialisten)
WSLa	Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv
ZSa	Zentrales Staatsarchiv (in BaBL)

Introduction to the Intra-National Borderland

German Nationalism Against Germany?

On 12 March 1938, German troops crossed the border from Bavaria into Austria. Nazi Germany officially annexed Austria by the next day, in what we now commonly refer to as “the Anschluss.” Hitler ran a plebiscite the following month to justify this annexation in terms “national self-determination,” the principle his western democratic rivals had so championed during the interwar period. The Nazis expanded their borders to achieve their greater Germany. Perhaps the most infamous of expansionist projects in modern history began with the rubber stamp of a “democratic” referendum.

In the weeks prior to the Nazi annexation, however, Austria already had a fascist regime in power. Leaders of this fascist, independent Austria planned their own plebiscite for the diametrically opposite reason: to affirm and assert Austria’s autonomy. Paradoxically, Austrofascist Führer Kurt Schuschnigg campaigned for Austrian autonomy from Germany by embracing explicitly the idea that Austrians were Germans.¹ Austrofascists grounded their claims for separation from the Nazi German Staatsnation (nation-state) specifically on their vehemence that Austria constituted an inseparable component of the German Kulturnation (broader cultural nation).² Propaganda leaflets of: “Being German means being free: Being

¹ Julie Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933–38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 1–15, 36–38, 232–236.

² By tethering the existence of their Staatsnation on their inclusion in the Kulturnation, these Austrofascists sought to collapse the dichotomy between the two. By studying the 1848 Revolutions in German-speaking Europe, Brian Vick noticed and argued for such synthesis between the two concepts of the German nation. Brian Vick, *Defining Germany: The 1848 Frankfurt Parliamentarians and National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 16. For a close reading of the dynamic history of

German means being loyal! Yes or No? Yes! With Schuschnigg for Austria!” flooded the streets of Austrian cities.³ Such proclamations of “Freedom! German Loyalty! ... Yes, with Schuschnigg for Austria!” cast Austrian regional loyalty and German nationalism as the keys to securing Austrian independence from none other than the German nation-state itself.⁴

This argumentation—embracing the German national identity to assure regional autonomy from the German nation-state—might seem puzzling. But it grew logically from two mutually dependent loyalties, which oriented Austrians toward southeastern regionalism and toward *völkisch* (racist-ethnonationalist) nationalism. Austrofascists wielded this combination to advance an independent Austria with citizens who identified as the southeastern representatives of the broader German nation. The propagandists embraced this contradiction whole-heartedly. To them, it seemed self-explanatory that they were German, but they saw themselves as German in specifically southeastern and Austrian way.⁵ Embracing their German heritage to resist German incursions made sound sense to these activists. The contradiction presented them less with cognitive dissonance and more with emotional resolve.

This affective impulse had a long history in the interwar period. A few years prior, an Austrofascist paramilitary entity—the notorious Heimwehren—published an official history of their movement. Masquerading as historians, their propagandists boasted about how the

the Kulturnation/Staatsnation discourses in the interwar Austrian context, see Jamie Andrew McGregor Bulloch, “The Promotion of an Austrian Identity, 1918–1938” (PhD diss., University College London, 2002), 7–27, 261–278.

³ König m.p. Ray. Insp., “5. Streuzettel, Vierteloktavformat.,” *Informationsschreiben für die Herren Landesführer*, Landesarchiv Salzburg (LaS), RehrLP – 1938/0036, No page number given, Printed on second inset between pages 4 and 5 of packet, Day 3 File 3 Photo 13.

⁴ Ray. Insp., 3. “Halbbogenplakat.,” *Informationsschreiben*, LaS, RehrLP – 1938/0036, No page number given, Printed on first inset between pages 4 and 5 of packet, Day 3 File 3 Photo 12.

⁵ Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 1–15, 36–38, 232–236.

Heimwehren “has made Austria German again.”⁶ They equated their fascist sense of German nationalism with Austrian regionalism. It seemed ethno-national German *Blut* (blood) could grow out of a diverse array of regional *Böden* (soil, territorial region). They also oriented their regionalist, völkisch nationalism toward *großdeutsch* (greater German) glory, so long as a future greater Germany maintained Austrian autonomy and bolstered its relative power.

But the Heimwehren were not the only fascist organization trying to make Austria German again. Nazis in Germany and Austria—especially Austrian Nazis operating out of Bavaria—rabidly and violently tried to do the same, but they had drastically different conceptualizations of what exactly it meant to make Austria German again. To them, it meant Nazification. Thus, the Heimwehren cadre often aimed their fascist German nationalism against domineering Nazism, both in affect and in action. All the while, certain ranks of the Heimwehren—particularly in the Austrian Land of Styria—increasingly became Nazi loyalists.⁷ Fascists thus experienced simultaneous fraternization and fragmentation over differing conceptualizations of German nationalism, which they believed so ardently as both “natural” and “unifying.”

To study this history of right-wing nationalism for and against the German nation-state, we must understand the role of regionalism. This dissertation traces southeastern German regional “affiliations” spanning from the conclusion of the First World War until the

⁶ Die Propagandastelle der Bundesführung des österreichischen Heimatschutzes, *Heimatschutz in Österreich*, Herausgegeben unter Aufsicht des österreichischen Heimatschutzes Amt des Bundesführers – Propagandastelle (Wien: Verlag Zoller, 1934), 321.

⁷ Bruce F. Pauley, *Hahnenschwanz und Hakenkreuz: Steirischer Heimatschutz und österreichischer Nationalsozialismus, 1918–1934* (Wien: Europaverlag, 1976), 10, 172.

reestablishment of Austrian independence after the Second. Regionalist claims functioned as motors of German political solidarity *and* discord among right-wing activists in Bavaria and Austria during the first half of the twentieth century. Radicalizing right-wing agents on both sides of the Austro-Bavarian border explicitly prided themselves as Germans, but they conceived of their ‘Germanness’ in very southern, eastern, and Alpine terms.⁸ How did these right-wing groups blend their greater German nationalism with their southeastern German regionalism?

The mixture of these two loyalties created an intoxicating affective brew, one that brought together right-wing agents on both sides of the Austro-Bavarian border in fraternal solidarity. But it also instigated fratricidal violence, all as these German groups sought to settle the question of what it meant to be German.⁹ To such right-wing extremists, it was not enough to be German. One had to be German in the “right” way.¹⁰ They worked toward unity while fighting over disparate versions of it. Right-wing extremists organized into a myriad of

⁸ For that contention regarding the Ständestaat, see Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 1-15, 36-38, 232-236. For a broader history of interwar Austrianness among activists across the right-wing continuum, see Bulloch, “The Promotion of an Austrian Identity,” 261-278. My work seeks to bring into conversation similar such questions with more recent literature on borderlands.

⁹ For a study that centers the complex, contested nature of this question, see Vick, *Defining Germany*, 1-13. As Erin Hochman framed it: “From 1918 to 1933, there existed numerous understandings of who, what and where could be categorized as German.” Erin Hochman, “Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy: The Politics of Commemoration in Germany and Austria” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2010), 272. Erin R. Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany: Republican Nationalism and the Idea of Anschluss* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 9. For malleability regarding Austrian conceptualizations of self—or “the flexibility of *Österreichertum*”—see Bulloch, “The Promotion of an Austrian Identity,” 266 (for direct quotation), 267.

¹⁰ I draw on Pieter M. Judson’s reminder “that nationalists deployed a harshly radical rhetoric in order to gain mastery over rival groups within their own nationalist movements and rarely to defeat the so-called national enemy. Different social and political groups staked out and performed more or less radical positions in order to win votes as the ‘most nationalist’ or the ‘most legitimate’ representatives of the nation.” Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 8-9.

paramilitary organizations to navigate this supposedly agreed-upon German space. In so doing, they often struggled chaotically to redefine the space in ways that struck the “right” balance of greater German imaginaries and regionalist loyalties. Discussions of regional cohesion created disagreements and violence over disparate versions of this objective, which manifested in street brawls, assassinations, terror, *Putsch* attempts, paramilitary mobilizations, and the smuggling of munitions, troops, and funds within and across these German-speaking states. German regional variations formed a constitutive contradiction of greater German nationalism, each a volatile yet integral ingredient of the other, and their combination precipitated a noxious, combustible combination of cooperation and confrontation.¹¹ The coexistence of such centrifugal and centripetal impulses locked the Austro-Bavarian region in a cycle of intra-fascist, German-on-German border violence. This space thus formed one of interwar Europe’s most unstable and tense borderlands, one even more puzzling specifically because the inhabitants professed the same nationality. To these activists, national union should have been so simple, which made things all the more frustrating when it eluded them. Further, the assumed common nationality meant any perceived dissident was not simply a political

¹¹ The historiography on German-speaking Europe experienced an explosion of regional studies in the 1990s, with Cecilia Applegate paving the way. I discuss her work in detail later, but I wish to address here her sweeping state of the field article on regional studies. She claims: “Instead the most promising historical work is moving toward an understanding of regional politics that sees them everywhere, Saxony or Bavaria, Brittany or the Nord, as constitutive—not imitative—of the politics of the nation-state, in effect the infrastructure of the political process altogether.” Cecilia Applegate, “A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Places in Modern Times,” *The American Historical Review*, 104, no. 4 (*AHR Forum*, Oxford University Press on behalf of the American Historical Association, Oct. 1999): 1172, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2649565>, Accessed 20 January 2022. Follow on her inspiring call to arms, I trace the regional and national as constitutive of *and* in contradiction with the national, a paradox of simultaneous centripetal and centrifugal forces that warped the Austro-Bavarian region into an intra-national borderland.

opponent but something far worse: a traitor. The supposedly “agreed-upon” national identity exacerbated borderland chaos and violence. In the heyday of violence, genocides, and ethnic cleansings across Europe’s more multi-ethnic spaces, intra-national conflict could likewise prove severe.

This story of rival right-wing, German-speaking organizations shows that Austrian interwar history did not point inevitably toward the Nazi Anschluss. Instead, a vast array of far-right groups jockeyed for position in and across this borderland region. In context, the “ultimate victory” of any one of them remained ever uncertain. This work thus helps overturn teleological, even stereotypical, narratives that conflate any far-right German extremism in the interwar period with “the rise of Nazism.” The 1938 Nazi annexation was never foreordained. On the contrary, uncertainty ran rampant over who would claim the fascist mantle in German regions, and chaos played an integral role in their radicalizations across this contested space.

Yet, an internal logic undergirded all this chaos and uncertainty. The 1938 Nazi annexation was also no accident. Somewhere between inevitability and contingency stands historical reality. Fascists in Austria spent years constructing their regional autonomy with the combustible tinder of ethno-racial German nationalism. In so doing, they built structures that advantaged the greatest arsonists of them all: the Nazis.¹²

Historiographies, Fascisms, & Borderlands

¹² Janek Wasserman presents a similar irony that non-Nazi Viennese intellectuals with right-wing ideas set important mental precedents for Nazism. Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918-1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 12, 14, 220, 226. I am less concerned with intellectuals and more concerned with transborder paramilitary maneuverings.

The constitutive contradiction between German nationalism and regionalism points us toward the dialectic of cooperation and competition across the Austro-Bavarian border. The claim here that German regionalism and greater German nationalism formed a constitutive contradiction builds upon Radomír Luža's argument: "The paradox was that, despite Greater-German rhetoric cutting across all main political parties, it was Austria's efforts to win control over her own destiny that set the main theme down to March 1938..."¹³ But Austrian concurrent desires for regional control and German nationalism did not just exist as a paradox—two separate phenomenon that co-existed. They remained co-dependent and mutually reinforcing, each predicated on the other, an orchestration with as much dissonance and cacophony as melody and harmony.¹⁴ Interwar right-wingers across Austria and Bavaria disagreed over fantastical schemes for regional solidarity within their visions of greater Germany. Objectives of regional and national unity ran counter to their methods of regional violence, mobilizations, and competition. Regionalist fascists hashed out robust discourses over the border—to alter, eliminate, patrol, or cross it—in ways that spread great discord throughout the very region they tried to coalesce into a southeastern German stronghold. Through this regional optic, we can begin to understand the nuanced, complex, seemingly contradictory—at times outright bewildering—decisions of these historical actors, as opposed to dismissing

¹³ Radomír Luža, *Austro-German Relations in The Anschluss Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 6-7.

¹⁴ Bulloch's great dissertation examines how the head of the Austrian conservative *Christlichsoziale Partei* (CSP), Ignaz Seipel, grappled with Austrian patriotism and German nationalism. Bulloch frames Seipel's understanding as "a dual allegiance to the German and to *Österreichertum*." Bulloch, "Promotion of an Austrian Identity," 264. I build on this framework, though I prefer "constitutive contradiction" or "affective brew" as it suggests they were mutually interdependent, interstitched, and interpenetrative, with each underscoring and undercutting the other.

them as unsound crackpots. As appealing as the latter explanation might seem, such arguments do not help us understand how and why their behavior made sense to them.

Previous scholars have already traced the irony that the Austrian case became so convoluted specifically because of the shared sense of German nationality. Stanley Suval's *The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era* showed that the Anschluss, when defined vaguely or employed rhetorically, served as a broad point of consensus among Germans and Austrians on both the left and the right, as a shared German nationality remained an operating assumption of most Germans and Austrians. However, the prospect of an Anschluss functioned as an apple of discord when activists tried to draft concrete policies to achieve it.¹⁵ Erin Hochman rightfully advanced this sentiment in her chapter on the pluralistic composition of the Österreichisch-Deutscher Volksbund (Austro-German People's League), a plurality that prevented it from agreeing on any specific steps for German unity.¹⁶ Her book, *Imagining A Greater Germany*, adroitly traces großdeutsch aspirations for an Anschluss that would "legitimize the Weimar and First Austrian Republics."¹⁷ I believe Suval and Hochman are exactly right. Flowing from their rich wellspring, my work seeks to assess the combustible combination of German nationalist impulses and Austro-Bavarian regional loyalties among right-wing activists.

The interactions of regional patriotism, regional conflict, and nationalism were critical to understanding this story, and they have yet to be explored in detail. In many ways, the story

¹⁵ Stanley Suval, *The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), xi-xxi.

¹⁶ Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 195-236.

¹⁷ Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 3. Mark Mazower also commented briefly on this phenomenon: "Demands for *Anschluss* had always masked a complex of motives..." Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), 52. See also Bulloch, "The Promotion of an Austrian Identity," 266.

of this intra-national borderland was one of irredentism, but there were so many irredentist factions that they ended up complementing *and* conflicting with one another. Regionalist discourses amongst Germans and Austrians fractured any unified notion of “irredentism” into violent rivalries with different visions of why, when, how, and to what extent the Austro-Bavarian border needed revision. Austrofascist patriots fighting against Nazis might have been German irredentists in a loosely-defined cultural sense, but they most certainly were not when presented with Nazi versions of irredentism that mandated complete political subservience to the Nazi Party and to the German state. My intra-national borderland concept incorporates irredentism as integral to this twentieth-century story, but it is also elastic enough to tell convoluted stories of activists and politicians who mixed extremism with pragmatism in ways that at times seemed devoid of logic, if not blatantly contradictory. The idea of an intra-national borderland is appropriately “messy” for this maelstrom of alliances, rivalries, betrayals, and infighting among far-fight German nationals.

By presenting such a convoluted story of shifting right-wing friendships and betrayals, my work complicates the “tidiness” of the Lager (camps) thesis so prevalent in Austrian historiography. In broad brushstrokes, this thesis posits that there existed specific sociopolitical strata in Austria—conservative Christlichsoziale Partei (Christian Social Party, CSP) adherents, nationalist Pan-Germans, and republican Sozialdemokratische Partei (Social Democratic Party, SDP) adherents—each of which acted with and against the others for power.¹⁸ In the broad

¹⁸ For staple studies bound to the Lager thesis, see F. L. Carsten, *Fascist Movements in Austria: From Schönerer to Hitler*, vol. 7 of *SAGE Studies in 20th Century History* (London: SAGE Publications, 1977), 41–69, 87–140. Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* (London: Croom Helm, 1980),

narrative of these groups, the Christian socials and social democrats remained at loggerheads, while the Christian socials and Pan-Germans tried to find enough common right-wing ground to build functional coalitions, though they often remained at odds as well.¹⁹ This Lager thesis has proven resilient even across disciplinary divides. A sociological study on interwar Viennese newspapers asserted that competition heightened with ideological propinquity. Papers for the far right and the far left feuded most ardently with those of their “adjacent ideologies”—the poor “centrist Christian Socials” who had to compete with both extremes for overlapping pools of potential supporters.²⁰ In seeking to apply an “ecological perspective on ideological organizations” as “a relatively general model of competition,” William P. Barnett and Michael Woywode let the CSP off the hook far too easily, framing the CSP as the victim of a “predator-prey relationship.”²¹ But orienting the CSP as “the center” perhaps risks normalizing their behavior as moderate, eliding over the CSP’s central role as right-wingers who drove the country down a fascist slope. Over time, the CSP and their palette of paramilitaries increasingly became fascists in their own right. Indeed, the scholars mention in passing that the CSP moved toward “a policy of ‘Austrofascism,’” a rather large inconvenience

1-6, 36-51, 97-143, 173-201. Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler’s Hometown: Linz, Austria 1908-1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 7, 64, 112-115, 217-229.

¹⁹ C. Earl Edmondson provides a succinct overview of the Lager framework. While he does reify it, he also includes serious nuance in that the Christian socials were “the most heterogenous.” His very detailed account of the right-wing infighting also is a critical step in leading us out of these monolithic assumptions. C. Earl Edmondson, *The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics, 1918-1936* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 11-13, 14 (for direct quotation), 15-18, 19-48, 105-149.

²⁰ William P. Barnett and Michael Woywode, “From Red Vienna to the Anschluss: Ideological Competition among Viennese Newspapers during the Rise of National Socialism,” *American Journal of Sociology* 109, no. 6 (The University of Chicago Press, May 2004): 1453-1454, 1456-1462, 1463 (for direct quotation of “centrist Christian Socials”), 1488 (for direct quotation of “adjacent ideologies”), 1489-1490, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/381774>, Accessed 8 January 2022.

²¹ Barnett and Woywode, “From Red Vienna to the Anschluss,” 1490 (for direct quotations).

they sweep under the rug at “the center” of the room.²² Furthermore, ideological rivalries were not limited to the newspapers in the Austrian metropole. They played out in discourses and in deeds with very violent stakes across the Austro-Bavarian borderland, in spaces where provincial priorities added compounding variables for analysis.

A detailed historical analysis of the Austro-Bavarian region reveals a much messier, chaotic, and violent picture than quantitative models can generate. Like the Austro-Bavarian border itself, the borderlines among right-wing organizations remained more porous than hermetic, resulting in liminal loyalties across this contested space. To their credit, Barnett and Woywode state as much, reminding readers that “In sum, the three ideological lager stood in contrast to one another but in a context marked by significant ambiguity concerning the boundaries between lager when it came to any particular dimension.”²³ In addition to nodding to the fluidity among the Lager, they present a case study with extremely impressive empirical rigor.²⁴ But ultimately, they rely upon the Lager as the foundational comparative units of their analysis and conclusions, among which they claim “we find very little in way of competition within ideological categories.” By highlighting inter-Lager feuds at the expense of intra-group feuds, they further reify the borders of the Lager and the legacy of its thesis.²⁵

Thankfully, certain scholars have led us out of this rigid “tripartite structure” or “tripartite model,” as historian Tim Kirk labeled it in his critique and complication back in

²² Barnett and Woywode, Barnett and Woywode, “From Red Vienna to the Anschluss,” 1463 (for direct quotation of “the center”), 1464 (for direct quotation on Austrofascism).

²³ Barnett and Woywode, “From Red Vienna to the Anschluss,” 1463, 1464 (for direct quotation).

²⁴ Barnett and Woywode, “From Red Vienna to the Anschluss,” 1452–1499.

²⁵ Barnett and Woywode, “From Red Vienna to the Anschluss,” 1455–1456, 1488 (for direct quotation), 1489–1491.

1996.²⁶ Julie Thorpe's work, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933-38*, has led the conversation out of the Lager assumption. In her work, she asserts that "My definition of pan-Germanism also invites us to move beyond one of the enduring orthodoxies of twentieth-century Austrian historiography, that Austrians were always and everywhere firmly fixed to their particular political-cultural milieux, be it conservative Catholic, social democratic or right-wing nationalist." Her work discusses the points of "convergence (as well as contestation) between and within" these factions. My dissertation accepts her concluding invitation, diving from her work into a deep reading of such "convergence" and "contestation" of right-wing paramilitaries in the Austro-Bavarian space.²⁷ My work shows just how pluralized, heterogeneous, polycentric, and disjointed the right-wing factions operated. We must frame right-wing extremists as inherently internecine and thus challenge assumptions that the radical right was in any way a coherent, monolithic Lager that acted in concert, however much its adherents preached just such regional and national unity.²⁸ Far-right paramilitaries lacked unity because supposed regional affinities intensified rivalries on the ground; perceived similarities provided common ground for alliances in theory and fuel for frustration in reality.²⁹

²⁶ Tim Kirk, "Austrian fascisms, 'Austrofascism' and the working class," Chapter 1 in *Nazism and the working class in Austria: Industrial unrest and political dissent in the 'national community'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19-20.

²⁷ Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 233. Wasserman likewise follows Thorpe's deconstruction of the Lager thesis. He examines the overlap of right-wing thinkers, writers, and intellectuals in the Austrian metropole, which was and is traditionally depicted as "Red Vienna." Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 6-10.

²⁸ In this sense, my work is very much in the same vein as Edmondson's mainstay book, which exposed just how fractured these organizations truly were. Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 1-149.

²⁹ My work thus builds on the Tom Scott's study of how regionalism fueled such "conflict" and "co-operation" or "gave rise both to competition and to coexistence" in the early-modern context of the Rhine region. See Tom Scott, *Regional Identity and Economic Change: The Upper Rhine, 1450-1600*

And yet, just because the right-wingers did not present a cohesive “camp” does not mean they lacked cohesive, discernable patterns of behavior. To an extent, they even became predictable: they spoke and acted in predictably unpredictable ways. Furthermore, infighting over the “right” balance of nationalism and regionalism formed a continuous through line that marked and crosscut their interactions. Their internecine divisions revolved around the binary stars of nationalism and regionalism, creating a discernable orbit, albeit one whose competing centripetal pulls kept molten the core of the Austro-Bavarian region. Specifically because right-wingers acted in such internecinal ways, they presented some degree of understandable cohesion.

Nor does it behoove us to write off these right-wingers as simply farcical or dysfunctional. They were often both of those things, yes, but they were also so much more.³⁰ They created chaos, infighting, street violence, and mobilizations, all of which contributed to any contemporary doubts about the viability of Germany and Austria’s first democratic experiments. While such conflicts made them ineffective in their immediate goals, they succeeded in perpetuating and normalizing cycles of regenerative violence that cast doubt on the viability of the democratic status quo.³¹ Their very chaos validated and exacerbated any

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 1–68, 69 (for direct quotation). I examine the extent to which such a dynamic play out among right-wing, violent paramilitaries in an intra-national space during the interwar period.

³⁰ For more on the need to take seriously the machinations of seemingly absurd extremists, Charles R. Gallagher, *Nazis of Copley Square: The Forgotten Story of the Christian Front* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021), 1–16, 239–249.

³¹ Along those lines, Larry Eugene Jones argued that it was the failure of conservatives to galvanize the people that opened an electoral vacuum the Nazis filled. Larry Eugene Jones, *The German Right, 1918–1930: Political Parties, Organizational Interests, and Patriotic Associations in the Struggle against Weimar Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 15, Available online at Cambridge Core, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108643450.001>, Accessed 14 January 2022. In many ways, this

pessimistic assessments of the Weimar and First Austrian Republics. Their very dysfunction functioned to cast democracy as defunct, creating an aura of uncertainty across this geopolitical border.

The sheer pluralization of these right-wing paramilitaries, parties, and organizations only exacerbated their internecine dynamic. Their hydra-like formations presented a case-in-point for what Bernhard Gissibl called “institutional entropy” in the context of imperialism in eastern Africa; though given their penchant for violence to overthrow democratic institutions, perhaps counter-institutional entropy serves as a better turn of phrase.³² Such pluralization also raises the question of taxonomies and ascribing labels to right-wingers. In echo of right-wing organizational pluralization, the historiography has done what it is wont to do: retreat into myopic bickering over pluralized typologies. Their pluralized set of fascisms/fascists includes “Austro-fascism,” “*konkurrenz* [competitive] fascism,” “clerical fascist,” and even “semi-fascist,” just to name a few.³³ Each one is less helpful than the last because, fundamentally, they all

assessment echoes Peter Fritzsche’s assessment of German parties across the political spectrum. Peter Fritzsche, *Rehearsals for Fascism: Populism and Political Mobilization in Weimar Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 230.

³² Bernhard Gissibl, *The Nature of German Imperialism: Conservation and the Politics of Wildlife in Colonial East Africa* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016), 237.

³³ The extent of this debate extends until the 1960s (at least). Carsten, *Fascist Movements*, 167–184. For “*konkurrenz* fascism,” see Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 8. For “clerical fascist,” see Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 233. For “semi-fascist,” see Kitchen, *Austrian Fascism*, 274. John T. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right in Austria, 1918–1934*, trans. Michael Wolfe, vol. 32 of *Danish Humanist Texts and Studies*, ed. Erland Kolding Kielsen (Copenhagen: The Royal Library, Museum Tusculanum Press, 2007), 53–67. For the German-language historiography, see Ewald Wiederin: “Christliche Bundesstaatlichkeit auf ständischer Grundlage: Eine Strukturanalyse der Verfassung 1934,” in *Österreich 1933–1938: Interdisziplinäre Annäherungen an das Dollfuß-/Schuschnigg-Regime*, eds. Ilse Reiter-Zatloukal, Christiane Rothländer, Pia Schölnberger (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2012) 41. Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy identify this bickering over “*Unterkategorie*” and decide on “*Austrofascismus*” as the most appropriate term, see Florian Wenninger and Lucile Dreidemy, *Einleitung to Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933–1938: Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, ed. Florian Wenninger (Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2013), 7. Emmerich Tálos likewise concludes his contribution to his

remain relative to how each scholar conceptualizes the label. This pedantry over typology mostly serves to generate unproductive tautologies. In the process, scholars have all but dissected “fascism” into oblivion, with a few key components left standing after the debating dust has settled. These mainstay tenets include right-wing impulses against liberalism, socialism, and Bolshevism fused with the momentum of revolutionary mass movements. This radical, revolutionary component distinguished fascists from traditional conservatives bent on maintaining the status quo (or, in interwar Austria and Germany, maintaining to as much of the status quo ante as possible). Fundamentally, I use the abstract term of fascism not as some historical agent in its own right, but rather as a fluid set of politically-motivated beliefs, which adherents combined, separated, and re-coagulated to the extent they saw fit: espousing objectives both revolutionary and right-wing, using conflict both as means and transcendental ends, coupling both nationality (even race) and geographic landscape, and/or placing zealous faith both in authoritarian leaders and principles.³⁴ Furthermore, Austro-Bavarian right-wing paramilitarists often remained vague and obscure, intentionally so, about their own political goals. But, they stood relatively united and clear in describing what they despised—namely,

anthology with a summation of about 15 such modifiers used in the existing scholarship: Emmerich Tálos, “Das austrofaschistische Herrschaftssystem,” in *Austrofaschismus: Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur 1933-1938*, (Hg.) Emmerich Tálos and Wolfgang Neugebauer (Wien: LIT Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2014), 416.

³⁴ This also draw on Wasserman’s operational understanding of the label of “Black” in interwar Austria, which could signify a “discourse centered on radical anti-Semitism, German nationalism, *völkisch* authoritarianism, anti-Enlightenment (and antimodernist) thinking and corporatism.” He contends that “Black” signifiers were diverse: “‘Black’ therefore implied fascism—both the Italian variety and Hitlerism” in addition to “German nationalism, or ‘Pan-Germanism,’” plus “Habsburgs and the monarchists, with their distinctive (Austrian) German nationalism.” Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 6.

Jews and Bolsheviks.³⁵ They saw the former as diasporic “parasites” devoid of any national or racial connection to the land, while they saw the latter as anti-nationalistic, atheistic, and revolutionary leftists. Often, they conflated these two enemies as overlapping in some vast conspiratorial network.³⁶

While the historiography’s extant toolkit of various “fascisms” might *describe* fascism, it does not really *explain* it.³⁷ Thankfully, newer scholarship has moved to embrace fluidity

³⁵ As George Mosse phrased it: “Fascism with its glorification of war and struggle needed enemies...” George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1999), 43. Anton Staudinger pointed out ideological coherence for Austrofascists was coupled to what they did *not* like: “...die konservativer, vielfach aber auch faschistischer Ideologie entsprechen, wie „Antiparlamentarismus“, „Antiliberalismus“, vorgeblicher „Antikapitalismus“, militanter sogenannter „Antimarxismus“, Korporativismus, Großstadtfeindlichkeit und Agrarromantik, Großraum- und Autarkievorstellungen, organizistisch-biologistische Volksgemeinschafts- und Volkstums-Ideologie zum Zweck der ideellen Harmonisierung der bestehenden gesellschaftlichen Interessengegensätze und der davon ablenkenden Konstruktion von Feindbildern, sowie Reichsmystik und Antisemitismus.” Anton Staudinger, “Austrofaschistische „Österreich“-Ideologie,” in *Austrofaschismus*, 32.

³⁶ Paul Hanebrink presents this conspiracy theory and its adherents as converting traditional antisemitism into new, twentieth-century terms of modern ideologies, a regeneration of the “old” into something “new” that was hallmark component of fascism itself. Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 7, 8 (for direct quotation), 9-12, 82-87. The potency of this myth also crossed the Atlantic, with right-wing Catholic movements in interwar New York City and Boston invoking it to justify and galvanize their organizations. See Charles R. Gallagher, *Nazis of Copley Square: The Forgotten Story of the Christian Front* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021), 1-30.

³⁷ Lauridsen claims this debate has spiraled into the use of qualifying labels to fascism that obfuscate more than they illuminate. Yet, he bolsters this obsession with labels by applying his own “radical-right” one. Lauridsen, *Nazism and the Radical Right*, 53-65, 66 (for direct quotation), 67. It is true that the overuse of the word fascism itself runs the risk of conceptual hyperinflation, voiding it of any meaning: “Any word which covers everything loses its cutting edge and dwindles to an empty sound.” Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (New York: Verso, 2007 [1991]), 7. He then claims that an ideology can still be analytically useful if its foils can be identified, something fascists did with reckless abandon. Gilbert Allardyce seriously criticized the overextension of the concept of fascism, critiquing scholars who would seek to apply it outside its specific “historical boundaries.” See Gilbert Allardyce, “What Fascism Is Not: Thoughts on the Deflation of a Concept,” *The American Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (Apr. 1979): 367-370, 378-379, 385-387, 388 (for direct quotation), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1855138>, Accessed 5 April 2018.

rather than the rigidity of such hallow taxonomies.³⁸ I work from such fluid conceptualization of fascism, conjoined with historiography that frames fascism as a relative emotional experience and as a dynamic process.³⁹ We should treat interwar paramilitary activists who openly embraced the affective power of fascist movements as such, regardless of whether they “succeeded” or adhered to set ideological rubrics.⁴⁰ These paramilitaries and militias often viewed themselves as fascist in a unifying way, or received labels as “the seed of fascism, which must first be developed.”⁴¹ I take such primordial fascism seriously as fascism, regardless of its supposedly inchoate stage. Or, as scholar George Mosse rightly suggested in *The Fascist Revolution*:

Fascism considered as a cultural movement means seeing fascism as it saw itself and as its followers saw it, to attempt to understand the movement on its own terms. Only then, when we have grasped fascism from the inside out, can we truly judge its appeal and its power... The cultural interpretation of fascism opens up a means to penetrate fascist self-understanding, and such empathy is crucial in order to grasp how people

³⁸ “If there is a common thread to the new research in the field, it is an increasing impatience with prescriptive terminologies and typologies, and a renewed focus on the realities of political change ... What researchers have found is a fluidity of ideology and political loyalties, a landscape of the political right in interwar Austria characterized as much by shared values and political affinities as by disagreements; in short a politics which, ultimately, softened Austria up for the Anschluss, rather than served as a bulwark against it.” Tim Kirk, “Dictatorship, Fascism and the Demise of Austrian Democracy,” Chapter 9 in *Austrian Studies Today*, eds. Günter Bischof and Ferdinand Karlhofer (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2016), 124, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2txjc.12>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

³⁹ Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, x-xi. Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 4, 6, 233.

⁴⁰ For scholars who dismiss Austrofascism and its *Vaterländische Front* because it “failed” see Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism*, 1967. See also Carsten, *Fascist Movements in Austria: From Schönerer to Hitler*, 1977.

⁴¹ Anonymous writing under the name Fabritius e.h., “Gedanken und Richtlinien,” Page 1, Tiroler Landesarchiv Innsbruck (TLAI), Bestand: “Bundesleitung Der Österreichischen (Alpenländischen) Selbstschutzverbände” (Heimwehr) VIII. Sammelakten aus den Jahren 1925-1926, VIII/1 Sammelakt (organization) 1-37 Fol., Day 3 Photo 31 of 62.

saw the movement, something which cannot be ignored or evaluated merely in retrospect.⁴²

My dissertation embraces relativist conceptualizations rather imposing austere parameters to assess “true” fascists. No such monolithic definition exists. Nor should it, as fascists included a diverse array of adherents, leading to the infighting studied here.⁴³ More elastic conceptualizations include groups with proto-fascistic leanings while still marking delineations with conservatives, monarchical restorationists, and reactionaries, many of whom castigated fascists for being rabble-rousers. Meanwhile, many in their ranks increasingly embraced the seductive dynamism of fascist movements by the 1930s.⁴⁴

Furthermore, as Julie Thorpe states in her monograph, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933–38*, we should start understanding fascism as “a larger process of fascistization,” to which the right-wing paramilitaries studied here became integral.⁴⁵ Immersed in dynamic radicalization, fascists blended the right with the far right and the institutional with the revolutionary. Aristotle Kallis best describes a complex web of such regimes as “para-fascism,” which pairs well with her emphasis on “mobility” pointing toward

⁴² Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, x–xi.

⁴³ Mosse also criticizes previous scholars for trying “to look for a single key to unlock the secrets of fascism’s existence and success.” Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, ix.

⁴⁴ Fritzsche narrated the shift from conservative elitist politics to radical right-wing mass movement occurring in the 1920s. Fritzsche, *Rehearsals for Fascism*, 5. In the Austrian context, C. Earl Edmondson’s book on the *Heimwehr* describes this radicalization of the right: “In a ‘revolutionary’ and ‘democratic’ age, conservative leaders had to borrow from their enemies. Many fascists, especially the most radical ones, talked more about the future than the past.” Edmondson, *The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 4.

⁴⁵ “...the Austrian regime was hardly in the shadow of fascism. Rather, it was directly placed within a larger process of fascistization sweeping across Europe in the interwar years.” Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 233.

“better routes to navigate those still challenging borderlands between fascism and authoritarianism.”⁴⁶

Right-wing divisions over the “right” regional-national balance led to an informal, intra-fascist “war” among themselves between the two World Wars, all as they simultaneously fought their socialist opponents.⁴⁷ The resulting *mélange* of conflict among the far right alone marked the Austro-Bavarian region as one of Europe’s most unstable fault lines in the interwar period. Therefore, I examine this space through the optic of a twentieth-century borderland. Quite literally, activists, politicians, and militia members during this time referred to the region as a *Grenzland* (borderland) or *Grenzmark* (border march) with *Mark* already indicating a region on the periphery, however conceived. As physical spaces, Bavaria, Tyrol, Salzburg, Upper Austria, and the western Alpine regions of Styria surrounded a geopolitical border, one both revered and reviled depending on perspective and situational context. Further showing this explicit borderland status, Austria once went by the name of the Ostmark, or Eastern March, and the Austrofascists embraced this borderland demarcation. So too did their rivals during Nazi rule, at least, for as long as Austria’s borderland label coincided with Nazi ambitions—and their shifting wartime fortunes. Complicating the story, many Austrians and

⁴⁶ Aristotle Kallis’s chapter traces the origin of the term “para-fascism,” as coined by Roger Griffin in his 1993 *Nature of Fascism*. Cited in Aristotle Kallis, “Working Across Bounded Entities: Fascism, ‘Para-Fascism,’ and Ideational Mobilities in Interwar Europe,” Chapter 4 of *Beyond the Fascist Century: Essays in Honour of Roger Griffin*, eds. Constantin Iordachi and Aristotle Kallis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 73–89, 90 (for direct quotation), 91–99, Available online at Springer Link, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46831-6_4, Accessed 17 January 2021.

⁴⁷ The notion that conservatives were also far from united was explored in Larry Eugene Jones, *The German Right, 1918–1930*, 11. His work is more concerned with conservatism itself, rather than fascism or Nazism. I seek to situate this right-wing disunity within the context southeastern German regionalism and the intersection with Austrian affairs.

Germans saw this border as a defunct historical vestige that arbitrarily split the German nation into two states. The 1919 Allied imposition of independence upon Austrian peoples who did not want it created a problem that infuriated German-speaking contemporaries. Many Austrians viewed their new landlocked republic as central to the broader German nation, but economically, militarily, and politically unviable on its own.⁴⁸ Adolf Hitler encapsulated this obsessive desire for borderland revisionism when he referred to Austria in the first sentence of *Mein Kampf*: “Today I consider it my good fortune that Fate designated Braunau on the Inn as the place of my birth. For this small town is situated on the border between those two German states, the reunion of which seems, at least to us of the younger generation, a task to be furthered with every means our lives long.”⁴⁹ To Hitler, the border dividing Austria and Bavaria paradoxically symbolized his aspirations of nationalist unification.

But I also present this region as a “borderland” in the sense of the historiographical concept. Bathsheba Demuth’s new research on Alaskan history outlines traditional borderlands studies as “a field that emphasizes the power and longevity of Indigenous nations, the contingencies of imperial expansion, and the contradictory, generative nature of spaces where jurisdiction is partial and contested. Borderlands are worlds where the shape of relationships and hierarchies of power remain plastic, their contours unfixed.”⁵⁰ In addition, historiography

⁴⁸ Pauley’s chapter covering the context of the First Republic is entitled “Crippled from Birth” and claims that “serious doubts about the country’s *Lebensfähigkeit* (viability) remained widespread... For Austrians, their self-doubt became a self-fulfilling prophecy.” Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 3 (for chapter title), 4-6, 7 (for substantive quotation), 8-15. See also Rolf Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War: From the Anschluss to the State Treaty 1938-1955* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 3, 139.

⁴⁹ Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1940 [1925]), 3.

⁵⁰ Bathsheba Demuth, “Labors of Love: People, Dogs, and Affect in North American Arctic Borderlands, 1700-1900,” *The Journal of American History* 108, no. 2 (Sept. 2021): 270, doi: 10.1093/jahist/jaab122, Accessed 6 December 2021.

of twentieth-century Europe has brought to borderlands the connotations of virulence and vulnerability. Across the continent, rising fervors of nationalism in the nineteenth century culminated in twentieth-century violence to make borders coincide with national populations, however defined.⁵¹ Historians of twentieth-century Europe employ the term to refer to the contested regions, particularly in central and eastern Europe, with unclear demographic majorities and large populations of national minorities. Complex ethnic webs across Europe led to extreme violence as activists, politicians, diplomats, armies, and militias shifted, formed, or dismantled borders. All the while, they killed, ethnically cleansed, or integrated inhabitants to justify, align with, or even initiate such border changes.⁵² The Austro-Bavarian region abounded with such nationally-motivated border violence. Assassinations, paramilitary street-fighting, attempted Putschen, bombings, marches, mobilizations, and the smuggling of munitions, paramilitary troops, and funds across the border created a highly militarized atmosphere in the interwar period. Paramilitarists across the political spectrum fixated on the

⁵¹ Eric D. Weitz, "From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions," *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (Dec. 2008): 1313-1315, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30223443>, Accessed 5 April 2018.

⁵² This literature is vast, so I have included here excellent points of entry. Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), xv-xvii, 1-24. For more current European historiography see Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 41-75. Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1-17. Alexander V. Prusin, *The Lands Between: Conflict in the East European Borderlands, 1870-1992* (New York: Oxford University, 2010), 1-10, 253-259. See also Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz's, Introduction to *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands*, eds. Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 1-8. A darker variation of the word "borderlands" was used by Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), vii-xix.

visibility and revisability of the Austro-Bavarian border. Because of these patterns, the paradigm of borderlands definitively applies to this space.

But there was a twist. The Austro-Bavarian region presents us with a borderland that remained intra-national. For the most part in this context, Austrians fashioned themselves as Germans in nationality. Additionally, some Austrians and Bavarians saw themselves as Germans of a similar southern, eastern, and Alpine variety.⁵³ These assumptions of common nationality blended with southeast German regionalism in ways that yielded an intoxicating Molotov cocktail, one that brought activists together in solidarity while also engulfing the border region in flames over disagreements, miscommunications, and leadership rivalries. Such conflicts created borderland conditions as chaotic as any multi-national, multi-ethnic region in central and eastern Europe. Here, regional loyalties remained foundational to the broader sense of German nationalism, which generated both cooperation and competition.

Research into such intra-national infighting offers the depth of a richly-informed regional history, but its implications shed new light on the concept of borderlands. Borderlands literature has covered the peripheral regions of eastern and central Europe's multi-ethnic empires, such as the regions of Austria-Hungary that splintered into separate nation-states throughout the twentieth century. In this literature, the concept of borderlands has become synonymous with international and multi-national, however constructed.⁵⁴ Luža's work

⁵³ Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 1-15, 36-38, 232-236. The notion of there being a plurality of definitions for "German" has a robust historiography. See, for example: Vick, *Defining Germany*, 1-13. Suval, *Anschluss Question*, xi-xxi. Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 9. Hochman, "Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy," 272. My work puts this question in conversation with borderlands literature.

⁵⁴ Sahlins, *Boundaries*, xv-xvii, 1-24. Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 41-75. Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 1-17. Prusin, *The Lands Between*, 1-10, 253-259. Snyder, *Bloodlands*, vii-xix. Bartov and Weitz,

maintains the standard conceptualization that borderlands meant multi-national conflict: “With the exception of Salzburg and Vorarlberg, every Land bordered a state with a non-German majority, where the Germans formed ethnic islands or lived in mixed regions adjacent to Austria. The special borderland psychology, based on national competition and struggle...”⁵⁵ Likewise, Julia Walleczek-Fritz reifies this notion that Austria’s borderlands meant Carinthia and Styria, which “comprised contested and ethnically diverse borderland regions that were threatened by the emerging State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs...”⁵⁶ This conceptual slippage between borderlands and international conflict is mistaken.

By studying the Austro-Bavarian region as an intra-national borderland, both historically and historiographically, I show that borderland conditions existed in spaces of a supposedly agreed-upon national identity. I bring into conversation the regional-national dynamic with the idea that those very “core” Länder, like Salzburg and Vorarlberg, functioned as borderlands. And they did so specifically because their inhabitants identified nationally with the inhabitants across the border. Thorpe rightfully addresses the idea that German-speaking Austria itself functioned as a borderland. But her borderlands narrative centers on Czech

Introduction to *Shatterzone of Empires*, 1-8. I build on Caitlin Murdock’s conceptualization that borderlands “are defined not by barriers but by movements” and that “multiple affiliations and regional particularities combined to create an eminently normal Central European landscape.” My approach focuses on the Austro-Bavarian case as intra-national rather than “multi-national.” Caitlin E. Murdock, *Changing Places: Society, Culture, and Territory in the Saxon-Bohemian Borderlands, 1870-1946* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2010), 11.

⁵⁵ Luža, *Austro-German Relations*, 169.

⁵⁶ Julia Walleczek-Fritz, “Staying Mobilized: Veterans’ Associations in Austria’s Border Regions Carinthia and Styria during the Interwar Period,” in *World War One Veterans in Austria and Czechoslovakia*, eds. Laurence Cole, Rudolf Kučera, Hannes Leidinger and Ina Markova, *zeitgeschichte* 47, Heft 1 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Vienna University Press 2020): 60, www.vr-elibrary.de, University of California Berkley Library, Accessed 17 May 2022.

minorities in Lower Austria, Croat minorities in the Burgenland, and Slovenian minorities encouraged to assimilate in Austrian Carinthia. She emphasizes multi-national borderland regions within Austria, and her work ultimately reifies the notion that borderlands remained inherently transnational or international.⁵⁷ I push past this line of inquiry to complicate assumptions that multi-nationalism remained a pre-requisite for borderlands violence. Likewise, scholarship on fascism has been making such a transnational turn for some time now.⁵⁸ While this transnational focus presents fruitful scholarship, numerous other fault lines—regional, religious, or linguistic—prompted border conflagrations, even in the century when nationalism achieved horrific virulence and even in a space where nationalism supposedly served as a point of consensus.⁵⁹

Consequently, I contend that the defining characteristic of a borderland, whether multi- or intra-national, hinged on the presence of mental paradox among the population(s) in question. This paradox collapsed the distinction between two affective impulses normally

⁵⁷ “Whereas Catholics referred to Austria as the bearer and representative of German Christendom in the East Marches of the old Holy Roman Empire, German-nationalists used the term in reference to Austria’s position on the borderlands of the German nation.” Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 115. For her discussion of Lower Austria, Carinthia, and Burgenland, see Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 121–140.

⁵⁸ Thorpe also made a powerful argument for more transnational studies regarding the *Ständestaat* in her 2013 historiographical review. Julie Thorpe, “Education and the Austrofascist State,” in *Das Dollfuss/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933–1938*, 381–393.

⁵⁹ Other works have already described the borderland qualities of the South Tyrol, another example of an *inter*-national borderland (Italian and German/Austrian). See Rolf Steininger, *South Tyrol: A Minority Conflict of the Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 1–3, 145–149. I am also interested in the northern, Austrian Tyrol, which I claim was an *intra*-national borderland with the German-inhabited Bavaria even farther to the north.

For transnational approach to the right-wing paramilitaries after World War I, see Robert Gerwarth, “The Central European Counter-Revolution: Paramilitary Violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War,” *Past & Present*, no. 200 (Oxford University Press, August 2008): 175–209. For a historiographical review of the “transnational approach” to fascism, see Kallis, “Working Across Bounded Entities,” 90.

seen as mutually-exclusive: anxious uncertainty and certain inevitability. The feeling that border revision would eventually happen remained ubiquitous in Germany and Austria alike. But this certainty fused with an almost existential angst about the exact nature and timing of this revision. As the border between certainty and anxiety withered, their volatile combination instigated the chaotic, confusing, and seemingly hypocritical actions of right-wing German activists in this period. Their conviction and resolve became unquestioned—they remained steadfast to fight and die for border revision—but the exact details of their goals remained elusive. They also remained subject to fluctuation based on changing circumstances. By bringing emotions to bear on the conversation of borderlands, we can begin to understand the coexistence of mutual agreement on vague objectives and yet vitriolic conflict over specific means.

My emphasis on borderlands as a fundamentally affective phenomenon draws inspiration from Bathsheba Demuth's recent scholarship on emotional bonds across Alaska, research that intersects "three significant but usually distinct historiographies: those of borderlands, animals, and emotion."⁶⁰ By bringing emotions to bear on borderlands in central Europe, I further underscore that fascism served an affective purpose. As Mosse described, "For fascism created a political environment which attempted to encompass the entire man nor woman, to address, above all, the senses and emotions, and at the same time to make the abstract concrete as something uplifting and familiar which can be seen and touched."⁶¹ And a

⁶⁰ Demuth, "Labors of Love," 270 (for direct quotation), 271-274.

⁶¹ Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, x. He further elaborated on his affective focus: "Fascism could create a consensus because it annexed and focused those hopes and longings that informed diverse political and intellectual movements of the previous century...political choices are determined by

borderland composed of rival fascists certainly presented a volatile emotional experience. The intra-national borderland intervention also grows from the idea that borders create and represent mental barriers as much as they form actual physical demarcations. Austro-Bavarian activists and paramilitaries based their regionalist schemes on their perceptions of reality, creating dynamic dialogues between real and imagined notions of regionalism, nationalism, and fascism. In presenting borderlands through the optic of historically-contingent mental and emotional barriers, I hope to answer Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett's call to arms for reinvigorating borderlands history: "instead of envisioning borderlands as steady-state phenomena—ahistorical entities waiting to be destabilized—we might ask how instability is built into the borderlands. In other words, to write open-ended histories, we should become more catholic about our categories."⁶²

Try as scholars might to move away from normalizing "the nation-state," the influence of modern Germany's borders have left a strong watermark on borderlands literature. It seems

peoples' actual perception of their situation, their hopes and longings, the utopia toward which they strive. The fascist 'attitude towards life' was suffused by cultural factors through which, as we have attempted to show, the movement presented itself..." Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, 42, 44.

Robert O. Paxton also iterated: "Feelings propel fascism more than thought does. We might call them mobilizing passions..." Robert O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism," *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 1 (March 1998): 6, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/235001>, Accessed 6 January 2021. I do not lean too heavily on his conceptualizations, as he tends to dismiss what he deems as not real fascism. I am more in favor of a relativist framework that accepts self-proclaimed fascists as fascists, regardless of their success in practice. Robert O. Paxton, "The Five Stages of Fascism," *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 1 (March 1998): 3

⁶² In their masterful state-of-the-field article, these two scholars rightfully caution that historians' hyperinflated use of "borderlands" has made it a stale conceptual catchall, with diminishing analytical returns and which risks reifying the very nationalist narratives they claim to upend. Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," *The Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (September 2011): 338-357, 358 (for direct quotation), 359-361, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/415099>, Accessed 1 January 2021.

the only borderland that makes the intra-national cut was the Cold War border that split the normative “unit” of Germany into East and West. Edith Sheffer’s *Burned Bridge* narrates a story of two neighboring German cities that fell on opposite sides of the Iron Curtain, describing how “cohesive borderlands” with one identity could become “bifurcated borderlands” with opposing identities.⁶³ Sheffer convincingly argues that mental and physical divisions became mutually constitutive and mutually reinforcing, and this interplay between physically and mentally constructed borders features heavily in my narrative.⁶⁴ Jason B. Johnson recently contributed a great microhistory of the Cold War division of an even smaller organizational unit: the “village life” of Mödlareuth as opposed to “town life” of Sheffer’s work.⁶⁵ His work builds on and contributes to the study of the “inner-German border,” but his work reifies the assumption that such a borderland within Germany must be a Cold War story.⁶⁶ But such studies presuppose and take for granted the borders of the German nation-state and cast Austria aside. Centering Austria shows that the German adage of “two states, one nation” had a provenance that extended long before the Cold War began.⁶⁷ Borderlands strife also existed in the first half of the twentieth century among far-right Germans split into the states of Germany

⁶³ Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3–4, 253 (for direct quotations).

⁶⁴ Sheffer, *Burned Bridge*, 3–13, 250–257.

⁶⁵ Jason B. Johnson, *Divided Village: The Cold War in the German Borderlands* (London and New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 9.

⁶⁶ Johnson, *Divided Village*, 8 and 9.

⁶⁷ A man in Vienna expressed such a sentiment when he bemoaned fact that the German people were living as “*Ein volk – Zwei Staaten*.” While this slogan would become a rallying cry in the context of a Germany divided into East and West during the Cold War, its provenance was from the division between North and South during the interwar period. *Ein Volk – Zwei Staaten: Schobers „Anschlußverzicht.“* G. I. Wien, 10 May 1930. Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BaBL), Bestandssignatur: R/8048/, Archivsignatur: 711, Standort: 51, Magazin: M206, Reihe: 77. Day 7 Photo 369.

and Austria.⁶⁸ Instead of looking at competing communist and capitalist ideologies, we ought to begin with competing notions of regionalism within a network of right-wing ideologies.

Lastly, this notion of borderlands as affective and as abstraction leads me to a word on conceptual and theoretical humility. Pieter M. Judson's work, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*, rightly reminds us not to assume and or reify the very category of the national, whether of the multi- or intra- varieties. He also cautions against us assuming "borderlands" as something or some category that was objectively real, instead remaining "illusory creations." Instead, he emphasizes the agency of "nationalist activists" in construing and constructing these spaces spatially, mentally, and physically.⁶⁹ I agree. State borders were historical constructs, with nothing natural or "objective" about them, and we ought not bestow agency upon the analytical category of borderlands. To that end, I foreground that it was people—activists, agents, paramilitarists, politicians, and everyday inhabitants—whose perceptions, impulses, and actions endowed the border with meaning. In so doing, they made the surrounding environs into "borderlands," simply because they framed the border as real, even if they despised it. And as we shall see, it was often a dynamic comingling of loathing and loving the border that warped the region into a borderland.

Nationalism & Regionalism: Austrian & Bavarian "Similarities" Before 1918

⁶⁸ For more on the extent to which a border was an "abstraction," see John Davis Morton, "Making Nations: The Northeastern Borderlands in an Age of Revolution, 1760–1820" (PhD diss., Boston College, 2019), 233.

⁶⁹ Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 257.

If Judson's work reminds us to take some humility with the category of "borderlands," then it also reminds us to treat critically the category of the "nation."⁷⁰ Pushing further, Tara Zahra's great monograph, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948*, reminds us to treat the category skeptically: it was specific agents in central Europe who pushed national categories onto dispersed inhabitants, who themselves often exhibited a resilient "indifference to nationalism."⁷¹ I certainly do not contend that every Austrian or Bavarian was a diehard German nationalist. The story in the intra-national borderland was also about specific human actors in specific organizations applying situational pressures onto populations they conceptualized as mono-national. While activists often present their nation as "natural," "inherent," or "transcending time," the idea of the nation remains simply that: an idea, an abstraction, a dynamic social-mental construct. As such, it remains specific to everyone, rife with disagreement, and subject to historical changes in interpretation.⁷² Hence the cooperation and conflict across the Austro-Bavarian borderland: activists spliced polyvalent notions of nationalism with polyvalent notions of regionalism.

And few ideas in history were as polyvalent as German nationalism. *Kleindeutsch*-*großdeutsch* discourses marked nineteenth century German nationalist movements.⁷³ And

⁷⁰ Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 5-7, 9-11, 13-14, 17-18.

⁷¹ Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 1-4, 5 (for direct quotation), 6-12. See also Brown, *A Biography of No Place*, 38-47. See also James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 3-9.

⁷² For the foundational text on nationality as an abstract construction, see Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 1-7, <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy.bc.edu/2027/heb.01609>, Accessed 12 February 2021. See also Bulloch, "Promotion of an Austrian Identity," 10-12.

⁷³ Vick, *Defining Germany*, 1-13.

they resurfaced passionately in 1918. As Erin Hochman has shown, left-of-center factions in interwar Germany and Austria welded großdeutsch objectives to their democratic platform. They wielded ideas of großdeutsch glory and destiny to buoy the new republics with nationalist legitimacy. It was *alldeutsch* (Pan-German) nationalism that fueled and intoxicated the right-wings, who also increasingly incorporated völkisch ethno-nationalism into their brew of right-wing racism.⁷⁴ Conversely, Julie Thorpe has crafted an adaptable notion of “pan-Germanism” to describe both the regional and broader Germanic impulses of interwar Austrians.⁷⁵ Other scholars have honed in on the *gesamtdeutsch* (also roughly, Pan-German) elements of the Austrofascist years.⁷⁶ These variations of German nationalism (pro-democratic, pro-fascistic, greater, lesser, ethno-nationalist, Pan-) speak to the extent to which the abstraction of the nation was constructed and contested, and it would be ahistorical to draw permanent, set distinctions among them.⁷⁷ For the operational purposes of this dissertation, I employ right-wing understandings and usages of großdeutsch nationalism. I do so not to

⁷⁴ Hochman, *Imagining Greater Germany*, 3, 238–239. See also Erin R. Hochman, “Ein Volk, ein Reich, eine Republik: Großdeutsch Nationalism and Democratic Politics in the Weimar and First Austrian Republics” *German History* 32, no. 1 (Oxford University Press on behalf of the German History Society, 2014): 29–52, (39–40 for the grossdeutsch versus alldeutsch divide), doi: 10.1093/gerhis/ght102, Accessed 18 May 2022. See also “Großdeutsch, nicht alldeutsch,” in *Das neue Österreich: Wochenschrift der „Bergland-Presse“ für Kultur, Politik u. Wirtschaft* (Nr. 4 f. Jahrg. 1929, Dezember, 21.12.1929), BaBL, Bestandsignatur: R/8048/, Archivsignatur: 711, Standort: 51, Magazin: M206, Reihe: 77, 3, 109, 222, 61 Ve 1 Alld. Verband, Day 7 Photo 364.

⁷⁵ Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 6–7.

⁷⁶ In particular, see the section “Die katholisch-österreichische (gesamtdeutsche) Reichs-Ideologie“ in Staudinger, “Austrofascistische „Österreich“-Ideologie,” 33–35.

⁷⁷ Demonstrating the historical fluidity and situational dependency of these overlapping yet distinct terms, Haans Haas labels the großdeutsch goals of the social democrats as “the idea of a gesamtdeutsch, later a European revolution against national socialism.” Hanns Haas, “Der „Anschluss“, Kapitel 1 in *NS Herrschaft in Österreich: Ein Handbuch*, Hg. von Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch, Wolfgang Neugebauer, Reinhard Sieder (Wien: öbv & hpt VerlagsgmbH & Co. KG, 2001), 29.

counter Hochman's robust use of it, but to complement it with the right-wing großdeutsch nationalism that would become infamous under the Nazis.⁷⁸ In that sense, I draw on Hanns Haas's claim: "The Austrians are a 'belated nation,' their missing national consensus facilitated the infiltration of the National Socialists, because they replicated a 'großdeutsch' attitude."⁷⁹ Furthermore, the actors I study referred to großdeutsch impulses explicitly, even the großösterreichisch fantasy. Großdeutsch also suggested a tacit emphasis on a specific spatial feature—the Austro-Bavarian border. Well, more accurately, the *elimination* of this specific cartographical demarcation. Because großdeutsch pointed to the very border I seek to center, I have decided to use it in favor of gesamt-/allddeutsch, though gesamtdeutsch discourses did feature depending on context.⁸⁰ Since this dissertation focuses on intra-fascist infighting, I have also decided to examine völkisch nationalisms as competing discourses over which regional "type" of German was the most "genuine." Often, right-wingers fused toxic großdeutsch with völkisch nationalisms when striving for German glory based on regional retrenchment.

And much like nationalism, regionalism likewise remained abstract, imaginative, and contested. Essentially, regionalism meant identification with and loyalty to a strong component within a larger state, empire, or country. But working toward regional unity translated into dissociative practices, simply because regional cohesion meant something different to each person ascribing to it.⁸¹ In dissecting Austro-Bavarian regionalism, I see my

⁷⁸ Hochman, *Imagining Greater Germany*, 3, 238-239.

⁷⁹ Haas, "Der ,Anschluss,'" 29.

⁸⁰ As Haas also claimed: "In 1934 the Austrian concept of the Austrofascist system and the gesamtdeutsch idea of National Socialism were coopted." Haas, "Der ,Anschluss,'" 28-29.

⁸¹ Though concerned with a different context, Scott reveals the fruitfulness of regional studies: "Yet it is no secret that the term 'region' is both ambiguous and imprecise. Therein, perhaps, lies its attraction, since it can embody a diversity of aspirations and identities. In one dimension, the region

work as applying the “regional turn” of the 1990s into conversation with the more recent historiographical field of borderlands.

This “regional turn” in the historiography on German-speaking Europe was marked by two flagship studies: Cecilia Applegate’s *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* and Alon Confino’s *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial German, and National Memory, 1871-1918*.⁸² To Applegate, “Nationalism could embrace their smaller worlds; Germanness could encompass their diversity ... For the incomplete nation of 1871, the invented traditions of the Heimat bridged the gap between national aspiration and provincial reality.”⁸³ Her examination on the attempt to reconcile intra-German “diversity” functions critically in this story. But I shift the spotlight away from the Pfalz—a region with its own identities complicated by being a Bavarian-run exclave and later part of the borderland imaginations of the Westmark—toward Bavaria and Austria to dissect borderland imaginations about the Ostmark.⁸⁴ Though my dissertation is less concerned with Confino’s claims about “collective memory,” I do rely heavily on his demonstrations that imaginative constructs of locality and regionality were elastic and interchangeable.⁸⁵

may be determined by natural features, a landscape bounded by geographical limits or characterized by a uniformity of geology, topography, or ecology; in another it may reflect the pattern of human settlement, marked by a common language, ethnicity, or culture. But it can also be an artificial construct, a means of identifying social and economic priorities, which can best be addressed by co-operation across existing administrative, territorial, or political divisions... In other words, the region is both ‘given’ and ‘created,’ and its vitality is likely to be greatest where the two elements coincide and interact.” Scott, *Regional Identity and Economic Change*, 1-2 (for direct quotation), 3-5, 17-69.

⁸² Cecilia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 3-4.

⁸³ Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*, 13.

⁸⁴ Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*, 1-9, 20-21, 197-227.

⁸⁵ Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3-6, 7 (for direct

The historiography's regional turn reached its culmination in 2010 with Martina Steber's *Ethnische Gewissheiten: Die Ordnung des Regionalen im bayerischen Schwaben vom Kaiserreich bis zum NS-Regime*. Her work brilliantly theorizes regionality, both deconstructing it as a contested set of abstractions while reconstructing the plurality of its very real implications.⁸⁶ She puts forward the idea of "*Mental Mapping*" to understand how imaginations interact with space and also traces multi-nodal "*Konstruktionsprozesse* (construction process)" for what became understood as regional.⁸⁷ Both theoretical innovations coincide well with the other scholarship upon which I have built this dissertation: namely, that fascism, understandings of borders, and nationalism were in many ways relative, psychological, and interactive processes, all subject to contestation and change over time.⁸⁸ She also constructively criticizes prior regional studies for "using the concepts »region« and »locality« indistinctly" before adding her own way forward: "However if one alters the national perspectives in favor

quotation), 8–23, 97–189. For more from him on intersections of Heimat and locality, see Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 23–28. Within the scholarship, the 1990s saw a shifting emphasis onto German-speaking regionality. In addition to Applegate and Confino were Scott (cited earlier) and Oded Heilbrunner, whose work examines the Baden "borderland" in the 1920s to study the rise of Nazism. He emphasizes the role of Catholicism and the Black Forest landscape as key to the southwestern German regionality here and points to the extent Nazism became popular with Catholics. I build on this foundation in my work but regarding the Alps of the southeastern German borderland region, with particular emphasis on the rise of non-Nazi far-right groups who used Catholic senses of self as rallying cries against Nazism. See Oded Heilbrunner, *Catholicism, Political Culture, and the Countryside: A Social History of the Nazi Party in South Germany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), 1–11, 12 (for direct quotation), 13–16. For a powerful literary review of this regional turn, see Applegate, "A Europe of Regions," 1157–1182.

⁸⁶ Martina Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten: Die Ordnung des Regionalen im bayerischen Schwaben vom Kaiserreich bis zum NS-Regime* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, 2010), 11–31.

⁸⁷ Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten*, 23–24, 28 (for "Konstruktionsprozesse von Region" quotation), 30, 34 (for "*Mental Mapping*" quotation, italics in original).

⁸⁸ Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten*, 23–24, 28, 30, 34. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, x–xi. Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 233. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1–7.

of a regional one, which moreover is not determined by the state alone, so the regional and local interpretation emerges no longer so one dimensional ...”⁸⁹ I seek to apply a similar such conceptualization of regionality as inherently pluralized, with demarcations between the national and local that nevertheless remained porous rather than hermetic. Her approach to the southwestern, German-speaking *schwäbisch* region serves as the ideal point of departure for my close reading of the southeastern, German-speaking *bairisch-österreichisch* region.

But what exactly do we take as this Bavarian–Austrian region? Given the relative, constructed nature of any “region,” an exact definition remains folly or perhaps privileges the preferences of a particular feuding faction as studied here. Assigning one singular definition also presents us with particular challenges because it risks eliding over contextualized specificity. Depending on context, “region” could imply regional variation within Austria, a specifically Austrian sense of space, a specifically Bavarian sense of space, or to both Austro–Bavarian spaces. Agents could also invoke vague notions of southeastern regionalism defined against some “northern” German foil. When used by a historical agent, I seek to tease out the term’s denotive and connotative role in the specific discourse in question. That said, this dissertation also needs a rough, operational definition. Geographically-speaking, the “region” studied here refers to areas of the borderland described above: the spaces surrounding the German–Austrian border. On the Reich side of things, that means roughly those peoples living in the southern piedmont regions of Bavaria, from Munich to the very ridgelines of the Alps. On the Österreich side of things, that means roughly those peoples inhabiting the Austrian

⁸⁹ Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten*, 33, 34 (for direct quotation).

states of Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Salzburg, Upper Austria, in addition to the western highlands of Styria. But as with any study that centers the border regions, inhabitants of the traditional “centers”—the twin metropolises of Berlin and Vienna—do feature as well, often in counterpoint, befuddled by the transborder activism that eluded their direct “control.”

Like nationalists, regionalists often built their beliefs upon constructed, reductive, and politicalized historicizations they hoped would justify, normalize, and somehow naturalize their immediate objectives. The German language has a specific word for such politicization of history: *Geschichtspolitik* (politics of history).⁹⁰ This concept posits that politics intertwine integrally with the past, not simply in terms of cause and effect, but also because politicians conjure narrative trajectories to legitimize their objectives and to demonize those of their opponents. *Geschichtspolitik* featured strongly in the construction of Austro-Bavarian regionalism(s) from about 1918 until 1945. Activists could invoke the past intentionally, accidentally, implicitly, explicitly, or some combination thereof, and they laced them throughout their political rhetoric, leaflets, party manifestos, and political treatises.

In addition to *Geschichtspolitik*, southern German-speaking lands in the first half of the twentieth century saw a flurry of regionalist claims based on specific presentations of landscape, language, culture, and even “race.”⁹¹ The supposed affinities that Austrians and Bavarians shared stemmed from perceptions and constructions, which themselves remained

⁹⁰ Robert Gerwarth, *The Bismarck Myth: Weimar Germany and the Legacy of the Iron Chancellor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1–10.

⁹¹ Or as Scott says about his Upper Rhine region of study: it was a place where “language, culture, and historical tradition bind what politics still divides.” Scott, *Regional Identity and Economic Change*, 3.

subject to different perspectives and to historical changes. But many people in question perceived these narratives to be real, and their actions reflected their perceptions. Furthermore, the superficiality of these affinities made it easy for politicians and activists to cash them in for quick political capital in debates and conflicts over the fate of Bavarians and Austrians.

My focus on Austria as a region of Germanness builds on Erin Hochman's dissertation "Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy," in which she asserts "Austrian identity in this period [1920s into the 1930s] mounted to a regional rather than a national identity," marked by confounding complication of being "a region of a particular nation" that "lay outside the borders of the nation-state and even constituted its own country."⁹² Her work positions this regionalism as based upon the Austrian sense of German nationality: "while Austrians saw themselves possessing a distinctive culture, they also regarded themselves as territorially part of a German Fatherland and as members of a German cultural nation."⁹³ Drawing on such ideas,

⁹² Hochman, "Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy," 233. She traces this regionalism through the discursive histories of the terms "tribe" (*Stamm*) and "locality" or "home" (*Heimat*), which were "flexible and multivalent" and which "articulated the centrality of Germanness and Germany to the diverse ideas about Austrianness." Hochman, "Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy," 235-236. David S. Luft's seminal article was key in framing of Austrian identity "as a region of German culture." David S. Luft, "New Conceptual Directions: Austria as a Region of German Culture: 1900-1938," *Austrian History Yearbook* 23 (1991): 137, <https://www.cambridge.org/core>, Accessed 16 December 2020. For more on the Stamm concept, see Till van Rahden's chapter on Jewish discourses of Stamm. He examines how Jewish advocates sought legitimacy within the national fabric of Germany by pushing for poly-nodal sense of Germanhood made of many Stämme. Till van Rahden, "Germans of the Jewish Stamm: Visions of Community between Nationalism and Particularism, 1850 to 1933," Chapter 1 of *German History from the Margins*, eds. Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 27-48, more specifically 37-38.

⁹³ Hochman, "Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy," 236. See also Julie Thorpe's assertion: "...Austrians were just as concerned with their boundaries of the German nation in the years before 1938. They were not only imagining their identity as Germans in the New Europe: they were also imagining their identity as citizens of the New Austria." Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 11. She adroitly re-conceptualizes pan-Germanism to incorporate the emphasis on regionalism, crafting it "as both a political and cultural idea of nationhood" that "reaches beyond conventional definitions to encompass both the particular regional and local expressions of German identity and the

my work broadens this sense of regionality to include Bavaria, tracing Austro-Bavarian perceptions as southeastern Germans, often of an Alpine variety. Furthermore, my work picks up on a thread Hochman identified when she clarified that “By regarding Austrian identity as a regional identity, I do not intend to deny regional variances within the First Republic – Vienna was extremely different from Styria, which in turn was different from Vorarlberg, and so on.”⁹⁴ Just Austria itself represented a complex mosaic of competing intra-state regions and regionalism.⁹⁵ My work examines such regionalist divisions and infighting within the broader southeastern German region itself.

A cursory glance at the history of the Austro-Bavarian region, its peoples, and its cultures might seem to lend credence to southeastern German solidarity, about which interwar regionalists pontificated.⁹⁶ Throughout the innumerable geopolitical upheavals of the medieval, early-modern, and modern periods, religious and secular authorities alike have codified, broken, reaffirmed, and broken again the demarcating line(s) between the territories

universal idea of a wider German-speaking community in Central Europe.” Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 233.

⁹⁴ Hochman, “Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy,” 236.

⁹⁵ “Regional identity in general can only be adequately considered within the framework of a state infrastructure which comprises a plurality of regions. In the case of Austria this pluralistic approach is especially evident.” Brigitte Mazohl-Wallnig, Introduction to “National Identity or Regional Identity: Austria Versus Tyrol/Salzburg,” Chapter 2 in *Austrian Historical Memory & National Identity, Contemporary Austrian Studies, Volume Five*, eds. Günter Bischof & Anton Pelinka (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 32. Steber likewise presents her chosen region as interwoven with a diversity of histories: “in Bavarian Swabia, the narration of history gained uniqueness through a paradox of topicality: The plurality of historical traditions in the region represents a unique challenge for the construction of a regional history there.” Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten*, 27.

⁹⁶ More recent historiography has echoed and even reified the conflation of these two regions. When discussing Austria’s economy, Evan Burr Bukey sees Bavaria as the best and most obvious comparison, given that these two regions “shared both a common border and a similar culture and heritage.” Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler’s Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 18 (for direct quotation), 19.

of “Bavaria” and “Austria.” The constant changes of these boundaries made it a contentious fault line in German-speaking Europe.⁹⁷ In the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, Bavarian and Austrian rulers stayed defiantly Catholic in the face of the Protestant Reformation and the resulting Religious Wars that swept through German lands. The eighteenth century likewise saw attempts to fuse Austria with Bavaria, with Frederick II of Prussia intervening to prevent such a bloc in southern Germany.⁹⁸ Such attempts remained well within the confines of early-modern *Staatsraison*, not the modern demographic politics of nationalism and nation-states.⁹⁹ But to twentieth-century nationalists, historical accuracy mattered less than the political capital they could fabricate out of teleological narratives.

In the nineteenth century, the Austro-Bavarian border remained highly contentious as the continent’s states increasingly grappled with questions of nationalism, in addition to more traditional questions of imperial jurisdiction. This fervor saw an added complexity about the

⁹⁷ During the territorial fluctuations of the medieval period, regions often associated with Salzburg were often part of the realm of Bavaria. See the great collection of territorial maps of the Holy Roman Empire in Peter H. Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire: A Thousand Years of Europe’s History* (Allen Lane: An Imprint of Penguin Books, 2016), xvi–xxxiii.

⁹⁸ For the politicization of Frederick II’s maneuver to advance twentieth-century arguments against *Anschluss*, see Friedrich W. Foerster, “Germany and Austria: A European Crisis,” in *Foreign Affairs* 9, no. 4 (Council on Foreign Relations: July 1931): 620–621, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20030390>, Accessed 8 February 2021.

⁹⁹ During the War of Austrian Succession, Habsburg Emperor Joseph II sought Bavaria and the headwaters of the Danube to reassert Austrian influence in the southern German-speaking lands. The Bavarian state resisted Austrian advances and was willing to fight to preserve its independence. For the Austrian invasion, see Paul P. Bernard, *Joseph II and Bavaria: Two Eighteenth Century Attempts at German Unification* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), 107–123 203–218. The tables turned during the Napoleonic Wars—Bavaria gained and then lost territories from Tyrol and Salzburg as French influence wax and then waned. In the terms of the peace settlement, “one fifth of its [Salzburg’s] area, the pre-alpine and fertile agrarian land west of the rivers Salzach and Saalach, remained Bavarian territory.” For more on the rise and fall of “pro-Bavarian sentiments” in the Salzburg regions during this time, see Gunda Barth-Scalmani, “The Case of Salzburg” in “National Identity or Regional Identity: Austria Versus Tyrol/Salzburg,” Chapter 2 in *Austrian Historical Memory & National Identity*, 51.

Austro-Bavarian border: the debate between a *kleindeutsch* and a *großdeutsch* unification. *Kleindeutsch* (small German) advocates pushed for a Prussian-led unification that would exclude Habsburg Austria and its significant Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, Slovene, Polish, Ukrainian, and Italian populations. *Großdeutsch* (large German) advocates pushed for a Prussian and Austrian-led unification that would bring Habsburg territories into the German fold. This debate beleaguered and bogged down the revolutionaries of 1848.¹⁰⁰ Prussia seemed to resolve it once and for all by defeating Austria in the Seven Weeks' War of 1866. Bavaria and other southern German states aligned with Austria against Prussia during this brief conflict, and Prussia's victory led to the exclusion of Austria from German affairs. It seemed to provide a definitive military victory for the *kleindeutsch* idea. A few years later, Prussia baited France into war, which in turn pressured Bavaria into a Prussian-dominated German unification in 1871. This Hohenzollern-led German Empire existed separately from, but in alliance with, the Habsburg-led Austro-Hungarian Empire to the southeast.¹⁰¹

However, Bavaria's "unification" into the new German Empire did not mean complete subsumption. The German Empire continued the federal traditions of German-speaking Europe. Bavaria maintained its own King, subordinate to the German Emperor/Prussian King to be sure, yet distinct nonetheless. Bavaria's military also remained structurally segregated from the rest of the Imperial German troops up to the First World War.¹⁰² Bismarck meant for

¹⁰⁰ Vick, *Defining Germany*, 164-173.

¹⁰¹ For a narrative that centers the Austrian-Prussian duality ("The Austro-Prussian Antagonism" or "the opposition between Austria and Prussia") in the *longue durée* of German history, see Heinrich August Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West 1789-1933*, trans. Alexander J. Sager, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013 [2000]), 21 (for direct quotations), 22-30, 71-200.

¹⁰² See D. R. Doronodo, *Bavaria and German Federalism: Reich to Republic, 1918-1933, 1945-49* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1992), 1-2.

his Kulturkampf against the Catholic Church to subordinate Germany's Polish populations, but it backfired by alienating southern Germany's Catholic officials and laity alike, mobilizing the Catholic Center Party into a formidable alternative to the more Prussian-dominated parties.¹⁰³ Numerous other links—demographic, geographic, and linguistic—supposedly forged and illustrated a special relationship between Bavaria and Austria. Southern Bavaria and northwestern Austria share the Alps as an imposing geographical feature which spans both sides of the manmade political border, and the Bavarian (Bairisch) dialect of Upper German could be heard throughout much of Austria.¹⁰⁴ In the interwar years, analyst Friedrich W. Foerster commented on a perception that Prussia subordinated southern Germans, meaning Austrians and Bavarians alike:

It would there be deplorable in the extreme if Austrian individuality were to be leveled out of existence by Berlin. How great this danger is we see in the case of the peaceful and democratic Bavarian people, who have been alienated from all their own traditions by nationalistic Prussian agitators, and who have in fact become the real pivot of nationalistic reaction in Germany.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West*, 200–204, 224. And this religious divide also reinforced and exacerbated regional north–south divides.

¹⁰⁴ For example, an English-language dossier on “Austria and Her Neighbours” from the 1930s commented on this regional cohesion, also revealing the extent to which such regionalism was based on perhaps fabricated and superficial historical narratives that belied more political objectives: “A highly plausible case might be made for the thesis that the ‘hereditary provinces,’ as they came to be called, had always held a special geographical and political status in the medieval Empire, serving as the link between Bavaria and the Pannonian plain: that they produced a specific South German culture very different from that of Saxony or Prussia, and that history is preparing them for a new mission as a centre of South German and Catholic culture. Others will reply that these are entirely specious arguments, invented as camouflage to conceal an altogether artificial attempt to dam back the forces of German national unity.” R.W. Seton-Watson, “Austria and Her Neighbours,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 13, no. 39 (The Modern Humanities Research Association and University College London School of Slavonic and East European Studies, April 1935), 556, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4203032>, Accessed 18 January 2017.

¹⁰⁵ Foerster, “Germany and Austria,” 623.

On the surface, Catholic Bavarians and Austrians formed a logical regionalist foil to Protestant Prussians. In 1928, the staunchly regionalist Bavarian periodical *Bayerische Umschau* even went so far as to run an article titled “Berlin, the crematorium of German culture.”¹⁰⁶ But “cohesive” regional solidarity defined against the regional Prussian “other” also served to dissociate.

In this dissertation, I trace the dynamic history of such southeastern German regionalism between the First World War and the Second. During World War I, Catholic bishops commented on the supposedly more polite, restrained, and caring nature of the Bavarian troops in sharp contradistinction to the Prussians.¹⁰⁷ Austrian and French statesmen alike attempted to capitalize on southern German regionalism in 1916, when it became increasingly clear that Germany fought for continental hegemony rather than to avenge the Habsburg dynasty.¹⁰⁸ The new Habsburg Emperor Charles dispatched Austrian diplomats to Belgium to discuss the possibility of making a separate peace treaty with the Western Allies, leaving Germany in the lurch in exchange for as lenient of peace terms for Austria-Hungary as possible. The unofficial offer made it clear that Austria-Hungary would lose territory to the

¹⁰⁶ “Berlin, das Krematorium Deutscher Kultur,” *Bayerische Umschau: Kampfblatt für deutsche Politik und deutsche Kultur*, 15 December 1928, 50. Folge, 6., 10, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/72/, Archivsignatur: 66, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 108, Reihe: 37, Deutsches Zentralarchiv, Stahlhelm, 61 Sta1, Landesverband Bayern, I/16/06 Stein A 119/15 Fu 268/61, (fol. 1-), Day 8 Photo 56.

¹⁰⁷ The Right Rev. Dr. Cleary, *Prussian Militarism at Work: A Letter* (London: Barclay & Fry, Ltd., 1917), 21-32.

¹⁰⁸ Likewise, David Clay Large commented on increasing Bavarian resentment against what was framed as a Prussian war for domination: “Bavarian peasants, exasperated with their plight in the war economy, began to see the whole conflict as some kind of insidious Prussian plot, whose outcome could only be disastrous to Bavaria ... Bavarian peasants rapidly convinced themselves that the war was being fought for the advantage of Prussia alone.” See David Clay Large, “The Politics of Law and Order: A History of the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr*, 1918-1921,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 70, no. 2 (1980): 7, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1006300>, Accessed 31 December 2020.

Allied states of Romania and Italy. However, to reward Austria for abandoning Germany, the Allies toyed with the idea of giving Bavaria, Silesia, and parts of Poland to Austria.¹⁰⁹ To that point, historian Carl Landauer commented that by 1918, Bavaria “had become a weak spot in the German home front” and “was exposed to influences from near-by Austria, which stayed in the war only because it could not obtain a separate peace without consenting to its own partition.”¹¹⁰ Allen Mitchell’s great work echoed such regional cleavages, claiming that by the end of the war there existed “popular antipathy in Bavaria to the economic and military hegemony of Prussia...”¹¹¹ Regional divides and war resolve seemed inversely correlated.

The Austrian attempt at a separate peace and subsequent invocations of the past to set borders raised an unanswerable question: which past historical context exactly should statesmen use to (re)-establish new borders? With the 1921 publication of Austria’s wartime diplomatic overture, and an added conclusion by Georges de Manteyer raised this question regarding the actual peace treaties of 1919 and their ringleaders. He thought their settlements had arbitrarily codified new borders from earlier times, such as when he claimed, “Austria was reduced to her frontiers of the early fourteenth century...”¹¹² The author cautioned against sifting through the past to establish contemporary borders:

¹⁰⁹ Georges de Manteyer, *Austria’s Peace Offer 1916–1917: With an Introductory Letter By Prince Sixte de Bourbon* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1921), 61–62, 315–317.

¹¹⁰ Carl Landauer would rely on regional stereotypes to prove his point: “But Munich is distinguished from Prussian cities by an easygoing spirit, a live-and-let-live atmosphere.” Carl Landauer, “The Bavarian Problem in the Weimar Republic, 1918–23: Part I,” *The Journal of Modern History* 16, no. 2 (University of Chicago Press: June 1944): 93, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1871341>, Accessed 28 October 2019.

¹¹¹ Allen Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria, 1918–1919: The Eisner Regime and the Soviet Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 33.

¹¹² De Manteyer, *Austria’s Peace Offer*, 331.

After all, from the point of view of strict logic, there is no reason why we should not request these Bavarians or Franconians to-day to retire to Bavaria or Franconia, so as to restore the country round Vienna to the autochthonous Slavs of Moravia and Styria, whom, for twenty centuries, they and the Romans have deprived of access to the Danube.

He narrated an ancient migration of Bavarian peoples into the Austrian lands, which he claimed as originally Slavic, to point out the absurdity of relying on historical narratives to build contemporary borders.¹¹³ Doing so would mean un-doing centuries, even millennia, of migration. He proceeded to mock Western statesmen:

A similar application of historical logic to England would take from her not only Ireland, Scotland, and the adjacent islands, but actually Wales itself, which she conquered in 1284 ... why should not all the Franks return to Franconia, all the Anglo-Saxons to Saxony, all the Normans to Normandy ... and all the Americans to Europe?¹¹⁴

De Manteyer's conclusion criticized the victors for clumsily wielding the past, all while he also reified some narrative that Bavarians had settled Austria.¹¹⁵

Such imaginative schemes for southeastern regionalism continued well after the conclusion of World War I. Founder of the conservative, regionalist Bavarian People's Party, Georg Heim, pushed to congeal together the southeastern German states, including Austrian lands.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, in January 1922, the New York Times reported that German activists organized for the "amalgamation of Austria with Bavaria as the South German counterfoil and as the balance to the preponderance of Prussia." Regional unity presented the obvious way to

¹¹³ De Manteyer, *Austria's Peace Offer*, 331-332.

¹¹⁴ De Manteyer, *Austria's Peace Offer*, 333-334.

¹¹⁵ De Manteyer, *Austria's Peace Offer*, 332-334.

¹¹⁶ Doronodo, *Bavaria and German Federalism*, 3-4.

overthrowing the supposed northern German yoke. According to historian F.L. Carsten's foundational monograph, *The First Austrian Republic: 1918-1938*, internal British governmental documents attested to this logic behind Anschluss ideas. Fusing Austria to Germany "would restore the balance between the Catholic south and the Protestant north, and help to check Prussianism in Germany." To some British statesmen, Austria could rein in Berlin's militarism.¹¹⁷

Austrian unity with Germany, with Bavaria specifically, would supposedly solve another perceived problem: the Austrian "rump" state left after the defeat and dissolution of Austria-Hungary in World War I. These activists saw "Austria's amalgamation with Bavaria as the sole solution for Austria's present plight."¹¹⁸ Anxiety over the Austria's unfeasibility cemented the commitment of these regional activists towards border revision. English-speaking observer C. A. Macartney commented on this fantastical Austro-Bavarian state, claiming regional cohesion came about because of just such anxiety: "Austria was at its most critical stage, while relations between Bavaria and the industrial North and Central Germany were also uncommonly strained."¹¹⁹ Along those lines, the *New York Times* claimed, "Bavarian activities to cinch Austria are based on two considerations ... that the Versailles Treaty will sooner or later be revised or break down; secondly, sooner or later Austria inevitably is bound

¹¹⁷ Full disclosure: I have not seen the original British governmental documents, but they are cited in F. L. Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic 1918-1938: A Study based on British and Austrian Documents* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1986), 6.

¹¹⁸ "Bavarians Working for Austrian Union: Powerful Interests Convinced," *New York Times* (1857-1922), 6 Jan. 1922. ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times, 3

¹¹⁹ C. A. MacCartney, *The Social Revolution in Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926), 256, Available through Hathi Trust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015005901064&view=2up&seq=8>, Accessed 21 January 2021.

to tie up with Germany, treaty or no treaty.”¹²⁰ Certainty abound from the fact that there simply seemed no question of if the border would face revision. And Austro-Bavarian regional connection made some sense, at least on the surface:

they [Bavarians incubating Austrian amalgamation] say all Austrians except radicals and Socialists are pro-Bavarian, that particularly the adjoining Austrian Tyrolese, who are much the same as the zither playing, yodling [sic] Bavarian Highlanders, who likewise wear knee-length leather breeches and sport green alpine hats with bushy tufts or feathers, are eager to join Bavaria.¹²¹

MacCartney further commented about some Austro-Bavarian union: “it is known that the throne was to be offered to a Wittelsbach of Bavaria. There is no reason to suppose that the Austrian mountaineers would have raised much objection to the change of dynasty, since their personal loyalty had largely died with the death of Franz Josef, and conservative Bavaria is far nearer to them in every way than Socialist and atheist Vienna.”¹²² In such thinking, Alpine solidarity of Bavaria and provincial Austria transcended the border, centuries-old dynastic differences, and loyalties to long-standing metropolises. To such regional idealists, Austrians submitting to a non-Habsburg would supposedly present a nonissue.

While regional affinities made a case for unification, the *New York Times* presented a serious caveat. Notwithstanding exogenous and unequivocal Allied (i.e. French) backlash, the exact nature of this hypothetical Bavarian-Austrian union would likely serve as a source of endogenous German contention: “If Austria were to join Germany as a separate independent Federal State, Bavaria would become no more powerful and Prussia’s preponderance would

¹²⁰ “Bavarians Working for Austrian Union,” *New York Times* (1857-1922), 3.

¹²¹ “Bavarians Working for Austrian Union,” *New York Times* (1857-1922), 3.

¹²² MacCartney, *The Social Revolution in Austria*, 256.

persist.”¹²³ The power of the southeast German region would remain divided and weak if split between a single Bavarian state and a single Austrian state. Only “Austria’s amalgamation with Bavaria”—ruled from Munich as one powerful federal state—could channel southeast German influence into an effective check on domineering Prussia. Thus, the newspaper reported “Well in advance, Bavarian propaganda and activities as regards Austria are doing everything possible to forestall Austria joining Germany as a federal state.” Uncertainty abounded over questions of when and how. What exactly did “amalgamation” mean, and according to whom?¹²⁴ Would Austria and Bavaria form one state but with power shared equally between them? MacCartney commented that such endeavors would serve “a Greater Bavaria,” and so did southeastern agglutination simply euphemize Austrian subservience to Bavaria?¹²⁵ Where stood the borderline between interregional solidarity and rivalry? Such unresolved questions converged between the World Wars to make the Austro-Bavarian region as chaotic a borderland as any in twentieth-century Europe.

Project Narrative & Methods

To trace the intersections of regionalism and borderlands violence, I present a narrative in five chapters. Chapter one starts with the end of the First World War. From the ashes of defeat and in the face of a revolutions from the left, right-wing paramilitary organizations in Bavaria—Georg Escherich’s Organisation Escherich (Orgesch) and Rudolf Kanzler’s

¹²³ For such French rejection, see Carsten, *First Austrian Republic*, 6. “Bavarians Working for Austrian Union,” *New York Times* (1857-1922), 3.

¹²⁴ “Bavarians Working for Austrian Union,” *New York Times* (1857-1922), 3.

¹²⁵ MacCartney, *The Social Revolution in Austria*, 112.

Organisation Kanzler (Orka)—invoked regionalism to cooperate with Austrians to forge a southern German line of defense. They thus contributed to the formation of the Heimwehren, similar right-leaning natalist militias throughout Austria.¹²⁶ I follow these groups and how they used military strategies to push for southern German unity against the feared Bolshevik threat from 1918 well into the 1920s. Like many right-wing paramilitaries at the time, they imagined southern German territory as their own *Bezirken* (military districts) that they could coordinate to defend their right-wing vision of a united German-speaking Europe. However, these groups remained at odds with official state functionaries in Germany, who often saw these right-wing militias as lawless usurpers.

Chapter 2 forays into the 1930s, when the various Heimwehren carried the legacy of the immediate interwar years to more radical rightwing ends. They strove for anti-democratic objectives by democratic means: forming a political party to campaign for the Nationalrat, all for the explicit purpose of dismantling it. But such party formation sowed division within and among the Heimwehren. Meanwhile, the inverse phenomena proceeded concurrently. The conservative CSP launched a paramilitary of their own, the Ostmärkische Sturmscharen (Eastern March Storm Troopers, OSS), meant to engage in the unofficial militia contests playing out in public. These parallel assaults along both paramilitary with parliamentary fronts

¹²⁶ Ludger Rape has already narrated how the Orgesch and Orka gave rise to the Austrian Heimwehren. His assessment of regionalism and nationalism is a bit static and rigid, as my first chapter will demonstrate. Ludger Rape, “Die österreichische Heimwehr und ihre Beziehungen zur bayerischen Rechten zwischen 1920 und 1923” (PhD diss., Universität Wien, 1968), 24, 283, 300, 312, 341–380. For a bit more nuance, see Roy G. Koepp, “Conservative Radicals: The *Einwohnerwehr*, *Bund Bayern und Reich*, and the Limits of Paramilitary Politics in Bavaria, 1918–1928” (PhD diss., University of Nebraska, 2010), 137, 262. My first chapter will build on these dissertations to trace how this regional-national nexus led to cross border mobilizations that marked this space as a borderland.

in turn ran in tandem with the Nazis' similar attack on Weimar democracy. And by 1933, both Germany and Austria were careening down the fascist slope. Despite this fascistizing, German-speaking, German-nationalist "bloc," right-wing activists then engaged in an unofficial war across the Austro-Bavarian border over the "right" ways to be fascist and German nationalist.

Austrofascists themselves remained bedeviled with pluralization into the 1930s. Chapter 3 starts by tracing the creation of the Vaterländische Front (Fatherland/Patriotic Front, VF) which existed awkwardly with the myriad Heimwehren and another CSP paramilitary, all dealing with violence from Nazis. While these feuding activists prided their natalist beliefs as integral to their fascist theories, their practices remained contingent on transnational interactions with Italian fascists. I trace how Austria not only became a full-blown fascist Ständestaat, but it also served as a fascist borderland at the geographical and ideological crossroads of this discord between Italy and Germany. We ought not let the infamous Rome-Berlin Axis obscure that these two fascist flagships almost came to broadsides over Austria's fate. Paradoxically, such intra-fascist fighting over territory remained inherent to the logic of fascists who so glorified conflict. If the Austrian "problem" was a fault line in fascist Europe, it simultaneously reinforced their ideological coherence by perpetuating militaristic competition over geopolitical borders.

In Chapter 4, I present the last year and half of the Ständestaat (Corporatist State, the Austrofascist regime), starting when the VF took over the disintegrated OSS and Heimwehren. This newly enlarged VF then engaged with the Nazi movement in two senses of the verb: as ideological friends worthy of fraternal participation in fascist and großdeutsch/völkisch projects and as conflicting adversaries amid a fratricidal war. However awkward this situation

might seem, it grew logically out of the constitutive contradiction between regionalism and nationalism. These two *Brudervölker* (brother peoples), organized into two German *Vaterländer* (fatherlands) cooperated and clashed in the name of achieving both regional resurgence and greater German glory, two identifiers that claimed to be coagulative but also remained inherently dissociative.

Chapter 5 frames Nazi Austria—following the Anschluss up to the end of the war—as a continuation of the interwar processes of borderland regionalism. First, the Nazis continued a press assault on the former Austrofascist organizations and their ringleaders, who penned manifestos about the abuses of Nazism as a Prussian barbarity. Meanwhile, while the Nazis meant for the Anschluss to provide a definitive solution to the Austrian question, they were badly mistaken. Their own administrative documents reveal divergent discourses over the exact branding of the Anschluss and the situating of Austria in Nazi space. The war exacerbated such discursive pluralization over the administration and meaning of Austria in their new Reich. As the Nazi Empire waxed and waned over time, so too did Nazi imaginations about their precious eastern borderland. Lastly, the conclusion briefly presents Allied continuities of intra-German similarities and differences in their occupation regimes, the “problem” of supposed border oddities, in addition to the implications of the Heimwehren on reckoning with the Nazi past.

My project musters a host of primary sources—ideological and financial statements of paramilitary groups, organizations’ meeting minutes, administrative maps, voting advertisements, and recruitment materials for these right-wing, uncivil society groups. I examine these documents for their appeals to reorganize southeastern German-speaking lands

with respect to regional solidarity. I also examine official German and Austrian records from Berlin, Munich, Salzburg, Innsbruck, and Vienna. Though Berlin and Vienna were outside of this German borderland in a geographical sense, the various attempts of German and Austrian officials to anticipate, counter, or cooperate with such Alpine regionalism intertwined critically with this story. Furthermore, as the metropole, Vienna often provided the arena in which activists hashed out their borderland contestations. I also include sources concerning the other Austrian states (Burgenland, Vorarlberg, Carinthia, Lower Austria, and the southeastern portions of Styria), when the activities of agents in these regions influenced Bavaria, Tyrol, Salzburg, Upper Austria, or the northwestern segments of Styria.

By examining the Austro-Bavarian region through the lens of borderland violence that fused intra-national and regional conflicts, I trace three main signifiers used to describe this regional solidarity: upper, southern, and eastern. These three categories shaped how right-wing activists discussed and acted upon Austro-Bavarian regionalism in centripetal and centrifugal ways. Upper referred to the upper German dialect spoken in the high-elevation Alpine region. This linguistic and topographical label suggested images of high-altitude mountainous terrain that became crucial for regional notions of culture and Böden. Mountainous regions also have a history of association with rugged frontierism, a belief that often led to them being regions of “quasi-sovereignty.” Central state agents simply believed it folly to expect total fealty from these spaces where transportation to and from imperial centers remained tenuous.¹²⁷ The Germanic Alpine lands fit this perception quite well. To the chagrin

¹²⁷ Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 222–226, 227 (for direct quotation), 276–278.

of government officials in urban centers (Berlin, Munich, Vienna), the peoples of the Alps got away with being quite dismissive of official state policies. Tait Keller's recent study, *Apostles of the Alps: Mountaineering and Nation Building in Germany and Austria, 1860-1939*, claims that a wanderer in the Alps could "forge a bond to a distinct landscape and environment, where sharp political boundaries became blurred and multifaceted identities could coexist."¹²⁸ His work soundly applies the "environmental turn" to the study of borderlands, where a border imposed in the midst of the Alps to separate Germany and Austria seemed both "linguistically illogical and naturally nonsensical."¹²⁹ While his study brings tourism and landscapes into the broader history of German national building, my interest focuses on the political implications of such mountainous discourse in conjunction with other expressions of regionalism. Furthermore, my work centers a phenomenon that relates to yet remains distinct from hers: how Alpine discourses created a sense of regional exceptionalism, which heightened border violence among peoples who, at least superficially, professed the same nationality.¹³⁰

The southern signifier referred to the cardinal direction of Catholic Bavaria and Austria as opposed to the Protestant northern German states. Defined against northern stereotypes of Prussian militarism, discipline, and austerity, the stereotypes of southern German-speakers

¹²⁸ Tait Keller, *Apostles of the Alps: Mountaineering and Nation Building in Germany and Austria, 1860-1939* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 5-6. While Alpine residents often resisted urban oversight, Keller further shows that residents from such centers often appropriated Alpine imagery when discussing the supposedly true nature of the German nation. He rightly points out that most German speakers live nowhere near mountainous landscapes, and yet, middle-class citizens from urban centers constructed a sense of German nationality based on the Alps. He further claims that German tourist and outdoorspeople projected paradoxical identities onto the Alps—ideas of both individual freedom and a collective sense of German-ness. Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*, 1-14.

¹²⁹ Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*, 5.

¹³⁰ Keller, *Apostles of the Alps*, 1-14.

centered on cultured civility, refinement, and enjoyment of life. This southern disposition projected an aura framed as supposedly “comfortable” and “sentimental” as foiled to the Prussian temperament of “jackboot” determination.¹³¹ Austrians apparently preferred “avoiding hard corners,” instead opting for more laid-back and “well-tempered” approaches to challenges.¹³² Michael P. Steinberg presented this Austrian variation of German nationality as being centered on cosmopolitanism as opposed to the exclusionary nationalism of northern Germans.¹³³ This stereotype of southern inclusiveness and cultural refinement also manifested itself in the power politics of the twentieth century. Tales of reserved Bavarian troops in Belgium during the First World War, who supposedly carried out their occupation with respect and attention to individual circumstances, fell squarely within these tropes of southern German grace and discretion. Throughout the interwar period, groups such as the VF hoped to mobilize notions of southern solidarity to set up a fascist bulwark against Nazi incursions on Austrian sovereignty.

Finally, the eastern descriptor stemmed from Romanticized musings about Austria’s medieval past as the “Eastern Realm” (Österreich) or the “Eastern Frontier” (Ostmark).¹³⁴ In German culture, notions of “the East” generally referred to regions due east of Germany,

¹³¹ R. K. Sheridan, *Kurt von Schuschnigg: A Tribute* (London: English Universities Press, 1937/1942), 306.

¹³² See Kurt von Schuschnigg, *My Austria*, trans. John Segrue, intro. by Dorothy Thompson, also known as *Farwell Austria* and/or *Dreimal Österreich* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1938) 302, 304.

¹³³ Michael P. Steinberg, *The Meaning of the Salzburg Festival: Austria as Theater and Ideology, 1890-1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 84-115.

¹³⁴ The borders of the “rump” state of Austria formed after the First World War echoed the medieval territory of the Eastern March “...the new State may be said to have a curiously close resemblance to the original Babenberg State which developed out of the ‘Ostmark’ and fell into the hands of the House of Habsburg in the 13th century.” Seton-Watson, “Austria and Her Neighbours,” 556.

meaning east-central and eastern Europe. Germans projected onto these spaces paradoxical emotions and images: supposedly an expansive land of abundance, promise, and the potential site of future German expansion, but also a backward land overwhelmed with poverty and despair that threatened German Kultur.¹³⁵ To German-speakers, however, Austria represented a simultaneously foreign and Germanized space, making it in many ways the best of both worlds. It served as a region that German-speakers could think of as enticingly “exotic” with eastern influences, but it remained comfortably familiar such that it did not seem “dangerous” or overwhelmingly different. Furthermore, imaginative schemes of the German *Drang nach Osten* (Drive to the East) saw Austria as both the bulwark of Germandom in east-central Europe and as Germandom’s springboard for future eastward expansion. The rallying cry of eastern solidarity manifested in groups such as the OSS, which played up east German auto-stereotypes to galvanize its members in defense of Austrian sovereignty.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ This German construct of “easterness” was not always nor inevitably one of existential fear and violence that came to a head under Nazism. Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2009), 1-11. But in the twentieth century, politically constructed historical narratives of eastern invasions converged with antisemitism and fears of Bolshevism to present “the east” as increasingly dangerous. Hanebrink, *The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism*, 8-9.

¹³⁶ Thorpe marks an interesting distinction among “*Ostmarkdeutschum*,” “*Österreichertum*,” and “*Deutschum*.” Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 115. Liulevicius mentions discourses of Austria being south and east, but he does not focus on them. See Liulevicius, *Myth of the East*, 34, 110, 152, 184. Jamie Bulloch’s brilliant dissertation traces “the constructs of *Österreichertum*” among right-wing politicians and theorists throughout the interwar years. He argues that, ultimately, these attempts at identity formation failed until after World War II, however dynamic the interwar discourse was. Bulloch, “Promotion of an Austrian Identity,” 2, 32-33, 261-262, 263 (for direct quotation), 264-278. I seek to apply this sense of right-wing Austrian-ness to Bavarian connections and borderlands chaos.

Bulloch also clings to “identity” as a key conceptual framework. See Bulloch, “Promotion of an Austrian Identity,” 16-19, 20 (for direct quotation), 21-33. This is less a fault or criticism; it is merely the mark of his historiographical context. But following the seminal Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper article problematizing “identity,” the word has become sort of defunct in the literature. See Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity,’” *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (Springer,

The history of Austria and southern Germany in the first half of the twentieth century did not see a definitive shift from one of these three labels to the others. Rather, the discourses of upper, southern, and eastern intersected in complementary and countervailing ways throughout these tumultuous years. Furthermore, these overlapping regionalist demarcations reveal that we ought not see the infamous Anschluss simply as a singular geopolitical event in 1938. Rather, it remained a set of continuous discourses, upon which different Austrians projected their fantasies and fears.¹³⁷ The idea of a union never functioned as a one-way street. Yes, it meant the prospect of merging Austria into Germany, but it could also refer to the idea of conjoining southern German regions (i.e., Bavaria) to Austria.¹³⁸ The idea of regional solidarity spiraled into violence because there existed contested understandings of this southeastern regionalism. Even after the Anschluss became a *fait accompli* in 1938, the meanings and implications remained up for debate.

February 2000): 1-47, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3108478>, Accessed 22 March 2022. I thus eschew “identity” for more relativist, “processual” concepts, such as “identification” (as proscribed by Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity,’” 14 (for direct quotation), 15-17); sense(s) of self (drawing on “self-understanding” as proscribed by Brubaker and Cooper, “Beyond Identity,” 17); “fascistization” (as proscribed by Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 233); and affective impulses or affective loyalties.

¹³⁷ For a mainstay theoretical intervention regarding ideologies and discourses in the context of the history of racism in the United States, see Barbara J. Fields, “Race and Ideology in American History,” in *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, eds. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York, 1982): 155-156.

¹³⁸ For the splintering discourses of unity, see Suval, *Anschluss Question*, xi-xxi. Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 195-236.

Chapter 1 Across the Alps: Transborder Smuggling & Paramilitary Formation, 1918–1928

The armistice on 11 November 1918 may have ended the official fighting along the western front of the First World War. But across central Europe, this ceasefire coincided with new confrontations in the form of paramilitary violence. Right-wing Austrian and Bavarian activists mobilized a litany of such regional “self-defense organizations” immediately following the armistice. They cobbled together right-wing provincial militias—the Bavarian Organisation Escherich (Orgesch), the Austro-Bavarian Organisation Kanzler (Orka or Orgka), and the nascent Austrian Heimwehren (Home Guards). In this chapter, I trace their transborder schemes and machinations. These agents strove for German national resurgence by re-entrenching themselves in regional senses of southeastern, Alpine solidarity. Such nationalism grounded along regional lines created a rocky, unstable foundation. It channeled nativist impulses toward greater German revanchism, but it also highlighted regional variances. This constitutive contradiction between German nationalism and *bairisch* regionalism generated complex debates over priorities and methods, all as these right-wing nationalists strove to rise from the ashes of national defeat. Their transborder transgressions marked the Austro-Bavaria region as an intra-national borderland, one all the more puzzling because the inhabitants surrounding the border claimed the mantle of German nationality. At stake in these internecine right-wing debates rested the question of how to live as Germans in the “right” way.

The far-right feuds within and across this borderland originated from two main sources. Firstly, these groups pluralized ad absurdum: the staggering number of such

organizations bewildered contemporaries back then and historians today. The unwieldy number of organizations, and the litany of self-proclaimed authoritarian leaders, meant any disagreement over methods and personalities—or even just plain confusion and misunderstanding—might spiral into the perception of irreconcilable differences. The second divide sprung from the relativism of both regionalism and nationalism: the meanings of “German” and of southeastern Germanism depended on perspective. The authority to speak on behalf of the nation and its southeastern region was up for grabs. Southeastern German agents sought to harness national currents and regional winds, which at times they channeled in tandem to propel their right-wing ship further and faster. Why? Because right-wing Bavarians and Austrians assumed that their regional manifestations of German culture were the most authentic and genuine, the only “type” of Germans up to the task of broader national resurgence. They thus channeled national and regional abstractions in countervailing ways, breaking their ship on the rock of such questions as: how should regionalism coexist in an age of nationalism? How viable would regionally based unification actually be? What should it even look like?

These questions deeply splintered the members of the far right, already at odds, into a dizzying number of different paramilitaries. Though such infighting beleaguered the far right, it also behooved them, albeit inadvertently and despite themselves. Their divisive methods contributed to the rise of right-wing extremism in interwar Europe because such intra-right-wing, intra-national infighting created confusion. Internecine far-right feuds locked the Austro-Bavarian region in a vortex of chaos, all in the name of re-establishing order. This

chaos reinforced any existing notions that the German and Austrian democracies failed to maintain order and needed to give way to regimes that would.

This chapter starts by offering background on the end of the First World War, the resulting paramilitarization of central Europe, and the eventual peace terms for Germany and Austria. It then narrates the rise of the two key paramilitaries in Bavaria and their combined influence on the nascent Austrian Heimwehren. Through a close reading of Bavarian and Austrian meeting minutes and programmatic texts, I show these agents' aspirations for trans-border, co-regional, and German-national cooperation. This chapter then turns to the funding and illegal arms trade among these men as they smuggled military contraband across the Austro-Bavarian border. All the while, far right Austrians remained dubious about the true intentions of their Bavarian "compatriots." The line between help and control proved both thin and relative. Finally, this chapter discusses a Bavarian leader's last-ditch attempt at forming a Heimatschutz (Home Defense) of his own, taking his cue from the Austrian Heimwehren/Heimatschutz across the border. Thus, a transborder paramilitary formation came full circle: The very groups the Bavarians had helped spawn in Austria in the 1920s became the model for Bavarian groups in the second half of the 1920s. This Bavarian group also quickly ran afoul of the Stahlhelm, Bund der Front Soldaten (Steel Helmet, League of Front Soldiers)—the more recognizable conservative veterans' organization. A Germany reinvigorated by its southeastern inhabitants simply did not sit well with conservative veterans spanning the entire country, bringing to a head the national-regional nexus. In the 1920s, suspicion and paranoia constituted the medium of political exchange among right-wing agents and activists.

From Armistice to Peace: The Austrian “Problem” & Paramilitary Mayhem

If Woodrow Wilson’s 1918 *Fourteen Points* sought to solve the old world’s woes, it also generated novel problems. Case in point, many German-speakers came to see as existential a new Austrian conundrum. Wilson’s idealistic text proclaimed to the Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians, Italians, Slovenians, and Slavs living under Habsburg rule that “the peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development.”¹ Around the November 1918 armistice, this rhetoric of national self-determination offered hope to German-speakers that Austrian lands could join Germany, simply because Austrians professed to be German in nationality.² Many German-speakers sought redemption in national unification following the dissolution of their once-mighty multi-ethnic empire, in which German-speaking officials had held a privileged position.³ In the days following the ceasefire of 11 November 1918, Austrian

¹ Woodrow Wilson, *President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points: 8 January, 1918: President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points*, Available online at *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library in memory of Sol Goldman, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp, Accessed 30 June 2022.

² Julie Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933–38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 1–15, 36–38, 232–236. Erin Hochman, “Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy: The Politics of Commemoration in Germany and Austria” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2010), 233, 235–236. David S. Luft, “New Conceptual Directions: Austria as a Region of German Culture: 1900–1938,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 23 (1991): 137, <https://www.cambridge.org/core>, Accessed 16 December 2020.

³ Residents of the Vorarlberg expressed a desire to join with Switzerland. Christian Koller, “‘Der Wiener Judenstaat, von dem wir uns unter allen Umständen trennen wollen.’ Die Vorarlberger Anschlussbewegung an die Schweiz,” Kapitel 4 in *Das Werden der Ersten Republik ...der Rest ist Österreich, Band I*, Herausgeber Helmut Konrad und Wolfgang Maderthaner (Wien: Carl Gerold’s Sohn Verlagsbuchhandlung KG, 2008), 83–102.

There is a robust historiography on the extent to which, in this context, the idea of Anschluss was a major plank in the social democratic platform. The hope was that an Anschluss between the Weimar Republic and the First Austrian Republic would strengthen social democracy in Central

statesmen unveiled their preliminary laws of the new Austrian state. They named their interim state “Deutschösterreich” (German-Austria). The compound nature of the name itself, let alone what it denoted, suggested orientation toward union with Germany.⁴ The next article proclaimed directly that this “Deutschösterreich is a constituent part of the German Republic.”⁵ The prospect of snatching any kind of national resurgence from the jaws of defeat was alluring to republican activists, hoping to legitimize German-speaking Europe’s first forays into social democracy.⁶ The foundational document of the new Austrian state presented the world with a proud declaration of Austro-German solidarity.

Europe. Such a diplomatic achievement was framed as a nationalist “win” that would solidify the nascent republics in German-speaking Europe. See Alfred D. Low, *The Anschluss Movement, 1918-1919, and the Paris Peace Conference* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1974), 1-8, 451-462. Erin R. Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany: Republican Nationalism and the Idea of Anschluss* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 1-20, 237-242. Richard Saage, “Die deutsche Frage: Die Erste Republik in Spannungsfeld zwischen österreichischer und deutscher Identität,” Kapitel 3 in *...der Rest ist Österreich*, 65-82.

To be sure, many inhabitants of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had been apathetic to the call of nationality/ethnicity, much to the chagrin and frustration of ardent nationalist activists. See Pieter M. Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 5-7, 9-11, 13-14, 17-18. See Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 1-12.

⁴ Tyrol and Salzburg even held referenda in 1921, the results of which favored Anschluss unequivocally. See F. L. Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic 1918-1938: A Study based on British and Austrian Documents* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company Limited, 1986), 63.

⁵ “5. Gesetz vom 12. November 1918 über die Staats- und Regierungsform von Deutschösterreich,” *Staatsgesetzblatt für den Staat Deutschösterreich: Ausgegeben am 15. November 1918*, Jahrgang 1918, 1. Stück, Seite 4, ALEX Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, by Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=sgb&datum=1918&page=26&size=45>, Accessed 21 February 2022.

⁶ Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 1-20, 237-242. See also Erin R. Hochman, “Ein Volk, ein Reich, eine Republik: Großdeutsch Nationalism and Democratic Politics in the Weimar and First Austrian Republics” *German History* 32, no. 1 (Oxford University Press on behalf of the German History Society, 2014): 29-52, doi: 10.1093/gerhis/ght102, Accessed 18 May 2022.

But with the official Allied peace terms presented in 1919 came the Austrian “problem.” The Allies had many objectives in their treaties, but they hammered home two particularly pronounced goals: defending the sovereignty of Europe’s newly formed nation-states and preventing any future Germany-speaking attempts at hegemony. The overwhelming Austrian desire to join the German nation-state would have aggrandized German-speaking power in Europe. When it came to Austria, the two Allied objectives collided head-on. Austrian expression of self-determination to join Germany would have consolidated the German-speaking states of Europe under one banner. In this case, the latter Allied objective trumped the former.⁷ In Article 80 of their 1919 Treaty of Versailles with Germany and Article 88 of their subsequent Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye with Austria, the Allies forbade any Anschluss without their say so.⁸ The people of Austria were not “accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development” if that autonomous desire manifested as a rejection of their own autonomy.⁹ Wilson’s Tenth Point encapsulated a contradiction the Allies built

⁷ For the sake of narrative clarity, I have painted “the Allies” here with a broad brush. It is important to keep in mind, as F. L. Carsten shows, that the “Allies” were far from a monolith. As mentioned in the Introduction, Carsten proves that some British statesmen deemed it wise to allow an Anschluss. Joining Austria and Germany was a moderate way of deflating any sense of persecution/martyrdom while also imposing an internal check on Prussia. The French, however, were in no mood for such a concession. Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic*, 6.

⁸ “Section VI. Austria. Article 80.” *The Versailles Treaty June 28, 1919: Part III*, Available online at The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy, Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library in memory of Sol Goldman, <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/partiii.asp>, Accessed 19 May 2022. According to this article of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, a potential Anschluss might be permissible “with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations,” meaning the victorious Allies. Technically, the letter of the treaty left open the Anschluss option, but the spirit of the terms and its writers intended to close that potentiality. See “Section VIII. General Provisions. Article 88.” of *Treaty of Peace Between The Principal Allied and Associated Powers and Austria (Signed At St. Germain-En-Laye, 1919, 10 September)*, Available online as PDF at <chrome-extension://oemmnndcbldboiebfnladdacbdnadm/http://www.forost.ungarisches-institut.de/pdf/19190910-1.pdf>, Accessed 1 February 2022.

⁹ Wilson, *Fourteen Points*, Online at *The Avalon Project*, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp.

into their own peace treaties, a hypocrisy which German-speakers emphasized when venting against the Versailles system.¹⁰ Austrian politicians had to rename the Republic of German-Austria as the First Austrian Republic, all to underscore an autonomy the Allies had imposed exogenously.

Concurrent within this high diplomacy, militia movements emerged out in the streets of central and eastern Europe. During the transition from 1918 armistice to 1919 peace, German-speakers organized paramilitaries to recover any form of consolation in the face of defeat.¹¹ A whirlwind of Freikorps (voluntary militias) fought to secure Germany's eastern regions from other ethnic/national groups and from the perceived threat of a Bolshevik Revolution.¹² The attempted Spartacist Revolution in Berlin, plus the brief communist takeovers in both Bavaria and Hungary, scared right-wingers witless and lent credence to their wildest nightmares. Meanwhile, Yugoslav militias besieged Austrian Carinthia, prompting inchoate Carinthian paramilitaries to import armaments from Bavaria to repel the Yugoslav

¹⁰ Snyder adroitly phrased that this contradiction meant "For many Germans, self-determination was both persecution and promise..." Snyder, *Bloodlands*, 9.

¹¹ The defeat created an emotional malaise of "unredeemed sacrifice." See Alexander Watson, *Ring of Steel: Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I: The People's War* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 6 (for direct quotation), 556-566. "Among the revolutionaries who hoped to lead the defeated, the dream was that the bloodshed could legitimate further radical transformations, which could impart meaning to the war and undo its damage." Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 3 (for direct quotation), 4-9. Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 82-82, 133-136. Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 9, 227, 250-251. F. L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980 [1967]), 86-87.

¹² These militias were composed of two key demographics: German veterans from the First World War who refused to give up the fight and young German males who felt left out from the great endeavor to defend the German Fatherland. The former wished to find some redemption and consolation for all of their previous struggles, while the latter sought a sense of masculinity by living out Romanticized military fantasies of their own. Bloxham, *The Final Solution*, 83. Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front*, 227.

invaders.¹³ National and ideological enemies from within and without, plus defeat in war, all fused to unleash a paradoxical development: the radicalization of German and Austrian conservatives into revolutionary paramilitarists.¹⁴ Existing scholarship on such paramilitaries already covered two main rivalries: conflicts among different nationalities and between left-right ideological groups.¹⁵ More recent literature has emphasized the transnational component of these right-wing movements—such as Hungarian support for such Austrian paramilitaries—against transnational left-wing revolutionaries.¹⁶ But what about conflicts within a common nationality and within right-wing ideological groups?

The relations simply within the German-speaking right-wing paramilitaries became fraught with competition, in addition to transborder cooperation among regionalists acting in the name of nationalist fantasies. We must examine this context of both common cause and internecine disagreement from 1918 into the mid 1920s to understand the formation and function of these right-wing groups. The uncertainties of the official peacemaking and unofficial paramilitary mayhem created a paradoxical affective convergence, one that marked

¹³ C. Earl Edmondson, *The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics, 1918-1936* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 20. See Reinhart Ditmar Kondert, “The Rise and Early History of the Austrian Heimwehr” (PhD diss., Rice University, 1972), 3-17.

¹⁴ As Edmondson claimed: “exigencies of the postwar situation made revolutionaries out of counter-revolutionaries.” Edmondson further describes this radicalization of the right: “In a ‘revolutionary’ and ‘democratic’ age, conservative leaders had to borrow from their enemies. Many fascists, especially the most radical ones, talked more about the future than the past.” Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 4.

¹⁵ Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front*, 9, 227-246. He also ties the German eastern front in World War I and resulting Freikorps chaos to the German fixation on borders. Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front*, 250-251. Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 20.

¹⁶ Robert Gerwarth, “The Central European Counter-Revolution: Paramilitary Violence in Germany, Austria and Hungary after the Great War,” *Past & Present*, no. 200 (Oxford University Press, August 2008): 175-183.

the intra-national borderland: existential Angst over German impotence coupled with certainty of some inevitable German resurgence. A collective feeling of being “down-but-not-out” permeated German-speaking Europe, whereby confidence and anxiety fused into two sides of the same emotional coin. Historian F. L. Carsten shows even some of the victorious British saw an Anschluss as just a matter of time, regardless of any Allied forbiddance.¹⁷ The affective amalgam of both doubt and certainty motivated activists to act with existential emotional intensity and with a sense of self-righteousness. Such emotionally-invested actions also pushed the mental boundaries of border revision schemes. The explosion of elusive objectives heightened the anxiety over what exactly might happen, all while solidifying a perpetual, exasperating sense that something would surely happen. And soon.

Official governmental statements demonstrated this positive feedback loop of anxiety and inevitability. In January 1919, before the Allies even finished drafting their official peace terms, the German-Austrian State Office for Foreign Affairs sent a manifesto to the Bavarian State Government and to other governments throughout Europe.¹⁸ The German-Austrian government gave its anxious assessment that an independent state of German-Austria would fail. These politicians argued that the “natural reunification” with Germany best served not only the Germans, but all Europeans. They invoked regionalism to claim that the inclusion of German-Austria in Germany would “invigorate the south-German element within Germany and create a counterweight against the hegemony of the north-German, Prussian essence

¹⁷ Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic*, 6.

¹⁸ *Betreff: Denkschrift über Deutschösterreich. Mit 1 Beilage.*, Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv München (BHaM), Abt. II Geheimes Staatsarchiv, MA 103022. Volkstaat Bayern. Akt. des Ministeriums des Aeußern. Anschluss Deutsch-Oesterreichs an das Deutsche Reich. Photo 792.

within Germany.” German-Austria would serve as the *Wacht am Donau* against Prussia, creating a peaceful state in central Europe.¹⁹ Spatial and territorial fantasies of all shapes and sizes abound at this historical inflection point, showing the emotional liminality of the moment. Further, many of these national schemes across the political spectrum were seasoned with regionalist stereotyping and auto-stereotyping of the supposed intra-German variances in dispositions.

Other activists in Austria also sought frantic, inchoate regional solutions. Members of the Der Wirtschaftsverband Schwaben-Vorarlberg (Economic Organization of Swabia-Vorarlberg) discussed imaginative plans to break away from Austria and to unify with Switzerland, or with the south German state of Württemberg, or with Bavaria.²⁰ Representatives turned to Geschichtspolitik, invoking medieval times when these regions fell under the Duchy of Swabia and came under Habsburg jurisdiction as Vorderösterreich (Anterior Austria). To these schemers, a future with the south German Swiss or with fellow Swabians in Württemberg and/or Bavaria seemed more stable than the capsizing Austrian ship. These activists also felt content abandoning their Austrian brethren in favor of regional cohesion centered on some Swabian collectivism.²¹ Beyond just such grand economic visions,

¹⁹ *In schicksalschwerer Stunde wurde der deutschösterreichische Staat gegründet*. Denkschrift über Deutschösterreich. BHAM, Abt. II Geheimes Staatsarchiv, MA 103022. Volkstaat Bayern. Akt. des Ministeriums des Aeußern. Anschluss Deutsch-Oesterreichs an das Deutsche Reich. 8. Photo 800. Such impulses even caught the attention of foreign observers, such as a British member of the Reparations Commission. Carsten’s monograph asserts this British agent “believed that Upper Austria, Salzburg and Tyrol desired to join Bavaria.” Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic*, 63.

²⁰ Even though Vorarlberg and Württemberg shared no common border.

²¹ *Abdruck zu Nr. III 51348 Zu Nr. K 358/1. Gegenstand: Der Wirtschaftsverband Schwaben-Vorarlberg*, BHAM, MIInn 74113, Akten Staatsministeriums des Innern: Betreff: Die Wiedervereinigung Oesterreichs mit dem Deutschen Reich 1920, 113, Akt. Nr. 200 m., Band I., 31025, Pages 1-6. 1 September 1920. Photo 690. For the definitive study of Swabian regionalism during this time, see

there emerged a serious movement for an outright Anschluss of Vorarlberg with Switzerland in the name of, as historian Christian Koller claimed, “different geographic, historical, ethnographic, and linguistic motives.”²² While my focus is more on southeastern *bairisch-österreichisch* regionalities rather than southwestern *schwäbisch* or *schwizerdütsch* regionalities, the point remains that these intra-German regional impulses functioned in fluid ways that often cross cut the existing geopolitical borders.²³ At this specific historical moment, German-speakers from various southern regions saw borders as fluid and revisable, as they sought to pick and choose what borders would best behoove their immediate interests. Such debates among border revisionists in these regions revealed the perceived precarity of the status quo.

*“We Need Weapons from Bavaria . . .” Origins of the Orgesch, Orka, & Heimwehren*²⁴

The German State of Bavaria, particularly its capital of Munich, encapsulated the chaos and extremism between the 1918 armistice and the 1919 peace treaties. By 1919, the post-armistice socialist state of Bavaria had spiraled into a full-blown Bolshevik-inspired revolution—even culminating in a two-month Soviet Bavarian Republic—which validated the

Martina Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten: Die Ordnung des Regionalen im bayerischen Schwaben vom Kaiserreich bis zum NS-Regime* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, 2010), 193–320. More specifically, she covers with impressive erudition the Vorarlberg connection to Swabia, in addition to the “the greater Swabia movement” (“Die großschwäbische Bewegung”) in Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten*, 198–205, 206 (for direct quotation), 207–220.

²² Not least of all was an antisemitic perception in provincial Vorarlberg that rule from Vienna was tantamount to subordination to a Jewish metropole. Koller, “Die Vorarlberger Anschlussbewegung an die Schweiz,” 83–88, 89 (for direct quotation), 90–102. This proposed Anschluss of Vorarlberg to Switzerland was far from a fringe, fanatical idea. Carsten claims, “70 per cent of those entitled to vote opted in favour of joining Switzerland as a new canton.” Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic*, 63.

²³ Again, see Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten*, 198–220.

²⁴ Hauptmann Obwurzer, *Abwehr – Organisation (Heimatwehren)*, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BaBL), Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin M 106, Reihe 49. Seit 3. Day 4 Photo 51.

worst fears of conservatives and galvanized right-wing paramilitarists toward radical action.²⁵ This Räterepublik (along with another in Hungary) so horrified right-wing activists, it launched a right-wing reaction of retaliatory, hyper-aggressive gang violence. While living in Hamburg in 1921, journalist Erwin Rosen (pseudonym for Erwin Carlé) came up with a list of the “nicest” words to describe the average political activist in Bavaria: “reactionary, thuggish, mentally ill, hostile-to-freedom, brutal.”²⁶ In his assessment, Bavarians proved more hysterical than Germans from other regions, too overcome with emotion to act practically in the face of the “Russian terror,” which allowed “madness to triumph in Munich.”²⁷ Within this maelstrom of Bavarian revolution and counter-revolution, the overarching organization for right-wingers was the infamous *Einwohnerwehr* (citizen’s militia). This umbrella organization gave rise to two major offshoots.²⁸ The Organisation Escherich (Orgesch) and the Organisation Kanzler (Orka or Orgka) mobilized toward countering Bolshevism in German lands, each of which crystallized around a Bavarian right-wing agent: Georg Escherich and Rudolf Kanzler, respectively. These groups formed in Bavaria in 1918, worked across the border in Austria, and were “officially” disbanded by order of the Allies in 1921 for operating against the Versailles system.

²⁵ For a detailed, powerful narrative of this Bavarian upheaval, see Allen Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria, 1918-1919: The Eisner Regime and the Soviet Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 75-336. For a more concise version, see Peter James, *The Politics of Bavaria – An Exception to the Rule: The special position of the Free State of Bavaria in the New Germany* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 36-38.

²⁶ Erwin Rosen (Erwin Carlé), *Orgesch* (Berlin: August Scherl G.m.b.h., 1921), 11.

²⁷ Rosen, *Orgesch*, 12.

²⁸ Large, “Politics of Law and Order,” 45.

Their obsession with law and order would, ironically, create a chaotic borderland of illegal transborder smuggling, theft, and militarization. Depending on the context, Austro-Bavarian regional pride buttressed nationalism or resisted it. Right-wing agents invoked one to underwrite and undercut the other, all the while blurring the divide between the two.²⁹ The Orgesch crystallized in Munich in 1920 around Georg Escherich, a rather eccentric individual. Born in Bavaria a year before the unification of the German Empire, he spent his youth studying in Regensburg and at the University of Munich while serving as an officer in the Bavarian artillery.³⁰ He received a doctorate from the University of Tübingen before working in German administration for forests, presumably to help him pursue his passion for hunting.³¹

²⁹ Ludger Rape has commented extensively on their formation, rise, and fall in his dissertation. He argued that the Orgesch and Orka were the true roots of the Austrian *Heimwehr*. He astutely emphasized two critical forces: *völkisch* nationalism (often of the populist and racist variety that would become the stable of German-speaking fascism) and Bavarian “particularism” (i.e. regionalism). He claims these two objectives increasingly became antagonistic, marring the effectiveness of the Orgesch and the Orka and bequeathing a serious ideological tension to the newly formed *Heimwehr*. Ludger Rape, “Die österreichische Heimwehr und ihre Beziehungen zur bayerischen Rechten zwischen 1920 und 1923” (PhD diss., Universität Wien, 1968), 24, 283, 300, 312, 341–380. The tension between nationalism and regionalism is critical to understanding the convoluted nature of this intra-national borderland. However, his narrative is too focused on these factors as being clearly defined antagonistic abstractions. In doing so, he presents each side as some coherent monolith working against the other, all in the name of finding a debilitating tension that explains their “failure.”

For a corrective that asserts that the paramilitaries of the immediate interwar years were both regional and *völkisch* and even *großdeutsch*, see the more recent dissertation Roy G. Koepp, “Conservative Radicals: The *Einwohnerwehr*, *Bund Bayern und Reich*, and the Limits of Paramilitary Politics in Bavaria, 1918–1928” (PhD diss., University of Nebraska, 2010), 137 (for *großdeutsch*), 262 (for the Orgesch as “functionally *völkisch*”). I offer here a close examination of the discursive nuances of these *großdeutsch* impulses vis-à-vis Austria—in which both Austrian and Bavaria were at the center stage, a synthesis of Koepp’s emphasis on nationalism and Rape’s detail of Austria. I also do so to trace transborder transgressions and tensions over supposed agreement (German national identity, increasingly extremist right-wing stances, paranoia over of left-wing conspiracy), which set the stage for longer term borderland tensions throughout the rest of interwar period.

³⁰ Rosen, *Orgesch*, 72.

³¹ David Clay Large, “The Politics of Law and Order: A History of the Bavarian *Einwohnerwehr*, 1918–1921,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 70, no. 2 (1980): 17–18, Accessed 24 January 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1006300>.

His forest fieldwork (read: hunting trips) took him from Abyssinia to Cameroon, with the latter having become part of the Kaiserreich's global empire, in addition to the Balkans.³² All the while, he harbored and expressed explicitly racist views of Black peoples and Slavs.³³ Wounded during World War I, he spent the rest of the conflict overseeing German-occupied Russian territory, specifically in the forest of the Białowieża along the border of today's Poland and Belarus.³⁴ David Clay Large states that when it came to the slave regime of POWs at his command, Escherich reigned as "the absolute sovereign."³⁵ The man was a veritable nexus of modern racism, authoritarianism, and militarism, all contributing to and compounding his right-wing extremism.

The birth of his organization coincided with serious rumors of regionalist separation. In the spring of 1920, the *Berliner Volkszeitung* reported with relief that the recent attempts to create an "abscission" that would create an official state division between "south and north Germany" had failed.³⁶ Just days later, on 9 May 1920, the Orgesch penned their foundational charter in the Bavarian city of Regensburg, but the founders clearly delineated Munich as their

³² Large, "The Politics of Law and Order," 18. See also footnote 36 of Bernhard Gissibl, "A Bavarian Serengeti: Space, Race and Time in the Entangled History of Nature Conservation in East Africa and Germany," Ch. 5 in *Civilizing Nature: National Parks in Global Historical Perspective*, eds. Bernhard Gissibl, Sabine Höhler, and Patrick Kupper (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 118.

³³ Large, "The Politics of Law and Order," 18.

³⁴ Large, "The Politics of Law and Order," 18. See also footnote 36 of Gissibl, "A Bavarian Serengeti," 118.

³⁵ Large, "The Politics of Law and Order," 18.

³⁶ "Süddeutschland bleibt beim Reiche. Eine Erklärung der süddeutschen Regierungen," *Berliner Volkszeitung*, 3 May 1920, Nummer 204, 68. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ZEFYS Zeitungsinformationssystem, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, <http://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/index.php?id=dfg-viewer&set%5Bmeta%5D=http%3A%2F%2Fcontent.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de%2Fzefys%2FSNP27971740-19200503-0-0-0.xml>, Accessed 14 February 2021.

headquarters. The Organization Register of the Munich District Court officially registered this faction on 8 August 1920.³⁷ Though the members of the Orgesch set their sights on the task of defending all “fatherland-minded” Germans from any threats, northern Germans labeled them as a specifically “Bavarian citizen’s militia,” indicating northern condescension about raucous proclivities of their southern neighbors.³⁸ Likewise, Rosen stated that this organization was only possible “on Bavarian soil,” where Munich’s political mayhem could precipitate the “Spartacus-like atrocity” of Bavarian Citizen’s militias. He further commented on how militias spawned off each other, creating a dizzying feeding-frenzy of “venomous spiders” where instigation, escalation, collaboration, and competition reinforced each other.³⁹

To achieve their ambitious objective of securing all Germandom from the communist threats, Escherich and his followers sought order. Their charter delineates their purpose of “securing the state,” “protecting persons, work and property,” “preserving the German Reich and preventing any partitioning efforts,” and finally, “maintaining peace and order and defending against any Putsch from the left or right.”⁴⁰ But his members had to grapple with a fundamental tension between their objectives and their methods. They sought order, yet they

³⁷ “Satzungen: Organisation Escherich (E.V.),” from the files of the Reichskommissar für Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung: Akten betreff Organisation Escherich Orgesch vom Juli 1920 bis Januar 1923. 1/88 ZSTA Potsdam 15. 07 Nr. 400. BaBL, Microfilm, Bestandssignatur: R/1507/, Archivsignatur: 400, Standort: 51, Magazin: Haus 901/KG, Lesefilmnummern: 67192. Page 405, 408. Microfilm viewed on 12 October 2018, Day 2 Photos 35, 38.

³⁸ “Satzungen: Organisation Escherich (E.V.).” BaBL: R/1507/, 400, Page 405, Day 2 Photo 35. “‘Die bayerische Einwohnerwehr bleibt:’ Frankreich läßt seinen Protest fallen,” *Berliner Tageblatt* December 1920, from the files of the Reichskommissar für Überwachung: Orgesch. BaBL, Microfilm, Bestandssignatur: R/1507/, Archivsignatur: 400, Standort: 51, Magazin: Haus 901/KG, Lesefilmnummern: 67192. Page 458. Microfilm viewed on 12 October 2018, Day 2 Photo 55.

³⁹ Rosen, *Orgesch*, 13.

⁴⁰ “Satzungen: Organisation Escherich (E.V.).” BaBL: R/1507/, 400, Page 405, Day 2 Photo 35.

emerged, survived, and thrived in chaos. To achieve their vision of stability, their *modus operandi* meant spreading chaos by fighting with communists, socialists, and right-wing rivals throughout southeastern Germany. While the Orgesch might seem fringe or fanatical, the official Reich Commission for the Policing of Public Order saw it as a serious threat to society and maintained meticulous records on it.⁴¹

Another key tension emerged between the Orgesch's rhetoric and its deeds regarding politics. Escherich made clear his organization remained open to all "well-reputed Germans or foreigners of German origin" regardless of "political party, socioeconomic background, or confession."⁴² Like many right-wing organizations, the Orgesch claimed to be above political party formation; it saw prosperity through security as common sense that defied democratic politicking. Greatness and order ought to transcend the political realm. In practice, however, the Orgesch thrived on divisive political action: organizing, mobilizing, and deploying civilian-soldiers to achieve partisan objectives in an extralegal sense. Furthermore, this tension between apolitical rhetoric and political actions grew out of the tension between inevitability and anxiety. Border revision, an inherently political topic, seemed so inevitable and necessary as to rise above politics. However, the exact specifics of this border revision remained so uncertain that it necessitated immediate political action.⁴³

⁴¹ "Reichskommissar für Überwachung der Öffentlichen Ordnung," 1/88 ZSTA Potsdam 15. 07, Nr. 400, BaBL, R/1507/, 400, Page 0362, Day 2 Photo 1.

⁴² "Satzungen: Organisation Escherich (E.V.)." BaBL: R/1507/, 400, Page 405, Day 2 Photo 35.

⁴³ Large provides a powerful take on the relationship between order and chaos and between political actions and apolitical claims. He rightly claims that paramilitary obsession with "upholding law and order" was vague enough to allow these highly political organizations to "transcend traditional party and interest group loyalties." Large, "The Politics of Law and Order," 76. He concludes that while groups like the Orgesch may have been disbanded rather quickly, they established two dangerous practices: (1) mobilizing the masses for revolutionary rightwing activity that was meant to bolster the

While the Orgesch managed large-scale operations, its sub-branch, the Orka, managed day-to-day tactics in southern Germany. Also formed in Munich around one leader, Rudolf Kanzler, the Orka technically operated under the Orgesch. They indicated their interest in events across the Austro-Bavarian border at a Munich meeting on 9 June 1920. Representatives discussed the frightful military situation in the state of Upper Austria, the supposedly southern flank critical to maintaining Bavaria's security. The minutes reported that the various districts of Upper Austria languished in chaos, and the existing right-wing paramilitaries there lacked the weapons and the leadership to do anything about it. Their resolution? Escherich needed to oversee the Austrian situation in addition to supervising his Bavarian-based paramilitary units. To help like-minded right-wing agents in Austria succeed, they "agreed" upon Escherich (not Kanzler) as the most suitable leader.⁴⁴

This top-down decision over leadership simply glossed over the cracks emerging in the foundation of the right-wing edifice. The "proper" regional solution to the problem of the Austro-Bavarian borderland remained relative—just the word *Anschluss* had shifting situational meanings dependent on who said it and who heard it.⁴⁵ A later report from the Upper Austrian border towns of Schärding and Braunau—within the district of Innkreis,

law but actually supplanted "state authority" and (2) making this type of militarized citizen participation "acceptable and even chic," leading to a "radicalization" of "the more conservative, static politics of the 'old Right' to the radical, dynamic politics of the new." Large, "Politics of Law and Order," 78–79.

⁴⁴ "Bericht: Sitzung in München am 9. Juni 20." Page 5, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, Ö österreich, Aktenbezeichnungsblatt, No. 649, Renner Akte Geheimberichte ueber Versammlungen ("Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz" see also folders 645 to 648)., Landesleitung der Einwohner-Wehren Bayerns Nebenstelle Rosenheim, Empf. 192, Nr. 614, „G“ Berichte, Day 4 Photo 107.

⁴⁵ Stanley Suval, *The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), 52; Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 195–236.

which actually had been a part of Bavaria until the nineteenth century—stated that Bavarian officers crossed the border regularly to provide military training to the sprouting Austrian right-wing organization, which desperately needed leadership. The report indicated that the (re)unification of the Innkreis district with the state of Bavaria appeared the best way forward. From the Bavarian side of the border, fusion simply streamlined their rightwing momentum. From the Austrian side, streamlining could ultimately mean subordination.⁴⁶

Regional rupture over “union” manifest again in the summer of 1920. Many conservative Austrian veterans desired a restoration of the Habsburg Empire in the form of an Anschluss between Austria and Hungary.⁴⁷ The Orgesch saw these conservative officer organizations as potential allies if the Orgesch could push them to the right kind of radicalism. In July 1920, the Bavarian Orgesch convened in Salzburg about the situation in Vienna. There, the Orgesch ringleaders heard that the Austrian officer organization would provide “the warmest support” to such right-wing paramilitaries. However, the alliance only went so far.⁴⁸ On 3 August, another meeting took place in Salzburg between representatives of the Orka and the Austrian officer organizations. The head Austrian spokesman, Infantry General Kraus,

⁴⁶ The report ended by stating that that Braunau (Hitler’s hometown) was the “typical indolent and lazy small town,” simply useless in the struggle to create order. “Nachrichtung aus Oberösterreich,” Page 5, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” Landesleitung der Einwohner-Wehren Bayerns Nebenstelle Rosenheim, Empf. 17. Juli 1920, Nr. 569, Day 4 Photos 72–73.

⁴⁷ The Austrian military cadre after the war was also bedeviled with serious political cleavages: large factions were loyal to the socialists and even a left-wing revolution, while others stayed conservative. See Joe Clinton Dixon, “Defeat and Disarmament: A Study of Military Affairs in Austria, 1918–1921” (PhD diss., The University of Minnesota, 1980), 47–101.

⁴⁸ “Landesleitung der Einw. w. Bayerns, Nebenstelle Rosenheim. Bericht über eine Zusammenkunft mit Führers der Grossdeutschen in Salzburg am 4. Juli 1920,” BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 18, Day 4 Photos 117–120.

articulated that his officer clique favored a Großdeutschland in theory. But he also made clear his reservations. To him, an Anschluss would provide Germany with the “biggest benefits” of both the “demographic and economic variety.” In return, Germany had to be willing to do something to benefit Austria. Any Anschluss needed to serve as a *quid pro quo*. He also chose to say Wiedervereinigung—meaning *reunification*—instead of Anschluss. His specific phrasing suggested Germany and Austria had already been unified at least once before, perhaps a clumsy and superficial reference to the Holy Roman Empire. Such sleight of hand hearkened to a time when Austria lorded as the powerhouse and “Germany” as a “nation-state” did not even exist. In sum, Austria deserved its rightful glory. The representatives from Bavaria would be wise to remember the humble origins of their German country and not overstep their bounds. For the sake of bolstering this southeastern German front against foreign enemies, the Austrians also reminded their Bavarian “allies” that both Bavaria and Austria needed resources from northern Germany. Southeastern regionalists thus warned about going over Bavarians’ heads should disagreements emerge.⁴⁹

The disjointed Austrian paramilitary groups, the Heimwehren, emerged in conjunction with the Orgesch and the Orka throughout the Austro-Bavarian borderland. To coordinate their strategy in their on-going paramilitary quasi-war against communism, Austrian and German representatives of certain “defense organizations” had convened on 13 May 1920 in Rosenheim, an Upper Bavarian town near the Austria border. They discussed

⁴⁹ “Sitzungs-Bericht über eine Zusammenkunft in Salzburg am 3. August 1920.,” Pages 1-3, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” Landesleitung der Einwohner-Wehren Bayerns Nebenstelle Rosenheim, Empf. 2. 7. 21 192 No. 866, 23, Day 4 Photo 136-139.

Bavaria's state of affairs and deliberated about the creation of more encompassing Heimatwehren (homeland guards). While Tyrolean Doctor Richard Steidle chaired the meeting, the minutes reveal Professor Bernhard Stempfle as a major speaker.⁵⁰ Professor Stempfle boasted that, all in all, the numerous right-wing Bavarian citizen's militias had approximately 300,000 participants, itself a dubious claim. Despite this high number, he claimed that the communist menace should be taken very seriously, as it had emerged emboldened and reorganized after the fall of the Bavarian Bolshevik regime.⁵¹ Their perceptions of a Judeo-Bolshevik hydra enhanced their herculean sense of self-importance.⁵²

Stempfle's mental notions of solidarity transcended the existing state lines on the map. "If Gesamt-Deutschland should be saved," then he and his compatriots would need a "united front." But his gesamtdeutsch pontification took a regionalist right turn when he claimed that only southern Germany could undertake this task of pan-national protection. In his assessment, the northern regions of Germany stood "utterly oriented toward the left." Southern German lands needed to coalesce to repulse the communist threat. His call to arms included a plea to the Austrians in the Tyrol and Salzburg to "cover Bavaria's back" from any communist-led military incursions. He thus claimed to trust Austrian Germans to rally to Bavaria's aid more

⁵⁰ "Abwehr – Organisation (Heimatwehren). Protokoll der Sitzung am 13. Mai 1920. Vorsitzender: Landesrat Dr. Richard Steidle; Anwesend: sämtliche Vertrauensleute des [B]andes.," Page 1, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, "Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz," 8, Day 4 Photo 49. For Stempfle's first name, see Koepp, "Conservative Radicals," 146.

⁵¹ "Abwehr – Organisation (Heimatwehren).," Page 1, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, "Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz," 8, Day 4 Photo 49.

⁵² See Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018), 7-12, 82-87. For this paranoia in the US, see Charles R. Gallagher, *Nazis of Copley Square: The Forgotten Story of the Christian Front* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021), 1-30.

effectively than the northern Germans within the extant borders of his own nation-state.⁵³ The meeting minutes also reaffirmed the impending sense of doom, as it described Bavaria and the Austrian Tyrol as being “in the middle of a witch’s cauldron.”⁵⁴ Enemies from within and from without threatened southern Germandom, and to him, Bavarian right-wing paramilitaries needed to spawn a hydra of their own in Austria.

The minutes also pointed toward a tension between objectives and means. In response to Stempfle, an Austrian—one Captain Obwurzer—replied that Tyrol stood prepared to come to Bavaria’s aid, but first it needed assistance in procuring armaments. He clarified that Tyrol had the guns but not the ammunition. Whipped up into a regionalist fervor, he finally concluded, “we need weapons from Bavaria, but we will only receive them if we organize as Heimwehren,” meaning as recognized militias akin to their Bavarian brethren.⁵⁵ Only with Bavarian ammunition could the neighboring Austrian states of Salzburg, Vorarlberg, and Tyrol form “the closed front of Alpine lands” that the Bavarians so desired. This meeting crystallized the idea that only consolidated, organized paramilitary forces in these Austrian regions could hope to form some Alpine, line-in-the-snow against perceived threats.⁵⁶ Their methods to solidify that supposed Alpine front entailed smuggling war matériel across the existing Alpine Austro-Bavarian border. Ironically, bolstering some abstract Alpine border

⁵³ “Abwehr – Organisation (Heimatwehren).,” Page 1, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 8, Day 4 Photo 49.

⁵⁴ “Abwehr – Organisation (Heimatwehren).,” Page 2, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 8, Day 4 Photo 50.

⁵⁵ “Abwehr – Organisation (Heimatwehren).,” Page 3–Page 4, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 8, Day 4 Photo 51–52.

⁵⁶ “Abwehr – Organisation (Heimatwehren).,” Page 5, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 8, Day 4 Photo 53.

meant permeating a very real one in practice. In selecting such a strategy, they set the precedent for puncturing the Austro-Bavarian border in the name of right-wing machinations, a pattern that would increase in intensity throughout the interwar years once right-wingers started to turn on each other.

That same summer, militia enthusiasts from the Tyrol met with Orgesch representatives at the Bavarian border town of Rosenheim. Such scheming even garnered foreign attention: the French press commented that Escherich himself courted the Tyroleans to the Bavarian front by pitting them against their Austrian capital: “moreover, all of the Germans put the Tyroleans en garde against the anti-German excitements of Viennese origin.”⁵⁷ The provincial, Alpine and staunchly Catholic Tyrol had a history of butting heads with cosmopolitan “Red Vienna,” which provincials often disparaged as corrupted with Jewish and socialist influences.⁵⁸ But the article implied that to such right-wing men, this iconic imperial capital remained beyond the pale of Germandom. According to the French press, these men saw Vienna as actively threatening the supposedly true German regions of Austria.⁵⁹ Tyrolean-Bavarian solidarity would transplant the “genuinely” German lands of Austria to

⁵⁷ “1. POLITIQUE EXTERIEURE c). **Vorarlberg et Tyrol** [bold in original] 3. Les Milices Pangermaniques et le Conseil de Guerre (25 Juillet),” *Bulletin périodique de la presse suisse: Du 21 Juillet au 10 Août 1920*. Ministère de la guerre. Bureau de la presse étrangère. 15 August 1920. No. 135, 104, Online via Gallica, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k65183785/f4.item.r=Heimwehr>, Accessed 21 February 2021.

⁵⁸ Koller, “Die Vorarlberger Anschlussbewegung an die Schweiz,” 83–102. For the extent to which the city has had plenty of thinkers curating discourses favorable for right-wing movements, see Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918–1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 1–14, 223–226.

⁵⁹ “Les Milices Pangermaniques et le Conseil de Guerre (25 Juillet),” *Bulletin périodique de la presse suisse*. Ministère de la guerre. Bureau de la presse étrangère, 15 August 1920, 135, 104.

Bavaria. Such a procedure implied amputating non-German regions, including Vienna—once the Habsburg heartland, now a compromised and expendable extremity.⁶⁰

The coagulation of the Tyrol's groups into the Heimatwehr, while key to the foundation of a more cohesive Heimwehren movement in Austria, also belied a further complication. Similar such branches coalesced in other regional states under different labels (and potentially different loyalties): the Heimatwehr in the Tyrol, the Heimatdienst in Vorarlberg, the Heimwehrrdienst in Salzburg, the Heimwehr in Upper Austria, and the Heimatschutz in Styria and Carinthia, though the two technically remained distinct.⁶¹ Kanzler

⁶⁰ In that vein of Tyrol's stance against Viennese oversight, Carsten describes: "In the summer of 1921, the Tyrolean Diet even voted a law introducing a new currency based on the German mark and independent of the krone [Austrian currency]. But the central government submitted a complaint to the Supreme Court which declared the step illegal." Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic*, 56. He then adds, "Certainly, for the strongly Catholic Tyrol, a combination with their equally staunchly Catholic neighbour to the north must have seemed preferable to union with 'Red' Vienna." Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic*, 63.

⁶¹ The organizational confusion of this "movement" was covered extensively in Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 1-149. For a clear breakdown on the tumultuous origins of the Heimwehr, including a constructed lineage to regional, alpine shooting club traditionalism, see Jason Engle's wonderfully evocative and painstakingly researched dissertation: Jason Engle, "A Legion of Legacy: Tyrolean Militarism, Catholicism, and the Heimwehr Movement" (PhD diss., University of Southern Mississippi, 2017), 1-152. The Heimatdienst of the Austrian Vorarlberg should not be confused with the Heimatdienst propaganda bureau of the Orgesch. See Kondert, "Early History of the Austrian Heimwehr," 16. While the Heimatschutz of Styria and that of Carinthia were distinct from each other, they were also very much distinct from Escherich's later Heimatschutz of Bavaria.

The Heimatschutz paramilitaries in Austria and Bavaria ought not be confused with the Heimatschutz environmental heritage protection movement under the Kaiserreich, meant to "preserve" the "cultural landscape." See Bernhard Gissibl, *The Nature of German Imperialism: Conservation and the Politics of Wildlife in Colonial East Africa* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016), 279, 285 (for direct quotation). Nor should the Heimatschutz paramilitary be confused with the Habsburg-era Heimatschutz, a pre-World War I association in Vienna that drew inspiration from that in Berlin and was also about forging and preserving environmental understandings of heritage across the Austrian lands. Carolin Firouzeh Roeder, "Slovenia's Triglav National Park: From Imperial Borderland to National Ethnoscape," Chapter 13 in *Civilizing Nature*, 243-244. Coincidentally, in discussing the Slovene-Austrian borderlands, she also reifies the notion that borderlands in Austrian history were multi-national, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual spaces, against which I present the intra-national borderland. Roeder, "Slovenia's Triglav National Park," 240-255. Lastly, the Styrian Heimatschutz paramilitary should not be confused with the Landesvereine für Heimatschutz in Bavarian Swabia, which was also

himself helped to form the Salzburg Heimwehrdienst.⁶² The Tyrol Heimatwehr fell under sway of both Richard Steidle (introduced above) and Waldomar Pabst, the infamous German émigré. His career in Berlin included condemning Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht to execution, participating in the failed 1920 Kapp Putsch against the Weimar Republic, fleeing to the Tyrol, and then proclaiming himself a Hauptmann of the Tyrolean Heimatwehr. All the while, he still received his pension as a former German officer.⁶³ And as a Prussian, Pabst received plenty of Tyrolean suspicion—perhaps rightfully so, as he purportedly funneled information back to Berlin.⁶⁴

These disparate Heimwehren, the Orgesch, and the Orka—in addition to other German-speaking men with (para)military backgrounds and right-leaning sympathies—revealed the Austro-Bavarian cooperation and tension in 1920. And their volatile combination came to a head in Salzburg. The first point of contention revolved around the foundation of a Heimwehren headquarters to help oversee the pluralized paramilitary groups. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Austrian military representatives stressed that the center of operations “must come to Vienna.” Kanzler of Bavaria rebuked his Austrian comrades when he claimed that, unfortunately for their Austrian pride, the representatives of the Austrian paramilitary organizations had already voted to accept the paternal embrace of the Orgesch headquartered

right-leaning but more concerned with “inserting itself into the conservative program of the Bavarian art and cultural politics of the Weimar years.” Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten*, 233.

⁶² Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 22. Kondert, “Early History of the Austrian Heimwehr,” 10.

⁶³ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 29–31. Kondert, “Early History of the Austrian Heimwehr,” 60–62.

⁶⁴ Kondert, “Early History of the Austrian Heimwehr,” 60–62.

in Munich.⁶⁵ The Austrians and Bavarians also bickered over the question of the true enemy. The Austrians focused on the threat posed by the Habsburg Restorationists. However, the Bavarian delegation found Austria's General Kraus too reserved and cautious, and they openly confronted him about it, explaining that the Austrian group targeted the wrong enemy. The Bavarian representatives explained that the Red hydra had many heads, and they ought not secure "property, law, peace, and order" by myopically confronting the Restorationists. Furthermore, the Austrian claim that they had vanquished the Bolshevik beast raised red flags for the Bavarians, to whom Bolshevism represented the ultimate evil. In true radical right-wing logic, the Bavarians believed the Austrian groups would expand their popularity by lengthening their list of enemies.⁶⁶

This conversation showcased the central paradox of interwar Austria as an intra-national borderland. Kanzler's rebukes vis-à-vis these issues offended the sensibilities of the Austrians, whose ringleader excused the Austrian delegation with a sharp closing statement:

The National Organization of German-Austrian Officers stands on the ground of the absolute unity of German-Austria and of the Anschluss of the entirety of Austria [Gesamt-Oesterreich] with the entirety of Germany [Gesamt-Deutschland]. It is not in the position to take part in the Organisation Escherich.

⁶⁵ He conceded that he would agree to the Vienna Headquarters *if* the Austrian paramilitary leaders were to push for it. However, he claimed, a previous vote on 25 July indicated that the majority of Austrian paramilitary leaders actually preferred the paternal embrace of Munich's leadership. "Sitzungs-Bericht über eine Zusammenkunft in Salzburg am 3. August 1920.," Pages 1-3, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, 23, Day 4 Photo 136-139.

⁶⁶ "Sitzungs-Bericht über eine Zusammenkunft in Salzburg am 3. August 1920.," Pages 1-3, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, "Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz," 23, Day 4 Photo 136-139. For the fascist fixation on opponents, see George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1999), 43.

He favored an Anschluss between Germany and Austria that maintained the territorial integrity of Austria. He did not favor an Anschluss between his officer corps and the Orgesch; such “unity” might mean organizational subordination. Furthermore, he adamantly rejected changes to Austria and their sense of being Austrian, including changes by the German state or the Bavarian paramilitary representatives. These positions constituted the two main oceanic currents under the right-wing armada as it sought to assemble. Parallel convergence of these currents propelled their ships farther and faster together, while volatile collision of these currents threatened to scatter the fleet. In this instance, the regionalist current upwelled to the surface, manifesting in the Austrians’ abrupt departure and refusal to join the Bavarian convoy.⁶⁷

The Orgesch, however, pressed for a fusion with the Austrian Heimwehren and veterans’ groups, an organizational Anschluss the Orgesch believed could bring authoritarian Austrians under the Bavarian fold. Orgesch representatives travelled to Vienna at the start of September 1920.⁶⁸ There they met with a host of Austrian veterans’ associations, including the Frontkämpfervereinigung (Union of Frontline Soldiers), the Austrian Gagistenverband (a veterans’ Organization), the Nationalverband österreichischer Offiziere (National Association of Austrian Officers), and the Verband Christlich-sozialer Offiziere (Association of Christian-Social Officers).⁶⁹ The minutes revealed that the members of the Gagistenverband “stand

⁶⁷ “Sitzungs-Bericht über eine Zusammenkunft in Salzburg am 3. August 1920.,” Pages 1-3, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 23, Day 4 Photo 136-139.

⁶⁸ Technically, the Orgesch representatives were from the Orgesch’s southern sub-division, the Organisation Kanzler (Orka) discussed later on in this chapter, but they were working for and reporting to the Orgesch.

⁶⁹ For some background on these groups, see Julia Walleczek-Fritz, “Staying Mobilized: Veterans’ Associations in Austria’s Border Regions Carinthia and Styria during the Interwar Period,” in

sympathetic towards an Anschluss to Germany, without however thrusting these thoughts as into the foreground as the Nationalverband,” though their Habsburg “legitimist” inclinations appeared “unmistakable.” Such Restorationists posed a potentially serious complication for an Austro-German unification that the Orgesch/Orka would have liked. However, in the Orgesch’s assessment of the Gagistenverband (and its supposedly 132,000 members, based on the very liberal assumption that family members also counted as participants), the Anschluss of this group “to the Orgesch” seemed “much easier, basically because its objectives are in accord with those of the Orgesch.”⁷⁰ The minutes further claimed that the Anschluss of Austria with Germany stood as “the program of all Austria parties and all Viennese circles,” specifically because Austrians hoped to turn Vienna into a “metropolis of East German trade.”⁷¹ On paper, and with assurances of “a complete endorsement of the Orgesch” from the Gagistenverband, these groups pushed for greater German glory by means of regional solidarity.

Additional meetings in Vienna in early-September evidenced regionalist relativity. The Orgesch made a final push to reach an Anschluss of these various paramilitary clubs across the Austro-Bavarian border. Oberleutnant Oskar von Reichel of the Orgesch spoke to a meeting of leaders from Viennese military groups, claiming that Escherich greeted his

World War One Veterans in Austria and Czechoslovakia, eds. Laurence Cole, Rudolf Kučera, Hannes Leidinger and Ina Markova, *zeitgeschichte* 47, Heft 1 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Vienna University Press 2020): 60, www.vr-elibrary.de, University of California Berkley Library, Accessed 17 May 2022.

⁷⁰ “Bericht über die Reise des Stabsleiters nach Wien am 2.u.3.Sept.1920.,” BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 9, 1, Day 4 Photo 75.

⁷¹ “Bericht über die Reise des Stabsleiters nach Wien am 2.u.3.Sept.1920.,” BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 9, 2, Day 4 Photo 76.

“Austrian brothers” and asked for their assistance in “preserving the constitution and order” against Bolshevism.⁷² While seemingly unifying in its rhetoric, this sale’s pitch by the Orgesch to Austrian Heimwehren belied two large complications. The first variable centered around what exactly the Orgesch wanted. They had talked for months about an Anschluss-style merger of Austrian with Bavarian paramilitary groups, which would essentially extend the Orgesch’s jurisdiction across the border. But now, the Orgesch spoke of a “Zusammenschluss,” which broadly meant incorporation, amalgamation, or federation—sort of a softer, more bilateral, and more cooperative Anschluss, though both terms remained abstract and context-specific. Indeed, Zusammenschluss could also mean consolidation and incorporation. Would the Austrians work with or for the Bavarians? The clarity Reichel offered, while still equivocal, left little room for Austrian pride: the Orgesch “will take over the thereunto professional military position, after I [Reichel] possess the relevant parochial power, and it would already mesh into the internal Gebiet (region, territory, or department) of the Organisation.” He also spoke of an “Eingliederung” (absorption). It boiled down to the question: would this joint enterprise manifest as uni- or bilateral? The distinction between the former and the latter remained fluid, and their distinction could be difficult to notice until too late.⁷³

⁷² “Tagesordnung zu der am 2. September 1920 stattfindenden Vorbesprechung: Vortrag: gehalten vor den Vertretern der Wiener Militärischen Organisationen und Verbände, zwecks Anschluss an die Aktion Escherich, durch Oberleutnant a.D. Oskar von Reichel am 2. September 1920 in Militäre-Kasino zu Wien.,” BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” No pagination given, Day 4 Photo 128.

⁷³ “Tagesordnung zu der am 2. September 1920 stattfindenden Vorbesprechung,” BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” No pagination given, Day 4 Photo 130.

A structural division also complicated the scene—the Orgesch had its Orka subdivision oriented toward the southern front. Reichel explained that, for geographical reasons, the Orka worked most closely with the Austrian Heimwehren. Its central seat was in Rosenheim on the Austro-Bavarian border, and the Orka was to be a central conduit for armaments acquisition.⁷⁴ While meant to streamline the counter-revolutionary defense of southeastern Germandom, it raised a serious question: toward what bearing did these multitudinous currents guide the Austrian Heimwehren members? Toward Bavaria? If so, toward the Bavarian Orgesch, or toward the Bavarian Orka? Toward Austria? If so, toward the overarching Austrian Heimwehren, or toward the specific Heimwehren division of each Austrian province? All the while, all was done in the name of building “a rampart of defense from the North Sea to the Brenner [the Alpine Pass on the border between Italy and Austria] against the red danger.”⁷⁵ Their goal was regional cohesion in service of their version of greater Germany, but they could only ever flounder in regional disunion.

Ten days later, the Orgesch representatives in Vienna set their sights on a more specified audience. According to the meeting minutes, instead of appealing to many groups “directed against the left,” the Orgesch focused on the Austrian Turnerbund (Gymnast Association), the national sports-training organization. The Orgesch inquired as to whether the Turnerbund saw eye to eye with them, with implications for establishing paramilitary

⁷⁴ “Tagesordnung zu der am 2. September 1920 stattfindenden Vorbesprechung,” BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” No pagination given, Day 4 Photos 130–132.

⁷⁵ “Tagesordnung zu der am 2. September 1920 stattfindenden Vorbesprechung,” BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” No pagination given, Day 4 Photo 135.

training programs and networks. The Orgesch debated as to whether the Turner members should join the Heimwehren in another organizational union. The Orgesch ultimately decided in the negative “out of tactical reasons,” which were that the Turner “should be the core troops” presumably of its own organization rather than becoming marginal additions to the Heimwehren. Secondly, the Orgesch did not want to see the Turnerbund’s existence “endangered,” again presumably meaning to fall under Heimwehren control. The Orgesch seemed to realize that rather than hinder them, organizational plurality worked to their advantage—it provided chaos, options, and multiple avenues for maneuver.⁷⁶

The next target in the Orgesch’s crosshairs was now the Austrian officer clique—the Nationalverband der deutsch-österreichischen Offiziere (National Association of German-Austrian Officers).⁷⁷ Austrian Executive Infantry General Kraus, speaking on behalf of this Nationalverband, condemned the Frontkämpfervereinigung and other such Austrian organizations. In his assessment, their loyalties seemed directed toward a “Danube Confederation,” which he detested because it meant working with Czechs, Slovaks,

⁷⁶ Sitzungsbereich über die Verhandlungen mit dem österreichischen Turnerbund in Wien am 12. Sept. 1920. in der Handels – und Gewerbeakademie,” Page 1, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” Landesleitung der Einwohner-Wehren Bayerns Nebenstelle Rosenheim, Empf. 29. 9. 20 192 No. 7073, 26, Day 4 Photo 140.

⁷⁷ “Sitzungsbereich über die Verhandlungen mit dem österreichischen Turnerbund in Wien am 12. Sept. 1920.,” Page 1, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 26, Day 4 Photo 140.

Hungarians, and other non-Germans.⁷⁸ They should meet such organizations with “distrust.”⁷⁹

General Kraus conceded that the Austrian officers must subordinate themselves to German leadership and accept that the Orgesch would advocate for Anschluss. In describing the leadership consolidation, he lamented about the number of provincial Heimwehren leaders who belonged to the Austrian Christian Social Party (Christlichsoziale Partei, CSP), the proudly Catholic conservative party led by priest-politician Ignaz Seipel.⁸⁰ Though also on the right, the CSP came across in this situation as a serious potential opponent of right-wing paramilitary groups; a major sticking point was the role of clericalism, with the minutes cautioning “The black [code for Catholic] Internationale is much more dangerous and more unpleasant than the red.”⁸¹ Though, on the very next page, Kanzler was sure to clarify that

⁷⁸ “Sitzungsbereich über die Verhandlungen mit dem österreichischen Turnerbund in Wien am 12. Sept. 1920.,” Page 1, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 26, Day 4 Photo 140. Interestingly, many members of the Frontkämpferverein also already had rather proto-fascist leanings. See Ludwig Jedlicka, “The Austrian Heimwehr,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 1, no. 1, (Sage Publications, Ltd. 1966): 130–131.

⁷⁹ “Sitzungsbereich über die Verhandlungen mit dem österreichischen Turnerbund in Wien am 12. Sept. 1920.,” Page 1, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 26, Day 4 Photo 140.

⁸⁰ The minutes reported Kraus’s opinion that, while the Austrian SDP was dangerous, they were not as dangerous as the CSP or the anarchists. It seemed the SDP was not the main antagonist to the right-wing organizations, as both the far right and left were at least “*anschluss-freundlich*.” “Sitzungsbereich über die Verhandlungen mit dem österreichischen Turnerbund in Wien am 12. Sept. 1920.,” Page 1, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 26, Day 4 Photo 140. Indeed, both the extreme right nationalists and moderate left republicans wanted Anschluss, though for opposing ends: rightwing nationalist resurgence versus democratic national self-determination, respectively. Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 16. For discussions of the pro-Anschluss impulses among social-democratic republicans, see Low, *The Anschluss Movement*, 1–8, 451–462, and Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 1–20, 237–242.

⁸¹ “Sitzungsbereich über die Verhandlungen mit dem österreichischen Turnerbund in Wien am 12. Sept. 1920.,” Page 1, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 26, Day 4 Photo 140.

Bolsheviks were the supreme threat.⁸² Either way, right-wingers clearly perceived themselves as besieged. And in that siege, Orgesch and Austrian radical right-wing men could perceive CSP zealots as too conservative, too stubbornly Austrian, and not German nationalist enough.⁸³

Yet, men across these groups would claim German as their nationality, and we ought not assume the two groups constituted distinct, clear-cut camps.⁸⁴ Immediately after Kraus brought up the officer clique, the next sentence in the minutes read as follows: “Zusammenschluss of Gesamt-österreich with Gesamtdeutschland and the establishment of a Wehrmacht.”⁸⁵ But what exactly would this Gesamt-Österreich-Deutschland look like? Further, what did Zusammenschluss even mean and to whom? Merger, consolidation,

⁸² Sitzungsbereich über die Verhandlungen mit dem österreichischen Turnerbund in Wien am 12. Sept. 1920.,” Page 2, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 26, Day 4 Photo 141.

⁸³ For the staunch Austrian-ness of certain CSP echelons, see Jamie Andrew McGregor Bulloch, “The Promotion of an Austrian Identity, 1918-1938” (PhD diss., University College London, 2002), 264. Carsten maintains that to “the radical völkisch” wings of the emerging Heimwehren, the CSP seemed even “reactionary and monarchist.” F. L. Carsten, *Fascist Movements in Austria: From Schönerer to Hitler* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1977), 60-61. Likewise, Martin Kitchen claims the CSP received scorn as “reactionary and clerical” from the Heimwehren. Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 56. For this intra-nationalist-competition mechanism see Judson, *Guardians of the Nation*, 8-9.

⁸⁴ For the older stance on distinct sociopolitical camps in interwar Austria (the “Lager” thesis), see F. L. Carsten, *Fascist Movements in Austria: From Schönerer to Hitler*, vol. 7 of *SAGE Studies in 20th Century History* (London: SAGE Publications, 1977), 41-69, 87-140. Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 1-6, 36-51, 97-143, 173-201. Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler’s Hometown: Linz, Austria 1908-1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 7, 64, 112-115, 217-229. For the deconstruction of the Lager trichotomy, see Tim Kirk, “Austrian fascisms, ‘Austrofascism’ and the working class,” Chapter 1 in *Nazism and the working class in Austria: Industrial unrest and political dissent in the ‘national community’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19-20. Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 233. Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 6-10.

⁸⁵ “Sitzungsbereich über die Verhandlungen mit dem österreichischen Turnerbund in Wien am 12. Sept. 1920.,” Page 1, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 26, Day 4 Photo 140.

amalgamation, or incorporation? The specifics of both form and function remained left undefined, perhaps so as not to upset anyone with CSP leanings.

Reflective of their dissociating loyalties, many CSP members held a Janus-faced view of Anschluss: in favor when talking about it in theory for the sake of some ethno-national pride (and for the sake of electoral support); opposed in practice whenever conversations moved to practical questions of the specifics, which obviated Austria's status as Germany's sidekick.⁸⁶ Ironically, the "common" nationality made minute disagreements balloon to frustrating proportions simply because things should have been so straightforward. The CSP sought to reconcile the affective power of German nationalism for domestic political support with a rejection of foreign political subjugation to Germany as a country. The attempts of its party leaders to collapse this binary heading would manifest itself again and again during the tumultuous history of this intra-national borderland.

Adding to the frustration, disagreement among men with so much in common reeked of traitors' betrayal, a much more serious transgression than standard, run-of-the-mill opponents. Kraus warned that the CSP wanted to turn the historical clock backward by establishing some Danube Confederation. In his assessment, such a lost causes would only "sell

⁸⁶ Speaking to the CSP's theoretical, hypothetical, ephemeral backing of Anschluss, Kitchen claims the CSP "supported the idea of an Anschluss." Kitchen, *Austrian Fascism*, 45. Seipel himself perhaps embodied this Janus-face perspective. Carsten claims that by 1929, "Seipel was now coming out definitely – but not publicly – against the Anschluss ..." Carsten, *The First Austrian Republic*, 140–141. It was quite the balancing act to harness that affective power of German nationalism for support while rejecting subjugation to Germany as a country, one manifested again and again in the intra-national borderland. Edmondson claims quite clearly "The Christian Socials were divided over this issue [*Anschluss*].... The Heimwehr, drawing its support from both the Christian-conservative and the nationalist camps, was also divided over the issue, but its eventual legacy, especially after the National Socialists had become competitors, was that of support for Austrian independence." Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 16.

Austria to the Slavs.” He condemned as marginal the “few Führer” of the CSP who set “the French-oriented Politik of the clericals,” while insisting the right-leaning Volk who supported the CSP were redeemable: “the electoral masses of the Christian-socials think German [denken deutsch].” To them, it was the sins of the priestly few that led astray the good German stock in Austria, a southeastern flock that just needed the right shepherd to inculcate the right form of group consciousness. Along those lines, he proclaimed that Austria needed “German battalions,” not Hungarian assistance, and he officially declared his “complete trust” in both Escherich and Kanzler, marking his loyalty to Bavarian right-wing militias.⁸⁷ The meeting minutes revealed the extent of inter-regional feuding within an intra-national space, especially over the question of organizational Anschluss among right-wing paramilitary groups. With unity supposedly so obvious, discord inherently became more infuriating. This tension manifested itself in their next set of maneuverings: smuggling armaments across the Austro-Bavarian border to carry out paramilitary machinations.

Transborder Transgressions: Moving Munitions over Mountains

To many German politicians, the meetings and scheming of the Orgesch, Orka, and Heimwehren reeked of conspiracy. Pre-empting any more chaos, the Prussian and Saxon state governments formally banned the Orgesch by the end of 1920. But they forged onward in the German-speaking south and having already secured the loyalty of some Austrian officers, the

⁸⁷ “Sitzungsbereicht über die Verhandlungen mit dem österreichischen Turnerbund in Wien am 12. Sept. 1920.,” Page 2, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” 26, Day 4 Photos 141.

Orgesch and Orka worked on promoting right-wing activity in Austria. By October, the *Deutsche Zeitung* claimed “the ‘Orgesch’ is also an important factor in Austria.”⁸⁸ Clearly sympathetic to the Orka cause, the claims of the *Montags Zeitung* went further: “At this opportunity representative Landeshauptmann Kanzler also reported about his activity as organizer of the Austrian Heimwehr movement and explained that the formation of the Heimwehren on Austrian soil is only a way which should prepare for the hoped-for Anschluss of our German brothers across the border to the common fatherland.”⁸⁹ This rhetoric of national fraternity glossed over a litany of regional differences, which came to a head in fratricidal ways during the interwar period. Repeating the notion of German fraternity, an Orka report written in Munich in December of 1920 concluded that only a unification of Austria and Bavaria could save Austria from “Bolshevik chaos.”⁹⁰ Saving their “neighboring Stammesbrüdern [tribal brothers]” in Austria would not only increase Germany’s power, but it would also make this Germanic borderland into a buffer, absorbing and disarming external

⁸⁸ “Was ist die ‚Orgesch?“, *Deutsche Zeitung: „Nationaldemokratische Partei“*, Nummer 40, 7. Jahrgang, 3 October 1920, Seite 2, ANNO – AustriaN Newspapers Online (ANNO), *Historische österreichische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=dez&datum=19201003&query=“Orgesch”&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 23 February 2021.

⁸⁹ “Bürgertum und Sozialdemokratie in Bayern. Der Föderalismus der bayerischen Volkspartei. – Die Einwohnerwehren. – Ein Volksbegehren gegen die sozialdemokratische Gemeinderatsmehrheit in München. – Die Verhaftung des Kommunistenführers Eisenberger. (Von unserem Korrespondenten.), *Montags-Zeitung: Erscheint jeden Montag früh.*, 18 October 1920, Nummer 2029, Seite 4, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=mzt&datum=19201018&seite=4&zoom=33&query=“Orgesch”%2B“Heimwehr”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 20 February 2021.

⁹⁰ “Bericht der Orka über die Lage in Österreich. München, Dezember 1920.,” Page 1, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/8032/, Archivsignatur: 23, Standort: 51, Magazin: M206, Reihe: 58 (fol. 1-). Zentrales Staatsarchiv (ZSa), Organisation Escherich Orka, FbG 007/89. 1-4-3-51, Day 5 Photo 451.

threats.⁹¹ Indeed, the text even stated that the Bavarian Orka “must not let our Stammesbrüder fall prey to enslavement [Versklavung],” perhaps with the slippage between slave and Slav on the tip of the tongue.⁹² In their racial reading of history, Slavs were named after slaves, so enslavement to them was tantamount to their world turned upside down. Further, the Orka denoted that the Austrians were brothers within their conceptualization of a southeastern German Stamm, brothers from the same regional variety, yet neither identical nor clones.⁹³ They conceptualized their transborder friends as similar and different, setting the stage for cooperation and competition.

Making Austria into an official borderland of the German Reich would thus save not only Austria, but also Bavaria and Germany. Indeed, it was “especially Bavaria” most at risk of “instant danger” if “Austria lapsed to Bolshevism.”⁹⁴ More prosaically, the report claimed that since the new Polish and Czechoslovak states blocked German access to the east, only by incorporating Austria could Germany hope to reestablish a lifeline to eastern markets, such

⁹¹ “Bericht der Orka über die Lage in Österreich. München, Dezember 1920.,” Pages 1–3, 4 (for direct quotation), BaBL, R/8032/, 23, 51, M206, 58 (fol. 1–). ZSa, Organisation Escherich Orka, Day 5 Photos 451–453, 454 (for direct quotation).

⁹² “Bericht der Orka über die Lage in Österreich. München, Dezember 1920.,” Page 2, BaBL, R/8032/, 23, 51, M206, 58 (fol. 1–). ZSa, Organisation Escherich Orka, Day 5 Photo 452.

⁹³ “Bericht der Orka über die Lage in Österreich. München, Dezember 1920.,” Page 4, BaBL, R/8032/, 23, 51, M206, 58 (fol. 1–). ZSa, Organisation Escherich Orka, Day 5 Photo 454. For more on the discourse of Germanic Stämme, see Till van Rahden, “Germans of the Jewish *Stamm*: Visions of Community between Nationalism and Particularism, 1850 to 1933,” Chapter 1 of *German History from the Margins*, eds. Neil Gregor, Nils Roemer, and Mark Roseman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 27–48, more specifically 37–38. See also Hochman, “Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy,” 235–236.

⁹⁴ “Bericht der Orka über die Lage in Österreich. München, Dezember 1920.,” Pages 1, 2 (for direct quotation), 3–4, BaBL, R/8032/, 23, 51, M206, 58 (fol. 1–). ZSa, Organisation Escherich Orka, Day 5 Photos 451, 452 (for direct quotation), 453–454.

that “Vienna will never lose its meaning as a commercial metropolis for the East.”⁹⁵ With more than a little resentment, the report added it would be nice if the northern Germans could recognize the necessity of including Austria, because “then the meaning of the Orka and its important actions for the Reich will also be appropriately appreciated there [in north Germany].”⁹⁶

Meanwhile, the Orgesch tried to salvage its reputation in such northern areas. An overture to Berlin attempted to prove the Orgesch’s merit by showing “the true face of the Orgesch!” Doing so meant dispelling myths that it operated as a secret organization, as a military or police organization, and as an illegal organization. While not technically an official military or police organization, the organization remained a group of militarized vigilantes still technically “allowed” by the “Justice Minister himself.”⁹⁷ Having set the record straight as best it could finagle with taxonomic technicalities, the Orgesch posed a question that insinuated the Orgesch was “widespread over all of Germany.” The Orgesch labeled Bavaria as the “most stabilized state in the German Reich,” even though such a statement ran in the face of Munich’s chaotic reality and reputation. Within the Orgesch’s own logic, that very chaos—in the form of mobilizing vigilantes to act according to their own authority to smuggle weapons, ammunition, grenades, and military advisors across the Austro-Bavarian border—served the

⁹⁵ “Bericht der Orka über die Lage in Österreich. München, Dezember 1920.,” Page 2, BaBL, R/8032/, 23, 51, M206, 58 (fol. 1-). ZSa, Organisation Escherich Orka, Day 5 Photo 452.

⁹⁶ “Bericht der Orka über die Lage in Österreich. München, Dezember 1920.,” Page 3, BaBL, R/8032/, 23, 51, M206, 58 (fol. 1-). ZSa, Organisation Escherich Orka, Day 5 Photo 453.

⁹⁷ “Das wahre Gesicht der Orgesch!,” Buchdruckerei F. Schulz, Berlin, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/8032/, Archivsignatur: 3, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 206, Reihe: 58, Organisation Escherich, Provinzialleitung Westsachsen (2), Propagandamaterial der Organisation Escherich, I/16/06 Stein A 671/4 Fu 1976/57, Eigentum des ZSa Potsdam, Organisation Escherich Aufklärung Propaganda I, Eigentum des DZa, One page double-sided, no pagination given, Day 5 Picture 129-130.

overall purposes of their order, or at least, the first steps toward it. It was their way of securing southeastern Germany, and by extension, all of Germany itself. They imagined the security of the Austro-Bavarian borderland as critical to the security of the German Reich's core. The pamphlet then described the leadership position of Escherich himself, claiming "it is wonderful, that the order-loving citizens in the rest of Germany have the wish to cooperate for the welfare of the state and to choose the one man as Führer, who works out of pure love of the fatherland?" This claim lacked numerical evidence, but just saying it put it out there as a perceived reality.⁹⁸

The activities of the Orgesch and Orka outside of Bavaria started to extend beyond meetings and scheming. On 22 December 1920, the *Linzer Tagblatt* reported that the government of Upper Austria received information of a Bavarian attempt to smuggle weapons to the Austrian Heimwehren. The government supposedly undertook the necessary steps to find and confiscate this contraband. While ostensibly for the preservation of order, these weapons created a mess for the Austrian Republic to clean.⁹⁹ Furthermore, procuring and transporting such contraband incurred concomitant costs. An internal memorandum within the Orka's Munich office reported that its financial situation stood on the brink of "collapse," and thus it needed direct governmental assistance. The message also clarified that the Orka and

⁹⁸ "Das wahre Gesicht der Orgesch!," BaBL, R/8032/, 3, 51, M 206, 58, Eigentum des ZSa Potsdam, Organisation Escherich Aufklärung Propaganda I, Eigentum des DZa, Back of pamphlet, no pagination given, Day 5 Picture 130. In December 1920, the Orgesch attempted a similar public relations campaign in Danzig. See "Du—und ‚Orgesch!“, Danzig-Neufahrwasser, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/8032/, Archivsignatur: 3, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 206, Reihe: 58, Propagandamaterial der Organisation Escherich, Organisation Escherich Aufklärung Propaganda I, Day 5 Picture 126.

⁹⁹ "Bewaffnete Heimwehren in Oberösterreich?," *Linzer „Tagblatt“*, 22 December 1920, Nummer 292, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 649, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, (fol. 1-), Organisation Escherich Gruppe Orka, 19, Day 4 Photo 65.

its corresponding Selbstschutzverbände Deutsch-Oesterreichs (SSV, or self-defense unions of German-Austria, often the name for some patchwork Heimwehren organizations in the Tyrol) needed to make their value known to all of Germany.¹⁰⁰ Namely, they saw themselves as the way to protect Bavaria's eastern border from the "Bolshevik flood." If no Bavarian state funds came forth, popular fundraising from "all Germans" remained an option. These militiamen set up a bank account in Munich to receive just such transfers.¹⁰¹

By the spring of 1921, arms traders brought revolvers, rifles, hand grenades, and copious amounts of ammunition to the Orka office in the border town of Rosenheim, all for their agents to smuggle across the border into Austria. These acquisitions also plummeted the paramilitary organizations further into insolvency. Invoices to the Orka offices confirmed the delivery of the contraband, and the Austrians presumably had to foot the bill.¹⁰² Furthermore, this munitions-smuggling into Tyrol led to paper trails and subsequent inquiries, which appeared awkward at best and incriminating at worst. The Bavarian Sales Office for Army Material issued a statement to Kanzler's office in Munich, claiming that government officials in Berlin wanted them to account for shipment "Nr. 16198" on 28 September of 1920. To

¹⁰⁰ "Leitung der Selbstschutz-Verbände Deutsch-Oesterreichs (Orka), München, im Januar 1921." BaBL, R/8032/, Archivsignatur: 20, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 206, Reihe: 58, (fol. 1-), ZSa 61 Or1 Organisation Escherich, Gruppe Kanzler, FbG 007/88 1-4-3-51, Day 5 Photo 407. For the clarification on names, see Engle, "A Legion of Legacy," 1-152. For the program of the Oberösterreich's SSV, including the statement on "Ruhe und Ordnung" see "Satzungen des Selbstschutzverbandes Oberösterreich.," Verleger: Selbstschutzverband Oberösterreich, BaBL, NS/26/, 649, 51, M 106, 49, (fol. 1-), 32, Day 4 Photo 66.

¹⁰¹ "Leitung der Selbstschutz-Verbände Deutsch-Oesterreichs (Orka), München, im Januar 1921." BaBL, R/8032/, 20, 51, M 206, 58, (fol. 1-), ZSa 61 Or1 Organisation Escherich, Gruppe Kanzler, Day 5 Photo 407.

¹⁰² "Empfangsbestätigung," BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 716, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, (fol. 1-), Aktenbezeichnungsblatt No. 716 Einwohnerwehren (Oberbayern) – Bewaffnung., Day 4 Photo 151.

avoid potential investigation or punishment from Berlin, the Bavarian munitions company adamantly insisted their Orka client furnish documentation about the use of its purchases.¹⁰³

Orgesch-Heimwehren propagandists acted to control any reputational damages that their illegal deeds might cause. A pamphlet entitled “What do the Heimwehr Want?” circulated in Bavaria’s neighboring southern German state of Württemberg. The text attempted to dispel a myriad of rumors that had created a public relations nightmare for the Orgesch-Heimwehren front. They hoped to dispel the rumor that “they work – especially in Tyrol and Bavaria – for the dismemberment of the Reich, into a Catholic southern and a Protestant northern Germany ... they prepare for a Civil War.” The pamphlet assured the reader of the baseless nature of such gossip: “always but really always, the tracks [of the true originators of these defamations] lead over the borders of our Volksgemeinschaft to the enemies of the Volk, more often than not to Jews.”¹⁰⁴ While conjuring scapegoats that spread

¹⁰³ “B.V.H. Bayerische Verwertungsstelle für Heeresgut, München 11. November 1920. An die Landesleitung der Einwohnerwehren Bayerns z. H. des Herrn Landeshauptmann-Stellvertreters Kanzler, Nr. 16198 Dr. Schn./30, Abt. III a I, München,” BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/8032/, Archivsignatur: 21, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 206, Reihe: 58, (fol. 1-), Zentrales Staatsarchiv (ZSa), 61 Or1, R 8032, Organisation Escherich Orka, Besond., Bayerische Erfassungsstelle für Heeresgut Reichsschatzministerium III, Day 6 Photo 366.

¹⁰⁴ “Was will die Heimwehr?,” Ein Leitfaden für jeden Heimwehr-Mann und -Führer,” 1921, Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg (LaBWSL), Findbuch E 186, Bestellsignatur E 186 Bü 698, 1 Bü, Organisation Escherich, Verfilmungsstelle: Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg [sic] Institut für Erhaltung von Archiv- und Bibliotheksgut, Staatsarchiv Ludwigsburg E 186 Württ. Einwohnerwehr und Tübinger Studentenbann 1918-1921 19x, Aufn Film 0009, Aufn. Einheit 0009, 17LBS1608000872, Nr. 698, Archivischer Identifikator 2-5391351, Vorsignaturen: Bund 79; 13, Digitalisate: 101, Mitteilungen und Anweisungen der Organisation Escherich an die Landesleitung Württemberg, Seite 3, (1 of database), <http://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/plink/?f=2-5391351-1>, Available via Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek: Kultur und Wissen online (DDB), Accessed 15 February 2021.

antisemitism, they proactively sought to refute claims against them, which indicated that their reputation for nefarious border activities had already preceded them.

To help salvage their reputation elsewhere, in “other” German regions, they ardently couched their maneuverings in the name of German solidarity: “We Germans need nothing in today’s time more urgently than unity, nothing pains us more than fragmentation. Today in the Organisation Escherich all well-meaning Germans work together, from the far north to the parapet of the Karavankas [Alpine range on the Yugoslavian border], without difference of Stand, of race, and of party...” As a demonstration of such unity, it even boasted about the successful organizational union of the Heimwehren “to the Organisation Escherich.” The supposed willingness of the Heimwehren to put regional unity above their parochial pride “gave a shining example to the entire German Volk” about German solidarity.¹⁰⁵ Along those lines, the brochure pontificated that their Austrian members of course embraced an Anschluss: “but for us German-Austrians this commitment to a groß, united Gesamtdeutschland simultaneously means the commitment to the Anschluss of our impotent miniature state to the groß deutsch motherland.”¹⁰⁶ Austrian recruits submitted with pride to the Orgesch and to Germany, at least according to this Bavarian propaganda disseminated in Württemberg. But

¹⁰⁵ “Was will die Heimwehr?,” LaBWSL, Findbuch E 186, Bestellsignatur E 186 Bü 698, 1 Bü, Aufn Film 0012, Aufn. Einheit 0012, 17LBS1608000872, Nr. 698, 2-5391351, Bund 79; 13, 101, Organisation Escherich an die Landesleitung Württemberg, Seite 9 (4 on database), <http://www.landearchiv-bw.de/plink/?f=2-5391351-4>, DDB, Accessed 15 February 2021.

¹⁰⁶ “Was will die Heimwehr?,” LaBWSL, Findbuch E 186, Bestellsignatur E 186 Bü 698, 1 Bü, Aufn Film 0013, Aufn. Einheit 0013, 17LBS1608000872, Nr. 698, 2-5391351, Bund 79; 13, 101, Organisation Escherich an die Landesleitung Württemberg, Seite 11 (5 on database), <http://www.landearchiv-bw.de/plink/?f=2-5391351-5>, DDB, Accessed 15 February 2021.

regional bickering over großdeutsch ambitions would mark this borderland for the next twenty-five years as subsequent chapters will show.

Along those lines, additional fissures opened in the alliance of the Bavarian Orka and the Austrian SSV. During a joint meeting in the Upper Austrian capital of Linz on 25 June, Kanzler assured Austrian co-nationals not to fear that Bavaria would leave Austria “blindsided” by abandoning it to suffer the consequences for its clandestine militarization. “Instead, Bavaria would always be able to help if something should go badly in Austria.”¹⁰⁷ The summit minutes indicated the group then turned toward details of finances, tactics, and weapons. An Orka representative by the surname of Hörl reported that the financial situation of his group appeared “catastrophic” and “critical.” In typical right-wing fashion, they displaced their own shortcomings onto “the Jews,” whose influence “was to be taken seriously.” Hörl labeled it a mistake to include Jews in any Orgesch/Orka activity in Bavaria, as he feared they brought their own political agendas with them.¹⁰⁸ In general, the paramilitary units ought to prefer “Aryan companies” as potential sponsors.¹⁰⁹ It seems that these antisemitic, right-wing beggars also acted as choosers when it came to securing the funds they so desperately needed for their expensive military tastes. The representatives from the Vorarlberg Alpine province asked for hand grenades and sixteen thousand cartridges; those from Tyrol requested four hundred rifles,

¹⁰⁷ “Protokoll der Stabsleitersitzung in Linz am 25. Juni 1921, angehalten im kleinen Sitzungssaal des Landeskulturrates,,” Page 1, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/8032/, Archivsignatur: 20, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 206, Reihe: 58, ZSa 61 Or1 Organisation Escherich, Gruppe Kanzler, Day 5 Photo 393.

¹⁰⁸ For the staple work on interwar antisemitism, see Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe*, 9–12, 82–87.

¹⁰⁹ “Protokoll der Stabsleitersitzung in Linz am 25. Juni 1921, angehalten im kleinen Sitzungssaal des Landeskulturrates,,” Page 6, BaBL, R/8032/, 20, 51, M 206, 58, ZSa 61 Or1 Organisation Escherich, Gruppe Kanzler, Day 5 Photo 393.

thirty thousand cartridges, and hand grenades; Salzburg's agents asked for eight hundred rifles and over sixty thousand cartridges of varying types; the representatives of Upper Austria, indicating the extent of their sense of anxiety, asked for seventy-five thousand cartridges, two thousand rifles, and "telephone material."¹¹⁰ Some agents resorted to theft to maximize their bang for no buck—they stole heavy artillery from the Austrian Army in transit to Italy and stashed these howitzers in Alpine depots, in addition to stealing munitions from rival socialist paramilitary organizations.¹¹¹

They established a bank account and smuggled munitions not just for show but for real plans. They drafted mobilization preparations for some impending political upheaval. On 2 February 1921, Austrian paramilitary leaders sent a report to the Orka representatives in Munich about their "Operation Plan and Alert System." They meant these plans to constitute part and parcel of the Orka's overall intelligence apparatus. The mobilization scheme stated that "for Tirol, the areas around Innsbruck, Jenbach, Rattenberg, Brixlegg, Wörgl and Kufstein were in consideration as the eventual danger zones." Cartographically, these towns formed a chain along the Inn River from Innsbruck northward to the Bavarian border at Kufstein. This line thus represented a critical transportation and mobilization route from the Bavarian Orka to the right-wing paramilitaries headquartered in the Tyrolean capital. Securing this area first in the case of any crisis revealed two critical implications. First, that this alliance of Bavarian

¹¹⁰ "Protokoll der Stabsleitersitzung in Linz am 25. Juni 1921, angehalten im kleinen Sitzungssaal des Landeskulturrates," Page 10, BaBL, R/8032/, 20, 51, M 206, 58, ZSa 61 Or1 Organisation Escherich, Day 5 Photo 402.

¹¹¹ Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 7-12. Kondert, "Early History of the Austrian Heimwehr," 48-49.

Orka and Tyrolean paramilitaries planned to meet any upheaval with their own military force pointed to a fascinating irony. Given that these organizations lacked official status (and northern German states had even legally banned them), the use of any such unofficial military force would usurp official state power. Their very attempt to quell some sort of Putsch would constitute a breach of legitimate sovereignty in and of itself. Second, by marking these regions as the “eventual danger zones,” this awkward right-wing conglomerate exemplified the confluence of two emotional undercurrents in this intra-national borderland: anxiety and certainty. They certainly perceived this region’s security as precarious, with political upheaval looming perpetually on the horizon. That they gave top priority to this region also revealed their belief in establishing a vital conduit with their Bavarian allies. They fumbled for a coherent regional countermeasure to an upheaval they saw as impending but simultaneously unknowable.¹¹²

Right-wing regionalists also inundated the borderland with another paradox: they strove to unite the region by adding new spatial divisions. Revising the main Austro-Bavarian border was not the only cartographical goal for many of these southern German right-wing agents. Like other paramilitary groups (including the National Socialists), they imposed their own imaginative redistricting for the federal states within the Austro-Bavarian region. The Orgesch’s administrative strategy over large swaths of the map amounted to slicing territories

¹¹² *Na. Stelle II. Tab. Nr. 83 res. Vertraulich! An de Orka. Innsbruck am 2 February 1921, in München.* BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/8032/, Archivsignatur: 31, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 206, Reihe: 58, (fol. 1-), ZSa 61Or1, Organisation Escherich Orka, Tirol, FbG 007/89 1-4-3-51, Day 6 Photo 154.

into more manageable-sized *Gaue*, with eighteen just for Upper Bavaria alone.¹¹³ By September 1920, they had dissected Austria's already small Alpine state of Vorarlberg into five separate *Gaue*.¹¹⁴ However, by February 1921, they rebranded the *Gaue* as *Bezirken* (districts).¹¹⁵ Administrative maps clarified how many rifles each sub-district had secured, and the number actually decreased over this half-year period.¹¹⁶ Through such redistricting, they grafted a series of fantastical constructs and erasures onto the map of the Austro-Bavarian region. While these conceptualizations had little to no immediate impact, they charged the atmosphere with borderland revisionism and redistricting.

Heimwehren Emergent & Escherich's Heimatschutz

The Orgesch and Orka only “officially” existed for a few years before the Allied governments forbade them explicitly in 1921. While this short lifespan might indicate insignificance or failure, such a rapid Allied response showed they presented a potential threat to the Allied peace settlement. Besides, ending an organization on paper was one thing, but actively changing the mentalities and practices of its enthusiasts was far more complicated. As

¹¹³ Large presents this precedent of territorial division as an official means of separating the Orgesch from any state structures—in other words, a revolutionary right-wing move against state control. Large, “Politics of Law and Order,” 23.

¹¹⁴ “Bregenz, am 24./IX. 1920.,” BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 648, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 49, (fol. 1-), Vorarlberg, Aktenbezeichnungsblatt, No. 648 Renner Akte Vorarlberg (“Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz” see also folders 645 to 647 and 649)., Days 1-3 Photo 482.

¹¹⁵ “Bregenz, am 1. Feber [sic] 1921.,” BaBL, NS/26/, 648, 51, M 106, 49, (fol. 1-), “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” Days 1-3 Photo 483.

¹¹⁶ “Bregenz, am 24./IX. 1920.,” BaBL, NS/26/, 648, 51, M 106, 49, (fol. 1-), “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” Days 1-3 Photo 482; “Bregenz, am 1. Feber [sic] 1921.,” BBL, NS/26/, 648, 51, M 106, 49, (fol. 1-), “Organisation Escherich Selbstschutz,” Days 1-3 Photo 483.

late as 20 May 1922, the workers' paper *Salzburger Wacht* asserted that funding and armaments "flowed and are flowing like milk and honey" to the Austrian militias "out of Bavaria, the motherland of the Orka."¹¹⁷ Historian David Clay Large also pointed out that, despite the disbandment, the Orgesch set the precedent of mass participation in right-wing ventures that superseded the state. To that end, former Orgesch participants often went to the Bauernwehr (Farmer or Peasant Militia) and Bürgerwehr (Citizen Militia), which had less formal militarization and thus more legal standing.¹¹⁸

If the Bavarian Orgesch/Orka had spent 1920 browbeating the various Austrian Heimwehren, then by 1921, the Heimwehren emerged as the paramilitary groups left standing. But the loss of their Bavarian backers left them weak and in desperate need of support. Furthermore, the fractured, confederated nature of this movement continued.¹¹⁹ In theory, these groups provided provincial counterweights to the Austrian socialist paramilitary, the Republikanischer Schutzbund (RS), but their pluralization generated discord over leadership, ideology, priorities, and strategies, not to mention the jealousy and paranoia of its many megalomaniac leaders.¹²⁰ One such example occurred in 1923, when Steidle of the

¹¹⁷ "Die Ruhestörer der Republik." *Salzburger Wacht: Organ für das gesamte werktätige Volk im Lande Salzburg*, 20 May 1922, Nummer 115, 24. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sbw&datum=19220520&query=Orka&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

¹¹⁸ Large, "Politics of Law and Order," 75-79. By pointing out the importance of the Orgesch in the rise of fascism in interwar Europe, Large also takes down the myth that the Orgesch should have been allowed to carry on as a more reasonable alternative to Nazism that would have kept Hitler's movement in check. Large, "Politics of Law and Order," 77-79.

¹¹⁹ Kondert, "Early History of the Austrian Heimwehr," 50. See also Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 1-149, 263. Each of these groups was also further broken down into its myriad of local *Heimwehren* and SSV. See Engle, "Legion of Legacy," 1.

¹²⁰ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 1-149, 263. The Republikanischer Schutzbund (RS) should not be confused with the 1923 Vaterländischer Schutzbund (VS) of the Austrian Nazis. Ivan

Heimatwehren in Tyrol tried to bully the Bund der Selbstschutz Organisationen der westlichen Alpenländer (Federation of Self-Defense Organizations of the Western Alpine Lands, BSOA) into submission, yet another attempt to bring local SSV into the Heimwehren fold. Some BSOA objectives included an antisemitic charge against supposed Judeo-Bolshevism, a phantom menace that so terrified right-wingers across Germany, Europe, and the globe.¹²¹ As just such right-wingers, the BSOA activists pushed for “a stronger fight against Marxism and the Jewish spirit” and “the defense of persons, work, and property, of law and order.” But their first objective encapsulated the regionalist question inherent in any conversation of German unity. They proclaimed to strive for “the unification of all German groups into one Fatherland, up until the preservation of the integrity of the Federal States of Austria.” They espoused the overarching goal of German unity, yet their caveat showed the relativity over the exact manner of this incorporation. Hence the Austrian organization clarified they would tolerate no subjugation of Austrian sovereignty, even (or especially) by Germans in Germany.¹²² Furthermore, their manifesto insisted that they allowed for making new connections with any “outside groups” (other paramilitary groups) “only with the

T. Berend, “A fascistoid Austrian demagogue: Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg,” Chapter 4 in *A Century of Populist Demagogues: Eighteen European Portraits, 1918–2018* (Central European University Press, 2020), 97, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7829/j.ctv16f6cn2.8>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

¹²¹ Programm des Bundes der Selbstschutz – Organisationen der westlichen Alpenländer.,” Tiroler Landesarchiv Innsbruck (TLAI), Bestand: Bundesleitung der Österreichischen (Alpenländischen) Selbstschutzverbände (Heimwehr), VIII. Sammelakten 1925–1926, VIII/1 Sammelakt (org.) 1–37 Fol. Day 3 Photo 8. For the history of conflating Judaism with Marxism, see Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe*, 9–12, 82–87. See Gallagher, *Nazis of Copley Square*, 1–30.

¹²² “Programm des Bundes der Selbstschutz – Organisationen der westlichen Alpenländer.,” Tiroler Landesarchiv Innsbruck (TLAI), Bestand: Bundesleitung der Österreichischen (Alpenländischen) Selbstschutzverbände (Heimwehr), VIII. Sammelakten 1925–1926, VIII/1 Sammelakt (org.) 1–37 Fol. Day 3 Photo 8.

unanimous agreement of all of the [Alpine Selbstschutz] Verbände.” By requiring total agreement just to make new friends, the BSOA organizations baked internal disagreement into their very foundation.¹²³

The BSOA continued to demonstrate the simultaneous cooperation and competition among right-wing organizations in interwar Austria and Germany. Its members declared their readiness to defend against any German dictator who pushed for an Anschluss, regardless “of whether from the left or right.”¹²⁴ This stance against an Anschluss from a right-wing German dictator stemmed from the fear that that such unification would not respect their vision of a bilateral Anschluss, which reserved a position of prominence for Austria. Instead, they feared any right-wing German dictator might subjugate Austria (and its paramilitary groups). The manifesto writers hit on the intra-national conundrum directly, stating such an Anschluss would constitute the invasion of a “foreign land” masquerading as the settlement of an “internal German matter.” This BSOA warning revealed two key aspects of this borderland: first, though the members advocated for Austrian preponderance, they had a brewing sense that Austria’s destiny included Anschluss (or some attempt at one). But they knew not the details of this

¹²³ “Programm des Bundes,” TLaI, Bestand: Bundesleitung, Day 3 Photo 8.

¹²⁴ Defending against an Anschluss attempt from the left made sense from this organization of self-proclaimed “anti-Marxist” and anti-socialist objectives. Along those lines, any attempt by the Austrian left to use force or violence to merge with the demonized “socialist-Bolshevik regime in Germany” was “to be crushed under the most ruthless usage of arms.” Such strong rhetoric was to be expected from a rightwing paramilitary in interwar Austria. “Bundesleitung der alpenländischen S.S.V. Tagb. No. No. 152/Bres ex 1923. Auszug aus den in Klagenfurt am 25. September 1923 aufgestellten Richtlinien für die ersten von jedem Lande selbständig zu ergreifenden Massnahmen der alpenländischen S.S.V. zusammengeschlossenen Landesleitungen beim Eintritt innerer Kämpfe im Reich.” TLaI, Bestand: Bundesleitung der Österreichischen (Alpenländischen) Selbstschutzverbände (Heimwehr), VIII. Sammelakten 1925-1926, VIII/1 Sammelakt (org.) 1-37, Day 3 Photo 9.

attempt (“from left or right”), which only exacerbated the sense of anxiety. It could occur at any moment and from any direction, spatially or ideologically.¹²⁵

This declaration against any dictatorially led Anschluss also revealed the extent to which Austria functioned as an intra-national space. According to BSOA representatives, Austria represented a “foreign/outlying land [*Ausland*]” to Germany. However, they warned about the ease of branding any Anschluss as an “internal German [innerdeutsch] affair.”¹²⁶ Depending on perspective, Austria and the German-speaking Alps more broadly existed inside and outside the German realm. The space existed as a borderland not simply because a state border ran through it. Rather, these right-wingers suspended Austria in an ether of different German nationhoods, as regimes and paramilitary groups collapsed the border between foreign and domestic lands. The volatile ether of an Austrian Anschluss combined seemingly contradictory impulses: inclusion with exclusion, inevitability with uncertainty, nationalism with regionalism, and cooperation with competition. The volatile combination of these factors all contributed to the liminality of Austro-Bavaria space. And the inchoate BSOA members eventually yielded to regional cohesion—they divested their organizations into the Heimwehren of Burgenland, Lower Austria, and Vienna in 1927, with Steidle at the nominal helm.¹²⁷

If the transborder machinations of his Orgesch and the Orka had given rise to the Austrian Heimwehren at the start of the 1920s, then by the end of the 1920s, the Austrian

¹²⁵ “Bundesleitung der alpenländischen S.S.V.” TLal, Bestand: Bundesleitung, Day 3 Photo 9.

¹²⁶ “Bundesleitung der alpenländischen S.S.V.” TLal, Bestand: Bundesleitung, Day 3 Photo 9.

¹²⁷ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 51.

Heimwehren in turn provided further inspiration for Escherich's next paramilitary venture back in Bavaria.¹²⁸ By 4 December 1928, he launched a Bavarian Heimatschutz.¹²⁹ This forest-resource manager turned far-right paramilitary leader proved more resilient than the Allied governments had supposed.¹³⁰ He sought to ameliorate the brewing friction between German and Austrian right-wing militias. In his proud, Bavarian thinking, Escherich opined that the centripetal impulses of the German state led the German people astray. Its rigid, Prussian-dominated structures prevented any breathing room for regional differences and exacerbated the tension between regionalism and nationalism. Instead, they needed a "federalist structure," one elastic enough for all Germans to express constructively their respective regionalist impulses. In Escherich's logic, a truly federalist Germany that truly respected regional state autonomy and jurisdiction would reconcile the tension between regionalism and nationalism.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Engle's great dissertation touches on a very interesting point: "In this iteration, the Heimwehren would supply the arms and support Bavarian formations, reconstituting the Einwohnerwehr in the form of the Bavarian Heimatschutz." Engle, "Legion of Legacy," 151. His chapter on that provides great detail on the Heimwehren, the Stahlhelm, and Escherich in the Vereinigte Vaterländische Verbände, but it does not really follow through on the story of Escherich's Bavarian Heimatschutz. Engle, "Legion of Legacy," 272-345.

¹²⁹ Not be confused with the contemporaneous Styrian Heimatschutz and Carinthian Heimatschutz discussed earlier. Also, not to be confused with the litany of environmentally focused Heimatschutz that have appeared in the history German-speaking Europe. For Heimatschutz environmental associations in Imperial Germany see Gissibl, *The Nature of German Imperialism*, 279, 285, and in the Habsburg Crownlands, see Roder, "Slovenia's Triglav National Park," 243-244, and in the Weimar Republic, see Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten*, 233.

¹³⁰ Escherich tends to be written off with the closing of his groups in 1921. While Large's work is an absolute tour-de-force, it relegates Escherich's Heimatschutz to footnote 16. Large, "The Politics of Law and Order," 17. See Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 21, 25, 41. See Rape, whose narrative ends at 1923. Rape, "Die österreichische Heimwehr," 1-640.

¹³¹ "Gründung eines Bayerischen Heimatschutzes: Drahtbericht unseres Korrespondenten," *Der Tag*, 4 December 1928, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/72/, Archivsignatur: 35, Standort: 51, Magazin M108, Reihe 37, (fol. 1-), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetztritz A-Z), St 552, F 152, Juli 1928-Juni 1929, I/16/06 Stein A 115/15 Fu 268/61, 42 E, Day 8 Photo 188.

Escherich's claims seem curious for many reasons, not least of all the fact that the framers of the Weimar Republic had maintained Germany's federalism. Surely aware of the structures of his nation-state, Escherich's claim seemed to criticize implicitly the extant federalism as a façade for Prussian unitarism. This sentiment implied that a *real* federalist state would afford even more autonomy to the different regions. To aggrandize Bavaria's weight within Germany, Escherich also sought, once again, to bring the various southeastern German paramilitary units under a Bavarian umbrella organization. This Heimatschutz resulted from a "Zusammenschluß" by the Führer of different organizations: Bavarian paramilitary men from Isengau and the Cheimsee, the Munich-based veterans' and fatherland associations, and "remarkably," an association from Württemberg (a south German state west of Bavaria) called the "Schwabenbanner Ulm" (Swabian Banner of Ulm, a city in Württemberg on the Bavarian border). The inclusion of this organization from Ulm contained a regionalist logic of its own: the unofficial Swabian region in southeastern Germany had its own dialect (schwäbisch) and crosscut the Bavarian borders with both Württemberg and Austria.¹³² The Führer of this Swabian organization tethered his group to Bavaria's fate—tolerating Bavarian pride seemed a better option than Prussian preponderance.¹³³

Escherich continued his practice of acquiring more groups in his paramilitary portfolio. However, he overplayed his hand by extending it to the Stahlhelm, the large conservative

¹³² For the historiographical masterwork on schwäbisch regionalism, see Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten*, 11–31, 30, 33–34, 198–220.

¹³³ "Gründung eines Bayerischen Heimatschutzes," *Der Tag*, 4 December 1928, BaBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1–), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetztritz, 42 E, Day 8 Photo 188.

veterans' organization throughout Germany. Escherich wanted their support for his movement via a mutually beneficial Zusammenschluss. The main problem? The Stahlhelm remained more widespread and exceedingly more well-known than Escherich's second attempt at a paramilitary front. The Stahlhelm subordinating itself in any way to his fringe Heimatschutz appeared awkward at best and insulting at worst. Furthermore, the two organizations had very different takes on regionalism. The Stahlhelm had much more national aspirations. The Stahlhelm set itself up against the Heimatschutz for being "too strongly federalist" in its objective of balancing regionalism and nationalism.¹³⁴

Just two days after hearing of Escherich's Heimatschutz, Bavaria's Stahlhelm representative condemned Escherich's machinations unequivocally. The representative listed the right-wing organizations that refused the Heimatschutz offer before claiming that Escherich—who "no longer had any political future in Bavaria"—wanted nothing more than a "competitive takeover of the Stahlhelm." The Stahlhelm representative also condemned him as a regionalist in nationalist clothing. This Stahlhelmer claimed that, by announcing his Heimatschutz, Escherich had "thrown off his mask" and revealed his true colors. If the Stahlhelm bled "black-red-white"—the traditional colors of the former Kaiserreich they advocated over the black-red-gold standard of the Weimar Republic—then Escherich and his Heimatschutz bled "ultra-white-blue," the traditional colors of Bavaria.¹³⁵ He thus accused

¹³⁴ "Der Stahlhelm Bund der Frontsoldaten, Landesleitung Bayern, München den 16. Mai 1929, An das Bundesamt des Stahlhelm z. Hd. des Bundeskanzlers Herrn General Czetztritz. Bericht über die wichtigsten Vorkommnisse der letzten Tage." BaBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1-), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetztritz, 16 B, Day 8 Photo 184.

¹³⁵ "Der Stahlhelm Bund Der Frontsoldaten/Landesleitung Bayern, Streng vertraulich! An das Bundesamt des Stahlhelm z.Hd.ds. Bundeskanzler Kam. General Czetztritz," BaBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1-), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetztritz, 43E, Day 8 Photo 190.

Escherich of partaking in a “movement” along with other pan-Bavarian organizations: “the comprehensive white-blue [colors of Bavaria] organizations and also the right-wing parties ... the V.V.V. [Vereinigte Vaterländische Verbände, United Fatherland Associations], Bund Bayern und Reich [Federation of Bavaria and Reich], die Bezirksvereine München [District Associations of Munich] a.[nd] a.[lso] the Nationalsozialisten,” quite the who’s who of Bavarian-based associations that often had their own militia elements. The Stahlhelm calculated that the ringleader of this conglomerate of (un)civil organizations was none other than “the Bavarian State Government” itself, which they surmised pushed for “independence of Bavaria and southern Germany in general from the centralization of Berlin.”¹³⁶ Clearly, paranoia among right-wingers could spiral rather quickly. Indeed, just two days before this Stahlhelm report of some grand-Bavarian conspiracy, Stahlhelm agents sought to assess whether other right-wing groups were receptive to Escherich’s Heimatschutz machinations: “How do the Vereinigten Vaterländischen Verbände of Munich stand by this founding [of Escherich’s Heimatwehr [sic] Bayern]? How about the [Bund] Bayern und Reich?”¹³⁷ Was he just another interloper in this already overcrowded right-wing space? True to the logic of

¹³⁶ “Streng vertraulich!,” BBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1-), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetztritz, 43E, Day 8 Photo 189.

¹³⁷ Pointing to the absurdity of right-wing pluralization, the Stahlhelm mislabeled Escherich’s nascent Heimatschutz as “a Heimatwehr Bayern.” “An den Führer des Landesverbandes Bayern des Stahlhelm, Bund der Frontsoldaten, Herrn Major a.D. Wäninger, München, Prinz Regentenstra. Bk. 343 Pers. Cz/Fr. 4 December,” BaBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1-), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetztritz, 41E, Day 8 Photo 187.

rivalry among this plurality of right-wingers, the Stahlhelm moved to counter Escherich's Heimatschutz.¹³⁸

Escherich's second attempt embodied the attempt to fuse regionalism and nationalism. He maintained that a strong federalist structure—with ample amount of Bavarian autonomy—would sooth the tension between regionalism and nationalism, channeling this constitutive contradiction into a constructive and functional German state.¹³⁹ The Stahlhelm quickly dismissed him as a regionalist opposed to their brand of nationalism.¹⁴⁰ Yet Escherich's goals also exemplified the synthesis between southeastern German regionalism and nationalism. In his mind, each benefited the other: a stronger Bavaria meant a stronger Germany and stronger German Volk throughout Europe. To him, different regions need not partake in a zero-sum game, whereby the aggrandizement of Bavaria or southeastern Germany came at the expense of Germandom in general. Instead, like his previous endeavors with the Orgesch, Escherich sought to expand his Bavarian-based movement into other German regions. He sought connections in East Prussia, Pomerania, and Mecklenburg (all parts of the Prussian federal state), and he spread word of the Bavarian Heimatschutz throughout the Republic.¹⁴¹ Other historians have powerfully examined this dynamic regarding regions in Germany (Bavarian-

¹³⁸ "An die Landesverbände: Ostpreußen, Pommern-Grenzmark, Mecklenburg. Bk. 204 Pers. Cs/Hö.," BaBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1-), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetttritz A-Z, 45 E, Day 8 Photo 192.

¹³⁹ "Gründung eines Bayerischen Heimatschutzes," BaBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1-), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetttritz, 42 E, Day 8 Photo 188.

¹⁴⁰ "Streng vertraulich!," BaBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1-), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetttritz, 43 E, Day 8 Photo 189-190. Thereby reaffirming the central claims of Rape, "Die österreichische Heimwehr," 24, 283, 300, 312, 341-380.

¹⁴¹ "An die Landesverbände," BaBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1-), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czetttritz A-Z, 45 E, Day 8 Photo 192.

Pfalz, Württemberg, Bavarian Swabia).¹⁴² But it remained no less true for southeastern Bavaria and even areas beyond the official nation-state borders, which often meant little in practice however much they remained on the map. To be sure, Escherich's second paramilitary attempt drew nothing but scorn from the Stahlhelm.¹⁴³ But the multifaceted, nuanced relationship between German regionalism and nationalism remained a constitutive contradiction—both antagonistic and constructive, simultaneously centripetal and centrifugal.¹⁴⁴

As Escherich's attempt at a Bavarian Heimatschutz petered out, the Austrian Heimwehren—not least of all the Styrian Heimatschutz—emerged as key players. A 1927 acquittal of murderers from the ranks of the Frontkämpferversammlung sparked socialist backlash, culminating in a general strike and uprising in “Red Vienna” that engulfed the Federal Justice Palace in flames. The Heimwehren helped suppress the street fighting in the

¹⁴² For the interplay between such German regionality and nationality, see the foundational Cecilia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 1–19. For the reconciliation of this regional/national dichotomy within and during the Kaiserreich from the lens of common memory, see Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3–23, 97–189. See also Confino's take on Heimat and locality, see Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 23–28.

¹⁴³ “An die Landesverbände” BaBL, R/72/, 35, 51, M108, 37, (fol. 1–), 61 Sta1 Stahlhelm, Schriftwechsel des Bundeskanzlers Czietritz A–Z, 45 E, Day 8 Photo 192.

¹⁴⁴ The document “Was ist der Bayerische Heimatschutz und was will er?” presented the regional-national dynamic: “In the hour of danger should the white-blue banner [colors of Bavaria] wave over us and conserve Bavaria as state, Germany as Reich!” That said, Kanzler himself cherry-picked this text for his curated set of primary documents for publication years later to justify these right-wing paramilitary groups retroactively to the public. Kanzler may have altered or even fabricated these documents to make as positive of a case as possible, shedding more light on the early 1930s when he got them published rather than encapsulating the actual context of the 1920s. So I have eschewed relying upon it in the body of this chapter about the 1920s. “Anlage 21 Was ist der Bayerische Heimatschutz und was will er?,” cited in Rudolf Kanzler ehemals stellvertr. Landeshauptmann der B.E.-W. *Bayerns Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus: Geschichte der Bayerischen Einwohnerwehren* (München: Verlag Parcus & Co., 1931), 252–253.

capital, framing them as champions of “law and order.” Since their intervention produced stabilizing results in the immediate term, its various wings gained clout in the First Austrian Republic and eventually became a fascist movement in its own right.¹⁴⁵ Meanwhile, the precedent of the government relying on the Heimwehren to restore order in Vienna proved a new Teufelspakt between paramilitary and parliamentary forces, a volatile co-dependency that the next chapter discusses in detail.

Concluding Reflections

This investigation of nascent Austro-Bavarian right-wing organizations from 1918 to 1928 has framed the Austro-Bavarian region as a borderland composed of “a people” with an “agreed-upon” national demarcation. Their schemes and actions presented a paradox of means and ends: attempting to solidify the borders of Germandom, however conceived, by making the Austro-Bavarian border porous and permeable. This tension set a contradictory precedent for later years when rightwing feuds would spiral from disagreements in meeting minutes to internecine subterfuge and transborder violence. These right-wingers lost sight of their beloved national forest in favor of prioritizing their regionalist trees. We need to spend more time looking at divergent notions of regionality if we wish to understand them more fully as sources of *both* nationalism and intra-national discord. Doing so builds upon and helps advance the robust scholarship that has examined the diversity of interwar Austria’s political factions.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 8.

¹⁴⁶ For such scholarly springboards, see Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 233. See also Wasserman, *Black Vienna*, 6-10.

This chapter has also recognized the extended legacy of Escherich himself, normally written out of the story after the Allies shut his initial institutions down in 1921.¹⁴⁷ The prospect of achieving regionalist goals such as his generated competition, suspicion, and paranoia that would manifest itself in blatant violence in the coming years. Right-wingers on both sides of this border wanted it both ways: Bavarians wished to cooperate with Austria *and* use it as a card to strengthen their overall bairisch hand in German-speaking Europe. Meanwhile, Austrians wished to gain Bavarian financial, materiel, and organizational support for their paramilitaries without injuring their sensitive pride or sense of control. The simultaneity of cooperation and competition undergirded the Austro-Bavarian relationship throughout the interwar years. It conditioned, shaped, and charged confusing currents of friendships and antagonisms among right-wing activists.

Furthermore, this chapter has shown that, in addition to studying the dialectic between apolitical rhetoric and political actions or the fascist dialectic between order and chaos, we ought to examine an additional, more emotional dialectic: the dynamic between anxiety and certainty. This dialectic escalated the intensity of border-revisionism because each of these emotions complemented and compounded the other. Their insidious ubiquity permeated this porous borderland. The mixing of these two feelings created a combustible Molotov cocktail that inebriated its right-wing imbibers with existential fear and righteous conviction. These

¹⁴⁷ Escherich's Heimatschutz is quite literally relegated to the footnotes in Large, "The Politics of Law and Order," page 17 footnote 16. Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 21, 25, 41. Rape, "Die österreichische Heimwehr," 1-640. Indeed, by offering close look at Escherich's schemes in 1928 with a Bavarian Heimatschutz, I pick up where Koepp left off in his conclusion. Koepp, *Conservative Radicals*, 257-258.

groups also repeatedly faced a perplexing combination of unshaken loyalty to right-wing ideals and an anxious uncertainty over the number of opportunistic methods and dictatorial leadership styles. The all-or-nothing mentalities of their ringleaders made it so disagreement over methods, petty personal clashes, or perhaps even just plain confusion, misunderstanding, and miscommunication could spiral into the perception of irreconcilable differences. These relationships among right-wingers placed limitations upon them, all while they pressured each other to push onward and to fight harder. Furthermore, the pluralization of such agencies exacerbated their feelings of anxiety and certainty: certainty in a right-wing resurgence in the long run but anxiety over which fellow Germans one could trust on a daily basis. Such anxious certainty throughout the interwar period eventually culminated in intra-fascist, intra-national violence across the Austro-Bavarian borderland.

With their distinct role in quelling the 1927 Vienna uprising, the Heimwehren emerged as forces to be reckoned with throughout Austria. This chapter narrates the intra-national and inter-regional strife within this fascistizing organization from 1928 until 1933.¹ I follow two inverse trends that characterized this period: the attempt of certain Heimwehren members to create their own political party, and the attempt of conservative Christlichsoziale Partei (Christian Social Party, CSP) leaders to create their own right-wing paramilitary. The CSP's new paramilitary, the Ostmärkische Sturmscharen (Storm Troopers of the Eastern March, OSS), entered the Heimwehren paramilitary arena on the streets, while the new Heimwehren party, the Heimatblock (Home Bloc), entered the CSP's parliamentary arena in the federal legislature's lower house.

Thus, their perpetual attempts to outflank the other generated a powerful dialectic. With the mutual convergence of their tactics, these right-wing rivals came to resemble each other as both launched campaigns on two fronts—electorally by ballots and paramilitarily by brawls. The borders between parliamentary discourse and paramilitary violence began to bleed together. Beset with feuds within and across their ranks, competition among men who idolized competition also solidified their group coherence, and such contests pushed them farther down the fascist slope. All the while, Heimwehren ringleaders relied on Putsch rhetoric and tactics that brought Bavaria into intra-national, trans-border confraternity and conflagrations.

¹ For “fascistization” as a word that delineates fascism as a process, see Julie Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933–38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 233.

Because the Heimatblock only ever secured a maximum of eight seats in the parliament, we might dismiss it as a fringe expression of the already fractured Heimwehren.² But its mere presence, conjoined with its leaders' proclivities for Putschen, created chaos and buttressed any extant skepticism about the viability of the First Austrian Republic. Furthermore, the Heimatblock's position in parliament ultimately helped secure the CSP coalition of Engelbert Dollfuss, the man who led Austria towards a fascist state in its own right. This new Austrofascist Ständestaat rose concurrently with the Nazi Drittes Reich in Germany. Despite the emergence of a fascist "bloc" in German-speaking Europe, however, right-wing paramilitaries from both regimes engaged in an unofficial conflict across the Austro-Bavarian border. The scholarship specific to Austria and Nazism has covered the fighting between these fascist regimes, and I argue that we need to focus on the fratricidal dynamic between these German-speaking fascists as stemming from their fraternal sense of national solidarity. More specifically, it sprung from right-wing attempts across the intra-national borderland to base their German nationalism upon their southeastern sensibilities.³ The constitutive contradiction of these affective identifiers established common ground for cooperation while opening ruptures in that same borderland *Boden*.⁴ The leaders jockeyed discursively and physically for

² See for example see Bruce F. Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis: A History of Austrian National Socialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 75.

³ Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 104–154.

⁴ There is a rich historiography that has also helped to refute the dichotomy between nation-building on the one hand and the continuation of regional/local identity. For the seminal text on Pfalz regionality and German national thinking, see Cecilia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 1–19. For more of this historiography in the context of Germany, see Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 23–28. Confino's own work has covered the two-way dynamic between local *Heimat* and broader German nationalism Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, 23–56. My work highlights Austria's

the trophy of supposed German authenticity, competing over whose regionality made them the “most” German. Rank-and-file right-wingers cheered them on and exchanged bets in the form of votes and violence, never exactly certain which horse to back. What remained certain, however, was the chaos that ensued when rival right-wingers were off to the races.

The First Austrian Republic: Parliamentary & Paramilitary Systems

The First Austrian Republic had a precarious first decade.⁵ It was structured as a federal parliamentary democracy with a bicameral legislature: the lower Nationalrat, with elected officials, and an upper Bundesrat, with officials from the federal states. A parliamentary coalition created an executive with a chancellor and cabinet as head of government, while a federal president served as head of state. And from 1920 to 1933, the Austrian Republic saw *fourteen* chancellors. Some ruled for only a few months (or even a few days), but all ruled coalition governments centered on the CSP. These ramshackle coalitions with fringe parties lacked stability.⁶ The Sozialdemokratische Partei (Social Democratic Party, SDP) remained in

position as a borderland with Bavaria to highlight the simultaneously constructive and destructive dynamic between regionalism and nationalism. He also expressed the mutual reinforcing dynamic of the regional and national from the lens of common memory in Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871-1918* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3-23, 97-189.

⁵ For doubts about its functionality at its origin, see Rolf Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War: From the Anschluss to the State Treaty 1938-1955* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 3, 139. Tim Kirk reminds us to take stock of the relatively robust components of the First Republic, which is also fair, depending on perspective or focus. Tim Kirk, “Ideology and Politics in the State that Nobody Wanted: Austro-Marxism, Austrofascism, and the First Austrian Republic,” in *Global Austria: Austria’s Place in Europe and the World*, eds. Günter Bischof, Fritz Plasser, Anton Pelinka, and Alexander Smith, *Contemporary Austrian Studies* 20 (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2011), 82, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1n2txkw.7>, Accessed 7 February 2021. That said, even if the republic itself was stable, it was certainly on a very rocky road.

⁶ C. Earl Edmondson, *The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics, 1918-1936* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1978), 43, 74-75, 80-83.

perpetual opposition. Party cleavages also manifested along provincial lines: the SDP ran the state government of Vienna, in strong contradistinction to the CSP-dominated provincial state governments of Tyrol, Salzburg, Carinthia, Styria, and Vorarlberg.⁷

The paramilitary organizations further complicated the political situation. The Heimwehren's role in suppressing the 1927 left-wing uprising in Vienna saw their emergence as key players.⁸ By 1929, the various Heimwehren had about 350,000 members on paper, though the number of men who received weapons and instructions for their usage amounted to one-tenth that number.⁹ The Heimwehren offered no definitive conclusion to its ongoing rivalry with the socialist Republikanischer Schutzbund (Republican Defense League, RS).¹⁰ Each of these two factions fought with the other in paramilitary calls and responses. RS and Heimwehren members came to blows at public events and labor rallies, and Heimwehren men often tried to intimidate strikers to return to work.¹¹ The *Manchester Guardian* reported their weapons of choice ranged from fists to stones and beer steins launched "as missiles."

⁷ Hence the label "Red Vienna," an abstraction that so agitated and scared conservatives and other right-wing agents. Vienna was also a hotbed for right-wing thinkers, who viewed themselves as overwhelmed by their long list of nemeses: cosmopolitan socialists, Bolsheviks, and Austro-Marxists, all often coded in very anti-Semitic terms. See Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918-1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 1-14, 223-226.

⁸ Macartney, "Armed Formations," 622-624. Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 44-48.

⁹ See footnote 4 in Krondert, "The Rise and Early History of the Heimwehr," 86-87.

¹⁰ Macartney, "Armed Formations," 622-624. Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 55-56, 141.

¹¹ Macartney, "Armed Formations," 622-624.

Paramilitaries also drew pistols, though less so after the 1930 Arms Law cracked down on gun use in these “illegal armies.”¹²

If the RS was more or less beholden to the SDP, the Heimwehren were nothing short of loose cannons. The Heimwehren and the CSP tried to collaborate, or at least, to use each other strategically. The Heimwehren hoped the CSP would supplant the republic with an authoritarian dictatorship, while the CSP hoped to use the Heimwehren as anti-socialist reservists. As often as not, discord and perceived betrayals formed the fabric that stitched the CSP-Heimwehren together.¹³ Their disagreement stemmed from the question of authoritarianism. The Heimwehren unabashedly pushed for extremism, dictatorial rule, and

¹² “Armed Clash in Austria: Heimwehr and Socialists: Danger of Illegal Armies. (From our own Correspondent.)” *Manchester Guardian*, 29 July 1930. BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9612, Standort 51, Magazin: M207, Reihe 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1–, Day 8 Photo 92.

The radicalization of these paramilitaries, fascist or otherwise, was quite palpable in this context. An anonymous writer criticized this extremism of Austrian paramilitaries, claiming that both the left and rightwing revolutionary groups had adopted such similarly intense practices that it was just as accurate the label the socialist RS as abiding by an ideology of “Red Fascism,” whereby “the social democratic party today actually contains all of the attributes of true fascism.” While certainly meant as a tongue-in-cheek comment on all of this political radicalization, his comment conveyed the sense that radicalized paramilitarization as such was inherently an implicit fascist tactic regardless of a group’s explicitly stated ideological inclination. Fabritius e.h., “Gedanken und Richtlinien,” Page 1, Tiroler Landesarchiv Innsbruck (TLal), Bestand: “Bundesleitung Der Österreichischen (Alpenländischen) Selbstschutzverbände” (Heimwehr) VIII. Sammelakten aus den Jahren 1925–1926, VIII/1 Sammelakt (organization) 1–37 Fol., Day 3 Photo 31 of 62.

¹³ Such disagreement usually stemmed from the question of authoritarianism. The *Heimwehren* unabashedly pushed for more extremism, dictatorial rule, and the outright elimination of socialist organizations and parties, often turning to Hungary or Mussolini’s Italy for support. The CSP often felt compelled to at least pretend to be responsible and more moderate, if only to put on a democratic face to appease (and thereby secure much needed loans from) the Western Powers. For example: “A peremptory ultimatum that Steidle sent the chancellor on 16 January 1923 ended the promising cooperation between the government and the Heimwehr front.” Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 1–29, 30 (for direct quotation), 31–48.

elimination of socialist organizations, while the CSP employed more caution, if only to appease western powers and maintain their lines of credit.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the Heimwehren remained both hyper-pluralized and internecine.¹⁵ Contemporaries found this pluralization difficult to follow. By 1928, a Viennese fabrics manufacturer complained to the Austrian government about the number of fascist groups: Vienna alone had representatives of the Austrian Heimwehr, the Heimwehr of Vienna, and the Heimatschutz of Vienna, in addition to two other fledgling organizations, all technically different. This exasperated manufacturer tried to ascertain which organization exactly he ought to support.¹⁶ At least some clarity came in November, when activists brought these disparate groups together as the Heimatschutzverband (Home Protection Association) of Vienna.¹⁷ But even this unity applied only to the capital city. Besides, a unifying name could be deceiving,

¹⁴ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 29–30, 90–91, 96. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 74.

¹⁵ Austrian Heimwehren organizations, along with the German and the Austrian Nazis, all coordinated, (mis)communicated, and conflicted with one another. “Die Hitlerinner gegen die Heimatwehr.,” *Reichspost*, 14 November 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M207, 45, 509/0, Day 8 Photo 98. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 73–75.

¹⁶ “F. Edlinger, Kommanditgesellschaft: Bleicherei, Färberei und Appretur.,” TLal, Rep. B 620a Bestand: “Bundesleitung Der Österreichischen (Alpenländischen) Selbstschutzverbände” (Heimwehr). XII. Jahr 1928, XII/11 Heimwehr. Day 3 Photo 47 of 62. The so-called Viennese Heimatschutz referred to here ought not be confused with the contemporaneous Heimatschutz in Styria, the Heimatschutz in Carinthia, nor the Heimatschutz in the Kaiserreich concerned with environmental issues. See Bernhard Gissibl, *The Nature of German Imperialism: Conservation and the Politics of Wildlife in Colonial East Africa* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016), 279, 285. Nor with the Habsburg-era movement for similar such environmental concerns based out of Vienna. See Carolin Firouzeh Roeder, “Slovenia’s Triglav National Park: From Imperial Borderland to National Ethnoscape,” Chapter 13 in *Civilizing Nature: National Parks in Global Historical Perspective*, eds. Bernhard Gissibl, Sabine Höhler, and Patrick Kupper (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 243–244. Nor should it be confused with right-leaning heritage protection group *Landesvereins für Heimatschutz* in interwar Bavarian Swabia. Martina Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten: Die Ordnung des Regionalen im bayerischen Schwaben vom Kaiserreich bis zum NS-Regime* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, 2010), 233.

¹⁷ C.A. Macartney, “The Armed Formations in Austria,” in *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 8, no. 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1929): 623–624, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3015677>, Accessed 10 June 2019.

simply masking rather than addressing internal divisions. The forging and fracturing of alliances among fascist organizations continued to intensify ad absurdum. But such absurdity from authoritarian, anti-democratic groups on the streets and in the halls of the Nationalrat buttressed any contemporary sentiments that the Republican system of government lacked staying power.

By Parliament & By Putschen: The Heimwehren, Heimatblock, & OSS

Seven years after the infamous 1923 Nazi Putsch in Munich, the Heimwehren pivoted to emulate the tactic of their northern Nazi neighbors: gaining election to their respective legislature for the explicit purpose of undoing it from within. Heimwehren attempts to infiltrate the parliament to dismember it happened in awkward fits and starts, fraught with hesitation, backpedaling, consternation, competition, and cynicism on all sides. An anonymous writer stated that this process distinguished the overarching Austrian “Heimatwehrbewegung” (Home Guard movement) from Italian fascist groups. The writer claimed to have solved the chicken-or-egg question for fascist political parties and paramilitary organizations, asserting the Heimwehren paramilitary groups came first which then gave rise to their fascist political party, instead of the reverse like in Italy. However reductive, to this anonymous Austrian, the Heimwehren “first contained the germ of fascism, that must first be developed.”¹⁸ And like germs, such fascist movements divided again and again, each time mutating into more extreme manifestations.

¹⁸ Fabritius e.h., *Gedanken*, Page 1, TLal, Bestand: Österreichischen Selbstschutzverbände, Day 3 Photo 31 of 62.

True to the internecine logic of emergent fascists, Heimwehren leaders fractured over the question of this parliamentary tactic. The splits also happened along regional divides, intensifying such intra-Austrian cleavages. Some saw winning seats in parliament as a shrewd, opportunistic Trojan horse. Others saw any Heimwehren participation in parliament as fundamental betrayal of fascist principles, as oxymoronic as that may sound. Heimwehren trepidation over this parliamentary tactic manifested in 1930. C. Earl Edmondson's monograph, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics, 1918-1936*, claimed: "observers saw the Heimwehr now at a crossroads, where it had to decide whether to remain a supra-party supporter of the coalition government or to go its own way as a separate party."¹⁹

Opposed to such parliamentary means stood Waldemar Pabst and Richard Steidle, the leaders of the staunchly-regionalist Tyrolean Heimatwehr.²⁰ At around this time Steidle's Tyrolean brand of German nationalism received a public proclamation. In 1931, Rudolf Kanzler, of Orka infamy discussed in the last chapter, published his anthology of handpicked primary sources meant to justify and garner sympathy for his 1920s machinations and those of the Austrian Heimwehren. Given the questionable provenance of his "sources," their validity for reporting on the actual occurrences of the 1920s was certainly suspect. However, their publication in 1931 makes them ripe for assessing Kanzler's attempt to curate a public image

¹⁹ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 105.

²⁰ "Kappist Pabst will putschen. Heimwehr gegen österreichisches Verfassungskompromiß," *Der Abend*, 21 November 1929, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 11368, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 206, Reihe: 52, Blattzahl (fol. 1-, A 508., Dt. Auslandswissenschaftl [sic] Institut, Deutsche Hochschule für Politik Archiv, [Name Illegible], 1927-Mai 1930. Day 9 Photo 129. "Heimwehren und Parlament: Steidle gegen den Parteienstaat – Schärfere Kampfmethoden angekündigt: Drahtbericht unseres Korrespondenten," *Der Tag*, 19 May 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, Day 8 Photo 78.

of his fellow right-wingers at the start of the 1930s. In one said document, Steidle as Führer of the Tyrolean Heimatwehren apparently proclaimed to be establishing his call for “order and peace on German-völkisch Tyrolean foundations.”²¹ Basing right-wing movements on a mix of völkisch nationalism and regionalism did add some semblance of natalist “authenticity,” but it did so at the cost of stability in the borderland.

And the party question would exacerbate this precarity. In Edmondson’s evaluation, Pabst sought “the creation of a Heimwehr-led military dictatorship—first in Austria, then in Bavaria, and finally in the whole German Reich.”²² *Der Tag* reported on Steidle’s anti-party sentiments during his speech at a 1930 Heimwehren rally at Korneuburg, which became known as the “Korneuburg Oath” and amounted to a declaration of his fascist objectives. In his speech, Steidle gave a scathing condemnation of any parliamentary ambitions for the Heimwehren. He purportedly claimed that Heimwehren Führer who wanted a party were “not allowed to play any role” in the movement, before adding “any Heimwehrmann in Parliament would stand against us and our interests!”²³ His rejection made sense from the standpoint of fascist logic. But he also spoke to the regionalist-nationalist tension. The social-democratic paper in Germany, *Vorwärts*, recorded that Steidle’s regionalist position welcomed Germans with *großdeutsch* ideas, on the condition that any “Großdeutscher” rejected social

²¹ „Auf deutschvölkisch-tirolischer Grundlage für Ordnung und Ruhe...“ Cited in Dr. Richard Steidle and Dr. Friedrich Schmidt, “Anlage 15 Aufruf,” cited in Rudolf Kanzler ehemals stellvertr. Landeshauptmann der B.E.-W. *Bayerns Kampf gegen den Bolschewismus: Geschichte der Bayerischen Einwohnerwehren* (München: Verlag Parcus & Co., 1931), 246.

²² Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 93.

²³ “Steidle gegen den Parteienstaat,” *Der Tag*, 19 May 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1–, Day 8 Photo 78. The infamous “Korneuburg Oath” has received so much attention in the historiography. Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 97–102. See Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 73–75. I am more interested in its contribution to the debate over parliamentary engagement.

democracy unconditionally.²⁴ Again, such regionalists tried their best to strike the right proportion of regional enthusiasm, greater German impulses, and right-wing ideological orientation.

Meanwhile, other Heimwehren strategists realized the prudence of using the legislature to defeat the republic at its own parliamentary game. Opportunistic and shrewd, these fascists held to the idea of attacking the democracy from within, however much they might have publicly denied this tactic. This faction crystallized around Prince Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, who embodied the idea of fascism as a process—the “increasing fascistization” Thorpe described in her work, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933-38*. Relatively young, he had an aristocratic lineage with a conservative upbringing, served on the Italian front during the war, and participated in a German paramilitary unit in Upper Silesia. All such experiences contributed to his increasingly revolutionary right-wing stance.²⁵ Ultimately, Starhemberg’s faction of infiltrating the Nationalrat via party politics moved ahead with their scheme anyway, but not without intra-Heimwehren repercussions.

The party question exacerbated intra-Austrian regional tensions. Namely, Pabst in the Tyrol shamelessly push for Putschen, leading to his brief expulsion from Austria in the summer

²⁴ “Mussolinis Aeßlein. Neues Faschistengelübde der Hahnenschwänzler.” *Vorwärts*, 30 May 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, Day 8 Photo 82.

²⁵ Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 233. His mother was also closely tied to CSP circles. See Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 37, 119, 129. Few labels spark as much taxonomical pluralization as “fascist.” Ivan T. Berend calls him “a fascistoid.” See Ivan T. Berend, “A fascistoid Austrian demagogue: Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg,” Chapter 4 in *A Century of Populist Demagogues: Eighteen European Portraits, 1918-2018* (Central European University Press, 2020), 93, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7829/j.ctv16f6cn2.8>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

of 1930.²⁶ Reporting from Innsbruck, a news source claimed that Pabst's exile brought the Heimwehren party question to a head, marking it as their "inflection point" and "hour of fate."²⁷ Pabst indicated his disdain for Starhemberg's aristocratic *milieu*, bemoaning to a Hungarian representative about the Heimwehren attempt to woo some more "incompetent aristocrats." He feared aristocratic penchants for conservatism or worse, nostalgia for some reactionary Restoration, which might exacerbate the tension between "*Schwarz-Gelb*" (black-gold, the colors of the Habsburgs and slang for Restorationists) loyalties to Austria and "*Großdeutsch*" inclinations. To Pabst, the Heimwehren already had the right concentrations of southeastern regionality and *völkisch*, großdeutsch impulses. Conservative aristocrats, with their old Austrian loyalties, might throw out of balance his ideal concoction of regional and großdeutsch loyalties in favor of the former. Echoing the previous chapter's pattern of cleavages between conservatives and radicals, to Pabst, recruiting too much from this aristocratic cadre "would place the völkisch character of the Heimwehr in danger."²⁸ However,

²⁶ He took refuge in with his fascist connections in Italy, though the same year he returned to Austria to great applause from Italian and Heimwehren fascists alike, "Ausweisung des Bundesstabschefs der Heimatwehren aus Österreich: Bis zur Entscheidung über die Berufung im Wiener Polizeigefängnis interniert.," *Reichspost*, 15 June 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, Day 8 Photo 85. For his return just months later, "Pabsts Triumphzug über den Brenner: Mit Ehrentrock und Fackelzug," Eigene Meldung der *Vossischen Zeitung*, 12 November 1930, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9613, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1-, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 149.

²⁷ This report referred to the Heimwehren as both "the Heimwehrbewegung" and as a "Volksbewegung." "Schicksalsstunde der Heimwehrbewegung in Österreich: Die Bedeutung der Vorgänge.," news clipping has no newspaper title listed, 19 June 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, Day 8 Photo 90.

²⁸ Italics in the published form of the document. "Aufzeichnung des ungarischen Regierungsbeauftragten über seine Besprechungen mit dem Heimwehrführer Pabst, Wien 25. Januar 1931," Document 24., O. L. Küm. res. pol. 1929-20-883, 22 Act Historica Hung. XI, 1965, documents contained in L. Kerekes, "Akten zu den geheimen Verbindungen zwischen der Bethlen-Regierung und der österreichischen Heimwehrbewegung," *Act Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 11, No. 1/4

Starhemberg proved Pabst dead wrong: this aristocrat could be just as völkisch and großdeutsch as any right-winger, so long as any großdeutsch schemes afforded Austria its rightful place in the sun.

The *Parteifrage* (party question) also drew bad blood from Pabst's Tyrolean partner-in-crime: Steidle. Another news report from Innsbruck commented on the Starhemberg-Steidle split, with Starhemberg insisting that the Heimwehren constituted "a renewal movement and must continue to work on the governmental renewal work," which meant acknowledging the existing governmental structures. Steidle's faction, however, insisted that the movement must "return to its structure from the year 1927," when the Heimwehren had fought and won in the streets of Vienna. Starhemberg wanted a regeneration via party politics; Steidle wanted a return to a strict paramilitary pedigree. The fissure culminated in Steidle threatening the "withdrawal" of his Tyrolean contingent from the overarching Heimatwehrverband: "pending further notice, the Tiroler Heimatwehr has to limit itself to its own Land."²⁹ Their strategic differences fractured along regional lines.

Starhemberg took the federal reins of the Heimwehren, however disparate, and his parliamentary party emerged as the Heimatblock.³⁰ The party's platform espoused anti-democratic, fascist tenets:

(Institute of History, Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1965): 339, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42554769>, Accessed 22 February 2021.

²⁹ "Austritt der Tiroler Heimatwehr aus dem österr. Heimatwehrverband," article clipping without newspaper name listed, 20. February no year given (previous and next archival entries are dated 20 February 1932 and 27 January 1932, respectively, so most likely this article was from 20 February 1932), BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 128.

³⁰ "Nach dem Führerwechsel in der Heimatwehr. Das Programm des neuen Bundesführers.," *Reichspost*, 5 September 1930, BBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, Day 8 Photo 95. "Fürst

The Heimatblock is using the democratic-parliamentary system not to protect it, but rather to vanquish it.

The Heimatblock struggles for the Volksgemeinschaft [roughly, people's community] and for the establishment of a true social, Christian and German Volksstaat [roughly, nation-state].

The Heimatblock is the parliamentary strike force of the Heimatwehren.³¹

With such rhetoric, the party explicitly embraced its goal to become a liminal interloper, a maskless infiltrator outwardly boasting of its status as such. It collapsed the distinctions between covert and overt, between politics and violence, between conspiracy and legality, and lastly, between democracy and dictatorship. All the while, it owed its very existence to the democracy they so demonized. The *Reichspost* commented on the foundations of this Vienna-based party, which the paper lumped under the Heimatschutzpartei. This news source also included a statement that underscored the taxonomic absurdity of this fascist pluralization:

the Heimatschutzpartei called into life by the previously united members of the former Heimatschutzverband, as well as the Heimatschutz named with the same mission, is not at all connected with the Viennese Heimatwehrverband and its affiliated organizations nor with the Austrian Selbstschutzverbänden, and because of the similarity of its name, the Partei is already dismissed as giving cause for confusion.³²

Starhemberg Führer der Heimwehren. Dr. Steidle nicht wieder gewählt – Ein Erfolg des Bundeskanzlers Dr. Schober,” *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3 September 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1–, Day 8 Photo 97.

An anonymous author sardonically explained that Austria's politics in this decade was simply a “game of parliamentarian forces,” whereby “behind the front of the [political] parties there are certainly always armed groups to make decisions, and they [the armed groups] know, just like the parliamentarians know, that the decision-making authority lies with them [the armed groups].” Fabritius e.h., *Gedanken und Richtlinien*, TLal, Bestand: Bundesleitung der Österreichischen (Alpenländischen) Selbstschutzverbände,” Page 1, Day 3 Photo 31 of 62.

³¹ Josef Wallner, “Zur Aufklärung! Was ist der Heimatblock?” (Verleger Landesleitung des Heimatblockes für Niederösterreich), BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/; Archivsignatur: 2070; Standort: 51 Magazin: M106; Reihe: 50, (fol. 1–), 192, Day 5 Photo 86.

³² “Das Projekt einer ‚Heimatschutzpartei,‘” *Reichspost*, article clipping without date listed (previous and next archival entries are dated 17 June 1930 and 29 July 1930, respectively, so most likely this article was from the summer of 1930), BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M207, 45, 509/0, Day 8 Photo 91.

The attempt to form a parliamentary party out of these affiliated yet divergent paramilitaries created uncertainty and even absurdity. Groups adamant about achieving unity by means of total control perpetuated fragmentation. The Starhemberg–Steidle relationship even spiraled into a “Führerkampf,” which, according to a Viennese report, entered an “acute stage.”³³

But Starhemberg relied on a plurality of tools to create a fascist Austria. As such, he saw the avenues of parliament and Putschen as mutually compatible. In October 1930, some Austrians took a speech of his as “plans for a Staatsstreich” (overthrow of the state) by the Heimwehren paramilitary. Adding credence to his intimations, his comments came during his tenure as Interior Minister on the CSP cabinet—the Putsch rhetoric came from within the reigning government itself. The *Berliner Tageblatt* reported his call to arms:

If the Heimwehr has placed its hands at the helm of the government today, then it did so not to protect the Christian Social Party, but rather to hold the steering wheel for our movement, that is for the Heimwehr movement, with an iron resolve so as to not let it be wrest from our hands by a red majority, which the Volk will perhaps elect.³⁴

This statement, like most paramilitary rhetoric, contained no specifics for how the Heimwehren would take control. Nevertheless, an official cabinet minister issued this utterance—not to mention a minister with a fascist party in parliament and a fascist paramilitary in the streets. Furthermore, the ambiguity of his “directive” showed the confluence of

³³ “Der Führerkampf in der Heimwehr,” archivist handwrote newspaper title on the news clipping but its abbreviated, faded, and illegible, 3 February 1931 [might say 1930, but also faded and illegible], BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 142.

³⁴ Even the grammar conveyed this sense of resolve fused with equivocation; if Starhemberg were speaking hypothetically, he would have structured the sentence in the subjunctive mood. Instead, he employed the indicative, which made it seem like the Putsch was really happening, thus heightening the immediate sense of panic. “Staatsstreich-Pläne in Wien. Der Aufruf der Heimwehren und eine Erklärung Starhembergs. (Telegramme unserer Korrespondenten.),” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 3 October 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1–, Day 8 Photo 99).

uncertainty about the Austrian government with the utter determination of this ringleader, who operated in a liminal space both in and outside the official political channels. Did the Heimwehren intend to seize the government that day, or did this outburst constitute “just talk” from an eccentric politician? The malaise of uncertainty coupled with orations of “iron resolve” perpetuated a sense of immediate but indeterminate political change.³⁵

Starhemberg’s discourse also made explicit the endgame of his parliamentary party: overthrow the Republic from within, from without, or by some combination of both. More ominously, Starhemberg stated that only a state run by the fascist Heimwehren could weather the storm of “the reds,” even if left-wing politicians secured their power by winning a democratic majority. Thus, by expressing his desire to override politicians that “the Volk will perhaps elect,” Starhemberg revealed the explicitly anti-democratic stance of his parliamentary Heimatblock.³⁶

This claim about the Volk articulated his stance on the right blend of regionalism and nationalism.³⁷ He clarified that he would lead his hypothetical Putsch in the name of “pulling

³⁵ “Staatsstreich-Pläne,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 3 October 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1–, Day 8 Photo 99).

³⁶ “Staatsstreich-Pläne,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 3 October 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1–, Day 8 Photo 99).

³⁷ It was unclear whether Starhemberg actually said the aside about the electoral will of the *Volk*. Another report in Cologne included Starhemberg’s quotation but without his claim about the *Volk*: “If the *Heimwehr* placed its hands at the helm of the government today, then it did so not to protect the Christian Social Party, but rather to hold the steering wheel for the Heimwehr movement, with an iron resolve to not let it be wrest from our hands by a red majority.” Here, the dismissal of the “red majority” being the outcome of a democratic vote of the Austrian people is absent. “Die Heimwehr kündigt Diktatur an! (Telegramme unsers eigen Berichterstatters) Die Wahl „im Zeichen des Heimatsturms“ in *Kölnische Zeitung*, 3 October 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M207, 45, 509/0, Day 8 Photo 101. According to the endnotes in Edmondson’s monograph, by the end of October, the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse* reported a revised quotation. Edmondson claims this new version “contended that Starhemberg ‘actually’ said that the HW would hold on to the reins only as long as the will of the people supported

the Volk up out of economic misery” that ran rampant under the democratic state. Rather than oppose the potential will of the Volk in the next election, Starhemberg clarified that a Heimwehren takeover aligned with the best interest of the entire Volk. Regionalist fascists would not claim to act against the Volk, which amounted to political suicide and ran counter to their sense of national German greatness. To these fascists, their regionalism served the German-speaking Volk. In his calculations, left-wing ideas and machinations might seduce and dupe the greater Volk into voting for “the reds” in future elections.³⁸ So, he saw it as his fascist duty to secure the reins of government, by Putsch if necessary, in order to show the Volk its true interests and rule in accordance with them.

Try as they might to represent the Volk—at least their right-wing conception of it—this fascist party lacked popularity. The Heimatblock stood precariously in parliament because, perhaps unsurprisingly, these fascists made lousy parliamentarians. They fared poorly in elections, and the few who made it into the parliamentary halls failed to rally state support for fascist policies.³⁹ In the 1930 November elections, the Heimatblock received a measly 226,000 votes across Austria, which translated into a paltry eight seats in the national legislature.⁴⁰ The movement’s official history book, published in 1934, spun the lackluster performance as best it

it.” Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, endnote 62 of Chapter 5 page 117, text of endnote given on page 292. Either way, it would seem he realized the importance of at least appearing to have the blessing of the Volk when it came to speaking on behalf of the Heimwehr.

³⁸ “Staatsstreich-Pläne,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 3 October 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1–, Day 8 Photo 99.

³⁹ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 113, 156, 201.

⁴⁰ In his 1942 memoir, Starhemberg would claim these electoral results as successful pulling votes away from the National Socialists, thus shutting out the Nazis from the Nationalrat and preventing the Nazis from doing the exact type of fascist infiltration of parliament the Heimatblock was attempting. Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 46–50.

could. Apparently, the Heimwehren only campaigned for their Heimatblock “half-heartedly” because they had already succeeded in inculcating their supporters with an anti-democratic rejection of the ballot box. Because of this supposed victory in spreading anti-electoral ideology, the Heimwehren now robbed themselves of success on the campaign trail. Their revisionist historians repackaged Heimwehren shortcomings and internal fractures as signs of strength.⁴¹

One year after Starhemberg’s incendiary exclamation, the Heimatschutz of the Alpine part of Upper Styria did lead an actual Putsch against the First Austrian Republic. Heimatschutz regional leader Walter Pfrimer led this abortive paramilitary charge. According to the *Salzburger Volksblatt*, Pfrimer “proclaimed dictatorship” as his agents infiltrated regional office in Styrian towns and even a town in neighboring Upper Austria.⁴² But the Heimwehren leaders from other regions disapproved of and disavowed the entire *Aktion* (maneuver). They saw it as an imprudent instance of Pfrimer’s megalomania, and the maneuver quickly fell apart.⁴³ The *Manchester Guardian* reported that “the Heimwehr, the semi-Fascist reactionary organization, had attempted a revolution in the provinces of Upper Austria and Styria.” From this foreign news report, the coup d’état served to embarrass the Heimwehren, exposing “both

⁴¹ Die Propagandastelle der Bundesführung des österreichischen Heimatschutzes, *Heimatschutz in Österreich*, Herausgegeben unter Aufsicht des österreichischen Heimatschutzes Amt des Bundesführers – Propagandastelle (Wien: Verlag Zoller, 1934), 219.

⁴² “Eine Desperado-Tat Dr. Pfrimers: Heimatwehr-Putsch in Obersteiermark, Dr. Pfrimer will die Macht im Staate ergreifen. –Nirgends in Widerhall seines Aufrufes, nur in Kapfenberg eine Schießerei.—Zwei Todesopfer.—Kläglicher Zusammenbruch des irrsinnigen Unternehmens.,” *Salzburger Volksblatt: mit der illustrierten Zeitschrift „Bergland“*, 14 September 1931, Nummer 210, 61. Jahrgang, ANNO – AustriaN Newspapers Online (ANNO), *Historische österreichische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19310914&query=Pfrimer+Putsch+Bayern&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁴³ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 136-143.

the levity and the impotence of the Heimwehr leaders” to the entire world.⁴⁴ The coup utterly collapsed in the short-term—even the Heimwehren’s account of their own history later dismissed it as devoid of “preparation and organization.”⁴⁵

But such “failure” requires further investigation.⁴⁶ Pfrimer’s incompetence and lack of interregional support from fellow provincial leaders ought not diminish the significance of this instance. How could a stable government allow such disturbances to occur, especially ones that seemed somehow both trivial and existential? The *Manchester Guardian* lamented that these demonstrations “weaken foreign confidence at a moment when Austria is in need of all the support she can get ... ultimately the willingness of foreign bankers and investors will depend on their view of Austrian stability.”⁴⁷ The Salzburg Heimwehren claimed blissful ignorance of Pfrimer’s plans, and the *Salzburg Volksblatt* indicated a greater irony: Pfrimer’s entire “movement to protect the law and order in the state, called to the protection of the Heimat...” resulted in “a breakdown of law and order.”⁴⁸ If the Putsch failed in the immediate term, it cast a shadow over Austria’s First Republic. In historian Lothar Höbelt’s assessment, the event

⁴⁴ “The Austrian ‘Putsch,’” *Manchester Guardian*, 14 September 1931, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9611, Standort: 51, Magazin: M207, Reihe: 45, Blatzzahl (fol. 1 –, 510/0, Day 8 Photo 177.

⁴⁵ Die Propagandastelle, *Heimatschutz in Österreich*, 221.

⁴⁶ Martin Kitchen dismissed this Putsch as “a further defeat for the Heimwehr and disillusioned right-wing activists turned towards the National Socialists as the party most likely to realize their aims. The elections in April 1932 showed increased support for the Nazis and a marked decline in votes for the Heimwehr’s *Heimablock*.” Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1980), 63. Though Edmondson points out “If anything there was temporarily a growth rather than a decline in its [the Heimwehr’s] following.” Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 142.

⁴⁷ “The Austrian ‘Putsch,’” *Manchester Guardian*, 14 September 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, 51, M207, 45, (fol. 1 –, 510/0, Day 8 Photo 177.

⁴⁸ “Eine Desperado-Tat Dr. Pfrimers,” *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 14 September 1931, 210, Seite 1, ANNO.

demonstrated the First Republic exemplified “old Austrian impartiality” instead of “republican stability.”⁴⁹ Either way, the sheer existence of this Putsch attempt, not to mention the mere existence of unauthorized armed organizations carrying it out, subjected the Austrian Republic to skepticism. Karl Lahm, a special correspondent for the Berlin-based *Vossische Zeitung*, commented sardonically that Pfrimer’s Putsch did not constitute “high treason,” because that term presupposed a legitimate state against which to commit it. In his assessment, the Austrian Republic simply amounted to “not a state.”⁵⁰ The Putsch failed in the short term, but its occurrence cast doubt on the Republic’s legitimacy.⁵¹

Yet the *Guardian* cautiously hoped the Putsch represented “a last desperate throw by the discredited leaders of the Heimwehr.” Perhaps the Austrian Republic’s response testified to the strength of the democracy? Such positive thinking proved premature.⁵² *The Times* reported on the event three days later, and it left less room for optimism. It stated that the Putsch should not worry potential creditors to Austria, but in this newspaper’s assessment, the episode served as an “indication of the strength of Heimwehr discipline and organization.” To some, the Heimwehren posed a very real threat.⁵³ Instead of being the death throes of an expiring

⁴⁹ Lothar Höbelt, *Die Heimwehren und die österreichische Politik, 1927-1936: Vom politischen „Kettenhund“ zum „Austro-Faschismus“?*, *Mit Bildern aus dem Archiv von Mario Stigl* (Graz: ARES Verlag, 2016), 210.

⁵⁰ Karl Lahm, “Kein Staat, Sonderberichterstatte der Vossischen Zeitung,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 21 December 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, 51, M207, 45, (fol. 1 -, 510/0, Day 8 Photo 179.

⁵¹ “The Austrian ‘Putsch,’” BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, Day 8 Photo 177. Jedlicka presents it as an unmitigated disaster for the Heimwehren. Ludwig Jedlicka, “The Austrian Heimwehr,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 1, no. 1 (Sage Publications, Ltd. 1966): 140. But just such confusion and chaos behooved fascist movements overall.

⁵² “The Austrian ‘Putsch,’” BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, 51, M207, 45, (fol. 1 -, 510/0, Day 8 Photo 177.

⁵³ *The Times* then recognized the power of the Heimwehr leaders by claiming: “The Putsch was abandoned rather than quelled, and the speed with which the leaders were able to spread their orders

organization, we might also read this Putsch as a clumsy, adolescent growing pain from which the Heimwehren emerged stronger and better prepared.

Three days after the attempt, Pfrimer sought refuge across the Alps in Fascist Italy. Two other ringleaders fled to Yugoslavia and a third to Hungary.⁵⁴ Starhemberg, whose callous Putsch mongering one-year prior had instigated panic, had less luck this time. Austrian authorities took him into custody and raided the Heimwehren facilities in Vienna, confiscating “a large store of arms.” Four days later, Starhemberg emerged clear of all charges, and the day after his release, he supplanted Pfrimer as Heimatschutz leader.⁵⁵ Just one month later, Starhemberg returned to his habit of hurling provocations against the republic. At a Heimwehr rally in Salzburg, he stated that the “Heimwehr were ‘no longer props of the State, but sworn deadly enemies of this system of government and all it implies.’”⁵⁶ He felt secure enough to condemn the democracy openly and unequivocally while wearing his paramilitary hat—both figuratively and literally, as the Heimwehren donned Alpine caps complete with feathers, earning them the insult of Hahnenschwänzler (Rooster Tails). While wearing his figurative

for its abandonment, quite as much as the scale upon which they succeeded in calling their followers into revolt, is another clear warning of the dangerous power of the Heimwehr and its organized forces. Governments in Vienna have had many warnings of the danger of allowing two rival unofficial armies, Heimwehr and Socialist, to exist in Austria, but no Government has been strong enough to disband them.” “Austrian Credit,” *The Times*, 17 September 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, 51, M207, 45, (fol. 1 –, 510/0, Day 8 Photo 178.

⁵⁴ “Pfrimers Asyl in Italian: Waffenfunde bei den Putschisten, Eigene Meldung der Vossischen Zeitung,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 16 September 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, 51, M207, 45, (fol. 1 –, 510/0: Day 8 Photo 171.

⁵⁵ “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 8, no. 7 (24 September 1931): 12 (176), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25638980>, Accessed 15 March 2021.

⁵⁶ “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 8, no. 10 (5 November 1931): 13 (261), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25638993>, Accessed 29 July 2020.

hat as a parliamentarian, he and his Heimatblock operated in the very core of that system. The borderline between parliamentary Party and paramilitary Putsch thinned to the point of nonexistence.

If the Putsch hysteria demonstrated the fragility of Austria during this time, it also spoke to the role of Bavaria. The Police Department of Munich investigated the origins of the Austrian Staatsstreich. Their investigation found that Pfrimer, along with three other accomplices (at least two of whom came from Austria), had planned their Putsch in Munich. According to reports, witnesses had seen his conspiratorial clique discussing the plan quite openly in a Munich café, where they talked about “the possibility of leading a campaign against Austria from here in Bavaria.”⁵⁷ It made sense that the Heimwehren leadership felt more relaxed discussing their Austrian takeover strategy in Bavaria—all the easier to avoid Austrian police surveillance. More importantly, they found Munich to have a milieu sympathetic enough to fascism, which curated a suitable space to discuss sedition. Their calculation led them across the border into Bavaria to plan the takeover and then back across the border into Austria to execute it. Originally, they wanted to lead the takeover “from here in Bavaria,” showing the extent to which they saw Austria and Bavaria as intertwined. Their transient political planning also illustrated their fluid movement across a permeable border, which fascists could dismiss as trivial and condemned to some sort of revision.

⁵⁷ “Pfrimer aus Bayern ausgewiesen. Die Gerüchte über neue Putschpläne (Telegramm unseres Korrespondenten), *Berliner Tageblatt*, 13 November 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, 51, M207, 45, (fol. 1 - , 510/0, Day 8 Photo 182.

Even more interestingly, Pfrimer returned to Munich on 18 October and “reported to the police voluntarily for the stated purpose of settling legal affairs.”⁵⁸ Pfrimer felt secure enough that the Munich police lacked the evidence to bring a case against him. He even felt shamelessly confident: in November, the Viennese *Die Stunde* reported he and two Austrian lackeys stirred up more trouble for the Munich police. They proclaimed the “preparation of a new Putsch in Austria,” and the cadre planned “this time they should take their exit from Bavaria to the Tyrol by means of an invasion of German National Socialists.” Starhemberg sent a Heimwehren representative to supervise the return of Pfrimer to Austria, all the while using Pfrimer’s embarrassing outbursts “to concentrate the leadership of the Heimwehr in his [Starhemberg’s] person alone.”⁵⁹ In the zero-sum arena of fascism, Starhemberg rose in accordance with Pfrimer’s fall. But this paramilitary leader and parliamentary representative still employed treasonous outbursts. In October, *Die Stunde* reported Starhemberg’s braggadocios claim: “I am a high traitor, and am proud of it, because it is better to be a high traitor than a traitor to the Volk.”⁶⁰ To the Führer of the Heimwehren and the Heimatblock, the parliamentary system itself amounted to high treason against the Volk. To oppose democracy openly made him the Volk’s hero. It remained unclear just who comprised this

⁵⁸ “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 8, no. 13 (17 December 1931): 13 (349), <https://www.jstor.com/stable/25639006>, Accessed 29 July 2020.

⁵⁹ “Starhemberg läßt Pfrimer verhaften; Ausweisung Pfrimers aus Bayern auf Veranlassung des Pressechefs Starhembergs,” *Die Stunde*, Wien, 14 November 1931, Nummer 2602, 9 Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, [https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=std&datum=19311114&query=Pfrimer+Bayer n&ref=anno-search&seite=1](https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=std&datum=19311114&query=Pfrimer+Bayer%20n&ref=anno-search&seite=1), Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁶⁰ “‘Ich bin ein Hochverräter:’ Das neue Glaubensbekenntnis Starhembergs,” *Die Stunde*, 24 October 1931, Nummer 2585, 9 Jahrgang, Seite 8, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=std&datum=19311024&query=Pfrimer+Bayern&ref=anno-search&seite=8>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

Volk: specifically regional Austrian-Germans, Germans in Austria and Germany, all of German-speaking Europe, or some combination of the above?

Pfrimer returned to Austria on 7 December, and eleven days later, Austrian authorities dropped all charges against him.⁶¹ Pfrimer's decision to return first to Bavaria and then to Austria broadcast his cocksure sense of invulnerability, and his tactic turned out to be a successful gamble against democracy. By receiving such leniency, Pfrimer exposed the right-wing sympathy of Bavarian and Austrian law enforcement agents and the overall impotence of both the Austrian Republic and the Bavarian federal state.⁶² If anxiety and certainty contributed to the formation of this complex web of fascist organizations, then the reverse process also proved true. The uprisings of these feuding groups, in turn, heightened the sense of anxiety and certainty—certainty among right-wingers that the democratic status quo could not last but also anxiety about what exactly the next day would bring. Heinrich Eduard Jacob, a political correspondent living in Austria but working for the *Berliner Tageblatt*, wrote a piece on the Heimwehren and this attempted Putsch, in which he reflected on its machinations for the paper's northern German audience. He vented his frustrations about reporting on the confusing political situation to Germany's southeast. "The longer one lives in Austria," he exclaimed, "the more one becomes exasperated with explaining the complexity of Austrian things to non-Austrians. The psychological distance from Vienna or Graz to Berlin is

⁶¹ "Chronology," *Bulletin of International News* 8, no. 13 (17 December 1931): 13 (349). "Chronology," *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 8, no. 14 (7 January 1932): 12 (376), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639009>, Accessed 29 July 2020.

⁶² "Pfrimer aus Bayern ausgewiesen," *Berliner Tageblatt*, 13 November 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, 51, M207, 45, (fol. 1 -, 510/0, Day 8 Photo 182.

sometimes farther than that from Addis Ababa or Cairo.”⁶³ Fascist activists in this contested intra-national space intertwined nationalism and regionalism, creating imagined and emotionally-charged “psychological” borders just as strong, if not stronger, than the borders on the map.

The Heimatblock’s obsession with Putschen had by now made them a liability to their dominant coalition partners, the CSP.⁶⁴ The *Berliner Tageblatt* quoted an exasperated CSP representative in Upper Austria: “The establishment of the Heimatblock represents for the Christlichsoziale Partei an event of war with the Heimatwehr.”⁶⁵ Such exhaustion even came months before Pfrimer’s Putsch, and months after it, Starhemberg propagated Putsch tactics yet again. The *Vossische Zeitung* claimed “Starhemberg threatens with revolution.”⁶⁶ This dysfunctional, co-dependent relationship with the Heimwehren pushed CSP leaders to engage in street politics with a paramilitary of their own. To that end, the very same year the Heimwehren paramilitary formed their political party, CSP Nationalrat member Kurt von Schuschnigg laid the groundwork for the Ostmärkische Sturmscharen (OSS). It represented the paramilitary wing of the CSP, the paramilitarization of this parliamentary party, and the reverse process of the Heimatblock.

⁶³ Heinrich Eduard Jacob, “Die Heimwehr und ihre Gegner. Ein politisches Röntgenbild,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 26 September 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, 51, M207, 45, (fol. 1 –, 510/0, Day 8 Photo 172.

⁶⁴ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 113.

⁶⁵ Telegramm unseres Korrespondenten, “Offener Bruch zwischen Christlichsozialen und Heimwehr,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 2 April 1931. BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 138.

⁶⁶ “Starhemberg droht mit Revolution: Er hat keine Zeit.,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 15 December 1931, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9613, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 45, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 130.

This new OSS harkened back to the medieval notions of Austria as the German Ostmark, or Eastern Realm. In terms of *Geschichtspolitik*, the name constructed an imagined trajectory with some Romanticized medieval past, when Austrians supposedly comprised the heroic vanguard of western civilization. The Austrian phalanx had supposedly shielded Europe from hordes of eastern “barbarians,” from Mongols and Turks to Russians. Such obsession with medieval imagery became a staple tactic of fascists, who sought to impose their racial worldview onto new geographical spaces and older historical times. In addition to being a statement about “others” to the East, this signifier proved crucial in German-speaking Europe. By proclaiming a connection to the Ostmark, this paramilitary group tethered itself to a specifically Austrian sense of Germanic self.⁶⁷

Though originally more conservative than revolutionary, the OSS espoused a set of right-wing, proto-fascist principles: galvanize young masses in the name of Catholic camaraderie to join their struggle. A copy of the OSS’s original tenets showed their leaders named Vienna as their headquarters, though the OSS operated throughout all of Austria to advance “fatherland/patriotic and cultural education, the physical training of the Catholic youth of Austria, together with the drilling of male youth in paramilitary sports.” The OSS sought to fuse mass, patriotic mobilization with militarized preparation for some inevitable

⁶⁷ Furthermore, the right to claim to be the Ostmark itself was up for debate. When the Nazis reorganized the German federal structure into the various Gaue, the state of Bavaria was broken up into five different units, one of which was labeled the Bayerische Ostmark. During the Second World War itself, the question of what exactly was the Ostmark would create discursive and administrative confusion: was the Ostmark this Bavarian Gau, the entirety of Austria, or the broad swaths of new territory briefly acquired during the broader war itself?

conflict.⁶⁸ The *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger* reported foundational goals: to organize “all young, politically interested Catholics, to whom the struggle for the vaterländische future means a matter of conscience ...” and to inculcate in its followers “the practical Volksgemeinschaft under the same banner.”⁶⁹ The specification that they wanted to prepare “Catholic youth” for impending conflict made this formation a specifically southern German one. Catholic carried with it associations of southeastern German regionalism set against the stereotypical construction of aggressive Prussian Protestants.⁷⁰ If the OSS seemed like a fringe group, it stood at the center of understanding the Austrian sense of self vis-à-vis German national identifications. Along those lines, Anthony Bushell’s *Polemical Austria* stated that OSS propaganda during the summer of 1933 contained the first “explicit articulation of the idea of the ‘Austrian nation’ (Die Österreichische Nation).”⁷¹ In their regional right-wing mentalities, Germans in the Austrian Vaterland needed specific German national loyalties to steel themselves against Germans in the German Vaterland.

⁶⁸ “Abschrift h.o.3.338.553-GD 2 vom 6. November 1933 Satzungen der Ostmärkischen Sturmscharen,” ÖSaW, BkA – Pr. Politische Bureau K3 576 1936 O (1-1000) Ad.R, O, Nr. 437/36, Eingelangt: 15.VII., Day 2 Photo 105 (for direct quotation), 106-108.

⁶⁹ “Das Ziel der Ostmärkischen Sturmschar,” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger: Mit der illustrierten Wochen-Beilage: „Weltguck*,” 19 November 1930, Nummer 266, 23. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19301119&seite=3&zoom=33>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁷⁰ “Satzungen der Ostmärkischen Sturmscharen,” ÖSaW, BkA – Pr. Politische Bureau K3 576 1936 O (1-1000) Ad.R, O, 437/36, 15.VII, Day 2 Photo 105-108. The *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger* reiterated this Catholic sense of individual and collective identity: “The new political *Kampforganisation* of the young Catholics invokes the Lord God’s blessing, from which each individual *Kämpfer* claims – Loyalty!” “Das Ziel der Ostmärkischen Sturmschar,” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, 19 November 1930, Nummer 266, 23. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO.

⁷¹ Anthony Bushell, “Austria and Concepts of Identity,” Chapter 3 in *Polemical Austria: The Rhetorics of National Identity from Empire to the Second Republic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), 63, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qhc5j.6>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

As the OSS strove for mass mobilization, it doubled down on appealing to youthful audiences who supposedly brought vitality and vibrancy to the movement. By 31 June 1933, the paramilitary group created its junior branch: the Ostmärkischer Studentenbund (OSB, Eastern March League for Students). Headquartered in Vienna and “responsible to the Reichsführer of the Ostmärkische Sturmsharen,” this organization planned to operate throughout Austria with the purpose of “patriotic-Austrian education [vaterländische-österreichische Schulung] of the participants.” The OSB also planned for their nationalistic pedagogy to include “festivals” and “the instigation of propaganda on academic ground.”⁷² Their curriculum began to efface the border between patriotism and nationalism to and for Austria. And Austrian loyalties indicated potential loyalties toward some Germania, or at least, a Germania draped in red-white raiment.⁷³

Thus, in the first years of the 1930s, two inverse phenomena conditioned the intra-national borderland: parliamentarization of the Heimwehren with the Heimatblock and the paramilitarization of the CSP with the OSS. Seemingly endless pluralization only exacerbated righting-wing infighting and dysfunction.⁷⁴ Martin Kitchen’s seminal text, *The Coming of*

⁷² *SATZUNGEN des Vereines OSTMAERKISCHER STUDENTENBUND*, ÖSaW, **Archiv der Republik** (AdR, bold text on label), Fach 179, Bestand/Signatur: **Bundespolizeidirektion Wien/VB** [bold in archival folio], XV-11.081, Bundes-Polizeidirektion in Wien V. B. Betreff: XV 11081 Ostmärkischer Studentenbund Gelöscht 1938 29 05/38, V.B. 1216/35 betreffend Mitgliedschaft von Militärpersonen. unbedenklich (10.III.1935) dtto. V.B. 553/3/37 V.B. 5245/36 [illegible] 4658/38, XV _ 11081, Day 1 Photo 7.

⁷³ For Austrian sense of Germanness, see Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 1-15, 36-38, 232-236. My interest in borderlands points toward the liminality of this Austrian-German connection.

⁷⁴ As Kitchen’s states: “Radicals in the Heimwehr, and those who took the Korneuburg oath seriously, were horrified at his [Starhemberg, the leader of the *Heimwehr*] compromises with a hated parliamentary system. Others were understandably confused by his wildly contradictory remarks and frequent changes of course. Thus the golden boy Starhemberg was unable to achieve any degree of

Austrian Fascism, points to this division as proof that “even as an anti-Marxist movement the Heimwehr had proved a failure.”⁷⁵ But their two-fronted assault on the Republic, by both Putschen and parliament, also points to another interpretation. Their internecine chaos shrouded the Austrian Republic, making its future difficult to descry and orienting political parlance toward the right, even if they had limited immediate “success.”⁷⁶ In Edmondson’s final assessment, while the Heimwehren disagreed to the point of dysfunction, they contributed to the democracy’s downfall because they consistently attacked the republican socialists.⁷⁷ Building upon his foundational interpretation, I opine that their dysfunction helped to destabilize the democracy by framing the political situation as out of control. Their cocksure adamance and righteous self-assurance heightened the uncertainty and marked the region as a contested borderland.

“One of the Queerest Wars:” Rise of Rival Fascist Regimes

The legacy of the Heimatblock far outlasted its lackluster performance in the election of 1930. Its members in the Nationalrat held a trump card: they formed the lynchpin that

unity, and indeed the Heimwehr became more fractionalised than ever.” Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1980), 62–63.

⁷⁵ Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1980), 62–63. Later Chancellor and eventual Austrofascist *Führer* Kurt von Schuschnigg would label the *Putsch* as “a comic-opera.” See Kurt von Schuschnigg, *The Brutal Takeover: The Austrian ex-Chancellor’s account of the Anschluss of Austria by Hitler*, trans. Richard Barry (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 55.

⁷⁶ For a brilliant intervention that we must take seriously the schemes and rhetoric of seemingly absurd right-wing extremists, see Charles R. Gallagher, *Nazis of Copley Square: The Forgotten Story of the Christian Front* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021), 1–16, 239–249.

⁷⁷ “Yet with all its internal dissension and numerical weakness, the Heimwehr—with foreign support—did contribute significantly to the realization of its most generally held goal: the destruction of Austria’s socialist party and of its democratic institutions.” Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 263.

cinched the CSP's parliamentary coalition. The CSP could only form a majority coalition by including the Heimatblock, among other parties. Despite only having eight seats, the Heimatblock thus "held the balance of power" because it could threaten to abandon the precarious coalition.⁷⁸ This party, with just under five percent of parliamentary seats, helped to secure Engelbert Dollfuss the position of Austrian Chancellor on 20 May 1932. One year later, this man closed the Nationalrat on a procedural technicality.⁷⁹ In doing so, Dollfuss thereby realized a major plank in the Heimatblock's foundational platform: supplanting the elected republican legislature with an authoritarian regime.

By the spring of 1933, the republics in both Austria and Germany had started to pivot toward authoritarian dictatorships. Though both states were oriented around right-wing ideologies by and for German-speakers, these regimes often stood in opposition to each other. Austria immediately faced aggressive advances from its northern Nazi neighbor. The first blow to Austrian sovereignty came from an administrative transition within Germany: the Nazis attacked Germany's federalist structures and traditions. The *Gleichschaltung*—the synchronization of bureaucratic, juridical, and academic policies and personnel with the Nazi agenda—also came with dismantling of federalist privileges traditionally afforded the once "Free State of Bavaria."⁸⁰ The Bavarian parliament effectively fell into obsolescence.

⁷⁸ Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 150 (for direct quotation). See also "Chronology," *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 7, no. 11 (20 November 1930): 16 (1016), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25638875>, Accessed 29 July 2020.

⁷⁹ Ironically, Starhemberg later recorded that Dollfuss did so at his behest, which angered the Austrian Nazis because it blocked them from infiltrating parliament, the very strategy Starhemberg had also just employed with his Heimatblock. Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 108.

⁸⁰ Thomas Schaarschmidt reminded us that supplanting the federalist system was the *Gleichschaltung*'s original purpose, rather than the purging of bureaucracies, legal structures, and public

Meanwhile, executive power increasingly shifted toward the Commissary of the Reich for the State of Bavaria—Nazi plenipotentiary Lieutenant-General Franz Ritter von Epp, a Bavarian with former experience reporting to Nazis in Berlin as the Reich Police Commissioner for Bavaria.⁸¹ Meanwhile, Nazi governing practices centered on their Gau-based party administrative system, which de facto trumped the federalist structure.⁸² Ironically, Nazi attempts to streamline their rule created absolute bureaucratic mayhem, as historian Thomas Schaarschmidt claimed: “while the National Socialists destroyed German federalism within two years of taking power, the replacement system they instituted was a confused patchwork of overlapping jurisdictions.”⁸³ Nazi “streamlining” or “coordination” often meant the opposite, leaving vast uncertainty in its wake.

The sublimation of Bavaria to Nazi unitarism presented a defeat to proponents of an independent Austria. Bavaria became a stronghold for Nazis and a base of operations for their meddling in Austria. The Nazi assault on German federalism even provoked a brief Austrian mobilization on the Bavarian border. In March 1933, Nazi Justice Minister in Munich Hans Frank gave a provocative address, warning the Austrian government not to persecute Nazis in

posts that came later and made it so infamous. Thomas Schaarschmidt, “Multi-Level Governance in Hitler’s Germany: Reassessing the Political Structure of the National Socialist State,” *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 42, No. 2 (GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, 2017): 220, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44234960>, Accessed 22 February 2021.

⁸¹ Karl Polanyi, “Austria and Germany,” *Wiley: Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 12, no. 5 (September 1933): 585, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2601779>, Accessed 18 January 2017; “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 9, no. 19 (16 March 1933): 17 (575), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639144>, Accessed 15 March 2021.

⁸² According to scholar Peter James, as soon as “late April/early May 1933, Bavaria ceased to be an independent political unit.” Peter James, *The Politics of Bavaria – An Exception to the Rule: The special position of the Free State of Bavaria in the New Germany* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 42.

⁸³ Schaarschmidt, “Multi-Level Governance in Hitler’s Germany,” 223.

its territories. According to an article in the *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, he couched his threat in terms of intra-national conflict: “May the Austrian government be warned in all friendly and fraternal devotion...”⁸⁴ Karl Polanyi documented the specific threat in his report to the British. Supposedly, Frank then stated that “General von Epp [the Nazi representative in Bavaria] would be, perhaps, entrusted with looking after matters in Austria,” an intimidating intimation. “The Vienna Government promptly instituted cooperation between the army, gendarmerie, and *Heimwehr* in defence of the frontier, and reservists were called up,” according to Polanyi.⁸⁵ The same English-language paper even reported that Frank’s comments on a Munich radio station amounted to having “threatened a Bavarian invasion of Austria.”⁸⁶ With its subsumption to the Nazi political system, Bavaria no longer formed a southeastern bulwark, real or imagined, to shield Austria from Berlin. Instead, any buffer Bavaria may have offered now warped into staging grounds for Nazi incursions into Austria.

Hans Frank’s pugnacious broadcast spoke to the intra-fascist feud between the *Heimwehren* and the Nazis. Both groups operated by and for German-speaking fascists, and both collapsed the border between paramilitarization and parliamentarization. On paper, it seemed the two had much in common. Certainly the *Heimatschutz* in Styria during Pfrimer’s

⁸⁴ “Der bayerische Justizminister für die österreichischen Nationalsozialisten,” *Innsbrucker Nachrichten: Mit dem Abendblatt „Neueste Zeitung“ und der illustr. Monatschrift „Bergland“*, 20 March 1933, Nummer 66, 80. Jahrgang, Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ibn&datum=19330320&query=Frank&ref=anno-search&seite=5>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁸⁵ Polanyi, “Austria and Germany,” 586.

⁸⁶ “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 9, no. 23 (11 May 1933): 13–14 (691–692), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639163>, Accessed 30 July 2020.

tenure as Landesführer cooperated and overlapped with the Nazi movement.⁸⁷ The *Leipziger Zeitung* outright conflated the two, claiming “Hitler loyalists” had carried out Pfrimer’s Putsch.⁸⁸ Furthermore, both Starhemberg and Hitler hailed from Oberösterreich and had marched together during the 1923 Munich Beer Hall Putsch.⁸⁹ Had Hitler, the man of the people, selected this young aristocrat as his Austrian agent? In 1930, the SDP’s *Arbeiter Zeitung* saw the two organizations as intertwined by citing Starhemberg’s speech in which he supposedly claimed, “The Hitler-movement is to us a strong ally, with which we will sooner or later certainly unify.”⁹⁰ The SDP news outlet reported that the Heimwehren sought to outflank their erstwhile CSP ally by courting the Nazis: “the Hahnenschwänzler are preparing for their unification with the Hakenkreuzlern [swastika men, slang for Nazis] of the Hitler tendency.”⁹¹ However, as with previous discussions of right-wing mergers, the question of unity perpetuated division, and the two movements increasingly became violent competitors.

⁸⁷ See Bruce F. Pauley’s seminal work claims it was the Pfrimer Putsch that served as “the most important catalyst” for the blending together of the Styrian Heimatschutz and the Nazis. Bruce F. Pauley, *Hahnenschwanz und Hakenkreuz: Steirischer Heimatschutz und österreichischer Nationalsozialismus, 1918-1934* (Wien: Europaverlag, 1976), 172. “Revolte gegen Starhemberg: Ein Teil der steirischen Heimwehr geht zu Hitler über,” news clipping without title listed, 23 April 1933, BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1–, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 156.

⁸⁸ “Die Aktion der Hitlergetreuen,” *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, 14 September 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9611, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1–, Deutsche Hochschule für Politik Archiv, 510/0, Day 8 Photo 169.

⁸⁹ Ivan T. Berend, “A fascistoid Austrian demagogue: Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg,” Chapter 4 in *A Century of Populist Demagogues: Eighteen European Portraits, 1918-2018* (Central European University Press, 2020), 96, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7829/j.ctv16f6cn2.8>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

⁹⁰ “Die Heimwehren wollen zu Hitler,” *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 17 November 1930, BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, (fol.–, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 150. Also available on ANNO, *Arbeiter-Zeitung: Zentralorgan der Sozialdemokratie Deutschösterreichs*, Nummer 316, 43. Jahrgang, Seite 2, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=aze&datum=19301117&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 1 March 2021.

⁹¹ “Schluß mit dem Skandal!,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 November 1930, Nummer 317, 43. Jahrgang, Seite 2, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=aze&datum=19301118&seite=1&zoom=33&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search>, ANNO, Accessed 1 March 2021.

The Heimwehren-Nazi dynamic came to encapsulate another constitutive contradiction of the intra-national borderland: the Nazis catalyzed the Heimwehren fascistization process. In 1931, the *Berliner Tageblatt* had reported on their “close relationship” as the Nazis pushed the Heimwehren in a fascist direction: “the Heimwehr had gone from the initial conservative channel into a radical one. National socialism owes some of its successes that it has achieved in the last months to this radicalism and chaos, which it has created in the ranks of the old Heimwehr supporters.” The Nazis transitioned the Heimwehren from conservative to increasingly fascist, and this radicalization only exacerbated the chaos across the borderland.⁹²

But the existence of mutually fascistizing groups also presented a contradiction. The *Vossische Zeitung* stated bluntly in a sub-headline for 6 November: “National socialist competition against [the] Heimwehren.”⁹³ Starhemberg transitioned from Hitler’s potential toady to his real rival. The *Bayerischer Kurier* reported in 1931 that the two fascist Führer butted heads in a “great Kampf ... the Kampf for the leadership of the right-wing radicals,” an ominous precedent given Starhemberg’s later penchant for *Führerkämpfen* (leadership struggles).⁹⁴ Structurally, both groups insisted on total control, meaning the simple existence of the other organization presented a challenge. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* reported on the deepening rift in 1931 when Starhemberg dared to suggest an organizational Anschluss.

⁹² “Heimwehr und Nationalsozialismus. Von unserem Mitarbeiter.,” *Berliner Tageblatt*, 24 February 1931, Nummer 45, BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 141.

⁹³ “Der Wettlauf der Putschisten: Nationalsozialistische Konkurrenz gegen Heimwehren: Meldung der Vossischen Zeitung,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 6 November 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 135.

⁹⁴ “Hitler und Starhemberg. Von unserem Korrespondenten.,” *Bayerischer Kurier*, 11 November 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 134.

As always, union remained in the eye of the beholder. From Starhemberg's point of view, the Nazis should "disband" in order "to join the Heimatschutz and put themselves unconditionally under his (Starhemberg's) leadership."⁹⁵ Like Georg Escherich's offer to the Austrians and later to the Stahlhelm, the suggestion appeared awkward at best, insulting at worst, but threatening either way. But to many participants of the proudly Austrian Heimwehren, Nazism amounted to old Prussian aggression in new brown uniforms.

Set against this widening Nazi-Heimwehren rivalry, the legacy of Hans Frank's 1933 radio broadcast lingered across the borderland. Two months later, the Nazi Justice Minister for Bavaria accepted an invitation from Austrian Nazis for a tour of speeches across Austria. The headline for *Die Stunde* on 10 May clearly labelled Frank's tour as an "Unwanted Visit." Bad blood still festered in the wound from his "radio broadcast that badly offended the Austrian government and advertized a forcible intervention [Einschreiten] of Bavaria against Austria."⁹⁶ During the visit, the Heimwehren held a rally at Schönbrunn Palace to celebrate "Starhemberg as Führer," according to the *Freie Stimmen*.⁹⁷ The *Alpenländische Rundschau* reported the rally doubled as a "Türkenbefreiungsfeier" [Celebration of Liberation from the Turks, anniversary

⁹⁵ "Heimwehren und Nationalsozialisten in Oesterreich: Nationalsozialistische Erklärung gegen Wiederaufnahme der abgebrochenen Verhandlungen," *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 November 1931, BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1-, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 133.

⁹⁶ "„Unerwünschter Besuch:“ Schärfster Protest des Regierungsorgans gegen die geplante Wienreise deutscher Minister; Verweigerung der Einreisebewilligung für den bayrischen Minister Frank?" *Die Stunde*, 10 May 1933, Nummer 3048, 11. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=std&datum=19330510&query=Frank&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁹⁷ "Der deutsche Ministerbesuch in Wien. Der Heimwehraufmarsch in Wien." *Freie Stimmen: Deutsche Kärntner Landeszeitung*, 14 May 1933, Folge 112., 53. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=fst&datum=19330514&query=Heimwehr+Turk&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

of the lifting of the Ottoman siege of Vienna in the early modern period]. Upwards of 40,000 paramilitary members attended, in addition to CSP Chancellor-turned autocrat Dollfuss. The Austrian fascists constructed a fantastical narrative—“Austria’s glorious past”—meant to galvanize and harness affective support for the Dollfuss regime. The festivities presented Austria as the bastion of Germandom (and Europe more broadly) against dangerous hordes from the east, and this conjuring of the past contained many explicit political messages. One such message was that the Heimwehren sought to flex in front of the unwelcomed Nazi representative, “to cherish the sacred Austrian tradition with the Heimatschutz and with all means to struggle for a free independent Austria.”⁹⁸

Frank’s visit to Austria left strong enough of an impression for Starhemberg to discuss it in his 1942 memoirs. He boasted about how his Heimwehren—“some Tyrolese peasant lads”—physically assaulted Nazis in front of Frank. He further wrote, “From that day Nazi terrorism could no longer compete with Austrian terrorism. Systematically I organized the hounding down of National Socialist terrorists.”⁹⁹ Starhemberg memoirs also recorded his rhetoric from this time, in which he decried the Nazis as “a murder gang” and Nazism as simply “brown Bolshevism.”¹⁰⁰ Of course, Starhemberg published his memoirs in 1942 while on the run from Nazis, when he curated an image of himself as always and forever an ardent anti-Nazi fighter. However, his stance against the Nazis in the spring of 1933 came across in

⁹⁸ “Besuch deutscher Minister in Wien und Graz, Dr. Frank ausgewiesen. Die Türkenbefreiungsfeier des österreichischen Heimatschutzes in Schönbrunn,” *Alpenländische Rundschau*, 20 May 1933, Folge 501, Jahrg. 1933, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=alp&datum=19330520&query=“Dr.”+“Frank”&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁹⁹ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 110.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 111.

context. Other Austrian leaders also oscillated between rivalry and cooperation with Germany. *Der Wiener Tag* reported a radio address by OSS-founder Kurt von Schuschnigg, who also spoke of the Nazi terror, but this time to signal solidarity and rivalry: “the fellowship of fate between Austria and Germany always remained unspoiled by the relative domestic political situations. This is also characteristic of today’s situation ... The government of Austria ... also struggles simultaneously however against sedition and terror.” Even in the face of the Nazi onslaught, Schuschnigg remained amenable to some broad, undefined “unity of law [Rechtsvereinheitlichung] with Germany ... in the future, nothing should stand in the way of this.”¹⁰¹ Schuschnigg attempted to impose a regionalist square on the nationalist circle by vacillating between carrots and sticks. Such a polarized strategy would come to epitomize his Nazi policies after he became Austrofascist Führer just one year later.

Exacerbating the rivalry in this intra-national conflict, *Der Wiener Tag* reported that on 20 May, Hans Frank spoke to a crowd of university students in a Berlin rally framed as “For Greater Germany and against Dollfuss.” Frank chastised the Austrian CSP’s leaders—Dollfuss and Schuschnigg—and proclaimed, “we want to struggle for the Zusammenschluß of Austria and Germany as a historical bridge into the future of the German Volk. And we want to lead this struggle with all legal-juridical means.” But his claims of legality shifted to more pugnacious rhetoric about Austria: “We expect the cooperation of the German academic youth. Prepared to die, you are the living power of the German Volk. You are the storm

¹⁰¹ “Oesterreichs deutsche Sendung, Ein Rundfunkvortrag des Bundesministers Dr. Schuschnigg,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 17 May 1933, Nummer 3589, XII. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19330517&query=“Schicksalsverbundenheit”&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

troopers of Hitler ... the entire world should hear it, that there can be no second Germany next to Hitler's Germany." The next speaker, Bundesschulungsleiter (Federal Education Superintendent) Leer, even eradicated southeastern Catholic regionalism from his Nazi großdeutsch nationalism: "Black lords [the clerical influences of the Dollfuss regime] gossip there [in Austria] about a special Austrian Geist [spirit]. But there is none. There is **only** a German Geist."¹⁰² He had already carried out a mental Gleichschaltung of Austria, discursively subsuming southeastern regional loyalties to Nazi nationalism.

The Austrian Nazis also jockeyed for supremacy in the intra-national borderland, starting back in the 1920s with their Vaterländischer Schutzbund (Fatherland/Patriotic Protection League, VS).¹⁰³ The VS spent its early days targeting Austrian youth for recruitment, selling tickets to an array of events, from "defensive mobilization [Wehrhaftmachung]" to social gatherings in Austria.¹⁰⁴ The Nazi movement in Austria ballooned well beyond its VS origins.¹⁰⁵ A decade after their 1923 emergence, they entrenched

¹⁰² Bold in original. "„Für Großdeutschland und gegen Dollfuß.“ Eine überhebliche Studentenkundgebung in Berlin – Der Justizminister Dr. Frank hält eine provokante Rede," *Der Wiener Tag*, 21 May 1933, Nummer 3593, XII. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19330521&query=Frank&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

¹⁰³ Berend, "A fascistoid Austrian demagogue," 97.

¹⁰⁴ For the bookkeeping on such ticket sales, see "Hauptkasse des V. Sch. B. 18617 * S --.50 Zur Wehrhaftmachung der deutschen Jugend im Vaterländischen Schutzbund. Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (WStLa), alte Signatur: D/337/Vaterl. Schutzbund A1/5, Gauarchiv Dokumentensammlung, Konvolut AG 118, 2.7.1.11.1, MA 8, Gauarchiv: Dokumentation, A1 - D - Dokumentensammlung: 118 - Vaterländischer Schutzbund, 6410888000, G 303-/8/77-83: A1/5, NSDAP Gauarchiv-Wien, A Nr. 337, 26, Kl. D, E. Nr. 41, 2721/a/b., Day 1 Photo 5. In addition, Photos 6-8.

"Vaterländischer Schutzbund, Kreis 2 Eintrittskarte...Krampus-Feier mit Tanz Musikalische und humoristische Vorträge." Event for 4 December 1926. WStLa, D/337/Vaterl. Schutzbund A1/5, AG 118, 2.7.1.11.1, MA 8, A1 - D - Dokumentensammlung: 118, 6410888000, G 303-/8/77-83: A1/5, NSDAP Gauarchiv-Wien, A Nr. 337, 26 12 4, Kl. D, E. Nr. 41, 2654, Day 1 Photo 3.

¹⁰⁵ Stadler essentially writes off this VS as "less important." But it is important to trace the genealogies, mutations, and grassroots mobilizations of these earlier fascist strains if we are to understand

themselves in Austria with a full-blown Sturmabteilung (the infamous Nazi Storm Troopers, SA). To them, the very existence of other right-wing paramilitaries challenged their total control, driving them to outright violence. A foreign observer discussed the first few months of Dollfuss's dictatorship thusly: "The lists of acts of Nazi violence in Austria during the spring and summer [of 1933] is a long one, too long to print. Shootings, intimidations, assaults, bombings, slanders and libels, were of daily occurrence."¹⁰⁶ Bavaria and the Austro-Bavarian border featured centrally in this paramilitary-based violence.

The border became a point of contention when the Nazi state attacked the Austrian tourist industry by charging 1000 marks for each tourist crossing the Bavarian border into Austria. To this tariff on tourism, "Dollfuss retaliated by closing all the Brown Houses [SA centers] in Austria, forbidding the Nazi uniform, and arresting some hundreds of Nazi agitators."¹⁰⁷ In reporting on this border escalation, the *Berlin Morgenpost* conceded the "intensification of the antagonism," but it clung to the fraternal goal of cooperation: "there must be no misunderstandings between the Germans on this side and that side of the border."¹⁰⁸

them later when they did achieve "success." K.R. Stadler, "Austria," Chapter 5 in *Fascism in Europe*, ed. S.J. Woolf (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1981 [1968]), 100.

¹⁰⁶ John Gunther, "Dollfuss and the Future of Austria," *Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 2 (Council on Foreign Relations, January 1934): 310, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20030587>, Accessed 18 January 2017 (again on 26 August 2020).

¹⁰⁷ Gunther, "Future of Austria," 310. Hitler imposed the tourist tax to hurt the Austrian economy even more during the Great Depression. See Kitchen, *Austrian Fascism*, 149–150.

¹⁰⁸ "Reisesperre nach Oesterreich: 1000 Mark Gebühr für Ausreise-Sichtvermerk," *Berliner Morgenpost*, Nummer 127, 28 May 1933, Seite 1, ZEFYS Zeitungsinformationssystem, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin: Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, <http://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/index.php?id=dfg-viewer&set%5Bmets%5D=http%3A%2F%2Fcontent.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de%2Fzefys%2FSPNP2719372X-19330528-0-0-0-0.xml>, Accessed 15 February 2021.

They ultimately sought transborder German respect. Meanwhile, the Nazis strove to eliminate the border in the future by buttressing it with an exit tax in the present.

Nazi paramilitary activists on the ground, however, acted as if the border simply did not exist. In June of 1933, Dollfuss went from outlawing SA uniforms to outlawing the Nazi Party entirely. He fought fascist fire with fire—Starhemberg later claimed he pushed Dollfuss to “meet National Socialist terrorism with even worse terrorism.”¹⁰⁹ The Austrian state purged Nazis from bureaucracies and schools, and the Dollfuss administration started detaining Nazis in concentration camps.¹¹⁰ The Dutch labelled the Austrian policies as a “counter-terror” operation, with Starhemberg’s anti-Nazi stance stemming from his anti-Prussian orientation.¹¹¹ But such action did not eliminate Nazism so much as it dispersed Nazism across the border. The now-banned Nazis of Salzburg established their new headquarters in the Bavarian town of Freilassing, a mere stone’s throw away from their Austrian hometown.¹¹²

The Nazi call across the Bavarian border proved alluring. By the end of summer 1933, the *Österreichisches Abendblatt* reported that Austrian police apprehended “four young people with packed backpacks on the streets of Salzburg,” who planned to cross the Bavarian border to join “An Austrian Legion” (Österreichische Legion, ÖL). This paramilitary group offered

¹⁰⁹ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 102. Cited in Pauley’s *Forgotten Nazis*, which uses this quote well to narrate the Dollfuss Gleichschaltung and camps system for Austrian Nazis, Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 107–111.

¹¹⁰ Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 107–111.

¹¹¹ “BEGIN DER TEGEN-TERREUR. Starhembergs naïeve condities aan Hitler – Nazi’s in Graz met gelijke [illegible] betaald. Nypels schrijft uit Weensche,” *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 31 January 1934, BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M 207, 45, (fol. 1–, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 111.

¹¹² Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 108.

haven in Bavaria to Austrian Nazis fleeing the Dollfuss regime.¹¹³ The Nazis seeking refuge in this Bavarian-based, Austrian-composed ÖL had “smuggled” themselves across the border to a Nazi militia camp on the outskirts of Munich.¹¹⁴ The *Salzburger Chronik* reported a CSP Nationalrat member’s speech, in which he denounced the ÖL for its plans to come back to Austria to create disorder. To these Nazis, they could traverse the Austro-Bavarian border at will; to Austrian patriots, they used the border as their first line of defense against a siege from Austrian émigrés. The German Foreign Minister reportedly had assured that the ÖL would be “dissolved and its members broken up into work camps.”¹¹⁵ In a sense, the Nazis upheld part of the minister’s promise. The German Nazis sent the ÖL to Dachau, but not to the infamous camp therein. Instead, the German Nazis established training grounds for this Austrian paramilitary elsewhere in the town, such that upwards of 1500 Austrian Nazis resided on Bavarian soil.¹¹⁶ According to the *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, the Austrian Schutzstaffel (SS)—

¹¹³ “Oesterreichische Hochverräter-Legion in Bayern,” *Oesterreichisches Abendblatt*, 4 August 1933, Folge 100, 1. Jahrgang, Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oab&datum=19330804&query=“Österreichische+Legion”&ref=anno-search&seite=5>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

¹¹⁴ “Der Schandfleck der ‚österreichischen Legion‘,” *Salzburger Chronik: mit der illustrierten Beilage „Die Woche im Bild“*, 24 August 1933, Nummer 194, 69. Jahrgang, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19330824&query=“Österreichische+Legion+in+Bayern”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

¹¹⁵ “Das Schicksal der ‚österreichischen Legion“,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 3 October 1933, Nummer 228, 69. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19331003&query=“Österreichische+Legion”&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

¹¹⁶ “Verhastete Nationalsozialisten: Der Urheber der Bombenfabrik gefunden?,” *Neues Wiener Journal*, 3 September 1933, Nummer 14.291, 41. Jahrgang, Seite 7, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nwj&datum=19330903&query=“Österreichische+Legion”+“Dachau”&ref=anno-search&seite=7>, Accessed 31 January 2021. For the numbers see “Die Landesleitung Oesterreich nur getarnt,” 13 August 1934, *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger: Mit der Abendausgabe: „JZ-Innsbrucker Zeitung“ und der illustrierten Wochen-Beilage: „Weltguck“*, Nummer 184., 27. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19340813&seite=2&zoom=33&query=“Österreichische%2BLegion”%2B“Dachau”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 31 January 2021. Pauley states the October 1933 membership in the ÖL’s was at about 4,500. By the end of 1934, he says it reached a high-water

responsible for the “organization of terror campaigns in Austria”—received an office in Munich.¹¹⁷

Chaos and confrontation only escalated in the intra-national borderland, as these fascists—proudly boasting of their German nationality—poised and postured along the border to fight for their vision of Germandom.¹¹⁸ A British observer claimed these groups also extended the confusing borderland conditions into the Austro-Bavarian airspace:

and then began a war, one of the queerest wars ever known anywhere, a war fought bloodlessly (except for casualties in minor border frays) but a war nevertheless. The Nazis invaded Austria. They crossed the frontier – through the air. Their planes dropped propaganda leaflets ... the tension increased until the Great Powers found it intolerable; first Dollfuss was given permission to increase his army by 8,000 men to full treaty strength; then France, Britain and Italy protested in Berlin.¹¹⁹

The same month, the *Salzburger Chronik* labeled this quasi-war among Germans of different regional backgrounds and with divergent fascist impulses as “the most unnatural conflict in the world.” According to the paper, Germandom suffered from German-on-German violence: “the conditions on the Austrian border” became so noxious that they “slapped every German sensibility in the face.” According to the Salzburg news source, “brown-red Munich” emitted all this toxicity along the Austro-Bavarian border. Bavaria became the melting pot in which German Nazis and exiled Austrian Nazis —“the so-called ‘Austrian legion’ ... which in Bavaria people want to support or have supported”—all blended together to launch incursions on the

mark of about 9,000 before dropping back down to 3,000 come 1938. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 144–145.

¹¹⁷ Die Landesleitung Oesterreich nur getarnt,” 13 August 1934, *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, Nr. 184, Seite 2, ANNO.

¹¹⁸ Gunther, “Future of Austria,” *Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 2 (Council on Foreign Relations, January 1934): 311.

¹¹⁹ Gunther, “Future of Austria,” 311.

Austro-Bavarian borderland.¹²⁰ Though not a traditional war, this “queerest” of wars across the borderland embroiled the Austro-Bavarian region in daily tumult, maybe not always severe, but enough to keep the inhabitants on edge.¹²¹

The “border forays” across the intra-national borderland might have seemed relatively “minor” from spatial and temporal distance. But the stakes escalated to fatal heights.¹²² According to the Salzburg government’s official reports, one of these “border incidents [Grenzzwischenfälle]” occurred when members of the Heimwehren shot and killed a German soldier. This incident coupled with another event, when “an armed Heimwehr patrol, four to six men strong, was seen on Bavarian territory.” Because of these incidents, Austrian authorities in Salzburg feared the “border population on the Bavarian side [Grenzbevölkerung bayrischerseits]” might retaliate and demonstrate against “Austrian officials and Heimwehr men.” The Austrians proclaimed a restriction on Bavarian border crossings into Austria, except for those Bavarians who offered “proper documentation issued” from “qualified Bavarian police officials.”¹²³ The Austro-Bavarian border lacked stability and order, not least of all because of the men there to impose their version of stability and order.

¹²⁰ “Zwei Lesearten,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 10. August 1933, Nummer 183, 69. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19330810&query=“an+der+österreichischen+Grenze”&re f=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

¹²¹ Gunther, “Future of Austria,” 311.

¹²² Gunther, “Future of Austria,” 311.

¹²³ Other exceptions included Bavarians who worked in Austria, Bavarian officials (“Gendearmerie, Police, Customs Officials”) who had to attend to duties in Austria, Bavarians with a legitimate reason or who owned “property in Austria,” and children traveling on the way to school. “Bezirksgendarmeriekommando Salzburg, E. Nr. 3273 Vom Grenzzollamte Hammerau wurde am 28./11/1933 folgendes in Erfahrung gebracht,” Landesarchiv Salzburg (LaS), Rehr Akten RehrLP 1922–1938, RehrLP-1938/0045, Landeshauptmannschaft Salzburg: Grenzverkehr mit Bayern: Al. Grenzverkehr, Ausflugverkehr, Durchreiseverkehr Tfg. – Reichen hall-Lofu, etc., 1933–1936, 1938

The Nazi government knew about this border strife. Internal German documents listed Austrian complaints about how the Austrian state “has today invoked all well-meaning patriotic [vaterlandstreue] inhabitants of Austria to a common end struggle against a minority of irredeemable enemies of state and terrorists, who obstinately and feloniously want to disturb the peace and order of our Heimatland.”¹²⁴ The Nazi report then enumerated the transgressions against Austrian sovereignty: displaying swastikas publicly, setting off “gas bombs,” launching “attacks with explosive devices,” wreaking havoc with “firecrackers,” bombing a train in Vienna, and attempting to dynamite a Vorarlberg Heimatdienst meeting and a Tyrolean Heimwehrführer’s residence.¹²⁵ A communiqué from Nazi Foreign Minister Neurath included a note that reported again on official Austrian grievances about the ÖL. In response, the Nazi state assured that it would remove the Austrian Nazi émigrés out of the borderland and place them in “work camps in northern Germany.” Even still, the Austrian state complained this legion remained “well armed and militarily trained” in the border region, particularly in the

29a/358, Bezirkshauptmannschaft Salzburg eingelangt am 28. Nov. 1933 No. 44354, Day 3 File 3 Photo 25.

¹²⁴ “Der ‘Politischen Korrespondenz’ gehen in diesem Zusammenhange folgende Mitteilungen zu:”, in *Aktionen der Nationalsozialisten in Österreich, Einschleusung von Propaganda- und Sprengmaterial sowie Einmarschpläne der ‘Österreichischen Legion’, Notenaustausch Jan. – Feb. 1934*. BaBL, R 43- II/1477, (fol. 1-), Reichskanzlei, 376433 Akten betreffend: Oesterreich, A. A., Band 3, vergl. Band 4, (Auswärtiges), *Austria* Nazi machinations Jan-May 1934, 27.10.45, Bandnummer 13, Seite 1 RK 412 34 376437 37 (Page 77 of 790 on database), Available online via “invenio – Eine Anwendung des Bundesarchivs,” Das Bundesarchiv, <https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/main.xhtml>, Found through Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek: Kultur und Wissen online (DDB), Accessed 21 February 2021.

¹²⁵ “Der ‘Politischen Korrespondenz’ gehen in diesem Zusammenhange,” *Aktionen der Nationalsozialisten in Österreich*, BaBL, R 43- II/1477, (fol. 1-), Reichskanzlei, 376433, Oesterreich, A. A., 3, vergl. 4, (Auswärtiges), *Austria* Nazi machinations Jan-May 1934, 27.10.45, 13, Seite 1 RK 412 34 376437 37 (Page 77 of 790 on database), Seite 2 376438 38 (79 of 790 on database), Seite 3 376439 39 (81 of 790 on database), invenio, DDB, Accessed 21 February 2021.

Bavarian border town of Freilassing across the Saalach River from Salzburg. The same Nazi memorandum openly admitted that Germany fueled the “the National Socialist terror in Austria” with armaments and educational paraphernalia whose provenance proved “incontestably” of “German origin.” It even described the exact path of the smuggling operation: “their route to and through Austria from the junction of the Antiesen river [in Upper Austria] with the Inn through Wels to Vienna.”¹²⁶ Geographically and cartographically, the Inn River in this sector comprised the physical demarcation between Bavaria and Austria, yet this river concurrently channeled transborder Nazi incursions. The same fluvial feature represented a boundary and a boulevard—perhaps even some turbulent, fluid combination of the two—marking yet another constitutive contradiction, this time onto right-wing uses of the landscape itself.¹²⁷

Beyond just border scuffles, the ÖL also planned an actual strike across the border. Writing to the Nazi Foreign Office in January 1934, the German Chargé d’Affaires in Austria included a report from Lieutenant Wolfgang Muff, a military attaché in Austria. Muff reported that clandestine agents in Munich planned for a twofold incursion against Austria in less than

¹²⁶ Neurath, “Memorandum by the Foreign Minister: Berlin, January 17, 1934, RM 65. [Enclosure] Berlin, January 17, 1934. Note,” No. 188, 3086/617118–23, Germany Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945, from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Series C (1933–1937): The Third Reich: First Phase: Volume II: October 14, 1933–June 13, 1934*, Department of State Publication 6750 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), 370, 371 (for direct quotation), Original from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Digitized by Google, Available on HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233&view=2up&seq=447&size=125&q1=Austrian%20Legion>, Accessed 9 February 2021.

¹²⁷ Bernhard Gissibl presents another case of a human attempts to graft borders onto natural features that defied such tidy impositions with his investigation of wildlife policies in German and British East Africa: “The virtual impossibility to control animal movements meant that the border linked rather than separated the two colonies.” Bernhard Gissibl, *The Nature of German Imperialism: Conservation and the Politics of Wildlife in Colonial East Africa* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2016), 239.

two months. The Munich activists pushed the now-underground Austrian SA to start a domestic uprising, while “the Austrian Legion is to invade Austria.” The Munich agents knew such a brash gamble might provoke the ire of the Nazi German government. So these Munich agents attempted, unsuccessfully, to keep their plans a secret. The report encouraged Nazi officials to take immediate preventative action against the ÖL “to prevent an irreparable disaster.”¹²⁸ Among the Nazis—already at odds with the Austrofascists—the distinction between Austrian and German could matter greatly, specifically because of their adamant that it did not. Reich and Austrian Nazis had a long history of disunion, both before and after their “triumph” in the 1938 Anschluss. Reich Nazis, especially higher-ranking officials in Berlin, often saw Austrian Nazis as an undisciplined rabble, lacking the foresight to win a complex long game that required diplomatic nuance. That Reich Nazis rolled their eyes at Austrian Nazis for being *too* over-the-top, crass, and heavy handed speaks to the potency of intra-German regional cleavages.¹²⁹ Unity seemed so obvious and so simple among these German-speaking, German-identifying Nazis, all the more frustrating when it continued to elude them.

¹²⁸ Erbach, “The Chargé d’Affaires in Austria to the Foreign Ministry: Telegram: No. 8 of January 31: Vienna, January 31, 1934—2:20 p.m. Received January 31—5:00 p.m. II Oe. 290. The Military Attaché Reports.” No. 229, 6115/E454802, Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*, 437 (513 in database)–438 (514 in database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233&view=2up&seq=513&q1=Austrian%20Legion>, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233&view=2up&seq=515&q1=Austrian%20Legion>, Accessed 9 February 2021. For a marked-up copy of the German document itself, see Erbach, “Telegram (geh.Ch.V.), Wien, den 31. Januar 1934 14 Uhr 20 Min., Ankunft 31. ”, 17 ”, Nor.8 vom 31/1.,” *Aktionen der Nationalsozialisten in Österreich*, BaBL, R 43- II/1477, (fol. 1-), Reichskanzlei, 376433, Oesterreich, A. A., 3, vergl. 4, (Auswärtiges), Austria Nazi machinations Jan-May 1934, 27.10.45, 13, 376442, 106, invenio, DDB, Accessed 21 February 2021.

¹²⁹ Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 115–117, 124–125, 133–137. Pauley even labels his chapter on tensions between Altreich and Austrian Nazis following spring 1938 as “The Great Disillusionment.” Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 216 (for direct quotation), 217–222.

This fascist quasi-war became odder in the sense that each “side” remained extremely fractured: German Nazis monitored the erratic plans of the Austrian Nazis, whom the Germans sheltered and trained in Bavaria, as these plans might embarrass the German Nazis diplomatically. Meanwhile, the Reich consular representative in Innsbruck pointed out the oddity that internal fissures also marred the Austrian autonomists. Official documents from the German consulate there pointed out the irony that the Nazi threat to Austria kept the Austrofascist faction together. Reporting at the start of 1934, the consulate agent claimed that during a momentary decline in the “hatred of the [Austrian] government against the NSDAP,” the Austrians in Tyrol turned on each other. He reported back to Germany, “thereby the security director, federal police commissioner and the Heimatwehr have entered into competition with each other. Hundreds of people are arrested, convicted...”¹³⁰ As George Mosse showed, fascists rely upon enemies, and so the decrease of external threats meant Austrofascists found new ones in their own ranks.¹³¹ All the while, such infighting did not hamper fascist success. The Reich consular agent described “the ruling turmoil [*Unruhe*] in Tyrol,” an environment of uncertainty that the fascists fought to amend, even though they contributed to and thrived in this exact political ecosystem.¹³² Such tumult allowed them to

¹³⁰ H. Saller, “Durchdruck, DEUTSCHES KONSULAT INNSBRUCK. Innsbruck, den 5: February 1934, 147, 4 Berichtsdurchschläge. Inhalt: Politische Lage in Tirol & Vorarlberg. An das Auswärtige Amt in Berlin.” Seite 1, BaBL, R 43- II/1477, (fol. 1-), Reichskanzlei, 376433, Oesterreich, A. A., 3, vergl. 4, (Auswärtiges), Austria Nazi machinations Jan-May 1934, 27.10.45, 13, A.A. eing. – 7. Feb. 1934, II Oe 355, Rk 1491, 376475, 203, invenio, DDB, Accessed 28 February 2021.

¹³¹ George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1999), 43.

¹³² Saller, “Politische Lage in Tirol & Vorarlberg. An das Auswärtige Amt in Berlin,” Page 4, BaBL, R 43- II/1477, (fol. 1-), Reichskanzlei, 376433, Oesterreich, A. A., 3, vergl. 4, (Auswärtiges), Austria Nazi machinations Jan-May 1934, 27.10.45, 13, A.A. eing. – 7. Feb. 1934, II Oe 355, Rk 1491, 376478, 206, invenio, DDB, Accessed 28 February 2021.

intimidate their rivals and to bolster their support by seeming to work toward order amid their own chaos.

The city of Salzburg, on the border between Austria and Bavaria, demonstrated the paramilitary chaos in the intra-national borderland. Brawls inundated the city streets, and Salzburg Governor Franz Rehrl described how the Nazis had made enemies of everyone else.¹³³ The SA had conflicted with the socialist RS, the fascist Heimwehren, and the CSP's OSS. Governor Rehrl reported on ubiquitous confrontation, meaning "the question of the Kmapf [sic, typographical error for Kampf] in the city, in the town and outside of the inhabited localities" which even engaged "in a small war." From his perspective, this situation differed greatly from "a conventional war [Feldkrieg]." Instead, it felt more like living "in a small war, in street fighting, in a civil war." According to Rehrl's report, the SA amounted to nothing short of a "civil war group/troop [unclear based on transcript]."¹³⁴ As per Dollfuss's May 1933 decrees, SA men were "not allowed" to wear their stereotypical brown-shirted attire, instead wearing "civilian clothes," a policy that perhaps backfired as SA members could blend into crowds.¹³⁵

¹³³ The report from Salzburg governor's office is officially listed as "undatiert [undated]" and could be from between 1922 and 1938. However, the OSS's emergence in 1930 narrows the likely date range down to somewhere between 1930 and 1934. Furthermore, the document can be even more accurately dated as it describes the SA uniform as forbidden, which means it would have been after Dollfuss's decree in May 1933. The document is also full of typing mistakes, suggesting it was probably only a preliminary draft. Franz Rehrl, *Der Strassenkampf*, LaS, Rehrl Akten RehrlP 1922-1938, RehrlP Politica (undatiert) (1-11), RehrlP – 0000/0006, Day 1 File 1 Pages 1-6.

¹³⁴ Rehrl, *Der Strassenkampf*, LaS, Rehrl Akten RehrlP 1922-1938, RehrlP – 0000/0006, Day 1 File 1 Page 1.

¹³⁵ Rehrl, *Der Strassenkampf*, LaS, Rehrl Akten RehrlP 1922-1938, RehrlP – 0000/0006, Day 1 File 1 Page 2.

Salzburg Governor Rehr reflected on possible options to re-establish order in the streets as fascist gangs patrolled for fights. He contemplated policies for two scenarios. If a “clash occurs in the open street” and “it comes to a fight,” he commented simply that he “must clear the street.” But if “the adversary is marching in order to occupy an important objective ... I must preempt the adversary in a forced march!” He then outlined his “Principles To Fight for the Movement [Austrofascism]: 1.) surprise the adversary! 2.) grab them firmly and enforce the law upon the adversary! No negotiating! 3). advance ready for battle! 4). identify early on where the weakest positions of the adversary are: deploy the main part of the attack there!”¹³⁶ The governor’s dramatic policies demonstrate the daily exchanges of violence in the streets of Salzburg. While he strove to be definitive, the sense of chaos permeated his order.

Rehr primarily worried about the Nazi SA, as they appeared the common denominator of most brawls and the common antagonist of the other paramilitaries. But it remained unclear whom Rehr relied upon as loyal enforcers of the Austrian state: the Heimwehren, the OSS, or the official Salzburg State Police? Probably the latter, given Rehr’s position as governor.¹³⁷ Regardless of the directive’s audience, the report made clear that the start of the 1930s saw conflicts involving a maelstrom of illegal and state-sanctioned paramilitaries. The rise of concurrent fascist regimes in German-speaking Europe, whose national and ideological stars aligned, stood star-crossed. Border violence seemed possible at any given moment. The “most unnatural conflict” and the “queerest” war would only intensify

¹³⁶ Rehr, *Der Strassenkampf*, LaS, Rehr Akten RehrLP 1922-1938, RehrLP – 0000/0006, Day 1 File 1 Page 6.

¹³⁷ Rehr, *Der Strassenkampf*, LaS, Rehr Akten RehrLP 1922-1938, RehrLP – 0000/0006, Day 1 File 1 Page 6.

in the coming years, specifically because southeastern regionalists continued to tether their autonomy to their national German impulses.¹³⁸

Concluding Reflections

The history of the Austro-Bavarian borderland from 1928 to the start of 1934 saw the Heimwehren enter the parliamentary arena. Their two-pronged assault by parliamentary and paramilitary fronts manifested as a drawn-out, internecine process, as fascist paramilitary members contemplated, argued, and campaigned. They campaigned in two senses of the word: swaying voters to elect them and launching paramilitarized Putschen. Their electoral campaigns in Austria yielded a paltry eight seats, but enough to help solidify Dollfuss's transition from the First Republic's Chancellor to the fascistizing state's first Führer. Inversely, the CSP—the First Republic's conservative party—realized that the fascist Heimwehren acted both radically and erratically. The Heimwehren proclivity for Putschen—one of which certain members planned in Bavaria—further wedged apart these two right-leaning factions. The CSP entered the paramilitary arena with a militia of its own: the OSS. Originally conservative, this militia tried to cultivate a mass, youth-oriented movement that indicated a further right-wing shift for the CSP. This paramilitary pluralization and conflation with political parties heightened the perpetual uncertainty. Drastic revision to the *Gestalt* (form) of the Austrian state seemed just around the corner, but the exact nature and timing of such changes remained both unknowable and incendiary. To that effect, in February 1934, the *Manchester Guardian*

¹³⁸ "Zwei Lesearten," *Salzburger Chronik*, 10. August 1933, Nr. 183, Seite 1, ANNO. Gunther, "Future of Austria," 311.

reported a statement from Starhemberg and Steidle, in which they purportedly proclaimed “‘something important’ may happen to-day.” The article continued with the Heimwehren leaders’ supposition that “If the Heimwehr demands were not fulfilled to-morrow they might see important decisions.” These intimations spoke to the inevitability and uncertainty permeating throughout the intra-national borderland.¹³⁹

As Nazi control over the German government waxed, Bavaria’s federalist privileges waned—with the Gleichschaltung, the Nazi Gaue eclipsed the traditional Bavarian governing structures. For all intents and purposes, Bavaria’s longstanding regional autonomy fell. Right-wing Austrian patriots closed ranks around the charismatic Dollfuss against Nazi Germany. Austrian Nazis, buoyed by their comrades north of the Bavarian border, closed ranks against the Austrian state. Austrian loyalists relied more heavily on policies that solidified the physical and mental borders between these two German countries, while Austrian Nazis relied more heavily on practices that undermined that same border. Commensurate solidification and dissolution of the Austro-Bavarian border delineated this space as an intra-national borderland. All the while, Austrofascists tried to have their Sachertorte and eat it too: maintain Austrian autonomy while connecting with fellow Germans across the border. These overlapping vectors eventually proved unsustainable, but the Austrofascists fought to align them for the next five years.

¹³⁹ “*News from Abroad*, Heimwehr Challenge to Dr. Dollfuss, Difficult Situation in the Tyrol, Province in which German and Italian Influences Clash (From our own Correspondent.), Heimwehr Threat, ‘Something Important’ May Happen To-day,” *Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1934, printed 5. February 1934, BaBL, R/4902/, 9613, 51, M207, 45, (fol. 1–, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 110.

By 1933, Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss set Austria on an increasingly fascist trajectory. He did so to secure domestic control over the country and to steel the country against foreign pressure: namely, Nazi German calls for unification. This chapter analyzes a critical change over time in these years: Dollfuss transmogrified his Christlichsoziale Partei (Christian Social Party, CSP) into the Vaterländische Front (Patriotic/Fatherland Front, VF).¹ The VF formed a supra-party organization meant to mobilize the country and carry out the will of the authoritarian chancellor. To the VF, serving Austrian meant believing in national German loyalty, while preserving the autonomy of Austria as the bastion of southeastern Germandom.² The VF and its members welded together regional and the national affections, minting them into two sides of the same Austrofascist coin. Yet these two sides compounded and contradicted each other.

Such was the nature of the Austro-Bavarian borderland: unwieldy spaces around a disputed border, spaces laced with rivalry, discord, conflict, and violence specifically because of the shared German nationality. Right-wing paramilitarists projected their fantasies and fears of border revision onto their fellow German compatriots. These fantasies ranged from aggrandizement and vindication, while the fears centered around rivals on both sides of the

¹ Not to be confused with the Vaterländischer Schutzbund (VS), the 1923 paramilitary organization the Austrian Nazis cobbled together, only to be abandoned in favor of the more infamous Sturmabteilung (SA) and Schutzstaffel (SS). See Ivan T. Berend, “A fascistoid Austrian demagogue: Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg,” Chapter 4 in *A Century of Populist Demagogues: Eighteen European Portraits, 1918–2018* (Central European University Press, 2020), 97, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7829/j.ctv16f6cn2.8>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

² Julie Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933–38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 1–15, 36–38, 232–236.

border. Fault lines shattered alliances over questions of the “right” regional “stock,” the “right” kinds of regional interests, and the “right” way to live and feel as fascists. These men, insecure of their conditions yet adamant of their convictions, also interwove their border fantasies and fears, blurring the line between dream and nightmare. The erratic result worked in their favor, even if in spite of themselves, leading to a borderland pregnant with paradoxes. These men curated panicked public places, accustomed inhabitants to alarm, and effaced the boundary between absurdity and acceptability, between parlance and violence. They standardized mayhem as a rule of the political game—often *the* rule of the game—warping confusion into a guiding constant. Some, particularly the Nazis, reviled the border as arbitrary (even abusive) and claimed as their national German right the prerogative to traverse it at will. Others, notably the Ostmärkische Sturmsharen (Storm Troopers of the Eastern March, OSS), the Heimwehren, and loyal VF members revered the border as historic (even sacred) and claimed as their Catholic calling the duty to preserve it at all costs. From the official formalization of the Austrofascist regime in spring 1934 until the start of 1936, far-right activists plunged this disputed space into more chaos as they strove to impose their varied versions of order. A complicating factor also bubbled into right-wing brouhaha during this time. It boiled down to the question of who would succeed Dollfuss as Austrofascist Führer after the Nazis assassinated him in the summer of 1934. This uncertainty unleashed perpetual anxiety over who had control, infusing the leadership troubles discussed in the previous chapter with even more intensity.

This chapter also situates this leadership competition within the fascist triangle of Austria, Germany, and Italy. The two men vying for Austrofascist leadership wedged

themselves between Nazi Germany's Führer and Fascist Italy's Duce. The intra-national borderland thus encompassed an additional prism of contradictions: Austria constituted a fascist borderland. Fascists from Germany to Italy formed an extensive, transnational network and operated simultaneously as friends and enemies. As Nazis smuggled arms from Bavaria into Austria to destabilize it, Austrofascists accepted Italian armaments and funds to resist such Nazi incursions. Interwar Austria found itself in a proxy conflict, pulled back and forth between the black-shirted Mussolini strain of fascism to the south and the brown-shirted Hitler variant to the north.³ Fascist ideological alignment only went so far when met confronted with the reality of conflicting territorial ambitions.⁴

³ In 2013, Helmut Wahnout labeled such connections between Fascist Italy and the Ständestaat as a "*Forschungsdesiderat*," before rightly concluding that the Heimwehren "zenith" was short-lived and that their "position of power, however, depended pretty much exclusively on Italian backing." His study covers 1932-1934, while I venture more to into 1934 to 1936. Helmut Wahnout, "Bundeskanzler Dollfuß und die österreichisch-italienischen Beziehungen 1932-1934," Kapitel 23 in *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938: Vermessung eines Forschungsfeldes*, (Hg.) Florian Wenninger und Lucile Dreidemy (Wien: Böhlau Verlag Ges. m. b. H & Co. KG, 2013), 601 (for direct quotation), 602-624, 625 (for direct quotation), 626-627.

⁴ The bulk of the historiography tends to center on diplomatic history. See Gerhard L. Weinberg's assessment that "Hitler had failed to grasp Mussolini's standpoint ... he either could not or would not understand that the Duce did not share his perception of the German and Italian quests for *Lebensraum*, that is, territorial aggrandizement, as being complementary – notably in the context of southeastern Europe." To build on such foundations of diplomatic, foreign-policy focused history, I offer here a more cultural reading focused on paramilitary organizations to present the complementary and countervailing aspects of interwar fascism. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 98. For the daily diplomatic push and pull amongst Hitler, Mussolini, and Austrofascists (and Hungarian leaders), see Alexander N. Lassner, "Peace at Hitler's Price: Austria, the Great Powers, and the 'Anschluß,' 1932-1938" (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2001), 423-510. For the "transnational" nature of Heimwehren, Bavarian organizations, Hungarian, and fascist Italian influences in the interwar years, see the fantastic dissertation by Jason Christopher Engle, "A Legion of Legacy: Tyrolean Militarism, Catholicism, and the Heimwehr Movement" (PhD diss., The University of Southern Mississippi, 2017), 93 (for direct quotation), 94-152, 272-333.

I argue that as an intra-national and intra-fascist borderland, Austrians navigated a confounding space between two fascist funhouse mirrors. Opposing fascist funhouse mirrors to the north and south of the Tyrolean border compounded and distorted the Austrian senses of self, exaggerating the interplay between German nationalism and regionalism. It also added affective weight to the Austrian Alpine and Catholic senses of self. All the while, this fascist infighting over territory remained inherent to the logic of fascists, who glorified conflict to achieve territorial expansion. If the Austrian “problem” formed a serious crack in interwar fascist relations, it simultaneously reinforced their ideological coherence.⁵ Such cracked, shattered glass littered the floor in this fascist funhouse, leaving Austrofascists no choice but to tip toe around them. All the while, each shard reflected and emphasized different aspects of their dissociative claims toward creating a coherent, united front.

The Austrofascist Regime & The Vaterländische Front

With the help of the Heimatblock (Home Bloc) political party, CSP leader Dollfuss secured the Chancellorship in 1932 and engaged in a quasi-war with the neighboring Nazi dictatorship. Already by 1933, he closed the Nationalrat on a procedural technicality. Pushback by the Sozialdemokratische Partei (Social Democratic Party, SDP) and its paramilitary group, the Republikanischer Schutzbund (Republican Defense League, RS), culminated in the infamous Austrian Civil War of February 1934. The Dollfuss regime violently suppressed the

⁵ As George L. Mosse rightly pointed out, fascists remained dependent on the presence of opponents. See George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1999), 43.

socialists and took this chaos as a chance to ban outright their political party and paramilitary unit. Dollfuss thus further moved the government toward the authoritarian regime the Heimwehren had so desperately wanted. His declaration of a new constitution in May 1934 gave him even more executive power, and the country's name changed from the First Austrian Republic to the Ständestaat (Corporatist State). This regime constituted the governmental embodiment of Austrofascism—the Austrian strain of interwar fascist, corporatist, politically-mobilizing ideologies now charged with Catholic fervor and fealty.

Through the crust of left-right Austrian conflict frothed forth worsening fascist infighting, particularly among the Heimwehren and the Austrian Nazis operating out of Bavaria as the Österreichische Legion (Austrian Legion, ÖL). The same month as the February Civil War in Austria, ÖL posturing on the Bavarian border led Dollfuss to place both the official state forces and the Heimwehren on high alert.⁶ The CSP also had a new formation of its own to muster on the streets. Along his fascistizing march toward the Ständestaat, Dollfuss doubled down on CSP mobilization by creating the new VF. This organization formed the ultimate umbrella organization of the Austrofascist regime, intended as broad movement to transcend political parties while serving as a reliable militia.⁷ The VF came to embody the fascist tenets of right-wing revolution, proclaiming to be the “the regenerative movement of

⁶ “Nazis Gathering On Austrian Line: Dollfuss Concentrates Army, Police and Heimwehr as Defense.” *The Atlanta Constitution* (1881-1945), 24 February 1934, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Atlanta Constitution, 1, <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.bc.edu/hnpatlantaconstitution2/docview/502040431/803EC3598B114534PQ/22?accountid=9673>, Accessed 20 February 2021.

⁷ A British observer described the VF thusly: “This [VF] was not to be a party. It was to be an organization, a movement rather, above parties, which parties might join. Its program – bold indeed for Austria – was unification of the country on a patriotic basis.” John Gunther, “Dollfuss and the Future of Austria,” *Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 2 (Council on Foreign Relations, January 1934): 311, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20030587>, Accessed 18 January 2017 (26 August 2020).

Austria,” the “regeneration of Austria in every respect,” and “stemming from the will of its founder and Führer, the chancellor and creator of the new Austria Dr. Engelbert Dollfuß...”⁸ To be sure, the CSP already had an extant paramilitary group—its OSS. The new VF only added to the web of right-wing pluralization.

As the name attests, the VF embodied German nationalism channeled toward southeastern regional patriotism. It sought to imbue its members with German nationalism, but with the explicit purpose of maintaining Austria’s borders, the autonomous sovereignty of the Austrofascist regime, and cultural supremacy of Austrian Germans: “The Vaterländische Front wants... an independent, German state under authoritarian leadership... a) for uncompromising, true Christianity, b) for the true, cultivated Deutschtum, c) for the autonomy of the German Ostmark...” They directed this nationally-charged regionalism both for and against their co-nationalist Germans to the north:

The Vaterländische Front is national, because it is conscious of the program of the German Ostmark, which is old and simultaneously in these days, eternally young: to be the intermediary in Danubian space between the Germans, Slavs, and Romanians. The Vaterländische Front is not national socialist, because it rejects Völker materialism as well as class-based and racial materialism.⁹

The VF dropped the material benefits for the Volk that National Socialists so prided but adamantly kept the nationalism. As such, it embraced the “struggle for the true

⁸ Anonymous, “Entwurf für »Leitsätze der Vaterländische Front«,” end of 1935 (2438/21f), cited in *Österreich! und Front Heil! Aus den Akten des Generalsekretariats der Vaterländischen Front Innenansichten eines Regimes*, Hg. Robert Kriechbaumer (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag Ges. m. b. H. un Co. KG, 2005), 57.

⁹ “Leitsätze der Vaterländische Front,” *Österreich! und Front Heil!*, 58.

Volksgemeinschaft.”¹⁰ The VF’s desire to have both its greater German fantasies and its Austrian regional privileges came to the fore in the VF’s declaration: “It is absolutely compatible with the principles of the Vaterl. Front, that its members advocate for the ideal of a greater Reich of Germans, in which Austria is true to its old purpose as the Ostmark, from which stems its thousand-year history and which maintains a corresponding special influence.”¹¹

Thus, the VF explicitly turned a highly politicized manipulation of history to define their sense of regional pride. A VF leaflet from January 1934 entitled “Austrians, learn your history!” engaged in Geschichtspolitik, glorifying Austria’s past as “the bulwark of Germandom against Turks and the French” and as “the last bulwark of the German Geist.” The VF coupled their glorification of Austria with an all-out attack on the northern German region of Prussia. The brochure labeled Prussianism as “the spirit of Potsdam” responsible for “expelling Austrian Germans from the Reich” and “whose proudest war memory constitutes only a chain of assaults on the brother tribes [Bruderstämme] of Germany,” a reference to the 1866 Battle of Königgrätz that effectively guaranteed a *kleindeutsch* (small German) national unification, by and for Prussia without Austria. The VF’s retorted with retaliatory exclusion—the VF wrote Prussia out of German culture and history. Instead, they presented Austria as the progenitors and harbingers of all things German: “Austria was a great German land, when the Prussians

¹⁰ Anonymous, “Handschriftlicher Entwurf für »Leitsätze der Vaterländischen Front«,” 1935–1936, (2438/24ff.), *Österreich! und Front Heil!*, 58.

¹¹ Cited by Dekanat der philosophischen Fakultät der Universität Wien Frank ? e.h. dzt. Dekan., *Abschrift, Sehr geehrter Herr Kollege*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K1 574 1936 B Ad.R, 1069/36, Day 6 Photo 166.

still spoke not a word of German and sacrificed horse blood to the pagan gods!” As the VF presented it, Nazism evolved from such barbaric Prussianism: “However, we reject the call from Potsdam, which is a slap in the Austrian face, which in spite of all of its national coating is un-German [undeutsch]. National Socialism is the barbaric regeneration of Potsdam!”¹² To VF propagandists, Nazism just constituted the latest example of age-old Prussian scheming against Austria.

As with nationalism, regionalism demanded foils—negatives upon which all non-desirable traits and anxieties of the self could be cast.¹³ Fascists heightened this tendency by depending on antagonists for the definition and consolidation of the self, even claiming the Prussian regional variant of German did not count as German.¹⁴ All the while, the VF still perpetuated the assumption that the regional groups involved were “Bruderstämme” and professed adamantly that “we believe in the Gemeinschaft of all Germans!”¹⁵ Espousing both German nationalism and Austrian regional glory did not just serve as lip service or window

¹² Vaterländische Front, “Österreicher, lernt eure Geschichte! ... Österreicher, lernt eure Geschichte! Glaubte an euch und seid stolz Österreichischer zu sein!,” Herausgeber und Verleger: Dr. Otto Kemptner, für den Inhalt verantwortlich: Dr. Ferdinand Krawiec, January 1934, W23, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BaBL), Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 2070, Standort: 51, Magazin: M106, Reihe: 50, Day 5 Photo 81.

¹³ Benedict Richard O’Gorman Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 1–7, <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy.bc.edu/2027/heb.01609>, Accessed 12 February 2021. Michael E. Nolan, *The Inverted Mirror: Mythologizing the Enemy in France and Germany, 1898–1914* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004), 2.

¹⁴ For that fascist dependence, see Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, 43. Vaterländische Front, “Österreicher, lernt eure Geschichte!,” January 1934, W23, BaBL, NS/26/, 2070, 51, M106, 50, Day 5 Photo 81.

¹⁵ Vaterländische Front, “Österreicher, lernt eure Geschichte!,” January 1934, W23, BaBL, NS/26/, 2070, 51, M106, 50, Day 5 Photo 81.

dressing. Austrian fascists embraced the affective power of greater German beliefs if Austria benefited from this greater Germany.¹⁶

In true fascist form, the VF leaders did not compromise on their terms for Anschluss. Austrofascists saw any Nazi intervention as less of an Anschluss and more of a *Gleichschaltung* (forced coordination/synchronization). A Nazi annexation of Austria meant subordination or dismemberment. Some feared that Austria would suffer a worse fate than the Gleichschaltung that befell the “Free” State of Bavaria following the 1933 Nazi assumption of power:

Austria, moreover, will not be simply Gleichgeschaltet like Saxony or Bavaria; Austria is a disorderly and rebellious province to be sacked and punished. An Austrian Legion has been formed in Germany, presumably to take part in this adventure. And it is said that all manner of Bavarian and Silesian roughnecks, whom the Germans themselves will be glad to get rid of, have been promised a free hand in the streets of Vienna, when – and if – Dollfuss fails.¹⁷

In this context, Austrian loyalists identified Nazis in Austria and in Germany as the primary opponents of their regime, and accordingly stereotyped Nazis as a rabble of low-class, rural Bavarians and Silesians. A Nazi triumph meant occupation by the worst Germany had to offer, and as such, they positioned themselves as antithetical to the Nazi version of a Greater German Reich. In such conceptualization, Bavarians received particular vilification, further

¹⁶ Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 1-15, 36-38, 232-236.

¹⁷ Regarding the fact that in Austria there were “proportionally ... many more Jews in Austria than in Germany,” Gunther also added that “if the Nazis do somehow succeed in taking Austria, then there will be a butchery.” Gunther, “Dollfuss and the Future of Austria,” 316-317. Austrians were under no delusions: Nazism meant Gleichschaltung. See a *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger* report on the Nazi Austrian Legion in Bavaria that was “to force Austria’s Gleichschaltung.” “Die Intelligenzclique,” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger: Mit der Abendausgabe: „JZ-Innsbrucker Zeitung“ und der illustrierten Wochen-Beilage: „Weltguck“*, 13 August 1934, Nummer 184, 27. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO – AustriaN Newspapers Online, *Historische österreichische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19340813&query=“Österr eichische+Legion”+“Dachau”&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

demonstrating how quickly Austro-Bavarian regional solidarity gave way to Austro-Bavarian rivalry in the intra-national borderland.¹⁸ With Bavarians now beyond the Nazi pale, Austrofascists increasingly placed their faith in the VF to forge the proper alloy of regionalism and nationalism. The *Salzburger Chronik* lathered praise on Dollfuss during a visit, lauding him for regenerating Austria through his fascist Ständestaat. The article sought to square the circle of Austrian regionalism and German nationalism. It stressed repeatedly that Salzburg—the “Alpenland”—served as a “German borderland.” But simultaneously, Austria served as Europe’s core, one that commanded the “fate of the Abendland [Occident].” To Austrofascist supporters, Salzburg’s borderland status of Germandom went hand-in-glove with regional exceptionalism such that it constituted the very core of western civilization. The Führer “allowed for Austria to rise again as the bulwark of that gesamtdeutsch and western mission, not only for Austrians but also for the entire German Volk.”¹⁹

The Heimwehren paramilitary agents worked contemporaneously with the VF, if not always harmoniously. In the spring of 1934, The Heimwehren propaganda office published the “official history” of its movement, which underscored that the Heimwehren who righteously welded southeastern regional identity to greater German glory. It waxed poetic about their staunch Austrian-ness and its fascist regeneration of the old: “age-old traditions of the Austrian Alpenvolk,” describing their uniform of “the grey jacket, the green hat and the

¹⁸ Gunther, “Dollfuss and the Future of Austria,” 317.

¹⁹ “Salzburg begrüßt den Führer Österreichs,” *Salzburger Chronik: mit der illustrierten Beilage „Oesterreichische Woche“*, 9 May 1934, Nummer 106, 70. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19340509&query=Grenzland&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

black grouse feather, which was always the clothing of the Älplers.”²⁰ It also boasted that they formed the voice of German national ambitions in and for Austria:

The Heimatschutz made Austria German again, German, like it was, since the first Babenbergs lorded as the standard bearers of the Holy Reich of the German nation in the land of the Danube. It [Österreich] owes to its [the Heimatschutz] struggle that this oldest, most prized, toughest part of the German Volkstum was saved from foreign domination. It [the Heimatschutz] led Austria back to itself again.²¹

In their Geschichtspolitik, Austria took center stage as a borderland. According to the Heimwehren propagandists, Austria’s status as a borderland—a crucible of some trans-historical, regenerative national-racial struggle—had forged the most tested and resilient *Blut* (blood) of all Germans, thus proving this borderland as the most Germanic of *Böden* (soil or territory). To these propagandists-turned-historians, Austrians would do well to remember the instrumental role of the Heimwehren in re-cultivating and reasserting Austria’s inherent German-ness.

But other groups also sought—and fought—to make Austria German again. Nazis had the same broad objective, but they held vastly different ideas regarding the specifics. To the Heimwehren, making Austria German again meant inculcating a sense of German ethno-nationalism to secure Austrian autonomy or a leading role in Germanic space, however

²⁰ Die Propagandastelle der Bundesführung des österreichischen Heimatschutzes, *Heimatschutz in Österreich*, Herausgegeben unter Aufsicht des österreichischen Heimatschutzes Amt des Bundesführers – Propagandastelle (Wien: Verlag Zoller, 1934), 321, 331. Interestingly, even the format of the “history” reinforced the regional paradox: the chapters are broken up by province or Land within Austria. In an effort to inculcate Austrian regional sense of Germanness, they relied on even more parochial senses of regionalism. Drawing on natalist, endogenous “authenticity” made sense to a point: it was key to the right-wing sense of self but also explicitly reinforced and threatened to exacerbate regional cleavages within the Heimwehren.

²¹ Die Propagandastelle, *Heimatschutz in Österreich*, 321–322.

defined. To the Nazis, however, making Austria German again meant terminating Austrian autonomy to unify with the Nazi state. The feuds among these organizations made life in Austria one of perpetual uncertainty; brawls, violence, intimidations, mobilizations, strikes, riots, protests, counter-protests, coup attempts, and counter-coup movements permeated Austrian streets, villages, towns, and cities. The *Salzburger Chronik* reported on Swiss border agents who patrolled the Bodensee, the lacustrine convergence of the Bavarian, Swiss, and Austrian borders. These agents apprehended a ship with three men from the ÖL, the Bavarian-trained Austrian Nazis.²² Their vessel contained thirty German-manufactured bombs meant for terrorist acts in Austria.²³ Starhemberg described Nazi agitation at this time as an extension of their “terrorist campaign. Every day bombing outrages were attempted, every day explosives or arms, smuggled across the German frontier, were confiscated.”²⁴ Ironically, the very tactic Starhemberg had pioneered in the Heimwehren’s tumultuous birth—illegally smuggling munitions across the border—now presented an existential threat to this same Heimwehren leader.²⁵

Armaments smuggling and street-fighting among right-wing groups made for baffling alliances. English-language news reported on cooperation in Austria between

²² Though two of the three agents were German citizens.

²³ “Bombentransport am Bodensee,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 24 July 1934, Nummer 167, 70. Jahrgang, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19340724&query=“Österreichischer”+“Legion”+“Bayern”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

²⁴ Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 133.

²⁵ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 133.

Munich-based Nazis and the now-illegal socialist paramilitary agents.²⁶ By arming the underground socialists, the Nazis in Bavaria prioritized pragmatism over ideological coherence, all to destabilize their Austrofascist rivals.²⁷ The *Salzburger Chronik* decried this Nazi-Socialist cooperation as a “Red-Brown Terrorfront,” an unholy alliance hell-bent on destroying Austrian autonomy. The Nazis not only made the Austro-Bavarian border increasingly porous; so too “the border between these two groups [Nazis and Socialists] was already blurred and their adherents have founded a united front of terror and transgressions.”²⁸ Furthermore, imagined ideals of southeastern regionalism loomed ever-present, both as a potential wrench in grandiose dreams and as a necessary instrument for fascist movements. Intra-movement competition motivated fascist participants to act with more and more heartfelt conviction. All the while, the chaos from intra-fascist, intra-national feuds showed that the Austrofascist regime also failed to maintain law and order, pushing more and more Austrians toward the instigators of such chaos: the Nazis.

²⁶ “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 11, no. 3 (2 August 1934): 12 (84), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639314>, Accessed 15 March 2021.

²⁷ Just the Nazi organizations alone were rife with internal discord, intrigue, and violence. Squabbles between German and Austrian Nazis emerged after the 1938 annexation, specifically over the question of jurisdictional control. Organizational power moves was the language of everyday Nazi administrators and activists. See Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler's Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 66-67. Giles MacDonogh addressed this rivalry between German Nazis and Austrian Nazis rather succinctly: “Hitler ... preferred to have Germans from the Altreich (as it was now called) occupy almost all the important positions ... The cold-shouldering of home-grown Nazis led to considerable resentment in Austria, where the Nazis from the Altreich were quickly transmogrified into ‘Prussians’, the traditional enemies, although most were no such thing.” Giles MacDonogh, *1938: Hitler's Gamble* (London: Constable & Robinson Ltd, 2009), 67, 68 (for direct quotation).

²⁸ “Staatsekretär Karwinsky über die Terrorakte: Rot-braune Terrorfront,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 24 July 1934, Nr. 167, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19340724&q=„Österreichischer“+„Legion“+„Bayern“&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

The Death of Dollfuss & The Austrofascist Führerfrage

By 1934, the civil quasi-war intensified, and the men in Bavaria tasked with enforcing border security also undermined it most actively. Nazi German officials reassured Austrian diplomatic representatives they would forcibly move ÖL away from the Austro-Bavarian border “to various camps in central and northern Bavaria” in an effort to ameliorate the tension.²⁹ In reality, the Nazi state doubled down on the ÖL as a borderland paramilitary force. A document from Nazi Foreign Minister Neurath revealed the Nazis dispersed these six thousand men to camps along “the Bavarian-Austrian frontier.” No longer just training and arming these exiled Austrian Nazis, the Nazi state also employed them as a “special border service” meant “to maintain peace and order in the frontier region, conduct counterespionage, control border crossings from Austrian federal territory to the territory of the German Reich, and finally to prevent the unauthorized return of Austrian refugees to Austria.” Issued guns and official uniforms of the Nazi Sturmabteilung (SA) and Schutzstaffel (SS), these thirteen units patrolled the Austro-Bavarian border.³⁰

²⁹ Köpke, “Memorandum by the Director of Department II: Berlin, April 10, 1934. II Oe. 964.” No. 394, 8668/E606731, Germany Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Series C (1933-1937): The Third Reich: First Phase: Volume II: October 14, 1933-June 13, 1934*, Department of State Publication 6750 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), 737 (813 of database), Original from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Digitized by Google, Available on HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233&view=2up&seq=813&q1=Austrian%20Legion>, Accessed 9 February 2021.

³⁰ Neurath, “The Foreign Minister to the Reich Ministry of the Interior: Most Urgent Confidential: Berlin, May 24, 1934, e. o. II Oe. 1279.,” No. 462, 8668/E606743-47, Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945: C: II*, 840 (916 on database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233&view=2up&seq=917&q1=Heimwehr>, Accessed 9 February 2021. The Nazi report dated 10 April 1934 likewise said “Austrian Legionnaires had been used for a considerable time as patrols and for frontier control.” Köpke, “Memorandum by the Director of

On the opposite side of the same border, the Heimwehren robustly guarded their frontlines. Presenting Germany as the victim, Neurath reported “irresponsible firing by these Heimwehr people—even across the border—and ... more and more bomb-throwing across to Bavarian territory.” To him, “the Bavarian border population has with reason become nervous and anxious” because of the Heimwehren violence, indicating the collective emotional uncertainty. The Nazi official expounded explicitly on this paradoxical combination of inevitability and uncertainty that transcended the border: “conditions on the German–Austrian frontier have in the past weeks taken such a critical turn that serious developments must be expected at any time.”³¹ The perception that something would soon happen paralyzed the inhabitants of this region. What exactly was anyone’s guess. But something.

Department II,” Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: C: II*, 737 (813 of database).

³¹ Neurath, “The Foreign Minister to the Reich Ministry of the Interior,” No. 462, Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: C: II*, 839 (915 on database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233&view=2up&seq=915&q1=Heimwehr>, Accessed 15 February 2021.

A Nazi military report claimed Lieutenant General Muff, the Nazi German military attaché to Vienna, believed that “The Austrian Legion in Bavaria would presumably be used as a militia of the party only *after* the political change in Austria [to a Nazi regime] had taken place.” Italics in original. See v. Pappenheim, “Note by an Officer of the Attaché Group of the Reichswehr Ministry T3/Att. Gr. Ia Berlin, May 24, 1934. Record of the Conversation of May 23, 1934 Between the Chief of the Army Command [Gen. Werner von Fritsch] and Lieutenant General Muff, Military Attaché in Vienna,” No. 459, 9937/E695613–16, Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: C: II*, 836 (912 on database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233&view=2up&seq=912&q1=Austrian%20Legion>, Accessed 9 February 2021.

A report in June by a Nazi official named Hüffer claimed SA Oberführer Langer believed “the entire situation at the German–Austrian frontier was intolerable” because of the volatility of the Austrian Nazis there. According to this source, Langer “has already given orders that the border patrol service under his command should in future no longer serve in the uniform of the Austrian SA and with arms, but in civilian dress with no arms in evidence.” But the Austrian Legion would remain a force on the border. Hüffer, “Memorandum by an Official of Department II, Berlin, June 8, 1934. e. o. II Oe. 1420, No. 492, S976/EG29754–56, Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945: C: II*, 887 (963 in database), 888 (964 in database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233>

Within this malaise of some impending yet indiscernible *Aktion* (maneuver), the fascist fighting across the Austro-Bavarian border reached the level of international crisis. On 25 July 1934, Austrian Nazis launched a Putsch and assassinated Austrofascist Chancellor Dollfuss. While the Nazi coup d'état collapsed, the Austrian Nazis succeeded in sowing uncertainty and chaos, contributing to the destabilization of their fascist rivals. Dollfuss now lay dead, which meant certain change, but what change remained unknowable. The fusion of these emotions kept the political atmosphere of the Austro-Bavarian region so charged and so prone to such flashes of borderlands violence. Following Dollfuss's death, a commemorative leaflet fused the *völkisch* and regionalist impulses of the Austrofascist message by proclaiming: "Forwards, Austrian men and women! For the free, German Austria of our heroic Chancellor [Dollfuss]!"³² In the Austro-Bavarian borderland, the "agreed-upon" German nationality sparked rivalries and violence.

During the Nazi Putsch, the ÖL had coordinated to invade Austria and support the internal takeover from without. Austrian Legionnaires in Bavaria boarded trucks and rode to the Austrian border. The *Neues Wiener Journal* reported on the mobile units of Bavarian-trained, Austrian Nazis hoping to initiate "a general revolution."³³ As Nazi Legionnaires boarded trucks and rode to the Bavarian border, southern Bavarian inhabitants reported this

&view=2up&seq=962&q1=Austrian%20Legion, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233&view=2up&seq=964&q1=Austrian%20Legion>, Accessed 9 February 2021.

³² Italics added for emphasis. Dr. Ferdinand Krawiec, printed by Paul Gerin, *Österreicher und Österreicherinnen!*, (Wien: Vaterländische Front), BaBL, NS 26/2070, (fol. 1-), Day 5 Photo 64.

³³ "A.E. Frauenfeld – der geistige Urheber des Kanzlermordes. Der Ueberfall auf das Bundeskanzleramt schon vor einem Jahr geplant. Von einem früheren österreichischen Naziführer. „Lavoro Fascista“ über Deutschlands Mitschuld am Kanzlermord," *Neues Wiener Journal*, 28 July 1934, Nummer 14.613, 42. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nwj&datum=19340728&query=„Österreichische+Legion“&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

mobilization to Nazi German officials. Though Hitler's agents had actively planned components of the Putsch, his regime strove to save face diplomatically by distancing itself from the failed Putsch participants.³⁴ The official Nazi government in Bavaria closely monitored the Munich base of operations for Austrian Nazis, and it eventually closed "all roads leading to Austria." Furthermore, "five hundred S.S. men were moved to the frontier to prevent the legionaries in the Freilassing camp [a Bavarian town on the Austrian border] from marching over to Salzburg."³⁵ Like the Heimwehren before them, the Austrian and German Nazis split themselves on this Putsch.

About ninety kilometers further west, more border mayhem ensued near the Austrian town of Kufstein. On the Bavarian side, the official German Reichswehr intercepted an ÖL convoy and forced them to surrender their arms, but elsewhere the Nazi officials arrived too late.³⁶ Forty Austrian Nazis actually crossed the border in a frantic attempt to prop up the Putsch, but Austrian soldiers awaited and repelled them.³⁷ Meanwhile the *Tiroler Anzeiger* acquired and printed a Bavarian report clarifying what the Austrian Nazis there had planned: "five hundred Legionnaires should stand by prepared for the invasion."³⁸ The *Salzburger Chronik* likewise reported that the ÖL planned "to break the resistance of the [Austrian] troops and Heimatschutz who remained loyal [to Austria]." In true southeastern regionalist fashion,

³⁴ For a statement of consensus that Nazi Germany had been involved in the planning, see Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World*, 96-97.

³⁵ "Chronology," *Bulletin of International News* 11, no. 3 (2 August 1934): 24 (96).

³⁶ "Chronology," *Bulletin of International News* 11, no. 3 (2 August 1934): 25 (97).

³⁷ "Chronology," *Bulletin of International News* 11, no. 3 (2 August 1934): 15 (87).

³⁸ "Wie die Oesterreichische Legion Kollerschlag erobern wollte: Eine Aktion großen Stils war geplant," *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, report on 30 July 1934, printed on 2 August 1984, Nummer 175., 27. Jahrgang, Seite 6, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19340802&query=Österreichische+Legion&ref=anno-search&seite=6>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

this Salzburg paper presented the Austrian Nazis as corrupted by nefarious Prussian influences.³⁹ Three days after the Nazi attempt, the *Neue Leipziger Zeitung* reported a “shootout” between Heimwehren men and Austrian “refugees” in Kollerschlag on the Austro-Bavarian border. Presumably, such “refugees” consisted of Austrian Nazis seeking asylum in Bavaria following the Putsch. Austrian and German border officials alike arrived to restore order and make arrests, indicating the extent to which German Nazis disavowed their boisterous fellow southeastern Nazis.⁴⁰ This scuffling even caused German Nazis to close the Bavarian border with Austria on four occasions in the weeks following the assassination.⁴¹ While Austrian Nazis in Bavaria saw Austro-Bavarian border as a bastardized restraint to be traversed at will, German Nazis in Bavaria now saw it as damage control. All the while, Austrofascists in Austria saw it as a first line of defense against Nazi agitation.

To distance itself further from the Putsch, the German regime disavowed the Nazi agents responsible for Dollfuss’s 1934 assassination.⁴² Nazi Germany reversed its policy of opening Bavaria to Austrian Nazi asylum-seekers seeking to escape the Austrofascist regime. An English-language observer recorded: “Nazi refugees were being welcomed into Bavaria

³⁹ “All was planned with Prussian precision,” cited in “Aus Deutschland sorgsam vorbereitet,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 4 August 1934, Nummer 177, 70. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19340804&query=“Österreichische+Legion”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁴⁰ “Oesterreichische Flüchtlinge an der deutschen Grenze verhaftet,” *Neue Leipziger Zeitung*, 27 July 1934, Verantwortlich: Richard Lehmann, Leipziger Verlagsdruckerei, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 2069, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 50, (fol. 1-), Day 4 Photo 246.

⁴¹ “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 11, no. 4 (16 August 1934): 16 (132), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639319>, Accessed 2 August 2020.

⁴² Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 98.

prior to the *putsch*, whereas those who tried to cross the frontier” after the Putsch “were promptly arrested,” while “an armed Austrian legion ... fed, housed and drilled in Bavaria ... was subsequently forbidden its uniform and demobilised.”⁴³ Reporting from Passau on the Austro-Bavarian border, *Der Morgen* reported an intra-Nazi gunfight. Nazi squads supposedly exchanged gunfire when Bavarian SS agents demanded the ÖL surrender their guns, resulting in the deaths of some legionnaires. The Austrian Nazis—under command of a former Captain of the Austrian army—simply refused to give up their armaments to their fellow Bavarian Nazis.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, the death of the beloved Austrofascist Führer threw Austria into chaos. Supporters of the Austrofascist state invested their hopes for a viable Austria onto this fascist dictator, so his assassination one year after his assumption of power did not bode well. Thus, we might also read the ensuing martyrdom of Dollfuß, which the literature has already discussed, as an indication of Austrian emotional insecurity.⁴⁵ Compounding the sense of

⁴³ E. M., “The Independence of Austria,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 11, no. 4 (16 August 1934): 6 (122), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25639318>, Accessed 26 February 2020.

⁴⁴ “Kampf zwischen Nazi und bayrischer S.S.: Zwei österreichische Nazi erschoss en [sic].” *Der Morgen: Wiener Montagblatt*, 30 July 1934, Nummer 31, 25. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=dmo&datum=19340730&query=“Österreichischer”+“Legion”+“Bayern”&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁴⁵ The Austrian population coped with the loss of their beloved Führer by constructing an image of him as Austria’s martyr, who fought the good fight against the Nazi movement and sacrificed his life for the political prosperity of the Austrian fatherland. This lionization of Dollfuß proved that the cult of the *Führer* could be as strong, if not stronger, in death as it could be in life. See Robert Kriechbaumer et al (ed), “»Sein Mut und Seine Tatkraft haben den neuen Geist und das neue Blühen erweckt.« Der Dollfuß-Mythos” in *Österreich! und Front Heil! Aus den Akten des Generalsekretariats der Vaterländischen Front Innenansichten eines Regimes* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau Verlag Wien, 2005), 223–237. For visual renditions of the sense of martyrdom, see Robert Kriechbaumer, “Der vaterländische Führerkult: Dollfuß – der „Martyrerkanzler,“ in *Ein Vaterländisches Bilderbuch: Propaganda, Selbstinszenierung und Ästhetik der Vaterländischen Front 1933–1938* (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2002), 173–199. See Dreidemy, Lucile.

political instability, uncertainty abounded over Dollfuss's rightful successor as Austrofascist dictator. A Führerfrage (leadership question) broke out over this very question, and the leaders of the various paramilitary organizations jockeyed for position. Presumably, leadership went to Vice-Chancellor Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg—the Heimwehren Führer whose incendiary Putsch rhetoric had brewed such tumult for the First Austrian Republic. Ironically, his opportunity for Austrian leadership seemed to arrive not because of a Heimwehren Putsch, but because of a failed Putsch by his Nazi rivals.

But during the Putsch, he was not in the streets of Vienna fighting back. Instead, he galivanted in the streets of Venice, trying to secure foreign support for the Austrofascist regime and his Heimwehren.⁴⁶ Upon learning of Dollfuss's death, Starhemberg returned to Vienna, ostensibly to steady the country, more prosaically because he sensed his chance to attain the reins. He did acquire them, and the Heimwehren helped quell the Nazi insurrection.⁴⁷ But his tenure as Austrofascist Führer lasted just days. In his stead, Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg—less

⁴⁶ C. Earl Edmondson, *The Heimwehr and Austrian Politics, 1918-1936* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 240, 242. See also "Rückkehr des Vizekanzlers Fürst Starhemberg," *Oedenburger Zeitung: Unabhängiges politisches Tagblatt für alle Stände*, 27 July 1934, Folge 168, 67. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oed&datum=19340727&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁴⁷ "Starhemberg übernimmt die Leitung der Regierungsgeschäfte: Amtlich wird verlautbart:" *Der Wiener Tag*, 27 July 1934, Nummer 4000, XIII. Jahrgang, Seite 4, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19340727&seite=4&zoom=24&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 31 January 2021. "Die Heimwehr mobilisiert," *Oedenburger Zeitung*, 27 July 1934, Folge 168, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oed&datum=19340727&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 31 January 2021. See also Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 242-243.

volatile, more palatable, and beholden to the CSP/VF, not to the Heimwehren—secured the Chancellorship.⁴⁸

As Heimwehren Führer, Starhemberg had to reckon with a regional development that looked compromising at best and damning at worst. A significant number of the Heimatschutz of Styria, the provincial group at Walter Pfrimer's command during his 1931 Putsch, by now served as Nazis in Heimwehren clothing.⁴⁹ Historian Bruce Pauley's seminal work, *Hahnenschwanz und Hakenkreuz: Der Steirische Heimatschutz und der österreichische Nationalsozialismus, 1918–1934*, asserted that the Heimatschutz became “now a part of the Styrian SA” while the Austrian Nazis schemed to assassinate Dollfuss. On the Nazi question, the fascist Heimwehren fractured along regional lines and in ways that deepened regional rifts. Following the assassination, Nazi outlets in Germany tried to mitigate their position in this diplomatic disaster by deflecting blame for the Putsch onto the Styrian Heimatschutz, selling out their Austrian agents to save their own reputation.⁵⁰ With Starhemberg tying up loose loyalties in his organization—to the extent that it even belonged to him—Schuschnigg became

⁴⁸ “Bundeskanzler Dr. Schuschnigg,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 31 July 1934, Nummer 4003, XIII Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19340731&seite=2&zoom=24>, Accessed 31 January 2021. “Dr. Kurt Schuschnigg – Bundeskanzler! Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg bleibt Vizekanzler,” *Der Morgan*, 30 July 1934, Nummer 31, 25. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=dmo&datum=19340730&seite=1&zoom=33&query=%2B%22Legion%22&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 31 January 2021. While Starhemberg had been in Venice, Schuschnigg had been the interim leader on the ground in Vienna during the botched Putsch, “Minister Schuschnigg interimistischer Leiter der Regierung,” *Oedenburger Zeitung*, 27 July 1934, Folge 168, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oed&datum=19340727&query=%2B%22Starhemberg%22&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 31 January 2021. See also, “Starhemberg übernimmt,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 27 July 1934, Nr. 4000, Seite 4, ANNO.

⁴⁹ Bruce F. Pauley, *Hahnenschwanz und Hakenkreuz: Der Steirische Heimatschutz und der österreichische Nationalsozialismus, 1918–1934* (Wien: Europaverlag, 1972), 10.

⁵⁰ Pauley, *Hahnenschwanz und Hakenkreuz*, 188, 190.

Führer of the Austrofascist regime. He remained in this position until the 1938 annexation, with Starhemberg brooding over the question of when his time would come.

Though rebuffed from the Chancellorship, Starhemberg did not emerge from the Nazi Putsch bereft of influence. Schuschnigg knew Starhemberg had clout among paramilitary men and so appointed him to succeed Dollfuss as head of the VF. *Der Wiener Tag* reported “thus, the Bundesführer of the Heimatschutz will also be the oberster [supreme] Führer of the Vaterländische Front.”⁵¹ The Austrofascists thus temporarily resolved the question of Dollfuss’s successor by resorting to their longstanding strategy of pluralization. Austria’s new “Government Schuschnigg-Starhemberg” had two interlocking Führer, with Starhemberg as Führer of the VF and Schuschnigg as Chancellor and Führer of state.⁵² When it came to affairs of the VF, Starhemberg technically outranked Schuschnigg, even though Schuschnigg led the country as whole. The two Führer strove for an image of solidarity, which *Der Wiener Tag* described in terms so rosy that belied its superficiality: “there was no rivalry for power, but rather a friendly cooperation from the first hour onward” and “a proven friendship in good and bad days.”⁵³ But Starhemberg remained Führer of the pluralized Heimwehren, and

⁵¹ “Zusammenarbeit aller Österreicher! Mitteilungen des Bundeskommissärs Adam über das Programm der Regierung Dr. Schuschnigg, Starhemberg – Führer der Vaterländischen Front,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 31 July 1934, Nummer 4003, XIII Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19340731&seite=2&zoom=24>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁵² “Bundeskanzler Dr. Schuschnigg,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 31 July 1934, Nr. 4003, Seite 2, ANNO. An English source reported that here existed a “dualism of the Clerical-Fascist dictatorship in which the Prince [Starhemberg], in his capacity of leader of the Front—the State political party—was in a position superior to that of the Chancellor, its vice-leader.” “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 12, no. 23 (23 May 1936): 16 (880), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639534>, Accessed 25 August 2020. Edmondson likewise referred to this system as “dualism.” Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 243.

⁵³ “Zusammenarbeit aller Österreicher! Starhemberg – Führer der Vaterländischen Front,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 31 July 1934, Nr. 4003, Seite 2, ANNO.

Schuschnigg also had his own paramilitary unit. Progenitor of the OSS back in 1930, Starhemberg still wielded this paramilitary group for the CSP.⁵⁴ The resulting mélange of fascist and right-wing paramilitaries throughout Austria created overlapping levels of regional and organizational loyalties to two interlocked leaders.

All the while, ardent Austrian autonomists embraced their southeastern regional affinities and their German nationality as a way of combating Nazism. In October 1934, the *Freie Stimmen* reported Starhemberg boasting about his movement: “that a revolution with bloodless means could go its way, is a sign of the terrific culture, which the Austrian is self-evidently born with, a sign that the Austrian is a German in the truest meaning of the word.” According to his words, the Austrian regional expression of German-ness allowed for a smoother, more sophisticated fascist revolution. He also equated Nazism with “brown Bolshevism,” displaying “no difference” from the original “red” variety.⁵⁵ Within the constitutive contradiction of the intra-national borderland, the Catholic Austrian fascists saw themselves as the best that the broader German-speaking nation had to offer, which obligated them to resist encroachment from the godless Nazis.

But Starhemberg’s speech went further. Another news outlet, the *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, recorded more of it, in which Starhemberg ranted against American materialism. In this passage, he presented his enduring intersectionality of southeastern German regionalism

⁵⁴ Edmondson provided an accounting of the advantages/resources of each in the event of a showdown. Edmondson, *Heimwehr and Austrian Politics*, 243–244.

⁵⁵ “Programmatische Erklärungen Starhembergs. Gegen die alten christlichsozialen Parteipolitiker – Die Frage der Verständigung mit den Nationalen – Ablehnung der Nationalsozialisten,” *Freie Stimmen: Deutsche Kärntner Landeszeitung*, 27 October 1934, Folge 246., 54. Jahrgang, Seite 4, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=fst&datum=19341027&seite=4&zoom=33&query=“Starhemberg”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

and *großdeutsch* (greater German) desires: “the Oesterreichertum is the purest and noblest and also the most unadulterated blood form of Deutschtum. And thus we champion this österreichische Deutschtum out of German reasons and out of a großdeutsch attitude with zealotry ... because we believe that, in the future, the Oesterreichertum will be the power and the pride of the entire Deutschtum.” He juxtaposed such glorious “Oesterreichertum” with its Nazi inverse. He dismissed Nazism as lacking staying power, that it “will remain a relatively passing apparition.”⁵⁶ To him, the Austrian regional variant of Germandom—still formulated in the Nazi lexicon of biological racism and expansionism—had the potency to transcend time.

Official Nazi documents and the Nazi press took note of the subcutaneous ruptures in the Austrofascist governing body. The German Military Attaché in Vienna, Lieutenant General Wolfgang Muff, reported to Berlin that Starhemberg’s Heimwehren and Schuschnigg’s OSS stood at odds. In his assessment, it seemed “unlikely” the two paramilitaries would establish an “agreement.” Supposedly, the divide between them ran all the way up to their respective Führer, as Muff noted: “the Government’s position was precarious (antagonism between Schuschnigg and Starhemberg).”⁵⁷ In addition to internal Nazi dispatches, the

⁵⁶ “Starhemberg über die Politik des Heimatschutzes, Rede des Vizekanzlers Starhemberg,” *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten: Mit der illustrierten Wochenbeilage »W. A. A.-Bilder«*, 26 October 1934, Nummer 3416, 10. Jahrgang, Seite 4, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wnn&datum=19341026&seite=4&zoom=33&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

For a deep dive on shifting conceptualizations of Österreichertum throughout the interwar years, see Jamie Andrew McGregor Bulloch, “The Promotion of An Austrian Identity, 1918-1938” (PhD diss., University College London, 2002), 2, 261-278.

⁵⁷ Lieutenant General Wolfgang Muff cited in von Böckmann, “[Enclosure] Meeting of the Military Attachés in the Foreign Department on October 30, 1934, Wehrmachtsamt 2281/54 geh. Ausl. I. Berlin, October 31 1934,” 5573/E399895-99, contained in von Böckmann, “The Reichswehr Ministry to the Foreign Ministry, N. 2281/34 geh. Ausl. I., Berlin, November 2, 1934. II M 1673.” No. 293 M64/M001787, 562, Germany Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945: From the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, Series C (1933-1937): The Third Reich: First Phase: Volume*

German press tried its best to counter against Austrian regionalism with rumors of cracks within the Austrofascist edifice, which the Austrian press tried desperately to discredit. The *Tiroler Anzeiger* ran an exposé about how the *Völkischer Beobachter* printed fabricated stories of supposed “battles between Heimwehren, Sturmsharen, and Christian Socials,’ of ‘shootouts’ in particular states and the ‘seriously injured.’” But the Austrian paper dismissed such stories as Nazi gossip meant to cast Austrofascists as embroiled in internecine chaos. The Nazi gossip even included allegations that Schuschnigg stood “against” Starhemberg and that the two Austrofascist leaders butted heads over conscription—with Schuschnigg in favor to subordinate the Heimwehren and Starhemberg opposed to maintain the relative power of the Heimwehren.⁵⁸ Starhemberg’s influence and his Heimwehren remained influential, but at this point, the Nazi press probably exaggerated or lied to destabilize the Austrofascist regime.⁵⁹ About a year prior, Austrian Nazis explicitly stated their tactic of pitting the two Austrofascist

III: June 14, 1934-March 31, 1935, Department of State Publication 6848 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), 562, University of Illinois Library at Urbana Champaign, Digitized by Google, Available online via Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=LVSj7BAZBzMC&pg=PA562&lpq=PA562&dq=archives+ostmärkische+sturmscharen&source=bl&ots=YJNtrsxugW&sig=ACfU3U1J7gsJB_mKpb8NPYqZG8_Cp-EFJQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewi80seX4ZDvAhUUgp4KHc67Dw0Q6AEwEnoECBAQAw#v=onepage&q=archives%20ostmärkische%20sturmscharen&f=false, Accessed 2 March 2021.

⁵⁸ “Achtung auf die Wühlmäuse!” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, 10 April 1935, Nummer 84. 28. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19350410&query=Heimwehren&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 31 January 2021. An English source would print the Nazi story that the OSS and Heimwehren had come to blows, stating that Starhemberg’s Heimwehren were engaged in “clashes” against the OSS. “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 11, no. 21 (18 April 1935): 7 (703), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639397>, Accessed 22 August 2020.

⁵⁹ According to the *Salzburger Volksblatt* around this time, “The Heimatschutz is so strong that no one can do politics against it or without it.” “Gewisse Politiker alten Schlages.” *Salzburger Volksblatt: mit der Bilder-Zeitschrift „Bergland,”* 1 April 1935, Folge 76, 65 Jahrgang, Seite 4, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19350401&query=%22starhemberg%22&ref=anno-search&seite=4>, Accessed 31 January 2021. “Achtung auf die Wühlmäuse!” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, 10 April 1935, Nummer 84, Seite 2, ANNO.

groups against each other, or at least, presenting them as bogged down in infighting.⁶⁰ However, the Nazi lie presaged a frighteningly accurate picture.

From Bavaria to the Brenner: Austria as a Fascist Borderland

As Dollfuss's assassination triggered questions about Austria's domestic leadership among prominent Austrofascist agents, it also triggered a crisis about Austria's borders among prominent fascist regimes. The fascist ideological alignment of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, their diplomatic Berlin-Rome Axis of 1936, and their ensuing wartime alliance often blurs their interwar contentions. Fascists embodied factitious competition, and the Austrian arch between Europe's two fascist pillars contained a contested keystone: the South Tyrol.⁶¹ This formerly Austrian domain with a large German-speaking population went to Italy as a spoil of World War I. Ever anxious about their borderland prize, the Italians wanted to avoid an expansionist Nazi state as their immediate northern neighbor. As such, they opposed any idea of the Nazis absorbing Austria unilaterally. Instead, Mussolini wished for an Austrian buffer, or better yet, an Austria within the Italian sphere of influence.⁶² The Rome Protocols of 17

⁶⁰ "...in the face of the differences that now again existed in a sharper form between the Heimwehr and the Fatherland Front, everything had to be done to drive a further wedge between them, propagandistically speaking." Dr. Rudolf Weydenhammer, "Memorandum by Dr. Rudolf Weydenhammer: II Oe. 1071 Report on My Conversation on March 7 and 8 With the Austrian Minister, Dr. Von Rintelen, in Rome," No. 308, 6111/E452798-800," Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945: C: II*, 576 (652 in database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147233&view=2up&seq=652&q1=Fatherland%20Front>, Accessed 9 February 2021.

⁶¹ See Rolf Steininger, *South Tyrol: A Minority Conflict of the Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 1-76.

⁶² "Mussolini does not want Austria to go Nazi. This would in effect bring Germany to the Brenner pass and almost to Trieste. There are 200,000 Germans in the South Tyrol and the further Germany is away from them the better Mussolini likes it." Gunther, "Dollfuss and the Future of Austria," 311. He also stereotyped Nazism as simply Prussian militarism run amuck: "...Italy, who, as we have

March 1934 laid the official diplomatic groundwork for Austro-Italian cooperation vis-à-vis Austrian autonomy from Germany. The first such accord stated “friendship” and “cooperation” among Austria, Italy, and Hungary.⁶³ The years from 1934 to 1936 marked a highwater mark of fascist tides ebbing and flowing across Austria, delineating Austria itself as an outright fascist borderland.

To be sure, Fascist Italy’s involvement in Austria did not appear out of thin air in 1934; it had its own interwar history. Mussolini had offered unofficial assurances of support to Austria as early as 1933.⁶⁴ Even further back, Italian fascists had undergirded the Heimwehren in the 1920s.⁶⁵ Mussolini had provided Waldemar Pabst with refuge during his 1930 exile and Starhemberg with support for his anti-Nazi counter-terror ideas.⁶⁶ The collaboration between

already notes does not want the Prussians on the Brenner.” Gunther, “Dollfuss and the Future of Austria,” 318. In Luigi Villari’s assessment, it was the failure of Britain and France that left the Austrians with no choice but to lean on Fascist Italy for support. When that support was gone, Austria had no international champion. Luigi Villari, *Italian Foreign Policy under Mussolini*, (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1956), 110-114. Hathi Trust Digital Library, [https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id= mdp.39015012906783&view=2up&seq=8](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015012906783&view=2up&seq=8), Accessed 21 January 2021. But Austrofascists had been looking to Fascist Italy as a role model for years. For more on the Austrian wrench in Nazi-Italian relations, see Ferdinand Siebert, *Italiens Weg in den Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Frankfurt: Athenäum Verlag, 1962), 24-38. Hathi Trust Digital Library, [https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.\\$b762822&view=2up&seq=6](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.$b762822&view=2up&seq=6), Accessed 21 January 2021.

⁶³ “No. 3554 – Protocol No. I Between Austria, Hungary and Italy. Signed at Rome, March 17th, 1934.” League of Nations – Treaty Series, Publication of Treaties and International Engagements registered with the Secretariat of the League of Nations. Volume CLIV 153, 1934-1935, 3534-3564, 1934: 285, chrome-extension://oemmndcbldboiebfnladdacbdmfmadadm/https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/LON/Volume%20154/v154.pdf, Accessed 6 August 2020.

⁶⁴ Dollfuss had secured “a promise of Italian support in his pocket” after a visit to the Italian dictator, according to Gunther, “Dollfuss and the Future of Austria,” 311.

⁶⁵ See Engle, “A Legion of Legacy,” 151-152, 272-333.

⁶⁶ “Pabst’s Triumphzug über den Brenner: Mit Ehrentrock und Fackelzug, Eigene Meldung der *Vossischen Zeitung*,” 12 November 1930, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9613, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1–, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 149. Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 103. He wrote on the next page that by 1933, he decided to unequivocally prioritize Austrian autonomy over any Greater Germany. But he would clarify that

Pabst and Mussolini led the socialist press to condemn the Heimwehren as “a traitor to the South Tyrol” for selling out nationalist objectives in exchange for Italian support.⁶⁷ Nazis even attempted to capitalize on the Italian-Heimwehren friendship for their own activities against Austrian loyalists. According to *Der Wiener Tag*, two Nazis broke their Austrian Gauleiter out of an Innsbruck prison by dressing themselves in the uniforms of their Heimwehren rivals. The Nazi agents in Heimwehren disguises then made for the Brenner Alpine pass into Italy, which would presumably provide haven to Heimwehren agents. But it ended in numerous arrests.⁶⁸ The previous page of that very paper also reported on Austrian Nazis fleeing into Bavaria that resulted in a shootout with Austrian border patrol.⁶⁹ In the Austrofascist borderland between Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, fascist allegiance mattered more than nationality—a fascinating tension since many fascists asserted ethno-nationalism über alles.

regarding this Greater German impulse, “I myself have perhaps been more to blame than most. I know now that I was wrong,” thereby admitting his proclivity for mixing these two ideas. But he was writing in 1942, by which point “Greater Germany” was now inseparable from the Nazis. He thus wanted to make it seem like he had been against this plan from early on. Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 104. To be sure, he was adamantly against a Greater Germany if that meant Prussian hegemony over Austria, but as I show, his Greater German impulses would continue when left vaguely defined or when defined in Austria’s favor.

⁶⁷ “Der Heimwehrverrat an Südtirol. Wie Pabst am Brenner empfangen wurde. – Eine schändliche Szene,” *Arbeiter Zeitung*, 19 November 1930, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9613, Standort: 51, Magazin: M207, Reihe: 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1–, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 148.

⁶⁸ “Nazi-Einbruch ins Innsbrucker Gefängnis. Zwei Heimwehrleute,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 31 August 1933, Nummer 3694, XII. Jahrgang, Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19330831&query=italienische+Grenze&ref=anno-search&seite=5>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁶⁹ “Oesterreichischer Nazi-Schmuggel über die Grenze.,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 31 August 1933, Nummer 3694, XII. Jahrgang, Seite 4, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19330831&seite=4&zoom=33&query=italienische%2BGrenze&ref=anno-search>.

The constant tug-of-war between Austria's northern and southern fascist neighbors also heightened the sense of border fluctuation. One month before Dollfuss's demise, Mussolini met with Hitler in Venice and thought that the Nazis would offer him influence over Austria: "The Italian Dictator, at first enchanted at the apparent triumph in Germany of principles akin to his own, was to be won for a bargain over the corpse of Austria, and Germany's energies were then to find an outlet in other directions."⁷⁰ Some Austrians criticized Dollfuss for looking to the south for assistance, claiming that Dollfuss "is sparing Austria the mercies of Brown Fascism only to make way for a Black Fascism as fundamentally repressive ... Italo-Fascism or Hitler-Fascism – they are one and the same, according to this view, and equally pernicious."⁷¹ They worried Mussolini's embrace could spiral into a chokehold. But the Nazi Putsch and assassination of Dollfuss revealed that their territorial ambitions expanded in many directions, and Mussolini realized Hitler would not forsake his own Heimat to Italian suzerainty.

Following Dollfuss's assassination, *Der Wiener Tag's* front-page story announced the mobilization of "Italian troops to the border." The Italian deployment included the air force, all summoned to prop up the Austrofascist regime should a Nazi invasion follow the failed Putsch.⁷² Starhemberg recorded that this movement did not constitute simple posturing:

⁷⁰ R. W. Seton-Watson, "Austria and Her Neighbours," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 13, no. 39 (Modern Humanities Research Association and University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies: April 1935): 565, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4203032>, Accessed 18 January 2017.

⁷¹ Gunther, "Dollfuss and the Future of Austria," 316.

⁷² "Italienische Truppen an der Grenze bereitgestellt," *Der Wiener Tag*, 27 July 1934, Nummer 4000, XIII. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19340727&seite=1&zoom=24&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 31 January 2021. Furthermore, Nazis propagated a victimization narrative about the transfer of Austria's German-speaking South Tyrol to victorious Italy following World War I. This burning question of South Tyrol question became a rallying cry for German irredentism and left fascist Italy wary of any German motives.

Mussolini “had mobilised the Alpine Corps and dispatched it to the Brenner and other frontier stations ready to march into Austria ... Hitler understood that he would be faced with Italian troops if he used the opportunity created by rebels for an attempt to seize Austria by force.”⁷³ Mussolini coupled this mobilization with diplomatic assurances to Austria. *Der Wiener Tag* quoted him as saying, “The independence of Austria ... is a pillar, that is defended by Italy and will be even more decisively.”⁷⁴ In August, Mussolini doubled down on his support to Austria, telling Starhemberg that, “he would defend Austria, ‘not only with words, but by deeds’... it is freely suggested that the ‘deeds’ in question take the form of contributions towards maintenance of the Heimwehr.”⁷⁵ Mussolini went so far as to liken the July 1934 assassination of Austria’s Chancellor to the June 1914 assassination of Austria’s heir. British sources quoted him as claiming that, “war is in the air, and might break out at any moment ... We responded promptly by sending troops to the frontier and so saved the situation.” The notion that Italy’s

For such Italian wariness, up until Spring 1938 when Hitler convinced the Italians that “South Tyrol would not become a stumbling block between him [Hitler] and the *Duce*,” Rolf Steininger, *South Tyrol: A Minority Conflict of the Twentieth Century*, part of *Studies in Austrian and Central European History and Culture*, ed. Günter Bischof (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003) 46–47, 48 (for direct quotation), 49.

⁷³ Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 164.

⁷⁴ “Kundgebung Mussolinis zu Dollfuß’ Tod: ‚Italien wird Österreichs Unabhängigkeit noch entschiedener verteidigen,“ *Der Wiener Tag*, 27 July 1934, Nummer 4000, XIII. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19340727&seite=1&zoom=24&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁷⁵ Cited in E.M., “The Independence of Austria,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 11, no. 4 (16 August 1934): 8 (124), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25639318>, Accessed 2 August 2020. I have not seen an original document/transcription of Mussolini’s statement. This notion of support in discourse and in action again presented itself on 28 November 1935, when a British newspaper reported on a statement of the Austrian Foreign Minister. The newspaper claimed the minister stated that “Italy had repeatedly, by word and deed, given proof of her interest in Austrian independence.” “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 12, no. 11 (7 December 1935): 15 (395), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639478>, Accessed 6 August 2020.

military maneuvers on the Austrian border “saved” Austria in this situation did not simply reflect Mussolini’s braggadocious bravado.⁷⁶ Another British observer recorded: “Austria was saved, less by her own defensive forces than by the indignation of European public opinion, by the hesitation of Hitler, by the fact that the Reichswehr was not yet ready for war, and by the concentration of Italian troops on the Brenner.”⁷⁷ Mussolini’s diplomatic comments extended to the threat the ÖL in Bavaria posed to the Austro-Bavarian border.⁷⁸ *Der Wiener Tag* reported:

About the threat of our country by Germany, Mussolini gives neither deceptions nor illusions. In Stresa he is reported to have said, amongst other things: “On the Austro-German border still stands the Austrian Legion, formed out of Austrian National Socialists, 20,000 men strong and behind it the entire Reichswehr. If this armed force were to cross the Austrian border, the Reich government would undoubtedly assert: it is a matter of Austrians who want to return to their Heimat.”⁷⁹

Here the Italian fascist dictator cast dispersions upon Austrian émigrés training in Bavaria, who schemed and trained to re-cross the Austro-Bavarian border in the name of Nazi großdeutsch, völkisch nationalism. All the while, Mussolini surmised that the Nazi government would shrug off any ÖL Aktion as simply a regional, Austrian matter, albeit one buttressed with Nazi

⁷⁶ Cited in “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 11, no. 5 (30 August 1934): 25 (169), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639324>, Accessed 2 August 2020.

⁷⁷ R. W. Seton-Watson, “Austria and Her Neighbours,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 13, no. 39 (Modern Humanities Research Association and University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies: April 1935): 567, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4203032>, Accessed 18 January 2017.

⁷⁸ “Italien gegen österreichische Legion,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 28 July 1934, Nummer 4001, XIII. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19340728&seite=3&zoom=24>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁷⁹ “Randbemerkungen: Den Bericht über Österreich,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 17 April 1935, Nummer 4253, XIV. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19350417&query=Österreichische+Legion&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

training, funds, and armaments. But as historian Gerhard L. Weinberg adeptly pointed out, Mussolini's stalwart assurance of Austrian autonomy following the Dollfuss assassination "forced Hitler to realize that the annexation of Austria was even more a foreign policy matter than he had supposed."⁸⁰ If the Nazis had seen the Austrian situation as an intra-national German problem, Mussolini showed it was an intra-fascist one as well.

Italian saber rattling along their border with Austria in response to Nazi provocations along their border with Austria pointed to the instability of the Austrian borderland: Italian Fascists and Nazis (of both German and Austrian heritage) pulled Austria to opposing ends. Nazis wanted de jure sovereignty over Austria, while fascist Italians wanted de facto control of Austria to prop up Austria's de jure "independence" against Nazi Germany. As Nazis smuggled German-produced armaments from Bavaria across their southern border to destabilize the Austrofascist regime, Austrofascists accepted Italian support from across their southern border to resist such Nazi incursions. In the context of 1933 to 1935, the fascist borderland served as an arena where the two leading fascist powers fought proxy conflicts. At stake was nothing short of the Ständestaat's very viability.⁸¹ To a large extent, Austrian independence depended on this fascist rivalry. A Nazi report from 1933 even labeled Austria

⁸⁰ Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler, and World War II*, 98.

⁸¹ A social-democratically inclined paper phrased it as: "So ringen deutscher und italienischer Faschismus miteinander um die Macht in Österreich." From "Faschistische Vorliebe für Oesterreich." *Volkspost: Sozialdemokratisches Wochenblatt für die Bezirke Schwechat, Hainburg und Bruck a. d. L.*, 6 October 1933, Nummer 40, Jahrgang 15, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?baid=vpt&datum=19331006&query=italienischer+Faschismus&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

as “the Italian colony,” indicating the extent to which both regimes invested in controlling Austria’s fate.⁸² The *Manchester Guardian* further commented:

interest now centres on the Tyrol, which is strategically the most important part of Austria to the German Nazis. It is a narrow strip between two Fascist countries, Germany and Italy, and the organizations supported by these two countries—the Nazis by Germany and the Heimwehr by Italy—clash here sharply. When the situation in the Tyrol became precarious last week, the Heimwehr was called to arms, and 8,000 men are still in arms in that province...⁸³

Austria’s existence as a fascist borderland meant that Austria’s paramilitaries remained wedged in a transitional state of partial mobilization. This ephemeral, liminal status surely exacerbated any anxiety that the borders were teetering on the cusp of revision, unilateral or otherwise. The inhabitants of the jagged Alpine border essentially dwelled on the affective edges of uncertainty and inevitability.

In 1934 there occurred not one but two instances of chaos in which violent border confrontation seemed imminent: the first as conjecture in February and the second as actuality in July following Dollfuss’s assassination. Such mobilization first in discourse and then in deed echoed the Putsch patterns of the Heimwehren back in 1930–1931. The reported Heimwehren mobilization in February unleashed a firestorm of rumors about border maneuverings by the Italian fascists, the Austrian Nazis based out of Bavaria, and the Austrofascists. The German consulate in Innsbruck relayed reports that, in response to the rumored Heimwehren

⁸² Lesen und weitergeben! Es geht vorwärts und aufwärts – im nationalsoz. Deutschen Reich. Es geht abwärts und rückwärts – in der italien. Kolonie Oesterreich. BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 2064, Standort: 51, Magazin: M106, Reihe: 49, fol. 1–, B6, Day 3 Photo 402.

⁸³ “Heimwehr Challenge to Dr. Dollfuss: Difficult Situation in the Tyrol: Province in which German and Italian Influences Clash (From our own Correspondent.),” *Manchester Guardian*, 5 February 1934, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9613, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1–, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 110.

maneuverings, the ÖL “would have been assembled, prepared to invade [einmarschbereit].” According to the German report, this potential showdown faced compounding complications reported in the Austrian press, which announced that “Italian troops were being loaded into railcars [einwaggoniert]” in an official Italian military maneuver.⁸⁴ This mobilizing hysteria among paramilitary men turned out to be false, as the German consular quickly assured his overseers in Berlin. But such claims, in conjunction with consular report’s use of the subjunctive mood, all indicated the sense of uncertainty across this contested space. Border confrontation among paramilitaries and even official militaries seemed possible at any given moment. Austrian Nazis based out of the Bavarian Mittenwald in Garmisch-Partenkirchen seemed poised to clash with Austrofascists based out of the Tyrolean capital of Innsbruck, who might receive reinforcement from the Italians via the Brenner Pass.⁸⁵ And these Italian troops

⁸⁴ H. Saller, “Inhalt: Politische Lage in Tirol. Durchdruck. Deutsches Konsulat Innsbruck. 160. Innsbruck, 7. Februar 1934, Unter Bezugnahme auf den Bericht vom 5.d.M. – J.Nr.147 – 3 Anlagen, 4 Berichtsdurchschläge. An das Auswärtige Amt in Berlin,” *Aktionen der Nationalsozialisten in Österreich, Einschleusung von Propaganda- und Sprengmaterial sowie Einmarschpläne der ‘Österreichischen Legion’, Notenaustausch Jan. – Feb. 1934*, BaBL, R 43– II/1477, (fol. 1–), Reichskanzlei, 376433 Akten betreffend: Oesterreich, A. A., Band 3, vergl. Band 4, (Auswärtiges), Austria Nazi machinations Jan–May 1934, 27.10.45, Bandnummer 13, II Oe. 417–/34, RK 1638, 232, Available online via “invenio – Eine Anwendung des Bundesarchivs,” Das Bundesarchiv, <https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/ma.in.xhtml>, Found through Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek: Kultur und Wissen online (DDB), Accessed 8 March 2021. For the initial (false) Austrian press report about Italian mobilization (“*einwaggoniert*”), see “Sturm über Tirol,” *Tiroler Anzeiger*, 6 February 1934, *Aktionen der Nationalsozialisten in Österreich, Notenaustausch Jan. – Feb. 1934*, BaBL, R 43– II/1477, (fol. 1–), Reichskanzlei, 376433 Akten betreffend: Oesterreich, A. A., Band 3, vergl. Band 4, (Auswärtiges), Austria Nazi machinations Jan–May 1934, 27.10.45, Bandnummer 13, II Oe. 417/34, Deutsches Konsulat Innsbruck 3. Nr. 160, RK 1638, I, 234, invenio, DDB, Accessed 8 March 2021.

⁸⁵ Saller, “Politische Lage in Tirol. Deutsches Konsulat Innsbruck. 160. Innsbruck, 7. Februar 1934, An das Auswärtige Amt in Berlin,” *Aktionen der Nationalsozialisten in Österreich, Notenaustausch Jan. – Feb. 1934*, BaBL, R 43– II/1477, (fol. 1–), Reichskanzlei, 376433 Akten betreffend: Oesterreich, A. A., Band 3, vergl. Band 4, (Auswärtiges), Austria Nazi machinations Jan–May 1934, 27.10.45, Bandnummer 13, II Oe. 417–/34, RK 1688, 232–233, invenio, DDB, Accessed 8 March 2021. For the newspaper correctives in the next two days, see “Eine Falschmeldung,” *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, 7 February 1934, *Aktionen der Nationalsozialisten in Österreich, Notenaustausch Jan. – Feb. 1934*, BaBL, R

would be arriving from the heavily German-speaking South Tyrol. The bewilderment from Bavaria to the Brenner made Austria, especially the Tyrol, a dizzying fascist borderland.

To be clear, Mussolini's "support" was neither paternalistic nor altruistic. Caught in a vortex of violent dictatorships, Austrians could find themselves at Mussolini's beck and call. Mussolini postured so adamantly for Austrian independence that he felt compelled to address and dismiss perceptions that "Italy aspired for a protectorate in Austria," according to *Der Wiener Tag*.⁸⁶ Italian support for their Austrofascist buffer against Nazi Germany continued in the form of political backing for Austria and warnings against Germany.⁸⁷ The *Salzburger Volksblatt* pointed out that Austria's "independence" from Nazism paradoxically meant a

43- II/1477, (fol. 1-), Reichskanzlei, 376433 Akten betreffend: Oesterreich, A. A., Band 3, vergl. Band 4, (Auswärtiges), Austria Nazi machinations Jan-May 1934, 27.10.45, Bandnummer 13, II Oe. 417/34, Deutsches Konsulat Innsbruck 3. Nr. ____, RK 1638, II, 235, invenio, DDB, Accessed 8 March 2021. "Falsche Gerüchte über militärische Vorbereitungen Italiens.," *Neueste Zeitung*, 8 February 1934, *Aktionen der Nationalsozialisten in Österreich, Notenaustausch Jan. - Feb. 1934*, BaBL, R 43- II/1477, (fol. 1-), Reichskanzlei, 376433 Akten betreffend: Oesterreich, A. A., Band 3, vergl. Band 4, (Auswärtiges), Austria Nazi machinations Jan-May 1934, 27.10.45, Bandnummer 13, II Oe. 417/34, Deutsches Konsulat Innsbruck 3. Nr. ____, RK 1638, III, 236, invenio, DDB, Accessed 8 March 2021.

⁸⁶ "Italien für die Unabhängigkeit der Republik Oesterreich: Eine bedeutsame Rede Mussolinis," *Der Wiener Tag*, 7 October 1934, Nummer 4063, XIII. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, [https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19341007&query=Mussolini+\"Österreich\"&ref=anno-search&seite=1](https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19341007&query=Mussolini+\), Accessed 31 January 2021. For another printed of his public proclamations against aspirations for an Italian "Protectorate" in Austria, see "Mussolinis Rede in Mailand," *Vorarlberger Landes-Zeitung*, *Amtsblatt für Vorarlberg. Wochenbeilagen: „Holunder“, „Frauen-Zeitung“, Kupfertiefdruckbeilage „Österreichische Woche“, Beilage zur „Vorarlberger Landes-Zeitung“.*, 8 October 1934, Nummer 231, 71. Jahrgang, Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=vlz&datum=19341008&query=Mussolini&ref=anno-search&seite=5>, Accessed 31 January 2021. Along the lines of such rhetoric, in Lassner's view, Mussolini wanted a subordinated Austria as "a faithful Italian client state." Lassner, "Peace At Hitler's Price," 479.

⁸⁷ During the war itself, *The Washington Post* ran a story about the interwar Austrian First Republic, asserting "it was undermined by reactionary Fascist forces under the influence and active support of the powerful Fascist neighbor, Italy, who—at the time—needed and abused Austria as a buffer against Germany." Max Lederer, "Austria And The Nazis: A Communication," *The Washington Post*, 14 December 1943, 10, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpwashingtonpost/docview/151630569/614165CADE8146E3PQ/30?accountid=9673>, Accessed 16 February 2021.

dependence on Italy: “the autonomy and independence of the buffer state of Austria, which moves under Italian supremacy between the German and Italian border...”⁸⁸ True to the internecine logic of fascists, they kept friends *and* enemies as close as possible. To them, the distinction between these two seemingly antithetical categories collapsed to the point of non-existence.

Cultural projects conjoined the Italian fascists to the Heimwehren across the border as well, especially because Starhemberg styled himself as the Austrian variant of Il Duce.⁸⁹ His propaganda office organized a film screening of Giovacchino Forzano’s film *Blackshirt*, a glorifying tribute to Mussolini, which an Austrian critic derided in the *Wiener Zeitung*’s cultural review section. The critic commented sarcastically that the Heimatschutz did not perceive the feature as “political propaganda” but rather as the “heroic face of reality.” The intent behind showing the film came across unequivocally: “to display the splendid Volksbewegung [people’s movement] of Fascism and, through it, the spiritual and cultural liberation of the new Italy to the Führer, to the Volk, to the Land.”⁹⁰ To Starhemberg, the

⁸⁸ “Europäische Kräfteverschiebungen. *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 7 April 1934, Folge 79, 64. Jahrgang, Seite 7, ANNO.

⁸⁹ Starhemberg sent Mussolini a personal congratulatory message on the anniversary of Mussolini’s march on Rome. “Depeschenwechsel Starhemberg-Mussolini,” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, 8 November 1934, Nummer 257, 27. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19341108&seite=2&zoom=33&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁹⁰ “Filmschau. „Schwarzhemden.“ *Wiener Zeitung: Herausgeber und Eigentümer: Die Bundesverwaltung*, 7 March 1935, Nummer 66, 232. Jahrgang, Seite 12, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wrz&datum=19350307&query=Mussolini&ref=anno-search&seite=12>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

Heimwehr needed to graft Italian fascism onto Austria to solidify its autonomy against Nazis, who operated in and across the Austro-Bavarian borderland.⁹¹

An anonymous cultural commentator demonstrated this perception of Austria as Italy's buffer against Nazism. Handwritten very lightly in pencil, on paper now very wrinkled and stained, a Nazi satirist drafted a graphic and antisemitic new "Federal Hymn" for the Austrofascist state.⁹² The writer lampooned the regime, condemning its attacks on Nazis as cruel and arbitrary: "Speeches and edicts constantly ooze from the oil of Christianity, one can be hanged because of it. Perjury is an ancient rite." Lastly, the song mocked the state for its overreliance on Fascist Italy and the Catholic Church in general, "Mussolini gives his blessing, as does the Holy Father."⁹³ To this Nazi, the Austrofascist regime would collapse without the prop of Fascist Italy and Catholicism.⁹⁴

⁹¹ In reference to the Heimwehr in 1933: "In its basic ideological orientation the *Heimwehr* saw itself as a fascist group closely molded on its Italian counterpart." Isabella Ackerl, "Was the Authoritarian Christian, Corporate State an Effective Means of Resisting National Socialism?," Chapter 4 in *Austria 1938-1988: Anschluss and Fifty Years*, ed. William E. Wright (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1995), 74.

⁹² Anonymous, "Bundeshymne," Landesarchiv Salzburg (LaS), Misc. P. Archiv. 11, Schriftstücke der NSDAP. 1920-1938, Day 5 File 1 Photo 71. It mocked Schuschnigg for his "cute hats" and labeled the assassinated Dollfuß as "our bloodied dwarf." He was just under five feet, but his champions used that to their advantage in cultivating a positive and enduring image of him as "the political darling of Western Europe." He was lionized as "Europe's first bulwark against Hitler, a sort of Nazi giant-killer. And stature came to him paradoxically because he is four feet eleven inches high ... His smallness, too, makes him popular. Affection seems to come easily for anyone four feet eleven. Let no one, however, mistake this 'Millimetternich' for a weakling." John Gunther, "Dollfuß and the Future of Austria," *Foreign Affairs* 12, no. 2 (Council on Foreign Relations, January 1934): 306-307, 313, 318, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20030587>, accessed 18 January 2017 (26 August 2020).

⁹³ Anonymous, "Bundeshymne," LaS, Schriftstücke der NSDAP, Day 5 File 1 Photo 71.

⁹⁴ For the role of Catholicism and papal encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* on Austrofascist efforts, see Georg-Hans Schmit, "„Im Namen Gottes, des Allmächtigen“: christlich – deutsch – berufsständisch. Ausgewählte Aspekte über den Stand und die Perspektiven der Forschung über das christlichsoziale Lager in den Jahren 1929 bis 1938," Kapitel 6 of *Das Dollfuß/Schuschnigg-Regime 1933-1938*, 153. For the importance of contextualized Catholic theology and doctrines to radical right-wingers the world over during this time, see Charles R. Gallagher, *Nazis of Copley Square: The Forgotten History of the Christian Front* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021), 1-30. Alternatively, another scholar has

Conversely, Starhemberg's later memoirs recorded Mussolini's utter disgust with Nazism, distinguishing his black-shirted Italian fascism from brown-shirted Nazism. Mussolini supposedly saw his movement as "rooted in the cultural tradition of the Italian people; Fascism recognizes the right of the individual, it recognizes religion and family." He saw his strain of fascism as offering an organic regeneration of Italy's glory. In Starhemberg's presentation of Mussolini's words, however, Nazism did not regenerate past glory so much as reverted humanity back to uncivilized origins: "savage barbarism; in common with barbarian hordes it [National Socialism] allows no rights to the individual; the chieftain is lord over the life and death of his people. Murder and killing, loot and pillage and blackmail are all it can produce." Supposedly, this movement could spring from "only these primitive Germans."⁹⁵ It remains unclear whether Starhemberg recorded Mussolini's sentiments accurately or fabricated them retroactively to advance his own anti-Nazi stance. Either way, he presented Mussolini as disparaging Nazis for representing barbaric pagans. By implication, Mussolini's Austrofascist allies formed the true bearers of German *Kultur* (culture). Enmeshed in this internal fascist quasi-war, Austrofascists carved out a niche for their regime diplomatically and ideologically by hybridizing elements from their fascist neighbors. From the north came ideas for affective German nationalism channeled in a southeastern regionalist direction. From the south came

pointed to the Catholic entrenchment to prove the Ständestaat was not "full fascist." Ernst Hanisch, "Der Politische Katholizismus als ideologischer Träger des „Austrofaschismus,“ Kapitel 4 of *Austrofaschismus: Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur 1933–1938*, herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. Emmerich Tálos, Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Politik und Zeitgeschichte* Band I (Wien/Berlin: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2014), 67 (for direct quotation), 68–85.

⁹⁵ Cited in Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 167.

Catholic rallying cries and corporatism. The resulting blend of fluid, convoluted, and countervailing right-wing tendencies saturated this fascist borderland.

While the Nazi satirist disparaged the Austrians for their Italian dependence, the Austrians saw Italian backing as decisive. The *Salzburger Chronik* reported that the Italian readiness to mobilize at the Brenner Pass amounted to a show of “forcefulness” that “was completely understood in Berlin.” The article also warned that, going forward, Austria needed the backing of a global coalition to prevent foreign browbeating.⁹⁶ Ever the spinsters, Hitler’s propagandists tried to flip the narrative on its head, claiming that Nazi Germany suffered from coordinated Austro-Italian abuse. In an article called “Germany ‘Distrusts’ Austria,” the *Der Wiener Tag* quoted from the *Berliner Börsenzeitung*. Supposedly, this paper discussed Italy’s penchant for Tyrolean border mobilization, which it saw as tethered to nefarious French influences. The Berlin-based report apparently intimated that an Austrian-led “Danubian pact” might “be misused for aggressive Politik.”⁹⁷ Two months later, *Der Wiener Tag* likewise scoffed at the Nazi press for cultivating a self-pitying narrative of victimhood. It ran a story about the Nazi *Völkischer Beobachter*, which boasted of a new outdoor venue in the Bavarian border town of Passau. Supposedly, this new theater “...on the border in the southeast of the Reich will develop itself to a site of true German and National Socialist cultural aspiration and thereby to a spiritual fortress in the threatened German borderland [*Grenzmark*.]” *Der Wiener Tag*

⁹⁶ “Der Tag, der die Entscheidung brachte,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 24 July 1935, Nummer. 168, 71. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19350724&query=an+der+österreichischen+Grenze&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

⁹⁷ “Deutschland „mißtraut“ Oesterreich,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 31 July 1935, Nummer 4355, XIV. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19350731&query=an+der+österreichischen+Grenze&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

commented sardonically on this Nazi sentiment: “according to the N.S.D.A.P.’s main medium, the Bavarian borderland [bayerische Grenzmark] is therefore threatened by Austria,” an assertion that the Austrian paper dismissed as “a bold claim.”⁹⁸ From the Nazi perspective, Bavaria served as the true southeastern regional borderland, implying that fellow German-speakers in Austria were the real aggressors. All the while, the Nazis subjected Austria to a perpetual siege.

The Austro-Italian connection went to seemingly absurd lengths, even so far as an Austrian paramilitary group issuing a literal call to arms in support of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia. According to an enlistment flyer, Schuschnigg’s own OSS launched a recruitment campaign to send a “voluntary Expeditionskorps” to help their Italian allies imperialize eastern Africa. They hoped to solidify right-wing solidarity with Fascist Italy via “Loyalty by Loyalty!” The OSS boasted their venture on behalf of Il Duce “attested to the Austrian-Italian blood brotherhood [Blutbrüderschaft] sustained by the tradition of old Austrian valor,” underscoring the right-wing attempts at cohesion. The OSS ringleaders wished to remunerate Italy’s fascist protection racket with paramilitary service in this colonial war. The recruiters presented this opportunity as an “obligation of honor” to return the favor to their Italian “allies, who have already saved us so frequently from the brown danger [Nazism].” In OSS calculations, they would cement solidarity between Fascist Italy and the Austrofascist state by explicitly offering a quid pro quo for Italian support against the Nazis. While pontificating about the “advantages”

⁹⁸ “Die Thingstätte in Passau,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 24 September 1935, Nummer 4410, XIV. Jahrgang, Seite 4, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19350924&query=%22an+der+österreichischen+Grenze%22&ref=anno-search&seite=4>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

of this expedition, the flyer advocated for “strengthening of Italian power and through it the effective guarantee for Austrian independence.” Clearly, the OSS organizers saw Italy as their champion against Nazi aggression. The flyer also pontificated that this overseas paramilitary venture would yield “the establishment of Austrian colonies in Italian sovereign territory.”⁹⁹ The OSS proudly presented any imperial benefits or prestige that Austria might receive as still circumscribed within the Italian sphere of influence. But the Italian invasion of Abyssinia also meant redeploying Italian troops from the Austro-Italian border (the “Brenner Division”) to eastern Africa, potentially leaving Austrians in the Nazi lurch. Austrian newspapers reported with relief when the Italian command positioned new divisions on the Brenner (the “Pustertal Division,” named after an Alpine valley) that could continue Italy’s “Oesterreichpolitik”—for now.¹⁰⁰

As always, uncertainty ran rampant. Come 1936, Italy’s stalwart protection began to falter, mostly because Hitler and Mussolini were drawing together.¹⁰¹ The Nazis stood poised

⁹⁹ Dr. Fritz Kuhn, “Abessinien das Land der Sklavenjäger hat dem Kulturstaat [sic] Italien durch ununterbrochene Verletzung des Völkerrechtes den Krieg aufgezwungen.” Herausgeber [sic]: Bundesführung der O.S.S. (Druck in Wien: Mayer & Klein), undated but document lists the deadline to enlist as 16 October 1935, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 2073, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 106, Reihe: 50, (fol. 1-), Day 5 Photo 164.

¹⁰⁰ “Von der Woche,” *Der neue Bezirksbote für den politischen Bezirk Bruck an der Leitha*, 9 February 1936, Nummer 1031, 38. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=bez&datum=19360209&query=“an+der+österreichischen+Grenze”&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 31 January 2021. “Bevorstehende Unterredung zwischen Starhemberg und Flandin; Eine neue Pustertal-Division.” *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, 4 February 1936, Nummer 28, 83. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ibn&datum=19360204&query=“an+der+österreichischen+Grenze”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021.

¹⁰¹ In his powerful research, MacGregor Knox posits that Mussolini had decided on relinquishing Austria to Hitler as soon as the first month of 1936, and then cites Mussolini’s statement that Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany shared a “community of destiny.” But he underestimates the extent to which Fascist Italy had been militarily committed to Austrian autonomy before that time. Their fascist overlap inherently meant discord and rivalry. MacGregor Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign*

to capitalize on May reports that Schuschnigg had “difficulty” about the “unascertainable attitude of Mussolini towards the Heimatschutz.”¹⁰² Mussolini and Hitler had rallied in solidarity to support the fascists against the communists in the Spanish Civil War. Furthermore, Nazi Germany also supported Italy’s imperialist war in Abyssinia and stood by the Italians during their subsequent estrangement from the League of Nations.¹⁰³ Italy’s war in Abyssinia also exemplified fascist divergence. The Austrofascist regime only supported Italy with vague ideas of paramilitary overtures, so as not to provoke the wrath of France and Britain. However, Nazis in Austria opportunistically saw this tentative support for the Italian war as a new front to attack the Austrofascist state.¹⁰⁴ On 9 October, British sources reported that “the outbreak of hostilities in Abyssinia was stated to have led to an immediate recrudescence of Nazi agitation in the country [Austria].”¹⁰⁵ Thus, the anti-war stance of the Nazis in Austria countered the pro-war stance of Nazis in Germany. Yet, any chance for the Austrian Nazis to

Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 113–141, 142 (for direct quotation/citation of Mussolini’s words), 143–147.

¹⁰² Papen, “The Minister in Austria to the Führer and Chancellor: Secret A 2869: Vienna, May 27, 1936: Received May 29. Pol. IV 245: Subject: Further development of the internal political situation.” No. 351, 2019/443755–57, Germany Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945, from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Series C (1933–1937): Volume V: March 5–October 31, 1936*, Department of State Publication 8083 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1966), 585 (673 of database), Original from University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign, Digitized by Google, Available on HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147266&view=2up&seq=673&q1=Schuschnigg>, Accessed 16 February 2021.

¹⁰³ Michael Carter-Sinclair, “Building a Christian and German Austria? 1934–8,” Chapter 9 in *Vienna’s ‘respectable’ antisemites: A Study of the Christian Social movement* (Manchester University Press, 2021), 215, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1fqvkqg.15>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

¹⁰⁴ See “Chronology,” Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: *Bulletin of International News* 12, no. 7 (12 October 1935): 11 (223), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25639458>, Accessed 6 August 2020.

¹⁰⁵ “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 12, no. 8 (26 October 1935): 12 (264), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639463>, Accessed 6 August 2020.

besmirch the Austrofascist regime aligned with overarching Nazi objectives. With the Rome-Berlin Axis later that year, Mussolini increasingly deferred to Hitler on Austrian affairs. Slipping out of Mussolini's gravitas, Austria fell into Nazi Germany's orbit.¹⁰⁶ This pull exacerbated intra-national borderland tensions, but Austria's time as a fascist borderland vanished beneath the event horizon. Yet we ought not lose sight of this earlier phase in fascist cosmology, when the push and pull of competing fascist gravities warped the core of Austrian daily reality and upwelled violence across the borderland's surface. All the while, the structures established at Versailles crumbled in this seismic world, displaced by new, imposing landscapes marked by emotional highs and lows of Alpine proportions.

*From "Führergemeinschaft" to Führerkampf?*¹⁰⁷

The same year that Austria's connection to Italy gave way to Nazi unilateralism, the Austrofascist Führerfrage began to look more like a Führerkampf (leadership struggle). Despite Schuschnigg's official succession to Dollfuss, loyalties to Starhemberg from the rank-and-file Heimwehren endured. Schuschnigg's OSS also flexed its muscles by presenting their troop organizations: a total of ten battalions, each with about three to four companies.¹⁰⁸ In an OSS intelligence report, members of the Heimatschutz expressed discontent with Schuschnigg at, of all places, a Führer Convention in Vienna. Heimatschutz members condemned Dollfuss's

¹⁰⁶ Carter-Sinclair, "Building a Christian and German Austria?," 217.

¹⁰⁷ General Secretary Colonel Adam, *Der Erste Bundesappell am 19 Jänner 1936* (Self Published by the General Secretariat of the Vaterländische Front), 6, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Nationalsozialistische Schriften mit Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front. 1929-1938, Day 5 File 1 Photo 27.

¹⁰⁸ Ostmärkische Sturmsharen Stadtführung Wien, Zeichen P./H. Organisationsplan. ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 O Ad.R, Day 2, Photo 147-149.

successor for having “abused the friendship” offered to him by the fascist paramilitaries, a friendship they claimed Starhemberg had been able to “uphold.”¹⁰⁹ A seemingly minor slight, the comment against the new Chancellor threatened to reopen the Führerfrage.¹¹⁰

Mass VF rallies did their best to accommodate this paradoxical leadership style, simultaneously autocratic and balanced. At a VF rally in January of 1936—the first roll call of the VF—the introductory speaker presented “our Chancellor and Federal Führer-Deputy Dr. Schuschnigg and our Federal Führer Vice-Chancellor Prince Starhemberg.”¹¹¹ Each foiled the other, presenting mirror images within the Austrofascist polycratic state structure. Starhemberg led the Schuschnigg’s supra-party VF but served as Schuschnigg’s Vice Chancellor when it came to governmental affairs. Schuschnigg led as head of government but served as Starhemberg’s second-in-command when it came to the VF. The introductory speaker clarified the distinction: “with the ceremonial pledge to the Führer [plural] of state and Front” joined together in “the political will of the Führer fellowship [Führergemeinschaft] of Schuschnigg-Starhemberg” whose “soldierly comradeship” would guide autonomous Austria.

¹⁰⁹ The marked-up draft of the statement used “*Kameradschaft*,” meaning comradeship, instead of *Freundschaft*, meaning friendship. Landesführung Kärnten in Klagenfurt Ostmärkische Sturmsharen, *Hochwohlgeboren Herrn Ministerialrat Dr. Josef Seidl Wien, I. Ballhausplatz, Hochverehrter Herr Ministerialrat!*, ÖSAW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 O Ad.R, 328/36, Eingelangt: 6.VIII.36, Day 2 Photo 109 (for direct quotation), 110. But the finalized report used the word “*Freundschaft*,” Bundeskanzleramt, Präsidium Politisches Büro 328/36/Hi, *Aus einem Bericht aus Klagenfurt ist zu entnehmen ...*, ÖSAW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 O Ad.R, 328/36, Day 2 Photo 111. “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 13, no. 9 (24 October 1936): 13 (353), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639589>, Accessed 6 August 2020.

¹¹⁰ “Chronology,” *Bulletin of International News* 13, no. 9 (24 October 1936): 13 (353).

¹¹¹ Adam, *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 6, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 27.

He included the rallying couplet of “Heil Schuschnigg! Heil Starhemberg!,” which the crowd shouted back to him.¹¹²

Schuschnigg then spoke for Austrian unity, espousing the constitutive contradiction between regionalism and nationalism. He ended his speech with the request “that you [the youth] work outside in the Heimat for the great Austrian sense of community [großen österreichischen Gemeinschaftsgedanken].”¹¹³ He explicitly embraced fascist, völkisch nationalism, but his nationalist impulses meant a regionalist sense of collective Austrian greatness. He then reiterated a famous quotation from a former Habsburg emperor, who purportedly said: “German glory is my glory and my glory is German glory.” Schuschnigg appropriated this quotation but added a new Austrofascist twist: “but we from the Vaterländische Front translate this expression into the language of our century and say: German glory is your glory and your glory is German glory, Austria!”¹¹⁴ His Geschichtspolitik rhetoric imposed a linear trajectory from Austrian Habsburg hegemony to his völkisch sense of regional autonomy. Likewise, Starhemberg foregrounded this synthesis of German nationalism and southeastern regional independence:

Because we think and feel German, we do not want to be under greater Prussian lordship. Because we have großdeutsch tasks to fulfill, we want to be free and independent and have the possibility to preserve foundational Germandom and to work in the world in this sense. Because we are good Germans, we want shape the

¹¹² Adam, *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 6, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 27.

¹¹³ Kurt von Schuschnigg, “Der Bundeskanzler und die Front.” in “Die Rede des Bundeskanzlers,” in *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 16, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 32.

¹¹⁴ Cited in Schuschnigg, “Der Bundeskanzler und die Front.” in “Die Rede des Bundeskanzlers,” in *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 16, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 32.

way into the future, in the spirit of and in line with the Austrian past. Because we are good Germans, we must energetically reject being forced into a political system, which in its innermost nature is un-German and foreign to being German.

In his conceptualization, embodying “good Germans” meant living Austria’s southeastern historical mission, all while holding steadfast in the face of barbaric, even “un-German” Nazi domination from the north. Pushing the point, he suggested the proper way to accomplish großdeutsch ambitions was via the Austrian channel of Germanness rather than the Prussian one, with Prussia as his regionalist code for Nazism from the north. To him, only Austria could ever be both the recipient and restorer of the contested German mantel, while Nazism, paradoxically, inverted and perverted the very concept of Greater Germany itself into something “un-German.”¹¹⁵ Both leaders did overlap, however, in waxing poetic about former Führer Dollfuss as Austria’s martyred savior.¹¹⁶

Time would prove the introductory speaker right about one thing: Starhemberg and Schuschnigg’s relationship certainly qualified as “soldierly.” And the double-edged sword of a soldierly dynamic cut both ways: as comradeship and as competition. The two already experienced a sharp divide over the very question of soldiers. Schuschnigg pushed for more

¹¹⁵ Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, “Erstens: ein freies unabhängiges Österreich.” in “Die Rede des Bundesführers.” in *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 20, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 34.

¹¹⁶ Schuschnigg, “Das Werk Dollfuss’.” in “Die Rede des Bundeskanzlers.” in *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 8-11, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 28-29; See also “...the unforgettable Führer and Comrade Dollfuss. At this conference we can say this about him in the afterlife: Comrade Dollfuss, you did not fall in vain, we have understood your will and continued and implemented it to this day in accordance with your spirit to the best of our knowledge and conscience.” Starhemberg, “Die Rede des Bundesführers.” in *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 6, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 32. See also “Die Rede des Bundesführers Starhemberg,” *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, 20 January 1936, Nummer 15, 83. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ibn&datum=19360120&seite=2&zoom=33&q=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 6 February 2022.

administrative connections between the army and the VF. Starhemberg—though still Führer of the VF—remained loyal to his first paramilitary group, the Heimwehren, and wanted to see men with Heimwehren pedigrees receive official military roles.¹¹⁷ At the January rally, neither man once mentioned the other. Towards the end of his speech, Schuschnigg “explicitly and solemnly again gave” Starhemberg “the assurance that he [Schuschnigg] wanted, like earlier, to march in the first rows of Vaterländische Front.”¹¹⁸ The end of Starhemberg’s speech likewise included an obligatory throwaway section on “Loyalty to the Chancellor” in which he expressed cursory gratitude to Schuschnigg, but he never once said Schuschnigg’s name. This portion also comprised the shortest of all sections of his speech, coming in at just half a page—out of sixteen total. And of that half page, only three of the six sentences actually referenced the chancellor. The rest recapitulated the theme of “Österreich über alles!”¹¹⁹ The clumsy sense of two Führer at the fascist rally was shown in pictures of the event, with both leaders taking the lead to inspect the honor guard and with both leaders standing awkwardly at the podium before a bust of the dead Dollfuss underneath a huge banner of the VF’s *Kruckenkreuz* (cross potent)—the Austrofascist response to the Nazi *Hakenkreuz* (broken/hooks cross, or swastika).¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ M. Margaret Ball, *Post-War German-Austrian Relations: The Anschluss Movement, 1918-1936* (Stanford University: Stanford University Press, 1937), 249-250.

¹¹⁸ Schuschnigg, “Der Bundeskanzler und die Front.” in “Die Rede des Bundeskanzlers.” in *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 15, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 31.

¹¹⁹ Starhemberg, “Treue dem Kanzler!” in “Die Rede des Bundesführers.” in *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 6, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 40.

¹²⁰ *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 6, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 41-43.

The competitive reality behind the façade of a “fellowship of Führer” started to emerge overtly.¹²¹ Nazi Germany’s Ambassador to Austria, Franz von Papen, recorded his conversation with ex-Austrian Chancellor Otto Ender, who commented on an emerging fracture. The more reasonable Schuschnigg pushed for a more equitable sharing of power, while the more maverick Starhemberg wished to enhance the fascist elements of the Austrofascist regime. “He [Ender] contrasted the system of dualism within the leadership of Government advocated recently by Schuschnigg (Schuschnigg: Head of Government, Starhemberg: the Fatherland Front) with Starhemberg’s endeavors to achieve the totalitarian Fascist state.”¹²² The Manchester Guardian also reported on such emerging cracks by claiming, “It would seem that Prince Starhemberg, while promising loyalty to Schuschnigg, is going to oppose two things which are believed to be the aim of the Chancellor [Schuschnigg]—the abolition of the militia in favour of a conscript army, and the establishment of more democratic methods within the Corporative Constitution.” The paper drew this conclusion from Starhemberg’s own words. At a rally, he purportedly claimed he would only allow the dissolution of his paramilitary units “over his dead body” and that “only political idiots could imagine” the end of his group. To be sure, he also proclaimed his loyalty to Schuschnigg, but his warning left no equivocation.¹²³

¹²¹ Adam, *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 6, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriften mit Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 27.

¹²² Franz von Papen, “The Minister in Austria to the Führer and Chancellor: Secret: A 2172: Vienna, April 24, 1936. Received May 4, 1936. Rk. 5185. Subject: Further increase of political tension inside Austria.” No. 294, 1549/376271-73, Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945: C: V*, 471 (559 on database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147266&view=2up&seq=559&q1=Fatherland%20Front>, Accessed 16 February 2021.

¹²³ “Starhemberg on Loyalty to Schuschnigg: ‘Ready to Defend’ Him Against His Supporters: Refusal to Disarm Heimwehr: From our Special Correspondent,” *Manchester Guardian*, 27 April 1936, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9613, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1-, 511/0, Day 8 Photo 105.

The leadership question spiraled further just one month later, when the system of checks and balances between Führer collapsed. Schuschnigg assumed the helm of the VF as well.¹²⁴ *Der Wiener Tag* recorded: “Starhemberg has been eliminated from the government because of a professional difference of opinion with the Bundeskanzler.” Ironically, Starhemberg’s successful role in “concentrating all vaterländische strength” and “the completed unification of the political leadership and the clarification of the Vaterländische Front’s situation to the state establishment” pushed Schuschnigg to assume Starhemberg’s VF position. Starhemberg’s subordination supposedly stemmed from his success in channeling völkisch impulses toward Austrian autonomy; he had worked himself out of a job.¹²⁵ In reality, the impetus for the dismissal lacked such rosy expansionary appeal. Starhemberg leaked information about scandalous financial dealings involving the Austrofascist chancellor.

¹²⁴ “Heute programmatische Erklärungen des Bundeskanzlers: Übernahme der Vaterländischen Front durch Bundeskanzler Dr. Schuschnigg.” *Der Wiener Tag*, 15 May 1936, Nummer 4641, XV. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19360515&query=starhemberg&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 31 January 2021. An English-language source reported the dismissal was “owing to differences of a non-personal nature with the Chancellor [Schuschnigg]” and “this ended the dualism of the Clerical-Fascist dictatorship,” at least officially. *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 12, no. 23 (23 May 1936): 15-16 (879-880), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639534>, Accessed 25 August 2020.

¹²⁵ “Die Umbildung der Regierung,” *Der Wiener Tag*, 15 May 1936, Nr. 4641, XV. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO. Perhaps this type of thinking foreshadowed the German Nazi subordination of Austrian Nazis following their “success” in bringing about the 1938 annexation. For some points of entry to that conversation, see Maurice Williams, *Gau, Volk, and Reich: Friedrich Rainer and the Paradox of Austrian National Socialism*, eds. Ulfried Burz and Claudia Fräss-Ehrfeld (Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten, 2005), 21-22, 277, Available online during Covid-19 thanks to HathiTrust.org, Accessed 18 October 2020, Digitized by Google, Original from University of Michigan. Harry R. Ritter, “Hermann Neubacher and the Austrian *Anschluss* Movement, 1918-40,” in *Central European History* 8, no. 4 (Cambridge University Press on behalf of Conference Group for Central European History of the American Historical Association, December 1975): 348-369, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4545754>, Accessed 18 January 2017. See also Bruce Pauley, “Chapter XIII: The Great Disillusionment: Austrian Nazis After the Anschluss,” in *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis: A History of Austrian National Socialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 216 (for direct quotation), 217-222.

Furthermore, he had waited to drop the story until one of Schuschnigg's visits to Italy, when the Chancellor could not do immediate damage control.

Like so many of his political endeavors, Starhemberg's scheme backfired. Ironically, the full details of the dealings also implicated the Heimwehren, which Starhemberg had conveniently omitted. Returning to Vienna, Schuschnigg exposed that the Heimwehren received exorbitantly more corrupt funds than the OSS ever had.¹²⁶ Along those lines, an Austrian reporter for the US-printed, German-language *New Yorker Staatszeitung* reprinted an *Associated Press* story on just how high the stakes were: "The possibility of an open conflict seems to be obvious between the new government federal Chancellor Schuschnigg and the Heimwehr, the private army of Prince Starhemberg, who yesterday lost the Vice Chancellorship." Schuschnigg even outplayed Starhemberg at his game of fascist gossip, waiting until Starhemberg himself visited Italy to announce the dismissal. Starhemberg went running to his Italian fascist idol, soothing himself by speaking to supportive crowds at a soccer match.¹²⁷ *The Chicago Tribune* reported that his parting words all but threatened retaliation by the Heimwehren.¹²⁸ The next day, the *New Yorker Staatszeitung* claimed that Starhemberg had "resigned for the sake of the greater Austrian idea [größeren österreichischen Idee]." This

¹²⁶ Ball, *The Anschluss Movement*, 254-256.

¹²⁷ "Die Monarchisten sind hocheifrig: Schuschnigg soll einen liberal Kurs anstreben. Lange Besprechung des Bundeskanzlers mit dem deutschen Gesandten von Papen deutet auf Annäherung zum Reich. –Mussolini schient der bisherige Schützling zu teuer gekommen zu sein: (Meldung der „Associated Press“). Starhemberg, gestürzter Heimwehrführer, unter Drohung von Wien nach Rom gereist." *New Yorker Staatszeitung*, 15 May 1936, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9612, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1, 371, 509/0, Day 8 Photos 75-75.

¹²⁸ "Open Conflict Feared." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963), 15 May 1936, From AP, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune, 2, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpchicagotribune/docview/181763504/991E1988AD054F27PQ/22?accountid=9673>, Accessed 22 February 2021.

“greater Austrian idea” constituted an attempt to reconcile German impulses with southeastern German regionalism. All the while, the reporter made clear that Starhemberg and Schuschnigg had nothing short of an “altercation” of leadership, from which Schuschnigg emerged victorious.¹²⁹ The *Daily Telegraph* went so far as to label Starhemberg as Schuschnigg’s “discomfited rival,” Starhemberg’s subordination as a “dramatic coup,” and “the rupture” as “violent,” leaving bad blood between these two fascists leaders.¹³⁰ Franz von Papen—Nazi German Ambassador to Austria—described Starhemberg’s subordination to Hitler as a “dethronement” but commented that Schuschnigg still had to contend with “the ‘opposition group’ of the Heimwehr.”¹³¹ According to *The Observer*, it took soothing words from Mussolini “to induce his friend [Starhemberg] to refrain from untoward attacks” against Schuschnigg.¹³²

In May, Schuschnigg’s new VF law of 1936 took steps toward legally codifying his Austrofascist consolidation. It established an even more highly militarized subunit under the

¹²⁹ Rene Kraus, “Oesterreichs Kurs nach Starhembergs Ausscheiden: Der Heimwehrführer ,hat der grösseren österreichischen Idee zuliebe resigniert‘, sagt dieser Beobachter. –Welchen Weg wird das Land unter Schuschniggs Führung gehen?, *New Yorker Staatszeitung*, 16 May 1936, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9612, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1-509/0, Day 8 Photo 76.

¹³⁰ Further stating: “Starhemberg was completely taken off guard...and is by no means reconciled to his fall,” in “Austria’s Internal Problem” *Daily Telegraph*, 25 May 1936, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9612, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1-, 509/0, Day 8 Photo 69.

¹³¹ Papen claimed that the Heimwehren faction originally considered Starhemberg’s dismissal to get him “more freedom of action outside the Government to carry out the Fascist programme” but Papen also stated that it just created “a rather dejected mood” among the Starhemberg loyalists. He also opined that Schuschnigg’s strategy of dealing with any Heimwehren recalcitrance would most likely be “to ‘wear it down’ gradually but systematically, whilst avoiding any open conflict.” Papen, “The Minister in Austria: May 27, 1936,” No. 351, 2019/443755-57, Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945*: C: V, 585 (673 of database).

¹³² “Starhemberg Castle Raided. Nazis Midnight Attempt. A Battle With Police. Search for Arms Foiled. Chancellor and Heimwehr. (From Our Own Correspondent.)” *The Observer*, 24 May 1936, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9612, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1-509/0, Day 8 Photo 66-67.

VF called the Frontmiliz [Front Militia], which according to the *Salzburger Chronik* “serves as a centralization of volunteers fit for military service.”¹³³ Apparently, consolidation came with more subdivision.¹³⁴ Furthermore, the Heimwehren still roamed the land. While the *New Yorker Staatszeitung* would proclaim “the end of the dualism of Schuschnigg-Starhemberg,” Starhemberg’s personal charisma thus lingered: he remained overarching Führer of the Heimwehren paramilitaries.¹³⁵ He also served as a lightning rod for Nazi ire. Contemporaneous with the assault on Starhemberg’s position within the Austrofascist government, the Nazis launched an assault on his estate within the borderland. The *Mühlviertler Nachrichten* reported about a Nazi raid on his Waxenberg Castle, located on the outskirts of Linz. An underground Austrian squad of SA members based out of Oberneukirchen, on the Upper Austrian side of the Bavarian border, broke in and seized weaponry that belonged to the Heimatschutz. The arrival of the gendarmes ended in a shootout.¹³⁶ The Austrian gendarmes repelled the SA men,

¹³³ “Das neue Bundesgesetz über die V.F.” *Salzburger Chronik: mit der illustrierten Beilage „Oesterreichische Woche*,” 22 May 1936, Nummer 117, 72 Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19360522&query=“Frontmiliz”+“Vaterländische”+“Front”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 20 February 2021.

¹³⁴ For the subdivisions in this newly consolidated VF, see Mag. Dr. Gerhard Urbanek, “Realitätsverweigerung oder Panikreaktion? ‚Vaterländische‘ Kommunikationspolitik in Österreich zwischen Juliabkommen 1936, Berchtesgadener Protokoll und ‚Anschluss‘ 1938, (MA Thesis: Universität Wien, 2011), 5–6. E-Theses. Universität Wien/Universitäts Bibliothek, DOI: 10.25365.thesis.15584, AC Number: AC 08766654, Item ID: 15584, <http://othes.univie.ac.at/15584/>, Accessed 20 February 2021.

¹³⁵ Rene Kraus, “Oesterreichs Kurs nach Starhembergs Ausscheiden: Der Heimwehrführer ‚hat der grösseren österreichischen Idee zuliebe resigniert‘, sagt dieser Beobachter. –Welchen Weg wird das Land unter Schuschniggs Führung gehen?, *New Yorker Staatszeitung*, 16 May 1936, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9612, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1-509/0, Day 8 Photo 76.

¹³⁶ Vereitelter Nazi-Anschlag in Waxenberg,” *Mühlviertler Nachrichten: mit der reichbebilderten Beilage „Oesterreichische Woche*,” 29 May 1936, Nummer 22, 48. Jahrgang., Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=mvn&datum=19360529&seite=2&zoom=33&query=“Waxenberg”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 31 January 2021. See also “SA-Stürme im österreichischen Heimwehrzentrum? Ueberraschende Erklärungen des Sicherheitsdirektors von Oberösterreich,” *Posener*

but the occurrence of such an intra-national borderlands struggle contributed to the sense of chaos and uncertainty, as the inhabitants “were terrorized by the incident.”¹³⁷ *The Observer* echoed such concerns by describing a ripple effect of panic:

It is significant of the extreme tension attaching to the general position in Austria that the news of an armed raid by Nazis on Prince Starhemberg’s castle at Wachsenberg [alternate spelling] should cause such a widespread tremor of alarm ... It turns out that the affair was not, as feared by some, the signal of a new ‘putsch,’ but simply a daring, not to say impudent, coup undertaken by a secret Nazi storm troop from a neighbouring village.¹³⁸

Armed extra-legal activity occurred so frequently as to keep the population perpetually en garde—the next Putsch seemed just around the corner, even if this particular instance did not constitute such an attempt. The *Mühlviertler Nachrichten* further reported that such a struggle ultimately led “the inhabitants loyal to the Vaterland [vaterlandstreuen] ... to close ranks in accordance with the New Order in Austria.”¹³⁹ In fascist logic, the omnipresence of struggle served to regenerate affective loyalty for the regime.

The rift between Schuschnigg-Starhemberg also split the rank-and-file. A June 1936 report in Linz, Upper Austria’s capital, commented on an intra-fascist altercation in Innsbruck, Tyrol’s capital. A town hall rally of the VF’s workers’ organization, the Soziale Arbeitsgemeinschaft (Social Work Group, SAG), erupted into a brawl. Heimwehren loyalists

Tageblatt, 27 May 1936, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9612, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1-, 509/0, Day 8 Photo 73.

¹³⁷ “Vereiteter Nazi-Anschlag in Waxenberg,” *Mühlviertler Nachrichten*, 29 May 1936, Nummer 22, 48. Jahrgang., Seite 1, ANNO.

¹³⁸ “Austria’s Internal Problem” *Daily Telegraph*, 25 May 1936, BaBL, R/4902/, 9612, 51, M 207, 45, Blattzahl (fol. 1-, 509/0, Day 8 Photo 69.

¹³⁹ “Vereiteter Nazi-Anschlag in Waxenberg,” *Mühlviertler Nachrichten*, 29 May 1936, Nr. 22, Seite 1, ANNO.

in disguise had infiltrated the meeting.¹⁴⁰ They interrupted the VF speeches and fascist salutes with a countering cry of “Heil Starhemberg!”—the very cry that had so recently been an exclamation of VF loyalty when coupled with “Heil Schuschnigg!”¹⁴¹ But now that Starhemberg’s lost his place as VF Führer, interrupting a SAG meeting with such shouts amounted to a challenge. These Heimwehren loyalists then spilled out into the street, singing a Heimwehren anthem instead a VF one. Despite the interruption and challenge, the VF report still admired the “resounding success” of the emotional gusto among the Heimwehren members. The VF report claimed that its own organization would do well to harness such affective enthusiasm as the “origin and example for our entire movement.”¹⁴² This Führerkampf

¹⁴⁰ *Abschrift: “Die neue Zeit” Linz a.D., Mittwoch den 24. Juni 1936. Innsbruck, am 23. Juni 1936.,* ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, Day 2 Photo 39–40. Despite the name, this SAG sub-organization was a part of the VF and not the socialist movement, whose party and paramilitary group Dollfuss had banned back in 1934. Instead, the VF mobilized workers in such organizations for the purpose of instilling fascist ideology and carrying out state-oriented labor. That said, it would be a mistake to assume all VF-SAG members were fascists; many were more moderate who hoped to advocate for the position of workers in Austria. A petition of six workers following this Innsbruck incident stated that some SAG members felt the fascist greeting of the VF leaders was inappropriate. They asked the organization “to work to prevent future demonstrations of the VF from becoming a stomping ground of fascist demonstrations, because it would no longer be possible for us as Austrian workers to take part in the SAG-gatherings.” They also interestingly drew a distinction between Dollfuss regime and fascism, claiming “we surely confide ourselves to a ‘Dollfuss-Austria,’ but never to a fascist tyranny, which would surely be the most shameful thing for the workers.” The cult of faith surrounding the martyred Dollfuss was thus quite strong as to draw enthusiasm for his regime from even non-fascist workers who perceived his rule as distinct from a fascist dictatorship. However, these six dissenters did not change the fact that the VF leaders and rank-in-file viewed the movement as fascist, as they “opened” their meeting with the “fascist salute.” F. Holzer e.h., et. al, *Abschrift: BO.KIFA. Anlässlich der SAG-Versammlung*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, Day 2 Photo 41.

¹⁴¹ *Abschrift: “Die neue Zeit,”* ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, Day 2 Photo 39–40; Adam, *Der Erste Bundesappell*, 6, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front, Day 5 File 1 Photo 27.

¹⁴² *Abschrift: “Die neue Zeit,”* ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, Day 2 Photo 39–40.

divided loyalties among the Austrofascists, who often viewed one another as both rivals and role models.

These feuds over the “true” Führer of the movement budded from the logic internal to fascists throughout Austria (and throughout Europe, for that matter). This Innsbruck altercation also warranted an official report from the VF’s Tyrolean Landesführer to Schuschnigg back in Vienna. This report included a more detailed narrative, specifying the town hall was at capacity with 1500 attendants, with five hundred additional followers standing outside seeking admittance. His report included assurances that while Heimwehren agents may have shouted “Heil Starhemberg,” the VF retaliated with volleys of “Heil Schuschnigg” and “Heil Dollfuss.” Apparently, a few OSS members also took offense to the cries of “Heil Starhemberg,” given that it affronted the man who had established their paramilitary organization. The federal police, officially loyal to Schuschnigg’s Austrofascist state and thus more inclined to side with his VF, removed some Starhemberg loyalists for verbally accosting two VF members outside of the town hall.¹⁴³ Pluralization of authoritarian, autocratic militias did not bode well for coherence. But perhaps that was exactly the point.

Concluding Reflections

With the conception of the VF, the Ständestaat careened further down the fascist crevasse, seeking to instill affective loyalty to the authoritarian state. They did so by attempting

¹⁴³ Der Landesführer der Vaterländischen Front für Tirol, *An das politische Büro des Bundeskanzlers z.H. des Herrn Ministerialrates Dr. Josef Seidl Wien*. ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, 486/36, Eingelangt 21. VII, Day 2 Photo 37-38.

to construct a mass, revolutionary movement, albeit with limited numerical success. Following Dollfuss's assassination, the question of his authoritarian successor spiraled into a convoluted system of overlapping Führer, with Schuschnigg as the government dictator and Starhemberg as the leader of the supra-party VF. All the while, Austrofascists based their autonomy from German nationals north of the border specifically on their own German nationalism. But grounding sovereignty on the quick sands of contradiction made for a precarious position, especially with an aggressive state across the border espousing unequivocally expansionist German nationalism.

Along those lines, VF Führer Starhemberg continued his fiery rhetoric, especially when addressing his Heimwehren supporters. His penchant for incendiary discourse remained particularly true vis-à-vis a potential Anschluss. Starhemberg clarified to his Heimwehren base that he would not accept a Nazi-dominated Anschluss. But he did offer what he saw as a viable resolution to the Austrian puzzle: "There is for us just a single solution to the großdeutsch idea, if the absolute and uncontestable guarantee is given, that Austria alone has the leadership in this großdeutsch Reich. But that would not actually be a großdeutsch Reich, but rather the großösterreichisch Reich."¹⁴⁴ Here he directly delineated the Austrofascist conundrum: großdeutsch grandeur that preserved Austria's predominance formed an admiral, desirable goal. So long as the bastion of southeastern Germandom stood as hegemon, Austrian regionalism and großdeutsch nationalism went hand-in-glove.¹⁴⁵ In the same speech, he

¹⁴⁴ "Das Vaterland an oberster Stelle." *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 12 December 1935, Folge 286, 65. Jahrgang, Seite 10, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19351212&seite=10&zoom=33&query=Starhemberg&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

¹⁴⁵ Building on Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 1-15, 36-38, 232-236.

contorted his words to fit a regionalist square into the nationalist circle, drawing a distinction between “österreichische” and “nationalistische,” eschewing the latter in favor of the former. But he immediately clarified that “österreichisch” meant “automatically and self-evidently” being “good-German [gut-deutsch].”¹⁴⁶ Austrians embodied the “good” Germans, never to subordinate to the Nazi German nation-state. He still couched his Austrofascist sense of self in German terms. To Austrofascists, the Nazi brand of nationalism simply placed a new swastika label onto old Prussian knockoffs—inauthentic, tasteless, and brutal in comparison to their own, genuine German sensibilities.

Furthermore, as Italy and Germany became closer and closer, Austria lost its protector against Nazi aggression. But for about two years from 1934 to 1936, Austrofascist leaders navigated their ship of state between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, often harnessing Mussolini’s Scylla to their advantage against Hitler’s Charybdis. The traditional literature tends to condemn the Austrofascist ship to a capsizing fate for having too many captains—mostly too naïve, myopic, powerless, and too debilitated by internal feuds.¹⁴⁷ But the Austrofascist ship of state remained afloat not despite but specifically because of its bearing between fascist regimes. Not that we should lionize the Austrofascist state. It constituted a morally reprehensible, ruthless regime that relied on violence, persecution, intimidation, and

¹⁴⁶ “Das Vaterland an oberster Stelle.” *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 12 December 1935, Folge 286, Seite 10, ANNO.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, F. L. Carsten, *Fascist Movements in Austria: From Schönerer to Hitler* (London: SAGE Publications, 1977), 333–334. F.L. Carsten, *The Rise of Fascism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982 [1967]), 228–229. Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 5–6, 282–284.

paramilitary enforcement; Dollfuss, Schuschnigg, and Starhemberg embodied authoritarian, fascistizing leaders in their own right.¹⁴⁸

But neither should we dismiss the Austrofascist state, as it mobilized paramilitary groups for nefarious purposes, and they found potent regionalist channels for their völkisch sentiments. By the spring of 1936, Schuschnigg emerged from this leadership struggle as the leader of both the state and the VF, a role he would use to engage with Hitler on his own fascist terms. However, Starhemberg's myriad Heimwehren and Schuschnigg's own OSS carried on as right-wing rivals, to say nothing of the ongoing machinations of the Nazis. Schuschnigg still needed to reckon with this pluralized set of paramilitaries both within Austria and across the Bavarian border.

¹⁴⁸ For a wonderful account of the more recent but no less heated Geschichtspolitik surrounding Dollfuss, see Lucile Dreidemy, "Dollfuss's Place in the Austrian National Mythscape," Chapter 5 in *Myths in Austrian History: Construction and Deconstruction, Contemporary Austrian Studies* 29, eds. Günter Bischof, March Landry, and Christian Karner (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2020), 111–128, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1f8xc9w.8>, Accessed 9 February 2021.

Chapter 4 Two *Brudervölker*, Two *Bruderreiche*, Two Führer: Austrofascist Engagement with Nazism, 1936–1938

From the summer of 1936 until the start of 1938, internecine struggles among right-wing paramilitaries only intensified. During this period, the Austrofascist Vaterländische Front (Fatherland/Patriotic Front, VF) subsumed other extant right-wing paramilitaries in Austria—the Ostmärkische Sturmsharen (Storm Troopers of the Eastern March, OSS) and Heimwehren (Home Guards). This *Gleichschaltung* (forced synchronization) of right-wing paramilitaries created internal friction, all as this now-bloated VF engaged with the Austrian and German Nazis. I argue that these German-speaking fascists engaged in two senses of the verb: as fascist friends participating in fraternal *großdeutsch* (greater German)/*völkisch* (ethno-nationalist) projects and as adversaries fighting in fratricidal conflicts of terror, assassinations, and street brawls.¹ The disarray and chaos in the intra-national borderland spiraled as the VF and the Nazis tried to impose versions of unity onto this disputed space. As the Nazis employed an infamous maxim of one Volk, one Reich, one Führer, a more accurate adage for these two German-speaking states in the mid to late 1930s would be: two *Brudervölker* (brother peoples), two *Bruderreiche* (brother states), two Führer.²

¹ Robert von Dassanowsky's brilliant study of Austrian film during this context labeled the two fascist belief systems thusly: "The ease with which the ideological codes of these parallel conflicting fascisms overlap or mix is striking in films throughout the period." See Robert von Dassanowsky, "Snow-Blinded: The Alps contra Vienna in Austrian Entertainment Film at the *Anschluss*," *Austrian Studies* 18 (Modern Humanities Research Association: 2010): 106, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41201234>, Accessed 12 February 2021.

² For such terminology, see Der Bürgermeister der Landeshauptstadt Klagenfurt, *Hochverehrter Herr Bundeskanzler!* Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Wien (ÖSaW), BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 'P36 F, 705/36, Eingelangt: 29.7, AW/35/78, Day 8 Photo 92. Hauptgruppenleiter für die Hauptgruppenleitung Vaterländische Front Hauptgruppe Wieselburg a./Erlauf, *Hochwohlgeboren Herrn Bundeskanzler Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg Wien I.*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 'P36 F, 802/36, Eingelangt: 30.7, Day 8

This chapter further contends that the Austrofascists sought Nazi respect for Austrian independence through a two-pronged response of both “appeasement” and punishment, depending on the situation.³ A logic wove these seemingly contradictory impulses together. The Austrofascist vacillation between cracking down and offering olive branches stemmed from the constitutive contradiction between regionalism and nationalism. Austrofascists and Nazis had much common ground—shared emotional fantasies of German nationalism, in addition to common fascist beliefs, authoritarianism, and zealous anti-Bolshevism. These impulses created ample space for cooperation. Yet deadly fault lines lurked beneath this common ground—Austrian regionalists’ desires for their sovereignty to be left alone, personal power struggles, and the backlash to any specific solution to the Austrian question. Seismic disagreements pulsed from these tectonic rifts, generating violence and destruction. As historian Hanns Haas rightly stated, “The borderline of the prevailing national level of consciousness was never totally clear. The Ständestaat’s Austrian ideology was powerfully colored as *gesamtdeutsch*.”⁴ This chapter launches from that perspective to advance even further. The constitutive contradiction between regional Austrian and national German identifications locked the borderland in a state of perpetual uncertainty. The fascists in Austria

Photo 12. Prof. Paul Sturm, *An Herrn Bundeskanzler Dr. von Schuschnigg*, *Wien*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Politische Büro K2 575 ‘P36 F, 727/36, Eingelangt: 29.7, Day 8 Photo 71.

³ Starhemberg’s 1942 memoir would label Schuschnigg’s initial policies after assuming leadership as “appeasement of the Nazis.” Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 169, 246.

⁴ Hanns Haas, “Der ‚Anschluss‘”, Kapitel 1 in *NS Herrschaft in Österreich: Ein Handbuch*, Hg. von Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch, Wolfgang Neugebauer, Reinhard Sieder (Wien: öbv & hpt VerlagsgmbH & Co. KG, 2001), 29. In many ways a foundational claim also for Julie Thorpe’s great work. Julie Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933–38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 1–15, 36–38, 232–236.

trod this fault line of grossdeutsch friendship and regionalist rivalry. They spent years in this precarious balancing act, tapping their common ground with the Nazis to unearth großdeutsch affect. But harnessing that affect to fuel regional autonomy also jettisoned the Nazis toward annexation.

An Agreement Between Two Führer: The 1936 Juli-Abkommen

Despite the tension, terror, street fights, failed and successful assassinations, Putsch attempts, party banning, and demonstrations between the Austrofascist Ständestaat and Nazi Germany, Austrofascist Führer Kurt Schuschnigg reached an accord with Adolf Hitler in 1936. In their agreement, Hitler affirmed that Germany would respect the borders of the independent Austrofascist state. Peace and Austrian autonomy seemed guaranteed; the chess match played out on the border between the two regimes seemed to conclude in a draw of mutual respect. Immediately thereafter, an outpouring of epistolary support from Austria and Germany inundated Schuschnigg's office. Schuschnigg seemed to be the rational leader who had managed Hitler's eccentricities, avoided an unnecessary conflict, "normalized" relations between the two states, and reaffirmed Austria's independence.⁵ One Viennese expressed joy at the "compromise [Ausgleich] between Austria and Germany," a not-so-subtle reference to the 1867 Ausgleich between Austria and Hungary. That compromise had established the Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, in which Hungary attained home rule over domestic affairs

⁵ Der Bürgermeister der Landeshauptstadt Klagenfurt, *Hochverehrter Herr Bundeskanzler!* Österreichisches Staatsarchiv Wien (ÖSaW), BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 'P36 F, 705/36, Eingelangt: 29.7, AW/35/78, Day 8 Photo 92.

but worked with Austria for a joint foreign policy. This Viennese viewed Austrian own self-rule as sacrosanct, but from a larger perspective, he saw its fate as inseparable from Germany's.⁶

These letters repeatedly expressed that German comprised the main national demographic of each state. On 24 July, the Chancellor and Legal Advisor of the Diocese of Cologne claimed to be speaking on behalf of “many parts of the German Reich” when he expressed his jubilation to Schuschnigg: “May the treaty be a work of peace, which serves the creation of peace across the borders of both German Reichs and out to all of Europe.”⁷ Another letter from the Bürgermeister of the Austrian town of Strasswalchen expressed similar joy: “May this great deed, which has again brought the Völker of both German states—Austria and Germany—into a relationship like it has been throughout the centuries, bring blessing not only to our fatherland but also to all of Germandom and bring peace to all of Europe.”⁸ To both of them, constructive relations between these two German states comprised the antidote to Europe's economic maladies and ethno-demographic tensions.

And yet, these letter writers lived in a historical epoch that triumphed unified, uniform nation-states as the ideal apex in the history of human political organization.⁹ Schuschnigg's

⁶ Präsidenten Herrn Kammerrat Jng. Leopold Schimek, *1 Schrieben des Präsidenten. Detaillisten-Verband in Wien, [Ku]ndgebung des Detaillistenverbandes zum Österreichisch-Deutschen Ausgleich*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 'P36 F, 746/36, Eingelangt: 30.7, Day 8 Photo 57-58.

⁷ Sr. Hochwohlgeboren Herrn Rechtsanwalt Dr. Karl Hauke Kanzler und Justitiar des Erzbistums Köln, *Sehr geehrter Herr Kanzler: Wien*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 'P36 F, 693/36, Day 8 Photo 139.

⁸ [Signature Illegible] Landstand und Bürgermeister von Strasswalchen bei Salzburg, *Marktgemeinde Straßwalchen St. Hochwolgeboren [sic] Herrn Kurth [sic] von Schuschnigg Bundeskanzler in Wien, 1. Ballhausplatz*. ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 'P36 F, 760/36, Eingelangt: 30.7, Day 8 Photo 45.

⁹ See Eric Weitz, “From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions,” *The American Historical*

supporters came to terms with the division of the loosely imagined German *Kulturnation* (cultural nation) into a pair of *Staatsnationen* (nation-states) by viewing the two as distinct, while belonging to the same broader Germanic realm. A letter from a Viennese resident to the Austrian Governor of Carinthia praised this agreement, “which again established the reputation of Austria in German space.”¹⁰ The letter writers sought to square the circle that both Austria and Germany contained Germans, but Austrians’ distinctiveness necessitated autonomy. Still, even with Austrian sovereignty, they circumscribed Austria “in German space.” These letters revealed the affective motor behind the intra-national borderland—an ardent desire for independence from Germany while still being inseparable from such “German space.”¹¹

The writers also reconciled this regional-national tension by constructing and projecting a feeling of national fraternity between the Germans and Austrians. An anonymous letter (the writer claimed to be “the child of the glorious [Austrian] army”) expressed gratitude to Schuschnigg for this treaty that preserved “economic cooperation ... with the German brothers, which will hopefully create more bread and work again.”¹² A Viennese teacher claimed that the “reconciliation with our German brothers” amounted to a “feat,” while

Review 113, no. 5 (December 2008): 1313–1343, <https://www.jstor.com/stable/30223433>, Accessed 29 July 2020.

¹⁰ Sr. Hochwohlgeboren Herrn Landeshauptmann Generalmajor Ludwig Huelgerth Klagenfurt Landhaus, *Sehr geehrter Herr Landeshauptmann!*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 ‘P36 F, 622/36, Day 8 Photo 135.

¹¹ Huelgerth, *Landeshauptmann!*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 F, 622/36, Day 8 Photo 135.

¹² *Hochverehrter Herr Bundeskanzler! Retter von Österreich!*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 ‘P36 F, 833/36, Eingelangt, 2.8, Day 8 Photo 3.

another letter thanked the Austrian Führer for making peace with the “brother Volk.”¹³ One accepted Austria’s place as the little brother, expressing joy at the “normalization of relationship to our big German brother Volk.”¹⁴ Another labeled the Nazi German state itself as the “Bruderreich.”¹⁵ This sentiment of two fraternal Völker also cut both ways: a letter from Heidelberg rejoiced at the “friendship with the Austrian Brudervolk ... God bless this step for both Völker, who are of one blood.”¹⁶ Despite the recent strain on diplomatic relations, Germans and Austrians conceptualized each other as “brothers,” blood-related and fraternal, but not identical. As such, these writers saw independence and coexistence as a healthier prescription than irredentist unity. In a century when many people uncritically championed uniform nation-states, inhabitants of the intra-national borderland synthesized fraternal national cooperation with clear-cut state autonomy.¹⁷

Schuschnigg’s popularity soared for the reasons these letters articulated. Schuschnigg also appeared to resolve Austria’s puzzling status as an intra-national borderland. By getting Hitler to assure Austria’s autonomy, Schuschnigg seemed to remove the general sense of uncertainty surrounding Austro-Bavarian border region. In August, an official telephone

¹³ Adele O. Weifs, *Euer Excellenz Hochverehrter Herr Bundeskanzler!*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Politische Büro K2 575 ‘P36 F, 732/36, Eingelangt: 29.7, Day 8 Photo 65–67. Wilfried Johannes Tertsch, *Hochverehrter Herr Bundeskanzler!*, ÖSAW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 ‘P36 F, 690/36, Eingelangt: 28.7, Day 8 Photo 101.

¹⁴ Bürgermeister Klagenfurt, *Herr Bundeskanzler!*, ÖSAW, BkA-Pr. Pol. Bü. K2 F, 705/36, Day 8 Photo 92.

¹⁵ Hauptgruppenleiter für die Hauptgruppenleitung Vaterländische Front Hauptgruppe Wieselburg a./Erlauf, *Hochwohlgeboren Herrn Bundeskanzler Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg Wien I.*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 ‘P36 F, 802/36, Eingelangt: 30.7, Day 8 Photo 12.

¹⁶ Prof. Paul Sturm, *An Herrn Bundeskanzler Dr. von Schuschnigg, Wien.*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Politische Büro K2 575 ‘P36 F, 727/36, Eingelangt: 29.7, Day 8 Photo 71.

¹⁷ Weitz, “Vienna to the Paris System,” 1313–1343.

transcription from Salzburg reported on the jubilation about Austria's protected status: "The Heimatschutz is greatly pleased ... O.S.S. very excited." The daily anxiety of what drama would happen next lessened because the two Führer seemed to secure peaceful coexistence for inhabitants around the border: "Salzburg, Hallein, and the larger villages have flown [their] flags ... The neighboring Bavarian villages have flown [their] flags."¹⁸ US analysts commented on the apparent success as well, applauding that these two German states managed their affairs maturely without the need for arbitration.¹⁹ Schuschnigg's diplomatic win looked like the sort of definitive achievement that had eluded the previous democratic regime.

But any Austrians who clung to fraternal coexistence faced a rude awakening. The same telephone call out of Salzburg also reported lingering anxiety: within the Heimatschutz there were "individual apprehensive utterances;" "in VF-circles certain caution, it is feared that the Pact will not be held;" "by stalwart National Socialists [there is] dismay." In Salzburg, in the shadow of the red-white-red Austrian banners fluttered figurative red flags: "yesterday and today many German cars have met in Salzburg."²⁰ Sure enough, an agreement on paper did not sure up the border in practices—diplomatic agreements meant little to Hitler, a lesson the Austrofascist Führer learned earlier than other European statesmen. The chess match on the

¹⁸ "Schriftlicher Nachtrag zu einem telefonischen Stimmungsbereich aus Salzburg," 15 August 1936, 2231/284, cited in *Österreich! und Front Heil! Aus den Akten des Generalsekretariats der Vaterländischen Front Innenansichten eines Regimes*, Hg. Robert Kriechbaumer (Wien, Köln, Weimar: Böhlau Verlag Ges. m. b. H. un Co. KG, 2005), 377.

¹⁹ Though the assessment was published in 1937, the appreciation of this agreement should not be dismissed as myopic or naïve. The diplomatic accord seemed legitimate, and Hitler's penchant for breaking promises was not yet well known. M. Margaret Ball, *Post-War German-Austrian Relations: The Anschluss Movement, 1918-1936* (Stanford University: Stanford University Press, 1937), 266.

²⁰ "Einem telefonischen Stimmungsbereich aus Salzburg," *Österreich! und Front Heil*, 377.

Austro-Bavarian border advanced in intensity and tempo, with the Juli-Abkommen less a stalemate and more Hitler's ploy to draw Schuschnigg closer to checkmate.

"Front Heil – Loyalty to Austria!"²¹ Subsuming the OSS & Heimwehren to the VF

To continue in the chess match against Hitler, Schuschnigg needed the loyalty of his own pieces. That meant bringing into line his bishops—the staunchly Catholic OSS. The pluralization of right-wing paramilitaries and the ever-present *Führerfrage* (leadership question) led Schuschnigg to see the myriad of such organizations as rivals to the Austrofascist regime and its umbrella organization, the VF. The *Salzburger Chronik* reported on his shifting approach to the OSS just one month before the Juli-Abkommen with Hitler. He apparently told his OSS that the "Sturmscharbewegung [Storm Trooper movement] is a constitutive part of the Vaterländische Front," one that should focus on "nurturing... the true Austrian spirit and the integral Austrian confession. The nurturing of social thinking in the direction of the true Volksgemeinschaft remains one of the most crucial points in our cultural program." As such, he issued an alert that the same group he had formed and armed in 1930 would have to surrender its weapons. He intimated that the spirit of the OSS would endure in the umbrella VF, but he stated his resolve unequivocally. The sheer number of paramilitaries might lead such groups "to compete with other organizations, which is as senseless as it is undesirable and

²¹ Valediction found on: Von der Gauführung Steyr-Stadt, *An das Generalsekretariat der Vaterl. Front*, *Wien, I., Am Hof 4.*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, 2638/36, Day 2 Photo 20–22, contained within the file of Der Geschäftsführende Landessekretär der Vaterländischen Front für Oberösterreich, *Hochwohlgeboren Herrn Ministerialrat Dr. Josef Seidl, Leiter des politischen Bureaus im Bundeskanzleramte Wien, I., Ballhausplatz. Hochgeehrter Herr Ministerialrat!*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, 1498/36, Day 2 Photo 19.

therefore has to stop.” He made clear the writing on the wall for the OSS: organizational “consolidation.”²²

With his popularity surging in the middle of 1936, Schuschnigg moved to neutralize the OSS officially.²³ He liquidated them in October, claiming that the OSS had already succeeded in regenerating all things old and in fusing German nationalism with Austrian regionalism. According to the *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, he lauded his OSS because it

²² “Die Politik der OSS: Der Bundeskanzler über die Sturmscharpolitik,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 18 & 20 June 1936, Nummer 140, 72. Jahrgang, Seite 4, ANNO – AustriaN Newspapers Online, *Historische österreichische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19360620&seite=4&zoom=33&query=“Schuschnigg”%2B“Sturmscharen”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

²³ To be sure, Schuschnigg’s accord with Hitler was not without its critics. A Catholic activist working on behalf of “the Committee to Struggle for a Catholic Austria” wrote about the two-year anniversary of Dollfuss’s assassination, in which he offered unfettered praise for the “martyred Chancellor” who “gave his life for this fatherland and for his opposition to brown fascism [Nazism].” Clearly, this Catholic activist favored Dollfuss, but he did not appear to be fascist, a testament to Dollfuss’s ability to garner support from across a spectrum of individuals with conservative, patriotic, and Catholic sympathies. Schuschnigg’s recent treaty with Hitler, however, received nothing but unfettered scorn: “Schuschnigg has betrayed us!!! Now is it time, to overturn the activities of this traitor!” This conservative Catholic’s stance was that the Nazis were liars, so any accord with them was folly: “Is Herr Schuschnigg really so naïve to believe that the contractual agreement of Hitler means National Socialism in Austria is an internal affair or is considered as a real guarantee against the Gleichschaltung or Anschluss efforts of the Third Reich? ... By this peace, Austria’s independence is more compromised than ever before. Catholics of Austria! Do we want our freedom, do we want the freedom of our country, do we want to defend the beliefs of our fathers, do we want to prevent Austria from becoming a province of the Third Reich? Then we must fight in a united Front of everyone, which champions Austrian independence against National Socialism ... The torch bearers of the Third Reich will be led in a triumphal way through Austria, above all through Vienna. ... German Swastika newspapers, German ‘tourists’ adorned with the Swastika, will infest Austria. Those are the first consequences and impacts of a treaty with the 3.Reich. [sic] ... At this pace, Austria is inscribed in the war front of Europe. Austrian mothers, do you want your husbands and sons to bleed to death on the battlefields of Europe for the greatness of the 3.Reich [sic], for the claim to power of a megalomaniac dictator! No! We all want peace. But we will only secure peace, if our country, in close league with the friends of peace around the entire world, will lead the struggle against fascism, above all against the most violent expression of it [fascism], against National Socialism!” Der Kampf ausschuss [sic] der Katholiken Österreichs, *Lesen Weitergeben Anschlagen, Christliches Volk von Österreich!*, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BaBL), NS 26/2070, (fol. 1–), Pages 1–3, Day 5 Photos 35–37.

carried the Catholic and ostmarkdeutsch program of the Vaterland of today's generation into consciousness. So the Ostmärkische Sturmsharen became the spearhead of old-Austrian thought into new times. Our goal was to evolve the immortals of the old Austria, who live in our memories, into contemporary, new power. The distinctive sign of our movement was to lead the struggle for freedom for the new Heimat [home], hand in hand with others who like us wanted the new Austria. To serve the eternal Austria in German loyalty, that was the paragon and the deepest reason of existence of our movement.²⁴

With the OSS's successful transition from a conservative to a regenerative right-wing (even fascist) movement, he now wanted to bring it into the VF's fold.²⁵ All the while, he effused his Austrian regionalism with German nationalism.²⁶ The liquidation occurred with the sublimation of other right-wing organizations and committees outside of the official Austrofascist hierarchy, whose loyalties might be elsewhere.²⁷ Soon after the announcement, the VF put on a spectacular show of force in Vienna and Lower Austria with well over 300,000

²⁴ "Kanzler Dr. Schuschnigg an die Sturmsharen, *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger: Tagblatt mit der Abendausgabe JZ Immsbrucker Zeitung und der illustrierten Wochenbeilage Weltguck*, 14 October 1936, Nummer 237, 29. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19361014&query='Schuschnigg'+Sturmsharen'&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

²⁵ A previous Nazi communiqué likewise stated Schuschnigg's tactic of saying the OSS would remain in a key "ideological" sense but not in any organizational sense. "A clever move by the Chancellor in this direction is his declaration that his Sturmsharen will in future [sic] be only an ideological army. With this, he has taken the first step towards the dissolution of the defence formations [*Wehrverbände*] and the further elimination of the Heimwehr." Franz von Papen, "The Minister in Austria to the Führer and Chancellor: Vienna, April 21, 1936. II Oe. 1153. Political Report," No. 288, 6081/E451388-92, Germany Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Series C (1933-1937): The Third Reich: First Phase: Volume II: October 14, 1933-June 13, 1934*, Department of State Publication 6750 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), 457 (543 in database), Original from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Digitized by Google, Available on HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015033857254&view=2up&seq=543&q1=Heimwehr>, Accessed 9 February 2021.

²⁶ "Kanzler Dr. Schuschnigg," *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, 14 October 1936, 237, Seite 2, ANNO.

²⁷ "Die Auflösung der Wehrverbände," *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, 14 October 1936, Nr. 237, 29. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19361014&seite=1&zoom=33&query='Schuschnigg'%2BSturmsharen'&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

participants, according to the Reichspost.²⁸ The VF acquired a new role as official “Liquidator of the Disbanded Armed Organizations,” meaning it oversaw the shutdown of various paramilitaries.²⁹

Disintegrating these fascist organizations—or more euphemistically, integrating them within the VF—amounted to a Gleichschaltung of such groups to the supposedly one, true Austrofascist organization. It remained ripe for potential resistance, especially since militiamen saw themselves as the vanguard against the Nazis onslaught. On 16 October 1936, Schuschnigg’s office received a packet of documents demonstrating the resilience (or recalcitrance) of the now-disbanded OSS.³⁰ The dossier reported that an OSS division in the Styrian town of Leoben refused to give up overnight. OSS Gauführer Dr. Alfred Ferstl reported on 14 October 1936 to his Landesführer that his group had continued the struggle for Austria and implied that it would continue to do so.³¹ Ferstl proclaimed, “Despite the

²⁸ “350.000 beim Frontappell für Wien und N.-Oest. Der große Appell.,” *Reichspost: Unabhängiges Tagblatt für das christliche Volk*, 19 October 1936, Nummer 289, 43. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=rpt&datum=19361019&query=“Schuschnigg”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021. Michael Carter-Sinclair put the estimated number of attendees in Vienna alone at 360,000. Michael Carter-Sinclair, “Building a Christian and German Austria? 1934–8,” Chapter 9 in *Vienna’s ‘respectable’ antisemites: A Study of the Christian Social movement* (Manchester University Press, 2021), 217, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1fqvkqg.15>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

²⁹ From the Wiener Zeitung, cited in *Bundesgesetz über die Auflösung der freiwilligen Wehrverbände*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K1 574 1936 C AdR, Day 6 Photo 229–230.

³⁰ Viktor Kollars, *Sehr verehrter Herr Bundeskanzler!*, 16 October 1936, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 1936 O (1–1000) 576 AdR, 1374/36/H1, Dient zur Vormerkung. Einlegen 1 November 1936, /36 11 I 1934, *Schuschnigg Herrn Baden b. O. 64/37*, Day 2 Photo 87.

³¹ The report is addressed to “Hochverehrter Herr Landesführer,” but no name nor organization is given for this recipient. It was presumably Ferstl’s superior within the OSS but could also perhaps have been his new boss in the VF. Either way, the document speaks to the OSS’s combination of competing with their leaders and yet cooperating with them. Dr. Alfred Ferstl e.h. Gauführer, *Abschrift Dienststelle: Gauführung Leoben, am 14. Oktober 1936, Hochverehrter Herr Landesführer*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 1936 O 576 AdR, 1374/36/H1, Dient zur Vormerkung. Einlegen 1 November 1936, Day 2 Photo 88.

dissolution of the armed organizations, lately the Leoben OSS was right to remain able to put up a fight.” The document identified the culprit: “the Nazis who misuse every visit of Reich German motorcades as an opportunity to demonstrate.” This time it was a convoy of Nazi German buses, and on the main town square, Austrian Nazis awaited their northern Nazi neighbors:

naturally, they [the German Nazis] were greeted in front of the Grand Hotel with cries of Heil and raised hands. Now the O.S.S. stepped into action. With cries for Austria, we charged against the Nazis and trounced these super-shouters with every trick in the book. These jokers were so surprised, that they initially did not fight back. When they were clobbered enough and finally came to their senses, the [Austrian] police stepped in and took them into their custody. By early Tuesday they were already taken into prison. After the brawl, we hauled through the inner city to the Dollfußplatz with constant cries of “Loyalty to the Ostmark” and cries of Austria

Though the OSS defeated the Nazis—well, at least according to the bravado of their own braggadocios report—the police did not afford the OSS the chance to revel. The police cleared the OSS from the main square and sealed it. Despite this slight, the OSS leader boasted that “this campaign of the O.S.S. in which the Gauführer of the V.F., Obering. Pichler personally took part in the frontline ranks, was a fully successful affair.”³² The OSS leader framed his forbidden yet patriotic activism in terms of resisting Nazism, terms his superior might find permissible. He also made sure to point out this OSS operation had the support (and even participation) of the local VF leader. In his mind, the VF activists serving on the frontlines instead of on Viennese committees condoned such OSS vigilante defiance.

³² Ferstl, *Abschrift Gauführung Leoben*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 1936 O 576 AdR, 1374/36/H1, Day 2 Photo 88.

Ferstl remained so unconcerned about punishment that he openly admitted his men eagerly defied their leaders' explicit wishes. Ferstl reported that the OSS members participated "with great gusto and are looking forward to the next opportunity to thrash the Nazis," and he added that the "hopes that Herr Landesführer will be pleased with us." Though these OSS participants defied their liquidation orders, they still saw themselves as loyal to their superiors.³³ The fascist contradiction between cooperation and competition, obedience and defiance, and loyalty and rivalry played out in the report and on the Dollfussplatz of Leoben. All the while, chaos remained the only consistency for Austrians whose streets, villages, towns, and cities boiled over with right-wingers so obsessed with order.

A similar incident occurred on the same day in Graz, whereby former OSS members, though technically extra-legal (even illegal), cooperated with the VF to counter local Nazis. "Reliable Sturmschärler [Storm Troopers]" stood side by side with "Front soldiers wherever possible" ready for a showdown with Nazis on the street that connected the Bismarckplatz and

³³ Ferstl even cordially invited the Landesführer to join the OSS of Donawitz [Austrian town] at their upcoming dance and that "it would make us infinitely happy" if the supervisor could also join their upcoming group ski trip in the nearby Alpine range – indeed, they were getting a great deal on the cabin because one of their members was now in charge of the lodge. Ferstl, *Abschrift Gauführung Leoben*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 1936 O 576 AdR, 1374/36/H1, Day 2 Photo 89. The very next day, an OSS official in Klagenfurt wrote to Schuschnigg to express his distress about the fate of the OSS. He respectfully pointed out that the dissolution of the OSS would embolden both the Nazis and the Bolsheviks. He claimed that now the Nazis in particular "now act, as if they are already the lords in Austria." His point to Schuschnigg was clear: his paramilitary men had maintained order and stability, but now the Nazi floodwaters would be unleashed. He concluded with a stark call to arms: "We plead with the Herr Chancellor to strike with sanctions, with which the activities of these illegals in Carinthia will be contained." Landesführer of Carinthia in Klagenfurt, *Ostmärkische Sturmsharen in LIQUIDATION Sr. Exzellenz Herrn Bundeskanzler Dr. Kurt von Schuschnigg*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 1936 O 576 AdR, 1374/36/H1, Dient zur Vormerkung. Einlegen 1 November 1936, Day 2 Photo 94-95.

the Dollfußring.³⁴ That these groups prepared for a showdown with Nazis on a street intersecting two areas named for Bismarck and Dollfuss seems almost too perfectly symbolic to be true. On one side stood a square named after the nineteenth-century orchestrator of Prussian dominance over and exclusion of Austria from the German nation-state; on the other extended a circle of broad avenues named after the twentieth-century Austrofascist champion of defiance against perceived Prussian browbeating. The Austrofascists triggered this liminal space by lining it with an inter-paramilitary cordon. Any Nazi attempt to Bismarck-square the Dollfuss-circle would erupt in intra-fascist, intra-national fighting.

But no Nazis greeted this OSS phalanx. Instead, in a different area of the city, Austrofascist youth organizations gathered for a trip to Vienna. Some Austrofascists “were greeted by a large group (circa 50 people) ... loudly shouting “Pfui [Fooey/Boo/Yuck] Schuschnigg!”³⁵ Five Austrofascists found themselves against fifty Nazis, and the Austrofascist activists immediately retorted

with calls of ‘Loyalty to the Ostmark’ and ‘Heil Schuschnigg’. It came to a short skirmish, which lasted barely 30 seconds. In which one of the five comrades is believed to have struck a Nazi. A Nazi called: ‘Your cripple [sic] is retreating!’ to which a comrade asked him ‘if he would like a slap across the face.’

The Nazi with a penchant for ablest slurs “ran immediately to the police” for protection. Like most bullies confronted with the very violence that they dealt, the Nazis sought protection from an authority figure, who brought the Austrofascists into custody. The Austrian police

³⁴ *Bericht ... Graz am 16. Oktober 1936*. ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 1936 O 576 AdR, 1374/36/H1, Dient zur Vormerkung, Einlegen 1 November 1936, Day 2 Photo 91.

³⁵ *Bericht*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 1936 O 576 AdR, 1374/36/H1, Day 2 Photo 91.

held “All in all, about 15 comrades from the Sturmscharen,” who were “merely and shortly interrogated.” Eventually, “the Landesleiter of the V.F., Dr. Alfons Gorbach and Major Szigethy, arrived and received in the station a debriefing of the incident and inquired about the injured. Shortly hence the comrades were able to leave from the station.”³⁶ Such reports demonstrated the dizzying array of members beholden to various fascist gangs—some legal, others not—with the added complication of the Austrian police. They temporarily detained the Austrofascist aggressors, yet they did not administer punishments to Austrofascists who assaulted Nazis. Along those lines, the local VF leaders had enough clout to secure the release of the OSS agents.

True to the pattern of cooperation and competition, however, the former OSS participants and longstanding VF members did not always close ranks smoothly. Intra-fascist rivalries manifested themselves in administrative feuds. Among paranoid fascist bureaucrats so obsessed with pedigrees, any previous participation in a now-disbanded militia created suspicion. Franz Tauscheck, “former Commandant of OSS-Reg. 21,” reported to Schuschnigg in November about ongoing VF discrimination against his previous OSS rank-and-file members.³⁷ He reported with dismay that the local VF leader, Dr. Franz Wedrac, had said that he could “accept no one from the O.S.S. into the district management” of the VF. The OSS

³⁶ *Bericht*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 1936 O 576 AdR, 1374/36/H1, 2, Day 2 Photo 92.

³⁷ Dir. Franz Tauscheck ehem.Kmdt.der OSS-Reg.21, *Abschrift. Mürrzzuschalg, am 13.11.1936, Bericht des Verhandlungsführers*, in *Ostmärkische Sturmscharen Landesführung Steiermark Liquidierungsstelle der ostmärkischen Sturmscharen Graz, Karmeliterplatz Nr. 6/11 Hochwohlgeboren Herrn Ministerialrat Dr. Seidl, in Wien I Bundeskanzleramt*, 1520/36/Hi Dient zur Kenntnis und Vormerkung. Eingelegen. 21 November 1936. ÖSaW, BkA – Pr. Polit Bureau K3 576 1936 O AdR, 576/36 11.I.1937 *Schuschnigg Heim Baden b. O.* 64/37 O, 1520/36 Day 2 Photo 86.

Commandant complained that “this logic from the local functionary is completely incomprehensible.”³⁸ He concluded:

The undersigned, as leader of negotiations, is of the opinion that these terms for the O.S.S. are thus humiliating ... Our Reichsführer [Schuschnigg] is the Führer of the state and of the V.F., and here, prominent Sturmschärler are thus treated as inferior and even the Landesführer [of the former OSS] is placed as a non-influential personality. We urgently request the Herr Bundeskanzler to arrange that change will finally be created here.³⁹

Such bureaucratic bickering illustrated the dynamic of intra-fascist relations. While striving for the goal of Austrian autonomy, fascists in the VF projected their paranoia onto the paramilitary lineages of their supposed comrades to assess their qualifications and loyalties. Paramilitary rivalries lingered after the official consolidation of the OSS under the VF, threatening to expose weaknesses in the united “Front” against the Nazis.

To have any chance of staying in the chess game against Hitler, Schuschnigg needed to rein in his knights—the Heimwehren followers of Prince Starhemberg. Schuschnigg thus also moved for their dissolution and incorporation into his VF. If the OSS balked at their subordination, the Heimwehren did not buck, surprisingly. At least, not at first. A few days prior to the official announcement of the Heimwehren dissolution, Starhemberg delivered a farewell speech to his followers, during which he read the writing on the wall. He articulated the need to rally around Schuschnigg as the singular Führer of Austria. His conciliation served both as a pragmatic acceptance of Schuschnigg’s victory in the *Führerkampf* (leadership

³⁸ Tanscheck, *Abschrift. Bericht des Verhandlungsführers*, ÖSaW, BkA – Pr. Polit Bureau K3 576 1936 O AdR, 576/36 11.I.1937 *Schuschnigg Heim Baden b. O. 64/37 O*, 1520/36, Day 2 Photo 85.

³⁹ Tanscheck, *Abschrift. Bericht des Verhandlungsführers*, ÖSaW, BkA – Pr. Polit Bureau K3 576 1936 O AdR, 576/36 11.I.1937 *Schuschnigg Heim Baden b. O. 64/37 O*, 1520/36, Day 2 Photo 86.

struggle) and as an ideological proscription for Austrian's strand of fascism. He proclaimed: "But I have always said, that the Heimatschutz can resign when its idea is anchored in the VF militia, indeed in the entire state." Starhemberg played the part of the gracious loser, conceding his paramilitary organization and his power. But he found consolation in his belief that the Heimatschutz had actually won out in the long run, imbuing the VF and the entire country with its particular strain of fascist ideology. He boasted that the Heimatschutz's ideological legacy came to fruition in "the development of an Austrian-national fascist front," about which he elaborated:

I have already labeled this Front as strongly Austrian. We are indeed already the Front: we were always Austrians, we have always felt national in a grossdeutsch sense, and we are also fascists. It is a natural deed to preserve the independence of Austria in the full extent of the word, as a spiritual and cultural concept. Without further ado, national thoughts and fascism can be reduced to a common denominator. And that is the goal: to embrace everything on the right and left of us that is dependably anti-Bolshevik in its focus. – And we must hold ourselves to this goal, comrades.⁴⁰

Starhemberg addressed the dynamic between Austrian regionalism and großdeutsch nationalism that characterized this intra-national borderland. Rather than seeing them as mutually exclusive, Starhemberg wove these two loyalties together into inseparable affective identifiers. He tapped into greater German nationalism, describing it as almost a prerequisite for the Austrofascist movement. He recognized its power to motivate and to offer a sense of powerful certainty in the face of existential anxiety. And through such greater German nationalism, he blazed a fascist path to preserve the "spiritual and cultural" autonomy of Austria

⁴⁰ Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, *Starhembergs Rede in Wr Neustadt am 4. Oktober 1936*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K1 574 1936 C Ad.R, 1210/36, 4-5, Day 6 Photo 242-243.

as an integral component of Germandom, one that deserved its due degree of clout. To an extent, harnessing großdeutsch nationalism for regionalism even inverted the center-periphery dichotomy that had so long marked Austria. According to his calculations, the intra-national borderland constituted less the “eastern frontier” of Germandom and more its central core, even the core of European culture itself. He pontificated about his “political testament: what I have striven for, is an Austria, stable and built according to the new world doctrine of fascism. An Austria ... with a fascist political order and a Christian framework ... a renewed Austria that can play its role as the center of Europe and—to completely disclose my heart to you—as a German Austria.” Unfortunately for Starhemberg’s wish, the complete power imbalance between Nazi Germany and the Austrofascist state rendered purely fantastical his idea of an Austria-centric German movement for all of Europe. The tension between his regionalist dream and the reality of Nazi power permeated the intra-national borderland. But this tension did not debilitate because, at its core, fascism created an emotionally charged experience.⁴¹ From the standpoint of affective abstractions, German nationalism and southeastern German regionalism mutually defined each other constitutive. Embedded in the reality of European power politics, however, these co-constituted forces also collided.⁴²

⁴¹ Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, x.

⁴² Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, *Starhembergs Rede in Wr Neustadt am 4. Oktober 1936*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K1 574 1936 C Ad.R, 1210/36, 4-5, Day 6 Photo 242-243. Drawing upon the Heimwehren precedent of constructing the Heimatblock back in 1930, Starhemberg implored Austrians to the left and right of the Heimatschutz to close ranks around Schuschnigg and his VF, even to the point of accepting support from non-fascist Austrian constituents. It was this fusion of ideological zealotry and pragmatism that made fascists both powerful and seemingly acceptable. The normalization of ideological extremes required a willingness to extend the occasional olive branch and thus appear reasonable and *not* ideologically uncompromising. Starhemberg, *Starhembergs Rede*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K1 574 1936 C Ad.R, 1210/36, 4-5, Day 6 Photo 242-243.

Starhemberg's address also outed Austria's true opponent. While proving oneself as "dependably anti-Bolshevik" formed an ideological prerequisite for joining the fascist coalition, Starhemberg identified the National Socialists as the real danger to Austria. Starhemberg sought to forge a fascist coalition that would activate regionalism against Nazism—yes, another fascist group, but to him one that epitomized prosaic Prussian power politics masquerading as greater German glory. To Starhemberg, while the Nazis might claim the mantle of German national unity, they only revived and exacerbated the centuries-old rivalry between Prussia and Austria, a former dynastic conflict of *Staatsraison* (reason of state/*raison d'état*) repackaged as and reinvigorated with twentieth-century ideologies.⁴³

Thus, for Austrofascists, the Nazi movement represented an existential threat, one that directly conflicted with Austrian regionalist dream of a southeastern dominated Greater Germany. Starhemberg explicitly laid out the Nazi threat to Austria and its fascist movement:

We have fought against National Socialism, because the construction of a National Socialist state in Austria ... has never arisen from the bottom-up, because the attempt was never endogenous, because they only ever want to make Austria into 8 Gau[e]. If they want to come to an understanding with us about how we grow German culture and want to work it out, yes, we are prepared for that and Austria will always stand alongside Germany if it is about Pan-German things or about meeting for broad arrangements. But the willingness to think in a Pan-German way will never tempt us into a discussion about our independence.

This sort of coalition-based fascism drew its supporters. Schuschnigg received a letter from an activist who made it very clear that she "came from the left," politically speaking: "that the left-wing people among us ... wish for nothing more than to believe in something! ... The Volk wants its hero. If you are not it, then it will gladly be Hitler!" She closed ranks around the devil she knew, one that at least might speak in terms of cooperation against Nazism and was at least receptive to occasional feedback. She felt comfortable warning the Austrian Führer against being too belligerent against the working class, like Starhemberg had been, and against instigating violence against Jews, which she claimed would not be a cure-all for Austria's woes. Grete Mage [illegible], *Hoch verehrter Herr Bundeskanzler!*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 P (1-1000) Ad.R, Day 3 Photo 51.

⁴³ Starhemberg, *Starhembergs Rede*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K1 574 1936 C Ad.R, 1210/36, 4-5, Day 6 Photo 242-243.

In labeling the Nazis as the most apparent danger, Starhemberg also spelled out the affective blend of southeastern regionalism and nationalism that he and his fellow Austrofascists strove to achieve. In their calculations, Austrians ought to pursue German solidarity as positive goals, as they harbored, nurtured, and reared “German culture.” But Austrian autonomy within, if not outright hegemony over, greater Germany formed the *sine qua non* of their cooperation. He presented subjugation to Berlin—not to mention being dissected into various Gaue at the whims of Nazi overlords—as simply unacceptable. He cautioned against the Nazis’ seductive cries of *völkisch* nationalism, which he formulated as siren songs that splinter Austria on the harsh, unforgiving edges of Prussian dominance. In his analysis, however, Austrian regionalism and greater German nationalism were not inherently mutually antagonistic; if the Austrofascists channeled them properly, each identifier served the other.⁴⁴ But for Schuschnigg to strike this balance, he decided to consolidate power. Even the foreign press noted that in doing so, he “deprived prince Starhemberg, from now on, of all authority,” according to a report from *L’Action française*.⁴⁵

In his later memoirs, Starhemberg framed the disbanding of the paramilitaries as a self-induced burden that careened the Austrofascist regime into the Nazi abyss. Starhemberg opined that Schuschnigg’s decision to do away with the Heimwehren “was a fatal political

⁴⁴ Starhemberg, *Starhembergs Rede*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K1 574 1936 C Ad.R, 1210/36, 4-5, Day 6 Photo 242-243.

⁴⁵ “L’Autriche entre Rome et Berlin,” *L’Action française: organe du nationalisme integral*, 12 October 1936, No. 286, 3, online via Gallica, Bibliothèque nationale de France, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k7664841/f3.item.r=Heimwehr.zoom,ark:/12148/bpt6k7664841>, Accessed 22 February 2021.

mistake.”⁴⁶ In his assessment, “The main result was a deep-seated resentment amounting to bitterness amongst the Heimatschutz in particular, but also in the ranks of the Ostmark Storm Squads, against Schuschnigg and his circle...He [Schuschnigg] was regarded as a traitor to the fighting front established by Dollfuss, and was blamed far more severely than he deserved. He was called “the Judas of Tyrol.”⁴⁷ Starhemberg dismissed such claims as Nazi exaggerations meant to spark infighting, but he concluded that the dissolution simply heightened the sense of uncertainty: “even calm and dispassionate circles unconnected with the Heimwehr regarded the step with deep anxiety and strong disapprobation.”⁴⁸ If the machinations of such right-wing paramilitaries had endowed the Austro-Bavarian borderland with such uncertainty, the reverse also proved true—their removal created anxiety about the border’s defense.

Such anxiety kept the southeastern German borderland in suspense as to what crisis tomorrow would bring. Even following the dissolution of the Heimwehren, Nazi newspapers in Germany whispered of a “resurgence of the Heimwehr,” presumably to present their Austrofascist rivals as fractured and weak.⁴⁹ The fascist reliance on internecine tactics and rumors of fissures, paradoxically, helps make these groups holistically understandable. We

⁴⁶ Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 256.

⁴⁷ Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 258.

⁴⁸ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 259. In his memoirs, Starhemberg would present Schuschnigg as a tragic (even pitiful) figure, a well-meaning and erudite man who was in way over his head when it came to the practicalities of politics. “He suffered the fate of a martyr, and it is in no spirit of criticism that I draw attention to certain qualities which explain decisions on his part otherwise not altogether intelligible.” Starhemberg then went on to enumerate his “fatal” flaws. Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 170, 171–172 (for direct quotations), see also 253–259, 263–267.

⁴⁹ “Wiederaufleben der Heimwehr? (Von unserem Wiener Korrespondenten.),” *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 20 January 1937, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 9612, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 45, 509/0, Day 8 Photo 60–61.

ought not dissect and deconstruct to the point of oblivion the notion of fascist movements. They abided by a coherent logic—one that found, created, placed, removed, and projected potential enemies both in plain sight and around every street corner. They constantly formed, fractured, and reconstituted their alliances and feuds, depending on context, political capital, whims, and expedience.

The Austrian Vaterländische Front & The Nazi German Vaterland

With OSS and the various Heimwehren chess pieces tenuously brought under Schuschnigg, Austrians who wished to oppose the Nazi movement likewise rallied around the VF. Reporting on the “disintegration” of those groups, the *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger* reported that the VF’s militarized subdivision, the Frontmiliz (Front Militia), served as “an important and necessary element of the federal defense” that was “to keep in the closest contact with the Bundesheer in all questions of organization, armament, equipment, and training.”⁵⁰ The members of the Austrian VF engaged head-on with the neighboring German fatherland to the north—both as friends in common fascist, German fraternity and as rivals in a regionalist quasi-war. Just months following the Juli-Abkommen, Nazi officials in Germany toyed with the idea of a quid pro quo in the spirit of the summer agreement. A Nazi official recorded the plan to push for the re-legalization of the Nazi party in Austria and in exchange, “for reasons of reciprocity, the Fatherland Front would have to be permitted to operate in Germany. We

⁵⁰ “Sämtliche Wehrverbände aufgelöst: Neuaufbau der Frontmiliz,” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger: Extra-Ausgabe*, 10 October 1936, Nummer 234, 29. Jahrgang, Seite 1, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19361010&query=“Frontmiliz”+“Bundesheer”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 20 February 2021.

are interested in having this agreement...” The agreement, inherently one sided in the Nazis favor, did not come to pass. But the idea—allowing rival German-speaking, fascist organizations to operate on opposite sides of the Austro-Bavarian border for cross-purposes—spoke to the nuanced dynamic of the intra-national borderland.⁵¹ This chess match across this border reinforced cooperative bonds and competitive rivalries. Political competition sprung from the internal, affectively motivated logic of the fascist adherents. Aggressive regionalism—with the loyalties, identifiers, rivalries, stereotypes, and distrust that accompanies virulent nationalism—pushed Austrofascists and Nazis further apart to the point of being outright antagonists. All the while, cooperation stemmed from the fact that both sides played this game in the name of loosely defined *völkisch* and *großdeutsch* comradeship.

But how did Bavaria factor into this Austrofascist struggle for independence? The Nazi *Gau* system already trumped the Bavarian state for all intents and purposes of governing and administrative power—warping Austrian regionalists’ largest potential southeastern ally into its most immediate threat. Bavaria served as a staging point for German and Austrian Nazi upheaval in Austria, and it was also their refuge during Austrofascist crackdowns against Nazi activists. Thus, the solidification of the Austro-Bavarian border became of immense interest to the Austrofascist regime, all while German and Austrian Nazis transgressed it so regularly.

⁵¹ To be sure, the offer, like most Nazi offers, would have been one-sided. The Nazis would have consolidated their control over Austria from within, while the VF would have received very little advantage from operating in Germany. Weizsäcker, “Memorandum,” Berlin, 7 October 1936, No. 167, 1744/403055-56, Germany Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Series D (1937-1945): Volume I: From Neurath to Ribbentrop (September 1937-September 1938)*, Department of State Publication 3277 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949), 301 (411 in database), Original from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Digitized by Google, Available on HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147282&view=2up&seq=411&q1=Fatherland%20Front>, Accessed 15 February 2021.

The very permeability of this border vexed Austrofascist officials, creating constant irritation and anxiety. In November, the VF leadership of the Upper Austrian Gau Steyr–City alerted their supervisors in Vienna about a bus carrying members of an outdoor sporting organization.⁵² This bus drove through Steyr to reach Munich. The VF believed the sporting enthusiast doubled as Austrian Nazis heading to Munich to celebrate the “the large festival for the Hitler Putsch Remembrance Day [Reich Day of Mourning of the NSDAP], and it is extremely obvious to consider these riders to Munich as representative participants in this festival.” Upon making this report, the Steyr VF pleaded with the Viennese authorities to involve themselves and support provincial officials to monitor “rigorously” visas for travelling to Germany. They lamented that “now it is practically so that every extreme National Socialist can travel to Germany easily,” even though the Führer pact did not stipulate that “the Austrian government had to let every Austrian travel out” into Bavaria. “So long as we indiscriminately allow people to travel to Germany, such rides will be enacted again and again and will obviously lead to a substantial boost for the National Socialist movement.”⁵³ The exasperated and flabbergasted local VF leaders further complained to their Viennese leaders about the relaxed border control policy:

Austria displays in such [questions? illegible because of typological errors] a generosity, which sometimes really appears incomprehensible. So the strongly-punished National

⁵² Like their Nazi rivals, the VF also used Gaue as administrative units to organize and carry out its operations. The VF was thus not inherently against a Gau system; it was the prospect of succumbing to an exogenous Nazi Gau system that they found so abhorrent.

⁵³ Von der Gauführung Steyr–Stadt, cited in *An das Generalsekretariat*, ÖSaW, BkA–Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, 2638/36, Day 2 Photo 20–21, contained within the file of DER GESCHÄFTSFÜHRENDE LANDESSEKRETÄR DER VATERLÄNDISCHEN FRONT FÜR OBERÖSTERREICH, *Hochwohlgeboren Herrn Ministerialrat Dr. Josef Seidl*, ÖSaW, BkA–Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, 1498/36, Day 2 Photo 19.

Socialists, who were reliably reported on by us, who had to serve long-term prison sentences on account of the bombing attacks, and who were pardoned as part of amnesty, were invited by NSDAP-sites in Germany to a multi-week recreational holiday. These persons were also awarded exit visas without any trouble.⁵⁴

Along those lines, the Austrofascist state offered 18,684 pardons to Nazi agents in the second half of 1936 alone.⁵⁵ The Austro-Bavarian border's permeability to Nazi agents, terrorists, and sympathizers consistently beleaguered and even embarrassed some VF officials, especially since many of these Nazi agitators faced few consequences. A British news source reported on this irritation from rank-and-file VF members. It cited a Linz newspaper commenting that Austrofascist leaders demanded order while affording Nazi agents such leniency: "patriotic Austrians who rallied to the Government's anti-Nazi appeals now felt themselves dupes confronted by triumphant adversaries. Convicted Nazis, for instance, had been released from custody through influential intervention."⁵⁶ The Austrofascist leaders' trapeze act between restricting Nazis without angering these fascist Germanic brothers, left VF members in the lurch and feeling resentful. VF members placed their faith in a hermetically sealed border as their only hope, all while their superiors kept faith in schemes for großdeutsch solidarity.

Regional chaos continued through 1937, varying from Nazi terror schemes to physical contestations along the border. The *Salzburger Chronik* discussed the revelation of a scandalous

⁵⁴ Gauführung Steyr-Stadt, *An das Generalsekretariat*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K3 576 1936 L Ad.R, 2638/36, Day 2 Photo 20-21.

⁵⁵ "Chronology," *Chatham House: The Royal Institute for International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 13, no. 15 (23 January 1937): 12 (628), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25639618>, Accessed 27 February 2020.

⁵⁶ Cited in "Chronology," *Chatham House: The Royal Institute for International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 13, no. 13 (19 December 1936): 13 (525), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25639607>, Accessed 23 August 2020. I have not seen the text from the *Linzer Volksblatt*.

Nazi “war plan” that involved “throwing bombs onto the [Austrian] Federal Chancellery from an airplane,” in addition to Nazi ambitions “to marshal in all of Austria an existing shock corps of 2000 to 3000 men, which will first ‘purge’ the ranks of the NSDAP but then it should commit acts of violence of the worst kind.” The paper condemned Nazi agents as “brown terrorists,” their machinations as a “terror campaign,” and the newly planned shock unit as a “terror brigade,” exacerbating the volatility of the borderland.⁵⁷ Two pages later, it reported on an actual border scuffle, which involved Austrian veterinarian Karl Zoller visiting the Austrian town of Jungholz. On the map, Jungholz “belonged” to Austria, but because of the Alpine topography, it connected to the rest of the world via roads that, on the map, “belonged” to Bavaria. While traversing a Bavarian juncture between Austrian spaces, he refused to return the “Hitler greeting” to five Bavarian Nazis. He believed that “as an Austrian he had no reason to answer with this greeting,” which led to him being “mauled.” The paper continued: “The outrage of this egregious incident is very great in the Tyrolean border territory.”⁵⁸ While fights such as this played out, broader clashes also occurred at rallies, demonstrations, public speeches, or any high-profile visits that would catch international attention. The February 1937 visit of Nazi Foreign Affairs Minister, Konstantin von Neurath, to Vienna created one such flashpoint.

⁵⁷ “Braune Terrorstoßtruppe zur Machtergreifung,” *Salzburger Chronik: Tagblatt mit der illustrierten Beilage „Österreichische Woche*,” 7 June 1937, Nummer 127, 73. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19370607&seite=3&zoom=33>, Accessed 2 March 2021.

⁵⁸ “Gestern, heute, morgen. Salzburg und die Nachbarländer: Ein unerhörter Vorfall,” *Salzburg Chronik*, 7 June 1937, Nummer 127, 73. Jahrgang, Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19370607&seite=5&zoom=33&query=Zoller&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

As reported in the *Salzburger Chronik*, his speech spoke to complexity of intra-national borderland:

The relationship between Germany and Austria is totally different to discern from that between states with foreign populations ... that limbs of the same Volk live on this side and that side of state borders ... the common language, the same culture, the same past also form the same fate for the inhabitants of the German Reich and Austria. That is the great perception, which reveals common German history to us. My visit to Vienna is to be understood from this fate-binding, national solidarity.⁵⁹

The single nationality, which to Neurath should have made Austro-German relations so simple, paradoxically made the regional problem more nuanced. The *Salzburger Chronik* discussed how this visit sparked an Austrofascist popular show of force: “The wall of people in cordons held in iron unity ... one Volk, one will.” Crowds enveloped Schuschnigg’s car and chanted. “It resonates through the night like from one single voice: ‘Heil Schuschnigg!’ ‘Heil Neurath!’ ‘Front Heil!’ ‘Austria!’ and again and again ‘Austria!’”⁶⁰ The VF’s response had a twofold effect: it demonstrated the pride of the Austrian people in their state for hosting the German Minister Neurath, thus presenting the arrival of the Nazi guest as a cause for jubilation. But it also constituted a *casus belli*, albeit a “war” in the form of street violence. In the street demonstrations that accompanied Neurath’s visit, the VF came across ranks of counter protestors. The *Freie Stimmen* did not state they were Nazi, but it stated they chanted “Ein

⁵⁹ “„Sorgfältige Planung und geduldige Erprobung“ Staatssekretär Dr. Schmidt über die Ergebnisse des deutschen Staatsbesuches in Wien: Neurath über den Besuch: Das Verhältnis zwischen Österreich und Deutschland,” *Salzburg Chronik*, 24 February 1937, Nummer 45, 73. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19370224&seite=1&zoom=33&query=„Neurath“&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

⁶⁰ “„Eindrucksvoller Abschied der deutschen Gäste von Wien: Große Ovationen,“ *Salzburger Chronik*, 24 February 1937, Nummer 45, 73. Jahrgang, Seite 9, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19370224&seite=9&zoom=33&query=„Neurath“&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

Volk, ein Reich!” The VF protestors then taught them “a deserved lesson” before the Nazis officially came under police custody.⁶¹ The *Chicago Tribune* reported that the VF members seriously harmed twenty-eight Nazis and required the use of Austrian soldiers to restore order. Ironically, many of these troops received their quarter in none other than “former Heimwehr barracks.” The foreign press labeled the VF’s activism as a “wild Vienna welcome.”⁶² All in all, Austrofascists saw the visitation as cause célèbre, flexing their muscles both in Germanic solidarity and in regionalist challenge.

The Austrofascist regime was more than willing to work as an equal partner with the more powerful Nazi state while Nazi agents triggered a resolved, often violent response from loyal Austrofascist supporters of the VF. Another 1937 demonstration resulted in Nazi-VF one-upmanship, this time in Wels in the state of Oberösterreich. In July, the Nazis celebrated the German and Austrian veterans from World War I, a brilliant pretext for a rally, as no Austrofascist official would dare disrupt such a commemoration. The *Salzburger Volksblatt* reported on Nazi-leaning Austrian Interior Minister Edmund Glaise-Horstenau’s speech: “As old war comrades we greet both German armies, the German Reichsheer, which has grown to the best army that one can think of, and our Austrian army, which has drawn on the deepest traditions of our Alpine Volk [unseres alpenländischen Volkes].” He interlaced national and

⁶¹ “Gegenkundgebungen in Wien. Aufmarsch von Frontmitgliedern aus der näheren Umgebung Wiens. Kleinere Zwischenfälle,” *Freie Stimmen: Deutsche Kärntner Landeszeitung*, 25 February 1937, Folge 46., 57. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=fst&datum=19370225&query=Reichspost&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

⁶² “Troops End Wild Vienna Welcome to Nazi Envoy: One Dead, 28 Hurt, 200 Jailed in Rioting,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923–1963), From AP, 23 February 1927, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune, 7, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpchicagotribune/docview/181865425/B86FB771A27D4626PQ/6?accountid=9673>, Accessed 20 February 2021.

regional tropes into one banner, which he also flew when discussing youth movements “of the German Volk in both German states.... which is the future of the nation.”⁶³ Days later, the VF responded with a 30,000-person counter-rally in the same city, reclaiming the space in the name of Austrian autonomy. The *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger* reported that the regional VF captain laid the blame for any “disturbances” during the veterans’ rally at the feet of men who were “not veterans.” It was “53 deutsch-völkisch members of the gymnastics association,” a group notorious for its Nazi leanings. Along those lines, he announced restrictions against such athletic groups with potential Nazi affiliations.⁶⁴ To the VF, the Nazis stooped so low as to impersonate veterans from the Great War to undermine Austrian autonomy, a tactic which elicited an Austrofascist crackdown.

Further complicating the situation, the VF had Nazis enrolled in its ranks, as infiltrators, yes, but also as officially invited advisors to the VF. About one month before the Wels incident, Schuschnigg decided to extend another olive branch to appease Nazi agitators into respecting Austrian sovereignty. This strategy also arose from the Juli-Abkommen with

⁶³ “Das Frontsoldaten-Treffen in Wels. Als erster Redner,” *Salzburger Volksblatt: mit der Bilder-Zeitschrift „Bergland“*, 19 July 1937, Folge 162, 67. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19370719&query=Wels&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021. See also: “Ueberprüfung der Verbreitungsverbote. Erweiterung der österreichisch-reichsdeutschen Referentenbesprechungen,” *Freie Stimmen*, 18 July 1937, Folge 162., 57. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=fst&datum=19370718&seite=1&zoom=33>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

⁶⁴ “Gegen die Demonstranten von Wels: Welche Maßnahmen,” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger: Tagblatt mit der illustrierten Wochenbeilage Weltguck*, 26 July 1937, Nummer 168, 30. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19370726&query=Wels&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021. See also: “Nicht zuschauen, nicht abwarten: handeln ist die Parole!“ Eine große Kundgebung in Wels,” *Der Tag*, 26 July 1937, Nummer 5070, XVI. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19370726&query=Wels&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

Hitler—Schuschnigg had bought German Nazi assurances to stay out of Austrian affairs at the price of folding Austrian Nazis within the VF.⁶⁵ However awkward and however much a ploy to appease Hitler, Schuschnigg's decision represented the logical, culminating outgrowth of the constitutive contradiction between fascist cooperation and competition. The volatile ground of the intra-national borderland fruited strategies strange at first glance, but we can discern their form and function if we situate them in context of their evolutionary genealogy. The VF set up the Volkspolitische Referat (People's Political Department, VR) to uphold the Juli-Abkommen and to imbue its members with the German nationalist gusto seen as so wildly popular in Nazi Germany. This VR worked for a sense of nationalism that would invigorate the VF and steel it against any incursions, not least of all from Nazi Germany.

An internal report about this particular strategy spoke to this integral tension now on full display: "There is evidence available that, on behalf of a group of illegal National Socialists, no effort will be spared to bring its influence to fruition into the Front by way of the volkspolitisch Referat and – this assumption about the established mentality of the National Socialists is probably not out of place – probably with the intention to subvert the Front."⁶⁶ In this calculation, building regional autonomy from Nazi Germany out of Nazi-esque

⁶⁵ K.R. Stadler, "Austria," Chapter 5 in *Fascism in Europe*, ed. S.J. Woolf (Routledge Library Editions: Racism and Fascism, 2020 [1968]), no page number online via Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=-xX8DwAAQBAJ&pg=PT82&lpg=PT82&dq=archives+vaterl%C3%A4ndische+schutzbund&source=bl&ots=A2HCDc2r5Y&sig=ACfU3U0VEvtCPdCr23r9Lq23Gk_I8rQxhA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjz3Ovr4ZDvAhVWsZ4KHcMaCQ4Q6AEwDXoECBAQAw#v=onepage&q=archives%20vaterl%C3%A4ndische%20schutzbund&f=false, Accessed 2 March 2021. For print, see K.R. Stadler, "Austria," Chapter 5 in *Fascism in Europe*, ed. S.J. Woolf (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1981 [1968]), 95.

⁶⁶ "Aus einer internen Analyse über die Vaterländische Front," o.D. wahrscheinlich 1937, 20/8ff., cited in *Österreich! und Front Heil!*, 394.

nationalism amounted to a deal with the devil. But it meant the loyalties of Schuschnigg's own chess pieces might now be suspect. Cultivating völkisch impulses among Austrofascists threatened to exacerbate the völkisch impulses of their main fascist rival, inundate the VF with Nazi activists, and even seduce VF activists to the Nazi cause.

Including known Nazis in the VR admitted the power Germany held over Austria. That the VF abided by this decision also spoke to these rivals' similarities regarding fascist orientation, authoritarian style leadership, and German nationalist sympathies. The legally sanctioned VR sat in juxtaposition to the activities of outlawed Austrian Nazis operating out of Bavaria. According to the *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, "One knows exactly how plans are also forged in Austrian emigrant circles in the German Reich, geared toward the penetration and conquest of Austria... so an element of the Austrian Emigrationspolitik, which operates at the Brown House [Nazi Office] in Munich, also tries to aim its torpedoes at the Juli-Abkommen."⁶⁷ Schuschnigg's attempt to inculcate Nazi völkisch impulses into his own movement for regional autonomy opened another avenue of trans-border Nazi infiltration. All the while, Schuschnigg continued his fusion of appeasement with punishment. Around the time Schuschnigg announced the VR, the *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt* reported members of an SS cell faced trial in Austria for operating an illegal organization and for earlier plans to use

⁶⁷ "Ein Wort zur Befriedung," *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, 24 June 1937, Nummer 142, 30. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19370624&query=Volkspolitische+Referat&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

violence to acquire guns, most likely from their now-disbanded Heimwehren rivals. A ringleader of this cell, however, already found refuge across the Austro-Bavarian border.⁶⁸

The Austrofascist state thus further resembled its Nazi rival to the north. According to the *Alpenländische Rundschau*, “the new Austria” adopted the “‘Autoritätsprinzip’ [authority principle] (the relationship of the German Führer and followers)” and imbibed “deutsch-volksstaatlichen ideas.”⁶⁹ The final months of 1937 encapsulated this dynamic of dual engagement. The *Salzburger Chronik* ran a story to assuage fears of relying on völkisch impulses, claiming that the VR catered neither to Nazis nor to others not believing in the “Austrian Vaterland.”⁷⁰ A Jewish newspaper, *Die Stimme*, reported on how Schuschnigg re-emphasized the need to channel German national (even racial) impulses for regionalist autonomy: “Anschluß? No! Absolutely and very clearly: No! Our race, our language, our culture, and our history are German. That is certain. But Germany is one country and Austria is another country ... The ideology of both countries is different, so that nothing about a

⁶⁸ “31 Nazi vor Gericht: Der Prozess gegen die Führer der SS.-Standarte 9: Die Organisation der SS.-Standarte 9.” *Neuigkeits-Welt-Blatt: Tageszeitung für den Mittelstand: Provinz-Ausgabe*, 19 June 1937, Nummer 139, 64. Jahrgang, Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nwb&datum=19370619&seite=5&zoom=33&query=SS&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021. See also “Ein Wort zur Befriedung,” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, 24 June 1937, Nummer 142, 30. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19370624&query=Volkspolitische+Referat&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

⁶⁹ “Pressestimmen der Woche,” *Alpenländische Rundschau*, 21 August 1937, Folge 723, 14. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, reprinting of „Politik des Gewissens,“ in *Zeitgeschichte*, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=alp&datum=19370821&query=Vaterländische+Front&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

⁷⁰ “Letzte Klärung,” *Salzburger Chronik*, 18 October 1937, Nummer 239, 73. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19371018&query=Volkspolitische+Referat&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

fusion can be spoken.”⁷¹ Both German states oriented their fascist methods and objectives toward opposing political ends: Austrofascist autonomy versus Nazi expansion.

Austrofascists wanted their own German state imbued with their own *völkisch* German nationalism to assert their own autonomy from Germany itself. A Nazi representative in Austria reported on this seemingly contradictory state of affairs. The VR would become inundated by “National figures who have set themselves the well-nigh impossible task of aligning groups [National Socialists and the Fatherland Front] as opposite in their ideologies as fire and water.”⁷² From the Nazi perspective, Austrofascism formed Nazism’s opposite because its proponents rejected Nazi control and calls for Anschluss. Nazis obsessed over the opposing aspects of their Austrian mirror image, rather than admitting the extent to which they reflected the same phenomenon: German-speaking, German-identifying regimes, each matching fascist fire with fire.

Austrian punishment for Nazis continued into November and December with new arrests and convictions. In November, the *Salzburger Volksblatt* reported the regime had sentenced sixty-nine Nazis, nine of whom faced more stringent charges for SA membership.⁷³

⁷¹ “Äußerungen des Bundeskanzlers,” *Die Stimme: Jüdische Zeitung*, 20 October 1937, Nummer 685, 11. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=dst&datum=19371020&seite=2&zoom=33&query=Rasse&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

⁷² Stein, “The German Chargé d’Affaires in Austria (Stein) to the German Foreign Ministry: A 6495: Vienna, October 14, 1937. Received October 16, 1937. (Pol. IV 5294),” No. 263, 2062/448609-12, Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945: D: I*, 473 (583 on database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147282&view=2up&seq=583&q1=Fatherland%20Front>, Accessed 13 February 2021.

⁷³ “Aus dem Gerichtssaal: Der SA-Brigadeführer von Salzburg verleumdet?” *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 18 November 1937, Folge 265, 67. Jahrgang, Seite 9, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19371118&seite=9&zoom=33&query=Nationalsozialisten&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

Just after Christmas of 1937, in the Austrian border town of Schärding, Austrofascist customs officials apprehended an automobile arriving from Germany. According to the *Kleine Volks-Zeitung*, the vehicle contained four German citizens and “a large amount of National Socialist books, official party school letters and other miscellaneous items for circulation in Austria, certainly National Socialist propaganda material.” The Nazi contraband prompted a further investigation of the Germans, which revealed two full-blown SS members among them.⁷⁴ More embarrassingly for the Nazis, the automobile belonged to the office of Oberbürgermeister Moosbauer of Passau, Bavaria’s Dreiflüßelstadt (three-river city) right on the Austrian border. As per *Der Wiener Tag*, Moosbauer helped implement the *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy) program on the local level, orchestrating Danube cruises for Nazi tourists. “In illegal circles” he also apparently became “labeled as the ‘Gauleiter of Austria,’” indicating this Bavarian’s penchant for posturing to lord over Austria. In this particular incident, Moosbauer lent the car to his SS chauffeur for a propaganda sojourn across the Austro-Bavarian border.⁷⁵ Nazi members and their ideas undermined the Austro-Bavarian

⁷⁴ “Einschmugglung von Propagandaschriften,” *Kleine Volks-Zeitung*, 29 December 1937, Nummer 358, 83. Jahrgang, Laufende Nummer 29705, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=kvz&datum=19371229&query=“Passau”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021. “Reichsdeutsche Einmischung in Oesterreich nachgewiesen,” *Mühlviertler Nachrichten: mit der reichgebilderten Beilage „Oesterreichische Woche“*, 31 December 1937, Nummer 53, 49. Jahrgang, Seite 6, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=mvn&datum=19371231&query=“Passau”&ref=anno-search&seite=6>, Accessed 1 February 2021. “Reichsdeutsches Nazipropaganda-Auto beschlagnahmt.” *Kärntner Tagblatt*, 30 December 1937, Nummer 300, 44. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=knz&datum=19371230&query=“Passau”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

⁷⁵ “Der Dienstwagen des Passauer Bürgermeisters: In Schärding beschlagnahmt.” *Der Wiener Tag*, 30 December 1937, Nummer 5225, XVI. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19371230&query=“Passau”&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 1 February 2021.

border and the autonomy of the Austrofascist state, all as German-speakers on both sides of the border floundered over the “right” way to be German.

Despite these awkward moments of rivalry, the anti-Nazi VF still incorporated Nazis into its organization. The Nazi-leaning *Salzburger Volksblatt* ran a piece about how:

The volkspolitisch advisors are representatives of the national opposition and hence in its majority National Socialist in attitude. With their taking over of the office, they have affirmed the question: whether a National Socialist can profess to the program of the Vaterländische Front ... It is possible and must be possible that men of our attitude work directly and honestly and in complete equality for the construction of Austria ... National Socialism as an attitude and weltanschaulich [worldview] creed is to reconcile with the creed of an independent, Christian, and German Austria...

Who better to inculcate the VF with völkisch nationalism than the Nazis? But the Austrofascists’ hoped nationalist instruction would buttress regional Austrian autonomy. The opinion piece continued: “Only the German Volk can always be the sole guarantee for the independence and autonomy of Austria.”⁷⁶ Austrian autonomy against Germany amounted to a German-wide concern, and Austrians thus turned to Nazi advisors to synthesize völkisch with regional impulses. But this combustible solution precipitated more chaos—and more basis for Nazi intervention.⁷⁷

An Altered Führer Agreement

⁷⁶ RA Dr. Albert Reitter, “Artikel des Salzburger Landesleiters des Volkspolitischen Referats, *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 31 December 1937, 320/37f, cited in *Österreich! und Front Heil!*, 395.

⁷⁷ Austrian patriots voiced such concern. In response to that opinion piece in the *Salzburger Volksblatt*, an Austrian said it plainly: “I do not understand how clear National Socialists can hold a leadership appointment in the Vaterländische Front ... in my opinion must the leader of this office be a genuine Austrian, not »a marked nationalist.«” Herrn St.A., “Brief an die Redaktion des Dienststellenorgans »Der Beamte« zum Artikel Dr. Reiters, 14 January 1938, 320/34, cited in *Österreich! und Front Heil!*, 396.

By the start of 1938, the chess match accelerated in tempo. Austrofascists continued to fuse regionalism and greater German nationalism, all to assert Austrian autonomy against the German nation-state. In January of 1938, the VF held a rally for its younger activists, who were to meet and hear from the VF Jugendführer (Youth Leader).⁷⁸ Professor Sepp Schifferer, representative for the Position of Federal Youth Leader (Bundesjugendführerstellvertreter), concluded his speech with a call to arms for the großdeutsch application of regionalist impulses:

If the youth are linked first with the foundation of the state through the proper struggle, they will develop for themselves their own mission, which does not lie in modest particularism, but rather in the defense of the synthesis of Christianity and Germandom, of the cultural idea of the old German Empire, of the cultural idea of Austria, which must and will become once again that of the entire German Volk.

He directly stated that the youth organizations ought not limit themselves to southeastern regionalism (“modest particularism”).⁷⁹ Rather, the Austrofascist movement wanted the next generation to set their sights on something much grander: the stewardship of the broader German cultural realm, a position they “must and will” assume “again.”⁸⁰ His argument, however clumsy, fell resolutely within *Geschichtspolitik* (politics of history)—harkening back to

⁷⁸ *Der Jugendführer: 2. Jahrgang Sonderfolge Jänner 1938: Arbeitstagung: Wien, 6.-8. Jänner 1938: Bericht Vorgelegt von der Bundesjugendführung des Österreichischen Jungvolks* (Wien: 30. Jänner 1938), Landesarchiv Salzburg (LaS), P.-Archiv 9-11, Misc. P. Arch. 10, *Nationalsozialistische Schriften mit Schriftgut der Vaterländischen Front. 1929-1938*, Day 5 File 1 Photo 45-46.

⁷⁹ Bundesjugendführerstellvertreter Prof. Sepp Schifferer, “Jungvolk als Staatsjugend,” in *Der Jugendführer*, 14, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, *Nationalsozialistische Schriften*, Day 5 File 1 Photo 53. Though this statement was made a decade and a half after the focus of Ludger Rape’s dissertation, this claim runs directly counter to the general contention that southeastern regionalism (or “Christian conservative Bavarian particularism” in Rape’s case) worked counter to grossdeutsch, völkisch nationalism. Ludger Rape, “Die österreichische Heimwehr und ihre Beziehungen zur bayerischen Rechten zwischen 1920 und 1923” (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1968), 312. As my dissertation has asserted, the two loyalties were as mutually reinforcing as they were mutually antagonistic.

⁸⁰ Schifferer, “Jungvolk als Staatsjugend,” in *Der Jugendführer*, 14, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, *Nationalsozialistische Schriften*, Day 5 File 1 Photo 53.

when Austrian domains comprised the flagship of the Holy Roman Reich—all to increase Austria’s clout in German-speaking Europe.

This Austrofascist professor conceptualized Austria not as some fringe borderland cast to the margins of German history. Instead, it comprised the essence of Germandom, both the paragon of and the paradigm for the “entire German Volk.”⁸¹ Paradoxically, that such Austrofascists advocated so vehemently for their state’s centrality drove forward the borderlands violence in Austria. This sense of Austria’s importance as the truest or purest type of German pushed Austrofascists to engage with their Nazi German brothers with such heartfelt conviction. His words also spoke to the Austrofascist fusion of cooperation and competition vis-à-vis Germany. To him, Austrians “must and will” outcompete northern Germans to guide the broader (and broadly defined) Volk toward constructive objectives.⁸² To be sure, his visions for Austria’s aggrandizement might seem like delusions of grandeur. But we should not simply dismiss them as such. They unearthed deeper roots, as they sprouted from the longer interwar story of stitching southeast German regionalism into the very fabric of broader German nationalism.

Meanwhile, the chess match teetered in the Nazis’ favor—the VF periodical’s for Tyrol commented that German Nazis backed Austrian Nazis to target the Juli-Abkommen, “misconstruing it” so “Austria simply has amounted to a commuter state [Trabantenstaat] of

⁸¹ Schifferer, “Jungvolk als Staatsjugend,” in *Der Jugendführer*, 14, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, *Nationalsozialistische Schriften*, Day 5 File 1 Photo 53.

⁸² Schifferer, “Jungvolk als Staatsjugend,” in *Der Jugendführer*, 14, LaS, Misc. P. Arch. 10, *Nationalsozialistische Schriften*, Day 5 File 1 Photo 53.

the German Reich.”⁸³ Austrofascists waxed poetic about their borderland status when it meant being the rugged, brave, tried-and-tested type of German. But they could not accept serving simply as an appendage to Nazi Germany. But by February 12, the machinations of Hitler and his Nazis locked Schuschnigg into a Zugzwang; Schuschnigg crossed the Austro-Bavarian border from Salzburg to Hitler’s Bavarian Alpine residence at Obersalzberg.⁸⁴ This mountain—upon which Hitler forced enslaved laborers to construct his Eagle’s Nest—stood unmoved since before humankind. But in modern human history, it had “moved” a few times between Bavarian and Austrian jurisdiction in accordance with shifting borders.⁸⁵ Looming over the Austro-Bavarian border on this Nazified Alpine precipice, the two Austrian-born, German-speaking, and fascist Führer included an “addendum” to the Juli-Abkommen from 1936, the same agreement that had secured Austria’s freedom and Schuschnigg’s popularity.⁸⁶ Officially, Hitler again claimed to uphold Austria’s autonomy, but now with one exception: Schuschnigg had to appoint Nazi agent Arthur Seyss-Inquart—also born and raised in the former Austro-

⁸³ “Einiges zur ‚Befriedung:‘ Wer stört?” *Vaterländische Front: Mitteilungsblatt der V.F. Tirol*, January 1938, Nummer 2, 4 Jahrgang, BaBL, Bestandssignatur: NS /26/, Archivsignatur: 2070, Standort: 51, Magazin: M106, Reihe: 50, (fol. 1-), Day 5 Photo 5.

⁸⁴ “Zusammenkunft des Bundeskanzler Dr. Schuschnigg mit Reichskanzler Hitler. Eine Sensation, wie sie Wien schon lange nicht hatte.” *Sonder-Ausgabe der Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, 13 February 1938, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ibn&datum=19380213&seite=1&zoom=33&query=“Berchtesgaden”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 1 February 2021. “Der Besuch auf dem Obersalzberg,” *Allgemeiner Tiroler Anzeiger*, 14 February 1938, Nummer 36, 31. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tan&datum=19380214&query=“Berchtesgaden”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁸⁵ Gunda Barth-Scalmani, “The Case of Salzburg” in “National Identity or Regional Identity: Austria Versus Tyrol/Salzburg,” Chapter 2 in *Austrian Historical Memory & National Identity*, 49.

⁸⁶ “Ein Zusatzabkommen zum 11. Juli 1936.” *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 14 February 1938, Folge 36, 68. Jahrgang, Seite 9, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb &datum=19380214&seite=9&zoom=39&query=“Berchtesgaden”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

Hungarian Empire—as Home Minister “with the police directly under him.”⁸⁷ As Nazis permeated the VF via the VR, a Nazi took an official position in the upper echelons of the Austrofascist government. Schuschnigg paid a heavy price for an adulterated version of “autonomy:” one of his own chess pieces now played for his opponent.

Once word of this Führer meeting atop the Bavarian Alps got out, Schuschnigg’s knight bucked: Starhemberg went for broke and reignited the Führerkampf against Schuschnigg. Starhemberg contacted Hitler and proposed the Nazi leader oust Schuschnigg and appoint him as Austrian Chancellor instead.⁸⁸ He thereby continued his long history of oscillating between cooperation and competition with the Nazis. The man had marched with Hitler in the 1923 Munich Putsch, had intimated an Anschluss between his Heimwehren and the Nazis at the start of the 1930s, and then proceeded to lead his Heimwehren in a frontal assault against the Nazis in the 1930s. Now he went crawling back to Hitler to outmaneuver his main Austrofascist rival for the position of Führer, albeit one subordinate to Hitler.⁸⁹ The fluid friend-enemy distinction among fascists coexisted with their rigid demarcation of external threats. Hitler rejected this opportunistic overture—the quasi-war between Nazi Germany and the Austrofascist Ständestaat had burned the bridge between these two Upper

⁸⁷ “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute for International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 15, no. 4 (19 February 1938): 18–19 (138–139), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25639782>, Accessed 15 March 2021. This British news source would later report that Hitler purportedly claimed the Berchtesgaden accord was simply “a supplement within the framework of the Agreement of July, 1936.” Cited in “Austria and Germany,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute for International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 15, no. 5 (5 March 1938), 19 (179), <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25642221>, Accessed 9 September 2020. I have not seen the original statement.

⁸⁸ Stadler, “Austria,” no page number online via Google Books. For print version, see Stadler, “Austria,” 105.

⁸⁹ Starhemberg conveniently omitted from his wartime memoir his offer to Hitler, as it ran counter to the image he sought to curate of himself as Austria’s David to Germany’s Goliath.

Austrians. Besides, Hitler had his pick of sycophants from which to choose when selecting a representative in Austria.

The *Innsbrucker Nachrichten* reported that this new accord might end the “suffering and terror” of the “Bruderkampf [brotherly battle],” one that had so long bedeviled the two Brudervölker, organized into two Bruderreiche under two fascist Führer.⁹⁰ But chaos only escalated, driven forward by the oscillation of Austrofascist policy. On 20 February, a VF report from a Salzburg agent encapsulated the paradox. He stated explicitly the myriad Nazi activities that were “forbidden” while maintaining that the VR served as consultant to determine the validity of all “national associations.”⁹¹ But Nazis ran rampant in the VR—by March, Seyss-Inquart himself ran it.⁹² Days later, the Viennese police quelled a rowdy, late-night Nazi crowd

⁹⁰ “Die Vereinbarungen am Obersalzberg. Und dennoch kam ein Bruderkampf,” *Innsbrucker Nachrichten: Mit dem Abendblatt „Neueste Zeitung“ und der illustr. Monatschrift „Bergland“*, 25 February 1938, Nummer 46. 85. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ibn&datum=19380225&seite=2&zoom=33&query=“Berchtesgaden”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 2 February 2021. For “Brudervolk” and “Bruderreich,” see Bürgermeister Klagenfurt, *Herr Bundeskanzler!* ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Pol. Bü. K2 F, 705/36, Day 8 Photo 92; Hauptgruppenleiter für die Hauptgruppenleitung Vaterländische Front, *Herrn Bundeskanzler*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 ‘P36 F, 802/36, 30.7, Day 8 Photo 12. Sturm, *An Herrn Bundeskanzler*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Politische Büro K2 575 ‘P36 F, 727/36, 29.7, Day 8 Photo 71.

⁹¹ Der Landesführer: B. Aicher e.h., *Vaterländische Front Landesführung Salzburg: Salzburg, am 20. Februar 1938. Weisungen von Amte des Frontführer (Sturmkorpsführung)*, LaS, Rehr Akten RehrLP 1922-1938, RehrLP-1938/0005, Page 1, Day 3 File 3 Photo 1.

⁹² For Seyß-Inquart as “der Bundesleiter des Volkspolitischen Referates,” see “Minister Zernatto über den neuen Weg,” *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 7 March 1938, Folge 54, 69. Jahrgang, Seite 3, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19380307&seite=3&zoom=33&query=%22Seyss-Inquart%22%2B%22volkspolitische%2BReferat%22&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 15 February 2021. For the role of Nazi agent Hugo Jury (famous as Gauleiter of Niederdonau) “as Volkspolitische Referent,” see [Signature illegible] SS-Hauptsturmführer for the Chief of the Sicherheitshauptamt, “[Enclosure] Secret!” in “The Chief of the Sicherheitshauptamt of the Reichsführer-SS to SS-Gruppenführer Keppler: Secret!: March 10 1938, III 224/1 AZ. 1790/38: Ro/Rlg,” No. 343, 1291/345103-08, *Auswärtiges Amt, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945: D: I*, 566 (676 of database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147282&view=2up&seq=676&q1=Volkspolitische%20referent>, Accessed 15 February 2021.

singing and marching through the city. Interestingly, participants in this haphazard Nazi gathering purportedly shouted both Heil Hitler and Heil Schuschnigg. Perhaps this couplet simply expressed drunken revelry; perhaps it expressed joy that Schuschnigg had conceded to Hitler.⁹³

Likewise, Linz in Upper Austria hosted frantic rallies between rival fascist groups. On 5 March, the new Nazi Home Minister Seyss-Inquart held a demonstration of 50,000 Nazis. As reported by *Salzburger Volksblatt*, the Upper Austrian Nazi Führer Eigruher spoke and commented on the “unholy Bruderkampf” in which “Volksgenossen [national comrades] from both camps” died.⁹⁴ The Nazi show of strength culminated in a torchlight parade, prompting rumors that the Austrofascists in Vienna might bring the Heimwehren out of (forced) retirement. Such a tactic might have undergirded Schuschnigg’s authority but at the cost of undermining his authority to dissolve the Heimwehren in the first place.⁹⁵ Adding to the

⁹³ “Große nationale Kundgebung in Innsbruck: Kundgebungen in Wien,” *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, 21 February 1938, Nummer 42, 85. Jahrgang, Seite 4, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ibn&datum=19380221&query=“Bruderkampf”&ref=anno-search&seite=4>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁹⁴ “50.000 Linzer bejubeln Seyß-Inquart.” *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 7 March 1938, Folge 54, 68. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19380307&seite=3&zoom=33&query=“Seyss-Inquart”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁹⁵ The article also contributed to the pluralization of fascist labels, referring to the Heimwehren as “fascistic.” “20,000 Yelling Nazis Parade: Troops in Barracks as Graz Hails Minister: Fey to Revive Heimwehr as Support for Schuschnigg,” *Daily Boston Globe (1928-1960)*, 2 March 1938, Reprinting from Associated Press (I have not seen original AP article), ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Boston Globe, 1 (for direct quotation), 2, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/847879425/3904318704F245DBPQ/123?accountid=9673>, Accessed 13 February 2021. *The Washington Post* also ran a version of the Associated Press story. See “Fey Rallies Old Heimwehr to Combat Nazis: Troops Disbanded in 1936 Urged to Fight for a Free Austria: Leader of Disbanded Heimwehr Summons Men to Thwart Nazi Government Coup in Austria: Fey Says He Can Mobilize 80,000 Men in 2 Days to Foil Uprising: 20,000 Parade in Graz as Seyss-Inquart Arrives to Restore Order.” *The Washington Post (1923-1954)*, 2 March 1938, Reprinting from Associated Press (I have seen original AP article), ProQuest Historical Newspapers; the Washington Post, X1, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/151090950/242D421B769E4F00PQ/121?accountid=9673>, Accessed 13 February 2021.

internecine rivalry, the call stemmed not from Starhemberg, but from his rival, former leader of the Viennese Heimwehren, Emil Fey.⁹⁶ Like Starhemberg, Fey had served Austria-Hungary in World War I before becoming a foundational agent of the Gagistenverband (a veterans' organization) and the Frontkämpferversammlung (Union of Frontline Soldiers).⁹⁷ Ironically, this latter group's murderous violence had led to the 1927 workers' uprising in Vienna, the suppression of which gave the Heimwehren such national acclaim. As Heimwehren leader of Vienna, Fey also contributed to the intra-fascist rivalries weeks before the VF absorbed the Heimwehren, Starhemberg had dismissed him and even implied his behavior during the 1934 Nazi Putsch had been suspicious. Fey supposedly then threatened to challenge Starhemberg for the position of the overarching Führer of the Heimwehren.⁹⁸ In the foreign press, rumors spread that their rift almost boiled over into a formal duel.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ "Fey to Revive Heimwehr as Support for Schuschnigg," *Daily Boston Globe*, 2 March 1938. "Fey Rallies Old Heimwehr to Combat Nazis: Troops Disbanded in 1936 Urged to Fight for a Free Austria: *The Washington Post*, 2 March 1938.

⁹⁷ Julia Walleczek-Fritz, "Staying Mobilized: Veterans' Associations in Austria's Border Regions Carinthia and Styria during the Interwar Period," *zeitgeschichte* 47, Heft 1, eds. Laurence Cole, Rudolf Kučera, and Ina Markova (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Vienna University Press, 2020): 60, Accessed via Google Books, <https://books.google.com/books?id=DhfbDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA60&lpg=PA60&dq=Gagistenverband&source=bl&ots=qrmP42xeV5&sig=ACfU3U3ij7m5a92ZtKp4TJ3GOYYwrl0Agg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj3tSXhaLvAhU8CTQIHbvADGwQ6AEwAnoECAkQAw#v=onepage&q=Gagistenverband&f=false>, Accessed 8 March 2021.

⁹⁸ "Ousted Leader Plans to Seize Vienna Guards: Fey Defies Expulsion by Fascist Prince. Clash Again." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 4 October 1936, From AP, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, 20, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpchicagotribune/docview/181809866/CFA7C72B8D954AE8PQ/11?accountid=9673>, Accessed 20 February 2021.

⁹⁹ "Fey Drops Duel Plan In Row With Starhemberg," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 9 October 1936, From AP, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, 19, <https://search.proquest.com/hnpchicagotribune/docview/181854340/DBB557B2387A4769PQ/3?accountid=9673>, Accessed 20 February 2021.

Four days after Fey's bombast about Heimwehren revanchism, the VF held their own demonstration in Linz to rally around Schuschnigg and "love of Heimat and Volk."¹⁰⁰ The Nazi-leaning *Salzburger Volksblatt* reported that a nighttime Nazi counter march met this VF display. SA men baited VF members outside their headquarters into a brawl: "It came to another clash, in which the SA made use of their guns. Altogether eight people, of which three were national socialists, were severely and lightly injured." The Nazi-leaning press reported the Austrian government supposedly even subjected key public buildings to "military occupation."¹⁰¹ A Nazi German report commented that VF affiliates received "armaments and rubber truncheons," and it concluded with indignation that VF members "began to rip swastika emblems off National Socialists." As Nazi accusations, their validity certainly deserves suspicion; either way, they intended to heighten the tension.¹⁰² The Führer agreement did nothing but exacerbate the daily sense of anxiety and franticness, further limiting Schuschnigg's room for maneuver on the chessboard.

With the endgame upon him, Schuschnigg sought to regain the initiative. He called for a referendum to take place on 13 March 1938, hoping for a landslide vindication of Austrian autonomy and a mandate from the Volk for independence. The VF campaigned for the

¹⁰⁰ "Aufruf an die Bauern! Große vaterländische Kundgebungen in Linz," *Salzburger Chronik*, 10 March 1938, Nummer 57, 74. Jahrgang, Seite 10, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19380310&query=Linz&ref=anno-search&seite=10>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹⁰¹ "Schwere politische Ausschreitungen in Linz," *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 11 March 1938, Folge 58, 68. Jahrgang, Seite 9, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19380311&query=Linz&ref=anno-search&seite=9>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹⁰² [Signature illegible] SS-Hauptsturmführer, "[Enclosure] Secret!" in "The Chief of the Sicherheitshauptamt: March 10 1938, III 224/1 AZ. 1790/38: Ro/Rlg." No. 343, 1291/345103-08, Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945: D: I*, 566 (676 of database), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005147282&view=2up&seq=676&q1=Fatherland%20Front>, Accessed 16 February 2021.

referendum with leaflets and pamphlets in favor of Austrian autonomy. The electoral slogans asserted the paradox of this intra-national borderland with braggadocious bravado. One proclaimed: “Being German means being free: Being German means being loyal! Yes or No? Yes! With Schuschnigg for Austria!” To resist surrendering to Germany, Austrians needed to surrender to their German impulses.¹⁰³ To these regionalists, embracing the German nationalism assured Austria’s autonomy, whose gravest immediate threat came from, ironically, the nation-state of Germany.

The VF propagandists espoused the constitutive contradiction whole-heartedly and without reservation. In the intra-national borderland, it made sense to conceive of oneself as German in an independently Austrian way. As odd or confusing as they may sound, such proclamations as “Freedom! German Loyalty! ... Yes, with Schuschnigg for Austria!” formed a logical solution. They framed loyalty to the German nationality as the key to independence from the German state.¹⁰⁴ A report from Salzburg reiterated just such pro-autonomy rallying cries: “For a free and German, independent and social, for a Christian and certain Austria, for peace, work and the equality of all, who profess themselves to the Volk and Vaterland.”¹⁰⁵ Their nationalism and regionalism constituted each other, however much they collided along the Austro-Bavarian border. Austrofascists channeled this combination toward an independent

¹⁰³ König m.p. Ray. Insp., “5. Streuzettel, Vierteloktavformat.,” *Informationsschreiben für die Herren Landesführer*, LaS, RehrLP – 1938/0036, No page number given, Printed on second inset between pages 4 and 5 of packet, Day 3 File 3 Photo 13.

¹⁰⁴ Ray. Insp., 3. “Halbbogenplakat.,” *Informationsschreiben*, LaS, RehrLP – 1938/0036, No page number given, Printed on first inset between pages 4 and 5 of packet, Day 3 File 3 Photo 12.

¹⁰⁵ Cited in Der Landeshauptmann, *Kundmachung des Landeshauptmannes von Salzburg über die Durchführung einer Volksbefragung am Sonntag, den. 13. März 1938 im Lande Salzburg*, 9 March 1938, LaS, Rehr Akten RehrLP 1922-1938, RehrLP – 1938/0035, 1, Day 3 File 2 Photo 6.

Austrian state comprised of citizens who identified as the southeastern representatives of the broader German nation.

The Austrofascists thus formed the true mirror image of the Nazis: German-speaking, German-identifying, fascists charged with similar affective sentiments but in opposite directions. They took Nazi German nationalism and flipped it on its head for their own purposes. A year prior, Göring himself had stated to a British representative: “if there were a plebiscite there [Austria] to-morrow, 80 per cent of the people would vote for Germany. It was not because they loved the Nazi régime but because every German, when it was a matter of Germany, voted German.”¹⁰⁶ To an extent, Austrofascists explicitly wanted their people to take Göring’s advice by “voting German”—just not in the exact way Göring meant. Fascists had spent the interwar years violently contesting just what “German” meant. And through the Austrofascist prism, “voting German” meant refracting this national identification back against Germany itself.

At this time, Dr. Franz Rehr, the man who had reported on the “Strassenkampf [street fighting]” in Salzburg at the start of the 1930s, still led the Salzburg Federal State.¹⁰⁷ But now, within the nomenclature of the Austrofascist administrative system, he also attained the title of

¹⁰⁶ Göring’s statement cited in Nevile Henderson, “Sir N. Henderson to Mr. Eden—(Received July 22.): (No. 678): Berlin, July 20, 1937.,” No. 484, 5482/E382029—30, Germany Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918–1945, from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Series C (1933–1937): The Third Reich: First Phase: Volume VI: November 1, 1936–November 14, 1937*, Department of State Publication 9338 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1983), 945 (1033 in database), Original from Penn State, Digitized by Google, Available on HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000009318038&view=2up&seq=1033&q1=Austria>, Accessed 16 February 2021.

¹⁰⁷ Franz Rehr, *Der Strassenkampf*, LaS, Rehr Akten RehrLP 1922–1938, RehrL Politica (undatiert) (1–11), RehrLP – 0000/0006, Day 1 File 1 Page 1 (for direct quotation), Pages 2–6.

VF regional Landesführer.¹⁰⁸ His office drafted an energetic call to arms in favor of Austrian autonomy in the upcoming referendum:

Now, the Austrian Volk should say a free and liberating yes to its fatherland, in front of the whole world and in front of the German Volk, of which it is a part, bonded by fate and by duty. After the 13 March of this fateful year of 1938, no one in the entire world shall be able to say that Austria's freedom, Austria's will for a Christian, German and social configuration is not anchored in the strong will of the freedom-loving Alpine Volk.

In these two sentences, Landesführer Rehr further advanced the Austrofascist position within the intra-national borderland.¹⁰⁹ Austrians supposedly constituted the Alpine expression of the German nation, and as such, they deserved their own autonomous, fascist fatherland. And this fatherland deserved to feel as nationalistically German as Germany.

Rehr made clear this notion of competing regional claims for the German mantle on the next page: "Salzburg men and women, in a free decision on this coming Sunday, your yes [vote] will determine the future of the fatherland, the Christian foundation of our Heimat, the clear will to the German Volk and to the duty of the German Alpine land, the purposeful originator of a social societal and economic order."¹¹⁰ To Rehr, the Alpine Germans formed the original wellspring from which flowed all subsequent greatness of the German nation. The original draft of the speech, before handwritten revisions, included the prefix "ur-" before "German Alpine land [des ~~ur~~deutschen Alpenlandes]," adding a meaning of ancient, primordial, original, or essential. Though he crossed out this prefix during revisions, its

¹⁰⁸ Dr. Franz Rehr, *Salzburger! Salzburgerinnen! Der Kanzler und Frontführer ruft Euch zu einem Bekenntnisse für Oesterreich auf. [! in handwritten revisions]*, LaS, RehrLP – 1938/0042, 3, Day 3 File 3 Photo 19.

¹⁰⁹ Rehr, *Salzburger! Salzburgerinnen!*, LaS, RehrLP – 1938/0042, 1, Day 3 File 3 Photo 17.

¹¹⁰ Rehr, *Salzburger! Salzburgerinnen!*, LaS, RehrLP – 1938/0042, 2, Day 3 File 3 Photo 18.

preliminary inclusion revealed that Rehr considered framing the southeastern Alpine region as the original, rightful, and authentic Germans.¹¹¹

The hope that a referendum would provide a definitive answer to the Austrian question only unleashed more uncertainty. On 11 March, two days before the planned plebiscite, the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* reported street showdowns in Vienna between Nazis and VF loyalists, with the VF shouting “Heil Schuschnigg and different battle cries” in response to their Nazi rivals.¹¹² The *Salzburger Volksblatt* likewise commented on the mustering of police and troops for “the maintenance of peace and order” following similar such Nazi marches.¹¹³ Given that many of these reports came from papers with Nazi sympathies, they probably exaggerated or fabricated the claims to depict the Nazis as victims in a chaotic Austria. Doing so lent credence to Nazi claims that Austria needed Germany to restore peace, order, and stability. Again, that the Nazis instigated much of this disorder did not matter. On the contrary, the perception of disorder was central to Hitler’s chess strategy.

Concluding Reflections

¹¹¹ As we have seen, the Austrofascist response to Germany was simultaneous confrontation and conciliation, a delicate dance between inclusion and exclusion of fellow Germans. Perhaps the “ur-” distinction for the Alpine Germans was too exclusive of “other” Germans, and so it was subsequently eliminated from the draft. The preliminary draft also included “German” before the word “duty.” Rehr, *Salzburger! Salzburgerinnen!*, LaS, RehrLP – 1938/0042, 2, Day 3 File 3 Photo 18.

¹¹² “Demonstrationen in der Innern Stadt,” *Neues Wiener Tagblatt: Demokratisches Organ*, 11 March 1938, Nummer 69, 72. Jahrgang, Laufende Nummer 25885., Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nwg&datum=19380311&seite=5&zoom=33&query=“Nationalsozialisten”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹¹³ “Schwere politische Ausschreitungen in Linz. Demonstrationen in Wien,” *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 11 March 1938, Folge 58, 68. Jahrgang, Seite 9, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19380311&query=%22Linz%22&ref=anno-search&seite=9>, Accessed 16 January 2022.

Numerous constitutive contradictions undergirded Austrofascists' engagement with their Nazi neighbors from 1936 to the spring of 1938: between southeastern German regionalism and großdeutsch, völkisch nationalism; between existential anxiety about Austria's future and yet absolute emotional certainty in fascism as the path to resurgence and deliverance; between fraternal cooperation and fratricidal confrontation of two Brudervölker organized into two neighboring Bruderreiche, each led by its own fascist Führer.¹¹⁴ The fusion of these seemingly opposing forces marked the Austro-Bavarian region in this context as a true borderland, albeit of an intra-national variety. The vacillation inherent in this Austrofascist policy toward Nazism—simultaneous resistance and reliance—did reinforce the notion that the Austrofascist state lacked the resolve needed either to cooperate fully with or defend resolutely against the Nazis. However, this tension between cooperation and competition actively advanced, not hindered, the rise of fascism in German-speaking Europe. The olive branches extended to Nazi Germany reinforced notions of völkisch, großdeutsch unity, while Nazi incursions and the resulting Austrian resistance reinforced notions that the Austrian state failed to maintain the law and order on which fascists so prided themselves. This pattern of cooperation and competition within a borderland composed of national brothers persisted to the last days of Austria's independence, when Schuschnigg's desperate decision for a referendum forced Hitler's hand to checkmate the Austrofascist Führer.

¹¹⁴ For "Brudervolk" and "Bruderreich," see Bürgermeister Klagenfurt, *Herr Bundeskanzler!* ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Pol. Bü. K2 F, 705/36, Day 8 Photo 92. Hauptgruppenleiter für die Hauptgruppenleitung Vaterländische Front, *Herrn Bundeskanzler*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Polit. Bureau K2 575 'P36 F, 802/36, 30.7, Day 8 Photo 12. Sturm, *An Herrn Bundeskanzler*, ÖSaW, BkA-Pr. Politische Büro K2 575 'P36 F, 727/36, 29.7, Day 8 Photo 71.

Chapter 5 Regional Contraction & National Expansion: The Intra-National Borderland in Greater Germany, 1938–1945

Following the annexation of Austria in March 1938, the borderline demarcating Austria and Germany as two separate sovereign states ceased to exist. On the map, at least. But the border between regionalism and nationalism remained as porous as ever.¹ The Nazis' former fascist rivals had already fallen from the trapeze bridging these two loyalties. It remained a razor-thin act to balance, even for the Nazis, who had emerged as the ringleaders of this interwar, intra-national, intra-fascist circus. Creating a *großdeutsch* (greater German), *völkisch* (racist-ethnonationalist) nationalist community implied the transcendence above regional loyalties. Yet, regionalism remained a prerequisite for *großdeutsch*, *völkisch* nationalism, situating multi-valent affections and loyalties into an array of German nationalities.

As definitive as the Anschluss might have seemed, Nazi actions could not resolve the Austrian “problem” nor unilaterally efface the constitutive contradictions of the intra-national borderland. Despite the “union” between the Austrian and German states, a divide among populations of the same nationality engulfed the Bavarian and Austrian regions, preserving the dynamic of the intra-national borderland into the war years. Specifically because this union occurred between German nationalities, German-speakers placed such salience on regional variance. Mental boundaries throughout the Nazi Reich lingered.² These psychological

¹ For theoretical notions of “*Mental Mapping*,” see Martina Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten: Die Ordnung des Regionalen im bayerischen Schwaben vom Kaiserreich bis zum NS-Regime* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, 2010), 34. For mental boundaries, see Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3–13, 250–257.

² For mental boundaries, again see Sheffer, *Burned Bridge*, 3–13, 250–257. Sheffer, *Burned Bridge*, 3–13, 250–257. For another take that emphasizes the throughlines of the annexation rather than its

demarcations provided potent emotional motivation for Nazi expansionism, but they simultaneously threatened to expose the cracks below the surface of the Nazi imperial edifice. As Emmerich Tálos rightly argued: the “process of liquidation and integration” remained marked by “conflict, competitive struggles, and intrigue.”³ But what role exactly did regionalism play in fracturing this Nazi project, both in deeds and in discourses?

This chapter exposes the ways in which regionalist tensions crosscut the abundant Nazi changes. The first section argues that the Nazis continued to demonize their former fascist rivals following the annexation. They framed the now-disbanded Austrofascist Vaterländische Front (Fatherland Front, VF) as ineffective and dangerous. Worst of all—from perspective of Nazi ideology—they insisted that Jewish influences had infiltrated and corrupted the VF. The Nazi need to compete against Austrofascists stayed well after the annexation. The second section examines Nazi administrative nomenclature regarding Austria. It reveals the extent to which the Nazis still contended with the constitutive contradiction of the intra-national borderland. Nazis employed a pluralized set of signifiers to describe “the Anschluss,” each with their own connotations and implications.⁴ Just what had transpired continued as a dynamic

ruptures, see Radomír Luža, *Austro-German Relations in The Anschluss Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 166.

³ Emmerich Tálos, “Von der Liquidierung der Eigenstaatlichkeit zur Etablierung der Reichsgaue der ‚Ostmark:‘ Zum Umbau der politisch-administrativen Struktur,” Kapitel 2 in *NS Herrschaft in Österreich: Ein Handbuch*, Hg. von Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch, Wolfgang Neugebauer, Reinhard Sieder (Wien: öbv & hpt VerlagsgmbH & Co. KG, 2001), 61.

⁴ In her impressively erudite dissertation, Jody Manning gets at this splintering discourse. But given that the bulk of her study is the early 1930s, she only has space for one paragraph about it in her final chapter. I seek to pick up where she left off. See Jody Abigail Manning, “Austria at the Crossroads: The Anschluss and its Opponents” (PhD diss., Cardiff University, 2013), 304.

discourse even after the infamous “event” of March 1938 had come and gone.⁵ This chapter also examines the pluralized language Nazis conjured to label the Österreich under their jurisdiction, in addition to their attempts at an Austrian *Gleichschaltung* amid shifts in their conceptualizations of “the Ost.”

An Anschluss & An Altered Plebiscite

The looming Austrofascist referendum scheduled for 13 March provided the Nazis with the impetus they needed to intervene. As Austrofascists such as Rehr, Schuschnigg, and their VF apparatus promoted Austrian autonomy in the referendum, the Nazis in Germany became ever more anxious. According to *Der Wiener Tag*’s issue on 11 March, the VF held rallies in Vienna that showed an outpouring of support for Schuschnigg’s platform of autonomy.⁶ But even the possibility of a “Yes!” vote for Austrian autonomy became too much for Hitler, as it would discredit his claim that the Nazi acquisition of Austria fell within the parameters of popular sovereignty and national self-determination. On the same day as *Der Wiener Tag*’s report, the Bavarian side of the border saw arrival of German soldiers and the

⁵ Jamie Andrew McGregor Bulloch’s detailed dissertation gestures at this split between Anschluss as “historical event” and Anschluss as pluralized set of hypotheticals. I seek to dive into the details about how the plurality of conceptualizations remained *after* the event. Jamie Andrew McGregor Bulloch, “The Promotion of an Austrian Identity, 1918–1938” (PhD diss., University College London, 2002), 266.

⁶ “Im Zeichen der Volksabstimmung: Lautsprecherwagen in den Straßen Wiens: Stürmische Begrüßung des Bundeskanzlers.” *Der Wiener Tag*, 11 March 1938, Nummer 5295, XVII. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO – AustriaN Newspapers Online (ANNO), *Historische österreichische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tag&datum=19380311&query=“Schuschnigg”&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

preparation of the Luftwaffe. Meanwhile, the Nazis colored any Aktion (maneuver) they might undertake as liberating Austro-Germans from an oppressive Austrofascist regime.⁷

To prevent this referendum, the Nazis again conducted a twofold assault on Austria, both from within and without. They did so in a much more concerted manner than during their dress rehearsal four years prior. The *Oedenburger Zeitung* reported that by 12 March, when faced with Nazi agitation at home and a Nazi ultimatum from abroad, Schuschnigg told the Austrian army to yield to German troops, so as “not to shed German blood.”⁸ Greater German impulses had subsumed southeastern German regionalism, so it seemed. As his regionalist dreams crumbled, Schuschnigg still maintained the sense of German national solidarity within the intra-national borderland. He also relinquished the Chancellorship to Seyss-Inquart in accordance with Nazi pressure.⁹ Seyss-Inquart wasted no time in facilitating the Nazi takeover from the inside. The *Salzburger Zeitung* reported that, in the name of restoring “peace and order,” Seyss-Inquart mobilized Nazi “security formations” within Austria, now officially

⁷ Michael Carter-Sinclair, “Building a Christian and German Austria? 1934–8,” Chapter 9 in *Vienna’s ‘respectable’ antisemites: A Study of the Christian Social movement* (Manchester University Press, 2021), 219, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1fqvkqg.15>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

⁸ “Wie der Rücktritt erfolgte,” *Oedenburger Zeitung: Unabhängiges politisches Tagblatt für alle Stände*, 13 March 1938, Folge 59., Jahrgang 71., Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oed&datum=19380313&query=deutsches+Blut&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁹ “Die neue Regierung,” *Salzburger Zeitung: Tagblatt mit der illustrierten Beilage „Österreichische Woche*,” Nazi renaming of *Salzburger Chronik*, 12 March 1938, Nummer 59, 74. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19380312&seite=1&zoom=33>, Accessed 2 February 2021. “Nationalsozialistische Regierung in Deutsch-Oesterreich gebildet: Dr. Arthur Seyß-Inquart der neue Kanzler,” *Oedenburger Zeitung*, 13 March 1938, Folge 59., Jahrgang 71., Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oed&datum=19380313&query=deutsch+Blut&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

rewarded for the past twenty years of public disturbances.¹⁰ He also called on Nazi Germany for assistance to help restore the law and order his group revered in principle but defiled in practice.¹¹

The Nazi-leaning *Salzburger Volksblatt* reported that German troops crossed the border with ease. It spoke of national fraternity in saying these soldiers “have come to their brothers in Austria.”¹² Nazi officials maintained that the military action aligned with the true will of the Austrian people:

Adolf Hitler’s German soldiers did not march German Austria in battle. They entered German land as representatives of a general German will to unity to establish brotherhood with the German people and soldiers there. It was a great demonstration of the community of German blood.¹³

They intended the military’s presence to symbolize großdeutsch fraternity (“brotherhood”) and völkisch nationalism (“the community of German blood”). The throngs of supportive Austrians greeting the incoming Nazis lent credence to such a narrative. Meanwhile, an Austrian professor proclaimed in the *Salzburger Zeitung*: “whoever comes here from the German Reich may traverse the border at Kufstein towards Innsbruck or at Reichenhall

¹⁰ “Die neue Regierung: Ein Aufruf des Bundesministers Seyß-Inquart zur Ruhe und Ordnung!” *Salzburger Zeitung*, 12 March 1938, Nr. 59, 74. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO.

¹¹ “Reichsdeutsche Truppenhilfe,” *Oedenburger Zeitung*, 13 March 1938, Folge 59., Jahrgang 71., Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oed&datum=19380313&query=deutsches+Blut&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹² “Mit der Truppe über die Grenze. Vom Sonderberichterstatte des DRB. Einmarsch in Seefeld,” *Salzburger Volksblatt: mit der Bilder-Zeitschrift „Bergland“*, 12 March 1938, Folge 59, 68. Jahrgang, Seite 18, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19380312&seite=18&zoom=33&query=Vaterländische%2BFront&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹³ Ludwig Sertorius, “With German Soldiers in Liberated Austria,” “Mit den deutschen Soldaten im befreiten Österreich,” in *Die Wehrmacht* 2, no. 6 (1938): 4-5, Copyright 1998 by Randall Bytwerk, German Propaganda Archive, Calvin University, <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/wehr01.htm>, Accessed 13 September 2020.

towards Salzburg or at Passau towards Linz.”¹⁴ The Austro-Bavarian border seemed utterly devoid of significance.

By the end of the day, the Nazis had secured Austria and abolished the VF. The next day, the Nazi regime announced the official German annexation of Austria, condemning Schuschnigg’s planned referendum as an undemocratic sham.¹⁵ Hitler had achieved what he penned on the first page of *Mein Kampf*, and he framed this event as nothing short of a total victory for his project of German irredentism.¹⁶ On 10 April, Hitler ran his own plebiscite with the exact opposite purpose of Schuschnigg’s: to prove that the Austrian Volk wanted an

¹⁴ Univ.-Prof. Dr. Josef Nadler, “Das Erbe,” *Salzburger Zeitung* (listed on database as *Salzburger Chronik für Stadt und Land*, but the front page clearly states *Salzburger Zeitung*), 12 March 1938, Nummer 59, 74. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=sch&datum=19380312&seite=3&zoom=33&query=Seyss%2BInquart&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹⁵ “Chronology,” *Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 15, no. 6 (19 March 1938): 21 (237), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25642233>, Accessed 15 March 2021.

Hitler proclaimed his move was to restore order to the borderlands chaos, while the Austrofascist referendum would have been anti-democratic. Adolf Hitler, “Hitler’s Proclamation to Germany,” cited in *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler April 1922–August 1939: An English Translation of Representative Passages Arranged under Subjects and Edited by Norman H. Baynes*, Vol. II, ed. Norman H. Baynes (New York: Howard Fertig, 1969), 1417–1419, HathiTrust, accessed 21 October 2020. Hitler claimed to restore order in the face of a supposedly fraudulent election: “If I had not intervened and the Schuschnigg Government had tried to carry through its trick plebiscite, there would have been bloody revolution here.” Hitler, Interview “With Mr. G. Wad Price published in the ‘Daily Mail,’” cited in *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, Vol. II, ed. Norman H. Baynes, 1424. Hitler would again say about the Austrofascist plebiscite for Austrian independence: “Those who should said ‘No’ would be marked men, while for those who said ‘Yes’ every opportunity was given to falsify the result of the voting; in other words: Herr Schuschnigg, who knew very well that he had behind him only the minority of the population, sought through an unexampled election fraud to create for himself the moral justification for an open violation of the obligations to which he had agreed [at Berchtesgaden].” Hitler, Speech in Berlin, cited in *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, Vol. II, ed. Norman H. Baynes, 1433.

¹⁶ “German-Austria must return to the great German motherland.” Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1940 [1925]), 3. Hitler would also speak to the interwar nationalist imagination that the Germans and Austrians were national brothers: “*Common blood belongs in a common Reich*. As long as the German nation is unable even to band together its own children in one common State, it has no moral right to think of colonization as one of its political aims.” Italics in English translated version. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 3.

Anschluss, which would thus appear as a triumph of popular sovereignty and self-determination.¹⁷

Despite the “official” vote in favor of Anschluss, southeast German regionalism threatened to expose the tensions and absurdities within the Nazi Greater German Empire. Even within a Nazi propaganda document meant to glorify this victory for nationalism, the murky relationship between southeast German regionalism and großdeutsch nationalism became clear:

Everywhere and without exception, there was invisible, spontaneous contact from heart to heart, that mysterious flow of natural connectedness: in the mountains of Tyrolia, in the Salzburg hills, in Upper Austria, on the Danube and the Inn, and then into the farthest corners of Steiermark, Kärnten, the Vienna Woods and the Burgenland. It was more than mere liking – it was love at first sight.

The idea of “love at first sight” presupposed, at least implicitly, the extent to which these Germans of different regionalities had been complete strangers until now.¹⁸ The creation of Nazi Greater Germany hinged on the movement, introduction, and mixing of foreign regional varieties of Germans, which had existed in distinct states while supposedly connected on abstract cultural, linguistic, national, and even “racial” levels. Yet to many Germans soldiers, the Austrian landscape appeared novel and exotic, even if praised.

¹⁷ “Dem Führer Hier hinein Dein JA,” Felizian Rauch Innsbruck, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BaBL), Bestandsnummer: NS/26/, Archivsignatur: 2077, Standort: 51, Magazin: M106, Reihe: 50, (fol. 1-), Day 5 Photo 307. “Ein Volk–ein Reich–ein Führer!... und das alles schuf der Führer, Dank ihm am 10. April mit Deinem Ja, Abgeworfen durch die Gruppe 7 des Nationalsoz. Fliegerkorps,” BaBL, NS/26/, 2077, Day 5 Photo 308. “Am 10. April dem Führer Dein Ja!,” BaBL, NS/26/, 2077, Day 5 Photo 308. “Ein Volk Ein Reich Ein Führer JA,” “Verantwortlich: Gaupropagandaleiter E. Schulze, Oldenburg, Entwurf und Druck: G. Hunckel, Bremen,” BaBL, NS/26/, 2077, 445 2/104, RTW. 10.4.1938, Day 5 Photo 303,

¹⁸ Sertorius, “With German Soldiers,” 4-5, Bytwerk, GPA, Calvin University.

Disparaging Austrofascism & Assessing Fascist Pedigrees

After the annexation, the new regime in Austria framed their former Austrofascist rivals as illegitimate shams, disgraceful to the German fascist movement. The Nazis sought to discredit the Austrofascist system by presenting the Austrofascist organizations, in particular the VF, as corrupt, inauthentic, and reliant on Jewish influences. As the Nazis strove to synchronize the Austrian components of their new empire, they still had to contend with the revenants of their intra-fascist feuds. Furthermore, like the Nazi Gleichschaltung of Germany, Nazi leaders assessed the loyalties of bureaucrats and other professionals, purging members whose fealty they doubted.

And the Nazis rapidly realized the longstanding Austrian fear of a Gleichschaltung.¹⁹ Just as Austrofascists had sent Nazis to concentration camps, the Nazis reciprocated in kind. They sent the VF ringleaders to the Dachau concentration camp in Bavaria—ironically, around where the members of the Nazi Österreichische Legion (Austrian Legion, ÖL) had been stationed, trained, and poised for their forays against their Austrofascist rivals.²⁰ Nazis moved

¹⁹ Schuschnigg's postwar memoirs included epistolary evidence of just such Austrian fears. An Austrian who wrote to him in 17 February 1938, just before the annexation, described how "to save Austria from the danger of *Gleichschaltung*." See Kurt von Schuschnigg, *The Brutal Takeover: The Austrian ex-Chancellor's account of the Anschluss of Austria by Hitler*, trans. Richard Barry (New York: Atheneum, 1971), 11. See also his adamancy about this term later in the memoir, Schuschnigg, *The Brutal Takeover*, 240, 271.

²⁰ For Austrofascist internment of Nazis, see Bruce F. Pauley, *Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis: A History of Austrian National Socialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 107–111. For Nazi internment of VF leaders, see Philipp Lumetsberger, "Hinein in die Vaterländische Front! Die Vaterländische Front als Machtbasis des Ständestaats?" (MA Thesis, Johannes Kepler Universität Linz, 2015), 83, Available online via Johannes Kepler Universität Linz (JKU) Bibliothek ePUB, chrome-extension://oemmnclbldboiebfnladdacbfmdadm/https://epub.jku.at/obvulihs/download/pdf/379849?originalFilename=true, Accessed 17 February 2021.

the Austrofascist ex-Führer, Kurt Schuschnigg to Munich under house arrest before deporting him to Sachsenhausen on the outskirts of Berlin. The Nazi decision made explicit his subordination to the northern German metropole.²¹ True to the longer pattern of carrots and sticks so marking the lived experiences for those in the intra-national borderland, the Nazis placed Schuschnigg under house arrest outside the actual confines of the concentration camp. They did not subject him to the harsh slave labor regime within, and they allowed for visitations from family members. He (and later his son) did comment on the abhorrent conditions just over the wall.²² Schuschnigg and his family lived as political prisoners of the Nazis. Perhaps his fascist ideology and supposed German nationality conditioned his incarceration. Perhaps more prosaically, the Nazis wanted to prevent martyring him for the ardently Catholic Austrofascist movement, much like the Nazis had done to their own detriment when they assassinated Dollfuss back in 1934.

This Gleichschaltung of administrative personnel also left its mark on the rank-and-file members of the Austrian bureaucracy, such as a municipal secretary from the state of Salzburg. This man had spent the 1930s moving from Austrofascist paramilitary group to

²¹ For Schuschnigg's own account of his experience during Nazi rule, see his diary: Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem: Chancellor of Austria and Prisoner of Hitler*, trans. Franz von Hildebrand (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), 205–292. As a high-profile prisoner, the Nazis wanted to keep his internment there confidential so as not to arouse backlash, and so the Nazis gave him the alias of “Dr. Auster.” See the memoirs of Schuschnigg's son, also named Kurt von Schuschnigg. See Kurt von Schuschnigg, *Der Lange Weg nach Hause: Der Sohn des Bundeskanzlers erinnert sich*, aufgezeichnet von Janet von Schuschnigg (Wien: Amalthea Signum Verlag, 2008), 119, Plate 48 (for direct quotation).

²² Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, 205–292. For his comments on the terrible camp conditions, see specifically Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, 223–226. Schuschnigg's son recorded being able to see over the barrier into the horrors of the camp, particularly the abuses of the infamous Kapos, from which the family was separated while still under surveillance. Schuschnigg, *Der Lange Weg nach Hause*, 138–142. For the general descriptions of his son's visits, when “Sachsenhausen-Oranienburg war unsere Wirklichkeit,” See Schuschnigg, *Der Lange Weg nach Hause*, 118–141, 142 (for direct quotation).

paramilitary group, starting in the OSS before transitioning to the Heimwehren. Born in 1903, he fit the age group drawn to these paramilitaries—just too young to serve in the Great War, thus drawn to the community of masculinity and patriotism the paramilitaries seemed to offer.²³ A Nazi report from June of 1938 scrutinized his Austrofascist past with trepidation, claiming that he “was in the illegal times [when Austria had banned the Nazi Party] one of the sharpest opponents of our movement and stood against us as an armed Heimwehrer. Was quick to use words like ‘brown pest,’” a disparaging way to refer to the brown-shirted Nazi SA.²⁴

True to the vacillating logic of the intra-national borderland, the officials in the Nazi Office of Civil Servants for Salzburg wavered on whether to dismiss this bureaucrat, who “was a strong opponent of the NSDAP.” The assessments claimed that following the annexation, “his attitude is very neutral and appropriate, also in regards to character.” They lauded his “professional competence” but lamented that this stemmed from the fact that he had “held an inflammatory speech during the unveiling of a Dollfuß memorial and so forth was naturally,

²³ See Donald Bloxham, *The Final Solution: A Genocide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 83. See also Liulevicius’s description the composition of the Freikorps in eastern Europe at the end of the First World War: “They [the men volunteering for the *Freikorps*] were joined by German students and other adolescents too young to have served in the army during the war.” Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front*, 227.

²⁴ In accordance with the laws of the Federal Republic of Austria, archival documents containing any identifying information of individuals who might still be alive must be edited. Names must either be left out or changed to pseudonyms; I have chosen the former option, to just keep everything as anonymous as possible. I have also chosen to leave out the name of the small town within the state of Salzburg where this vignette took place, all for the sake of preserving anonymity and complying with Austrian law. Dienststellenwalter [Redacted], Gesehen! Der Kreisleiter [Redacted], Gesehen! Der Kreisamtsleiter [Redacted], *NSDAP Gau Salzburg Kreis: Zell a. See Amt für Beamte; Formblatt Zur Durchführung der Verordnung zur Neuordnung des österr. Berufsbeamtentums (kundgemacht im Gesetzblatt f.d. Land Oesterreich, 56. Stück vom 4.6.1938. Streng vertraulich*, Landesarchiv Salzburg (LaS), PRÄ 1938/06a - 3098 - 5806, U.A., Geschäftsbezeichnung: 1938 6a 5779, zur Durchführung 30. 12.38, geschrieben: -- “ – illegible/ 2. x 17/1/39 illegible, verglichen: -- “ – illegible/17/1.39 illegible, bestellt: 39/XII F./ 18/1.F., Day 5 File 2 Photo 21.

utterly in the black [Catholic/Christian Social] camp and earlier studied as a priest.” This southeastern German regionalist—Catholic, pro-Dollfuss, and member of two Austrofascist paramilitaries—perhaps seemed beyond the pale of Nazi inclusion. Ironically, his Catholic education made him suspect while simultaneously proving his credentials for a bureaucratic position.²⁵ Likewise, “his work in the [Austrofascist] chancellery [was] impeccable, nevertheless, politically [he was] almost not possibly acceptable.” The key word here? “Almost.”²⁶ By November, the Nazi officials slapped him on the wrist for his Austrofascist paramilitary past, placing him on “rehabilitation,” a euphemism for a one-month suspension from work.²⁷ Again, true to the pattern of moderated punishment, they stated he remained eligible for pay during his suspension.²⁸

Gauleiter Eigruher of the new Austrian Gau Oberdonau also revealed Nazi perceptions of Austrofascist individuals. He spoke about Austrians in exile wreaking havoc on the Nazi movement. His list of dangerous Austrians abroad included “our emigrants, our Jews, our

²⁵ Gesehen! Der Kreisleiter: [signature illegible], Gesehen! Der Kreisamtsleiter: [signature illegible], *NSDAP. Gau Salzburg Kreis Zell am See Amt für Beamte Streng vertraulich*, LaS, PRÄ 1938/06a - 3098 - 5806, U.A.U.LN. [illegible], Geschäftsbezeichnung: 1938 6a 5779, bestellt: 39/XII F./ 18/1.F., Day 5 File 2 Photo 20.

²⁶ Dienststellenwalter, *Formblatt Zur Durchführung der Verordnung zur Neuordnung des österr.Berufsbeamtentums*, LaS, PRÄ 1938/06a, Geschäftsbezeichnung: 1938 6a 5779, bestellt: 39/XII F./ 18/1.F., Day 5 File 2 Photo 21.

²⁷ Der Bürgermeister, Gemeindeamt Bramberg a.Wk., 28 Oktober 1938 An die Bezirkshauptmannschaft – zu H.d.H.Bez.Hauptmann Dr. [Redacted] in Zell am See, LaS, PRÄ 1938/06a - 3098 - 5806, Bezirkshauptmannschaft ZELL am SEE präS. 29 Okt. 1938 Z. 14826 Ref. a, 14826, Geschäftsbezeichnung: 1938 6a 5779, bestellt: 39/XII F./ 18/1.F., Day 5 File 2 Photo 24. Zahl 14.825 Gegenstand:[Redacted] in [Redacted], Dienstenthebung An die Staatspolizeistelle Salzburg, LaS, PRÄ 1938/06a - 3098 - 5806, Eingelangt 19. Nov. 1938, Abg. 23. Nov. 1938, B-1/14826/38, Geschäftsbezeichnung: 1938 6a 5779, bestellt: 39/XII F./ 18/1.F., Day 5 File 2 Photo 23.

²⁸ An die Staatspolizeistelle Salzburg, LaS, PRÄ 1938/06a, Eingelangt 19. Nov. 1938, B-1/14826/38, Geschäftsbezeichnung: 1938 6a 5779, bestellt: 39/XII F./ 18/1.F., Day 5 File 2 Photo 23.

Marxists, our Heimwehr leaders, and our clerics who had fled,” all of whom collectively formed “a fifth column in Paris, London, Prague, and New York...” In particular, he called out former Austrofascist minister Guido Zernatto for perpetuating the narrative that the Anschluss constituted a German invasion against the real sentiments of the Austrian people. Eigruber especially condemned Zernatto for supposedly stating: “I guarantee that at the smallest opportunity the Austrian people will rise up and liberate itself and chase the Prussians or the Nazis out of beautiful Austria.” According to Eigruber, Zernatto formulated his southeastern regionalism in a way outright hostile to the Nazi irredentist project.²⁹ Eigruber also railed against disparaging comments made by none other than Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, now in exile and labeled in the Nazi press as a “traitor to the Volk and country.”³⁰

Starhemberg avoided the Nazi annexation simply because he had already embarked on a vacation in Switzerland.³¹ True to his regionalist stance, he consistently maintained that the Nazi Empire amounted to nothing more than “Greater Prussia” run amuck.³² With his Austrian

²⁹ Cited in August Eigruber, “The Propagandist during the Period of Struggle and Today,” Copyright 2012 by Randall Bytwerk, Available online at German Propaganda Archive (GPA), Calvin University, <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/eigruber2.htm>, Accessed 1 March 2022. Cited on this online collection as “Der Propagandist in der Kampfzeit und heute,” 12 January 1941, *Ein Gau wächst ins Reich. Das Werden Oberdonaus im Spiegel der Reden des Gauleiters August Eigruber* (Wels: Verlag Leitner & Co., 1942), 168–186. I have not seen the original German-language document.

³⁰ Eigruber, “The Propagandist,” Bytwerk, GPA, Calvin University. “Sensationelle Funde in Starhembergs Wohnung bei Paris: Sensationelle Beute: Starhemberg’s Aktenmappe: Ostmärker haben sie in Frankreich gefunden,” *Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung: fürs deutsche Volk!*, 23 June 1940, Folge 14.522, 41. Jahrgang, Seite 1 und 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=krz&datum=19400623&seite=1&zoom=33&query=Bayern%2Bund%2BÖsterreich&ref=anno-search>, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=krz&datum=19400623&query=Bayern+und+Österreich&ref=anno-search&seite=5>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

³¹ Ernst Rüdiger Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), 267–269.

³² Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 29, 281.

Heimat under such Prussian occupation, he fled to France, where he entered the Air Force before enlisting with Charles de Gaulle and fighting in French colonial holdings in Africa.³³ His wartime memoirs presented the ultimate castigation of stereotypical Prussianism: “What is Prussia? The embodiment of old barbaric instincts – inherent in a superficially Germanised East Slav race. Prussian militarism is the modern equivalent of the barbaric hordes of primeval days. Wherever the victory march of these hordes resounds, Europe and Western culture are trampled underfoot.”³⁴ To Starhemberg, Prussians did not even count as Germans, as he saw them as peoples from the nondescript Ost masquerading as Prussians. In doing so, he repurposed Nazi antisemitic tropes to deny the Germanness of the supposedly duplicitous and insidious Prussians.

In Starhemberg’s imagination, Prussians formed the *real* threat to the *real* Germans, meaning the glorious but besieged Austrians: “There is no longer any Germany. In place of Germany stands Greater Prussia. The last island of the German race in Europe is Austria. That is why the maintenance of Austria is imperative.”³⁵ Equating Nazism with Prussianism, he conveniently omitted that the NSDAP’s supreme leader hailed from the former Austrian crownlands, as did the original German Workers’ party (DAP) and its subsequent German National Socialist Workers’ party (DNSAP).³⁶ As the Nazis constructed their Greater German Reich, Starhemberg claimed its Prussian provenance negated it as a true German enterprise on

³³ “Publisher’s Note” to *Between Hitler and Mussolini: Memoirs of Ernst Rudiger Prince Starhemberg* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1942), v-vi.

³⁴ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 28.

³⁵ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 29.

³⁶ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 29. Pauley, *Forgotten Nazis*, 24–32.

a fundamental, even racial, level. To him, the original core of German-ness centered on Austria.³⁷

In his nostalgic logic, if Austria was the core of Germandom, then it also represented the pinnacle of borderlands perfection:

And what is Austria? The bastion of this Mediterranean culture, the bastion of European civilization. In Austria and South Germany, but particularly, in Austria, there took place that marriage between Latin culture and fresh Teutonic virility from which sprang the universalist idea of a German Empire, materialising as the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle Ages. Austria has always fought for the maintenance of the German race in Europe – fought on the bastions of the Eastern Marches against a variety of Eastern races threatening the West – but fought above all in centuries of struggle against Prussia.

Here he displayed the Austrofascist script of Austria being the tried-and-tested borderland of Germandom—and by extension, western civilization itself—against some transhistorical siege of so-called Asiatic groups: first Mongols, then Turks, then Slavs, and now, with historical irony in full swing, even the Prussians themselves.³⁸ According to his musings, Austria collapsed the distinction between core and borderland, a nexus that sparked all authentic großdeutsch impulses.³⁹

His demarcations of “German” also remained permeable. Despite iron resolve (at least his curated image of it), he employed the label less as a hard-and-fast category and more as an elastic rubric, one that he stretched to cover any given situational needs. In his politicization of history, he boasted of his aristocratic ancestor’s instrumental role in repulsing the Ottoman

³⁷ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 29.

³⁸ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 28.

³⁹ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 28-29.

sieges of the Austrian heartlands. In describing the heroic defense, he also gave credit to “Germans of every race, save the Prussians.”⁴⁰ In this instance, the Prussians counted as German. However, the Prussians had forsaken their brethren, implying they had not just acted cowardly. Even worse, they had acted traitorously. They qualified as German, but only for him to qualify that very inclusion to imply a more scathing condemnation.

Starhemberg thus conflated Prussians with Nazis to rant against both. Meanwhile, the Nazis undertook the reverse process: the Nazi press castigated Starhemberg. According to Nazi newspapers, Nazi troops—more specifically “an östmarkische division”—searched Starhemberg’s apartment in Étampes, just outside of Paris.⁴¹ Starhemberg was nowhere to be found, but in his domicile, they located what they claimed was his draft peace proposal for how the Allies might organize German-speaking Europe if they defeated the Nazis. In the plan, Starhemberg presented the Allies with a “split-state of Germany.”⁴² They should divide Germany into a “principality” system, with Prussia restricted to the land “between the Oder and Elbe” and East Prussia given to Poland. But, “Bavaria and Austria would merge into a Catholic monarchy.”⁴³ This southeastern state would form the new Germanic hegemon, with

⁴⁰ Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 112.

⁴¹ Leo Leixner, “Sensationelle Beute: Starhembergs Aktenmappe!,” *Der Landbote*, 6 July 1940, Folge 278, 6. Jahrgang, Seite 12 (11 for database), ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=lab&datum=19400706&seite=11&zoom=33&query=Bayern%2Bund%2BÖsterreich&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 7 February 2022.

⁴² Leixner, “Sensationelle Beute: Starhembergs Aktenmappe! Wenn Starhemberg in Berlin eingezogen wäre...,” *Der Landbote*, 6 July 1940, Folge 278, 6. Jahrgang, Seite 13 (12 for database), ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=lab&datum=19400706&seite=12&zoom=33&query=Bayern%2Bund%2BÖsterreich&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁴³ Leo Leixner, “Ostmärker erbeuten Starhembergs Aktenmappe: Ein toller Fund während des Vormarsches in Frankreich – Dokumente beweisen eine abgrundtiefe Verkommenheit: Wenn Starhemberg in Berlin eingezogen wäre ...,” *Innsbrucker Nachrichten: Parteiamtliches Organ der NSDAP. Gau Tirol-Vorarlberg: mit amtlichen Mitteilungen der staatlichen und der kommunalen Behörden des Gaues*

Prussia left humbled. The Nazis certainly exaggerated (or even fabricated) the story, but they framed their attack on the Austrofascist émigré in terms of his supposedly constant, southeastern Catholic machinations against a poor, victimized Prussia. Such paranoia of southeastern German regionalism also appeared later in the war, when the Nazi press claimed the Allies conspired to strip the “southern German–Austrian parts from the Reich,” perhaps to “cobble together a new Danubian State out of Bavaria and Austria.”⁴⁴

These memoirs, published well into the war, tried to impose some logic onto Starhemberg’s regionalism and his German nationalism. In describing his actions in the 1930s, he wrote about Austria’s particular complication “that nationalism and patriotism are not complementary ideas.” Yet he still adamantly blended Austrian regionalism and German nationalism: “I personally reject the Anschluss. I invariably oppose the idea of self-surrender, of total absorption by the German Reich. Instead, I stand for a union.”⁴⁵ As contradictory as this statement might sound, it made sense to him. His nationalism rested upon regional relativism. Thereby, the concept of “union” diverged into an array of formulations, labels, and

Tirol-Vorarlberg, 24 June 1940, Nummer 147, 87. Jahrgang, Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ibn&datum=19400624&query=Bayern+und+Österreich&ref=anno-search&seite=5>, Accessed 2 February 2021. See also: Leixner, “Sensationelle Beute: Starhembergs Aktenmappe!,” *Der Landbote*, 6 July 1940, Folge 278, 6. Jahrgang, Seite 13, ANNO.

⁴⁴ Wilhelm Weiß, “Die Erhebung von 1923: Wir beendigen nachstehend die Veröffentlichung zum Jahrestag der Erhebung von 1923, deren erster Teil in der Ausgabe vom 7. November erschienen ist.” *Völkischer Beobachter: Kampfblatt der nationalsozialistischen Bewegung Großdeutschlands: Wiener Ausgabe*, 8 November 1943, Nummer 312, 56. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=vob&datum=19431108&seite=3&zoom=33>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁴⁵ Cited in Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 26. Starhemberg was not one to hide his anti-Prussianism: “Into my office walked a man whose outward appearance antagonised me – a North German type incorporating all the most repulsive characteristics of the Prussian: corpulent, with a half-shaven head, bull-necked, wearing a suit that was too tight and consequently was stretching to bursting across his paunch, with sleeves and trousers too short.” Cited in Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 37.

implications.⁴⁶ He refused nationalism when coupled to regional subsumption. But he embraced it when coupled to “an essentially independent Austria” that could maintain its “strong bonds with the German Reich. Even though we are inwardly conscious that the North German character is alien to us, and are aware that culturally we are on a higher plane than Germany, yet we speak the same language and are members of the same German family.”⁴⁷ His regional sensibilities went hand-in-glove with German glory so long as it meant restraining nefarious Prussian circles.

From the perspective of Austrian Gauleiter Eigruber, however, such southeastern regionalism of the Austrofascist variety threatened the united front of Germany’s eventual war effort. He harped against such internecine regionalism when calling on his listeners themselves to enforce Nazi unity: “When someone tells you a joke about a Prussian or a Bavarian, let him finish, then knock him flat.”⁴⁸ Eigruber sought to refute any Austrian sentiments against both Bavarians and Prussians as the “other Germans.” Eigruber seemed all too aware of fractures among southeastern, Alpine, Catholic, *bairisch*-speaking Germans. Whether Austrians made regionalist jokes in jest or in earnest, Eigruber ordered one response: violence.

Eigruber also discussed the Austrofascist legacy in the war years, commenting on the contingency that had been at play in getting to this point. In a speech in January 1941, he refuted Austrians who framed as inevitable the Nazi victory over the Austrofascist regime:

⁴⁶ Stanley Suval, *The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), xi-xxi. Erin R. Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany: Republican Nationalism and the Idea of Anschluss* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 195-236.

⁴⁷ Reconstructed dialogue with Benito Mussolini, cited 1942 in Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, 26.

⁴⁸ Eigruber, “The Propagandist,” Bytwerk, GPA, Calvin University.

As if they [Austrians who assumed inevitable Nazi triumph] really knew that men from Steiermark, Kärnten, and Salzburg would stand guard in Narvik [in northern Norway]! In truth, three and a half years ago they had no idea whether the Krukenkreuz [sic] [the cross potent, the symbol of the conservative Austrian *Vaterländische Front*] or the Swastika would triumph; they nervously thought and speculated about how they could come out of things in the best way possible, where they should place their bets to come out with as many Schillings or Marks as possible.

He pointed to the interwar uncertainty that so marked the intra-national borderland. Rather than see the Nazi takeover of Austria as self-apparent, Eigruber presented the interwar years as a duel of fascist fates locked in pitched combat for hegemony over German-speaking Europe.⁴⁹ True to the affective convergence in this borderland, he coupled the righteousness of his ideological stance with continuous anxiety about the ultimate success of his ideology, especially in a world of real and imagined existential conflicts.

Nazi newspapers also smeared the Heimwehren and VF, whose Austrian regionalism had made them unpalatable to Nazi tastes. The Nazis did not stop at organizational dismemberment. They condemned the Austrofascists' reputations and legacies into oblivion. Just months after the annexation, the Nazi paper for Austria, the *Österreichischer Beobachter*, flipped on its head the narrative of the Kulturkampf. It claimed that Dollfuss and his Austrofascist state had launched the real Kulturkampf against northern Germans in the name of Catholic purity, in which "full buckets of dirt were poured on Prussia, naturally." The article presented the Prussians as the victims of southeastern Catholic machinations and the Nazis as the ones who had "done away with all desires for a Kulturkampf."⁵⁰ The north German Nazis

⁴⁹ Eigruber, "The Propagandist," Bytwerk, GPA, Calvin University.

⁵⁰ "Wer trieb Kulturkampf?," *Österreichischer Beobachter: Traditionsblatt der alten Kämpfer*, 1. Junifolge 1938, 3. Jahrgang, Seite 5-6, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=obl>

had liberated Austrians from their regionalist false consciousness. Furthermore, *Das Kleine Volksblatt* commented in January 1939 that “no one wanted to be let himself/herself be labeled as [in] the Vaterländische Front.”⁵¹ In Nazi Austria, the label warranted trouble, and the Nazi papers even framed the VF as a “bogus organization.”⁵² A paper later reported that a woman ran afoul of the Nazi authorities simply “because of her endorsement of the Vaterländische Front.”⁵³ Another printed a story about a shootout between an OSS leader and Austrian SA members.⁵⁴ Fixated on familial genealogies, the Nazis also held fascist pedigrees in high esteem.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, the Nazis harped on the VF’s ineptitude in constructing any Volksgemeinschaft, commenting disparagingly that it only ever provided some benefits to parents: “But that was also the only work and the only deed of this organization, which stood

&datum=1938&page=73&size=45, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=obl&datum=1938&page=74&size=45>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁵¹ “Ein Briefträger sucht die VF.” *Das Kleine Volksblatt*, 15 January 1939, Nummer 15, Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=dkv&datum=19390115&query=Vaterl%C3%A4ndische+Front&ref=annosearch&seite=5>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁵² “Schwindelgründung” was the exact word used. Heinrich Rieger, “Durch Kampf zum Sieg,” *Kreisbote: Wochenblatt für den 10., 11. und 23 Wiener Gemeindebezirk*, 15 March 1940, Nummer 2132, 42. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=bez&datum=19400315&query=Vaterl%C3%A4ndische+Front&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁵³ “Notizen: Verhastete Betrügerin,” *Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung*, 2 October 1940, Folge 14.623, 41. Jahrgang, Seite 8, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=krz&datum=19401002&query=Vaterl%C3%A4ndische+Front&ref=anno-search&seite=8>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁵⁴ “Gemeindesekretär auf Menschenjagd: Schüsse gegen SA.-Männer – Veruntreute Amtsgelder,” *Der Landbote*, 14 January 1939, Folge 201, 5. Jahrgang, Seite 30, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=lab&datum=19390114&query=Ostm%C3%A4rkische+Sturmscharen&ref=anno-search&seite=30>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁵⁵ By “fascist pedigree,” I mean an individual’s personal history of enrollment and engagement with various fascist organizations, not the fascist “pedigree” of Aline Lion, who uses it to mean the “antecedents” that contributed to Italian fascism. See Aline Lion, *The Pedigree of Fascism: A Popular Essay on the Western Philosophy* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1927), 10 (for direct quotation, 11–22, 58 (for direct quotation, 59–234).

until its dissolution under the auspices of the Heimwehr chief Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg...”⁵⁶ While the Nazis framed their fascism as a natural and organic outgrowth of the Volk, the Nazis worked to frame the VF’s brand as stilted and imposed. The *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* framed it as a “national League forced by the [Dollfuss and Schuschnigg] government” into which “we Ostmärkern” joined “involuntarily.” The Austrofascist organization thus constituted nothing but a “coerced entity.”⁵⁷ By degrading the Austrofascists in such terms, Nazism by contrast appeared as a robust, genuine movement. To Nazi propagandists, the Heimwehren and VF (and its leaders) only embarrassed German fascist and völkisch movements.

Other condemnations reflected Nazi antisemitic expectations, fears, and accusations.

The Nazi press curated a narrative that Jewish influences had infiltrated the former

⁵⁶ “*Fortsetzung von Seite 1: Klosterbesitz für die Wiener Mütter,*” *Völkischer Beobachter*, 21 May 1939, Nr. 141, 52. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=vob&datum=19390521&query=Vaterländische+Front&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

In a paper for Austrian émigrés in the United States, the Heimwehren would be championed for its stance for Austrian autonomy against Nazi Gleichschaltung. *The Voice of Austria* went so far as to say that Heimwehren participants “gave their lives in defense of Austrian democracy between 1933 and 1938,” which was absurd. By 1933, the Austrian “democracy” was quickly becoming a shell of its former self ultimately leading into the creation of the Austrofascist regime in 1934. Furthermore, the Heimwehren activists loathed the democratic system of the First Republic. The attempt here was to present Austrofascists in as positive of a light as possible to western audiences. The article reified the Austrian regionalist sense of superiority over “their Prussian ‘brothers.’” Antoine Gazda, “Lone Fighters,” *The Voice of Austria: Independent Non-Party Monthly Review: Independent International Information Bulletin: Liberation: United We Stand For The Four Freedoms*, ed. Dr. Franz Klein, July 1943, Vol. 3, No. 2, New York, Pages: 2 (4 on database), 4 (6 on database), ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=voa&datum=1943&page=112&size=45&qid=ZHMSAULN5GV2RF45N73O8TUAGCGQD1>, [https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=voa&datum=19430057&query=\(text:Heimwehr\)&ref=anno-search&seite=6](https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=voa&datum=19430057&query=(text:Heimwehr)&ref=anno-search&seite=6), Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁵⁷ Dr. Erwin Stranik, “Französisch-Marokko arabisch gesehen: Ein Beispiel ausbeuterischer Kolonialpolitik: Eine mißlungen Agitation,” *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 23 July 1940, Nummer 201, 74. Jahrgang, Seite 5, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nwg&datum=19400723&query=Vaterländische+Front&ref=anno-search&seite=5>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

Austrofascist groups. In February 1939, the Nazi *Österreichischer Beobachter* ran an article about events from the previous year, being sure to comment on “Jews from circles of the V.F.” The article also tried to cast scorn on the 1938 Austrofascist campaign for Austrian autonomy. To the Nazi press, the Austrofascist claims for “the independent, Christian, corporatist ... free and therefore renowned Austria” also meant “Jewish,” which the Nazi story added to the list of descriptors.⁵⁸ Two months later, the Nazi *Völkischer Beobachter* reported another supposed scandal. The paper labelled as Jewish two brothers who had served prominently in the Heimwehren, and then it accused them for supposedly corrupt financial dealings.⁵⁹ The Nazi propaganda-press went with guilt by association—attack the Austrofascist movements by calling out its participants as supposed racial enemies.

During Nazi investigations of another supposed Jewish-financial conspiracy, *Das Kleine Volksblatt* reported that as the Nazis came to power in Germany, the “Heimatschutz and the Sturmsharen [OSS]” had received “‘subsidies’ hand over fist in the interest of Judentum.”⁶⁰

⁵⁸ “Die Amtliche Nachrichtenstelle meldet: Feierliche Einweihung des Gebäudes der Generaldirektion der ‚MATAG‘ durch den Bundespräsidenten.,” *Österreichischer Beobachter*, 1. Feberfolge 1939, 4. Jahrgang, Seite 8, 9 (17 on database), ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=obl&datum=1939&page=48&size=45&qid=XVUMVQD4XN7GJ5KS9CQ5N19BSM2MV4>, [https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=obl&datum=19390052&query=\(text:“Vaterländische+Front”\)&ref=anno-search&seite=17](https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=obl&datum=19390052&query=(text:“Vaterländische+Front”)&ref=anno-search&seite=17), Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁵⁹ “Je drei Jahre schweren Kerker für Salo und Max Neufeld: Die jüdische Heimwehr-Schuster verurteilt: Eigener Bericht des ‚Völkischen Beobachters.‘” *Völkischer Beobachter*, 27 April 1939, Nummer 117, 52. Jahrgang, Seite 11, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=vob&datum=19390427&query=“Heimwehr”&ref=anno-search&seite=11>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁶⁰ “Gericht: Gewissenlose Freibeuter verursachten den ‚Phönix‘ Skandal. Der Jude Bretchneider und Oberbuchhalter Hanny vor Gericht. – Ein schwarzes Kapitel aus dem Bestechungssumpf der Systemzeit.” *Das Kleine Volksblatt*, 6 February 1940, Nummer 37, Seite 9, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=dkv&datum=19400206&query=“Vaterländische+Front”&ref=anno-search&seite=9>, Accessed 2 February 2021. The newspaper for the Vorarlberg town of Bludenz also ran the story: “Verschiedene Nachrichten: Der „Phönix“ Zusammenbruch vor Gericht – 478 Millionen Shulden,” *Bludnzer Anzeiger: für die Bezirke Bludenz und Montafon*, 10 February 1940, Nummer 6, 56. Jahrgang,

Days later, the *Völkischer Beobachter* also implicated the VF in this Nazi-perceived scandal.⁶¹ Again and again, the Nazis harped on this accusation. That same year, the Nazis reported a new “scandal” whereby the VF had worked in league with supposedly ubiquitous, insidious Jewish conspirators.⁶² Later on, the Nazis tried to use claims of Jewish money to besmirch not just the VF, but all the main entities fighting for Austrian regional autonomy. The Nazi press accused the OSS, the CSP, the VF, a newsletter of the Heimwehren, one of Dollfuss’s assistants, and pro-Schuschnigg reporters for accepting various amounts of money from Jewish sources.⁶³ That these Austrofascist groups had their own antisemitic stances remained beyond the point.⁶⁴ Nazi propaganda still presented their ex-rivals as props of their ultimate enemy. The Nazi need

Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=baz&datum=19400210&query=“Ostmärkische+Sturmscharen”&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁶¹ “Ein paar Millionen Schilling spielen keine Rolle: Die Kriegsfrent gegen die Nazis: Eigener Bericht des ‚Völkischen Beobachters,‘” *Völkischer Beobachter*, 13 February 1940, Nummer 44, 53. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=vob&datum=19400213&query=“Vaterländische+Front”&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁶² “Das Porträt eines ‚Vaterländischen:‘ Ein Jude sollte ‚Parteigeschäfte‘ finanzieren: Kellermann-Bohrer wegen Erpressung und Betruges vor Gericht: Eigener Bericht des ‚Völkischen Beobachter,‘” *Wiener Beobachter*, inset of *Völkischer Beobachter*, 16 August 1940, Nummer 229, 53. Jahrgang, Seite 7, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=vob&datum=19400816&query=“Vaterländische+Front”&ref=anno-search&seite=7>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁶³ “Erinnerungen an die Systemzeit. Jüdische Journalisten erhalten christliche Schmiergelder. — 2,351.000 Schilling für die verkrachte ‚Neue Freie Presse.‘” *Kreishote: Wochenblatt für den 10., 11. und 23. Wiener Gemeindebezirk*, 15 November 1940, Nummer 2167, 42. Jahrgang, Seite 6, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=bez&datum=19401115&query=“Vaterländische+Front”&ref=anno-search&seite=6>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

⁶⁴ Let there be no doubt, the Ständestaat agents were antisemitic, but comparatively, they were not as virulently racist in their antisemitism as the Nazis. Persecuting, deporting, and murdering Jews was also not a central policy project like it was for the Nazis. This is not to make excuses for the Austrofascists, but the difference is important to note. See Angelika Königseder, “Antisemitismus 1933–1938,” in Kapitel 3 of *Austrofascismus: Politik – Ökonomie – Kultur 1933–1938*, herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. Emmerich Tálos, Wolfgang Neugebauer, *Politik und Zeitgeschichte* Band I (Wien/Berlin: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2014), 54–65.

to discredit and demonize—including other German-speaking fascists—meant accusing them of the worst possible crime in Nazi ideology: collaboration with the supposed Jewish threat.

Nazi Nomenclature: Anschluss, Altreich, & Austria

While the Nazis condemned unequivocally their Austrofascist rivals, they equivocated continuously in their attempts to rule Austria. This section narrates the disparate discourses in the Nazi administrative system regarding labels for their rule. I trace the linguistic pluralization surrounding the “proper” name for the Anschluss, for Germany, and for Austria, all of which revealed the Nazi attempt to channel regionalism to their expansionism.⁶⁵ The plurality of terms continued the sense of uncertainty even after the Nazi annexation “solved” the Austrian “problem.”

In November of that same year, Nazi bureaucrats in Munich could not settle on a term for the momentous March maneuver. Had it amounted to a true “union,” an “Anschluss?” Or had it been tantamount to a “re-unification,” a “Wiedervereinigung?” Or perhaps there existed a more suitable signifier, such as a “homecoming,” a “Heimkehr?” The Nazi Administrative office in charge of Child Support went with the phrase “The Heimführung [repatriation] of

⁶⁵ For a strong intervention regarding taxonomy, see Kate Brown’s fourth chapter “The Power to Name.” Though the topic of her chapter concerns national identifiers in a slightly earlier time and in a highly multi-ethnic space (Soviet Ukrainian borderlands during the 1930s), the theoretical relevance remains. Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 118–133. See also Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), xvii.

all Germans from Austria.”⁶⁶ Each of these terms carried a loaded set of connotations and conveyed a different implication regarding *Geschichtspolitik* (politics of history). Union implied bilateral agreement. Re-unification claimed that Austria and Germany had at some point previously operated as one, such that that 1938 served as some righteous Reich restoration. But Germany and Austria as modern states had never seen such unity. Whatever “unity” had existed in the Holy Roman Empire, the early-modern dominions of Habsburg and Hohenzollern dynasties remained a far cry from modern nation-states. To Nazi propaganda, establishing a linear trajectory of großdeutsch German unity mattered much more than historical accuracy. “Homecoming” and “repatriation” brought additional sets of sub-text: that Austria represented the prodigal German son who had gallivanted farther afield in Eastern and Balkan affairs. The Nazi movement supposedly secured its glorious return under the benevolent, paternalist supervision of the German state.

This disparity over labels continued throughout the Second World War.⁶⁷ The plurality of names for the 13 March Aktion spoke to a larger point: the annexation did not

⁶⁶ Reichsbundesleiter – Stellvertreter gez. Konrad, Reichsbund der Kinderreichen Reichsbundesleitung VI m/gi, Berlin, den 7. November 1938, Rundschreiben Nr. 92/38. An alle Landesleiter, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (WSLa), Design: Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv, A2-2 Rassenpolit. Amt. NSDAP-Gauleitung Wien Reichsbund Deutsche Familie: a). Tagungen + Propaganda (1938-1941, 2. Teil) b). Rundschreiben aus Berlin (1938-1944, 1 Teil), Reichsbund der Kinderreichen ab Mai 1940. Reichsbund Deutsche Familie, Rundschreiben („Mitteilungen“) 1938, Der Beauftragte des RDR für die Ostmark Eingelangt am 10.11.38, Day 1 Photo 101.

⁶⁷ Nicholas Stargardt commented on the power behind names of humans and locations in his introductory section “The Right To A Name:” “Possessing one’s own name is one of the most elementary forms of personal identity ... Names of places turn out to be just as complex as names of persons. Often, towns had several different names for centuries, which altered with the language spoken by their multi-cultural population or the political jurisdiction under which they fell ... Names are not neutral and, in writing this book, I have discovered that the right to name people and places remains a very present part of the legacy of the Second World War.” Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children’s Lives Under the Nazis* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), xv-xvi. Again, see also Zahra,

function as a singularity, a one time “event,” even among the very circles that had carried it out. Unity between Austria and Germany (or any political entities for that matter) only ever existed as abstractions in peoples’ minds, which continued to generate divergent linguistic choices long after the immediate “event” had come and gone. The violent disagreements of the interwar years already showed this reading of the Anschluss as an ongoing, drawn out discourse.⁶⁸ The “Federal Constitutional Law” concerning the fusion of Austria with Germany announced it as the “Wiedervereinigung of Österreich with the German Reich.”⁶⁹ Two years after the “event,” as Nazi bureaucrats imposed Nazi law in Austria, they seemed to settle on Wiedervereinigung as their euphemism of choice, which they also employed in their summary of Austria’s legal integration into Nazi Germany in April 1941.⁷⁰ The official office in Nazi Germany for coordinating the Anschluss became known as Reichskommissar für die

Kidnapped Souls, xvii. Names were definitively charged within the intra-national borderland, even with a supposedly agreed-upon German nationality and language.

⁶⁸ This claim builds extensively on the work and ideas of: Suval, *The Anschluss Question*, xi-xxi. Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 195-236.

⁶⁹ “Gesetzblatt für das Land Österreich 1. Kundmachung: Wiederverlautbarung des Bundesverfassungsgesetzes über die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem Deutschen Reich. 2. Verordnung: Abstimmungsverordnung – AB.” 15 March 1938, Jahrgang 1938, 1. Stück, Nr. 2, ALEX – Historische Rechts- und Gesetzestexte Online, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Seite 1, <https://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=glo&datum=1938&page=3&size=10>, Accessed 30 March 2022.

⁷⁰ Der Reichsminister des Innern Frick, “Verordnung über die Einführung des Spielbankrechts in der Ostmark und im Reichsgau Sudetenland.” 18 April 1940. *Reichsgesetzblatt: Teil I 1940 Ausgegeben zu Berlin, den 23. April 1940 Nr. 72*, 665, Tyroler Landesarchiv Innsbruck (TLAI), Repertorium B640, Archivordnung VI/1 Gaupressarchiv Presseauschnittsammlung: Karton 12 (Staat/Staatliche Organisationen), Nr. 18 Ostmärkische Gesetze und Erlässe der Reichsregierung, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg VI/1/18 (Kr. 12), Day 5 Photo 2. Studienleiter der Verwaltungsakademie Wien Universitätsprofessor Dr. Helfried Pfeifer, *Die Ostmark Eingliederung und Neugestaltung: Historisch-systematische Gesetzessammlung mit Einführungen, Einläuterungen, zahlreichen Verweisungen und Schrifttumsangaben nach dem Stande vom 1. April 1941* (Wien: Verlag der Staatsdruckerei, 1941), TLAi, B640, VI/1, Karton 12, Nr. 18 Ostmärkische Gesetze, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg, Day 5 Photo 22.

Wiedervereinigung Österreichs.⁷¹ Furthermore, newspapers referred back to this supposed event as the “Eingliederung” (integration or absorption).⁷² In context, all of these supposed synonyms showed the Anschluss unleashed discursive divergence.⁷³ The Austrian puzzle that had beleaguered central Europe still solicited a variance of resolutions, however momentous the Nazi military Aktion might have seemed. Even the foreign press noted the lingering tension. The very day after the annexation, the French newspaper *La Dépêche du Midi* spoke to the potential continuation of the großdeutsch/kleindeutsch question: “the only problem is the following: will Austria become a province of Germany or a secondary national socialist state?”⁷⁴ Make no mistake, the Nazis adamantly pursued the path of absorption. But the

⁷¹ “Das Ostmarkgesetz voll in Kraft,” ES Wien, im April, *Kölnische Zeitung*, Erscheinungsort: Köln, 23.4.1940, 0827, Metropol-Gesellschaft, E. Matthes & Co. Berlin-Charlottenburg, Zeitungs-Ausschnitt-Büro, TLal, B640, VI/1, Karton 12, Nr. 18 Ostmärkische Gesetze, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg, Day 5 Photo 32.

⁷² “Die Verwaltung der Ostmark: In Wien ab 1. Februar keine Zentralinstanz mehr,” *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Berlin, 26 January 1940, TLal, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg VI/1/18 (Kr. 12), Day 5 Photo 31.

⁷³ There is a rich historiography on the cleavages between German and Austrian Nazis that emerged after the 1938 annexation. Maurice Williams, *Gau, Volk, and Reich: Friedrich Rainer and the Paradox of Austrian National Socialism*, eds. Ulfried Burz and Claudia Fräss-Ehrfeld (Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten, 2005), 21–22, 277, Available online during Covid-19 thanks to HathiTrust.org, Accessed 18 October 2020, Digitized by Google, Original from University of Michigan. See also Harry R. Ritter, “Hermann Neubacher and the Austrian *Anschluss* Movement, 1918–40,” in *Central European History* 8, no. 4 (Cambridge University Press on behalf of Conference Group for Central European History of the American Historical Association, December 1975): 348–369, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4545754>, Accessed 18 January 2017. For a more recent take, see Giles MacDonogh, *1938: Hitler's Gamble* (London: Constable & Robinson Ltd, 2009), 68. See also Bulloch, “Austrian Identity,” 266–267. “...even the Austrian Nazis favored an autonomous and Catholic Austria.” Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918–1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 220. See also Pauley’s “Chapter XIII: The Great Disillusionment: Austrian Nazis After the Anschluss,” in *Forgotten Nazis*, 216 (for direct quotation), 217–222.

⁷⁴ “L’ARMÉE ALLEMANDE EST ENTREE EN AUTRICHE SAMEDI MATIN A 5h. 30: M. Adolf Hitler, qui avait quitté Berlin en avion, a reçu un accueil triomphal dans sa ville natale et à Linz: Tous les chefs nationaux socialistes allemands ont en fait, à Vienne, les leviers de commande: Le seul problème est le suivant: l’Autriche sera-t-elle une province allemande ou un Etat secondaire national socialiste? L’EX-CHANCELIER SCHUSCHNIGG EST GARDE A DOMICILE, *La Dépêche*, 13

Wehrmacht could not dispel regionalism as quickly as it could march. The myriad of names suggests this event constituted an ongoing discursive Nazi process to find, assign, and settle on a single name from among a litany of various categorical labels.⁷⁵ The strong military presence added additional complications for the publicity spin. Commenting on the annexation from beyond the reach of Nazi censors (for the time being, at least), French press sources labelled the annexation as nothing short of a “coup de force.”⁷⁶ The Nazi attempt to synchronize and homogenize the irredentist narrative exposed its divisions and polycentric voices.⁷⁷

March 1938, BaBL, Frankreich Pressestimmen, Bestandssignatur: R/4902/, Archivsignatur: 1194, Standort 51, Magazin: M 207, Reihe: 44, Blattzahl (fol. 1 –, Lt. Auslandswissenschaftl. Institut, Deutsche Hochschule für Politik Archiv, Anschluss Österreichs an das Reich: Ausland u. Anschluss, D 1062, 1194, Day 9 Photo 262.

⁷⁵ Laura Morowitz’s wonderful essay about Nazi myth making claims that the Anschluss “would be framed as an event outside of time.” The Nazis cultivated an image of this annexation it as some inevitable moment of natural unity that transcended history, presenting it in almost religious terms. By studying the Anschluss through the optic of imagination, she contributes strongly to presenting this annexation as not just a singular event but also as a series of mental constructs. Laura Morowitz, “Hitler as Liberator, Ostmark as Bulwark, and other Myths of the Anschluss,” Chapter 6 in *Myths in Austrian History: Construction and Deconstruction*, Contemporary Austrian Studies 29 (New Orleans: University of New Orleans Press, 2020), 132 (for direct quotation), 133, 135–139, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1f8xc9w.9>, Accessed 10 February 2021.

⁷⁶ Camille Loutre, “A Vienne après le coup de force,” *Le Petit Parisien*, 13. March 1938, BaBL, Frankreich Pressestimmen, R/4902/, 1194, 51, M 207, 44, Blattzahl (fol. 1 –, Day 9 Photo 268. Gustave Herve employed the same turn of phrase in his newspaper article: “Mais cette entrée de l’armée allemande sent tellement le coup de force...” Gustave Herve, “Il n’y a plus d’Autriche,” *La Victoire*, 16 March 1938, BaBL, Frankreich Pressestimmen, R/4902/, 1194, 51, M 207, 44, Blattzahl (fol. 1 –, Day 9 Photo 257.

⁷⁷ In his brilliant narrative of German-speaking colonial organizations from the end of the First World War to the end of the Second, Gregory Weeks even suggests that to some members of such colonial organizations in Vienna, the annexation was nothing short of a new colonialization within German-speaking Europe itself: “Der Symbolismus ist nicht schwer zu erfassen. Österreich als neueste ‚Kolonie‘ Deutschlands und Wien als deren Hauptstadt waren besonders geeignet als Gastgeber für Tagung des RKB [Reichskolonialbund], und die österreichischen Kolonialisten und Nationalsozialisten haben sich besonders bemüht, diese Tagung zu einem Erfolg werden zu lassen.” Gregory Weeks, *Hitlers österreichische Kolonialisten: Erste Republik – Ständestaat -- „Drittes Reich“ 1918–1945* (Wien: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2016), 65.

Along those lines, the Nazi annexation came with accompanying issues concerning territory labels. If Austria went by Österreich, what should the Nazis label the areas of the German nation-state from before the Anschluss? Increasingly, the Nazis referred to the pre-1938 German nation-state as the Altreich (Old Reich) in contradistinction to the Österreich (Eastern Reich). Such labels reinforced the flexibility, even reversibility, about what was “old” and what was “new” in Greater German imaginaries, especially through the refracting lens of Geschichtspolitik.⁷⁸ If Germans in Germany and Austria imagined the Österreich as the old heartland of Germandom during the Holy Roman Empire, then they also saw it as the “newly acquired” eastern Reich, a twentieth-century borderland adjoining their newly-labeled Altreich.⁷⁹ Both the Alt- and Öster-reiche summoned images of powerful, primordial, ancient,

⁷⁸ For more on the Austrian Nazis as seeing themselves as fulfilling a new Nazi mission that built upon their supposedly age-old role as masters of multi-ethnic spaces, see Liulevicius, *Myth of the East*, 184, 197–199.

⁷⁹ Hitler gave a speech at the Heldenplatz in Vienna on 15 March 1938 to confirm the Anschluss. Here he expressed the reversibility of these old/new connotations quite explicitly: “Now I proclaim for this land [Austria] its new mission which corresponds with the command which in times past summoned hither the German settlers from all the shires (*Gauen*), of the Old Reich. The oldest East Mark of the German people shall henceforth be the youngest bulwark of the German nation and thus of the German Reich. Through the centuries in the disturbed periods of the past the assaults of the East have broken on the frontiers of the Old Mark.” Adolf Hitler, Speech “On the Heldenplatz in Vienna,” cited in *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, Vol. II, ed. Norman H. Baynes, 1426.

For an example of the Altreich/Ostmark distinction, see Einführung von im Altreich geltenden Bestimmungen in den Reichsgauen der Ostmark, Beilage zum „Verordnungs-und Amtsblatt für den Reichsgau Tirol und Vorarlberg“ aus 1941, TLaI, B640, VI/1, Karton 12, Nr. 18 Ostmärkische Gesetze, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg, 69, Day 5 Photo 10.

Liulevicius, *German Myth of the East*, 184, 197–199. For the plurality of Ostmark meanings in the pre-Anschluss 1930s, see Julie Thorpe’s take: “The editors also believed this universal pan-German identity was dependent on the particular expression of what was uniquely Austrian in the German ‘Ostmark.’ A ‘strong sense of what is Austrian [and] a general sense of what is East March German (*Ostmarkdeutschtum*) does not stand in contradiction to pan-German ideas, but is, rather, the necessary pre-requisite.’ The reference to an *Ostmarkdeutschtum* appeared repeatedly in *Tagespost* editorials and had a different connotation from the Catholic use of the term as we saw in Chapter 3. Whereas Catholics referred to Austria as the bearer and representative of German Christendom in the Eastern Marches of the old Holy Roman Empire, German-nationalists used the term in reference to Austria’s position in the

and medieval Germanness that supposedly transcended historical time. But the inverse also proved true, in that both the Alt- and Öster-reiche seemed new. Despite its name, the Altreich formed the new core of the burgeoning Nazi empire, while the Österreich served as its new acquisition to the southeast. The Alt/Öster-reich dynamic encapsulated Nazism's power and popularity. On an affective level, Nazism seemed to reconcile and even synthesize seemingly mutually exclusive impulses.⁸⁰ Its adherents felt they could have it both ways: fictional historicization of the new plus aggressive regeneration of the old.

The imaginary of Austria as both “the new” and “the old” Germanic borderland manifested explicitly in another taxonomic shift. During their rule, the Nazis moved away from labeling this new territory as Österreich and toward calling it the Ostmark (the Eastern March), a label that directly denoted it as Germandom's eastern borderland.⁸¹ Interestingly, Nazi administrative documents in the months and years just after 1938, in addition to Nazi newspapers, referred the newly acquired land as interchangeably Österreich and the Ostmark.⁸²

borderlands of the German nation.” Julia Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933–38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 115.

⁸⁰ This combination of reactionary and revolutionary has an extensive historiography. Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), ix–x, 189–235. See also Lisa Pine, *Education in Nazi Germany* (New York: Berg, 2010), 3, 137.

⁸¹ Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius: “Austria itself was renamed the ‘Eastern March,’ (*Ostmark*)...” Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East: 1800 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 184. Mark Mazower went so far as to say: “Austria was therefore completely stripped of its identity (as Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland would be after it): it was renamed the *Ostmark* and treated as a province of the Reich. German law was gradually extended throughout the country, and Austrian government institutions were dissolved or subordinated to their German equivalents.” Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 48.

⁸² For the interchangeability of “Ostmark” and “Lande Österreich,” see Der Reichsminister der Justiz Dr. Gürtner, Reichsminister für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft R. Walther Darré, “Verordnung zur Ergänzung der Vorschriften über die Einführung des Erbhofrechts in der Ostmark. Vom 12. April 1940,” *Reichsgesetzblatt Teil 1 1940 Ausgegeben zu Berlin, den 23. April 1940, Nr. 72, TLaI, B640, VI/1, Karton 12, Nr. 18 Ostmärkische Gesetze, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg*, 665 (for direct

A Nazi pro-Anschluss leaflet, from just after the Nazi annexation in March but just before the Nazi referendum in April, explicitly demonstrated the initial interchangeability of these two labels: “1938 The old Ostmark Österreich comes to the Reich, Großdeutschland becomes a reality.”⁸³ Like the strategy of the now defunct OSS, this move proudly embraced Austria’s borderland status. They appealed to a legacy of the Ostmark holding the line of Kultur against foes from “the East,” which mobilized existing southeastern regional impulses for Nazi expansion.⁸⁴ This leaflet also demonstrated the Nazi dynamic of synthesizing the old with the new, as their new Greater Germany remained predicated on the inclusion of the “old Ostmark Österreich.”⁸⁵

quotation), 667, Day 5 Photo 2-3. Der Reichsforstmeister in Vertretung Alpers, “Verordnung zur Durchführung des Gesetzes gegen Waldverwüstung in der Ostmark. Vom 19. April 1940, *Reichsgesetzblatt Teil 1 1940*, TLaI, B640, VI/1, Karton 12, Nr. 18 Ostmärkische Gesetze, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg, 669 (for direct quotation), 670-671, Day 5 Photo 6-8.

⁸³ Text in “Ein Volk-ein Reich-ein Führer!,” BaBL, NS/26/, 2077, Day 5 Photo 308.

⁸⁴ Luža relegates the discussion of this name to a footnote. See Luža, *Austro-German Relations*, 49 (footnote 62).

⁸⁵ Text in “Ein Volk-ein Reich-ein Führer!,” BBL, NS/26/, 2077, Day 5 Photo 308. The pluralized set of meanings contained in this space was explored in Laura Morowitz’s chapter, which claims that the Ostmark was a powerful imaginative myth in the Nazi imperial project: “The *Ostmark* was many things: the lost ancestral homeland, a treasure chest of natural resources ... But in Nazi mythology, its most important feature was its mountains,” which, in Nazi imaginations, formed an impregnable geographical barrier sheltering their Aryan race from supposed racial others. Morowitz, “Hitler as Liberator, Ostmark as Bulwark,” 140. But as Evan Burr Bukey correctly asserted, the Ostmark was also seen as a space for fluidity, appealing to Altreich Germans because it suggested another perfect balance: between the foreign and the familiar. Austria was exotic enough to be exciting without being too different, dangerous, or alienating: “Visitors from the Reich tended to regard the Ostmark as a Nazi Disneyland, an Alpine paradise of holiday resorts, soothing music and good food. The problem was that few Austrians thought they were living in a theme park, especially in wartime.” Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler’s Austria: Popular Sentiment in the Nazi Era, 1938-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 199. In a condensed version of the book published a year later, he reiterated the fact that German tourists saw Austria as a German playground which further exacerbated “the antagonism” between the supposed types of Germans. See Evan Burr Bukey, “Die Stimmung in der Bevölkerung während der Nazizeit,” Kapitel 3 in *NS Herrschaft in Österreich*, 83-84.

But to the Nazis, there could only ever exist one true Reich: their Greater German Reich. The sheer existence of another German Reich, even only the name of Österreich, might challenge their claims of supremacy and unity. Nazi rulers thus came to downplay the Österreich label, too potentially evocative of southeastern sovereign autonomy.⁸⁶ The shift did not occur de jure nor overnight—months after the Anschluss, a single document described Austria interchangeably as “Österreich,” “österreichischen Gebiet” (Austrian territory), and “the Ostmark.”⁸⁷ Rather, the Nazis conducted conceptual sleight of hand, and their new name of choice increasingly became the Ostmark.⁸⁸

But this emphasis on Austria as the medieval Ostmark, the eastern reaches of Germandom, presented yet another puzzle within the intra-national borderland: a Bavarian Gau went by the Bayerische Ostmark. This label appealed to German imaginaries of a hilly land on the border with the Austrian Ostmark and the Sudetenland, which the Nazis took from Czechoslovakia later in 1938. A Nazi tourist booklet from 1936 boasted about the Bayerische Ostmark’s Germanic landscape, but it stumbled into a linguistic cul-de-sac in describing the Bavarian Ostmark’s proximity to the Austrian Ostmark. It described the Bavarian Ostmark as “The Rural Land of the Ostmark between the Donau and Inn.” But

⁸⁶ In his impressively thorough account of Austria and Nazi Germany, Hermann Hagspiel covers the name change with curious brevity, with less than a page dedicated to its discussion. Hermann Hagspiel, *Die Ostmark: Österreich im Großdeutschen Reich, 1938 bis 1945* (Wien: Wilhelm Braumüller Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung Ges.m.b.H., 1995), 105–106. Luža claimed “the public resented the disappearance of the name of Austria.” Luža, *Austro-German Relations*, 165.

⁸⁷ Reichsbundesleiter – Stellvertreter, *Rundschreiben Nr. 92/38. An alle Landesleiter*, WSLa, A2-2 Rassenpolit. Amt. NSDAP-Gauleitung Wien, Reichsbund Deutsche Familie, 1938, RDR für die Ostmark, 10.11.38, Day 1 Photo 101.

⁸⁸ Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East*, 184; *Bestimmungen in den Reichsgauen der Ostmark*, TLaI, B640, VI/1, Karton 12, Nr. 18 Ostmärkische Gesetze, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg, 69, Day 5 Photo 10; Mazower, *Hitler’s Empire*, 48.

Austria also encompassed land between the Danube and the Inn, and the two rivers evoked quintessential, even stereotypical, Austrianness. The brochure further described the Bavarian Ostmark's propinquity to Austria: "In the southeast this part of the Bayerische Ostmark Gau's territory borders on the state of Oberösterreich [Upper Austria], on the Austrian border city of Braunau (the birth city of Adolf Hitler)... its border touches the conjunction of the Inn and Salzach." Again, these two rivers could suggest Austria. The Nazis presented the landscape as a major appeal of the Bayerische Ostmark, and the brochure emphasized the ways in which these rivers traversed the Austro-Bavarian border so naturally. As Nazi propagandists painted their canvas of a Bavarian border-landscape, they diminished the fluvial lines of both Bavarian and Austrian Ostmarken to the vanishing point.⁸⁹

Uncertainty continued over the Ostmark's exact meaning, namely because Nazis also applied it to other eastern frontiers. To the Nazis, the Ostmark also conjured, ironically, images of Austria's main regional foil, rival, and even antagonist: Prussia. In the 1920s, a right-wing Prussian-based paramilitary group existed as the Wehrbund Ostmark, based out of the Prussian city of Frankfurt an der Oder.⁹⁰ The German-language *Prager Tagblatt* labeled it as "radical

⁸⁹ "Ostmärkisches Bauernland zwischen Donau und Inn," *Deutschland: Die Bayerische Ostmark ruft: Das schöne Reiseland an der Grenze*. ÖSaW, Kriegsarchiv Wien, Kärtensammlung, KIIc 18-200a, Day 6 Photo 44.

⁹⁰ Secondary literature on this paramilitary group is scant. For a paragraph on it, see Rainer Pomp, *Bauern und Großgrundbesitzer auf ihrem Weg ins Dritte Reich: Der Brandenburgische Landbund, 1919-1933* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 2011), 85, Available via Google Books, https://books.google.com/books?id=57PmBQAAQBAJ&pg=PA85&lpg=PA85&dq=wehrbund+ostmark&source=bl&ots=8DVdgbnz-3&sig=ACfU3U2VtXSylvDOTDMswiyKs_9gd35ZgQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjg0t_F9fvuAhV1EFkFHct1Dv4Q6AEwDnoECBAQAw#v=onepage&q=wehrbund%20ostmark&f=false, Accessed 25 February 2021.

right” organization, so much so that the Prussian government shut it down in 1926.⁹¹ But again, legally ending a paramilitary organization meant one thing; actually disbanding it meant something else. In 1928, the conservative Stahlhelm, Bund der Front Soldaten (Steel Helmet, League of Front Soldiers) subsumed the lingering structures of this Wehrbund Ostmark. That same year, Escherich attempted to court the Stahlhelm to his Bavarian Heimatschutz.⁹² Further lending this label Prussian connotations, the Ostmark had served as the original name of the Nazi Gau due east of Berlin before the Nazi rise to power. When the Nazis launched their Gleichschaltung in 1933, the Nazis did some redistricting, creating Gau Kurmark out of their original Nazi Ostmark and Gau Brandenburg.⁹³ The infamous 1938 annexation of Austria thus did not constitute the first time the Nazis had imposed an Anschluss between Brandenburg

⁹¹ “Die Maßnahmen der preußischen Regierung. Hausdurchsuchungen bei Ruhr-Industriellen. – Auflösung der rechtsradikalen Verbände Olympia, Ostmark und Wiking.,” *Prager Tagblatt*, 13 May 1926, Nummer 112 (struck out with pen and 113 handwritten above it), 51. Jahrgang, Seite 4, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ptb&datum=19260513&query=“Wehrbund+Ostmark”&ref=anno-search&seite=4>, Accessed 23 February 2021. See also “Faschismus in Deutschland: Gen. Sevaring geht vor.” *Tagblatt: Organ für die Interessen des werktätigen Volkes: Mit der illustrierten Sonntagsbeilage „Volk und Zeit“*, 15 May 1926, Nummer 111, Seite 4, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=tab&datum=19260515&seite=4&zoom=33&query=“Wehrbund%2BOstmark”&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 23 February 2021.

⁹² *Abkommen zwischen dem Wehrbund Ostmark und dem Stahlhelm, Bund der Frontsoldaten*. BaBL, Bestandssignatur: R/72/, Archivsignatur: 71, Standort: 51, Magazin: M 108, Reihe: 37, (fol. 1-), Deutsches Zentralarchiv, Stahlhelm, 61 Sta1, Landesverband Brandenburg, Jan. 1926 – Okt. 1929, I/16/06 Stein A 119/15 Fu 268/61, 240, Day 6 Photo 242. *An das Bundesamt des Stahlhelm, Magdeburg: Der Stahlhelm Bundesgeschäftsstelle Abt. Berlin Politische Abteilung, Tagebuch Nr. 521/28 Pol. Bei Beantwortung anzugeben. Dortige Nr. IIa/A 2904, Berlin W. 15. den 12.4.28*. BaBL, R/72/, 71, 51, M 108, 37, (fol. 1-), Deutsches Zentralarchiv, Stahlhelm, 61 Sta1, Landesverband Brandenburg, Jan. 1926 – Okt. 1929, 235, Day 6 Photo 236.

⁹³ See footnote 59 of Albrecht Tyrell, “Führergedanke und Gauleiterwechsel. Die Teilung des Gaues Rheinland der NSDAP 1931,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 23, 4. H. (Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag GmbH [and its subsidiary Akademie Verlag GmbH] October 1975): 354, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30197799>, Accessed 22 February 2021.

and an Ostmark. Within the Nazis' nomenclature, the Ostmark remained subject to historical change and could, ironically, invoke both Austria and Prussia.

Along those lines, the Ostmark also conjured images of East Prussia (Ostpreußen), both the eastern border region of Prussia (and Germany) and the location of a Prussian core city: Königsberg, the former coronation site of the Hohenzollern dynasty. The literature produced by certain interwar organization—*The Student of the Ostmark: Kampf Leaflet of the Gau Student Leadership of East Prussia*—embodied the contested nature of the Ostmark label.⁹⁴ Based out of Königsberg, this organization maintained that East Prussia, not Austria, constituted the *true* eastern marches of Germandom. Immediately following the annexation of Austria, this organization's leaflet broadcast their pride in Austria's inclusion in the Reich, crafting a historical narrative of "Austria's German Cultural Achievement" to legitimize the Anschluss. The leaflet boasted that the Nazi annexation of Austria allowed for a grand rewriting of German history:

we learn from this history that the "dualism" [between Austria and Prussia] was not some "insurmountable" antagonism; that at its position stands a fruitful, fertile polarity, from which emerges no rigid either-or, but rather affirms the diversity of German life as a defining element and so lays the foundational stone for another great history, upon

⁹⁴ "Das größere Deutschland," *Der Student der Ostmark: Kampfblatt der Gaustudentenführung Ostpreußen* Folge 1 (Königsberg (Pr): 1 April 1938), contained in report from Gaustudentenführer Ostpreußen, Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei Gauleitung Ostpreußen, Amt: NSDAP=Studentenbund, 30.XI.1938, 12. Dez. 1938, 4640, ÖSaW, Zivilakten der NS-Zeit: Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem Deutschen Reich („Bürckel“) Materie Mappe 4625 bis 4650, AdR, Karton 208, Day 5 Photo 96.

Interestingly, the second issue of the leaflet just fourteen days later would include Silesia in the Ostmark. "Die neue Hochschule entsteht," *Der Student der Ostmark: Kampfblatt der Gaustudentenführung Ostpreußen und Schlesien* Folge 2 (Königsberg (Pr): 15 April 1938), in Gaustudentenführer, Gauleitung Ostpreußen, 4640, ÖSaW, Zivilakten der NS-Zeit: Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung, Day 5 Photo 115.

which stand the columns of Prussia and Austria, upon which stretches the dome of a great cultural future in an enormous arch.

This student organization dismissed the centuries-long Austrian-Prussian division as a false dichotomy. Together, Austria and Prussia amounted to German greatness, and the annexation supposedly validated this historical revisionism, which pointed toward some glorious future.⁹⁵

While this East Prussian organization welcomed Austria with open arms, it delineated that East Prussia stood as the original Ostmark, the one so championed in Romanticized Nazi narratives of Teutonic knights crusading eastward into the Prussian heartland. Along those lines, the brochure labelled Austria as the Österreich. Further suggesting the replaceability of the Austrian Ostmark with the border regions of Ostpreußen, German-speakers again organized a new Heimwehr unit. But instead of serving Austrofascism, it took the form of a Schutzstaffel (SS) group in Danzig: the SS-Heimwehr Danzig.⁹⁶ Nazi nomenclature confusingly blurred the divide between Austria and Prussia, but perhaps that served the Nazi's overall point, intentionally or not. For Nazis to achieve their Aryan racial unity, they needed to cast the Austro-Prussian rivalry into their dust bin of history.

⁹⁵ "Oesterreichs deutsche Kulturleistung," *Der Student der Ostmark* Folge 1, 21, in *Gaustudentenführer, Gauleitung Ostpreußen*, 4640, ÖSaW, Zivilakten der NS-Zeit: Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs, Day 5 Photo 113.

⁹⁶ "Lieber sterben, als polnisch werden! SS-Heimwehr Danzig tritt an/Gauleiter Forster sprach bei einer gewaltigen Kundgebung," *Kleine Volks-Zeitung*, 19 August 1939, Nummer 227, 85. Jahrgang, Laufende Nummer 30294, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=kvz&datum=19390819&query=%22Heimwehr%22&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 20 February 2021. For a brief description of its role in the first month of the war, see "Rückkehr der SS-Heimwehr Danzig: Nach ruhmreichen Kämpfen wieder in der Heimat," *Neueste Zeitung: Das Innsbrucker Abendblatt*, inset of *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, 26 September 1939, Nummer 220, 27 Jahrgang, Seite 2 (10 in database), <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ibn&datum=19390926&query=%22Heimwehr%22&ref=anno-search&seite=10>, Accessed 20 February 2021.

Like Bavaria and the rest of the federal states of the *Altreich*, Nazi imperial rule also meant the Austrian *Ostmark*'s dissection into a myriad of *Gaue* for the purposes of administration. The Nazis initiated this process just months following the annexation and decreed it formally a year later in their *Ostmarkgesetz* (Ostmark Law).⁹⁷ The seven new Austrian *Gaue* received the labels: Wien (Vienna), Salzburg, Tirol (Tyrol, later called Vorarlberg-Tirol), Oberdonau (Upper Danube), Niederdonau (Lower Danube), Kärnten (Carinthia), and Steiermark (Styria).⁹⁸ In the process, the Nazi enacted *Anschlüsse* of two former federal states of Austria. They subsumed the former Vorarlberg into the Tyrol *Gau*, while they dismembered the former Burgenland among the Niederdonau and Steiermark *Gaue*.⁹⁹

If the Nazis shifted certain intra-Austrian borders around, they also employed key changes to the names. The Austrian Federal States of Upper and Lower Austria had become the *Gaue* of Upper and Lower Danube. The Nazi administrators subtle maneuver fit their previous pattern of eschewing the *Österreich* name in favor of newer, more fractured labels. All things *Österreich* might seem too regionalist, potentially unleashing centrifugal affective

⁹⁷ Maurice Williams, "German Imperialism and Austria, 1938," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, no. 1 (Sage Publications, Ltd, January 1979): 141, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/260231>, Accessed 7 February 2021. Alfred V. Boerner, "Foreign Government and Politics: Toward Reichsreform—The Reichsgaue," *The American Political Science Review* 33, no. 5 (American Political Science Association, October 1939): 854–856, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1949700>, Accessed 7 February 2021.

⁹⁸ Reichsbundesleiter – Stellvertreter, *Rundschreiben Nr. 92/38. An alle Landesleiter*, WSLa, A2-2 Rassenpolit. Amtd. NSDAP-Gauleitung Wien, Reichsbund Deutsche Familie, 1938, RDR für die Ostmark, 10.11.38, Day 1 Photo 101. See also "Das Ostmarkgesetz," *Kölnische Zeitung*, 23.4.1940, 0827, TLaI, B640, VI/1, Karton 12, Nr. 18 Ostmärkische Gesetze, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg, Day 5 Photo 32.

⁹⁹ Boerner, "Toward Reichsreform—The Reichsgaue," 855–856. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the dissection of the Burgenland created much internecine pushback and resentment from its previous *Gauleiter*. See Tálos, "Die Etablierung der Reichsgaue der 'Ostmark,'" 59.

loyalties that could undermine their ideal of ein Volk organized into ein Reich. Within Nazi nomenclature, the Danube did not threaten German unity—conversely, the riverine label behooved their unity. It replaced the potentially separatist impulses of a distinct eastern Reich with Romanticized notions of an ancient and powerful Germanic river, one that originated in Bavaria and flowed naturally down through Austria. It served as a more integrative label, combining the Nazi penchant for Germanic landscape imagery with Bavarian–Austrian unity. Breaking-down the Austrian Ostmark into even smaller units preserved the affective power of regionalism—the Alpine Tyrol and the Danube River basin—but it did so in ways so disintegrated, so dissolved as to pose no threat to the national unity of the Nazi Reich.¹⁰⁰

Historian Maurice Williams noted that Hitler also became wary of the Ostmark label itself as too regionally cohesive: “As a final indignity, Hitler later directed that the region should not even have a separate name, such as *Ostmark* or *Reichsgaue der Ostmark*, ordering that, if necessary, the term *Alpen-und-Donau Reichsgaue* would suffice.”¹⁰¹ Historian Laura Morowitz asserts that the Nazis abandoned the Ostmark label in 1942, as it still created a regionalist drag on their goal of transcendental racist nationalism.¹⁰² Epistolary evidence from Schuschnigg suggests they completed this nomenclature shift by 1 May 1943.¹⁰³ Instead of the Ostmark, the

¹⁰⁰ As Luža claims, the Nazis “had not allowed the formation of a center of power in the country [Austria], but it had cleverly provided an outlet, in the administration of the Gaue, for native elements concerned mainly with matters of provincial interest to become locally influentially. This did not give the country bargaining power against the Reich. Still, the populace did not want to lose its identity completely and was averse to submitting blindly to instructions from Berlin.” Luža, *Austro-German Relations*, 167–168.

¹⁰¹ Williams, “German Imperialism and Austria,” 141.

¹⁰² Morowitz, “Hitler as Liberator, Ostmark as Bulwark,” 133.

¹⁰³ “...die Ostmärker – (oder Donaugauler, wie es jetzt, glaube ich, heißt)...” Kurt von Schuschnigg, “Brief 99: 1. Mai 1943: Lieber Artur!,” Cited in Dieter A Binder and Heinrich Schuschnigg, »Sofort vernichten« *Die vertraulichen Briefe Kurt und Vera von Schuschniggs 1938-1945*,

Gaue taxonomy denoted the southeastern border-landscape itself, one that naturally traversed any previous Austro-Bavarian state border. Evocative of German-Austrian solidarity, the Gaue system discursively undermined rather than underscored the divides between the “types” of Germans.

The ensuing reliance on Gaue as the administrative unit in Austria amounted to the Austrofascists’ greatest fear: a Gleichschaltung of Austria, a unilateral Nazi forced synchronization of the Ostmark to the Nazi program.¹⁰⁴ It also amounted to an Austrian repetition of Bavaria’s fate back in 1933.¹⁰⁵ Historian Evan B. Bukey claimed that the provincial Austrian public “bitterly opposed” the Nazi attack on certain Catholic traditions, echoing such resentment in Bavaria: “in the countryside, the response of the farming population to Nazi regulations and wartime hardships resembled that in neighboring Bavaria.”¹⁰⁶ He also pointed out the Austrian “anti-Prussian sentiment” following the annexation, as the Anschluss made

Vorwort von Herbert Rosendorfer (Wien: Amalthea in der F.A. Herbig Verlagsbuchhandlung GmbH, 1997), 294.

¹⁰⁴ “...*Gleichschaltung* became the sobering epilogue to the history of the Austrian *Anschluss* movement.” Ritter, “Neubacher and the Austrian Anschluss,” 369. “Austrians soon learned that they had become second-class citizens.” Williams, “German Imperialism and Austria,” 140.

¹⁰⁵ In the same 14 March 1938 interview with the British journalist, just one day after the official declaration of the Anschluss, Hitler stated: “I assure you in all sincerity that four days ago I had no idea at all that I should be here to-day, or that Austria would have been embodied, as she is from to-night, with the rest of Germany on exactly the same basis as Bavaria or Saxony.” As with much of his rhetoric, what exactly he meant was unclear, but that ambiguity was exactly the point: yes, the *Anschluss* as an “event” had “happened” but the *Anschluss* as a process was just beginning. Hitler’s ambiguity leant aura of uncertainty as to that process. Depending on the listener, Hitler’s comments comparing Austria to Bavaria might have been comforting that Austria would be as integral of the Nazi Reich as Bavaria, but to others, his words might have been upsetting for suggesting that Austria would be picked apart into *Gaue* just as the Nazis had done to Bavaria in 1933. Hitler, Interview “With Mr. G. Wad Price published in the ‘Daily Mail,’” cited in *The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, Vol. II, ed. Norman H. Baynes, 1423.

¹⁰⁶ Evan B. Bukey, “Between Stalingrad and the Night of the Generals: Popular Opinion in the ‘Danubian and Alpine Regions,’” Chapter 8 in *Austria, 1938-1988: Anschluss and Fifty Years*, ed. William E. Wright (Riverside: Ariadne Press, 1995), 176.

clear to Austrians the disparity of economic conditions with their northern neighbors.¹⁰⁷ The Nazis neither solved nor settled the Austrian “problem:” they unleashed variances in the perception(s) of “union.”¹⁰⁸ Their Aktion continued to spawn affective tensions, which the inhabitants negotiated and navigated daily.

The March to War: The Sudetenland & the “New” March of the Ost

The Nazis came to see the intra-national borderland as any other multi-national borderland within their imperialist, irredentist schemes for Central Europe. This Nazi equivalence became clear with Nazi plans for the Sudetenland, one of the most infamous multi-national borderlands in the history of Nazi expansion.¹⁰⁹ Gaue from both Bavaria and Austria bordered the Sudetenland. Following the Nazi annexation of it in the fall of 1938, Gaue from these three German regions absorbed portions of the Sudetenland’s territories.¹¹⁰ The Nazi

¹⁰⁷ Evan B. Bukey, “Die Stimmung in der Bevölkerung,” 83.

¹⁰⁸ After the war, with Nazism defeated, the Austrians embraced a sense of victimhood. As such, the relativity of “union” extended into the historiography itself. Historian Gordon M. Shepherd condemned the Nazi Aktion as nothing short of the “Rape of Austria.” He also referred to it as “foreign conquest” and an “invasion.” See Gordon M. Shepherd, *Anschluss: The Rape of Austria* (London: Macmillan & Co Ltd, 1963), xiii.

¹⁰⁹ There is a vast historiography on this topic. Some starting points of entry are Eagle Glassheim, “Czechs, Germans, and the Borderlands before 1945,” Chapter 1 of *Cleansing the Czechoslovak Borderlands: Migration, Environment, and Health in the Former Sudetenland* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016), 15–41, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1k3s998.5>, Accessed 25 May 2022. See also Norman M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 108–122, 136–138. Even in her work on national apathy, Tara Zahra still focuses on the Sudeten case as a borderland par excellence: Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls*, 169–273.

¹¹⁰ Historiographically, the extent to which Bavaria, Austria, and the Sudetenland are selected together as unit of comparative analysis in the Nazi era is demonstrated in Walter Ziegler, *Bayern, Österreich, Sudetenland – schuldig oder unschuldig am Dritten Reich?* (Passau: Wissenschaftsverlag Rothe, 1995), 5–7, 34–47.

settled on the euphemism of “Eingliederung” (integration/incorporation), a series of additional Anschlüsse that resulted in territorial aggrandizement for Austria (Gau Ober- and Niederdonau), and Bavaria (confusingly, Gau Bayerische Ostmark).¹¹¹ Nazi imperial integration thus hinged on disintegration, as both the Bavarian and Austrian Ostmarks completed the partition of this multi-ethnic borderland.

If Nazis sought to streamline their imperial rule in theory, then they created utter chaos in terms of administrative jurisdiction, both in practice and on paper (See Figure 1).¹¹²



Figure 1: “Integration of the Sudetenland with the Reich.” Given the absolute cartographical chaos on display here, perhaps “Verflechtung” better translates as “entanglement.”

¹¹¹ Der Führer und Reichskanzler, Der Reichsminister des Innern, Der Stellvertreter des Führers, Der Reichsminister der Finanzen, “Gesetz über die Gliederung der sudetendeutschen Gebiete. Vom Dezember 1938. Entwurf. I S 1016/38 1061, ÖSaW, Zivilakten der NS-Zeit Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs mit dem Deutschen Reich („Bürckel“), Materie, Mappe 1754.Band 1 bis 1754/15/1, AdR, Karton 23, 1754 Band I, Sudetenland-Eingliederung der sudetendeutschen Gebiete- U123, Day 4 Photo 71, Day 4 Photo 72 (for direct quotation), Day 4 Photo 73. Map from “Das Sudetendeutschtum: Seine wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und geschichtlichen Grundlagen,” Herausgeber: Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, Verlag der Deutschen Arbeitsfront GmbH., Berlin C 2 - Druckerei Leipzig - D3279, ÖSaW, Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs, Mappe 1754.Band 1 bis 1754/15/1, Sudetenland-Eingliederung, U123, Day 4 Photo 135.

¹¹² Map from “Das Sudetendeutschtum,” ÖSaW, Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs, Mappe 1754.Band 1 bis 1754/15/1, Sudetenland-Eingliederung, U123, Day 4 Photo 135.

As in the Gleichschaltung of Austria, this decision yielded confusion and ambiguity, much to the chagrin and frustration of Nazi bureaucrats. Administrators in Ober- and Niederdonau expressed consternation about what legal systems applied where, especially in southern Moravia and Bohemia, which now bordered territories the Nazis had bequeathed to Ostmark Gaue:

The legal situation in the south Moravian and south Bohemian territories is quite unclear and there is danger that a legal uncertainty eventuates. The administered territories formed a united legal territory with today's Sudetengau until the occupation by the German soldiers ... after the integration [Eingliederung] of southern Moravian and southern Bohemian territories to Nieder- and Oberdonau, the harmonization of laws [Rechtsangleichung] and the legal renewal should follow uniformly with the territories of the Sudetengau.

Plans for legal “harmonization” in Greater Germany came with discord, while attempts at streamlining meant a proliferation of ambiguities, questions, and potential answers.¹¹³ In this sense, the Gleichschaltung of Austria and the Sudetenland created the same jurisdictional confusion that befell Bavaria six years prior, as described by historian Thomas Schaarschmidt.¹¹⁴ Fascist attempts at unity remained coupled with uncertainty in the intra-national borderland during Nazi imperialism.

¹¹³ Leiter des Kreisrechtsamtes: Dr. Harald Schindler, “Bemerkungen zur Rechtslage in den an die Gaue Niederdonau und Oberdonau abgetretenen Gebiete der Sudetenland,” ÖSaW, Reichskommissar für die Wiedervereinigung Österreichs, Mappe 1754.Band 1 bis 1754/15/1, 1754/2, Rechtsangleichung der in die Ostmark eingegliederten ehemals sudetendeutschen Gebiete Kr. 23, Day 4 Photo 266-269.

¹¹⁴ Thomas Schaarschmidt, “Multi-Level Governance in Hitler's Germany: Reassessing the Political Structure of the National Socialist State,” *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 42, No. 2 (GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, 2017): 220-224, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44234960>, Accessed 22 February 2021.

The Nazis also presented the administrative laws of the Gaue of the Sudetenland and of the former Austria as inextricably linked; they proclaimed their Sudeten system in the Sudetengaugesetz (Sudeten Gau Law), which they announced concurrently with their Ostmarkgesetz.¹¹⁵ That the Nazis tethered Sudetenland's fate bureaucratically to that of the former Austria regions contained a logic to it. The Sudeten region (and the Czech lands more broadly) fell under Habsburg control for centuries. During the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a German-speaking majority inhabited the Sudeten region, which formed part of Austrian-ruled Cisleithania. The Nazis thus appealed to some cherry-picked trajectory of historical and geographical continuity by shackling the Gaue of the Sudetenland with those of the former Austria.

By lumping Sudeten and Austrian Germans together in their administrative calculations, Nazi bureaucrats also showed they perhaps saw the Austrians as “other” Germans—maybe more like the Sudeten Germans who had spent twenty years among Czech-speaking neighbors under Czechoslovak rule. This Nazi imperial strategy also revealed the extent to which intra-national and multi-national borderlands overlapped, both in their spatial imaginations and in their governing policies. The border between these two “types” of borderlands started to blur, figuratively and quite literally on the map. However much the Austrian and Sudeten Germans had once formed the dominant “core” ethnic group of the old

¹¹⁵ Boerner, “Toward Reichsreform—The Reichsgaue,” 858. “Die Organisation des Reichsgaues: Erste Verordnung zur Durchführung des Ostmarkgesetzes voröfentlich... Reichsgaue in der Ostmark und im Sudetenland (Schluss von Seite 1),” *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*, Folge 165 v. 14.6.39 (Se), TLaI, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg VI/1/18 (Kr. 12), Day 5 Photo 28 and 29.

Habsburg dominions, their new status as borderland extensions of Greater Germany had salience for Nazis in the Altreich.

By the spring of 1939, the Gau system started to appear preponderant. Oberdonau Gauleiter, August Eigruber, spoke publicly with the *Wiener neueste Nachrichten* about his thoughts on the transition to the Gau system:

Now that the people is actually united, we can turn to real growth, undistracted by earlier conflicts about ideology, organization, and power. We are particularly pleased now that the *Gau* system has been implemented, and all the barriers of unnatural bureaucracy have fallen away. They were the most remote offices in Vienna, which did not know the real conditions in the *Gaue*, and perhaps did not want even to understand them.¹¹⁶

Perhaps unsurprising, the Gauleiter boasted of the administrative efficiency of the system in which he held a leadership role. More tellingly, he spoke to the Nazi desire to eschew Viennese oversight in favor of regional districts synchronized with the Nazi Party itself:

Old Austria, the federal state, suffered from this [Viennese administrative oversight], as did the entire population of the *Ostmark*. Now that we have simplified administration, we have the opportunity to lead the *Gaue* in a healthy way, directed toward the good of the whole German people, which is at the same time the good of the homeland.¹¹⁷

According to his calculations, any vestigial Austrian state structures had not only outlived their usefulness, but they now actively obstructed the Nazi movement.

The outbreak of war provided the Nazis with further cover to disintegrate Austria in the name of imperial integration. But in the former Austrian lands, now part of the Nazi Reich

¹¹⁶ Cited in August Eigruber, "The Most Loyal Son of the People," Copyright 1998 by Randall Bytwerk, GPA, Calvin University, <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/eigruber1.htm>, Accessed 25 November 2020. Cited on this online archive as *Wiener neueste Nachrichten*, 29 May 1939, 1-3. I have not seen the original German source.

¹¹⁷ Eigruber, "Son of the People," Bytwerk, German Propaganda Archive, Calvin University.

for over a year, supposed national-racial unification still did not bring the solace and cohesion the Nazis had propagated.¹¹⁸ Instead, Nazi administrators could but react to the southeastern German regionalism still churning within the intra-national borderland. Reporting in Berlin on 26 January 1940, the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* claimed that “in Vienna from 1 February there [would be] no more Zentralinstanz [central authority].” The Nazis de facto disintegrated any remnants of the preexisting, overarching Ostmark bureaucratic apparatus. The report printed further:

There is no more federal capital of Vienna, at least not technically in an administrative sense, and there is no more the ‘Ostmark’ as a political, administrative conception... is it still not said that the taken regulation in the seven Ostmarkgaue is unalterable and that they automatically should be taken over for the rest of the Reich. But the living example of a new order is available.¹¹⁹

This newspaper wanted it clear that as Nazi Germany expanded its reach in Europe, it simultaneously tightened its grip on Austria.

As Nazi forces invaded Denmark and Norway and prepared for war with the west, the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* expressed the constitutive contradiction between regionalism and nationalism explicitly. Reporting in Berlin on 22 April, this news source ran a piece entitled “Ostmarkgauen and Central Authority: Duties of the Reich Interior Minister,” and it printed the comments of a Nazi bureaucrat in the Interior Ministry regarding the “establishment of the new Reichsgauen of the Ostmark.” This unnamed bureaucrat purportedly stated:

¹¹⁸ Bukey uses economic success as a barometer of the Nazi regime’s popularity. See Bukey, *Hitler’s Austria*, 13, 17–18, 117, 123–125, 173–174, 180–181, 190, 199, 201. But popularity was not strictly an economic issue, and regional affective loyalties would linger throughout the war.

¹¹⁹ “Die Verwaltung der Ostmark,” *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, TLal, VI/1/18 (Kr. 12), Day 5 Photo 31.

The former land of Austria ... since 1 April 1940 no longer exists either in administrative centralization or as a provider of laws and duties. For a long time to come, there will still be a series of questions of a general political and organizational manner, which will not be able to be resolved by every Reich Governor in the Reichsgaue of the Ostmark alone, but rather would require [being resolved] by a central assessment and governance for the entire Ostmark. In this territory, also like concerning the still not finalized harmonization of laws [Rechtsangleichung], the Reich Interior Minister will, like earlier, carry out supervision as the Central Department. The work that is coming to a conclusion in the Ostmark represents a momentous stride for Reich unity.

From the perspective of Nazi overlords, resolving the regionalism question meant dissociating Austria into Gaue—anyone of which could challenge the suzerainty of the Altreich—while simultaneously streamlining the Altreich’s control over the disbanded Austria. This Nazi administrator also elaborated on another contradiction: in the long term, this supposed bureaucratic rationalization would facilitate the execution of laws in Greater Germany, but the immediate impact meant bureaucratic confusion.¹²⁰

Austria thus encapsulated countervailing meanings of Nazi goals for Zentralinstanz. Yes, they sought to remove any remaining “Zentralinstanz” from the vestigial Austrian state itself.¹²¹ But it simultaneously suggested the endgame of the entire Nazi Gau system in the first place: centralizing Nazi control over former Austrian territories.¹²² The Gleichschaltung for conformity remained laced with conflicting meanings. And integration of Nazi rule in

¹²⁰ “Ostmarkgaue und Zentralinstanz: Aufgaben des Reichsinnenministers, Berlin, 22. April.” *Münchener Neuste Nachrichten*, Folge 114 v. 23.4.40, TLal, NSDAP Gauleitung Tirol und Vorarlberg VI/1/18 (Kr. 12), Day 5 Photo 30.

¹²¹ “Die Verwaltung der Ostmark,” *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, TLal, VI/1/18 (Kr. 12), Day 5 Photo 31

¹²² “Ostmarkgaue und Zentralinstanz,” *Münchener Neuste Nachrichten*, Folge, TLal, NSDAP VI/1/18 (Kr. 12), Day 5 Photo 30.

wartime remained contingent on the disintegration of Austrian administration, yet another constitutive contradiction marking this intra-national space.

Meanwhile, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France fell in weeks. The Nazis achieved almost immediately what the Kaiserreich had killed itself over four grueling years trying to do. By the start of 1941, it seemed the Nazi military in western Europe “only” had to bomb Britain to the negotiating table. But 1941 also proved an inflection point for Nazi conceptualizations of “the East.” In early summer, the German military launched its all out, ideologically charged invasion of the Soviet Union. The Nazis began forging their empire based on “Aryan” eastward emigration, all predicated on the expulsion and extermination of “racial enemies.” But the Nazi imperial and genocidal manifestation of the *Drang nach Osten* (Drive to the East) also complicated the “real” meaning of the eastern frontier. As the German military advanced from eastern Germany and Ostpreußen into the USSR, the Ost conjured up even more disparate concepts, ideas, fears, and fantasies. In general, it increasingly denoted and connoted the vast swaths of eastern territory the Germans temporarily conquered, occupied, and settled.¹²³ An official Nazi dispatch from the August 1941 referred to “the Ostmark, the Sudeten

¹²³ For the Nazi fixation on constructed notions of eastern spaces, again see Liulevicius: “A key expression of this fascination came with a linguistic explosion of terms linked to ‘East,’ surpassing earlier decades. Hence, Nazi usage spoke obsessively in terms of *Ostkrieg* (Eastern War), *Ostfeldzug* (Eastern Campaign), *Osteinsatz* (Eastern Action), *Ostarbeiter* (Eastern workers), and so on. This is not to say that the Nazis’ ideological vision of the East and its potential was monolithic. On the contrary, precisely because the Nazis were able to draw on a varied earlier tradition of thinking about the East, individual emphases could differ.” Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East*, 171. See also Liulevicius, “On 17 July 1941, Hitler had named Rosenberg the Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories. His ministry was called the *Ostministerium* (‘East Ministry’)... Its officials were dubbed ... ‘Eastern losers’ (*Ostnieten*), as the ministry gained a reputation (largely accurate) of offering possibilities for substandard bureaucrats. The ministry increasingly fell behind in the intense competition between rival institutions of the Nazi regime for control of the eastern expanses. The territories were divided into new units, Reich Commissariats. Immediately established were the Reich Commissariats for Ukraine and a new

German areas, the Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia, the Memel area, and the incorporated eastern areas and Eupen-Malmédy [annexed component of Belgium]” as the “new Reich area,” collectivizing all such lands as the “new.”¹²⁴ But with time, as millions of Germans began to march eastward, Eastern Europe eclipsed Austria as the “new” eastern march within imperial imaginations and practices. The Nazis administered regions in eastern Europe as “the occupied *Ostgebiete* [eastern territories]” and forged a new official “Ostland” (East Land) out of Belarus and the Baltic countries.¹²⁵ In Nazi imaginations, the Ostmark lost ground to this Ostland as the truest and newest eastern borderland.

territory dubbed ‘Ostland’ (East-land), consisting of Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Western Belarus (overlapping largely with the territory called Ober-Ost in the First World War).” Liulevicius, *The German Myth of the East*, 195. For a refutation against the assumption that German administrators in the Ost were incompetent, see Stephen A. Connor, “Golden Pheasants and Eastern Kings: The German District Administration in the Occupied Soviet Union, 1941-1944” (PhD diss., Wilfrid Laurier University, 2007), 252-253, Online via Scholars Commons @ Laurier: Promoting and preserving digital scholarship at Wilfrid Laurier University, Theses and Dissertations (Comprehensive), <https://scholars.wlu.ca/etd/1048>, Part of the Military History Commons and the Political History Commons, Accessed 21 February 2021.

See also Wendy Lower for a treatment of: “The *Ost*—intoxication of the East—was an imperial high that increased the violence of the war and genocide. Hedonism and genocide went hand in hand, and women and men were its agents, its partners in crime.” Wendy Lower, *Hitler’s Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (New York: Mariner Books, 2014), 165. The *Freikorps* members showed a somewhat similar affective response in Eastern Europe towards the end of World War I. See Liulevicius, “The Freikorps saw the East as a place with no limits, where the only order was violence.” Vejas Gabriel Liulevicius, *War Land on the Eastern Front: Culture, National Identity, and German Occupation in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 243.

¹²⁴ Freiherr von Weizsäcker, “The State Secretary to the Embassy to the Holy See: Berlin, August 25, 1941. Pol. III 1642.,” No. 241, 535/240000-03, Germany Auswärtiges Amt, *Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, from the archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Series D (1937-1945): Volume XIII: The War Years: June 23-December 11, 1941*, Department of State Publication 7682 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1964), 381 (465 on database), Original from The Pennsylvania State University Commonwealth Campuses Libraries Hazleton, Digitized by Google, Available on HathiTrust, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000009059146&view=2up&seq=465&q1=Ostmark>, Accessed 13 February 2021.

¹²⁵ C.M.C., “The Baltic States: II.—Under German Occupation,” *Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 21, no. 26 (23 December 1944): 1087, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25643735>, Accessed 25 November 2020.

This shift in Nazi imperial calculations away from the old Ost and toward the new seemed to manifest in Nazi rebranding of the Bayerische Ostmark to Gau Bayreuth in 1942. According to Nazi news sources, Bavaria no longer fell within their parameters for a borderland, and thus, the Mark label no longer applied: “As a former Grenzgau – standing in the foreground of the Grenzlandkampf [borderland struggle] – the Gau Bayreuth lies in the middle of the Großdeutschen Reich.”¹²⁶ The rebranding revealed the extent to which Nazis saw Bavaria as a Mark before the Nazi march to war, indeed even central to the “Grenzlandkampf,” even if it now formed part and parcel of their new imperial core. Along those lines, the Nazi press reported that the new name served to connote fresh identifiers for Bavarians. Naming the Gau after the Wagnerian pilgrimage site paid homage to the operatic soundtrack of Hitler’s movement. Instead of maintaining this Bavarian space as a borderland, the Nazis situated this entire Gau within the nucleus of German “high culture; because bound with Bayreuth are the names of German men of art, culture, music and architecture.”¹²⁷ Perhaps more prosaically but no less importantly, the naming switch also decreased the chance for

¹²⁶ “Gau ,Bayreuth,“ *Neuste Zeitung: Das Innsbrucker Abendblatt*, inset of *Innsbrucker Nachrichten* (Nummer 139, 89. Jahrgang), 16 June 1942, Nummer 115, 30. Jahrgang, Seite 2 (8 in database), ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ibn&datum=19420616&query=bayerische+ostmark&ref=anno-search&seite=8>, Accessed 2 February 2021. See also “Kleine Mitteilungen.” *Mitteilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft Wien in der Deutschen Geographischen Gesellschaft: Organ der Deutschen Geographischen Gesellschaft für den europäischen Südosten: Schriftleitung Dr. Hermann Leiter*, Band 85, (Wien: Ostmarken-Verlag, 1942), Seite 395, *National-Bibliothek Wien*, 390.827-B. Karl [pencil faded, illegible] 85, ANNO, [https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=geo&datum=19420004&query=\(text:bayerische+ostmark\)&ref=anno-search&seite=401](https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno-plus?aid=geo&datum=19420004&query=(text:bayerische+ostmark)&ref=anno-search&seite=401), Accessed 2 February 2021. “Kurz, aber wichtig: Berlin.” *Salzburger Volksblatt*, 16 June 1942, Folge 139, 72. Jahrgang, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=svb&datum=19420616&query=bayerische+ostmark&ref=annosearch&seite=2>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹²⁷ “Gau ,Bayreuth,“ *Neuste Zeitung: Das Innsbrucker Abendblatt*, 16 June 1942, Nr. 115, Seite 2, ANNO.

regional confusion by eliminating the question: did the Ostmark signify Austria overall, this specific Bavarian Gau, Ostpreußen, or the “new” Ostland? Depending on situation, it might refer to any of the above, perhaps even a combination thereof. While Austria and Bavaria no longer stood as the Nazi borderland par excellence, the tensions of the intra-national borderland continued to fester come late 1941, when the German advance on the USSR began to stall.

As the Nazis waged their genocidal war as an “inter-racial” showdown against Slavic and Jewish peoples in the “new” Ostland, a rather different ethnic cleansing project came to the fore in 1942 back in the “old” Ostmark. As a borderland of German- and Italian-speakers, the South Tyrol had remained an awkward complication for the Rome-Berlin Axis. Existing literature has already focused much attention on this infamous intra-fascist borderland space, so I will only treat with it briefly here.¹²⁸ In lieu of a territorial transfer, the fascist leaders instead settled on a population one, which they scheduled to end the last day of 1942. The Nazis thus boxed themselves into organizing another ethnic cleansing project, yet this time, it amounted to an intra-national one of fellow “Aryans.” The Nazis envisioned Gau Tyrol-Vorarlberg as the perfect point of welcome for the South-Tyrolese Germans, and Austrians set up relocation camps and new settlements by Innsbruck. But initial Nazi preparations did not suffice; transferring over 200,000 people took time. A British agent reported that “for special reasons due to the war,” the deadline became the last day of 1943. Increasingly South Tyrolese German-speakers moved to Gau Carinthia. Even including Carinthia, the Nazis soon found

¹²⁸ For more on the infamous South Tyrol issue, see for example Rolf Steininger, *South Tyrol: A Minority Conflict of the Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 19–76.

themselves with too many “Aryans” and not enough space. So, according to a British report, “in 1942, Himmler, making the request that the settlement of the South Tirolese should be speeded up, announced that Luxembourg, Lorraine, and the East Sudetengau should be preferred for settlement areas.”¹²⁹ In the ongoing Nazi experiment of ethnically reorganizing Europe, the Austrian Gaue were to be the laboratory for mixing new German immigrants “brought home” to the Reich. By 1943, the Nazis had inverted the ethnic cleansing paradigm to apply to people the Nazis marked as Germans.

Also in 1943, the *Völkischer Beobachter* reported on another Nazi inversion: the reversibility of Austria’s position in Nazi spatial imagination. This newspaper reported on the words of Hugo Jury, the Gauleiter of Niederdonau. In his treatise, “The Ostmark,” he pontificated on his homeland’s positionality vis-à-vis Germany and within Greater Germany. This manifesto “depicted the change of this Grenzmark [borderland], which constituted the long-time core of the entire Reich and then after the eventful fate when the Zusammenschluß [incorporation] with the Reich was finally re-established and thereby laid the corner stone for the construction of the Großdeutsch Reich.”¹³⁰ In this Austrian Nazi’s imagination, the Greater German edifice rested upon the 1938 annexation as a restoration of some imagined historical moment of German unity. His version of the Ostmark also vacillated seamlessly between the center and periphery of Germandom. The borderlands distinction remained fluid and elastic,

¹²⁹ J.R. “The Exchange of Minorities and Transfers of Population in Europe since 1919: II. Repatriation of Germans by Agreement—Exchange of Minorities in the Balkans since 1939,” *Royal Institute of International Affairs: Bulletin of International News* 21, no. 17 (19 August 1944), 658–660, 661 (for direct quotation), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25643666>, Accessed 28 November 2020.

¹³⁰ “Das größere Reich,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, 13 October 1943, Nummer 286, 56. Jahrgang, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=vob&datum=19431013&query=Grenzmark&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

subject to historical change, and subject to the relative whims of those conceptualizing them. In his captivity, Schuschnigg likewise commented on this new Ost of eastern Europe distinct from his supposed Austrian core of Germandom. In a letter dated 28 October 1943, he sardonically mocked the Sachsenhausen tower guards who “belonged to the Ost, and in fact one hears from the neighboring tower mostly Slavic or exceedingly broken German; they are naturally »Volksdeutsche«. Also a dandy fiction!”¹³¹ The Nazi project of bringing Germans from the new Ost insulted his sensibilities, as he figured himself a true German from the original Germanic Ost.

The category of German borderland oscillated and undulated in rhythm with the German fortunes in war. By 1945, Austria regained its borderland status in Nazi calculations simply because the Eastern Front of the war—the Ost that had recently supplanted the Ostmark—arrived in Austria itself. At the start of April, the *Oberdonau-Zeitung* ran a transcript of Gauleiter Eigruber’s radio address. The paper’s preface to the address included how Oberdonau again served as a borderland and “the enemy will be held in Oberdonau ... the Heimatgau [home Gau] of the Führer proved itself in numerous historical tests and now again known is the restless duty that imposed onto it [Oberdonau] its character as a Grenzland [borderland].”¹³² In the Nazi press, Oberdonau’s history of struggle had forged this region into

¹³¹ Kurt von Schuschnigg, “Brief 108: 28. Oktober (19)43: Lieber Artur!,” Cited in Binder and Schuschnigg, »Sofort vernichten«, 314.

¹³² “Der Gauleiter: Oberdonau wird gehalten! Die Rundfunkansprache des Gauleiters am Freitagabend – Appell an den Gemeinschaftssinn der Bevölkerung – Wertvolle Erleichterungen der Versorgungslage -- ,Wir behalten absolut die Nerven – in Oberdonau wird stehen geblieben!,” *Oberdonau-Zeitung: Tages-Post: Amtliche Tageszeitung der NSDAP. – Gau Oberdonau*, 9 April 1945, Nummer 82 8., (18.) Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=obz&datum=19450409&query=Grenzmark&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

borderland, one that the Nazis hoped would steel itself yet again against another eastern onslaught. Eigruber gave a different radio address two days later, in which he attempted to rouse the inhabitants of the ever-shrinking Greater Germany to fight on, especially against the Soviet Army:

Our attention is focused exclusively on the East. That is where the enemy stands, there the decisive battle will be fought, there will be decided the fate of the Reich and of our people.... Bolshevik soldiers are not supermen, nor disciplined and courageous individual fighters, but only what they always were: a wild collection of Asiatics driven forward by whips, mixed with European trash from the Balkans.¹³³

To Eigruber, his Austrian Gau functioned as a watch on the east, fulfilling some age-old mission as the true Ostmark. Austrians needed to do what they had supposedly always done—hold the line against eastern “hordes” and bring mastery to the various “subordinate” ethnic groups of southeastern Europe.

But Austria was overrun—not just with Allied soldiers, but also with another “type” of Germans: war refugees. “And now a word to refugees” reported Eigruber. “Even if hundreds of thousands have moved into our *Gau*, I have assured sufficient provisions and food supplies.” With war refugees, the southeastern German region became ever more heterogeneous. Internationally, it gained diverse German populations from around Europe, and multi-nationally,

¹³³ Cited in August Eigruber, “Oberdonau Will Stand Firm,” copyright Randall Bytwerk 2016, GPA, Calvin University, <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/eigruber8.htm>, Accessed 28 November 2020. Cited on this online archive as “In Oberdonau wird Stehengeblieben. Rundfunkansprachen des Gauleiters],” “Die Blickrichtung nach dem Osten,” *Neue Warte am Inn* (Braunau am Inn). I have not seen the original German source, but GPA states it was translated, cited from, and available at: “In Oberdonau wird stehengeblieben, Rundfunkansprachen des Gauleiters – Die Blickrichtung nach dem Osten,” *Neue Warte am Inn*, 18 April 1945, Nummer 16, 65. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=nwi&datum=19450418&seite=1&zoom=33>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

it harbored “allied foreigners” such as Italians and Hungarians seeking safety in Austria. All the while, Eigruber boasted of the supposedly endogenous strength inherent to the people from his Gau: “Nothing will shake the native calm of we people from Oberdonau.”¹³⁴ Just days later, his assessment had changed: “All *Gaue* are filled with refugees. There are no shelters anywhere,” he claimed.¹³⁵ It seemed as though he saw the writing on the wall.

But Nazi leaders and ideology mandated an all-or-nothing fight to the finish. In Nazi defensive calculations, southeastern German-speaking lands ought to form a cohesive regional unit. Along the lines of southeastern solidarity, the *Österreichische Zeitung* reported that the Nazis had grand visions of “the so-called ‘Southern Fortress’ of Hitler, which encompasses Bavaria, Austria, and Czechoslovakia.”¹³⁶ Likewise, historian Laura Morowitz examined rumors of a grand Nazi “*Alpenfestung*” (Alpine Fortress) that haunted Western military commanders. They feared the Nazis had carved labyrinthine defensive positions into the Austrian and Bavarian Alps to mount their last stand. The Allies worried the intra-national borderland might provide the ultimate stronghold of the thousand-year Reich. Yet, the Nazis

¹³⁴ Eigruber, “Oberdonau Will Stand Firm,” Bytwerk, GPA, Calvin University.

¹³⁵ Cited in August Eigruber, “*Gauleiter* Eigruber Calls Us All to Determined Defense,” copyright Randall Bytwerk 2016, GPA, Calvin University, <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/eigruber5.htm>, Accessed 29 November 2020. Cited in online archive as from “*Gauleiter* Eigruber ruft uns alle zu entschlossener Abwehr,” *Innviertler Heimatblatt* [sic] (Ried), 27 April 1945, 3. I have not seen the original German source as cited, but it is on ANNO as “*Gauleiter* Eigruber ruft uns alle zu entschlossener Abwehr auf: Amerikanische Panzer knapp vor der Gaugrenze – Tragen wir den Notwendigkeiten der Front Rechnung,” *Innviertler Heimatblatt: Amtliche Wochenzeitung Der NSDAP. Für Das Innviertel*, 8. Jahrgang, Nummer 17, 27 April 1945, Seite 3, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=ihb&datum=19450427&seite=3&zoom=33>, Accessed 2 March 2022.

¹³⁶ “Ein glänzender Sieg der Roten Armee,” *Österreichische Zeitung: Frontzeitung für die Bevölkerung Österreichs*, 21 April 1945, No. 2, Seite 3, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oez&datum=19450421&query=“Bayern-Österreich”&ref=anno-search&seite=3>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

had no real military capability of doing so.¹³⁷ However, US intelligence officers feared that this Nazi Alpenfestung might provide the wellspring of new right-wing German-speaking paramilitaries, which could continue fighting an informal war following the collapse of the official Nazi state. They feared a repetition of the post-World War I paramilitary pandemonium.¹³⁸ And as the front came to the intra-national borderland, Gauleiter Eigruber couched the defense of the Austrian and Bavarian Gaue as inseparably linked. The geographical proximity of these two southern regions pushed Eigruber to see them increasingly as one defensive unit: “Although the developments along the front in *Gaue* Niederdonau and Steiermark are good, things have developed less well recently in Bavaria. American tanks are thrusting toward Bayreuth and Bamberg to the southeast ... This afternoon, enemy tanks were reported northeast of Passau...”¹³⁹ Bavaria once again seemed to form the last line of defense for Austria: but this time, not for Austrofascists against Nazis, but for Nazis against advancing Allies.

True to the long history of competition among southeastern regionalists, Eigruber made sure to point out that the Bavarian front against the Western Allies faltered first, not the Austrian line against the Soviets. “In coming days the Anglo-Americans will attempt to reach the Inn and from there thrust up the Inn and down the Danube. We are now a war area.”¹⁴⁰ The Inn—originating in Austria and flowing into Bavaria, where it merged with the Danube

¹³⁷ Morowitz, “Hitler as Liberator, Ostmark as Bulwark,” 145.

¹³⁸ Timothy Naftali, “Creating the Myth of the *Alpenfestung*: Allied Intelligence and the Collapse of the Nazi Police-State,” “Forum: Toward a History of Austrian Intelligence Studies,” Chapter 10 in *Austrian Historical Memory & National Identity, Contemporary Austrian Studies* 5, eds. Günter Bischof and Anton Pelinka (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 207–208.

¹³⁹ Eigruber, “Determined Defense,” Bytwerk, GPA, Calvin University.

¹⁴⁰ Eigruber, “Determined Defense,” Bytwerk, GPA, Calvin University.

before flowing back into Austria—naturally traversed the borders between the Austrian and Bavarian Gaue. It presented a geographical manifestation of southeastern German regional union. Ironically, it also presented the Western Allies with a central vein to the heart of the intra-national borderland.

Concluding Reflections

The Anschluss never really clarified the Austrian “question.” Rather, Austria’s status remained in flux, dynamic, and liminal. However much Nazi actions in the spring of 1938 seemed to resolve to the intra-national paradox, their resolution remained a mirage. Rather, the Anschluss represented the ongoing processes endemic to this southeastern German space. As always, the meaning of this “union” rested in the eye of the beholder, dependent on leaning and loyalty, all because “the” Anschluss existed first and foremost as a pluralized discourse. Like Nazism itself, ideas of about the Austrian lands could connote things both new and old. Fantasies about them could summon revenants of the medieval eastern borderlands, which the Nazis made new again as the first region they annexed to create Greater Germany. Integration of Austria into the Nazi fold necessitated the sublimation of the Austria to Nazi centralization, for which they fumbled via dissolution and disintegration. But streamlining by pluralizing rarely yielded the desired effect. Instead, the actual administration functioned in an ad hoc manner, with clumsy fits and starts from the Österreich to the Ostmark to the various Ostmärkische Gaue. These demarcations had their own convoluted relations to the neighboring Gaue, meaning the Bayerische Ostmark and those from Czechoslovakia. Their

nomenclature and administrative boundaries remained bereft of certainty, resulting in ramshackle, intersecting jurisdictions.

As the Nazis expanded their war to new eastern horizons in 1941, the Ost increasingly came to suggest vast imaginations of some eastern empire. Their delusions of imperial grandeur in Poland and the USSR eclipsed the Ostmark as the German borderland to the east. But as the war reversed, the Ostkrieg edged closer and closer to the Austrian Ostmark, returning the borderland status to this space and revealing the elasticity of the borderland distinction. The borderland and core labels may not have emerged arbitrarily, as real historical changes in the warfront determined their applicability. But like the war itself, they too proved reversible.

In the final days of the war, Schuschnigg's Nazi captors moved him and his family with frantic frequency from Sachsenhausen, to Berlin, and then south to Bavaria.¹ At Dachau, Schuschnigg commented on the wickedness of the space—not just for the prisoners, but also for the reputation of his precious German culture.² The Nazis then moved the family back to Austria before heading to the South Tyrol, still an Italian holding. Having hailed from the Austrian Tyrol, Schuschnigg recounted his emotional resurgence of southeastern German regionalism upon entering the South Tyrol. The Tyrolean dialect and the Alpine landscape (even the sky itself) boosted his spirits amid all the uncertainty. Such uncertainty soon came to a head: he reported that his captors' execution list included his family name.³ But their execution never came. Schuschnigg invoked on regionalism to explain their salvation: it was "a representative of the Tyrolean local government" who intervened and saved them.⁴ In his mind, it made sense a fellow Alpine Tyrolean who stayed the hand of the would-be executioners. Whether true or apocryphal, this vignette spoke to his adamant emotional investment in Alpine regionalism as defined against whom he saw as brutish northern Germans.

If Schuschnigg had looked to the Brenner for Mussolini's support during Austria's interwar existence as a fascist borderland, then by war's end, the Brenner Pass once again appeared on the horizon as an Alpine symbol of deliverance. This time, his unlikely friends at

¹ Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, 261–264.

² Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, 271.

³ Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, 287, 288.

⁴ Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, 289.

the Brenner stood not fascists from Italy, but the soldiers from the United States.⁵ Here, the US-Americans released the ex-Führer of the Austrofascist regime from his Nazi captivity. For Schuschnigg and his family, the war ended in a borderland that had been such a flashpoint of contention among three different interwar fascist regimes.

The Allied powers proceeded to carve Austria into occupation zones—as they did in Germany as well. Among the Allied powers, serious competition emerged over the occupation, and not just between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union. The British and the Americans found themselves at odds over the spoils. Strategists in both countries wanted the north German coastal regions for direct access to large ports. The Western Powers wrote off the southeastern German regions—Bavaria and Austria—as less than ideal occupying territory. They seemed supposedly too rural and “backward,” too inland and mountainous. They appeared more trouble than their worth, in need of more work and investment to rebuild and make functional along western lines. During this dispute within the Anglo-American “special relationship,” the British turned to Soviet support for their bid to occupy the coastal regions. Eventually, the US government begrudgingly accepted the bulk of the southeastern German-speaking region.⁶ The US occupation zones included Bavaria, Salzburg, most of Upper Austria, and parts of Baden-Württemberg, corresponding more or less with many core regions of the intra-national borderland.⁷

⁵ Schuschnigg, *Austrian Requiem*, 288–289.

⁶ Edgar L. Erickson, “The Zoning of Austria,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 267, Military Government (Sage Publications, Inc. in association with the American Academy of Political and Social Science, January 1950): 106–113, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1026732>, Accessed 18 January 2017.

⁷ The Tyrol and Vorarlberg went to France, the UK administered Carinthia and Styria, while the Burgenland, Lower Austria and a piece of Upper Austria fell to the Soviets. The Allies divvied up

Thus, the victorious US forces came to occupy a southeastern German region that crossed the Austro-Bavarian border. Cartographically, the US reinscribed the very notion of regional solidarity across the border, about which interwar Bavarians and Austrians had pontificated and over which they had feuded. But the US reasons for doing so remained antithetical to the objectives of the interwar right-wingers. Instead of the inhabitants themselves creating this administrative unit in the name of regional and national German strength, the Americans carried out their Anschluss of occupation zones to end right-wing, German-speaking impulses.⁸

Still, the result presented a through line of trans-border cartographical cohesion, weaving a strange historical irony through the intra-national borderland's dénouement. During the war, the Allied Powers had insisted that they would restore Austria's autonomy, even enshrining it as a war aim in their 1943 Moscow Declaration. This proclamation included a specifically delineated "Declaration on Austria" that stated "They [the governments of the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union and the United States of America] declare that they wish to see re-established a free and independent Austria and thereby to open the way for the Austrian people themselves ... to find that political and economic security which is the only

Vienna as well. See Rolf Steininger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War: From the Anschluss to the State Treaty 1938-1955* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 43-54.

⁸ In this sense, the Allies reified notions of southeastern German regionalism for their own purposes, a story of change, yes, but also one of lingering continuity that contributes to the historiographical trend against the notion that 1945 was a "zero-hour," a total break in time equivalent to a reset or a rupture. See Rita Chin, Heide Fehrenbach, Geoff Eley, and Atina Grossman, *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 5 (for direct quotation), 6.

basis for lasting peace.”⁹ The Allies wanted a sovereign Austria detached from whatever remained of Germany. While the Allies ensured a strong border on the map between Austria and Bavaria at war’s end, the US occupational jurisdictions in Austria and Bavaria eventually transcended it.

The question of émigrés and refugees on the “wrong” side of the border also belied its permeability. During the Nazi period, thousands of Austrians had moved to Bavaria. Austria had supposedly formed an integral part of the Nazi German Reich, and so Austrians moved across the border. Furthermore, as the war came back to this Reich, Austrian refugees had fled to Bavaria for protection. But the Allies had declared Austria’s postwar (re)independence, and according to the dangerous logic of homogenous nation-states, these Austrians in Bavaria now lived as foreigners surrounded by German nationals. Thus began a forced repatriation of thousands of Austrians, suddenly identified as distinct from the Germans they so recently saw as co-nationals. If some Nazis had presented the joining of Austria to Germany as a *Heimkehr* (homecoming) or a *Heimführung* (repatriation), then the reverse process of separating Austria from Germany could also mean the same thing. Austrians in Bavaria had to “return home” back across the border.¹⁰

⁹ *The Moscow Conference; October 1943: October, 1943: JOINT FOUR-NATION DECLARATION*, Available online at *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*, Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library in memory of Sol Goldman, <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/moscow.asp>, Accessed 3 January 2022.

¹⁰ Reichsbundesleiter – Stellvertreter gez. Konrad, *Reichsbund der Kinderreichen Reichsbundesleitung VI m/gi, Berlin, den 7. November 1938, Rundschreiben Nr. 92/38. An alle Landesleiter*, Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (WSLa), Design: Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv, A2-2 Rassenpolit. Amtd. NSDAP-Gauleitung Wien Reichsbund Deutsche Familie: a). Tagungen + Propaganda (1938-1941, 2. Teil) b). Rundschreiben [sic] aus Berlin (1938-1944, 1 Teil), Reichsbund der Kinderreichen ab Mai 1940. Reichsbund Deutsche Familie, Rundschreiben („Mitteilungen“) 1938, Der Beauftragte des RDR für die Ostmark Eingelangt am 10.11.38, Day 1 Photo 101. “Interview mit dem Bayrischen

But forced migration along regionalist lines—an intra-ethnic cleansing—took time and created consternation. A Viennese newspaper, *Die Weltpresse*, ran a story on 27 September 1945 about such complications. The Viennese paper wished to correct a misstatement out of Munich. Apparently, back at the start of the month, the *Münchener Zeitung* erroneously jumped the gun. “The announcement of the ‚Münchener Zeitung‘ pertained to an alleged population exchange between Bavaria and Austria and induced many Austrians from all parts of Bavaria to come to Reichenhall [Bavarian town on the Austrian border] and remain there for the return transport to their Heimat.” Back in Austria, *Die Weltpresse* ran a corrective stating: “As of now it is officially known that there are neither housing options nor means for the removal of these Austrians.” This Viennese press reported its source as none other than “the Bavarian Press Office and the Broadcasting Station of Munich.” This operation lacked two critical components of a homecoming: actual homes and methods for coming and going. Instead, *Die Weltpresse* contended that “only Austrians, who reside in the districts of Reichenhall and Berchtesgaden, are tentatively allowed to count on a Rückführung [repatriation] from Bavaria to Austria.”¹¹ Logistical constraints on the ground meant that officials could only accommodate

Ministerpräsidenten: 10 000 Österreicher kehren aus Bayern heim. Möbel können mitgenommen werden – Die Sorgen der Flüchtlinge in München.” *Salzburger Nachrichten: Unabhängige Demokratische Tageszeitung*, 5 December 1945, Nummer 151, 1. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO – AustriaN Newspapers Online (ANNO), *Historische österreichische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=san&datum=19451205&query=“Bayern”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹¹ “Kein ‚Bevölkerungsaustausch‘ Bayern – Österreich,” *Die Weltpresse: Unabhängige Nachrichten und Stimmen aus aller Welt: Herausgegeben vom britischen Weltnachrichtendienst*, 27 September 1945, Nummer 9, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=dwp&datum=19450927&query=%22Bayern+und+%c3%96sterreich%22&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 30 December 2021.

crossings for Austrians already at the border itself—indeed, Austria engulfs Berchtesgaden on three sides, making it a veritable peninsula of Bavarian land in an Austrian sea.

As we have seen in the intra-national borderland, one's "type" of German mattered as much as "being German" in the first place. Three months later, the *Salzburger Nachrichten* reported that, to assist with forced relocations, the Bavarian state apparatus established a Munich-based Austrian Repatriation Committee, in addition to an Augsburg-based Austrian Relief Program. By December 1945, Bavaria had already moved 18,000 Austrians. The reasoning perhaps presented even further insult regarding who counted as "authentic" Germans: Bavarian agents wanted to make way for German refugees from the Sudetenland and Hungary, and so the Austrians needed to go. All the while, the Bavarian representatives expressed regret along the lines of regional solidarity: "We Bavarians feel closely related to the Austrian Volk. But we currently find ourselves in a predicament, that forces us now with heavy hearts to bring a part of the Austrians living in Bavaria back to their Heimat." The paper even reported that southeastern German solidarity shined brightest when set against the backdrop of Prussia: "In conversations between Austrians and Bavarians it is again and again determined that full attunement rules when the conversation is about the 'Prussians,'" who were denigrated as domineering and deceitful.¹² Absent an "other" regional variety of German, the Bavarian and Austrian regional cohesion spiraled into bickering, discord, and even forced migration.

Regionalist impulses and discourses lingered. The *Innsbrucker Nachrichten* reported an article entitled "Will Bavaria be autonomous?", which printed the response that should certain

¹² "10 000 Österreicher kehren aus Bayern heim," *Salzburger Nachrichten*, 5 December 1945, Nr. 151, Seite 1, ANNO.

US officials have their way, “still before the end of 1945 there will be an independent state of Bavaria.”¹³ In hindsight, we might simply dismiss such an announcement as regionalists grasping at any story that might offer any redemption or autonomy. But belief in the idea, however farcical, proved resilient. Four years later, the *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten* echoed such claims in an article: “Will Bavaria be an autonomous Kingdom?,” likely in reference to the pseudo-autonomous status it enjoyed during the Kaiserreich. The Bavarian State government officials still trod the constitutive contradiction of regionalism and nationalism that had marked this space as an intra-national borderland. The article commented that the state officials “still rejected an ‘exclusion of Bavaria from the German community of fate.’” Bavarians identified as German, but they wanted privileges that recognized their stance as a special “type” of German, even if (perhaps especially if) it created “frustration for the north German states.”¹⁴ At times, Austria featured in this regionalist daydreaming. In 1946, the *Österreichische Zeitung* printed an interview with French General Béthouart, the French High Commissioner in the Allied Council supervising the occupations. The reporter broached the topic of some “form of a federation of German Catholic states (Württemberg, Baden, Bavaria and Austria), whose initiator is said to be Austria.” The French Commissioner’s responded unequivocally: “We reject it [this plan] in all of its forms. In such a plan, in which it [Austria]

¹³ “Wird Bayern selbständig?” *Salzburger Nachrichten: Herausgegeben Von Den Amerikanischen Streitkräften Für Die Österreichische Bevölkerung*, 3 July 1945, Nummer 22, 1. Jahrgang, Seite 1, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=san&datum=19450703&query=“Bayern”&ref=anno-search&seite=1>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹⁴ “Wird Bayern selbständiges Königreich?,” *Oberösterreichische Nachrichten: Unabhängiges Tagblatt österreichischer Demokraten*, Nummer 111, 5. Jahrgang, 12 May 1949, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oon&datum=19490512&query=“Bayern”&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

is assigned the leading role, why should Austria not see another means to bring about a new Anschluß? It would however soon enough lose its leading role, for a second time occupying the position as the impotent ‘second.’”¹⁵ In dismissing this regional scheme, he also commented on intra-German regional rivalries: even if this came to pass, Austria would again face subordination to more powerful German neighbors. Along those lines, in 1946, conservative politicians in Bavaria felt compelled to dispel rumors that they worked toward some fantastical Danubian Federation with Baden-Württemberg, Austria, and Hungary, with Vienna as the capital.¹⁶ Whispers of regionalist fantasies lasted past the total defeat in war.

Alongside such gossip existed very practical border concerns, especially regarding two Austrian enclaves in Bavaria: the small towns of Jungholz (in Tyrol) and Kleinwalsertal (in Vorarlberg). Because of the jagged Alpine topography, the only roadways to these Austrian towns went through Bavaria. The US-American occupiers in Munich presented such enclaves as anomalies and thus problems. The solution became “elimination,” according to a directive from the Office of Military Government for Bavaria Civil Administration Division to the

¹⁵ As this story was from a press organized for the Red Army, its accuracy was certainly suspect. But, the very story itself spoke to the believability of southeastern, Catholic solidarity and that the Soviets wanted to discourage any question of altering the Austro-Bavarian border, framing it as both too tainted with Nazi history and against Austria’s own best interest. “Bemerkenswertes Interview General Béthouarts,” *Österreichische Zeitung: Zeitung Der Roten Armee Für Die Bevölkerung Österreichs*, 22 September 1946, Nummer 219 (376), Seite 12, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oez&datum=19460922&seite=12&zoom=33>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

¹⁶ “CSU schlägt Donaustaatenbund vor?” 17 December 1946, UP – 37, Report citing Berlin-based newspaper *Morgen*, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BaK), *Deutsches Büro für Friedensfragen, Zeitungsausschnitte und Pressemeldungen betr. Donauföderation, 1946–1947*, Bestandssignatur: Z/35/, Archivsignatur: 524, Standort: 10, Magazin I 1B K.2.04, Reihe 336, fol. 1–, Day 1 Photo 17. “Gegen eine ‘Donauföderation’,” 3 February 1947, UP – 20, Aus Deutschland A 12, BaK, *Deutsches Büro für Friedensfragen*, Z/35/, 524, 10, I 1B K.2.04, 336, fol. 1–, Day 1 Photo 4.

Minister President of Bavaria. The US directed the Bavarian officials to compile reports on the enclaves' inhabitants and histories and to stand prepared for

minor adjustments that would improve the boundary and eliminate such partial exclaves and enclaves ... It should be borne in mind that territorial cessions are not likely to be accomplished on a compensatory basis. Therefore, territory on the German side of the border that could well be ceded to Austria and Czechoslovakia should be noted as well as vice versa.

To the US, pragmatic rationalization of the border mattered above all else.¹⁷ The response of the Bavarian commission in charge of researching the question perhaps seems unsurprising: incorporation into the Bavarian fold. In their reading of history, yes, these towns had technically fallen under Austrian jurisdiction, but by the end of the nineteenth century, they fell outside the Austrian customs union and in the German one. Furthermore, the Bavarians claimed these enclaves "were integrated into Bavaria after the Anschluß of Austria ... seen from a purely economic or administratively practical standpoint, the Anschluß of both municipalities of Jungholz and Mittelberg to the Bavarian State territory would be the most appropriate." The Bavarian regional impulse to aggrandize at Austria's expense remained, now couched in pragmatism.¹⁸

¹⁷ "Abschrift: Office of Military Government for Bavaria Civil Administration Division Civ. Adm/HJM/ms. AG 312 NGBG, 19 December 1947, Subject: Territorial Reorganization – Enclaves and Exclaves; To: Minister President of Bavaria, 7 Prinzregentenstraße, Munich." BaK, Bestandssignatur: Z/35/, Archivsignatur: 185, Standort: 10, Magazin: I 1B K.2.04, Reihe: 336, *Deutsches Büro für Friedensfragen, Territorialfragen – Allgemeines – 1947-1949*, Z35/185, fol. 1–, IIa A1. 4a II/4273, 134–135, Pages 1–2, Day 1 Photo 125–126.

¹⁸ An das Amt der Militärregierung für Bayern, Civil Administration Division, München, Tegernseerlandstraße 210. Betreff: Territorial Reorganisation–Enklaven und Exklaven. Bezug: Dortiges Schreiben AG 312/MGBG vom 19 Dezember 1947. Diesseitiges Schreiben vom 13. February 1948., 17 February 1948, BaK, Z/35/, 185, 10, I 1B K.2.04, 336, *Deutsches Büro für Friedensfragen*, fol. 1–, IIa A1. 4a II/4273, 1–3 (129–131), 2 (130) (for direct quotation), Day 1 Photo 120–122, Photo 121 (for direct quotation).

But the Bavarian commission also knew pushing for an “Anschluß” of any size, shape, or form would certainly lead to Allied rejection. In the same report, the Bavarians backed down and presented no desire to change the border; instead, they advised self-determination.¹⁹ Two years later, the *Wiener Kurier* ran an article about the “constitutional curiosity” of Jungholz, whose Austrian inhabitants had “to pass German border control and will be controlled by the Bavarian border police” every time they wanted to enter or leave their village, even when going to the Austrian Tyrol itself.²⁰ While these enclaves perhaps appeared peculiarities, they also remained explainable from the historical logic of the intra-national borderland. The mentality of regional variations on the same nationality manifested in convoluted attempts to impose order on a seemingly-baffling border. To this day, these two towns—encircled and only accessible by Bavaria—remain Austrian.

Meanwhile, the Allies pushed their denazification policies in both Austria and Germany. Indeed, the Allies convicted and executed Gauleiter Eigruber himself in 1947. But Allied justice only went so far, often tempered with practical administrative concerns on the ground about needing to reconstruct these defeated countries. The more pragmatic approach meant working with the administrative, professional, and legal personnel on hand.²¹ This

¹⁹ “An das Amt der Militärregierung für Bayern, Civil Administration Division, München, Tegernseerlandstraße 210. Betreff: Territorial Reorganisation-Enklaven und Exklaven. Bezug: Dortiges Schreiben AG 312/MGBG vom 19 Dezember 1947. Diesseitiges Schreiben vom 13. February 1948., 17 February 1948, BaK, Z/35/, 185, 10, I 1B K.2.04, 336, *Deutsches Büro für Friedensfragen*, fol. 1-, IIa A1. 4a II/4273, 129-131, Day 1 Photo 120-122.

²⁰ “Bergdorf Jungholz: Ein staatsrechtliches Kuriosum an der Tirolerisch-Bayerischen Grenze,” *Wiener Kurier: Herausgegeben Von Den Amerikanischen Streitkräften Für Die Wiener Bevölkerung*, 16 July 1949, Nummer 164, 5. Jahrgang, Seite 15, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wku&datum=19490716&query=Jungholz&ref=anno-search&seite=15>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

²¹ For a great review on the denazification and “democratization via integration” in the Federal Republic of Germany and how the 1950s were, broadly speaking, “an era of conservative retrenchment

conundrum between liberal idealism of the western powers and expediency of their administrative pragmatism manifested in the legacy of the fascist Heimwehren. The former Heimwehren Führer of Lower Austria, Julius Raab, emerged as a key politician in the Second Austrian Republic, eventually becoming Chancellor in the 1950s. But in 1949, when he served as President of the Bundeswirtschaftskammer, the *Volkswille* ran a story that he pushed for a “re-establishment of the Heimwehr” with himself as its “Bundesführer.” The source also reported that, true to the internecine logic of fascism, he jockeyed with another man for the lead position.²² The Soviet-backed paper in Austria, the *Österreichischer Zeitung*, wrote in no uncertain terms: “The Kampf for the leadership position has already begun.” Surely this article functioned as a Soviet attempt to delegitimize any right-wing resurgence, but it presented a haunting echo of the interwar *Führerfrage* (leadership question) turned *Führerkampf* (leadership struggle) between Schuschnigg and Starhemberg.²³

This rumored Heimwehren resurgence never took place, and their infamous ringleader, Starhemberg continued his rather fortunate, quixotic life story. After the war, the

about the Nazi past,” see Devin O. Pendas, *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965: Genocide, History, and the Limits of the Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6-16, 17 (direct quotation), 18-23. For the glaring continuity of legal personnel, particularly in postwar Bavaria, see Devin O. Pendas, *Democracy, Nazi Trials, and Transitional Justice in Germany, 1945-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 67-68.

²² “Einzelheiten über die Wiederaufstellung der Heimwehr, Graf oder Raab soll ‚Bundesführer‘ und ‚Graf Strachwitz ‚Stabsschef‘ werden,” *Volkswille: Tageszeitung für Kärnten*, 29 May 1949, Nummer 124, 5. Jahrgang, Seite 3 (5 on the database), ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=vw&datum=19490529&query=„Heimwehr“&ref=anno-search&seite=5>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

²³ “Verstärkte Bestrebungen zur Wiedererrichtung der Heimwehr, Der Kampf um die führenden Positionen hat bereits begonnen,” *Österreichische Zeitung: Zeitung Der Sowjetarmee Für Die Bevölkerung Österreichs*, 24 May 1949, Nummer 120, (1177), Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oez&datum=19490524&query=„Heimwehr“&ref=anno-search&seite=2>, Accessed 2 February 2021.

Austrian socialists sought justice for Starhemberg's fascist machinations and formally accused him of treason. But the courts dismissed the charge in 1953, and he returned from exile in Argentina to his Heimat in 1955. Not only did the legal system dismiss any indictment, but it also restituted his vast property holdings that the Nazis had nationalized. Among the postwar destitution, he emerged as "one of Austria's wealthiest men," according to *The Washington Post*. Eventually, his seemingly boundless font of fortuity ran dry. He succumbed to a heart attack on Ides of March 1956. *The Washington Press* also continued the pattern of equivocation over the ideological leanings of the Heimwehren, settling on "a Fascist-type national guard."²⁴

The legacy of the Heimwehren lingered on a personal level for its previous rank-and-file members. One instance encapsulated the narrative of intra-fascist cooperation and competition in the intra-national borderland. An Austrian lawyer [name redacted for privacy, in accordance with Austrian law] from Styria sought acceptance to the bar in Salzburg, now under US oversight. The US occupation apparatus vetted such applicants regarding their activities during the Nazi era. The US Deputy High Commissioner, Jesmond D. Balmer, had by September 1949 told the Salzburg Governor's Office to deny this man's request. According to Nazi records, he had served in the Styrian SA during the 1930s. During the war itself, he apparently boasted on record about his SA participation.²⁵

²⁴ "Prince Starhemberg, Heimwehr Chief, Dead," *The Washington Post and Times Herald* (1954-1959), 16 March 1956, story from *Associated Press*, Bregenz, Austria, 15 March 1935, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, <https://www.proquest.com/hnpwashingtonpost/docview/148833225/7150A66466C4C7BPQ/1?accountid=9673>, Accessed 2 January 2022.

²⁵ Jesmond D. Balmer, Brigadier General, USA Deputy High Commissioner, "Honorable Josef Rehr Governor, Land Salzburg," Headquarters United States Forces in Austria, 30 September 1949, Landesarchiv Salzburg (LaS), Präsidialakten 1949: PRÄ 1949/30.3 in PRÄ 1949/29.1-PRÄ 1949/30.4, Day 6 File 2 Photos 8-9.

However, the man based his case for reinstatement on the claim that in the 1930s, he had actually served in the Styrian Heimatschutz, not the SA. He sought to leverage his participation in the Austrian fascist paramilitary unit as proof that he had *not* joined the Nazi movement. He asserted that the appearance of his name on the SA roster resulted from fraudulent Nazi bookkeeping policies. According to his June 1949 testimony, after the Nazis' March 1938 annexation, the names of men in the Heimatschutz "were automatically transferred to the NSDAP." He claimed that the Nazis in Austria had erroneously equated Heimatschutz members with Nazis, supposedly believing that "participation in the Wehrformation (armed formation) of the Styrian Heimatschutz should be counted as participation in the SA since 1933."²⁶

His case seems dubious for several reasons. First, this man may very well have marched in the SA based on the Nazis' records and his statements during the war. Second, if he were in the Heimatschutz, then he may have cooperated and competed with the Nazis in any numerous capacities.²⁷ Third, even if he had marched in the Heimatschutz instead of the NSDAP, as he so claimed, that very argument explicitly admitted to fascist paramilitary participation and potential violence. While the American vetting system originally saw this written explanation as insufficient, the Deputy High Commissioner then reported the applicant's strategy shifted to dismiss the Nazi records as "misconstrued because of misleading

²⁶ Name Redacted, "Abschrift. Salzburg, den 14. Juni 1949. An die Amerikanische Militärregierung Salzburg Rechtsabteilung Salzburg," LaS, Präsidialakten 1949: PRÄ 1949/30.3, Day 6 File 2 Photo 12.

²⁷ For the overlap between the Nazis and the Styrian Heimatschutz in particular, see Bruce F. Pauley, *Hahnenschwanz und Hakenkreuz: Steirischer Heimatschutz und österreichischer Nationalsozialismus, 1918-1934* (Wien: Europaverlag, 1976), 172.

summary.”²⁸ One month later, American Brigadier General Balmer reversed his decision: “no procedure under Federal Law No. 6/47 has been instituted against him, this Headquarters no longer opposes his admission to the Salzburg Bar.”²⁹ If the legal system itself could not find fault with his past actions, the US occupiers accepted him as a legal agent in Salzburg. To be sure, his acceptance could very well have been for expediency.³⁰ Still, he tried to prove his non-Nazi credentials by explicitly admitting to service in another German-speaking fascist paramilitary group. Just as one’s fascist regional “pedigree” mattered in the intra-national borderland, so too did one’s fascist paramilitary “pedigree” when it came to reckoning with the Nazi past.

The End of the Intra-National Borderland: An Austrian Nation?

In 1955, Julius Raab, the ex-Heimwehren Landesführer of Lower Austria, served as Austrian Chancellor. Under his tenure, Austrians negotiated an end of the Allied occupation and independence for themselves, pushing the Allies to make good on their wartime Moscow Declaration promising Austrian autonomy. The Allies relinquished their occupational holds, contingent on official Austrian neutrality to placate fears of losing Austria in the polarizing Cold War.³¹ Austrians also continued to identify against their German neighbors, including any regional unity with their fellow southeastern German-speakers, the Bavarians. Why did

²⁸ Balmer, “Honorable Josef Rehr Governor, Land Salzburg,” Headquarters United States Forces in Austria, 24 October 1949, LaS, Präsidialakten 1949: PRÄ 1948/30.3, Day 6 File 2 Photo 8-9.

²⁹ Balmer, “Honorable Josef Rehr Governor, Land Salzburg,” Headquarters United States Forces in Austria, 24 October 1949, LaS, Präsidialakten 1949: PRÄ 1948/30.3, Day 6 File 2 Photo 2.

³⁰ For the glaring role of such expediency regarding legal personnel in occupied Germany (and especially in Bavaria), see Pendas, *Transitional Justice in Germany*, 67–68.

³¹ Steiniger, *Austria, Germany, and the Cold War*, 110–143.

the borderlands conditions in the Austro-Bavarian region not continue on into the second half of the twentieth century to today? The short answer: the unconditional military defeat and subsequent occupation of Nazi Germany. This time around, the Allies eliminated any question or doubt of whether German-speaking Europe had lost.³² The Allies achieved a victory so complete, with Germany and Austria temporarily but utterly dismembered, as to make any question of German revanchism and unity beyond the pale. They even condemned Austria's intra-national foil, Prussia, to oblivion—the victorious Allies expunged it from the map for being the supposed progenitor of German militarism.³³

Nor was any form of revision or intra-national solidarity with Germans north of the Austro-Bavarian border something the Austrians desired. In its place stood the new question of whether “Austrian” constituted a national category in its own right.³⁴ That is, an Austrian nation distinct from the German nation.³⁵ In this nation-building endeavor, the Austrians received exogenous help. In addition to pledging Austria's restored sovereignty, the 1943 Allied Moscow Declaration also pronounced “Austria, the first free country to fall a victim to Hitlerite aggression, shall be liberated from German domination.” The wording of the declaration further belied Allied sympathy for Austria, as the Allies claimed to “regard the

³² Pendas, *Transitional Justice in Germany* 7, 24 (especially footnote 6).

³³ Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Brandenburg-Prussia, 1601-1945* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), xii-xviii.

³⁴ Jamie Andrew McGregor Bulloch, “The Promotion of an Austrian Identity, 1918-1938” (PhD diss., University College London, 2002), 32-33, 254.

³⁵ For a detailed study of the complicated discourses and efforts to forge some sort of Austrian nationality, see Fritz Fellner, “The Problem of the Austrian Nation after 1945,” *The Journal of Modern History* 60, no. 2 (The University of Chicago Press, Jun. 1988): 264-289, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1881133>, Accessed 14 February 2022.

annexation imposed on Austria by Germany on March 15, 1938, as null and void.”³⁶ The declaration had profound implications. As historian Ernst Hanisch put it, the Austrian “founding myth” for its existence as an independent state came “following a selective interpretation of the Moscow Declaration of 1943.” The Allies seemed to grant the Austrians a moral out after the total defeat of Nazism. Austrians (mis)took the declaration as Allied license to distance themselves from the Nazi movement—even to claim status as the original victims of Nazism in their “Opfermythos” (victim myth)—shirking blame for all things Nazi (totalitarianism, crimes against humanity, total war, war crimes, genocide, total defeat) onto their north German neighbors in the Nazi Altreich.³⁷ This sense of victimhood conveniently elided over the final sentence of the “Declaration on Austria,” in which the Allies penned: “Austria is reminded, however that she has a responsibility, which she cannot evade, for participation in the war at the side of Hitlerite Germany, and that in the final settlement account will inevitably be taken of her own contribution to her liberation.”³⁸ Despite this qualifying rebuke, the Austrians tried to pass the Nazi legacy onto the Germans, distinct from

³⁶ *The Moscow Conference*, Online at *The Avalon Project*, <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/moscow.asp>.

³⁷ Ernst Hanisch, “Der Ort des Nationalsozialismus in der österreichischen Geschichte,” Einleitung in *NS Herrschaft in Österreich: Ein Handbuch*, Hg. von Emmerich Tálos, Ernst Hanisch, Wolfgang Neugebauer, Reinhard Sieder (Wien: öbv & hpt VerlagsgmbH & Co. KG, 2001), 13. As Janek Wasserman reminds us, “The Austrian victim narrative has a long history.” Janek Wasserman, *Black Vienna: The Radical Right in the Red City, 1918-1938* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), 220. But it is not my intention to outline that narrative in this brief epilogue. Nor is it my intention to assess the accuracy of this Austrian perception. As Hanisch points out, “The criticism of the Opfermythos has solidified as a stereotype; it contains no more scholarly creativity.” Hanisch, “Der Ort des Nationalsozialismus,” 13. Instead, I see its very existence and perceived believability by Austrians as a case for the solidification of the Austro-Bavarian border.

³⁸ *The Moscow Conference*, Online at *The Avalon Project*, <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/moscow.asp>.

their Austrian sense of self, replete with “innocent” outdoor Alpine activities, Viennese cosmopolitanism, *gemütlichkeit* (comfort), and *Kultur* (culture). Perhaps unsurprisingly Austrian sources pushed this victimhood narrative aggressively, especially with their curated dossier of cherry-picked textual evidence framing Austria as the hapless and helpless martyr of Nazism.³⁹ Even as late as 2005, historian Thomas Weyr proclaimed, “For in the end it was the Viennese themselves who opted for wealthy Prussian provincialism over cultural and intellectual excellence that might have restored the city’s greatness.” His argumentation equated Nazism with Prussian regionalism, plain and simple, and he claims Austrians bought it.⁴⁰ Curiously enough, regionalist assumptions have been mustered both to defend and to deconstruct the Opfermythos.

Furthermore, after the Second World War, the emotional paradox that had so marked and beleaguered the interwar intra-national borderland had dissolved. In its place existed a much stronger sense of Austrian independence from Germany. Coupled with western financial backing, the sovereign autonomy of the Second Austrian Republic in comparison to Western Germany finally seemed settled.⁴¹ Border change ceased to seem inevitable, possible, necessary,

³⁹ *Rot-Weiss-Rot-Buch: Gerechtigkeit für Österreich! Darstellungen, Dokumente und Nachweise zur Vorgeschichte und Geschichte der Okkupation Österreichs (nach amtlichen Quellen): Erster Teil* (Wien: Druck und Verlag der Österreichischen Staatsdruckerei, 1946), 3–224.

⁴⁰ Thomas Weyr, *The Setting of the Pearl: Vienna Under Hitler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), xiii.

⁴¹ To historian Franz Mathis, in terms of constructing an “identity” based on history, any “Austrian identity” can only really look to the post World War II years for its invention: “My main argument is that 1,000 years of Austria history have not only contributed extremely little to creating an Austrian identity, but have even tended to hinder such an identity from being created.” Franz Mathis, “1,000 Years of Austria and Austrian Identity: Founding Myths,” Chapter 1 in *Austrian Historical Memory & National Identity, Contemporary Austrian Studies, Volume Five*, eds. Günter Bischof & Anton Pelinka (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 20 (for direct quotation, 21–31).

or even desired. In place of the emotional paradox also stood a new certainty, plain for all to see in the desolation, destitution, and destruction of the war. An Austrian sense of self—*Österreichertum* as opposed to *Deutschtum*—had solidified as distinct and viable.⁴² Anschluss, Wiedervereinigung, Heimkehr, Zusammenschluss, Eingliederung, no matter how conceived, were unacceptable to all. The Soviet-leaning *Österreichische Zeitung* printed an op-ed from one Professor F. Sch. who asserted unequivocally: “Even today, every child sees what the Anschluß of Austria brought: War, endlessly much blood and tears, rubble and destruction, mass misery and hunger.” The writer also flipped on its head the Nazi notion of an Austrian Heimkehr, instead presenting the annexation as nothing short of a “terrible Heimsuchung [infestation] by the brown pest [brown-shirted Nazis].”⁴³ Nazism, or rather its unconditional defeat, shrouded in evil all things Anschluss, including its contested past and any potential prospects.⁴⁴ In so doing, the intra-national borderland dissolved into the new currents of the Cold War.

Yet the notion that “Austrian” might constitute its own “nationality” as opposed to “German” received criticism. Helmut Sündermann’s 1970 treatise, *Wie deutsch bleibt Österreich? Antwort an Schuschnigg*, offered a scathing retort to the claim that Austrian now denoted a nationality—so propagated by the former Austrofascist Führer Schuschnigg in the name of Austrian autonomy. Sündermann responded that Austrians remained “German” in nationality

⁴² For a rich account of this fledgling though marginal interwar discourse on a potential Austrian nation, with it gaining more traction after World War II, see Bulloch, “The Promotion of an Austrian Identity, 1918–1938,” 32–33, 261–278.

⁴³ Prof. F. Sch., “Wie es wirklich war,” *Österreichische Zeitung*, 5 June 1945, No. 19, Seite 2, ANNO, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oez&datum=19450605&seite=2&zoom=33&query=%22Anschluss%2B%C3%96sterreich%22&ref=anno-search>, Accessed 28 December 2021.

⁴⁴ For such the historical contestation and liberal-democratic endorsements of Anschluss, see Erin R. Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany: Republican Nationalism and the Idea of Anschluss* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 3, 195–236.

and that any claim otherwise amounted simply to myth. To substantiate this claim, he reified the notion that the Austrian lands had been settled “by Bavarians” during the Middle Ages. He also used etymology as grounds for his political argument, claiming the name Austria (Österreich) offered direct evidence of its connection to the Bairische Ostmark.⁴⁵

While Sündermann clearly intended to make the case against an Austrian nation, however defined, his argument revealed exactly why the intra-national borderland in this context had ceased to exist. With the new “founding myth” of “Austrians” as distinct from “Germans” in Germany—the remaining cultural, historical, linguistic ties no longer sufficed to drive any desire to revise the border. With Austro-German unity so tainted by Nazism from which Austrians now wanted such distance, with the Allied enforcement of Austrian autonomy, and with the Cold War casting a cryogenic hold over Central European boundaries, the Austro-Bavarian borderland stabilized. The interwar desire for border change had been so utterly defeated that Austrians could only embrace the autonomy the Allies afforded them.

Concluding Reflections

So, what does this close reading of intra-fascist, intra-German infighting during the first half of the twentieth century offer us? What is the point of a regional analysis of Austro-Bavarian transborder paramilitary unit machinations? Tracing such right-wing proliferation

⁴⁵ Helmut Sündermann, *Wie deutsch bleibt Österreich? Antwort an Schuschnigg* (Freising: Druffel-Verlag, 1970), 20–21.

and fragmentation affords us tiers of overlapping importance—matryoshka dolls of significance with key points depending on the interests of the particular reader.

The first, most specific tier of conclusions regards southeastern German regionalism itself. Stemming from the historiography on the Heimat and the constructed nature of nationalism, this dissertation has added to the notion that regionalism was historically constituted and constructed, in and of itself nothing more than elastic, elusive discursive constructs, shifting in different situational and historical contexts utterly dependent on the imagination of the historical actor in question.⁴⁶ The plurality of perceptions for horizontal unity among peoples for a given region paradoxically generated significant discord in the southeastern German region. The result? A dizzying array of uniformed, often armed right-wing paramilitary groups whose exact loyalties—parochial, provincial, regional, organizational, national, “racial”—seemed neither certain, static, nor clear cut. On affective levels, the combination of these identifiers yielded impulses both complementary and countervailing, to varying degrees. The intersectionality of these loyalties seemed both perpendicular and parallel, depending on perspective. As with train tracks running alongside

⁴⁶ Benedict Richard O’Gorman Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]), 1–7, <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy.bc.edu/2027/he b.01609>, Accessed 11 January 2022. Cecilia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 1–9, 13, 20–21, 197–227. Alon Confino, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor: Württemberg, Imperial Germany, and National Memory, 1871–1918* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3–23, 97–189. David S. Luft, “New Conceptual Directions: Austria as a Region of German Culture: 1900–1938,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 23 (1991): 137, <https://www.cambridge.org/core>, Accessed 16 December 2020. Erin Hochman, “Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy: The Politics of Commemoration in Germany and Austria” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2010), 233, 235–236. Martina Steber, *Ethnische Gewissheiten: Die Ordnung des Regionalen im bayerischen Schwaben vom Kaiserreich bis zum NS-Regime* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, 2010), 11–31, 34.

each other, the two rails of regionalism and nationalism worked together in parallel to guide the right-wing wagon onward. But when viewed down the center to the vanishing point of the horizon, the two tracks could seem to come together, hinting at either a powerful convergence or a violent collision. Southeastern German regionalism and *völkisch, großdeutsch* ethno-nationalism presented just such a constitutive contradiction for right-wing groups. They operated alongside each other until they eventually collapsed, converged, or collided.

If regionalism and nationalism functioned as both compatible and combustible, they also remained embedded within the next conceptual tier: the politics, objectives, and deeds of right-wing paramilitaries. Interwar central and eastern Europe became maelstroms of such paramilitaries from across the political spectrum. Traditional literature on Austria marked each of these units and political parties as a set *Lager* (camp), monolithic blocs that acted in concert with and against each other, a thesis that endowed each Lager with almost anthropomorphized sense of agency and cohesion.⁴⁷ More recent scholarship adeptly criticized and complicated the Lager thesis.⁴⁸ In that vein this study has dissected the right-wing, increasingly fascist “camp”

⁴⁷ For traditional Lager orthodoxy, see F. L. Carsten, *Fascist Movements in Austria: From Schönerer to Hitler*, vol. 7 of *SAGE Studies in 20th Century History* (London: SAGE Publications, 1977), 41–69, 87–140. Martin Kitchen, *The Coming of Austrian Fascism* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 1–6, 36–51, 97–143, 173–201. Evan Burr Bukey, *Hitler's Hometown: Linz, Austria 1908–1945* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), 7, 64, 112–115, 217–229. William P. Barnett and Michael Woywode's sociological approach gestures toward hybridity that transcended the set Lager, but all in all, they utilize and reinforce Lager as their categories of analysis. William P. Barnett and Michael Woywode, “From Red Vienna to the Anschluss: Ideological Competition among Viennese Newspapers during the Rise of National Socialism,” *American Journal of Sociology* 109, no. 6 (The University of Chicago Press, May 2004): 1463–1464 (for their acknowledging of Lager fluidity), but 1455–1456, 1488–1491 (for their underscoring of Lager distinctions), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/381774>, Accessed 8 January 2022.

⁴⁸ Tim Kirk, “Austrian fascisms, ‘Austrofascism’ and the working class,” Chapter 1 in *Nazism and the working class in Austria: Industrial unrest and political dissent in the ‘national community’* (Cambridge:

in Austria and Bavaria almost to the point of oblivion. The tensions, feuds, and violence within such fascists, pseudo-fascists, counterrevolutionary activists, and other far-right extremist was exactly what drove forward the borderlands chaos.

The existence of hermetic, homogenous Lager remains a myth we must continue to complicate, even dismantle. However, when broadly conceived, right-wingers still present comprehensible trends for us to trace. As irrational and illogical as they might seem, a certain rational logic emerged from their behavior. First, their cooperation, overlapping right-wing impulses, and adherence to German nationality meant that they maintained identifiability.⁴⁹ Second, these men spoke and acted erratically with such frequency that their tantrums almost became predictable, even certain. All the while, the exact manifestations and consequences of their hysterics remained unpredictable, further compounding the amalgam of certainty and uncertainty. Third, right-wingers functioned with some coherence *specifically because* they also remained so bedeviled by internal feuds. To men who glorified confrontation, fighting remained inherent to their interactions with others, even with (especially with) other right-wingers. To them, conflict served as some perpetual, supposedly natural source of renewal, collapsing the means-ends distinction and creating a co-dependency on evermore opponents.⁵⁰ They construed power to mean identifying and combating antagonists, and so anyone and everyone became fodder for antagonism. Such right-wing men conceptualized power

Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19-20. Julie Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State, 1933-38* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 233.

⁴⁹ Thorpe is absolutely correct in stating that Austrians were Pan-German, as she defines it, thus cross-cutting and complicating normally assumed Lager divisions. See Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 233.

⁵⁰ George L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1999), 43.

narrowly to mean a zero-sum game of “winning” and “losing.”⁵¹ This tension existed readily for explicitly defined opponents, but it clearly also manifested among fellow right-wingers. Their divisiveness constituted a core commonality.

And that divisiveness actually worked to their advantage, intentionally or not. Right-wing infighting locked the Austro-Bavarian region into twenty years of perpetual anxiety, even terror, as right-wing militiamen fought an unofficial, quasi-civil war against different militias and against rivals within their own militia, to say nothing of the “official” on-going conflicts they had with socialist paramilitaries. The final account of intra-right-wing, intra-national violence was staggering, bewildering, and often downright confounding: trans-border smuggling of arms, funds, propaganda, and personnel; transborder arming and training of militiamen followed by the violent disarming of just such militiamen; rival demonstrations and shouting matches; shootouts and fistfights; arrests, expulsions, and mobilizations; failed and successful assassinations; transborder terror and counter-terror operations; concentration camps; rumored and attempted Putschen; planned and real plebiscites toward opposite ends. As such, these paramilitaries held the Austro-Bavarian region and its inhabitants emotionally hostage throughout the interwar period, sowing uncertainty over of what conflagration would assuredly happen tomorrow. This sense of inevitable showdowns coupled with the anxiety of just who would get involved, when, where, how, and what exactly would result.

⁵¹ The conceptualization of “the political” as “the most intense and extreme antagonism” was the claim of founding right-wing thinker Carl Schmitt in his (in)famous treatise. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political: Expanded Edition*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007 [1932]), 29 (for direct quotation), 30.

The same uncertainty-inevitability complex applied for the border. In the right-wing imagination, revision of the Austro-Bavarian border seemed a very real possibility, but again, who would get involved, when, where, and what exactly would result remained very unclear. All the while, such unanswered (often unanswerable) questions provided additional potential fuel for infighting. Depending on paramilitary perspective or situational context, the border bifurcating this region into Bavaria and Austria could seem a revered inheritance, containing centuries of Habsburg history and preserving endogenous Austrian “authenticity.” To other right-wingers in other contexts, the same border amounted to nothing more than a line: arbitrary, defunct, and worst of all, exogenously imposed by spiteful victors in 1919. Surely this “unnatural” vestige could not hold back the “natural” waters of national unification, no matter how much the Allies insisted on maintaining it.

The affective convergence of certainty-anxiety, of inevitability-uncertainty fused with the constant trans-border violence and chaos, marking the Austro-Bavaria region as much of a borderland as any in interwar central and eastern Europe. My borderlands claim points us to the third tier of significance. In the first half of the twentieth century, this space became so complicated, chaotic, and contested not despite but specifically because of the “common” nationality. Unity seemed so easy, so simple, and thus so frustrating, so infuriating when it eluded these extremists for all the reasons explored here. Furthermore, “common” nationality meant that a rival did not simply constitute a political opponent, with whom one might disagree but still respect. The “common” nationality and “common” right-wing, even fascist, ideology meant a rival constituted someone far worse: a traitor. Among agents who perceived disagreement as both inevitable and irredeemable, any (perceived) betrayal, infighting, and

fragmentation could spiral quickly. All the while, this fusion of competition and common nationality motivated right-wing agents with such affective fervor and heartfelt conviction. They worked and fought with ever more intensity down the fascist slope, all to achieve their imaginative ideas for German glory.

The significance of an intra-national borderland transcends just right-wing pluralization and fragmentation, a rather common occurrence on the ideological extremes. It also transcends just this Austro-Bavarian region. The standard borderlands “paradigm” in the historiography on twentieth century Europe maintains that borderlands sprang from multi-national spaces. Vertical loyalties to a dynastic sovereign had supported the “old” multi-ethnic empires in past centuries—from Romanov and Hohenzollern to Habsburg and Osman dominions. But by 1918, such vertical pillars collapsed utterly under the unprecedented strains of total war and the centripetal nationalisms. For better or for worse, horizontal loyalties to fellow members of the same nation formed the new schema for organizing polities, as codified in the “Paris system,” as historian Eric Weitz’s mainstay article asserted.⁵² But large national minorities lived on the “wrong” sides of these new borders demarcating new nation-states, spatial vestiges of the “old” empires in which multi-national, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious populations had so long intermixed. But in the era of homogenous nation-states, such minority populations represented “problems.” Nation-state agents suspected people of a foreign nationality might have questionable loyalty to another nation-state, pose threats

⁵² Eric D. Weitz, “From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions,” *The American Historical Review* 113, no. 5 (Dec. 2008): 1313, 1314 (for direct quotation), 1315–1343, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30223443>, Accessed 8 January 2022.

to national security, and/or provide impetus for invasion from a neighboring national army. A paradigm for polities that posits national homogeneity condemned twentieth-century Europe to war, genocide, ethnic cleansing, and forced migrations to “straighten out” multi-national spaces.⁵³

The historiography on European borderlands hinges on the idea, unquestioned and unproblematic, that borderlands assuredly emerged in multi-ethnic and multi-national spaces. This causal mechanism for twentieth-century violence has provided great analytical explanation, but it now presents us with an exhausted field of diminishing returns. It also excludes other contexts—temporally, in eras before humanity had invented “nationality” and spatially, in regions with nationally “homogenous” populations. Such multi-national assumptions certainly proved untrue in the Austro-Bavarian region. Here, as we have seen, the common German nationality seemed one of the only points of consensus, albeit in ways that sowed division.⁵⁴

It was that exact consensus that drove forward the interwar strife that made the space a borderland. Thus, the Austro-Bavarian story subverts, even inverts, the traditional

⁵³ See, for instance, Peter Sahlin, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), xv-xvii, 1-24. Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 41-75. Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1-17. Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz's, Introduction to *Shatterzone of Empires: Coexistence and Violence in the German, Habsburg, Russian, and Ottoman Borderlands*, eds. Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 1-8. For a dark spin on the word, see Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), vii-xix.

⁵⁴ Stanley Suval, *The Anschluss Question in the Weimar Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), xi-xxi. Hochman, *Imagining a Greater Germany*, 9, 195-236. Hochman, *Staging the Nation, Staging Democracy*, 272. Thorpe, *Pan-Germanism and the Austrofascist State*, 1-15, 36-38, 232-236.

borderlands idea in traditional European historiography. But the Austro-Bavarian story studied here did not pose a “unique” case study. Such a label risks explaining it away as simply an outlier or as the exception that proved the rule of multi-national borderlands. Instead, I present it as the proof of concept for intra-national borderlands as an analytical category. It would serve as a more appropriate conceptual model for different twentieth-century spatial contexts, such as the violence in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, North and South Korea, North and South Vietnam, and East and West Germany. This analytical category would also better fit civil wars more broadly, even further back to the Vendée during one of the foundational moments of nation-state building, the French Revolution. This lens would also elucidate and clarify secessionist wars, when not defined along multi-national cleavages. During the US Civil War, the border-states became infused with intra-national violence over differing interpretations of what the founders of the nation and drafters of the Constitution had “truly” intended regarding slavery and sovereignty. Lastly, in shamelessly presentist terms, such regionalist scheming could illuminate the role of Confederate iconography in the former Confederacy *and* in rural areas throughout northern states, symbols which right-wing radicals mobilized in their 2021 Putsch against Congress in the name of “patriotism.” Regionalist grounds for intra-national fighting extend the temporal and geographical utility of the borderlands concept itself.

Framing borderlands as fundamentally affective experiences also contributes to its conceptual flexibility and longevity.⁵⁵ Borderlands as spaces infused with emotional

⁵⁵ For a foundational work that combines theories on emotions and borderlands, albeit in a vastly different temporal and geographical context, see Bathsbeba Demuth, “Labors of Love: People,

convergences opens the concept further afield to new temporal and spatial contexts, while providing a new optic through which to examine the more “traditional” multi-national borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe. While the Austro-Bavarian case detailed here remains intrinsically important, especially for those interested in the history of German-speaking Europe, its implications transcend the regional. They offer a new conceptual framework for studying borderlands as stemming from disputes within a circumscribed “in-group,” be it ideological, regional, national, or even emotional.

But what role does such regionalism play in our current, interconnected, and “globalized” world. Global homogenization, supra-national organizations, and international currencies seem to dominate the horizon. But the “global” turn has clearly given rise to a natalist push back throughout the US and Europe. Brexit, the Rassemblement National/Front National in France, and Trumpism perhaps present us with the most apparent manifestations of this impulse in the Atlantic world. Austrians and Germans have also felt elements of this retreat toward regionalism and xenophobia, meant to assuage the fear of “losing” supposedly “traditional” identities to globalization, immigration, a single currency, and the decisions of bureaucrats in Brussels. Such sentiments have started to manifest themselves in the political mainstream in Germany and Austria in the form of the right-wing Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ), respectively. The FPÖ explicitly embraces the regionalist approach, being the self-proclaimed Soziale Heimatpartei and running campaigns in the Land of Tyrol on a campaign of closing the border with Italy: “Eyes

Dogs, and Affect in North American Arctic Borderlands, 1700–1900,” *The Journal of American History* 108, no. 2 (Sept. 2021): 270–274, doi: 10.1093/jahist/jaab122, Accessed 8 January 2022.

open, Brenner closed: finally true border protection for Tyrol guaranteed.”⁵⁶ In the interwar period, the open Brenner had been the Austrofascist artery for Italian fascist support. Now, in a post-Schengen Europe, this right-wing party frames the Brenner as an Alpine gateway that they ought to seal against a perceived onslaught of Middle Eastern refugees. Covid-19 has further galvanized right-wingers in Austria into concerted group action, triggering mass protests of FPÖ enthusiasts against pandemic closures meant to create community safety.⁵⁷ Decades later, general uncertainty coupled with a fixation on mobility still fuel Austrian right-wing activists.

Meanwhile, the explicitly regionalist Bayernpartei (BP) claims staunch regional prerogative within, even separation from, the German nation-state, launching campaigns for a Republik Bayern against the Bundesrepublik Deutschland.⁵⁸ And yet, the BP weaves such regionalist claims with, even inseparable from, a German sense of nationality, but German in a specifically southeastern, Bavarian way. The attempt to galvanize such affective regionalism depends on a similar affective impulse as nationalism centered around Munich instead of Berlin. Nor has the supra-national trend of the EU escaped BP’s sense of regionalism, with the BP advocating for regional solidarities across the EU: South Tyrol and Sardinia in Italy;

⁵⁶ “Augen auf, Brenner zu: endlich echter GRENZSCHUTZ für TIROL garantiert.” Election poster for FPÖ: Die Soziale Heimatpartei. On the street in Neustift im Stubaital, Tirol. Photo taken 25 February 2018.

⁵⁷ “Austrian far-right Freedom Party protests against COVID measures: Freedom Party supporters among thousands protesting in Vienna against COVID lockdown and mandatory vaccinations.” *Al Jazeera and News Agencies*, 20 November 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/11/20/vienna-austria-covid-lockdown-protests>, Accessed 30 December 2021.

⁵⁸ “Republik Bayern ↑ ~~Bundesrepublik Deutschland~~, DIESMAL GSCHIED [sic] WÄHLEN! BAYERNPARTEI,” V.i.S.d.P.: Florian Weber, München. Election poster for Bayernpartei. On the street in Eichstätt, Bayern. Photo taken 28 September 2018.

Wallonia and Flanders in Belgium; Wales and Scotland in the UK; Alsace, Brittany, Occitany, and Corsica in France; Catalonia in Spain; or the Basque region straddling the Franco-Spanish border along the Pyrenees. It remains unclear whether the BP's campaigning committee notices the ironies of seeking solidarity along the lines of vastly different regions across a continent. But a "Europe of Regions instead of Centralism" makes for a fascinating rally cry for regionalists who likewise feel oppressed or subordinated on both the national and supra-national stages.⁵⁹

Lastly, a word regarding the GOP's elephant in the room: Trump. Or, more broadly, the resurgence of right-wing extremism across the US and Europe. Based on this investigation of right-wing regionalism, we ought to take any right-wing extremists at their word.⁶⁰ This includes right-wingers, the far right, proto-fascists, pseudo-fascists, fascists, alt-right activists, "neo-fascism" adherents, and paramilitary vigilantes, regardless of success or failure.⁶¹ Their specific words make a difference, even if they claim not to "mean them" when they go too far, such as inciting a Putsch attempt against the US Congress. Their obsession with natalist and regionalist tropes, while relying on foreign networks and cherry-picked historical narratives, curate a discourse of competitors and rivals, "winners" and "losers" in a tragic zero-sum game. And while we ought to reject as false their absurd claims, we also ought to take these ridiculous

⁵⁹ "BAYERNPARTEI: Europa der Regionen statt Zentralismus," V.i.S.d.P.: Florian Weber, München. Election poster for Bayernpartei. On the street in Eichstätt, Bayern. Photo taken 8 May 2019.

⁶⁰ For centering seemingly marginal right-wingers, see Charles R. Gallagher, *Nazis of Copley Square: The Forgotten Story of the Christian Front* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021), 1-16, 239-249.

⁶¹ For "neo-fascism," see Robert Reich, "The true meaning of 6 January: we must answer Trump's neofascism with hope," *The Guardian*, 28 December 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/dec/28/6-january-capitol-attack-trump-neofascism-coup-republicans>, Accessed 30 December 2021.

statements seriously. They do create serious confusion, chaos, and misinformation, not to mention providing smokescreens that veil very real misdeeds.

No matter how preposterous or fantastical those misdeeds may seem, we simply must take them seriously. In October 2021, armed members of the German right-wing party, *Der Dritte Weg* (The Third Way), set out on a march to the Polish border in order to reify it during the ongoing Poland-Belarus border crisis. Fortunately, German police repelled them before they could enact their horrifying version of order, which undoubtedly would have meant borderland violence and chaos.⁶² And Austrian and German authorities still have their run-ins with neo-Nazis, stores of weapons, and propaganda literature.⁶³ Indeed, according to Tim Lister of CNN, “Austrian neo-Nazi activists frequently connect with similar groups in Germany, according to authorities, because they perceive themselves as part of a greater German Reich.”⁶⁴ In December of 2020, this Austro-German far-right solidarity manifested in right-wing Austrian attempts to smuggle armaments into Germany, all so right-wingers there could carry out their own violence.⁶⁵ One hundred years after the Orgesch/Orka smuggled

⁶² Claudia Otto and Inke Kappeler, “German police stop far-right vigilantes attempting to patrol Polish border,” *CNN World* and *Reuters*, 25 October 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/25/europe/germany-far-right-vigilantes-intl-grm/index.html>, Accessed 30 December 2021.

⁶³ Frank Jordans and David Rising, “German officials say far-right crime rising as police arrest alleged neo-Nazi,” *PBS News Hour* and *Associated Press*, 4 May 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/german-officials-say-far-right-crime-rising-as-police-arrest-alleged-neo-nazi>, Accessed 30 December 2021. Tim Lister, “What a staggering gun cache discovered in one suspected neo-Nazi’s house says about far-right extremism in Europe,” *CNN World*, 17 November 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/17/europe/austria-far-right-extremism-intl/index.html>, Accessed 30 December 2021.

⁶⁴ Lister, “What a staggering gun cache,” *CNN World*, 17 November 2021.

⁶⁵ Reuters Staff, Reporting John Revill, “Austrian police seize haul of weapons intended for German extremists,” ed. David Holmes, *Reuters*, 12 December 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/austria-arms-idUSKBN28M0O5?taid=5fd5190e2f44a8000167990>, Accessed 30 December 2021.

guns and ammunition from Bavaria into Austria for the nascent Heimwehren, new far-right agents have reversed the flow of such destructive contraband.⁶⁶

And finally, we ought not relish internecine feuds among right-wing leaders and within far-right organizations, tempting though it may sound.⁶⁷ The chaos unleashed in such schisms further advances their end goals by framing the entire democratic system as dysfunctional. Furthermore, when President Trump initiated a violent Putsch against Congress in January 2021, Vice President Mike Pence presented a major potential target. Months later, Trump still condoned the crowd's cheers to "hang" his own Republican running mate.⁶⁸ Such violence is intrinsically horrifying and existentially dangerous for individuals and democracy alike. In the meantime, the rest of us are left in a collective malaise of inevitability and uncertainty: inevitability that something will go awry. What exactly, to whose detriment, and to whose advantage, no one can say. But democracies can exhaust themselves on such tempestuous seas, affording ample opportunity for the extremes.

⁶⁶ The Austro-German cultural connection *vis-à-vis* neo-Nazi activity has also manifested itself in music: rap artist by the name of "Mr Bond" made neo-Nazi songs in Austria, which a neo-Nazi used to live-stream a shooting spree in Germany. "Austrian 'Neo-Nazi rapper' held after long search," *BBC News*, 3 February 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-55918156>, Accessed 30 December 2021.

⁶⁷ Drew Harwell, "Since Jan. 6, the pro-Trump Internet has descended into infighting over money and followers," *The Washington Post*, 3 January 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/01/03/trump-qanon-online-money-war-jan6/>, Accessed 29 June 2022. Denise Lu and Karen Yourish, "The Turnover at the Top of the Trump Administration," *The New York Times*, 10 April 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/03/16/us/politics/all-the-major-firings-and-resignations-in-trump-administration.html>, Accessed 27 December 2021.

⁶⁸ Chris Cillizza, "Donald Trump isn't sorry about the 'Hang Mike Pence' chants," *CNN Politics: THE POINT with Chris Cillizza*, 12 November 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/11/12/politics/donald-trump-mike-pence-january-6/index.html>, Accessed 3 January 2022.

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